

EMO Community Celebration Set For February 4

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon will celebrate the people and ministry of ecumenism in Oregon — including the installation of new president Charles Jordan — at its annual community celebration Thursday, Feb. 4, at Valley Community Presbyterian Church, 8060 SW Brentwood, Portland.

The celebration will include an ecumenical prayer service at 6 p.m., with dinner and awards to follow at 7 p.m.

Member of Oregon's church, civic and service communities and EMO supporters are invited to celebrate the theological dialogue and education, community ministry, and public policy advocacy that define EMO's mission. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations including Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox bodies committed to unity, justice and improving the quality of life for all Oregonians.

Tickets for EMO's Celebration and Awards Dinner are available from the EMO office for \$25 each. For information or reservations call (503) 221-1054.



Charles Jordan

A Deeper Meaning For Black History Month

By Prof. McKinley Burt

The celebration of Black History Month has become a venerable, inspiring and motivating tradition in the African American community. A particularly meaningful consequence has been an expansion far beyond any demographic limitations that could have been anticipated.

This year as we approach the Millennium, the social, economic and political significance may be the most important to date. But that is what I say every year when preparing an introductory note for the proud celebration almost at hand. And certainly the Portland Observer staff has demonstrated its ability to stay on task for every edition.

It has been said that certain truths are "self-evident", and we offer as our 'evidence' the dedicated performances just cited. Also, we find that in consequence of an early alarm, individuals and organizations in the community did indeed intensify their efforts — with an unbelievable energy.

Deep concerns had been expressed and among them the following warning: "There is an increasing perception that a number of African Americans are beginning to accept and celebrate Black History Month as though it were just an enjoyable, periodic event-like Spring Break or a natural phenomenon like the equinox." That did not happen and we would like to take a modest amount of the credit.

We were fortunate that for years our staff and our community always could depend on the boundless energy and commitment of the publisher, the late Joyce Washington. She held a perception-and left a tradition-that the world of African Americans extends far beyond any conventional restraints that might be imposed from within or without the immediate community.

Those of us who write for the Portland Observer or have contributed to its pages appreciate the validity and authenticity this paper has lent our expressions. Consequently the reading audience frequently is exposed to controversial, but well-documented essays and research that

relate to African American history (among other things).

It is ever so critical in this volatile era in the politics of race and identity, that minorities have a 'leg up' in the information game. What seemed shockingly controversial when first appearing in the Portland Observer a decade ago, is now presented as 'documented' fact on the cable "History Channel". How many times have I had a teacher or student call with the information that major American technology innovated by a black inventor — as I reported in this paper many years earlier — was now part of the lesson plan in many schools (and the 'establishment' newspaper follows these leads).

As said earlier, it is critical to the survival and progress of minorities that they stay ahead of the game, a "leg up" as it is put. African Americans as well as their friends in other communities can depend upon this paper to deliver an honest, unflinching and accurate news and data base — the kind that facilitate wise decision-making in racial matters. An antidote to the often banal and mean-spirited utterances of those too embittered to reason — or those too weak to protest evil.

This past December it was reported that Oregon's draft history standards were a cause for concern among the state's history teachers. And the standards proved to be an equal cause for concern among a good number of African American

parents. Those who called or came to my house voiced their disbelief that, after the expenditure of so much money (millions) on such minority history projects as the "African American Baseline Essays," there was such a little to show (Scott Learn's article, The Oregonian for Dec. 23, 1998). Several indignant parents had photocopies of the deeply-structured material I had prepared for the school district in early 1984 and others videotapes of a 1984 hour-long presentation on "Black Inventors" that I did for Cable TV. (Forget that I wrote a widely acclaimed book on the subject; first edition, 1969).

Surely a "deeper meaning" and need for Black History Month is indicated when we are faced with a controlling establishment whose determined stance is exactly that of "Humpty Dumpty" in the famed 'Alice In Wonderland series', "Things are what I say they are."

Nothing could be any clearer than that, no matter how many high-priced consulting firms are brought in to 'calm the natives'. While African Americans are especially proud of having forged the standard for racial protest in America — with their blood, marches, sermon and song — they remember that there also are other minorities trying to carve out a cultural space in this land. Dr. King said... "all God's children." Indeed, our history needs to be a year-round agenda.

Litter Pick Up Event!

Volunteers will be picking up litter on NE Alberta Street as part of the Litter Free Alberta Campaign from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Volunteers will meet at Sabin CDC at 1488 NE Alberta St. (corner of 15th & Alberta) at 10a.m. Gloves, trash bags, and refreshments will be provided.

For more information please call Emily at Sabin CDC at 287-3496. Please print this announcement in you community event/volunteer opportunity section. Thank you very much!

Check out our The Portland Observer Web-site!
<http://PortlandObserver.net>

A Century of African-American Arts



I'll Make Me a World

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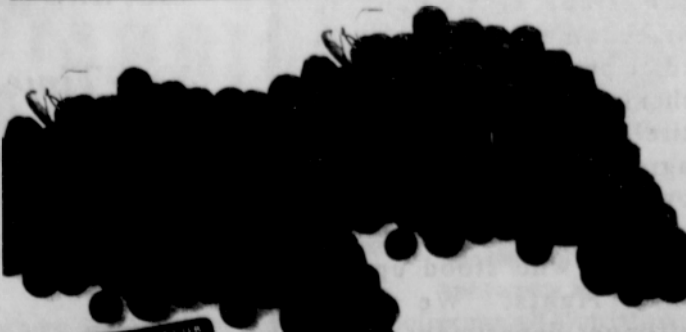
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