

KBMS: Portland Soul Radio

by Nyewusi Askari

Fasten your soul seatbelts, Portlanders! A Black-owned and operated 24-hour-a-day radio station is coming to your city. Pending approval of the FCC, the station should be in place in four weeks or less. Mr. Chris Bennett, owner of the station explains.

"The name of the station that we have purchased is KAAR, 1480 am in Vancouver, but we will change the stations' call letters (KAAR) pending FCC approval. Tentatively, the call letters are KBMS. The indication is that those call letters will be the ones approved by the FCC."

Radio station KAAR 1480 in Vancouver, Washington, was recently purchased by KRIS Bennett Broadcasting, Inc. Explaining the new station's format, Mr. Bennett said, "It will be a soul station. We will play Rhythm and Blues, Rap, Gospel, Jazz, the whole arrangement of Black music. We will also be an information vehicle for the African-American community in Portland. The music will play 24 hours a day."

Mr. Bennett, and African-American, said the corporation that purchased the station is 100% Black-owned and understands the ins and outs of the print and broadcast media.

"I have three newspapers and a magazine in the Seattle/Tacoma area: The Seattle Medium, which is an award-winning newspaper; The Tacoma True Citizen; a shoppers guide called The Metro Homemaker; and the magazine, The Soul Town Review. We are self-contained. We do our own printing. I have been in the business for 18 years," he said.

In the African-American communities of Seattle and Tacoma, Mr. Bennett has helped launch the careers of many aspiring African-American journalists. He said, "Three of the top writers at the Seattle Times newspaper right now worked for us. We have, unfortunately, trained a lot of people who have gone elsewhere to bigger and better things. And that's fine because we are about helping people get ahead."

Responding to the question of why he chose Portland for his new soul station, Mr. Bennett said, "We own the radio station KRIZ 1420 am here in Seattle. We've had that for four years, and we've built and built from a small daytime station to a full-time, powerful metropolitan station located in the Black community. There were two properties available when we started looking at Portland. I had done some homework and saw that Portland didn't have an urban format soul station."

I saw that the masses of the people in Portland's Black community was not being served by other radio stations.

So, we looked at Portland and decided that we would put into place a 24-hour voice down here; that we would have good music, national and local news and views. We hope to be on the air within the next thirty days."

Speaking specifically to Portland's African-American community, Mr. Bennett said, "We want the community, especially the business folk there and the church community, to try and support us financially. We are putting out a tremendous amount of money, and although we are going to create some jobs there, we do need their support spiritually and financially. It's amazing that since we've put the word out, a number of folks from Portland have been calling us offering their support."

The new station will be located in downtown Portland in the old postal building at 5103rd Avenue and Washington. Mr. Bennett said, "The building was already ready for a radio station. It had been renovated for another station that didn't take it. We won't be in Vancouver anymore."

The minute we get approval, we will be moving into downtown Portland.

We are buying our tower sites. We have three towers that are

located in Northwest Portland, but the community we want to serve is in Northeast Portland. We will be shooting out 2500 watts non-directional. Our signal at night gets as far as Tacoma, Washington. We will be covering Portland, Gresham, Beaverton, Oregon City and all the surrounding towns and cities in Oregon."

A native of Waynesboro, Georgia, Mr. Bennett said he is looking forward to becoming an active member of Portland's African-American community. "We hope to be a vehicle and an outlet for young people. I understand that Portland has a bad drug scene, but somehow we've got to get in there and help get rid of it or we are going to lose an entire generation of children."

Concluding his interview, Mr. Bennett quoted African-American activist Dick Gregory: "Mr. Gregory once said that the way to communicate with the masses of Black children is through your refrigerator door and on Black radio. I can't do anything about the refrigerator, but we sure got some Black radio coming. I also want to conclude by thanking **The Portland Observer** for assisting us in some of the transitions we are doing. We come down there and might have to use the telephone or a place to hang our hats and **The Portland Observer** has been most kind. We really appreciate it because we are coming to Portland to get involved with people, and we are going to turn to the community. We need each other. Actually, I am more excited about Portland than I was about Seattle," he said with a deep laugh.

So Portland, get ready for a soul ride — a ride we hope will last into forever.

To Mr. Bennett, Mrs. Gloria Bennett and KRIS Bennett Broadcasting, Inc., we say, "Welcome to our City and to our community. May our relationship and involvement establish a legacy Oregon will never forget. Thank you for choosing to share your visions and dreams with us."

Sports

by Fred Hembry

Shaping Up For the PIL

At last, Spring is here! After all the long, hard hours of winter training and anticipation, the 1988 track season arrives. We saw some of our high school talent two months ago in the Portland Indoor. Now we will have the pleasure of seeing the rest of the talent as well.

1988 should prove to be an interesting season in PIL track. With the graduation of such standouts as Peter Prichett of Benson and Leon Lincoln, Jr., of Madison, along with several others, a noticeable void will be felt. A few teams have lost more senior greats than others, and they will be in a rebuilding mode this season. This will be a coaches year, giving the spectators a chance to see the mentors of each school program at work.

I had the opportunity to speak to a couple of the area coaches about their returning athletes as well as their undeveloped talent.

Leon McKenzie, the coach at

Benson, said that although they lost a lot of talent last year, they'll still be making a "lot of noise." Benson shouldn't have too much trouble with the likes of Walter Bailey. Walter holds the 5th best long jump for Oregon Preps. Coming into the season, Walter has a best of 23'11 1/2". He also runs a 10.6 100 and a 21.6 200.

Benson also has a sure bet in the field with Hau Nguyen, a pole-vaulter. Hau went 13'3" as a junior. He also throws a mean javelin with a best of 180 ft. Athea Williams is ranked #2 in the 200 with a mark of 24.9. She's in the top four in the 400 with 56.8. "We can run Athea in the anything from the 800 down and do well," coach McKenzie stated. With talent like this Benson is sure to do well.

Grant has depth coming into the 1988 season, much like Benson. Coach Cotton has returning powerhouses like Bill Sheppard and K.K. Waller, as well as a host of underclass talent that could fill in wherever needed. Cotton

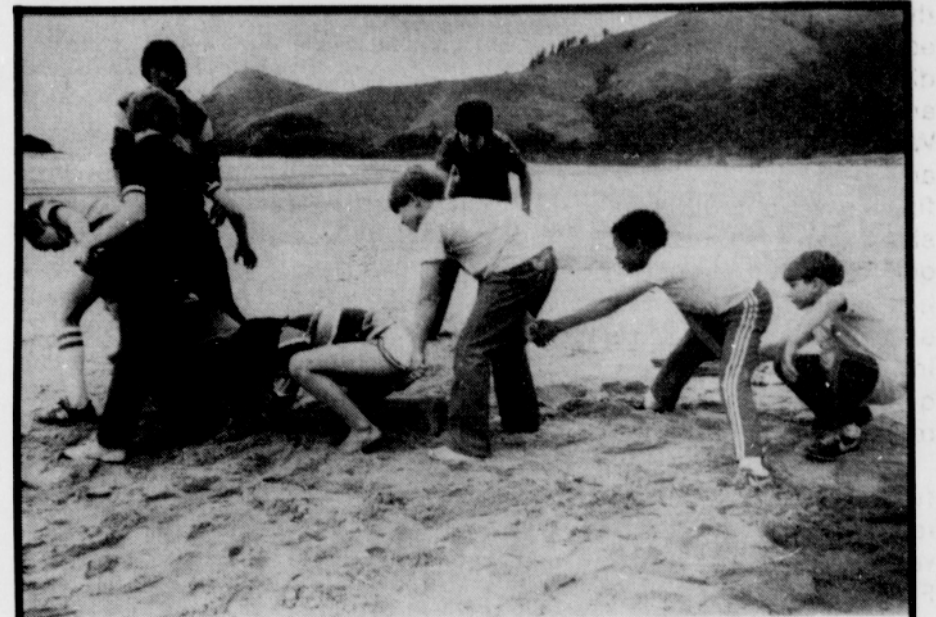
has Jeanine Macow (58.0 400m), and John Dimoff who should threaten some other athletes. Grant should be the big meet favorite this year, and could again give the state tourney a run for its money.

Madison had a great 1987 season. Unfortunately, a lot of their talent were seniors. Madison is definitely having to rebuild their program this year. They do have some talent developing that could be very threatening in a couple of years. Coach Leon Lincoln feels that "David Cauthers should emerge as one of the better distance runners in the city." David will run the 1500 up to the 3000. He also has Debbie Cantrea who should do very well in the 800.

After talking to these coaches, I feel that the spectators are in for some interesting Track & Field this season. Who will emerge on top is anyone's guess. My pick is Grant due to the returning depth Coach Cotton has, but only the next two months will tell the tale.

NIKE NW Basketball Camp

Boys and girls ages 11 through 16 are invited to sign up for the NIKE Northwest Basketball Development and Team Camp at St. Martin's College in Lacey, Washington. Boys' Camp is July 10-15 and Girls' Camp is July 17-22. Day Camper rates are \$130.00 and Overnight Camper rates are \$250.00. Group rate with eight or more players per group is \$230.00. Registration deadline is May 15, 1988. For additional information and registration, please contact: Pacific J C Basketball, P.O. Box 7106, Bellevue, Washington 98008 or call (206) 746-4016.



Nature study, arts and crafts, outdoor recreation and living skills and life skills development are among the activities for youth, teens and adults at the YWCA's scenic Camp Westwind on the Oregon coast. Twenty-five summer sessions include Youth, Ranch, Marine Science, Adventure Canoe, Family, Senior, Mother-Child, Creative Arts (for people with disabilities) and more. Call 223-6281 for more information.

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