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"The Eyes and Ears of The Community"

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"Touch Of Elegance"



Andrea Dionne Debnam



Rukaiyah Naieemah Shabazz-Adams



Vincent Lamar Watson



Janet Marie Warren

Les Femmes has chosen 22 high school seniors to be presented in their 40th Annual Debutante and Cavalier Ball, "A Touch Of Elegance."

Dedicated to improving the lives of African-American youth, while preparing them for life after high school is one goal of Les Femmes. The Portland based organization of women has developed a strict code of ethics and rigorous curriculum for the young people to follow.

To reward the participants for following the ethics code and curriculum, each senior who demonstrates academic success and service to the community will be honored in the formal ball on Sunday, June 23 at 8 pm in the Grand Ballroom of the Oregon Convention

Center. For seven consecutive weeks Les Femmes and the Portland Observer have introduced the 1991 debutantes and cavaliers. This week meet the remaining four--Andrea Dionne Debnam, Rukaiyah Naieemah Shabazz-Adams, Janet Marie Warren and Vincent Lamar Watson.

Debnam, the daughter of Chad and Mauria Debnam, is a 1991 graduate of St. Mary's Academy. While in high school, Debnam was elected to the student body Executive council while being active in the African-American club, French Club, Marians and Einstein's Relatives--a science club. Debnam is a member of St. Phillip the Deacon Church where she teaches

Sunday School. This fall she will enter University of Oregon and major in biology. After completing medical school, Debnam will be a pediatrician.

Shabazz-Adams, the daughter of Walleed Shabazz and Nobie Hill, is a 1991 graduate of The Catlin Gabel School. While in high school, Shazz-Adams was a trailblazer for African-American women at Catlin Gabel. In 1990, Shabazz-Adams was elected student body president, the first African-American female to hold that office. She is also co-founder and vice-president of Sisters Gaining Equality through Excellence and was selected princess of Oregon's first African-American festival. She will attend Carleton College in Northfield, MN and major in Physics or Education Administration.

Warren, the daughter of Emmett and Eloise Warren, is a 1991 graduate of Benson High School. At Benson, Warren exercised her leadership where she founded the school's Spirit Club and served as president. A talented graphic artist, Warren was editor of the sports and freshmen sections of the 1988 yearbook. She was also selected as the 1991 Craftsman of the Year. Warren will attend the Art Institute of Seattle to enhance her art skills. Her goal is to own an advertising agency.

Watson, the son of Clara Lafayette, is a 1991 graduate of Benson High School. Watson moved to Portland from Texarkana, Texas in his junior year. While at Benson, Watson lettered in football and track. This year Watson was selected as an alternate for the Shriners North All-Star team. He also won gold and silver medals for the mile and 400 meter relays at the Oregon 4A track and field meet. Watson attends Antioch Baptist Church. He will play football and study business administration at Portland State University in the fall.

Gregory Heights Students Win "Cool School" Video Contest



Student video participant, Ebony Sloan, says, "Stay in school no matter what people say."



Michael Grice, Advisor for Portland Public Schools Youth Council

STORY & PHOTOS BY
DEAN CAMARDA

School spirit, smiling faces and happy feet were in abundance Tuesday morning, June 11, at Gregory Heights Middle School. The occasion was to acknowledge them as the winners of the "Cool School" video contest sponsored by Foot Locker and K-Swiss shoes. The contest, open to all eighteen middle schools in the Portland district, was created to encourage students to work together as a team to communicate to the public and to one another the importance of staying in school. Using a creative mix of rap, dance and acting, the twenty-five participating students produced a video that won new athletic shoes for the entire student body, teachers and staff.

According to Sean Sloan, one of the student participants, producing the video was fun and the message is important; "It's good to stay in school, because if you go out into the street there's really nothing for you to do except the wrong things." Also on hand

for the affair was Michael Grice, advisor for the Portland Public Schools Youth Council. He thinks it is vital to reach kids before they are in high school, because by then it's often too late to help. Grice says, "The reason why this corporate-public school collaboration was such a success, was that it helped the kids to make a stay-in-school message rather than us adults trying to convince them to stay in school. We think it's very important to find ways to help more kids stay in school-if it helps ten kids do that, I think it's worth it."

The students should be proud of themselves. They earned the rewards of their earnest efforts. The ideas that went into organizing the video were entirely their own, and they worked together to produce a clear and potent message to their peers. If there was any doubt about the aim of the video, it was summed up succinctly by student, Odrick Smith, who says in the video, "Drink, drugs, gangs and violence are things that should be avoided by all youth. Wise up, stay in school."

15,000 Black Jews Return Home; Wings Over Ethiopia, Part II



Black Madonna (Virgin Mary): Her portraits and statues are found in cathedrals and museums all over Europe. This was Bartholdi's model for the STATUE OF LIBERTY.

BY PROFESSOR MCKINLEY BURT

Last week when I began this account of the 3,400 year round trip of Ethiopian Jews to their homeland in Israel, I had no idea how many of our readers would not only express a general interest in the subject--but would make an immediate connection to the black female used by the French in their original design for America's "STATUE OF LIBERTY" (see May 22 edition of the Observer, back page).

That is the reason for my choice of one of the scores of BLACK MADONNAS for this week's illustration. In many of Europe's cathedrals and museums we find paintings, statues and other religious icons that portray the Mother of Christ as an African female. This is a concept derived directly from the Biblical description of the actors who took part in the "Resurrection Play", and which was institutionalized by the 'establishment church'. There should be little wonder, then, at the choice of the

young French sculptor, Bartholdi, of an African model to celebrate the "Emancipation of the Black slaves in America". France was a predominately Catholic country and the statue of Liberty was originally a "Black Madonna".

The African presence in the Bible transcends both the Old Testament of the Hebrews and the New Testament of a developing theology. And it transcends the geographical separations of Ethiopia, Palestine, Babylon, Kush (Arabia Felix); Egypt and West Africa. But, consistently, the traditions and the literature (religious and secular) reflect a "Resurrection Theme" based upon a mother of color, as often as not a virgin, and who gave birth to a woolly-haired child. The worship of a black woman as the mother of the human race goes back to dim antiquity.

And now, scientists (paleobiologists) report after examination of man's genes throughout the world, that "LUCY, AN ANCIENT ETHIOPIAN

WOMAN IS THE MOTHER OF US ALL."

Father Fernandez, a Catholic missionary who worked among the 'Christian' Ethiopians in the 16th century said, "They depict their Gods and heroes black, and their devils and villains white. They paint Christ, the Blessed Virgin and other saints in black form; and devils and wicked men, white. Thus Christ and his apostles are black and Judas, white. Annas, Caiphas, Pilate, Herod and the Jews are white, while Michael is black, and the Devil, white" (J.A. Rogers, 100 Amazing Facts, p.100).

Now then, a very disturbing question arises about that heavily traveled route between Israel and Ethiopia--in both directions. Last week I mentioned soliciting opinions about this sudden "Ethiopian Airlift Caper" and several replies are in, including reader speculation. Many, including myself, are saying, "Wait a minute, hold the phone".

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 the African American Festival