

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

UNITED ^{WE} FUNK

tour

Old School
Funk Plays
Portland
Sunday



The All-Stars



Club Nouveau

Portland will be shaking its groove thang, Sunday, Dec. 1 from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Roseland Theater when the United We Funk

Tour puts the roof on fire. But we don't need no water, you know the rest.

The tour features music from the

old school. It promises to be one of the most talked about shows to come to the Rose City in a few years with some of the greatest music

ever made.

Featured artists include The Dazz Band (Let it Whip); Michael Cooper of Confunkshun (Loves Train

and his many solo hits); the Bar Kay's (Soul Finger, Shake and Dance) and Clubnouveau (Lean on Me).

Some of the fattest bass lines and guitar riffs that leave you breathless came from the era of

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Community Calendar

Adopt a Pet

The Oregon Humane Society is extending its outreach efforts to several area pet stores this month. Help the Humane Society bring homeless pets into the community, call 503-285-7722, extension 204 for more information.

Free Thanksgiving Dinner

St. Andrew Catholic Church will offer its annual free Thanksgiving Feast to 400 people from the surrounding neighborhoods on north and northeast Portland on Thanksgiving day from noon to 3 p.m. at the church Community Center located at 4940 NE 8th Ave. To volunteer to help with the dinner or to donate food, call 971-244-0339.

Kennedy School Thanksgiving

McMenamins welcomes friends and families for a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner buffet from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Kennedy School at 5736 N.E. 33rd. The menu features chipotle pepper, pesto and traditional deveded eggs, maple baked ham with honey-beer mustard, herb-roasted turkey breast, baked yams with Jonathan apples and brown sugar glaze, traditional sage stuffing and fresh baked pumpkin pie with whipped cream. For reservations, call 503-249-3983.

Thanksgiving Blood Drive

The American Red Cross invites blood donors to give the gift of life at its Eight Annual Thanksgiving Day Blood Drive. Characters from Oregon Children's Theatre's Sacagawea will make a special appearance, along with broadcasts of the Macy's Parade and national football games, hands-on children's activities, food, beverages and a visit from the Portland Fire Bureau and its engines. The event will begin at 7:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m. at the American Red Cross Donor Center, 3131 N. Vancouver Ave.

Holiday Tea Sunday

Area residents are invited to join the Les Femmes group during a special Holiday Tea on Sunday, Dec. 1 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Irvington Village Plaza on Northeast Mason and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The event will feature the sorority's 2003 Prospective Debutante's. Participants are asked to enter the plaza from the adjacent Irvington Covenant Church parking lot.

Residents Hopeful Despite Economy



Leo Burrell has perfected his trade over a 34-year career.

Leo Burrell – A Quality Welder

Tradesman looks to grow job base and stay independent

BY DAVID PLECHL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

There aren't a lot of independent welders in Oregon. In fact, Leo Burrell just might be the only mobile independent welder in the state with advanced certifications.

Whatever your welding needs, wherever you are, Burrell will come to you. He does big projects with contractors and subcontractors, small jobs, commercial welding and residential.

"I pretty much do it all," he said, "welding, fitting, burning and onsite fabrication."

Burrell started welding in 1968 and has been with seven different unions in 34 years, but it wasn't until he established his own business that he finally had the opportunity to deliver the kind of quality and service he always wanted to.

"The way I was taught, quality and cosmetics went hand and hand," Burrell explained. "I guarantee my weld."

In fact, the integrity of Burrell's welds are so strong, inspectors know his work when they see it.

"My weld is my signature," he said. According to Burrell, welders working for huge contractors are often forced to compromise quality with speed. It's

an attitude that has become unacceptable to the gritty laborer who honed his craft welding in the Baltimore, Oregon, and Washington shipyards.

"When they pressure these guys to work too quickly, quality suffers," he said.

"It makes me a little sad when I see the steel going up, and I can't get in on the construction."

Going it alone certainly has its rewards for Burrell but the path has not been easy.

Burrell says it can be a lot slower for independent welders because they aren't working under the umbrella of a larger firm. When big contractors put up an apartment building, they often already employ all the welders they need.

"It makes me a little sad when I see the steel going up, and I can't get in on the construction," he said.

Burrell gets most of work through word of mouth, the yellow pages, and online.

Ideally, he would like to get about 120 hours a month worth of welding jobs.

"I'm just trying to make a living, to provide enough for my families needs," he said.

Burrell found some work with the \$300 million dollar light rail project in north Portland, but ultimately it didn't amount to much.

"TriMet is really trying to get some of the bigger contractors to use smaller guys," he said. "I think they're doing their best to help people."

But Burrell wishes they could insert a clause into the contracts of large public projects so that guys like him have a seat at the table.

"Right now they've got people really working for you, but they can't make people hire you," he said.

Burrell sometimes thinks independent workers like him are too small to notice, but he's not giving up so easily.

"It's a learning experience," Burrell says confidently. "I'll get hot slowly."

Leo Burrell can be reached by calling 503-313-2396 or by email at aqualityweldoronly@attbi.com

Couple Take Life Day By Day

Former school custodians would love their jobs back, but make best of layoffs

BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Cliff Greene first met Karen Waters when the two former Portland Public School District custodians were freshly assigned to buff the imposingly long halls of Grant High School.

Her strength and dedication to hard work instantly impressed him. In those days, Greene says they had to hand-carry the bulky buffers up three flights of stairs.

"Those machines are heavy," he said. "She could carry them."

Just two years after that fateful encounter, the couple was married. Although they were eventually assigned to different schools, they remained just a mile apart. Waters at Kellogg and Greene was just around the corner at Youngsten.

"We took pride in what we did," said Greene. "Teachers would compliment us, we had a love for it."

The couple logged a combined 31 years with the district. They weren't getting rich, but they were comfortable. Then, everything changed.

"For years we've negotiated with the district and we always worked it out in the end," said Waters.

This time they didn't. In an effort to bridge a gaping financial shortfall, the school board decided to cut 318 custodians and replace them with a contracted, lower-wage and primarily disabled staff.

Greene and Waters were shocked. They couldn't believe the district would let hundreds of people go after so many years of impeccable service.

"We just didn't see it coming," said Greene.

Portland Habilitation Center cut a deal with the district to take over where the long-time custodians left off. The contract terminated 65 years of Local Union 140 service to

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Cliff Greene and Karen Waters of northeast Portland struggle to survive economically after losing their jobs in the Portland School District. The couple had a combined 31 years with the district, before layoffs this summer.

PHOTOS BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER