

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Preventing Pet Overpopulation

Learn how to take an effective role in humanely and compassionately controlling pet overpopulation at a Pet Overpopulation Prevention Class at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 19 at the Oregon Humane Society, 1067 N.E. Columbia Blvd. Attend this meeting to receive tools to assist your neighborhood and make a positive change for the lives of homeless cats through spay and neuter programs. For more information, call 503-416-2985.

Juneteenth Celebration Meeting

The House of Exodus Juneteenth Association invites those interested in forming the Juneteenth Vending Committee to attend a meeting Wednesday, March 19 at 7 p.m. at the McCoy Academy, located at 3802 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. For more information, call 503-281-9597.

Band Fund Raiser

The Evergreen High School Band and Colorguard has been selected to represent the State of Washington in the American Salute to the Veterans of World War II in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in June of 2003. In order to defray the cost of attendance, the Evergreen Band Boosters will hold a fundraiser benefit show featuring the Patrick Lamb Band with Debra Crowe and comedian Angel Ocasio. The show will take place in the Evergreen High School Auditorium, 14300 N.E. 18th St. in Vancouver on Friday, March 21 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for students and seniors available through Fastixx by calling 1-800-992-TIXX. For more information, call 360-256-9015.

IFCC Bridge Benefit

The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center will hold a Duplicate Bridge Contest to benefit the non-profit arts center on Sunday, March 23 between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. at the IFCC, 5340 N. Interstate Ave. For a donation of \$25, players will play a sanctioned game with masterpoints awarded and receive a home-cooked meal, complimentary beverages and snacks. A prize will be awarded to the winning pair of the contest. Interested parties are to register by calling 503-823-2070.

SMART Program Barbeque

New Seasons Market's Concordia location will sponsor a barbeque benefit on Saturday, March 22 and Sunday, March 23 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. to help Oregon's leading volunteer program dedicated to early childhood literacy. Hawaiian style beef ribs, tofu on Jasmine rice with grilled vegetables, a piece of fruit and a beverage will be served for \$5 all day at 5320 N.E. 33rd Ave. All proceeds will be donated to the SMART Program.

Learn the Art of Mehndi

The Beaverton City Library will present a workshop in the Indian art of Mehndi led by Harsha Parikh on Sunday, March 23 at 2 p.m. in the library's conference room located at 12375 S.W. 5th St. in Beaverton. Mehndi is the art of decorating the hands and feet using dye made from the leaves of the henna plant. For more information, call 503-644-2197, extension 5262.

continued ▼ on page B7

Ethos Bids for Abandoned Building

Former Masonic Temple wanted for music education

A group of Portland's best and brightest is making a difference bringing music back to area kids.

Ethos, Inc., a nonprofit music center was started in 1998 by Charles Lewis, a recent graduate of Harvard University. After returning to Portland, he quickly recruited a group of inspired students from the University of Portland, Portland State University and Evergreen College to bring music education back to Portland's underserved youth.

Demand for music education opportunities has skyrocketed in recent years. Faced with a dwindling budget, the Portland School District has had to cut most of its arts education funding.

"When I started Ethos there were only two teachers for every thousand students taking classes in music, art and drama combined. Five years later, the problem has only become worse," Lewis said.

In fact, only half of Portland's elementary schools have any music education programs whatsoever. The schools that do have music often limit instruction to 20 minutes per class per week.

Ethos has responded to this need by offering music lessons both at its northeast Portland headquarters and directly in local schools. There are currently 280 students a week taking classes in Ethos' tiny facility at 27 N.E. Killingsworth. Ethos has also started 48 after school music education programs in schools, alternative schools and community centers throughout Oregon. Expanding to fill a critical need in local schools, Ethos has



Music instructors with Ethos, Inc. strike up a tune in front of the former Masonic Hall next to Jefferson High School. The non-profit group wants to use the long abandoned building for music education for underserved kids.

outgrown one building after another.

On the verge of outgrowing its most recent building, Ethos is looking west to the abandoned Masonic Temple next to Jefferson High School.

Boarded up and neglected for over 32 years, the Masonic Temple is currently owned by

the Portland Public School District. The District, a highly motivated seller, wants to sell off excess property to generate revenue for their most important venture - teaching students.

Enter Ethos - a motivated buyer with a mission. Having outgrown its current

humble abode a few blocks away, this vibrant nonprofit is tackling the purchase of a new building while building on its own success.

While the actual purchase of the Masonic Temple will be comparatively cheap, estimates for its renovation range from \$800,000 to \$2.7 million. To pay for the upgrade, Ethos will have to approach some of the Northwest's largest foundations.

But Ethos is no stranger to local foundations. Ethos' current list of funders is a "Who's Who" of the Northwest's philanthropic community. In the past year alone, Ethos has received program grants from the Paul Allen Foundation, the Fred Meyer Foundation, the Collins Foundation, the Templeton Foundation, the Wyss Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation and many others.

"Our challenge is translating our tremendous program support into a capital campaign that will allow us to completely renovate this incredible building. I am confident we can do that within two years," Lewis said.

A big fan of Robert Kennedy, Lewis was originally inspired by President John Kennedy's vision of a new Camelot.

"Camelot was about bringing people together while fighting for justice," Lewis said. "It is a cause that is close to all of our hearts at Ethos."

For Ethos, the battle cry is equality in music education. If previous success is any indication, even more Portland youth will have music in their lives because of Ethos, Inc.

For more information about Ethos, Inc.'s proposal for the Masonic Temple, visit www.OregonMusicAcademy.org or www.ethos-inc.com.

Capitol Sends Minorities, Women Packing

Advocacy groups lose funding, keep up fight for future support

BY DAVID PLECHL

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Lawmakers in Salem decided to cut funding to commissions on women and minorities in an attempt to balance a current budget crisis.

Sen. Avel Gordly, D-Portland, was one of the most ardent defenders of the commissions. At a caucus meeting, the African American lawmaker questioned how minority voices would continue to be heard in the overwhelmingly white Legislature.

But Gordly eventually decided the immediate need for prescription drugs for the poor outweighed the commissions' need.

"I'm operating on some faith here," said Gordly, noting that the budget by newly elected Gov. Ted Kulongowski for a two-year period beginning in July includes full funding for the commissions.

The Senate approved the current year cuts unanimously. The House was nearly



Everett Rice of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs

unanimous. But beneath the surface, legislative discussions were much more volatile.

The deal to balance the state's 2001-2003 budget was nearly jeopardized when House

Democratic Leader Deborah Kafoury of Portland made a last ditch effort to save the commissions.

Kafoury said if they didn't stay in the budget, Democrats would walk.

The move infuriated House Speaker Karen Minnis of Wood Village who temporarily shut down budget negotiations.

The next day, Minnis warned the budget deal would go forward with or without Democratic votes.

Everett Rice, executive director of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs echoed the hope that despite the vote, the Legislature would eventually restore funds.

"I think the commissions will be here," Rice said.

The state provides about \$80,000 a year to the commissions representing women, African Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans.

By eliminating them from the current budget, which ends June 30, the state saved less

than \$50,000. Keeping them out of the next two-year budget cycle would save about \$642,000.

If the cuts stand, Rice said minorities in Oregon will suffer. He fears the voice of African Americans and all peoples of color will be lost.

"If the commissions are allowed to be wiped out completely it is going to put the state at a disadvantage."

—Everett Rice, Oregon Commission on Black Affairs

The commissions have served as a voice and pipeline between minority communities and the legislature for years.

"If the commissions are allowed to be wiped out completely it is going to put the state at a disadvantage," Rice said. "I love this state. But I'm concerned about where it is going."

Woman of Faith

Local resident Annette Steele honored for family achievements and contributions to her community

The Blazers honored local resident Annette Steele, a strong woman of faith, for her perseverance as a single parent of seven, working six days a week, cleaning houses as far away as Lake Oswego with walking as her mode of transportation.

Steele takes pride in the success her children have achieved through her tireless efforts to put them through college. Steele's children: an attorney, two teachers, a state worker, a grocery executive and a medical

technician are her legacy.

Steele was one of eight local African Americans to be honored at each home game during February for Black History Month.

She was selected for the honor based on her outstanding achievements and contributions to her community. She received a \$500 stipend and a Black History Month ticket section, both of which she has chosen to donate to Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church.



Portland Trail Blazer executive Nick Jones (left) and Blazer star Rasheed Wallace introduce Annette Steele during ceremonies honoring leaders in the community.