



Left to right: James Myrick, Richard Minnifield, Sarha Rastberry, Eddy Irby III, Lorena Herrmann, Richard Peyton. Photo by Richard Brown

## El Dorado Club Steps Out With New Image

by Bob Lothian

As an eighth grader who received straight A's at what was then Highland School, Eddie Irby was picked to give the speech representing students at the legislature in Salem when Highland was renamed in honor of Martin Luther King.

That's why Irby, as one of the co-managers of the El Dorado Club, located at the corner of Northeast Union Ave. and Alberta St., has a special interest in cleaning up the area and keeping drugs away from children at nearby King School.

The club is stepping out with a bright new image, one that discourages drugs and that will hopefully encourage business in the area, Irby said.

The new image does not tolerate pushers. "It is our policy not to serve them at all, and not to let them on our property," he said.

Just a few months ago, the block from Union up to 7th on Alberta was one of the city's leading drug markets. Pushers were so bold as to approach motorists in their cars, and to harass children from the school.

With its large parking lot on the corner, the club was sucked into the sordid scene and became a hangout for pushers. They tied up the phone and used the bathroom and dark corners of the bar to make deals, Irby said. Police were often on the premises, and that discouraged business, he added.

"This has been a home base for drugs and police and we had a problem getting rid of both of them," said club co-manager Colin Thompson.

But with community pressure and increased police surveillance, drug activity on the corner has decreased dramatically. Irby said the club will continue the trend by chaining off the parking lot and asking suspicious characters to leave. The phone and bathroom will be for customers' legitimate use only, he added.

"We're trying to turn it around and make it a clean, classy, respectable nightclub for the entire community," said Irby.

"It takes a little to keep the drugs out, but we're doing our part," Thompson added.

Irby said the club faced being closed by police and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. Observing that drugs had closed several other establishments in the community, Irby said the drug dealings were hurting business in a part of town that desperately needs healthy commerce.

"If we can give this Northeast corner of Alberta a better image and upgrade the community, then we feel we are helping to create an atmosphere that encourages investment in the black community," Irby said.

He encouraged former patrons of Geneva's to give the El Dorado a try. Its main attractions are live soul music, jazz and home-cooked soul food.

The El Dorado boasts one of the most extensive collections of recorded soul music around, with 1300 albums. A huge, white, grand piano dominates the bandstand.

The restaurant's ribs, chicken, burgers and sweet potato pie are offered on a unique "pay what you think it's worth" basis. No one cheats, though. "That's how good the food is," Irby said.

In addition to Irby and Thompson, the El Dorado crew includes Richard Peyton, James Myrick, Lorena Herrmann on bookkeeping and Robin Lauder milk as cook. Irby, Thompson, Peyton and Myrick grew up in the community and attended Grant High School together.

"We're just a group of young people that want to see right done," Irby said. "We feel that so far we're passing. We just might pass with flying colors if they don't look out."

## 1986 Ebony Fashion Fair (Body Language)

The 28th Annual Ebony Fashion Fair will appear in Portland at the Red Lion Motor Inn, Jantzen Beach, on Friday, April 25, at 8:00 p.m. This famed traveling fashion show is produced by Ebony Magazine and is sponsored by Portland Chapter of Links, Inc. for the benefit of Links Education Fund.

More than 200 exquisite garments complete with the latest accessories, 10 female and 2 male models, commentator, music director, stage and business managers and wardrobe staff travel from coast to coast on a special chartered bus. Because of the unprecedented demand for sponsorship of the show by charitable organizations around the country, Ebony Fashion Fair now tours two seasons.



Emanuel Ungaro - Green printed jacket lined in fuscia over fuscia and black silk dress and red turban.

Jean Patou - Magenta satin dress with sheer V neckline and multi-colored rhinestone trim.

Tickets may be purchased at Stevens & Son (Lloyd Center), Mrs. C's Wigs (7th & Fremont) and House of Sound (3634 N. Williams).

Proceeds from previous shows made it possible to make contributions to many local charities such as: NAACP, Portland Art Museum, Martin Luther King Scholarship Fund, Portland State University, United Negro College Fund, American Cancer Society, Kidney Association of Oregon, U.N.I.C.E.F., Urban League of Portland, American Heart Association Oregon Affiliate, Inc. Kerr Young Parents Program, Ethiopian Aid (Africare, Inc.) and many other groups and organizations.



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