

OPINION

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The Portland Observer

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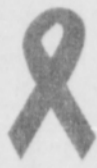
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ALBINA MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE



Healing Worship Celebration

Join us in our war against HIV/AIDS,
and help break the silence in our communities.

Albina Ministerial Alliance (AMA) is breaking the silence on HIV/AIDS in the African American communities by educating Christian churches in the North and Northeast community and fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. AMA is inviting community members, pastors, ministers and missionaries to the annual local observance of the national Balm in Gilead's Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS worship celebration.

Please join us in our war against HIV/AIDS with
Keynote Speaker, Vanessa Gaston, President/CEO
Urban League of Portland
on:

Sunday, March 7, 4 p.m.
Bethel A.M.E. Church
5828 NE Eighth Ave.
Portland, Oregon

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Bishop Grace Osborne, AMA Health Coordinator, (503) 281-5850,
or Dr. LeRoy Haynes, Service Coordinator (503) 287-0261.

There's Power in Where You Shop

Support businesses that add to our economic base

BY FAYE M. BURCH-WILSON

The focus on Black History places the achievements of African-Americans in the spotlight and increases appreciation of the significant contributions of African Americans. As inventors, scientists, creative thinkers, writers and authors, artists, educators, professional practitioners, entrepreneurs, politicians, developers, contractors, service providers, home owners and business owners; the importance of these contributions should not be ignored.

Equally significant is the collective purchasing-power of African-Americans.

We are a very important consumer base. Collectively, the buying power of African Americans in Oregon has doubled in the last 10 years to over \$938 million dollars. The Hispanic communities, in Oregon, now have \$3.9 billion dollars in buying power. Collectively African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans will purchase over \$2 trillion dollars nationally.

This is important because we all have choices about what we purchase and where we will spend our dollars. However, until we make better and more informed purchasing decisions and realize the power we hold individually and collectively our communities will not move forward and benefit directly from that purchasing base.

We would be well served by creating and supporting a strong locally-based economic agenda.

When you have to make a choice about where to purchase your groceries or personal items from retailers consider whether or not African Americans are employed by the businesses, are visible in entry level and management positions and whether African Americans participated in the construction and/or expansion to facilities.

Of the new sites currently under construction or recently constructed such as Interstate Fred Meyer, Trader Joe's, Zupans, Walgreen's or QFC's, consider if local residents and local minority contractors were given an opportunity to participate in building the new stores.

What you may not be aware of is many of the nationally-known retail chains like Walgreen stores have an annual certification program. This kind of certification requirement is a significant barrier to locally held construction businesses and local contractors because it precludes their participation. These national retail chains import skilled labor from outside of the communities in which they are building and expanding their operations.

The retailer makes the decision to adopt practices and policies that exclude the local residents who are

expected to shop in the new stores but not benefit from the enormous amount of work required to develop, design and open a new store.

Are these national retailers with certification barriers asking the people hired to build those stores to come back to this community and shop? No they are not. However, they are expecting you to buy from them and keep them in business.

What happens if you decide not to invest in building the wealth of retailers who choose not to invest or share some of the benefits with the community? What return and benefit should you get for your buying power? The retail chain that invests in our community, hires local residents and contracts with the local contractors and small community-based businesses and who give back by supporting our civic organizations and issues deserves and has earned our support and consumer dollars.

Consider the actions of your lo-

given the opportunity to participate fully we will send our own kids to college" and we will help to support the critical non profit organizations with our dollars and civic voluntarism efforts.

Ladies who are card-carrying members of the "Shop-till -You - Drop Club" are you investing in stores that in turn make an investment in your immediate community? Many of our students have complained that no students from North and Northeast Portland High Schools are getting callbacks to work for the Lloyd Center shops and retailers. We saw recently on 60 Minutes that some stores are targeting a very different consumer. If they are losing interest in the urban minority buyer and courting the suburban shoppers, we have a choice to make as well.

Shifting emphasis and creating an image more suited to the majority community which is seen as an ideal customer, is a business deci-

Consider whether or not African Americans are employed by the businesses, are visible in entry level and management positions and whether African Americans participated in the construction.

— Faye M. Burch-Wilson, African-American construction project manager and business consultant

cal banks, whether the Bank of Umpqua, Wells Fargo or US Bank are allowing our contractors and resident-owned businesses to partner with them to build and expand their operations. If these financial institutions are not willing to share the wealth with the community perhaps the community should make different choices.

Bank of America is making a statement by sponsoring the infamous and valued art exhibit the Hewitt African American Art collection on exhibit at Portland State University. We thank you for that but we also want you to promote home ownership, lend money to our development projects and finance our business ventures. As an example, Albina Banks' mission is to participate in the resurgence of our community. They employ people from our community and appoint community residents to their board. These institutions are partnering with the community and profiting and prospering from those strong community partnerships.

Many big businesses think the answer is to sprinkle a few scholarships around our community but if we are given the opportunity to participate in the economic benefit as a colleague of mine, Andre Baugh also a consultant said, "if we are

the retailer is free to make. As a consumer, we enjoy the same freedom of choice. We can choose to shop and patronize only those stores that hire and support the minority community. In sharp contrast to this kind of approach, Nordstrom has an elegant Black History month photography exhibit in the middle of their Lloyd Center lobby. It is their way of acknowledging African-Americans and showing respect for African-American as a valued customer.

Art exhibits and photography exhibits once a year are wonderful and exciting but we want our community to participate in the economic distribution of wealth all year long. This has to be about more than who has the right pictures on their walls. Look around and become more aware of you influence and use it wisely.

Remember to use local African American owned businesses for goods and services. Use your buying power where it counts. Let's build an economic base for our community. Support businesses who give their support to you!

Faye M. Burch-Wilson is an accomplished African-American construction project manager and local business consultant who promotes diversity in the workplace.

Letter to the Editor:

Nomination is No Joke

I am writing this letter in reference to the nomination of R Kelly for an NAACP image award. The very first time I heard about it, the thought that came to me, was this is just someone playing a very crude joke, but after a little investigation, I found out that the nomination is as real as it gets.

When I picked myself up off the floor I realized that the people who let this nomination even make it to the table or have this up for discussion are the real joke.

Unless I missed the redefining of

image along the way somewhere, I personally find this embarrassing, and downright shameful for this to go on, coming from an organization with a rich tradition in serving and standing up for the right values and moral threads of our community.

Let it be understood that no means am I judging Mr. Kelly. But you would think that in a room full of people, that apparently have been chosen to be there because of the ability to make decent intellectual decisions, one or maybe two would have stood up and said, you know

folks, this may not be the best idea until we find out if Mr. Kelly will be exonerated from the charges of child pornography, so we will have to block this nomination by any means necessary.

After going this path with the R Kelly nomination, it only affirms that the questions of credibility, purpose and mission of this organization in certain situations are absolutely valid.

Paul Knauts Jr.
Northeast Portland



African American Health Coalition, Inc.

Presents for your health,

Wellness Within REACH Activity Calendar

Aerobics

Mallory Ave. Christian Church

Mon, Wed, Fri, 6-7am, Pierce • 5:30-6:20pm,
Granville • 6:30-7:30pm, Nickerson

Humboldt Elementary

Tue, Thu, 6-7pm, Keller

Low Impact Aerobics

Daniel's Memorial Church

Tue, 7:15-8:15pm, Granville

Water Aerobics (Contact AAHC)

Salvation Army

Matt Dishman

African Dance

Matt Dishman

Sat, 10-11am, Addo

Body Conditioning

Wild Oats Market

Sat, 9:30-10:30am, Nickerson

Pilates

Matt Dishman

Mon, 12:15-1:15pm, Jenkins

Daniel's Memorial Church, 1234 NE Killingsworth
(12th & Killingsworth)

Humboldt Elementary, 4915 N Gantenbein

Mallory Avenue Christian Church (Gym), 126 NE
Alberta

Salsa

Salvation Army

Mon, 6:30-7:30pm, Henry

Stretching/Body Sculpting

Matt Dishman

Tue, Thu, 7-8am, Lois

Tai Chi

Salvation Army

Wed, 6:30-7:30pm, Lyles

Walking Group

Peninsula Park

Sat, 12:30pm, Woods

Weight Mgmt./Conditioning

U. of Portland Indoor Track

Tue, Thu, 9-10am, Hasan

Yoga

Wild Oats Market

Tue, Thu, 7:30-8:30pm, O'Rourke

Matt Dishman, 77 NE Knott

Peninsula Park, 700 N Portland

Salvation Army, 5325 N Williams

U. of Portland Indoor Track, 500 N Willamette

Wild Oats Market, 3535 NE 15th

**Must be 21 or older to participate. Please contact AAHC before showing up to the first class and for more information at 503-413-1850 or kdempsey@aahc-portland.org. Please receive approval from your doctor before beginning exercise class.

REACH

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health
A Program of the African American Health Coalition, Inc.
Sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



Contact AAHC at 503-413-1850 or visit our web site at www.aahc-portland.org