

African educators strengthen ties with U.S.

by Kathryn Hall Bogle

Operation Crossroads Africa (OCA) annually brings to the United States about 200 visitors from Africa and the Caribbean for personal contact with American work and culture. OCA is a private, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization to strengthen ties among the people of Africa, the United States and the Caribbean. It seeks to stimulate among Americans a greater interest in the affairs of these regions of the world.

Through the OCA program last week came six men from Togo on the west coast of Africa, a country nearly the size of West Virginia. There are about 18 major ethnic groups in Togo's population of 3 million. Dominant groups are Ewe, Twi and Hausa. It has been estimated that 10% of Togolese are Muslim, 30% are Christian, and 60% practice their traditional religions.

The six men who were Portland visitors are all educators and teachers in Lome, the capitol city of Togo. French, the official language of Togo, is heard most often, although the African languages, Ewe, Mina, Dagomba, and Kabie are still in home use. The visitors, all fluent in English, are involved in a comparatively new Togolese effort, they said, to emphasize English as a second language in their Togo schools. Before arriving in this city the visitors had an intensive three week study of English in an Arizona college.



Bethel A.M.E. Church Missionary Society at a church picnic at Peninsula park. Some of them saw softball played for the first time when Ernest Hartzog, assistant superintendent of Portland Public Schools, set up games for the crowd attending the picnic.

Transportation for the guests was provided by the Portland Urban League as a cooperative contribution to the OCA program on behalf of the general community.

On their American tour, the African visitors were escorted by Isabelle Houbreque. The party left Portland to spend a week in New York City before returning to Togo.



The six Togolese visitors admire some of Portland's award-winning roses at Washington Park and receive a blossom from a park worker. (Photo: K. Hall-Bogle)

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In Portland, Badamassi Lawani, 39, Lolonyo Ladeh-Ahliadza, 46, Adote-Bah Adotevi, 33, Kwasi Djondo, 43, Abdoulaye Imadah, 36, and N'Sova Assogba, aged 33, spent a day at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory learning something of local general curriculum and the teaching of English as a second language under the direction of Dr. Ann Murphy.

On the second of their two-day stay in Portland, the visitors were morning guests of Dr. Paul Williams of Portland Community College and his wife Barbara, who showed them places of interest in the city, including a special tour of the Cascade campus of PCC.

Dr. E. C. Ogboubiri arranged for the visitors to picnic with some of the engineering staff of Bonneville Power Administration. They met Cynthia Rounds, an electrical engineering student working part-time at Bonneville. Later in the day, the group tasted barbecued ribs, American style, as guests of the

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