

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Adopt a Pet

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

Free Training For Hospice

Kaiser Permanente will provide free volunteer training to people willing to provide physical and emotional support for terminally ill hospice patients in the Portland area and respite for their caregivers. The training is in Portland on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. starting Jan. 30 through Feb. 27, with one Saturday session on Feb. 8 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Kaiser Permanente's hospice volunteer coordinator Juanita Oliver at 503-499-5285.

Chinese New Year Banquet

The Chinese New Year Cultural Fair will be a community event to welcome the Year of the Sheep with a banquet and a traditional dragon dance. The annual celebration will be held at the Legin Restaurant, 8001 S.E. Division on Saturday, Feb. 1, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 2, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Natural Migraine Relief

New Seasons Market will offer a free class by Dr. Jessica Nesseler-Cass, ND, on natural migraine relief. Dr. Nesseler-Cass will discuss the three types of migraines, how they can be linked to foods, hormones and stress, and how to avoid triggering migraines. This class is open to the public on Tuesday, Feb. 4 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Slavery Reparations Discussed

Randall Robison, author of several books on African American issues, will lead a lecture at the Kaul Auditorium at Reed College on Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 7:30 p.m. on what America owes to blacks. Robison is widely recognized for his leadership of the Free South Africa Movement to end apartheid in South Africa; his efforts to highlight the effect of globalization on African and the Caribbean; his work to win support for reparations for African Americans; and his efforts to alert Americans to the causes and implications of America's burgeoning prison industrial complex.

Art Supply Swap and Sale

Art on the Peninsula will host an art supply swap and sale on Saturday, Feb. 8 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Kenton Firehouse, located at 2209 N. Schofield. The swap and sale is a free event offering spaces and tables for people to sell or swap artist supplies, tools or craft items. For more information, call 503-823-4099 or show up with your batch of supplies and swap away.

The Mystery of Black Holes

Come learn about disappearing stars at the Mt. Hood Community College Planetarium on Saturday, Feb. 8 and Sunday, Feb. 9 at 2 p.m. "Black Holes" will feature images of the effect massive collapsing stars have on their surrounding celestial environments. The 45-minute presentation will take place at the MHCC Sky Theater at the school's Gresham location. Admission is \$1 on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, contact Doug McCarty at 503-491-7297.

World Renowned Educator Visits

Advocate dazzles classroom

BY DAVID PLECHL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Marva Collins is something of a legend among teachers. She founded Westside Preparatory in Chicago and single-handedly destroyed the myth that minority and inner city children are destined for a life of academic and social failure.

So when Boise Elliot's third grade

"Believe in yourself."

—Marva Collins, founder of Westside Preparatory in Chicago

teacher, Evelyn Flowers, caught wind of her visit to Portland, she knew she couldn't pass up the opportunity to have Collins bring some of that magic to her students.

What Flowers saw only furthered her amazement. Collins quickly had the entire class' rapt attention.

Flowers said some of her stu-

dents are low academic performers. Others have issues with attention deficit. But when Collins had them all repeating poetry on her cue no one would've known it.

"For her to turn them on like that was just an incredible experience to watch," Flowers said.

In fact, the spectacle brought her to tears.

"Yes, I'm crying," she told her class. "I'm just so impressed."

Collins taught the children a spontaneous poem to illustrate the difference between needs and

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PHOTO BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
World-renowned educator Marva Collins teaches third-grade students at Boise Elliot to recite original poems. The strength and inspiration Collins brought to the children brought their teacher, Evelyn Flowers, to tears. "I'm just so impressed," she said.

"We have no quotas. We do have goals. We want to make the fire department representative of the communities we serve."

—Erwin Warren, head recruiter for the Portland Fire Department



PHOTOS BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Erwin Warren, head recruiter for the Portland Fire Department, oversees hopeful trainees during a firefighting agility test last weekend. He said since the trainee program started five years ago, women and minority employment in the department has jumped from four percent to 19 percent.

Diversity in the Ranks

Firefighting trainee program opens doors for minorities and women

BY DAVID PLECHL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The young men and women who participated in this month's agility test to become a Portland firefighter have already scaled a slippery slope.

The hopefuls were among more than a thousand applicants who took a written test to be considered a firefighter trainee. Six hundred were asked to return for an interview and just 174 were invited to the fire department's training center for a grueling afternoon of strength and endurance-related climbing, pulling, dragging and lifting.

"They've all demonstrated the ability to become good firefighters," said Erwin Warren, the department's head recruiter since 1997, and the first African American to hold that post.

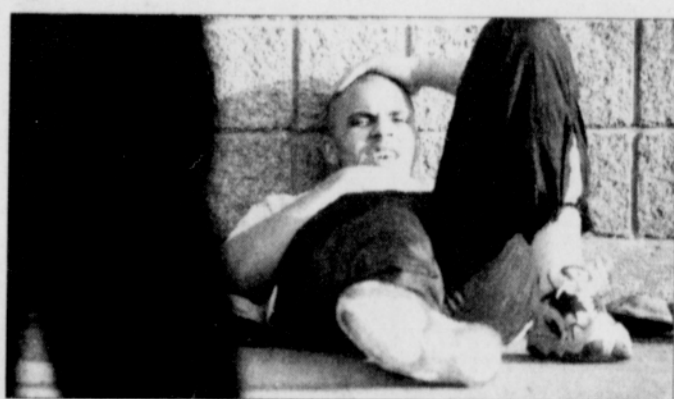
The firefighter trainee program provides an opportunity to become a firefighter without prior experience.

Established as a way of leveling the playing field, Warren said the program has opened the doors for women and applicants of color

that traditionally have not had a place in the department.

After all, it wasn't until 1955 that the first African American was employed as a Portland firefighter. It was another 21 years before three more African American men were brought in despite a union body vote

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Robert Kapuniai-Ryan rests between rounds of the Portland Fire and Rescue agility test. He will be considered for employment along 174 other applicants that took the strength and endurance-related test last weekend.

The Firefighter That Almost Never Was

Bill Ladd's rocky start leads to a lasting career

BY DAVID PLECHL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Bill Ladd didn't always want to be a fireman. He picked up the skills in the Marines and proved himself apt. But in the back of his head, he always had a different future in mind.

"I wanted to teach art and history," he said.

So after four years of dust and dry weather at Camp Pendleton, Ladd returned to Portland.

He enrolled in art studies as a full-time college student.

"Art has always been one of my main interests," he said. "The Marines were like

my alter ego."

Between his studies, Ladd drove for TriMet. At the same time a friend suggested he consider firefighting.

Ladd entered a training feeder program, but wasn't taking the prospect seriously. He had other occupations to consider. Besides being a talented artist, Ladd showed a propensity for the written word.

He was introduced to George Pasero, a longtime sports columnist with the Oregon Journal and Oregonian. Pasero looked over his work and told him he might have a future in journalism.

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Bill Ladd (right) has served as a Portland Firefighter for 30 years.

Coalition Plans to Push Out Enron

9,500 signatures will put People's Utility District on the ballot

The Oregon Public Power Coalition volunteer petitioners have gathered enough signatures to place on the September 2003 ballot a measure to create the Multnomah County People's Utility District with ultimate purpose to acquire the assets of PGE and remove Enron from Oregon.

Placing such a measure on the ballot requires 7,219 valid signatures of registered voters who live in Multnomah County, according to the county's Elections Office.

The coalition has already collected well over 9,000 signatures and expects to bring in another thousand by Feb. 5, when the group plans to file the signatures with Multnomah County for verification.

Over 150 volunteers have turned in signatures, all of which

"This is about removing Enron from Oregon and getting control of the PGE assets."

—Bill Michtom, signature collector

were collected by unpaid volunteers. At least 1,000 of the signatures were collected from the line of moviegoers waiting to enter the downtown Fox Theater to see the Michael Moore film, "Bowling for Columbine." Michael Moore has sent the coalition his congratulations.

"What put us over the top was the Jan. 18 peace rally in Portland," said Joan Horton, the chair of coalition's petitioning committee. "Over 700 people signed the petition in just a few hours."

The petitioning veterans among the volunteers reported a high level of enthusiasm among those signing the petition.

"This is about removing Enron from Oregon and getting control of the PGE assets," said signature collector Bill Michtom.

PGE is Enron's largest remaining asset and is a major source of cash for Enron.