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“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.”

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in his “I Have a Dream” speech, Aug. 28, 1963

Dr. King’s ‘Beloved Community’

continued ▲ from B11

“Hurricane Katrina and Rita’s horrible aftermath and the neglect from the White House in Washington D.C. was the breaking down of “Beloved Community,” Gordly explained.

She said here at home, suffering comes to people facing

got scolded by my mom for not concentrating on breakfast.”

The reading habit ran in her family.

“My great grandmother read, so did my grandmother, as well as my mother, none of them could seem to put a book down, and then of course, I too joined in on the reading

tations and accountability.”

“That is how it was when I was growing up,” she said. “Our country has lost that and we need to recapture it.”

Gordly said people must also participate more in the political process by voting.

“You cannot afford to keep saying that voting does not mat-



Sen. Avel Gordly

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhuman.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

disparities in healthcare, education and welfare.

“A lot of children still languish in poverty in Oregon with not enough to eat, arriving at school hungry,” Gordly said.

She shook her head at the difficulties people face in getting healthcare, quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who said, “Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhuman.”

Gordly wants to see greater educational opportunities.

“Reading is the key for the younger generation, and everyone for that matter,” she said. “I used to read cereal boxes and

right along with them.”

Gordly also credits travel as a way to acquire knowledge, encouraging folks to get out of their neighborhoods.

“I had the opportunity to travel to Africa when I was much younger in 1971,” she said.

Describing the empowerment of seeing black leaders run the governments of Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal, she said, “My trip to Africa was empowering and my identity was elevated.”

As to what other things people can do for themselves, Gordly said, “We need to have expect-

ter; it is not a privilege not to vote, it is a privilege to vote.”

Reflecting on Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks’s legacy, she said that “Part of our hope as a people is our healing. It is to understand how certain things happened in this country, like where did the alcohol and drugs that ferment our neighborhoods come from? Responsibility starts with one another.”

“The ark comes back to the king,” she said, describing what happens when we don’t take care for each other and more importantly have basic respect for one another.

Separate But Equal?



On the day of Parks’ arrest, the bus driver instructed her and three other black passengers to give their seats to standing white men. Bus drivers were afforded power as a police officer of the city when carrying out orders of equal but separate accommodations. However, blacks seated in the section set aside for them did not have to relinquish their seats to whites unless there were other seats available. The bus was full that day; the driver had violated regulations.