

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Back II School Jam

The NAACP Youth Council and Youth & Arts Achievement Program presents the Back II School Jam. This is for the high school and college crowd. The event will be DJ'd by Mark Mack from Jammin 95.5 and will be held at the Alberta St. Station, 1829 NE Alberta St. on Friday, September 10th from 8PM until Midnight. Price is \$7. Pre-purchase of tickets will be at Armoni's and Galore Paging. It's gonna be off the hook!

Interstate Max Forum

There will be a two-day interactive mini-conference on Friday, September 24 from 6:30PM to 9PM and on Saturday, September 25, from 9AM to noon at the Ockley Green Middle School, 6031 N. Montana (Tri-Met bus 5). The conference will cover the same topics as Community Forum 1 but with updated information. The forum will conclude with a wrap-up session to tie together ideas and suggestions from the two forums. Free childcare available.

The Disco Ball

Once again it's time to shake your booty, flash the polyester and stomp those platform shoes! Join the Lotus and Z100 Sunday, September 5th for the biggest Outdoor disco party under the stars! The entire parking lot behind the Lotus is transformed into a giant disco tech. Equipped with three full bars and Bar BQ food. "Satin Live Orchestra" will be performing live. The party starts in high gear at 9 PM, band starts at 10:30 PM.

Oregon Stamp Show

A Show for Postage Stamp Collectors will be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, September 17-18 & 19 at M.G. Maison Armory, 6700 SW Oak Street, Tigard, Oregon 97223. This three-day show features leading West Coast stamp dealers and their extensive, collectible postage stamp inventories. Rare postage stamps and postal history of the United States and foreign countries will be displayed. For further information, call Steve Crippe at 425/487-2789.

Off-Leash Areas

Portland Parks & Recreation will be holding a public hearing on Off-Leash areas in Portland's Parks. The public hearings are to get input from members of the community on this issue. The next two meetings will be on Wednesday, September 15, 6:30-8:30PM at the Portland Building, Room C and Saturday, September 18, 9AM - Noon at Warner Pacific College, Egtvedt Room. For more information, please call 823-5457.

Legs for Life

Portland/Vancouver-area healthcare systems will conduct free screenings for people who are suffering leg pain to determine if they are at risk for a common condition known as Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD). The screenings are set for September 14 to 25. Anyone suffering from leg pain or other PVD symptoms is invited to attend a free screening at a site convenient to them. For further information about making a screening appointment (required) and about individual site dates, times and addresses, call 503/833-3727.

Conflict Resolution & Violence Prevention

Oregon Peace Institute will offer a workshop on "The Use of Art in Conflict Resolution and Violence Prevention" facilitated by Rebecca Singer, the Executive Director of Artrageous, on Thursday, September 23, 1999 from 6:30-9 PM at the First United Methodist Church in Room 160, 1838 SW Jefferson Street, Portland. Please register by calling OPI: 503/725-8292. A \$10 donation would be appreciated.

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

Former Jefferson Dancer Takes 'Center Stage' As Program's New Artistic Director

PORTLAND, OR, August 23, 1999 — Dancing barefoot and moving to a fresh new beat, Steve Gonzales is poised to bring innovation and excitement to the Jefferson Dancers, Jefferson High School's celebrated dance company.

Jefferson's new artistic director knows how to capture youthful energy and put it center stage. He's done it before — 15 years ago, as a student — when he was a Jefferson Dancer.

The New York University graduate, who begins working with Jefferson students when school opens this year, has worked as a professional dancer and choreographer for the past five years. As a dancer for MOMIX, an international dance company based in New York, he has performed around the world. He also has experience teaching master dance classes to students of all ages.

The opportunity to rejoin the company where he took his first dance steps proved irresistible to Gonzales.

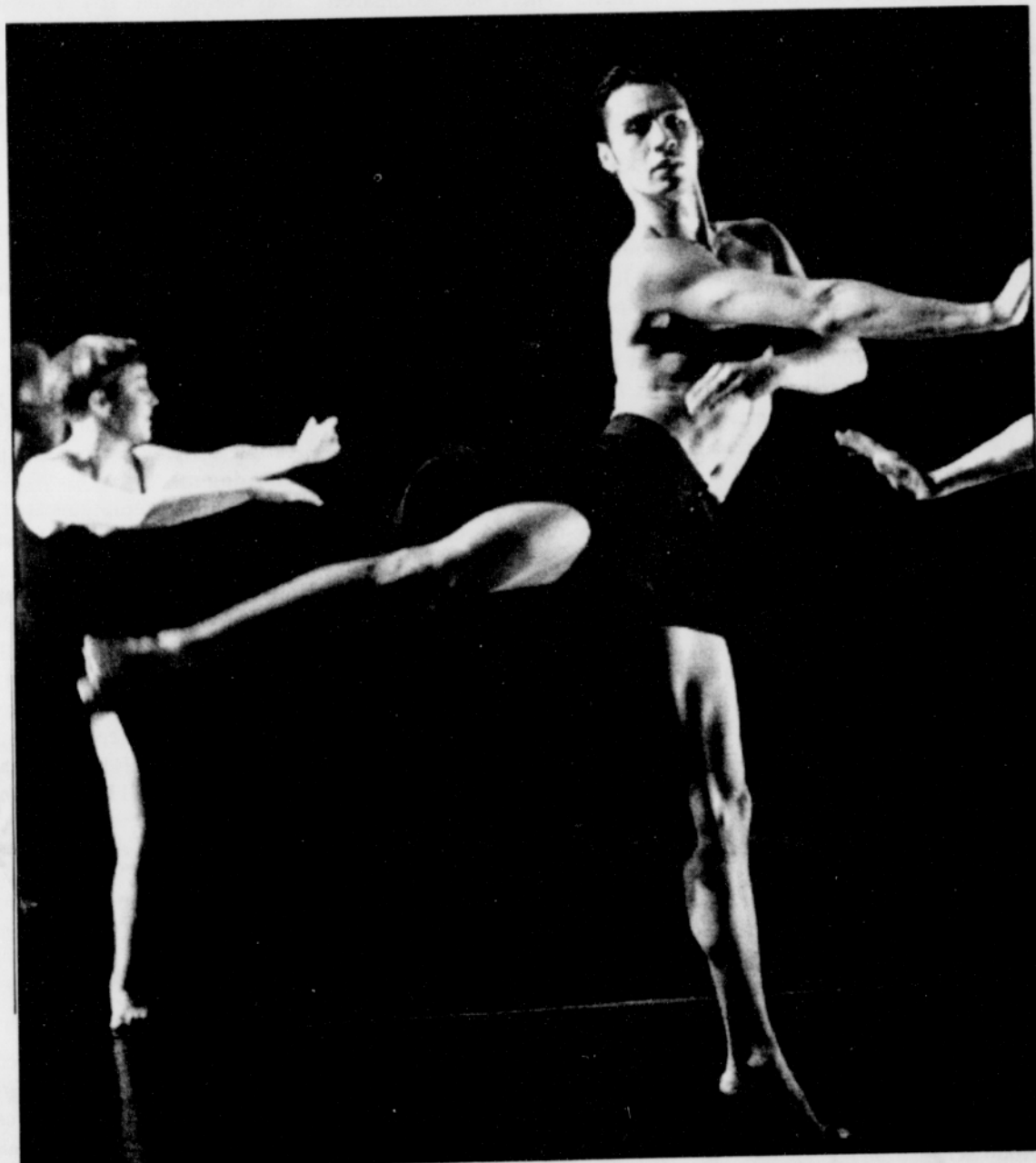
"The Jefferson Dancers made such an impact on my life," says this youngest of nine children, who was the first in his family to graduate from high school. "Dancing in the company gave me self-esteem and helped me overcome some of the obstacles I had to face."

Portland Public Schools Supt. Ben Canada says that, "The hiring of a proven professional like Steve Gonzales shows this district's ongoing commitment to the Jefferson Dancers, and to all of the

arts programs in our schools. I'm a firm believer in the power of the arts to stir children's imaginations, build their confidence, and help them develop the skills they need to make their dreams a reality. Steve is a perfect example of how those dreams can come true."

The Jefferson Dancers have earned national recognition for artistic innovation and professionalism since the program began 25 years ago. Gonzales hopes to "boost the performance level up a notch, drawing on the strengths of our students to develop an even better product," he says.

"Coming from New York City, where hundreds of dance companies co-exist, I know that the more dance companies there are, the better," Gonzales says. He plans to incorporate ideas from his professional career - props, innovative lighting, "lots more to look at" - in upcoming productions for the Jefferson Dancers.



National Summit of Mental Health Consumers and Survivors

BY YEMA MEASHO

Forming a united national voice was the point of discussion at last week's four day long National Summit of Mental Health Consumers and Survivors held in Portland. Funded by several state and county governments, the summit accommodated over 450 consumers and survivors that came across the nation to talk about how they can come together to influence mental health policies both in their local communities and the national level.

Organizers believe the summit will give them the opportunity to develop action plans for issues that can become the basis for the national platform of collective voice of consumers and survivors.

"The summit was devised as an opportunity for a big brainstorming session to bring the best minds together for four intense, creative days and focus them on the issues affecting the consumer survivor movement," said Joseph A. Rogers, executive director of the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse. "We want the summit to be the kick-off of a significant dialogue that consumers can continue at various national meetings."

In a joint effort with the clearinghouse, Oregon's Office of Consumer Technical Assistance (OCTA), a consumer-run organization providing technical assistance to consumers and providers of mental health services statewide, campaigned to bring the summit to Oregon.

In order to develop a system which is more responsive, more humane and ultimately more economically efficient, says Kevin Fitts, director of OCTA, the consumer's voice should be the guiding light to bring about changes in the system.

"In many other areas of commerce, the producers of the product or service go to great lengths to investigate what it is customers want and sell that to them," said Fitts. "However, with public health care in America, it has been what you get is what they serve you and that should change. The people, the users, the consumers and the recipient of that service should be able to direct that change."

The Clearinghouse developed 12 major planks addressing issues ranging from advocacy to organizing and financing, force and coercion treatments to alternatives and traditional mental health services, to multicultural issues and community support.

For many attendees, the national summit was an opportunity to voice their concern about what has been done to accommodate their needs in their communities.

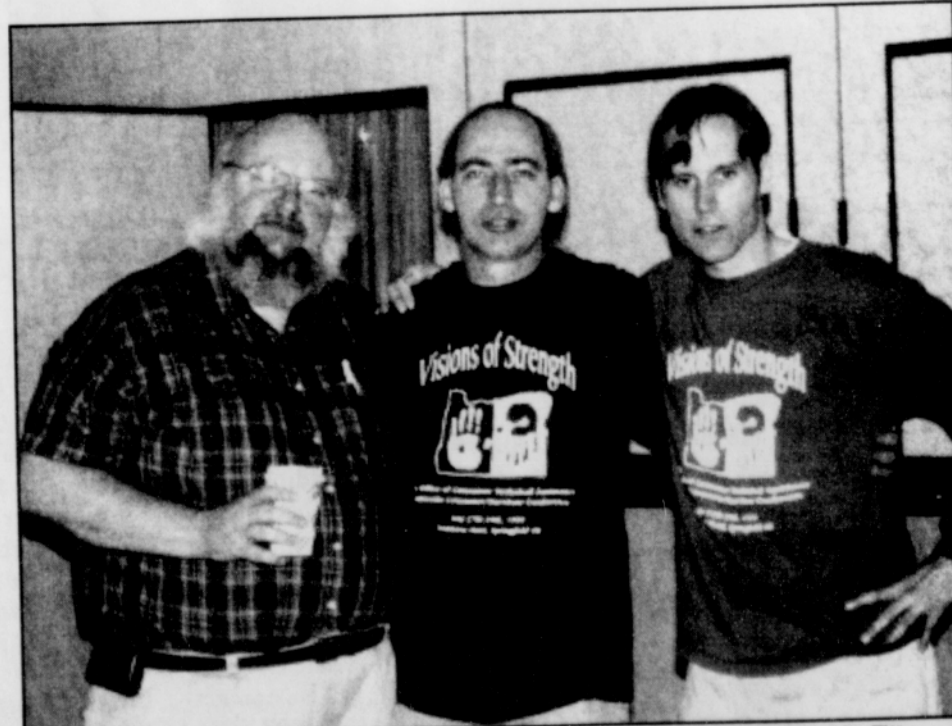
"Minorities are very poorly represented," said Lillian Roberts of Vancouver, Washington. "If we want service, it is like pulling teeth."

A Native American and mental health consumer herself, Roberts attended the multicultural issue plank and participated in drafting the action plan for the cultural diversity plank.

"During our discussion, some issues have been brought to the table that nobody has spoken of before," said Roberts.

Some have compared the mental health consumers and survivors movement to the civil rights movement and the gay and lesbian movement.

"This is a civil rights movement to talk about how we can take our lives and take back our health care," said Fitts. "This is a struggle similar to the civil rights movement where mental health



Joseph A. Rogers of Clearinghouse (left), Kevin Childs (center) and Kevin Fitts (right) were part of the Portland summit mental health to create a national platform.

Photo by Yema Measho

and psychiatric patients are treated as second class citizens and when they do speak their voice is not respected."

Although the controversial bill of force and coercion passed this legislative session in New York, the issue of forced treatment remained one of the planks that interested attendees.

"When the system uses force or coercion and mandates treatments, I think it comes as a response to a system that is broken and does not meet people's needs," said Fitts.

"I was impressed by the heart and soul of the group that convened for the na-

tional summit," said Scott Snedecor, consumer networking coordinator of OCTA. "The work we started at this conference will provide us with the momentum to continue as a voice for human rights."

Working hand-in-hand with the Clearinghouse, OCTA will compile the information that will become the national platform. If you are interested in getting the copy of the publication or identify as consumer or survivor and would like your voice to be heard, contact OCTA at 503/231-3052 or check out their website at www.orocata.org