

Annual Benefit Walk

On Saturday, May 4, Portland Habitat for Humanity will team up with seventeen Portland non-profit organizations for the fourth annual Walk for Humanity. This year's celebrity hosts are Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury, KATU's Leah Hope, KOIN's Ken Boddie, KGW's Brenda Braxton and KPTV's Lars Larson.

Portland Habitat, a non-profit housing organization, will host the five mile pledge-walk which showcases the work being done in northeast by non-profit organizations. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. at Alberta Park at NE 19th and Killingsworth. The Walk will begin with a police escorted parade down Killingsworth and end back at Alberta Park with a barbecue and community fair.

"We have been overwhelmed by the excitement generated by the community and media for this year's Walk," said Doreen Roozee, Associate Director of Habitat for Humanity. "The excitement and enthusiasm should lead to a record number of participants and pledges raised."

Over 1,000 participants are expected to attend with \$75,000 raised in pledges and matching grants to benefit all participating organizations. The Fannie Mae Foundation, the lead sponsor for the Walk, made a significant contribution to the matching grant fund with additional support coming from First Interstate Bank. Other Walk sponsors include Nike, KISN 97.1 FM and SUNNY 910 AM.

Walk proceeds will benefit 18 non-profit organizations.

The Theory Of The Black Middle-Class

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

When I first mentioned to a group of friends that this was to be the title of a forthcoming article, the first suggestion was that I substitute "Myth" for the term "theory." But I successfully argued that everyone present had long-entertained the notion that such a 'population' existed; they simply couldn't agree on the proper parameters or measurable characteristics of this nebulous group of black citizens.

The ensuing and rather agitated conversations brought out the fact that recent media headlines, critical analyses by syndicated columnists, and in-depth (?) studies by the weekly news magazines have all leaped upon the subject of this 'real-or-fancied' black middle-class. The piece most frequently discussed is that appearing in the current issue of the New Yorker magazine, "Blacks In America"; a survey conducted by

Yankelovich Partners Inc. (Sounds Par for the course).

One of our coffee shop groups noted that my choice of a title for this article seemed to be a take-off on a very famous book written over a hundred years ago by an economist and social critic, Thorstein Veblen. The foreword of its zillionth reprinting emphasizes that his insights hold as well for today's materialistic culture as for last century.

This 'note' goes on to describe Veblen's tour de force as "a biting commentary on American culture. In his examination of an American working class that aspired to a leisure class, Veblen identified the forces behind 'consumerism', coining such terms as 'conspicuous consumption' and 'pecuniary emulation.'" All these trends and forces, of course, are about spending what you can't afford in order to 'appear what you ain't'.

But is Veblen's model a suitable frame of reference for making the case for a "Black-Middle-class", and if we do determine that there actually is such a creature, what about the selection of valid parameters. Here, let us go back to statistics 101 and simply define a parameter as "one measurable statistic of a population." And of course the most natural and easily available measure is income; A statistic easily correspondable to the general demographics of education housing, age, lifestyle, etc.

According to this referral there surely must be a great and growing black middle-class; the census and the Bureau of Labor statistics tell us so. And if we are concerned that the data is skewed by those high-salaried athletes and entertainers, then-enough of us have gotten to college to know what to do if data contains a 'few' observations that are either very large or very small compared

with the other values. We go for the "median" instead of the mean, and don't get carried away with the Ebony and Jet scenario.

An observation that I can personally attest to is that there is a growing maturity in style and manner in the black middle-class that is not-so-new and unaccustomed anymore. What a change since 1956 when I was the accountant for the Los Angeles Mecca Mortgage Company which was financing those plush homes in Baldwin Hills for the newly-upward bound black executives, engineers, lawyers and administrators. The new mansions came equipped with swimming pools, tennis courts, two or three mortgages or trust deeds and ulcers.

Surviving this, the brethren and their children now face a precarious economic existence, a financial musical chairs of disappearing mid-level

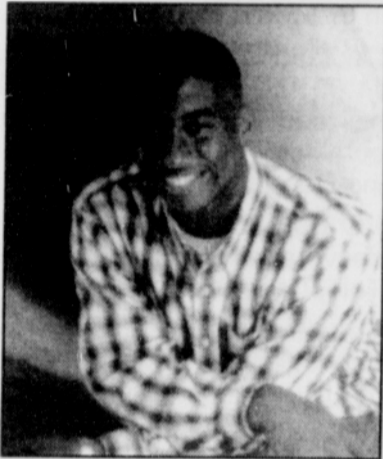
job slots. See the following:

"The End of Work: the Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era." Jeremy Rifkin "Pensions In Crisis: Why the System is Failing America and How You Can Protect your Future." Ferguson & Blackwell "The Retirement Myth", Karper, Harper Collins pb.) (will be out in May).

And Bradley K. Googins, founder-director of the Boston University Center on 'Work and Family' has the following widely-used publications to his credit (Prof. at Boston U. School of Social Work). A. "Balancing Jobs and Home Life: Changes Over Time In A Corp." B. "Work/Family Conflicts: Private Lives, Public Responses" C. "Linking The Worlds Of Family and Work: Family Dependent Care and Worker Performance".

Continued Next Week

OUTSTANDING SENIORS



Hasan Jahi Artharee

Hasan Jahi Artharee is the son of Baruti and Bernadette Artharee is a 1996 graduate of Central Catholic High School and has earned a full division I basketball scholarship to Portland State University.

Hasan played soccer baseball,

football and basketball. Captain of his basketball team, was recognized by USA today as a member of the All USA Team and named "High School Player of the Week" by KFSS radio. He is a member of Mt Olivet Baptist Church and has volunteered with St. Joseph's Nursing Home, Negro College Fund walk-a-thons and as a day camp coach.

Rakeem Washington

Rakeem Washington, son of Charles and Elizabeth Washington, is a 1996 graduate of Benson High School and has earned a 3.2 grade point average.

The Future communications major has been a three time letterman in baseball and played varsity basketball. He plans to attend the University of San Francisco.

The Portland Observer is recognizing outstanding seniors graduating from area high schools. Anyone who knows a col-



lege-bound senior who will graduate in 1996 and has an outstanding record in academics, community service or athletics please submit a photograph and the senior's name, school, parent(s), activities and achievements and college and goals to the Observer.

Community Law Week

Over the past year, legal issues and high profile trials have figured prominently in the daily news and captured the nation's attention. While events like the O.J. Simpson trial have certainly raised public awareness of our system of law and justice, it is vitally important that citizens have information regarding their own individual rights and responsibilities, the legal profession, and the ways in which our legal system impacts upon their daily lives.

Community Law Week is an annual event that affords citizens the

rights and responsibilities, the legal profession, and the ways in which our legal system impacts upon their daily lives.

Community Law Week is an annual event that affords citizens the opportunity to gain practical knowledge on legal issues affecting their lives in a

board range of areas-- landlord/tenant relations, family law, and the criminal justice system, to name just a few. Community Law Week events also provide information on the availability of free or low-cost legal services available to citizens in the Portland area.

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All workgroup meetings will be held Thursdays at noon at Metro in Room 370, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland. Please bring your own lunch; coffee will be provided.

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