

# METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

## Community Calendar

### Trees Need Friends

Friends of Trees will plant trees and shrubs in the Boise/Humboldt/King/Sabin/Vernon neighborhood on Feb. 21 and the Hough/Rosmere and Vancouver neighborhood on March 6. If you want to be a help to your community and environment, call 503-284-TREE or visit [www.friendsoftrees.org](http://www.friendsoftrees.org).

### Story Telling For African-American Readers

Toni Morrison's "Who's Got Game? The Lion or the Mouse?" will be read at 11 a.m. Feb. 17 at Barnes and Noble, 1317 Lloyd Center.

### African Film Festival

Family Film Day at the Kennedy School presents "Nightjohn" at 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 21. 5736 N.E. 33rd Ave.

### Group Support

Providence Health Systems presents "Managing a Chronic or Life-Threatening Illness" at a free community forum from 7 to 8 p.m. Monday Feb. 16 at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center's Southern Auditorium, 9205 SW Barnes Road.

### End Tobacco Dependence

End tobacco dependence permanently in a six-series class from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Mondays from March 15 through April 12 at Kaiser Permanente's North Interstate Services Building, 7201 N. Interstate Ave. Cost is \$125. For more information, call 503-286-6816.

### Quit Your Diet

Kaiser Permanente offers fitness tips and weight management by eating for vitality, health and pleasure with a twelve-series class on Freedom From Diets from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursdays starting March 4 through May 20.

### Laughing Through It

A Portland Jam Night plans to heal the community's ills through laughter at the Wave Theatre in North Portland. The live music and sketch improv. Comedy is at 9 p.m. Fridays. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$4 for kids. For more information, call 503-735-4184 or visit [www.jam-night.com](http://www.jam-night.com).

### Volunteer Training

Train to be a Providence Hospice volunteer to help those facing terminal illness, from 9:30 a.m. to noon Tuesdays and Thursdays through March 2. The series costs \$250. To register, call 503-574-9498.

### Control Rage

Learn to control your anger in positive ways in Kaiser Permanente's Dealing with Anger class from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays through March 24 at Kaiser Permanente's Town Hall, 3704 N. Interstate Ave. Cost is \$140. To register, call 503-286-6816.

### Celebrate this Month

Celebrate Black History Month at Mt. Scott Community Center's Family Night, from 7 to 9 p.m. Feb. 20. Portland Parks and Recreation recognizes Black History Month with modern, rap and traditional music, dance, stories and crafts. Cost is \$1.50. 5530 S.E. 72 Ave. For more information, call 503-823-4870.

### Uptown Readers

Barnes and Noble hosts a reading of "Black Renaissance Harlem: Uptown" at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 28 at 1317 Lloyd Center.

## Unlocking African-American History

Specialists help local residents trace their roots

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Everyone has their own reasons for researching their roots, according to genealogical specialists.

For some, their history provides the missing pieces to a family mystery, passed on through hazy oral history. For others, the reason is pragmatic, identifying a pattern of diseases or deaths within the bloodline.

For African Americans, there's an added challenge.

"Until after the Civil War, many African Americans didn't have surnames and records weren't kept," said Connie Lenzen, a certified genealogist and member of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon.

African Americans freed from slavery after the Civil War sometimes changed names more than once before settling on one name, further complicating the puzzle.

The Genealogical Forum is celebrating Black History Month by offering a free open house with several speakers to highlight the different avenues and challenges of African American genealogical research.

The event will be held Wednesday, Feb. 18 at the group's library at 1505 S.E. Gideon St.

The Genealogical Forum also regularly holds classes and has an extensive library of city directories and state records to help researchers.

"Anytime you have a silent story, it nags at people," said Lenzen. "The Genealogical Forum provides the tools to find the hidden stories in their families."

Willia Brooks plans to speak at the open house. Her search led her to 1870s Kentucky and Sierra Leone.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Genealogist Connie Lenzen (right) and sisters Willa Brooks and Dorothy Turner, research an Oregon Census record from 1850.

Brooks began her search more than a year ago. At 77, she found challenges filling in gaps of information because many of her relatives have died, who could have provided details to help her research.

"I can go back to records in Kentucky, but beyond that it was always sort of a cloud," she said.

After scouring census logs in Kentucky, Brooks enlisted the help

of modern technology.

She worked with a Washington, D.C. organization called African Ancestry ([africanancestry.com](http://africanancestry.com)). After swabbing her cheek for a DNA sample and waiting for several months, Brooks discovered she is related to people from the Mende tribe of Sierra Leone, and also has ancestors from Spain and Ireland.

"It was a very emotional moment when I got the information back,

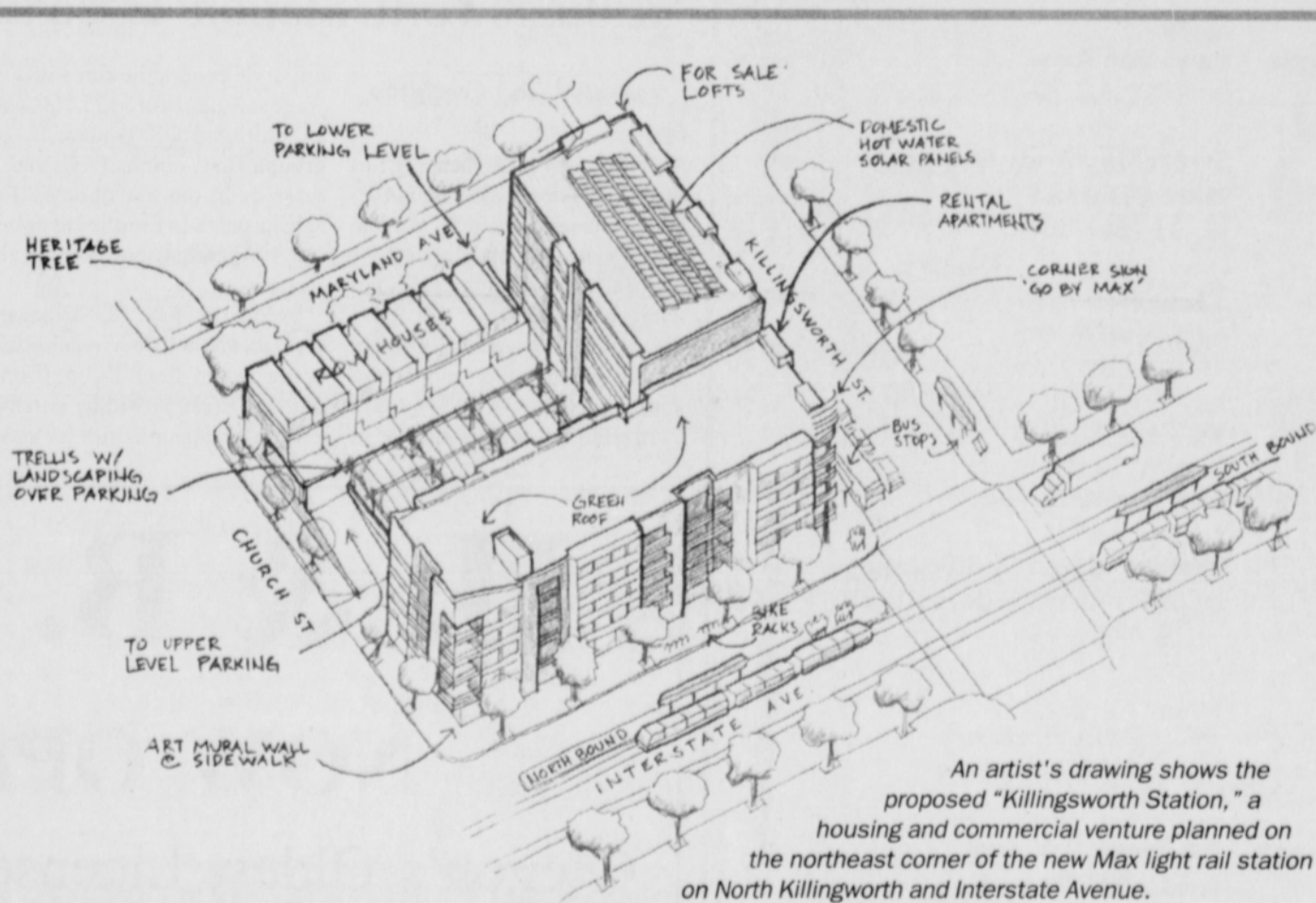
because you're just out there as an African American and you don't have any sense of where you started," she said. "There's a big gap between Kentucky and Sierra Leone, and I'm going to continue tracing that."

According to Lenzen, some write books or reports on their research to pass along to the next generation. But an individual's findings appeal to a broader audience, as

well.

"The stories are a treasure trove for historians a hundred years from now, especially for African Americans. This is the last chance to get the stories down from people who survived the civil war," she said.

For more information on the Genealogical Forum's schedule of classes, visit [www.gfo.org](http://www.gfo.org) or call 503-963-1932.



An artist's drawing shows the proposed "Killingsworth Station," a housing and commercial venture planned on the northeast corner of the new Max light rail station on North Killingsworth and Interstate Avenue.

## 'Killingsworth Station' Eyed for Intersection

Block could hold 106 new housing units, businesses

A committee of neighbors, government officials and other community representatives has recommended that a city block at the intersection of North Interstate Avenue and Killingsworth Street be developed into "Killingsworth Station," with 106 units of

new housing and ground floor businesses.

Tuesday, the Portland Development Commission announced that the team of KemperCo, LLC, Innovative Housing, Inc., and Peninsula Community Development Corp., has been chosen to develop the complex, on the northeast corner of the future Killingsworth Max light-rail station.

"We picked the proposal that we thought represented the shape and future of where we would like to see the Interstate Corridor go," notes Walter Valenta, selection com-

mittee member and co-chair of the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Advisory Committee.

The Killingsworth Station project will be the first major PDC-sponsored development at an Interstate MAX light rail station and is intended to serve as a model for other transit-supportive developments along Interstate.

Interstate MAX is scheduled to open

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## Gospel Extravaganza Planned

Two events support PCC scholarships

A Gospel Extravaganza will be held at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 28 at the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church, 3138 N. Vancouver Ave.

"Why are we here?" is the theme of the 20th annual event, co-sponsored by Portland Community College with performances from the St. Luke Lutheran Church Choir, Young People of Zion, the Visualize Mime team and many other groups.

The extravaganza is free with a souvenir book available in exchange for donations.

In addition, a special banquet to celebrate the gospel celebration anniversary is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the Terrace Room at the University of Portland Commons, 5000 N. Willamette Blvd. Vanessa Gaston, director of the Urban League of Portland, will be the guest speaker. There will be live music. The banquet ticket price is \$25 or \$250 for a table that seats 10. The dinner is at 7 p.m.

Proceeds collected from the banquet and Gospel Extravaganza will help support the PCC Foundation scholarship fund. For more information, call 503-943-2244.