

# METRO

The Portland Observer

## Myths of Africa

Illustrations shared during Black History Month

See Focus, page B3



Missy Elliot and Christina Aguilera help fight HIV and AIDS.

See Focus, page B2



SECTION B

## Community Calendar

### Trees Need Friends

Friends of Trees will plant trees and shrubs in the Hough/Rosmere and Vancouver neighborhoods on Saturday, 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).

### Health For Everyone

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual Health Fair featuring "Health Issues that Affect Everyone" is from 9:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Saturday, March 13 at the Ainsworth United Church of Christ, 2941 N.E. Ainsworth United Church of Christ. The event is free, and lunch is provided. For more information, call 503-284-8767.

### Government Contracting

A one-day conference for small, minority, disadvantaged and women-owned businesses to learn how to participate in federal government contracting prospects is held Thursday, March 18 from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Doubletree Hotel-Jantzen Beach. The session is sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. Register online at [www.hud.gov/washington](http://www.hud.gov/washington) or by phone at 1-877-741-3281.

### A Healing Song

Sankofaa Health Institute offers a free diabetes support group from 6 to 7:30 p.m. every third Thursday at Alberta Simmons Plaza, 6707 N.E. MLK Blvd. For more information, call 503-285-2484.

### What's Fido Thinking?

Learn about what goes through your pooch's mind at Canine 101 through the Oregon Humane Society, 1067 N.E. Columbia Blvd. Classes is at 11 a.m. Saturdays, March 6 and 20. Donations are \$10. For more information, call 503-285-7722.

### Mood Enhancement

Learn about how food affects mood at New Seasons Market, 5320 N.E. 33 Ave., from 5 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 29. For reservations, call 503-288-3838.

### Daffodil Bouquet

Treat yourself or loved ones to a beautiful daffodil bouquet and help cancer research with a Portland State Cascade Campus Phi Theta Kappa fundraiser through the American Cancer Society Daffodil Days. All orders are due by March 5. Flowers cost \$12 with a vase and \$7 without. For more information, call 503-295-6422 or e-mail [janne.ault@ptk.org](mailto:janne.ault@ptk.org).

### NAACP Meetings

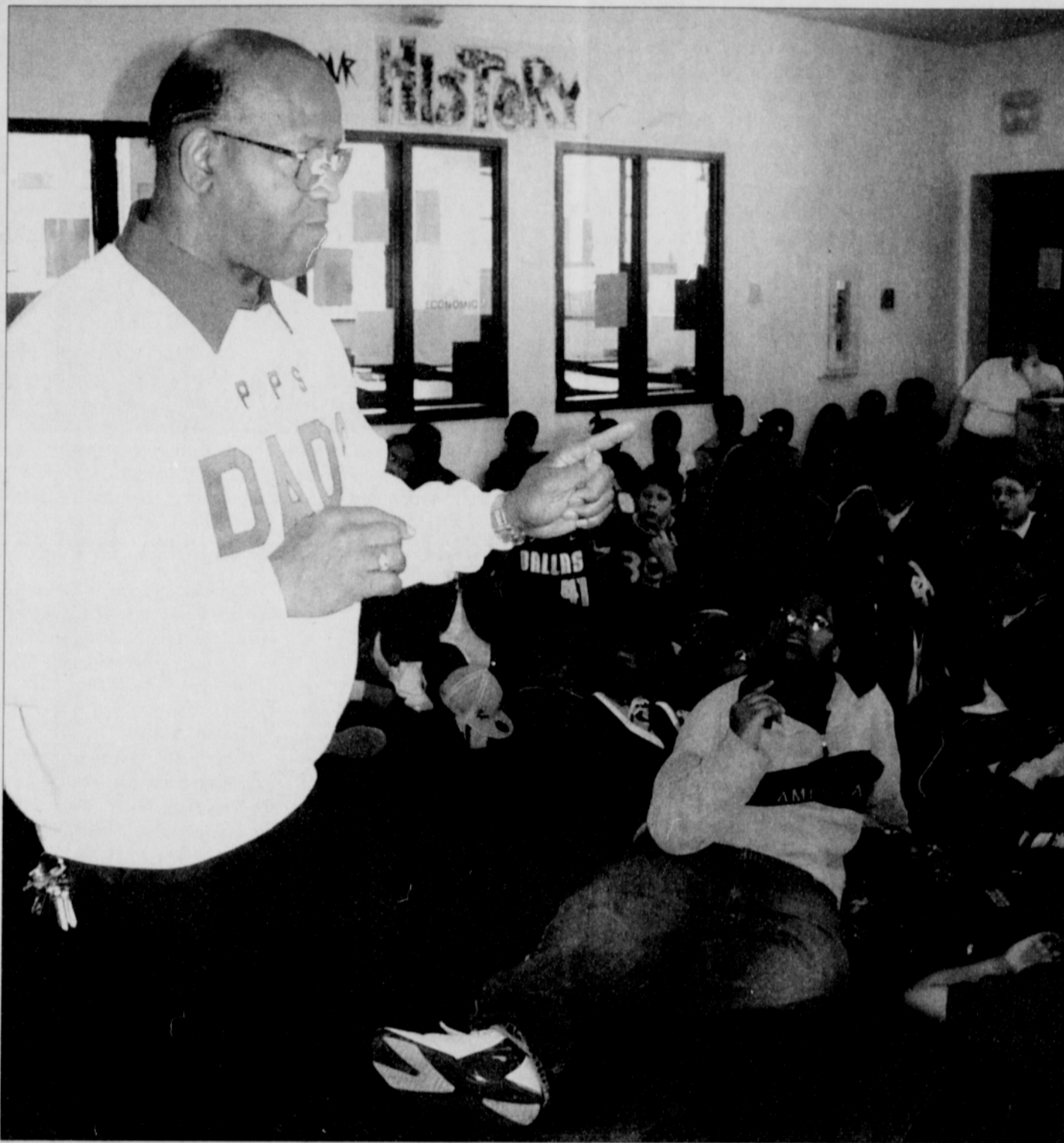
The Portland Branch of the NAACP will hold two monthly executive committee meetings, one on the second Thursday of the month and the Thursday before the fourth Saturday of the month. General membership meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of each month. For more information, call 503-284-7722.

### 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.



Robert Boyer, a former mediator at the King Facility in northeast Portland, visits Victory Middle School at the Blazer Boys and Girls Club to present Portland African-American history to a new generation. He told of the struggles and triumphs of local African Americans past and present, including those who once lived in the lost city of Vanport.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

# A Victorious Start

Northeast charter school finds success

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Victory Middle School's inventive approaches to learning seem to be paying off.

The charter school sponsored by the Oregon Department of Education says it has improved learning, nipped behavioral problems in the bud and has plans to expand.

## St. Johns Growth Plans

City eyes street changes, more housing

BY LEE PERLMAN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A proposed plan for urban growth in the St. Johns-Lombard neighborhoods of north Portland goes before the public during an open house Saturday, Feb. 28, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the St. Johns Community Center, 8427 N. Central St.

The plan has been approved by the Portland Planning Commission, but has drawn opposition from a committee of local residents headed by local realtor and activist Sharon Nasset.

A central focus has been a proposal to install curb extensions at selected locations on North Lombard Street, a move the opposition group feels will interfere with traffic movement.

Nasset also objects to the development of three and four story housing complexes, claiming they will interfere with existing business renovation and expansion.

"They're going to change the zoning from R5 to R1, which will give us five times the (housing) density," she said. "We don't have enough business to fill the storefronts we already have."

Barry Manning, project manager for the growth plan, said what's proposed is modest in comparison to other city neighborhoods.

He said the mixed-use development on Lombard is promoted but not required.

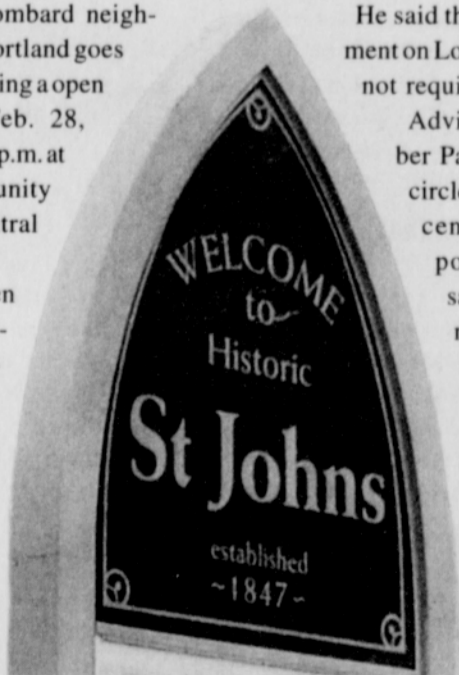
Advisory committee member Pat Opdyke said traffic circles in the St. Johns town center core were proposed for pedestrian safety and keeping the neighborhood's unique character.

"There's room for a lot of different people to have a lot of different perspectives," Opdyke said. "I believe most people support this."

Neither the St.

Johns Boosters, the North Portland Business Association nor the St. Johns Neighborhood Associations have taken positions on the plan.

St. Johns chair Robin Plance said the plan doesn't do enough to address truck traffic through the neighborhood, but she does support a redesign of the "ivy island" in the heart of downtown St. Johns.



## Racism Persists in Housing Market

Campaign combats homeowner and rental discrimination

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Housing discrimination still exists nationwide decades after a fair housing act was enacted to correct the racial disparities, according to new study by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

Carolyn Peoples, HUD's assistant secretary for fair housing and equal opportunity, addressed the issue in a visit to Portland.

Despite the Fair Housing Act of 1968, people of color seeking housing are being turned away or preyed upon by unscrupulous sellers making unfair and costly offers, Peoples said.

Nationally it's estimated that 75 percent of whites own homes, compared to 50 percent of African Americans and Hispanics.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination based on race, family status, color, religion, national origin, gender and disability. HUD has embarked on a new campaign to inform the public of those rights.

"We learned that white sales are consis-



Housing and Urban Development Assistant Secretary Carolyn Peoples visits Portland to address discrimination in the housing market.

tently favored over minorities in home sales and rental housing," Peoples said.

She said A HUD public service announcement called "Accents," will condemn a blatantly racist practice where property owners tell people of color housing is no longer available over the phone, after identifying them as minorities based on their accents and speech patterns.

Other attacks will be made against the financial barriers preventing minorities from securing housing such as money for down payment and closing costs and a lack of knowledge about the home buying process.

In response, HUD is helping buyers with down payment costs and providing counseling at home buying centers to walk people through the process.

"We bring in appraisers, real estate agents and lenders to provide a person with some knowledge, so when they're ready to buy a home, they won't be victims of predatory

continued ▼ on page B6

Currently serving 102 sixth graders, with a 15 to one student to teacher ratio, the school plans to add a seventh grade in the fall and wants to add a high school in the distant future. The school operates out of the Blazer's Boys and Girls Club on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in northeast Portland.

School leaders say placing two teachers in each classroom and planning a curriculum a year in advance has improved concentration and grades among students, but most notable is the innovative disciplinary tactics dreamed up by the school's principal.

Students who misbehave are not sent to the principal's office or even to detention. Instead, they are assigned to the Learning Center, which operates as a regular classroom, following the same curriculum as the mainstream class, with one poignant difference: a behavioral specialist observes the class and keeps kids on task.

"They behave better because they have strong discipline and really focus," said Rich Blizzard, principal at Victory. "The Learning Center is one of the highest achieving classrooms in school."

While fighting and backtalk were a problem earlier in the year, according to Blizzard, most of the problems have ceased.

"They've come to trust teachers instead of solving their problems themselves," he said.

One of the advantages of operating within the Boy's and Girl's Club is latching on to its rewards system. Victory's best citizens become Victory Stars and earn Club Bucks, good for pizza parties, dances and game days.

Victory's diverse student body is composed of 80 percent African Americans, with Caucasians and Latinos making up the remaining 20 percent. According to Blizzard, the racial makeup has been a non-issue at his school.

"Race isn't really an issue. The issue is really if kids develop the mindset to pick up a book and contribute to their own learning. We're making strong progress in that direction. Kids are taking their own learning seriously," he said.

Victory's approach to non-native English speakers is unique, as well. Instead of having a separate instruction for Spanish-speaking students, at Victory, an English as a Second Language teacher is present in a mainstream classroom.

"All those students are mainstreamed in with the rest of the students, giving them full access to content as well as language support," said Joshua Zeller, a class group in-

continued ▼ on page B6