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Minority & Small Business Week

Businesses Make Big Impact

From Alberta eateries fueling the local economy to a florist opening a neighborhood shop, Portland entrepreneurs shine with hope
See Minority Business Section B, inside



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Week in The Review

Rita Wrecks Small Towns

Residents of the Texas refinery towns hit hardest by Hurricane Rita on Saturday were blocked from returning to their homes Tuesday because of the danger of debris-choked streets, downed power lines and a shortage of ice and generators. Damage to the small, rural towns of Jasper, Port Arthur and Orange and several other towns in Louisiana were virtually complete.

Police Chief Resigns



New Orleans Police Superintendent Eddie Compass resigned Tuesday after four turbulent weeks in which the police force was wracked by desertions and disorganization in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath. As the city slipped into anarchy during the first few days after Katrina, many officers deserted their posts, and some were accused of joining in the looting that broke out.

Former FEMA Head Grilled



Former FEMA director Michael Brown blamed others, especially Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco and New Orleans Mayor

Ray Nagin, for most government failures in responding to Hurricane Katrina on Tuesday. Brown said that in the days before the storm, he expressed his concerns that "this is going to be a bad one" in phone conversations and e-mails with President Bush and his Administration.

Negro Leagues Player Dies

Byron "Mex" Johnson, a shortstop for the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro leagues and Satchel Paige's traveling team, died Saturday at 94. Johnson played for the Monarchs in 1937-38, when blacks were barred from the National and American leagues. He joined the traveling team of the legendary pitcher Satchel Paige in 1939 and stayed through 1940.

New Citizen Wins Lottery

A man who immigrated from Kenya to the United States found prosperity beyond his expectations on the day he became a U.S. citizen. Shortly after Moses Bittok, of West Des Moines, took the oath of citizenship on Friday, he discovered he had a \$1.89 million winning ticket from the Iowa Lottery's Hot Lotto game.

Self Enhancement, Inc. Builds Futures



PHOTOS BY KATHERINE BLACKMORE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Self Enhancement, Inc. President Tony Hopson Sr. and the SEI Gospel Choir at the SEI Center, 3920 N. Kerby Ave.

Youth benefit from comprehensive training program

BY KATHERINE BLACKMORE
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In fifth grade, school wasn't Crescentia Dixon's highest priority. Sitting in class was a daily task before coming home to help her single mother take care of her younger brother and two sisters.

Then Dixon became involved with Self Enhancement, Inc., a local program that directs youth toward a life of positive fulfillment.

"SEI was my escape sometimes when I was overwhelmed at home," Dixon said. "This is my life. It's a part of me, part of my family. The coordinators are like your par-

ents — they're your second mom and dad." Now at 24, she said the values instilled in her through SEI have helped shaped her in a remarkable way.

"It's not just a youth program," she said. "You feel it in your heart. These people want to be here and want to help. It's another culture here. When you walk into the building, you're home and no one will ever turn you away. There are so many opportunities we've been given."

Nicknamed "Cupcake" by others around SEI, Dixon now works as a receptionist for

the program while taking care of her 3-year-old son, Khali Warren. She said without the lessons she's been given through the program, raising her toddler wouldn't be the same.

"We live by the standards, we value them," Dixon said.

The program's "seven standards" are a mantra among its youth, based on values of integrity and respect. They include: greeting each other every day with a smile and handshake; honoring and respecting each other with proper language and speech;

valuing the space of oneself and others; being mindful of truth and honesty; treasuring cultures, whether it be your own or others; and reflecting beauty both inwardly with understanding and outwardly with appearance.

"If I could sum it all up into one word, it would be that it's a blessing because so many people are watching over you," Dixon said.

Humble beginnings, happy endings

The one person who's always watching over SEI is Tony Hopson Sr., the agency's founder, president and chief executive officer. He planted the seed with a one-week summer sports camp in 1981 and its roots blossomed into a popular meeting place where more than 700 local youth are guided

"It's not just a youth program. You feel it in your heart. These people want to be here and want to help."

— Crescentia Dixon

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Knott Street Boxers Enter Hall of Fame

Northeast gym holds generations of champions

BY KATHERINE BLACKMORE
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After years of fighting for honor, the Knott Street Boxers of northeast Portland have finally found some recognition from the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame. The team that made boxing history from 1956 to 1972 will be inducted with a ceremony on Oct. 11 at the Multnomah Athletic Club.

Being included in these ceremonies has been a long sought goal of the team, having named 10 National Amateur Athletic Union Champion boxers, two Olympic team members and many top 10 rated professional boxers during their heyday.

"It's a long time coming," said Halim Rahsaan, one of Knott Street's champion boxers. "We were really responsible for putting Oregon on the map as far as sports, post and pre-civil rights era."

Rahsaan credits trainer Chuck Lincoln as the backbone of the gym during that time.

"He pushed us, giving us the confidence we needed. He was a father figure, a doctor, a psycholo-

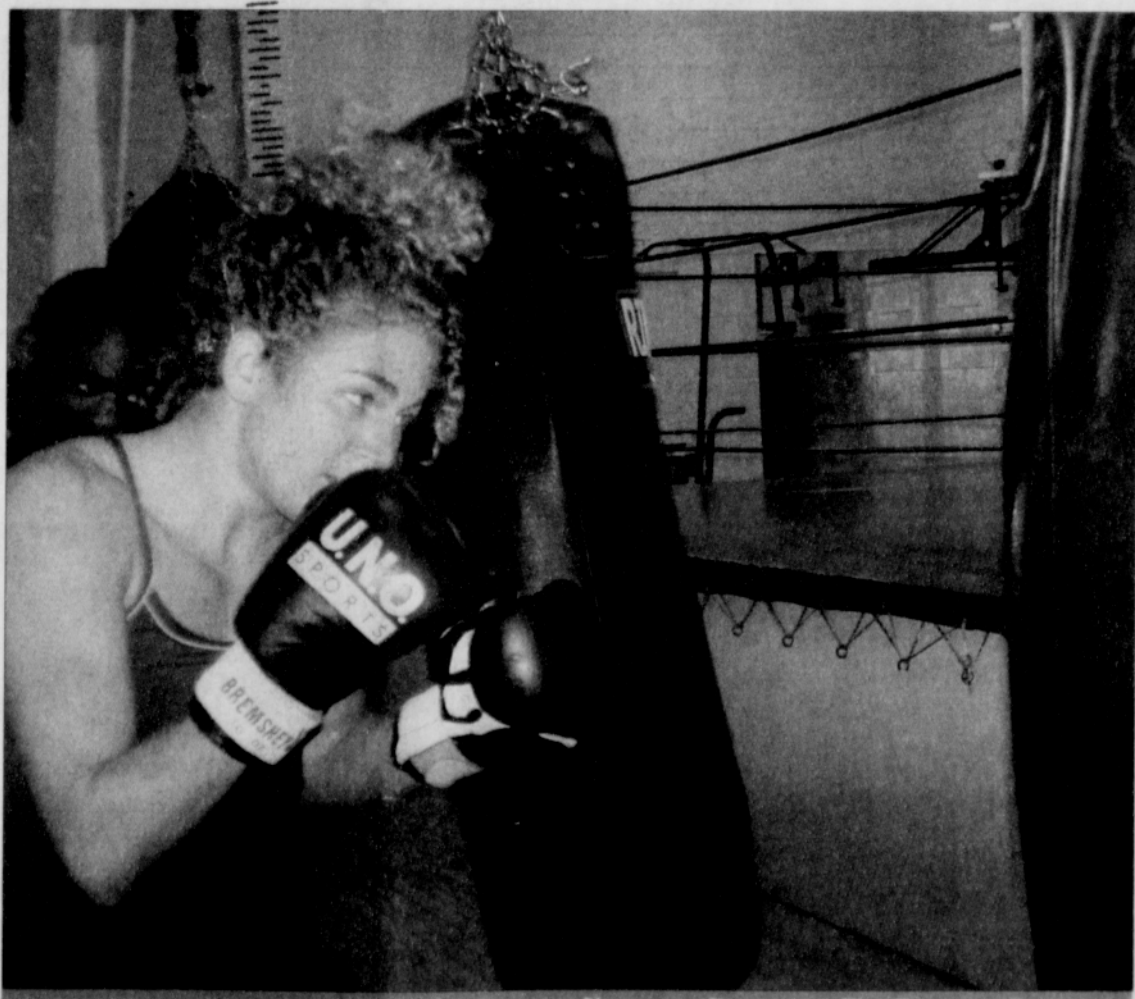


PHOTO BY KATHERINE BLACKMORE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Representing a new generation of boxers at the Knott Street gym in northeast Portland is Laura Dalente.

gist, a sociologist," he said.

Lincoln, a Golden Glove champion who once found it difficult as a welterweight to get professional boxing matches because of his intimidating stance, eventually

turned to coaching, churning out the bread and butter of the Knott Street ring.

"I enjoyed it. I learned a lot from those guys. It was a lot of hard work, but it was enjoyable. I just

stepped in to see how far we could go. We just kept on winning and winning and I got used to it," Lincoln said, grinning.

The team, which has 40 Golden Gloves titles to its name, includes

Thad Spencer, who will be honored in his own right at the induction ceremonies. Spencer was ranked top heavyweight contender to champion Muhammad Ali in 1967.

Although the induction ceremony is limited to 350 people, it will also be broadcast locally on FOX before game one of the World Series on Saturday, Oct. 22.

Those wanting to experience the wonders of a more modern Knott Street Boxing team before the induction ceremony can cheer at the Downtown Rumble, being held on Sunday, Oct. 2 at downtown's Hilton Grand Ballroom. Fighters ranging from ages pre-teen to mid-20s will be boxing in a benefit for the Knott Street Boxing Club and JOIN, a non-profit housing program for Portland's homeless community. The inducted boxers will also be honored at this event.

"There's a lot of young talent that's coming along," Rahsaan said. "I see the tradition being carried on. I like to see the young boxers look up to the older boxers as role models."

Laura Dalente is one of the modern boxers fighting in the Downtown Rumble, nicknamed by trainer Ray Milton as "The Million Dollar Baby That Lives," referring to the Oscar-winning movie starring Hilary Swank as a star female boxer, with Clint Eastwood as her mentor.

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