

Couple Attends African American Summit



Eugene and Carlene Jackson, representing northeast Portland's Irvington Covenant Community Development Corporation, meet U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., at the recent African American Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C.

Eugene and Carlene Jackson of Molalla, representing northeast Portland's Irvington Covenant Community Development Corporation, attended the recent African American Leadership Summit in Washington D.C.

The two-day conference provided a forum for more than 380 African American participants from across the country to discuss a range of policy issues with senior members of the United States Congress and the Bush Administration.

The Oregon couple was nominated by U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., and was the only representatives from the state.

Smith is a strong supporter of Irvington Covenant CDC, a faith-

based, non profit corporation that builds affordable homes for low-income families and trains ex-offenders in homes construction.

Trainees are assigned a mentor from Irvington Covenant Church to provide essential support and encouragement. All graduates are placed in permanent job in the construction industry. The Jackson's are founding board members of ICCDC.

"At this critical time in our nation's history, it is imperative that African American leaders and federal officials exchange ideas about the pressing issues affecting our families and communities," said Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, co-chair of the summit.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Reflections Mirror Image Bookstore owner O.B. Hill welcomes customer Greg Benton to his new location at 313 N.E. Killingsworth.

Book Seller Moves to New Site

Independent Afrocentric bookstore struggles during sagging economy

Reflections Mirror-Image Bookstore re-opened last weekend with several drummers announcing the new location of Oregon's only black-owned bookstore. Reflections Mirror-Image Bookstore is now located at 313 N.E. Killingsworth.

Drum master BeBop Robinson led the drumming circles. Other activities included book club membership drive and outside vending. These activities will continue weekends in July to support the book seller's new home.

The move does not apply to the Reflections coffee shop and gift

store, which remains housed in the Walnut Park Retail Center.

The bookstore is now located in the upstairs of a gray, two-story house, this is quite a contrast from its former location. Although smaller, it still retains a spiritual persona and an Afrocentric decor.

"Reflections Bookstore customers need not worry", said owner O.B. Hill. "We have not gone out-of-business. I just moved two blocks west to ensure that I don't."

Like other independent booksellers, Hill said he was finding it difficult to carve out a market while surviving in a competitive retail environment during a downswing in the economy.

According to Hill, the bookstore has struggled for eight years since its existence without turning a profit. He claims that northeast Portland still offers a viable environment for selling Black-interest books.

"If not here, where?" Hill asks.

CARCORNER

BY DAVID REEDER

Credit Score Myths

"I've never missed a payment. My credit score must be high."

This could not be more wrong. Many people get upset when they get their credit score and find out how low their credit score is. Paying on time is one of the best things for your FICO score, but it's only one of over 100 variables making up your credit score.

Having many open accounts does as much damage to your credit score, as there is potential for you to run up your credit limit on all your accounts. People with good credit tend to have too much credit, and too many old accounts that they no longer use. Lenders view that as a risk. When I got my score it was ok, but needed improving. Because

they were dragging down my score, I closed half a dozen computer store and department store cards which I no longer use.

"If I run my credit report, won't that drag down my credit score?" No, not at all. You can request your own credit report anytime you like and it won't drag down your score.

However, the inquiries that are done by filling out credit and car applications will lower your score.

Things have changed recently and it will not adversely affect you as it has in the past and lenders know that a smart shopper will go over their options before a purchase. You should work with someone that cares about your needs and can shop a large inventory for you.

You can reach David Reeder by e-mail at reederdavid@yahoo.com.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Justice for Janitors

Portland janitors marched through downtown Portland last week to bring attention to inadequate health insurance. Janitors cleaning commercial and government buildings ratified a new contract Saturday that would include paid sick days and health coverage for family members when 70 percent of Portland

janitors unionize. Today, 57 percent of janitors in the city belong to the Local 49 of the Service Employees International Union. Alice Dale, the chapter president, said the union would like to reach that number, triggering the added benefits by April 2004

Candidate No-Shows Draw Ire of NAACP

(AP)—Three of the Democrats' nine presidential contenders drew the wrath of the president of the NAACP for skipping the group's candidate forum, highlighting a growing discontent among blacks toward the Democratic Party.

The six Democratic presidential hopefuls shared the stage with four empty chairs, each labeled with the name of a White House candidate who didn't make it. They were President Bush and Democrats Joe Lieberman, Dick Gephardt and Dennis Kucinich.

While Bush's absence wasn't a surprise—he hasn't attended previous NAACP conventions since taking office—the group's leaders were outraged at the Democratic no-shows.

"In essence, you now have become persona non grata," NAACP President Kweisi Mfume said of the Democrats who passed on the event. "Your political capital is the equivalent of confederate dollars."

Black leaders have been reminding the candidates that they cannot be taken for granted in next year's election, but the party is off to a rocky start with minorities in this election cycle. Black party leaders were furious when the Democratic National Committee planned to lay-off 10 staffers this spring, and all were black. The DNC backed off that plan and has been working with the Congressional Black Caucus to ease tensions.

Al Sharpton compared the Democratic Party to the late former Georgia Gov. Lester Maddox, a segregationist who during the 1960s would take up an ax handle to chase blacks from his Atlanta fried chicken restaurant.

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Anytime we can give a party 92 percent of our vote and have to still beg some people to come talk to us, there is still an ax-handle mentality among some in the Democratic Party.

—Al Sharpton

to us, there is still an ax-handle mentality among some in the Democratic Party," Sharpton yelled from the podium, waving a wooden ax handle. "I want to stop people from wanting our vote but not wanting to be seen with us in public, treating

us like we are some political mistresses."

Blacks have been a solid constituency for the Democratic presidential nominee in recent elections. In 2000, Al Gore captured 90 percent of the black vote to George W. Bush's 9 percent, one of the lowest

percentages for a Republican in decades, according to exit surveys. Bill Clinton got more than 80 percent in his two Democratic presidential campaigns.

But Stanley Thornton, an NAACP member from Miami, said the Democrats have moved so far to the center that sometimes he can't tell them apart from Republicans. Democratic candidates must distinguish themselves to win black votes, he said.

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