

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Concert For Flood Relief

A flood relief concert will be held Saturday at 7 p.m. at Tualatin High School featuring a performance by John Nilsen with Jeff Leonard, Jason Moore and Dan Balmer. The event is co-sponsored by the city of Tualatin Parks and Recreation and Kids and Co. Donations of at least \$10 will be taken at the door.

Musical Talents Featured

Showtime '96, a concert that highlights the talents of the "No! Kidding! Choir" and jazz musicians Janice Scroggins and Rick McNutt will be held Thursday, April 4 at 6:30 p.m. at the Melody Ballroom, 615 S.E. Alder. The concert is dedicated to promoting cultural and music diversity.

Donor Base Help Offered

The Black United Fund offers expert help for people working with non-profit organizations to build a donor base. For information, call Artangia Presley at 282-7973.

Dax Warps To Portland

Terry Farrell, Lt. Jadzia Dax from Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, will be the guest at a Portland Star Trek convention, March 30-31, at the Portland Airport Holiday Inn, 8439 N.E. Columbia Blvd., with doors opening daily at 11 a.m. and closing at 6 p.m.

Music Millennium Recital

Flutist James Galway will present a special Portland recital with pianist Phillip Moll, Tuesday, March 26 from noon to 1 p.m. at Classical Millennium, located at 32nd and East Burnside.

Oscar Party At Mittleman

An Oscar-like party with food, decorations and festivities will be held March 30 at 6 p.m. to support the Mittleman Jewish Community Center. The fundraising event will be held at the center at 6651 S.W. Capitol Highway.

Women Volunteers Needed

Women in Community Service is recruiting women volunteers for positions as mentors for graduates of their lifeskills program. The next training session is April 13. For information, call Mary McMenamin at 280-6646, extension 251 or Claudia Delgado at 280-6640, extension 310.

Riverboat Cruise Set

A Mississippi Riverboat Gaming Cruise to benefit Community Vision, a nonprofit agency to help people with developmental disabilities, will be held Friday, March 29, leaving from Stark and Front streets aboard the Sternwheeler Columbia Gorge. Participants who beat the dealer at poker, craps and Roulette will earn changes to win vacation getaways, restaurant gift certificates, event tickets and other prizes.

SUBMISSIONS: Community Calendar information will be given priority if dated two weeks before the event date.

Designer Excels In World Market



Portland native Ramon Blackburn and his "Marquis" clothing is making its way around the world. (Photo by Pamela Jordan)

BY PAMELA JORDAN
Three years ago Ramon Blackburn had two things: a bag of self-designed T-shirts he passed out to anyone who'd have them, and a dream - to be the king of men's casual clothing.

A year-and-a-half later his fashions could be found in two Portland-area Nordstrom stores, and a few small west-coast shops.

Today the 26-year-old Portland native manages merchandise sold as far away as Chicago, New York, Sweden and Japan from his clothing store and offices in Multnomah Village.

"It feels good to see the company survive, and do as well as it's done in just 36-months," said Blackburn.

Designs for Blackburn's Marquis Ramone

line of extra-heavy-weight T-shirts, sweatshirts, rugby shirts and shorts were inspired by casual menswear giant Tommy Hilfiger. But Marquis Ramone has a unique streetwise flair that's all its own. And the extra large embroidered logos found on many of

young people are currently wearing. He also studies music videos to gauge ever changing fashion trends.

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"Our target market, the 16 to 34 year-old-male, is influenced by what celebrities are wearing. I try not only to keep on top of those trends, but to stay one step ahead."

Ramon Blackburn

Blackburn's clothes set them apart from the competition.

An avid people watcher, the Grant High School grad also gets a lot of ideas for his clothing line by keeping a close eye on what

trends, but to stay one step ahead," said Blackburn.

Hundreds of Ralph Lauren wanna-bees hound clothing store buyers with what they hope are eye-catching designs. Blackburn

was no exception. In his early days, Blackburn took his designs to clothing stores to promote his line and get feedback from salespeople.

One day while meeting a clerk for lunch, a buyer was sitting nearby. That buyer gave Blackburn his first big break, placing his items in Nordstrom's Brass Rail departments at Lloyd Center and Washington Square.

"You'd be amazed at how many people comb buyers with their designs," said former Nordstrom buyer Shane Morris. "But Ramon was more persistent and more passionate than the other designers who come in. He kept coming back, he's had direction and he's focused."

Blackburn's oversized fashions are made by a Portland apparel manufacturer. General sales manager Don Thompson thinks Blackburn's soft-spoken manner, and baby-faced looks disguise a hustle and tenacity rare in someone his age.

"Blackburn is willing to listen and learn," said Thompson. "His patience is a key factor in his success so far."

Thompson, who also works with large companies including Nike, Land's End and L.L. Bean, plays an important role in guiding the young entrepreneur. Together Thompson, Blackburn, and Jerry Manns, Matquis' color coordinator, meet in the company "war-room," selecting color schemes for the upcoming seasons.

"War room discussions can get pretty heated. Sometimes we disagree, but Ramon's willingness to work with us is why he's doing well."

Blackburn thinks this "war-room" strategy has been successful so far, but he admits his love of wide ranging colors have led to some poor choices.

"One fall we used some unusual browns, and a plum we couldn't get rid of," said Blackburn. "We had a hard time moving it."

Blackburn's older brother, Anthony, is president and business manager of Marquis Ramone. He sees his role as more than keeping track of the books. His job is to free up his younger brother to be creative.

"Without Ramone's creativity, we wouldn't be where we're at today," said Anthony Blackburn. "My job is to guard

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Durham Sees Success In Construction



Workers for Durham Construction are building new homes in the King neighborhood on Northeast Roselawn.

Edward T. Durham Jr. is not your ordinary contractor. He is as enterprising as he's dexterous. And because of his high driven energy, he's never failed in his endeavors.

At age 9, Durham was selling hot dogs in the street of Boston, Mass. And at age 11, he had his hands on fixing bikes for area children.

Today, Durham 38, owns one of the few successful minority-owned construction companies - Durham Northwest Industries, Inc.

Moved by opportunities that abound in the Portland construction arena, Durham left Boston 18 months ago to settle in Portland.

He had a stint with his brother in

construction management and after six months veered out to start his own business.

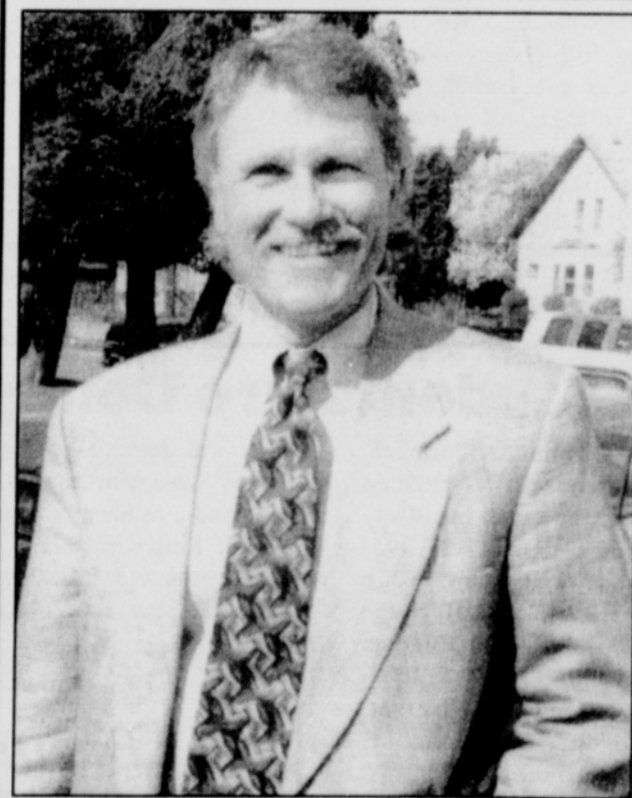
Durham, Inc., is responsible for building over 24 housing units in partnership with area developers.

"The key to it is to deliver," Durham said. "I don't whine. I get the job done, that's why my business is getting bigger everyday."

The local contractor is a bonded and insured business, located at 317 N.E. Killingsworth.

"A lot of people are concerned with failures and I don't have those feelings," said Durham.

So when next you need a hand to take care of your construction needs, contact Durham, Inc. at (503) 319-0821.



Gov. John Kitzhaber stopped at the offices of the Portland Observer Friday to discuss business and community concerns.



Elyse Clawson, director of Oregon Juvenile Justice Services, police chief Charles Moose (left) and Bishop A.A. Wells assemble to open a new center for juvenile offenders at the Mallory Avenue Church in northeast Portland.