

# Words Change Lives



Ruth Glass (from left), Willie Mae Turner, Joe Franklin and Dr. Scholastica Njoku of the Northwest African American Writers Workshop read for a Write Around Portland event at Dawson Park.

## Writing forum brings confidence to express oneself

BY LEE PERLMAN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Northwest African American Writers Workshop has a new audience. Rev. Ben Owre has a new avenue of expression in his old age. And Lora LaFayette says her life has been transformed.

The participants in Write Around Portland came together at Dawson Park in north Portland to celebrate their works and share their published and more recent writings.

The celebration on July 16 was the culmination of two months of workshops in the Boise and Eliot neighborhoods.

Groups such as the Native American Rehabilitation Association, Friends of Children and the Unthank Plaza senior housing project, got involved in creating a comfortable environment for expression. Mothers and daughters forged a closer identity by writing together.

The local residents' writings are published in "all and Sundry," an anthology sold at the park and avail-

able from the Write Around Portland organization.

Rachael Wyatt, a recent graduate of Parkrose High School, read from her writings during the community celebration.

"I've been writing since I was four, but it's been pretty recent that I decided that this was what I wanted to do," she told the Portland Observer.

Among other things, her work affirms a strong religious faith. She said the gathering gave her a chance to meet a group of writers, African Americans like herself, others three and four times her age, and people with diverse backgrounds.

The first reading of the day featured the work of four members of the Northwest African American Writers Workshop. The group, formed 14 years ago, has published an anthology called Kuumba (available at Reflections bookstore) and meets regularly at Portland Community College's Cascade Campus library.

Joe Franklin, Willie Mae Turner, Ruth Glass and Dr. Scholastica Njoku read for the group.

Glass described the courting rituals of an earlier generation, with meetings at the girl's home and her mother sitting nearby to make sure nothing improper occurred - such



Rev. Ben Owre



Lora LaFayette

as the young man taking the girl's hand in his.

Other readers told of a woman's painful divorce from a man she still loved, a man's bitter complaint against former female lovers and an ex-drug abuser's description of a woman junkie who borrowed his bathroom for a "fix" and nearly killed herself there.

The Rev. Ben Owre, former pastor of Woodlawn and Hughes Memorial Methodist churches, embarked on a new career as a writer two years ago when WRAP held a workshop at the Dahlke Manor senior center, where he now lives.

For Lora LaFayette, a resident of downtown's Park Tower, WRAP ushered in a life change. She encountered the group through a socialization class for the mentally ill. The group helped her build self-esteem and led to her enrollment in classes at Reed College and Portland State University. She is now working on a novel, several poems and short stories.



Secretary of State Colin Powell

(AP)—Secretary of State Colin Powell dismissed as gossip and nonsense a published report that he had sent word to the White House he would not serve in a second Bush administration.

"I don't know what they are talking about," Powell said of

## Powell Calls Report He's Leaving Nonsense

the story in The Washington Post. "I serve at the pleasure of the president. The president and I have not discussed anything other than my continuing to do my job for him."

According to the newspaper, Powell's deputy, Richard L. Armitage, informed National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice that neither he nor Powell would serve in a second term.

"This is just one of those stories that emerge in Washington that reflects nothing more than gossip, and the gossip leads to a rash of speculation about who might fill a vacancy that does not exist," Powell said in an interview with Radio Sawa, which broad-

casts to the Arab world with U.S. financial support.

"The story has no substance," Powell said. "And the so-called conversation that took place between my deputy, Mr. Armitage, and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice did not take place."

The White House, meanwhile, expressed President Bush's support for Powell.

"The president thinks he is doing an outstanding job and appreciates the job that he is doing," Press Secretary Scott McClellan said. "The president looks forward to Secretary Powell continuing to work with him in our foreign policy realm."

## Lawmaker Says Budget Abandons Seniors, Children

State Rep. Gary Hansen, D-North Portland, in a speech to House Special Committee on Budget members on Friday, criticized both the state budget and the process used to create it.

As the only Democrat on the committee, Hansen addressed the concerns of his caucus about the inadequacy of the budget.

"This budget abandons our children and seniors. Right now we each have a vote that could undermine Oregon's social safety net," he said.

He cited the elimination of county funds for pre-natal care as well as elimination of services for medically needy seniors and the cap on the Oregon Health Plan as examples of devastating cuts.

"The leadership of the House is now saying to Oregonians that no matter how high unemployment rises, we will not provide health care coverage to any new children or pregnant mothers."

## Volunteers of America Hires Sweeney

Christee Sweeney has joined Volunteers of America Oregon as Director of Development and Communications.

Sweeney, a graduate of University of Oregon and St. Mary's Academy in Portland, most recently worked on the Oregon Public Affairs team for Intel. She is also a former director of communications for the Portland Trail Blazers.

Volunteers of America is a non-profit human services organization meeting critical needs of children and families.



Christee Sweeney

## New Middle School Finds a New Home

Victory Middle School, formerly slated to open at New Song Community Church, will open at the Blazers Boys and Girls Club this September.

Oversize classrooms, a double-size gym, full cafeteria, a teen room and a fully equipped activity areas make the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard club an attractive school environment for middle school kids. Officials with the school said

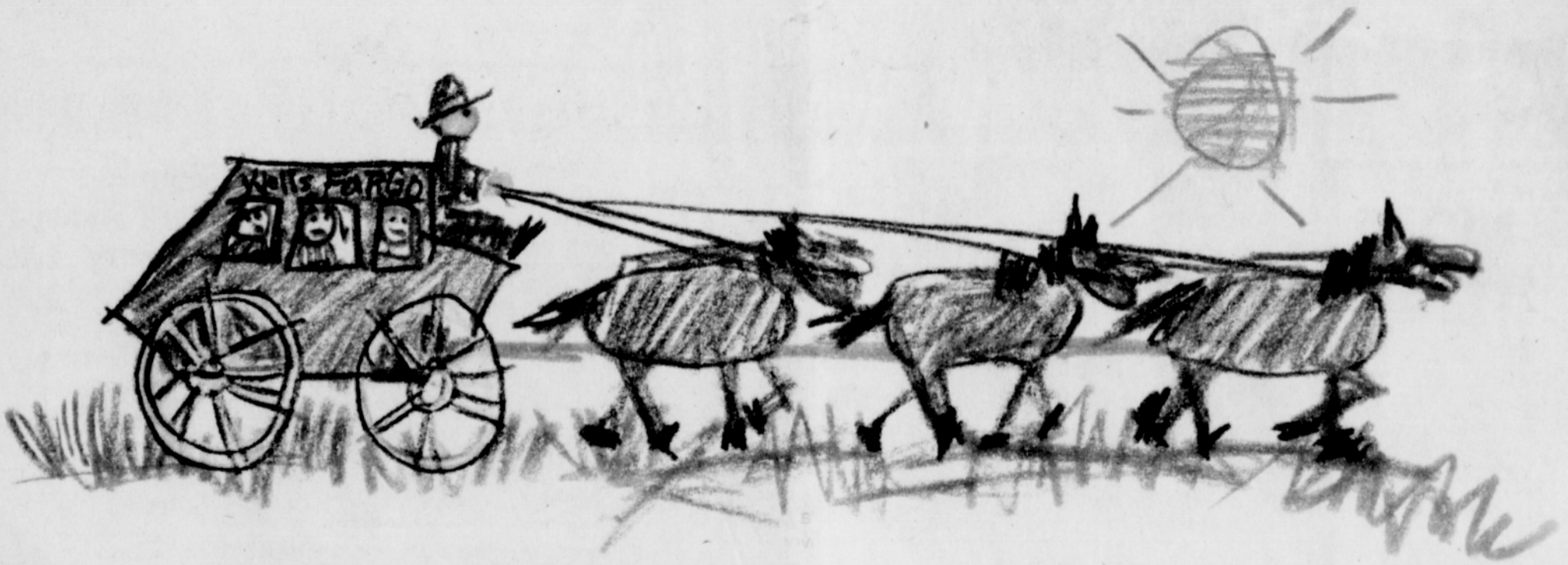
Blazers Boys and Girls Club members would continue to enjoy their full use of the facility after school hours.

Victory students will receive a free public school education. Two teachers in most 30-student classrooms will make for a 15-1 student-to-teacher ratio. Certified teachers will teach math, science, language arts, health, physical education and social studies.

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