

# METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

## Community Calendar

### Greater Portland Flute Society Northwest Composers' Concert

Saturday, March 15, at 8 PM at Lincoln Hall. (Room 75) Portland State University. Admission is only \$5 GPFS Member/\$8 Non-members.

### Are you suffering from shortness of breath?

If you worked and had eight to ten years or more of exposure to Asbestos before 1973 and reside in Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington and/or Texas, you have approximately 90 days to report in for your free screening.

Dave Worthington, Asbestos Investigator, 2205 N. Lombard, Room 103, Portland, OR 97217. Monday - Friday 9-4:30 pm.

### Parents of Children With Asthma and Allergies

Parents of Children with Asthma and Allergies Support Group will meet Monday evening, March 17, 7 p.m. at Lake Oswego Baptist Church, 4565 SW Carman Drive, Room 254 (corner of Carman Drive & Kruseway-- Route 217 becomes Kruseway). Please call 579-8375 to RSVP.

### "Speaking of Art" lecture

Pacific Northwest College of Art's "Speaking of Art" lecture series now is taking place on Tuesdays at noon. The location for "Speaking of Art" remains the Berg Swann Auditorium, 1219 S.W. Park Ave.

The exciting lectures for March and April are as follows:

- **March 11** - Horatio Law, Portland Printmaker and PNCA professor.
- **March 18** - "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision," film.
- **March 25 & April 2** - Spring Break.
- **April 9** - Special "Art Without Class" event.

• **April 16** - Tom Prochaska, Portland Printmaker, painter and PNCA professor.

For more information about PNCA, please call (503) 226-4391.

### A Comedy of Errors

Mt. Hood Community College will host *A Comedy of Errors*, by William Shakespeare at 8:00 pm, March 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, & 15 in the Main Theatre. \$6 general admission, \$4 students/seniors. Call the Box office at 667-7154. For information call 667-7157 or 669-6969.

### PCC Celebrates Women's History Month in March

"Girls' Town". Friday, March 7, 7 p.m., CT Bldg., Little Theater. "Beyond Borders" Tuesday, March 11, 11 a.m. to 12:20 p.m., SS Bldg., Rm. 102

### Free meditation instructions

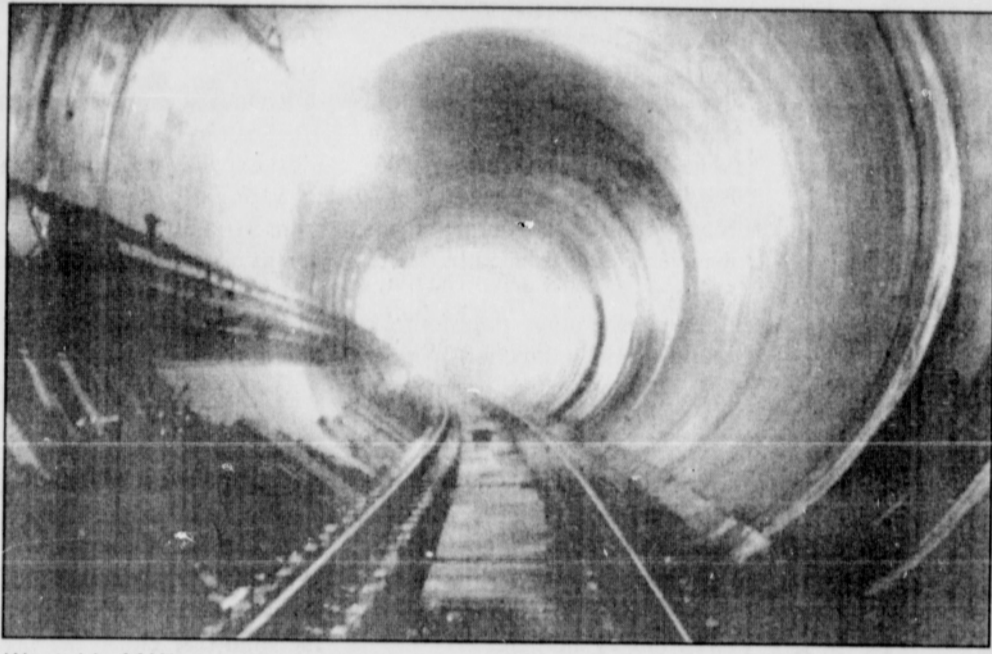
Authorized representatives of Sant Thakar Singh will be offering a free program which includes instructions for the inner Light and Sound meditation. This process, which brings inner peace, can be learned by young and old alike regardless of faith, religion or lifestyle. Saturday, March 8th 1PM. Room 102 Building 3; PCC Rock Creek Campus: 17705 NW Springville Rd. Portland. For any questions call 541-459-5647

### Tri-Met

Tri-Met job fairs to recruit part-time bus operators, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Center Street Garage, 4012 SE 17th Ave. in Portland, and Merlo Garage, 16130 SW Merlo Road in Beaverton. Wages start at \$9.07 and progress to \$16.49 within three years. For information on applying in person at Tri-Met, or receiving a job application by mail, call 238-4835.

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

## MAX Light rail access expanding



Westside MAX crews are nearing the two-mile mark as they install rail in one of the two three-mile-long light rail tunnels (above, left) through Portland's West Hills. Rail installation in the tunnel is a five-step process that begins with placing concrete blocks to hold the rail. Working in the westbound tunnel since mid-January, nearly 10,000 feet of rail has been bolted onto the concrete blocks. Crews expect to have rail the whole length of the tunnel by the end of February. The remaining installation will take place this summer. Max tracks are also spreading West to NW 231st (above right). Behind Intel's Hawthorne Farm facility on Elam Young Parkway in Hillsboro, light rail crews work with crowbars to finesse westbound track into place. Nearly one-and-one half miles of eastbound MAX track is installed between SW 185th and NW 231st. Work is continuing on the westbound track.

## Work Force Training anticipated

BY NEIL HEILPERN

**C**urrently employed workers in North Portland may have greater access to skills training if the legislature approves a proposed bill to provide funding and tax incentives to businesses which join the program.

Dubbed "The Oregon Labor and Industry Training Act," the bill would create a program that promotes employer-based skill training and education of currently employed workers from funds that come from a variety of sources.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Cynthia Wooten (D-Eugene), is expected to be introduced this week, according to Portland consultant Chris Apgar, who assisted Wooten in preparing the proposed legislation. He said it had not yet been determined whether the bill would be introduced first in the House or the Senate.

"This will open a larger market for jobs in Northeast Portland as well as the rest of Oregon," said Apgar.

He noted that at least one third of the approved contract funds would be used to

train workers in businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

"If you work at a company with 25 employees and the company doesn't have the money to send workers to a specific training that will help increase skill levels," said Apgar, "this fund would pay for the training."

"It would also pay the wages of the replacement workers while the regular workers are taking time off for the training." "This means having better skilled work and a higher retention rate," said Apgar. "If people know they can get training they might stick around a work place a little longer."

"As an example, turnaround is a problem in the health care industry," he said, noting that smaller assisted living health organizations could train their workers under this plan.

He also listed Freightliner and the Oregon Food Bank as organizations in Northeast Portland which could be included in the training, as part of the Oregon Employer Council.

Apgar said that during recent talks with

Ron Young, employment relations manager for Freightliner's truck division in northeast Portland, "He expressed support for the program that includes training for the current work force."

Other areas of expected support, he said, include long term care facilities, food processors who seem to like the literacy training aspects of the program, and other groups. He said temporary help agency Brooks & Associates in North Portland had indicated support, in addition to their presence on the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council.

Apgar said he was enthusiastic about discussions with organized labor leaders noting that the AFL-CIO "has been supportive in the past." He is planning further talks with AFL-CIO President Irv Fletcher in the near future.

Some of the funding would be available for unions to create new training packages and current training programs would not be displaced by the new funding, he said.

One important element, said Apgar, is a literacy component which would be targeted

"for areas such as North and Northeast Portland."

"We want to encourage employers to provide adult training education for their employees," he said. "After the employers show proof they provided the training, the following year they would get a tax break -- reduced state unemployment taxes."

An important part of the proposed legislation is skill set development, said Apgar. "This includes developing training packages for high tech industries, including specific skills such as statistics and accounting, certified nurses aides and other practical applications."

Apgar said that small businesses do not usually have the funds to provide training for specific workers. A company could receive a maximum of \$5,000 to train a worker.

"This bill would provide funding for a consortium of several small businesses in Northeast Portland to provide training for a specific skill for people from each of the businesses," he said. "The businesses could

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## Charity auction to benefit area kids

**P**ortland, OR - On March 8, attendees at the Boys & Girls Club's Kids Auction will have a "golden opportunity" to support Portland-area youth.

Billed as "Your Golden Opportunity to Help Kids," the 13th annual black-tie gala

will be held at The Portland Hilton Hotel and will feature a silent auction beginning at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and oral auction.

The state's single largest charity auction netted \$360,000 in 1996 and is expected to draw record dollar figures once again.

Among the more than 1700 auction items are a trip to view the taping of a "Seinfeld" episode, and original John Lennon painting and a classic '49 Chevy 1/2 ton pick-up.

Also included in the auction block are a variety of vacations from the Wallowa Mountains to Hawaii and France, plus premier

sports events such as USTA tennis at the 1997 U.S. Open and the NHRA Drag Races to Major League Baseball's 1997 All-Star Game.

For reservation, call the Boys & Girls Clubs of Portland Metropolitan Area at (503) 232-0077.

## County Acts to Increase Diversity

**M**ultnomah County Commissioners have finalized changes in purchasing rules to increase the diversity of contractors utilized by the County. The rule changes represent a portion of the County's response to the recent Regional Disparity Study which identified substantial underutilization of minority and women's business enterprises.

"I am very pleased that we can move forward to provide opportunities for businesses that have not always been treated fairly," said Multnomah County Chair Beverly Stein. "These new rules should help to increase the diversity of contractors who get business from the County."

The rules changes focus on public improvement and architectural and engineering contracts with a dollar value under \$50,000. Those contracts will be awarded under an "informal" system. County staff will be required to solicit quotes from state certified firms, get one bid from a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), one from a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) and one from an Emerging Small Business (ESB).

Exceptions would be made for contracts where no contractors meeting the criteria were available to do the needed work.

The focus on small contracts was recommended by the Oregon Regional Consortium Disparity Study. The study found that the diversity of available contractors was greatest for smaller contracts.

The Disparity Study was funded by Multnomah County, the City of Portland, Metro and seven other local government agencies. It examined public construction contracting practices for the period 1991-1994 and determined that M/WBEs were underutilized. At the same time, Multnomah County conducted a review of contracting in areas other than construction and found similar underutilization. The County is in the initial phase of addressing the underutilization in the non-construction contracting areas.

"This is just one of many steps that we need to take to fight the effects of historic discrimination," Stein said. "We have made great strides in increasing the diversity of the County workforce, but we are still behind in the areas of contracting."

Reports on County workforce diversity find

that the County has a larger representation of racial minority workers than any other government in the State and that the composition of the workforce mirrors the diversity of the community. However, recent tallies of contractor diversity show very low numbers.

In addition to the change in purchasing rules the County has recently undertaken several steps on increase contracting opportunities. It now distributes a list of all state certified M/WBEs and ESBs to all County employees who do purchasing. The County operates a contracting hotline jointly with Metro and provides information on contracting opportunities via the internet and by fax to potential contractors.

The County is in the planning stages of developing a sheltered market program for contracts over \$50,000 in conjunction with the City of Portland and creating the position of Compliance Officer to monitor efforts in increase contractor diversity. Those programs will be considered by the Board of County Commissioners when they adopt the budget for the coming fiscal year. The new purchasing rules will take effect March 31, 1997.

## Labor Party leader to speak in Portland

Adolph Reed, a member of the new Labor Party's National Council, and Contributing Editor to its national journal, Labor Party Press, will speak in Portland Sunday, March 9 and Monday, March 10. The Sunday speech, "Rebuilding Working-Class Movements" will be at: Koinonia House, 633 SW Montgomery (by PSU), 7 pm

On Monday Mr. Reed will speak on "Gender in Afro-American Political Thought", at Reed College from their press office, which will be at Vollum Lecture Hall at 7 pm. Mr. Reed will be available for questions after each speech, as well as at home in Chicago at (773) 947-0327 Fax (773)947-0328.

Mr. Reed is a professor of political science and American studies at Northwestern University in Chicago, IL. He is an African-American, an author of many books and articles, including *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon* (1986), and the forthcoming *W.E.B. Dubois and American Political Thought*. He writes a monthly column for *The Progressive* magazine.