

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Party for Human Rights

Celebrate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with international refreshments, music, dancing and speeches from students of model United Nations programs and community activists at St. Andrews Community Center, at Northeast Eight Avenue and Alberta Street, from 5:30 to 9 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 10.

Shopping Opportunity

The Hail Mary Gallery, 1609 NE Alberta St., is holding a Holiday Bazaar from noon to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and noon to 4 p.m. Sundays through Dec. 24 with an artist's reception from 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 6. For more information, call 503-281-6096.

Home Improvement

The Community Energy Project holds free workshops on water conservation and weatherization. For more information, call 503-284-4962.

Radical-Curious?

Radical Women holds its next meeting at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 10 beginning with a hearty meal for a \$6 donation. The meeting is at the Bread and Roses Center, 819 N. Killingsworth. For more information, call 503-240-4462.

Chimps Gone Wild

Jane Goodall brings enthusiasts closer to nature with "Wild Chimpanzees," through May at the Omnimax Theater, 1945 S.E. Water Ave. Tickets are \$8.50. For more information, visit www.wildchimpanzees.org.

Get in Shape

Providence Health Systems offers Westside fitness classes at 4015 SW Mercantile Drive, Lake Oswego. Classes include step, ball and bar, cardio mix, cardio step, gentle-paced fitness, group strength training and Tai chi, to name a few. For a full schedule, call 503-574-6595 or visit www.providence.org/classes.

No Excuses

Pacific Northwest Regional Blood Services asks Oregonians to run out of excuses when it comes to donating blood. The agency is holding its annual MLK Day Blood and Marrow drive on Saturday, Jan. 17 from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the American Red Cross, 3131 N. Vancouver Ave. For more information, call 503-528-5476.

Wild Oats Wellness

Wild Oats Wellness Center presents free workshops at 3535 N.E. 15th Ave. (at Fremont) in upstairs studio A. A lecture on Healing Depression and Anxiety is from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Dec. 10 and a class on the benefits of cloth diapering is from 3 to 5 p.m. Dec. 13. Pre-register at 503-281-3262.

A Healing Song

Sankofa Health Institute offers a free diabetes support group from 6 to 7:30 p.m. every third Thursday at Alberta Simmons Plaza, 611 N.E. MLK Blvd. For more information, call 503-285-2484.

NAACP Meetings

The Portland Branch of the NAACP will hold two monthly executive committee meetings, one on the second Thursday of the month and the Thursday before the fourth Saturday of the month. General membership meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of each month. For more information, call 503-284-7722.

What was making Pho Thanh Thao such a welcoming place for a diverse clientele in a neighborhood that has suffered economically until only recently?

More Than Just Noodles

Vietnamese restaurant brightens Killingsworth-PCC Corridor

BY SEAN P. NELSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Vietnamese-American diet is rich with fresh vegetables. Asian Americans in general are healthier and thinner because meat is used as a garnish in their dishes along with interesting vegetables, herbs and spices.

This was evident by a sampling of a traditional Vietnamese dish called Bo La Lot served by Luat Nguyen, owner of Pho Thanh Thao, a new restaurant at 902 N. Killingsworth St.

Bo La Lot is a dinner item consisting of charbroiled ground beef wrapped with a La Lot leaf. The mint flavored leaf comes on a plate along with pickled carrots, bamboo shoots, shredded cucumbers, noodles, rice papers and peanut dipping sauce. The idea is to roll all the ingredients in rice paper and dip it into the peanut sauce. It's a hearty meal for only \$8.95.

But the real reason The Portland Observer dined here was to see what was making Pho Thanh Thao such a welcoming place for a diverse clientele in a neighborhood that has suffered economically until only recently?

The answer is a combination of a family with a lot of restaurant experience and the expansion of nearby Portland Community College.

Like many Asian-American success stories, Nguyen's roots in business began through the hard work of his family, in this case his mother, Mary Hang, 62, who once ran a mom and pop market in Vietnam.

She got the family into local business after coming to Portland in 1982, first establishing a Dza Thao and later Thanh Thao in the Hawthorne neighborhood.

"My mother is the person who leads us," Nguyen said.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Luat Nguyen is the owner of Pho Thanh Thao, a new restaurant on North Killingsworth Street. Located across from the old Renaissance Market and the future home of an expanded Portland Community College campus, the eatery is experiencing an explosion in popularity from both local residents and newcomers.

The family credits its business success to a belief in themselves and locating in neighborhoods that are undergoing a renaissance.

"We didn't know PCC would expand," Nguyen said. "We bought the building and decided to do it. The PCC expansion helps business a lot."

Pho (pronounced Fuh) is the Vietnamese word for noodle soup. A staple of the Vietnamese diet, it is usually eaten for breakfast or lunch. The Vietnamese translation of the name Pho Thanh Thao means, bright,

generous or kind.

The menu at the Pho Thanh Thao restaurant features a wide variety of pho and many other Vietnamese and Thai dishes at reasonable prices.

"We also have good chicken noodle soup, stir fry food and pad Thai noodles," Nguyen said. Lunch specials are served from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. weekdays. Business hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The restaurant is closed Tuesdays. For more information, call 503-289-3326.

Bridge Builders Gala Coming

Event honors youth accomplishments

A local organization supporting African-American youth is hosting a holiday gala later this month to honor young people while celebrating Kwanzaa.

Bridge Builders' seventh annual Kwanzaa Gala and Initiates Ball will begin by the lighting ceremonial Kinara, a Kwanzaa tradition. An ancestral call honoring fallen heroes and performances by the Prospective Gents Club, the Imminent Ladies of Virtue and others will entertain young men and women who recently completed rites of passage, recent college graduates and their loved ones.

The gala is at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 27 at the Portland Center for the Performing Arts' Newmark Theatre.

Tickets for the Kwanzaa gala are \$30, and can be purchased at the Portland Center for Performing Arts box office, at 1111 S.W. Broadway and various businesses in northeast Portland. For more information, call 503-306-2960, extension 3.



Dylan Jones, a high school junior, mentors Gunner Culver and Marcus Bush at Martin Luther King School in Vancouver. The kids are participating in the national "I Have a Dream Foundation," helping low income students reach their potential

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAUL SCHROEDER

Vancouver Kids are DREAMERS

Students get a boost to reach potentials

Add a group of kids from low-income areas of Vancouver to a national group of students who are getting a boost in their education and career goals thanks to the "I Have a Dream Foundation.

The latest dreamers in Clark County are thanking Coldwell Bankers Barbara Sue Seal Properties for a \$10,000 donation to the I Have a Dream Foundation of southwest Washington.

The donation will be targeted

to 91 fifth grade students at Martin Luther King Elementary School in Vancouver who had been adopted into the project two years ago.

The I Have a Dream Foundation helps children reach their highest potential by providing long-term mentoring, tutoring and enrichment activities.

The donation from Coldwell Bankers came from a silent auction to bid on items donated by employees.



Fifth-graders Jewli Chay (left) and Alla Kisilitsa are 'dreamers' from Martin Luther King Elementary School in Vancouver.