

METRO

The Portland Observer

Community Calendar

Business Meeting

Join North/Northeast Business Association meetings on the first Monday of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. at Albina Community Bank, 2002 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd. Morning networking meetings are the third Wednesday of each month from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Blazers Boys and Girls Club, 5250 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd. For more information, call 503-249-0487 or visit www.nneba.org.

Gain Computer Skills

The Sun program offers a computer class for parents starting Jan. 3 at King Elementary School. To register, call 503-916-6156 or 503-319-3425.

Volunteer Option

If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, check out Bradley-Angle House to end domestic violence. Bilingual women and women of color are especially needed. For information, call 503-282-9940.

Crack the Code

Crack the code to filling out financial aid paperwork with the help of the ladies of Beta Psi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. The workshop is at Portland State University from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For questions and more information, call 503-725-8766 or e-mail Nicole Harris at dst_betapsi@yahoo.com.

Volunteer for Hospice

Kaiser Permanente offers training for hospice volunteers Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 to 4 p.m. from Jan. 18 through Feb. 3 with one Saturday session on Jan. 29. For more information or to register, call 503-499-5285 or 503-499-5408.

Get Schooled

Learn how to help to improve schools and jobs at a forum with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo and President of Oregon's AFL-CIO Tim Nesbitt at 7 p.m. Jan. 13 at the Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40th. Free and sponsored by the Multnomah County Democratic Party.

Learn in London

Portland Community College offers a learning opportunity to earn credit in London. An informational meeting is from 6 to 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 10 in the Spruce Room of the CC Building at the Sylvania Campus, 12000 S.W. 49th Ave. The London trip is set for March 31 through June 11. For more information, call 503-614-7151.

Get Fit, Stay Healthy!

Sankofa 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. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. For more information, call 503-285-2484.

Creative Space For Dance

Aurora Dance Studio, 5433 N.E. 30th (at Killingsworth), offers an array of classes for children, teens and adults at all levels of ability. Call 503-249-0201 or visit online at www.hevanet.com/auroradance for additional information.

Work For Change

Community Advocates invites those interested in protecting children from abuse to become an event volunteer, event outreach, technology expert, graphic artists or office support team member. For more information, call 503-280-1388.

Home Improvement

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

Contracting with Portland

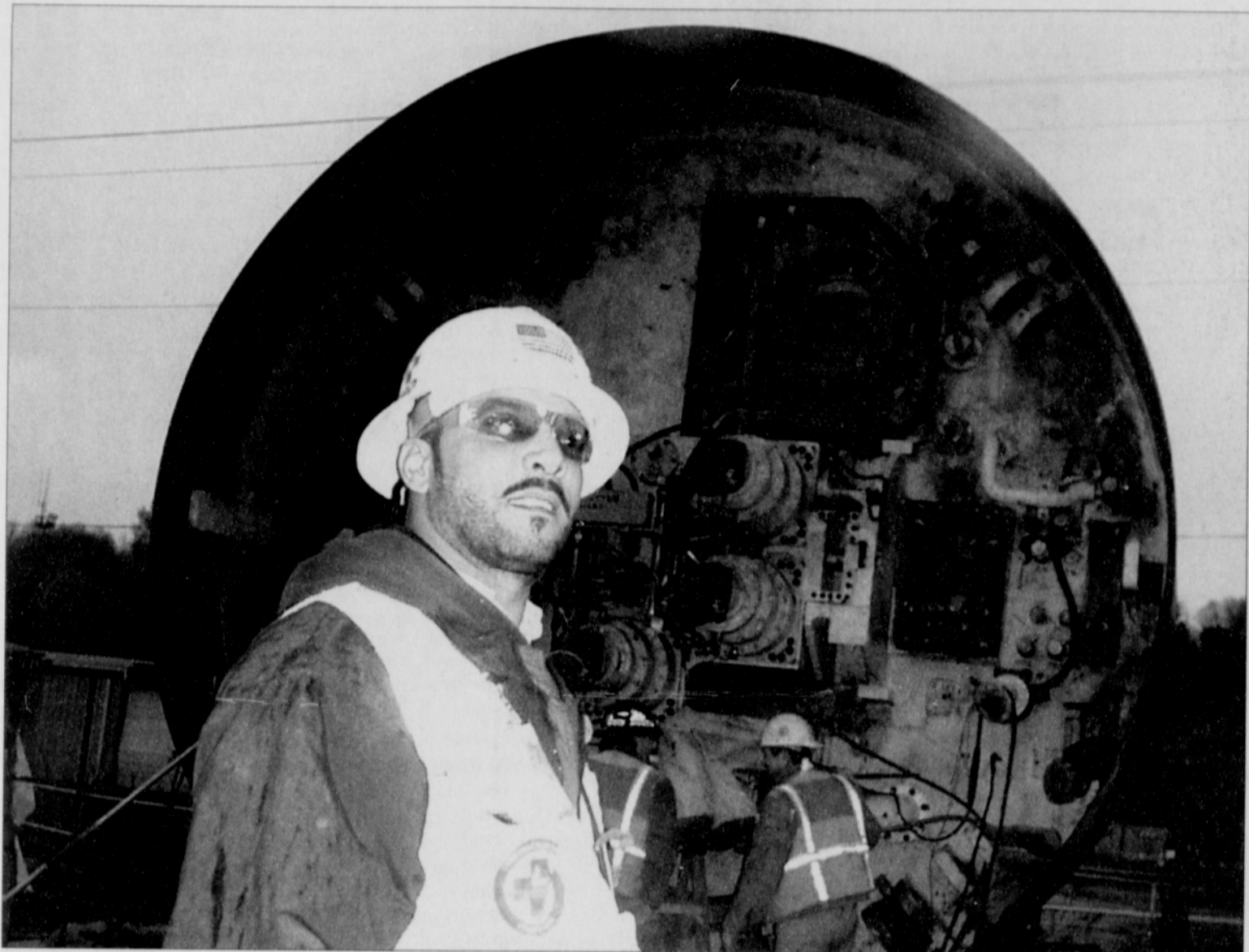


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Lyndell Walton of CMTS Construction, a minority-owned firm, is part of the multicultural workforce contracted to operate a huge boring machine to dig the big pipe sewer overflow project on Swan Island.

City renews push for a diverse workforce

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The city of Portland has a new mission to do business with minority-owned and emerging companies.

Greg Wolley, program coordinator for professional services and small business development, was recently hired to keep minority- and women-owned businesses as well as emerging small businesses in the loop when the city contracts services.

"There was a disparity study in the mid 1990s that documented large gaps in the numbers of

minority- and women-owned business that were contacted to do work in the city," Wolley said.

As a result, Portland plans to expand minority contracts in the professional and technical fields, including jobs in architecture, engineering, information technology, training, marketing, outreach, graphic design, finance and insurance.

Wolley is helping to create opportunities for small businesses with new rules that give more weight to emerging and minority-owned businesses and better outreach functions to alert the companies of contracting opportunities.

One business that has benefited from outreach efforts is CMTS, a construction firm that has contracted with the city to work on a big pipe sewer overflow project on Swan Island. CMTS is owned by an African American and has women

and people of color in executive positions.

"Historically—this is just human nature—people hire people that they know and that they're familiar with and feel have done a good job in the past. This creates an insular culture," Wolley said. "The city of Portland hired me to help to instigate a culture shift within the city."

The city will hold a professional services outreach event in February for small business owner to meet project managers that do hiring. Local agencies such as TriMet, the Port of Portland and Portland Development Commission will be in attendance.

For more information, call 503-823-6860 or e-mail gwoolley@ci.portland.or.us or visit www.portlandonline.com/omf/purchasing for contracting opportunities.

Rally Against Hate

Event to denounce racist fliers

To combat the actions of a hate group, several community organizations, including the Oregon Commission for Black Affairs, are planning a Saturday, Jan. 8 Unity Rally to show that tolerance is more powerful than prejudice.

The hate group plans to gather on the same day at a southwest Portland park to distribute flyers with racist messages to several nearby neighborhoods. But instead of confronting the haters in a potentially violent encounter, Unity Rally organizers want the public to join them for a 1 p.m. rally on Jan. 8 at the Multnomah Center, 7688 S.W. Capital Hwy.

The rally will include speakers such as community and government leaders, music, an activity room for kids and a display of signs and banners promoting justice and understanding.

Participants are asked to make signs, banners or wear buttons promoting a message of peace, justice and tolerance and to download a poster available at www.portlandonline.com/oni.

For more information about the events, visit www.tolerance.org or call Emily Gottfried at 503-295-6761.

Bridge Builders Prepare for 8th Annual Gala

Portland's Keith Dempsey sat on the steps at Georgia Tech with tears in his eyes. It was his freshman year in high school and while visiting colleges with 24 other members from the Bridge Builders' Prospective Gents Club, he wondered if he would ever get the opportunity to actually enroll in one of the prestigious institutions from the tour.

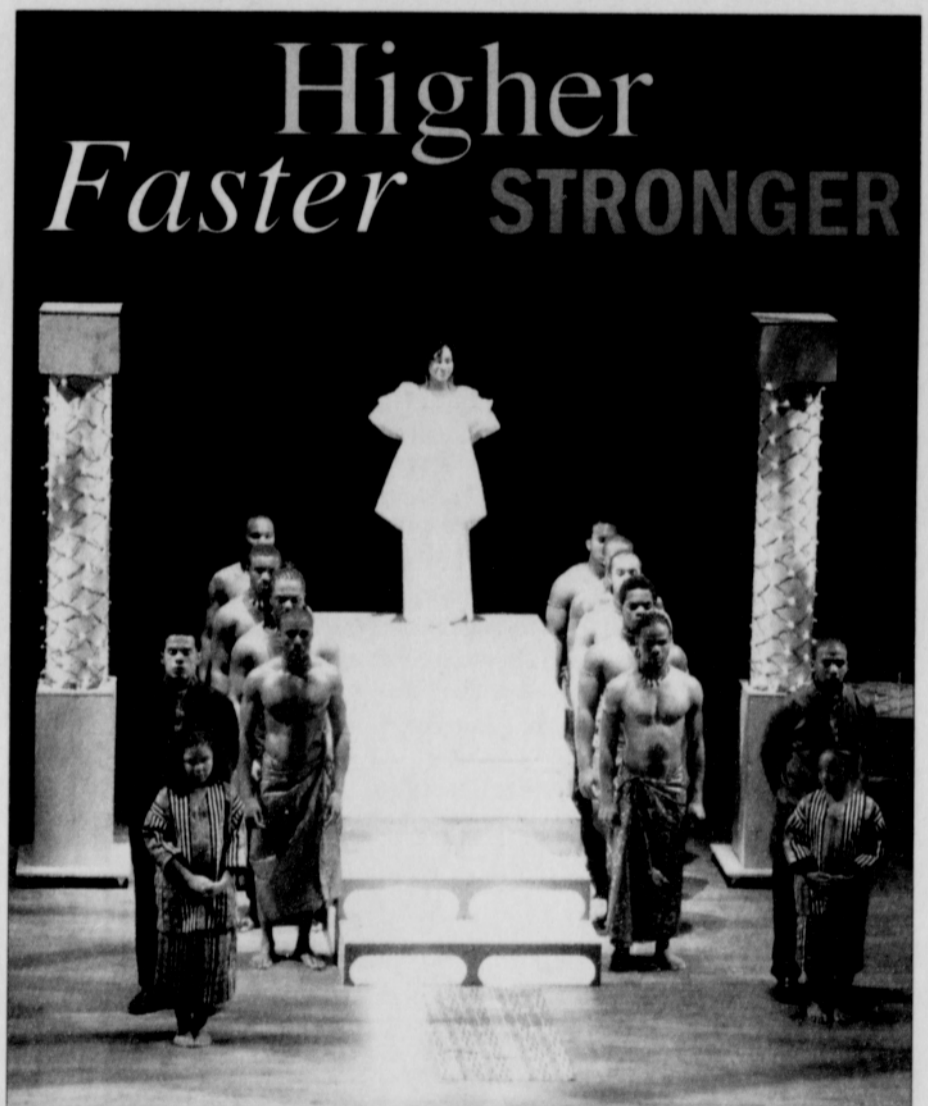
With just average grades at the time, Dempsey was not sure that he would be accepted to any school. And if he were accepted, where would the dollars come from?

Over the next three years, Dempsey changed his study habits and graduated from Parkrose High School with a B average. He remained active in Bridge Builders by participating in the Kikao wa Ndugu study sessions at University of Portland, performing with the cane precision team and serving as the club's eighth president.

"My advisors from the gents kept telling me that if I handled my business, they could get me in Tuskegee," says Dempsey. Tuskegee, known for its training of the famous Tuskegee Airmen, was Dempsey's first choice of colleges. The training of fighter pilots was a major draw for a young black male who aspires to be a commercial airplane pilot.

Dempsey just returned home after his first semester at Tuskegee, where he is majoring in aeronautical engineering.

"The first semester was hard," he admitted, "but I think you will be proud of my grades."



Elaborate choreography is part of the annual Bridge Builders Kwanzaa Gala and Rites of Passage ceremony.

On Friday, Dec. 31, his mother Gloria Brock will sit in the Newmark Theatre and shed tears of joy for a son who fulfilled a dream. The Bridge Builders will honor Dempsey and 16 other college freshmen

each with their own success story at the 8th annual Kwanzaa Gala and Rites of Passage Ceremony.

continued ▼ on page A5