

# PCC offers contemporary African literature

Timothy Saben was raised in Uganda learning English and Swahili as he lived with "one foot firmly planted in Black culture and the other in colonial white culture." Saben will offer a course in Contemporary African Literature winter term at Portland Community College, Sylvania Center, 12000 S.W. 49th Avenue. The class lasts 12 weeks and meets each Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10-11

a.m. Students can audit the class or earn three transferable college credits. "When I was growing up in Uganda my companions were Black kids my own age," Saben said. "I learned the African verbal encyclopedia from my companions. I knew Swahili so it was easy. I learned stories of the slave trade in Swahili from old wized men in Africa." Saben credits his childhood com-

panions, his parents ("their wellspring of philosophy was humanity") and early friendships with Black African intellectuals with his interest in African literature and with helping Americans understand contemporary African culture. When Saben was growing up in the 1950's in Africa he said the literary tradition was coming from the West. "The written tradition was a white perspective but I knew how much of

a bias it was because my other foot was in the Black world," Saben explained. The most famous of the 1950's African novels was "Something of Value" by Robert Ruark—a book which is not on Saben's list for the PCC course. "Ruark's book is a white man's view of Black culture—full of stereotypes that white men are big, rugged and handsome and white women are beautiful and simpering

and Blacks are either nice or beastial savages jumping around in skins to the throb of tom-toms," Saben said. "There's tremendous literature coming out of Africa now," Saben said. "It doesn't have the groping cynicism of western literature. It is rural, collective and agrarian literature rather than industrial, individual and urban as ours is. There's a spontaneity about African

literature that you don't find much in western literature." Saben, who was educated in Kenya, Scotland and England before receiving his doctorate at the University of Oregon, lived in Canada and Australia before settling in Portland in 1974. Two experiences in Portland (please turn to page 10 column 5)

# PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volume 9 Number 50  
December 20, 1979  
10¢ per copy



Calvin Russell Graham Jr. at age 12 take time out to pause with violin. Calvin is 17 years old now.

## Young violinist tour Tokyo, Japan with Portland Junior Symphony

By Stephanie L. Michael

Recently the Portland Youth Philharmonic, better known as the Portland Junior Symphony went on a twelve day educational tour to Sapporo, Ebetsu and Tokyo, Japan. The group of 102 musicians, ages 13-23 plus 30 staff and escorts participated in six concerts, two school visits, two national television broadcasts and home stays with Japanese families while in Japan. The trip to Japan opened up the orchestras 1979-80 season. The groups visit to Sapporo was in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Sapporo and Portland. The orchestras trip was to demonstrate Portland's commitment to the sister-city program, offer a recognized Portland cultural entity to the Japanese and to allow a person-to-person experience through home stays. The trip cost was around \$125,000 dollars. The city, orchestra families and the community each contributed one-third to the cost of the trip. Calvin Russell Graham Jr. is the only Black musician in the orchestra, now in its 56th year of existence. The 17-year old violinist has participated in the accomplished orchestra on several occasions since he was 12 years old. Graham is one of the few young people in the group representing not only Portland, but distant cities such as the Dallas, Salem and Longview. The orchestra conducted by Jacob

Avshalomov is maintained by the Portland Junior Symphony Association, a non-profit educational organization which provides annual music training at no cost and without tax support for its regular operating expenses. Russel Graham began playing the violin when he was four years old. His parents initiated the start of private lessons for the instrument as soon as he turned five. Looking back through the years Russell says he disliked taking the lessons that lasted through junior high school. But now, he feels the work, time, and money put into lessons helped him get a seat in the orchestra. Grraham says, "I was 12 when I signed up to be in the orchestra, so it was necessary that I audition for a seat. I had to pick a piece and play it for two or three minutes. Then you are required to play a scale and do on the spot sight reading. I guess I must have been pretty good, because I got in and there was alot of kids who wanted to be in the orchestra." "I didn't then and I still don't find it hard being the only Black in the group. Now there are four other minority people playing in the orchestra. I don't think that many Black people listen to classical music. I think they appreciate any type of music, but money has alot to do with the lack of Black people being involved with classical music. It takes money to have private lessons

and to own an instrument such as a violin." When young Graham first started playing in the orchestra he was not serious about being a musician, his outlook was towards being a doctor like his father. But now in his last year of high school, he's made some decisions about his future life. "At first, I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. I think when you're growing up it's difficult to make decisions about the future. To tell the truth, I wasn't serious about playing music until this year. Right now, I know I want to be an accomplished musician in a metro orchestra, but I also want to do many things in my life. I'd like to always do work in the community and help people. Over a person's lifetime you just don't know where things might lead you." As a daily practice, Russell not only has to keep ahead on his academic studies, he also has to practice on his violin and trumbone. He says his practice sessions on the instruments can range from 2 to 3 depending on how he feels. He stressed that at this time, he's trying to learn how to discipline himself. "Hopefully next year, I will be accepted to a school next fall. I'm preparing myself for that whole process right now. I'd like to go to school somewhere in the east. (Please turn to page 10 column 3)

## Blacks celebrate January 1st as "Jubilee Day."

January 1, will not be just the advent of a new year; National NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks has called on Black people across the country to annually celebrate January 1 as "Jubilee Day," to commemorate the signing of the Emancipation proclamation by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 which abolished slavery in the United States. Hooks and the NAACP look to "Jubilee Day" as a day of "spiritual renewal; a day of worship and thanksgiving; a time to commemorate our Black Heritage, and a time to reflect, rededicate and revitalize our efforts... in our quest for equality of opportunity. The "Jubilee Day" concept was first introduced by Director Hooks in his benedictory address at the 70th Annual NAACP National Convention held in Louisville, Kentucky last June. A resolution to include the commemoration as part of the national organization's agenda was passed overwhelmingly. The annual celebration is intended to involve various portions of the Black community in a conjuctive effort to solidify and embrace the two major institutions which have historically key to Black survival in America; the Black family and the Black church. Specifically, the "Jubilee Day" resolution calls for local branches to encourage governmental leaders to issue commemorative proclamations; for families to take time out to recount "the experiences of Black freedom fighters, historic Black heroes and heroines...to instruct children about the value of hope and perseverance in overcoming adversity and despair." Black pastors are encouraged to hold special services "linking the civil



National NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks

rights struggle, the NAACP's role, and the mission of religion to the vitality of family life. The national NAACP leadership will set aside "Jubilee Day" to convene, reassess and plan strategies for obtaining its civil rights goals, and to generate the funds necessary for its campaigns. "Jubilee Day"—January 1—will not only signal the advent of something new, but the effort by Black people to re-new their faith in themselves and in a unity of purpose.

## NAACP give top honors to Zodiac contest winners.

Three-year-old Nicole, the Cancerian daughter of Phillip and Carolyn Murray, raised \$214 in Holiday Seal sales. Ms. Bowman, representing Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, raised \$600.11. Total revenues from both of the contests and the December 2 Fashion Extravaganza amounted to some \$3581.98. The Holiday Seal Fund raising campaign netted \$2169.93. At the December 9 ceremonies officially ending the campaign for this year, held at Bethel A.M.E. Church, Ms. Murray received a check for \$25; Harold Williams—son of Board member Harold Williams—took second place honors and a check for \$15 for raising \$205.75; Third place Felicia Robertson, daughter of Edna Robertson, received a check for \$10 for her \$182 fund-raising effort. Following Ms. Bowman, who was officially crowned "Queen" at the ceremony, were Mr. C.C.McCorvey, representing Allen Temple, who raised some \$500, and Mr. Ed Raibon of Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church who raised \$269.62.



Ms. Nicole Murray



Ms. Jewell Bowman

Ms. Nicole Murray and Ms. Jewell Bowman walked off with top honors as winners of the Portland Branch NAACP's Holiday Seal Children's Zodiac Contest and King/Queen Contest respectively.

## "Operation Phone Book"

Lions Club in the greater Portland metropolitan area will again be conducting their "Operation Phone Book" recycling project. The proceeds from this year's December 14 through January 12 collection of obsolete phone books will be shared between the Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation and participating youth groups. Each Lions Club will work with a youth organization in their area. About 30 collection sites where the

general public can turn in their old phone books are listed on an insert in the new 1980 directories. Major users of telephone books are going to be collected on a scheduled basis. Since 1925, Lions throughout the world have responded to the needs of the blind, and more recently have extended into sight and hearing conservation. In 1959 the Oregon Lions founded the Sight and Hearing Foundation. The foundation is a regular

contributor to the Devers Eye Clinic and the Oregon Lions Eye Bank at Good Samaritan Hospital and Medical Center, as well as supporting other projects for the blind such as the Southern Oregon Blind Center and a summer camp. Chairman of this year's "Operation Phone Book" project is Dick Brattin (233-2522) working closely with District Governor Dennis Trichenor.