

A Lesson in Diversity

Young woman was both student and teacher at West Linn

BY RON WEBER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Her tall, slender frame was anything but foreboding. Her large brown soft eyes and big friendly smile told me Brittinie Harper was a young woman with a mission. She was not a typical 18 year old.

While spending her senior year at West Linn High School, Harper was both student and teacher. Her mission was to teach a group of students and staff what it was to be African American.

One of only five black students in her class, she was alarmed at the lack of knowledge on the part of both her classmates and teachers regarding black history in America. After asking several students and staff members what the NAACP

(National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) meant, she was surprised that only one person, a teacher, knew what the initials meant and what the group stood for.

Armed with this, Harper wrote a proposal to help staff and students learn more about African-American people and their history. Although the school president backed the proposal and the principal initially called for a group discussion on the idea, the meeting was never held.

That did not stop this six-foot one-inch lover of the arts, music and journalism. Harper pressed on, insisting that the school do more than a light brush-over on slavery during February's Black History Month celebration.

Harper said after she and her classmates were briefly taught about "slavery, Zimbabwe, zebras, and the hot African sun," she challenged the school to go deeper into the "American" African people and "not to concentrate so much on

slavery," stating that her people were much more than former slaves.

Any history book will prove this true. African Americans helped build this country to become what it is today. Students need to be given the opportunity to read about it. Their exposure to the scores of black heroes in Europe, Africa, and the Americas would help students not only understand the important role of African Americans, but also to focus on the need for diversity and equality throughout the world.

As part of her conquest, Harper spent two days at Jefferson High School, four days at Parkrose High and some time in New York City. She was also given a "Making a Difference" project and chose reverse-racism, looking at prejudices black Americans have towards the white population. She pointed out that much of the problem comes from jealousy and the difference in educational opportunities.

Harper also wrote a play titled "Tomorrow," for which won first



Brittinie Harper was alarmed at the lack of African American history at her mostly white school.

place in the Oregon Thespian Conference competition.

Harper comes from a large and close-knit family, headed by her mom who is her best friend and her dad, Michael Harper, a former Portland Trail Blazer and NBA star. As

each of the kids grow up, they are taking turns helping out at their father's southwest Portland insurance company.

Heading off this fall to the University of Oregon, Brittinie plans to work towards a degree in journal-

ism, focusing on media electronics. Her dream job would be working for MTV. Based on her drive, talent, and deep commitment to her causes, there is a good chance Brittinie Harper will go exactly where she wants to.

Kendra James Forum Airs

Portland Cable Access is airing the entirety of the Kendra James Community Forum on CityNet 30.

The July 1 meeting, nearly five hours long, will air at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 16; 8:30 p.m. Sunday, July 20; 6 p.m. Monday, July 21; 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 22; and 5 p.m. Wednesday, July 23.

The forum addressed the police shooting of Kendra James on May 5 during a traffic stop on North Skidmore Street.

Representatives from the police department and district attorney's office presented information and answered questions during the public event at Mount Olivet Baptist Church in North Portland.



Peggy Ross

Ross Leads Affirmative Action Post

Governor Kulongoski has named Peggy C. Ross to the post of Director of the Office of Affirmative Action.

"Peggy brings extensive experience in working with both public and private-sector organizations to promote diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace," Kulongoski said. "She will help build community partnerships to further the im-

portant work of this department." The African American Chamber of Commerce extended a congratulatory note to Ross and Kulongoski for the appointment.

Ross is the principal of P.C. Ross Group, a firm specializing in business development, diversity training, and outreach services, which she founded in 1994. She is also a consultant to the Office of

Minority, Women & Emerging Small Businesses and a continuing education instructor at Portland Community College. She worked previously with the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs.

Ross studied business administration and psychology at Nebraska Wesleyan University and Portland State University.

Walk for Justice Saturday

On Saturday, July 19, St. Andrew Legal Clinic will hold its 4th annual Walk for Justice.

The five-mile trek will begin at 10 a.m. starting at the Alberta Street Public House, 1036 N.E. Alberta St. There will be a celebration there following the walk with awards, prizes and live music.

All proceeds from the event go directly towards helping low-income families, with family law needs, coming to St. Andrew Legal Clinic for legal assistance.

To participate in the Walk for Justice, there is a \$25 registration fee, but the fee is waived for those who raise \$75 or more in pledges. For more information, call 503-281-1500 extension 24.

Healthy Choices Give Your Day a Boost

BY OLIVIA RAMOS

What's your excuse for skipping breakfast? "I don't have time," "I'm fine with coffee," or "I'm not hungry when I get up" are all excuses licensed dietitian Valerie Edwards hears often.

"It's hard when you don't usually eat a morning meal to make it part of your daily routine," says Edwards, a dietitian with Providence Portland Medical Center. "But if you keep experimenting

and find out what works best, you'll enjoy the many benefits from eating a healthy breakfast."

According to the American Dietetic Association, eating breakfast can help you control weight, think clearer and help lower cholesterol, which reduces the risk of heart disease.

Think you're cutting calories by skipping breakfast? Chances are you'll be starved by lunch, which may lead you

to overeat later in the day.

"Breakfast helps jumpstart your metabolism in the morning," says Edwards. "Normally, you're more active during the day, and the calories you consume in the morning will burn off more quickly than those you eat later when your body tends to be resting."

If you're taste buds don't crave traditional breakfast foods, try something different. Vegetables,

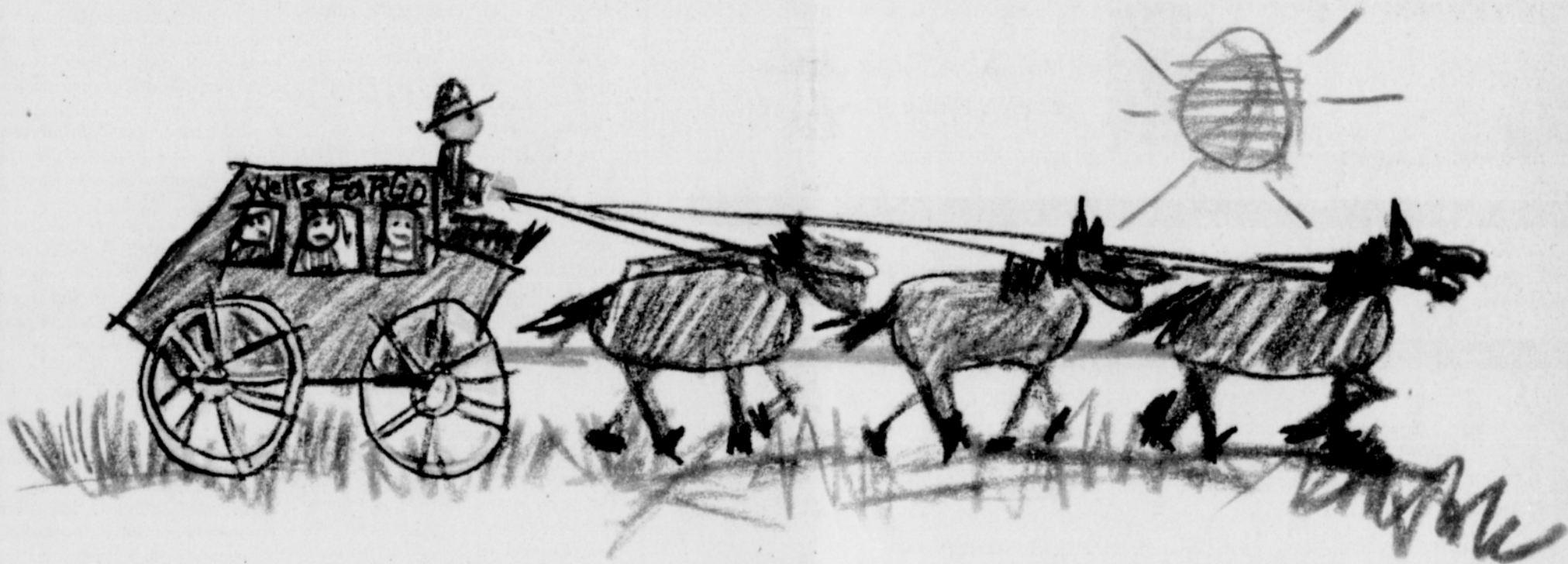
salsa and low-fat shredded cheese wrapped in a tortilla or even leftover veggie pizza can give you the right combination of nutrients to start your day.

Edwards suggests if your excuse for skipping breakfast is lack of time, try some simple grab and go breakfast items like a handful of nuts, a fruit cup, a small carton of skim milk, whole-grain cereals, hard-boiled eggs or peanut butter on wheat toast.

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