

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

A Day at the Fair

The Leadership Development program at Portland State University, in partnership with organizations such as the Black United Fund, Albina Ministerial Alliance, Center for Community Mental Health, and the Urban League, is organizing a community fair to bring together Portland's North/Northeast residents and connect them with nonprofit organizations that help to build healthy and successful futures. The event will be on June 3, from 10 am.- 2 pm. at the Matt Dishman Community Center, located at 77 NE Knott. Call 503/282-7973.

Serving Up Youth Tennis in the Parks

The whack of a racquet against a tennis ball is a special sound of summer - especially when made by kids and teens participating in Portland Park & Recreation's Junior Tennis in the Parks program. Three 2-week sessions will be offered starting June 26 and ending August 3. Lessons take place Monday-Thursday for one hour. Call 823-3189.

Fremont/MLK Vision Committee Meeting

The next two meetings of the Fremont/MLK Vision Committee will be on Tuesday, May 30, at 6 pm. at OAME Plaza, 4134 N. Vancouver and then on Tuesday, June 13, at the same time and location. All of the working Committee meetings are open to the public and include a public comment time. Depending upon the progress of the committee, they anticipate that the next community-wide presentation to solicit comments on vision study alternatives will occur in July, although no firm date has been set. Additional information about this and other PDC projects is on-line at www.portlanddev.org/develop.

Attention Unsigned Artists!

Approximately 10 artists and bands, encompassing all styles of music, will be chosen to perform at the Black Music Artist Showcase on June 23rd. Top 3 performers will have a chance of winning great prizes like \$1,000. The deadline is May 26. Send a 2-song cassette, bio, picture if possible, any press material and complete contact information with non-refundable application fee of \$25 for a single artist and \$75 for group by the deadline date. Contact the Roseland Theater about the Local Artist Showcase on Friday, June 23, 2000.

The Palace and Collections of a Russian Noble Family

Art lovers have a few more days to see the Stroganoff: The Palace and Collections of a Russian Noble Family at the Portland Art Museum. This acclaimed exhibition, which has garnered international press attention closes on Wednesday, May 31. The exhibition features icons and antiquities, gold and silver decorative arts, palace furnishings all arrayed as they were in the Stroganoff Palace, one of the grandest 18th century buildings on St. Petersburg's principal thoroughfare.

Try Acupuncture, Herbal Remedies at Free Seminars

Are you healthy as you want to be, could be? Complementary medicine can give you a new outlook on your health. Now, you can check it out in a safe, educational forum. The Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (OCOM), 10525 SE Cherry Blossom Dr., Portland, is sponsoring free seminars on June 10, 17 and 24. Each Saturday seminar starts at 10 am. and lasts about 90 minutes. Call 503/253-3443.

Environmental Justice Action Group Meeting

The Environmental Justice Action Group (EJAG) will be having a meeting on Wednesday, June 7, from 6-8 pm. in the King Neighborhood facility. The focus of the meeting is to review results of a recent EJAG canvass in North/Northeast Portland around air pollution and asthma issues conducted in conjunction with Portland State University students. The organization is dedicated to environmentalism in the inner city.

Crisis Team members move in on School Board



Tony Hopson, president of Self Enhancement Inc. and Ron Herndon, co-chair of the Black United Front and head of the Albina Head Start program, explain their reason for marching on the school board meeting on May 22.

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

"We're working on it."

That was the Portland Public Schools' answer to those who demanded action to close the appalling gap in student's achievement between minority and white kids 30 years ago. It was the answer 20 years ago. And 10 years ago. And it is the district's answer today. Meanwhile, the racial achievement gap is still there - just as large, just as ugly, just as

unconscionable, as ever.

The Portland school district is working to close the gap. Superintendent Ben Canada calls it his highest personal priority, and a major effort to close the gap is part of a new strategic plan to be approved by the school board in June.

Yet the district is making a mistake by failing to immediately take up the proposals of a community coalition that has produced its own plan for boosting lagging achievement at 14 schools with mostly poor and minority

students.

The coalition, known as the "Education Crisis Team," is made up of mainly African American and Latino leaders. It's the wrong group for the district to kiss off with a we're-working-on-it, leave-it-to-us" approach.

These people, these parents, these graduates of the Portland schools themselves, have seen and heard it all before. They've been told before to wait for the new plan, the new effort, the new approach to fix these schools that keep failing kids.

They've been waiting, some of them, for three long decades. They won't wait - they shouldn't wait - any longer.

The Educational Crisis Team had set a May 12 deadline for the school district to respond to its demands for action, it failed to meet the deadline, so the Educational Crisis Team demonstrate. Yet the Educational Crisis Team is right to insist on a sense of urgency. This cannot be allowed to go on - this clucking over a system that enables some children to achieve, but not others.

Of course, this isn't just Portland's problem - the minority achievement gap is evident in urban schools all over this county. And it's not just a school problem, either. Too many students get little or no help at home; too many show up at school unprepared to learn. Yet it's possible to close the achievement gap. Others have done it. A growing number of urban school serving mostly minority and poor kids are bringing high percentages of their students to grade level in math and reading. If they can, so can Portland.

The New Party is urging the school district and board to immediately implement the Crisis Team proposals and provide sufficient high quality material smaller class sizes, student and teacher mentors and tutors to implement changes. The party is confident that voters will pass the school bond measure in November, which can provide the needed funds. The Crisis Team has proposed hiring "achievement czars" for each of the low-achieving schools, and allowing them to make final decisions on classroom instruction policies. Instead, the school district should put its best and brightest principals in those schools, and make it financially and professionally worthwhile for them to stay in place and turn them around. The Crisis Team is right: There's no more time to waste. Every year that this gap persists sentences another group of kids to a sub-par education.

2000 Oregon salute to small business

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Each year for the past 37 years, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation calling for the celebration of Small Business Week. This year, National Small Business Week, which is sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), was held from May 21-27, 2000. The celebration honored the estimated 25 million small businesses in America that employ more than half the country's private work force, create two of every three new jobs, and generate a majority of American innovations.

Small Business Week recognizes outstanding small business owners for their personal achievements and contributions to our nation's economy. One outstanding entrepreneur is named to represent each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam as the state Small Business Person of the Year. From this group, the national Small Business Person of the Year is chosen.

Trade associations, chambers of commerce and business organizations frequently sponsor candidates. Sponsors submit a nomination package to the nearest SBA district office for review and selection by each district's Small Business Advisory Council. Nomination packages are then sent to regional SBA offices and prepared for transmittal to the SBA Office of Advisory Councils for review. The national Small Business Person of the Year, as well as two runners-up, are selected by the SBA Administrator based on the recommendations of the National Advisory Council and are announced during Small Business Week.

This year's award ceremony was held at the Benson Hotel May 17, 2000

Ken Boddie, for the third year in a row, was chosen to be Master of Ceremony. "When a quarterback finds a play that works, why change it?" said Phil Gentry, District Director, SBA Portland, speaking of the job he gets from Ken Boddie each year without fail.



(Top) Ken Boddie draws duty as Master of Ceremony.

(Right) Phyllis S. Gaines of Vessels accepts award for the Small Business Advocate of the Year.



Phil Gentry, also introduced the new Regional Administrator, Region X, SBA, Joann Francis, who took over the awards ceremony with a moving talk about her emergence into her current position.

Joann preceded to introduce the keynote speaker, Joan Hartley, Business Development Coach, Speaker & Author who brought tools and toys to move the audience to looking at doing business from many different perspectives, using everyone as a part of the team.

Small Business Advocates and Special Award Winners

A small business advocate is an individual who has used his or her professional expertise or personal talents to further the

understanding and awareness of small business. These individuals have also taken an active role in creating opportunities for small business.

The following small business advocate awards were presented:

Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year.....Phyllis S. Gaines-Vessels

Women in Business Advocate of the Year.....Mary O'Kief - Southern Oregon

Women's Access to Capital (SOWAC)

Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year....Carl Whaley-Salem's Veteran Center

Accountant Advocate of the Year....Bryan P. Fitzsimmons, CPA-

Financial Services Advocate of the Year.....Cherie Folkens, James Mackinnon & Kelly Mears Oregon Certified Business Development Corporation

Media Advocate of the Year....Stephen R. Woodward & Jacqueline S. Love-Oregonian

Oregon Small Business Person of the Year.....John R. Bendit-Upscale Automotive

Region X and Oregon Small Business Exporter of the Year...John C. Hagler-Classic Trolley, Inc.