

Celebrating Women's History & Careers

Bike Group Serves Local Women

Unique program helps with repairs

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

On Wednesday evenings you'll find a handful of women, including transgender women and men, filtering into North Portland BikeWorks on Mississippi Avenue. With bikes in tow, they get to work on anything from fixing a flat to overhauling an old Schwinn.

The important thing to remember about the donation-based Women and Trans Bike Night is that it's not about exclusion. The program is geared, rather, to reaching women and people who have experienced gender oppression, said Bob Kendrick, one of the non-profit bike shop's founders and mechanics.

The shop has steadily built a solid cooperative group since opening in the summer of 2002. Men make up the majority of cyclists, but take a look down any Portland street and you'll spot a woman very soon.

In response, BikeWorks has hosted Women and Trans Night since the beginning, inviting an important part of the community to use shop space, bike stands, tools and mechanic expertise, free of charge, for small or ongoing bike projects.

In a city teeming with as many bikes as microbrews, the program may seem unremarkable, but it was the first of its kind in the nation.

Kendrick and mechanic

Jackie Davis, both familiar faces on Wednesday night, said the majority of cyclists come in because their bikes have been sitting, unused, for a while, and they're seeking help with general bike maintenance. BikeWorks gives them access to a complete line of tools and mechanics to teach them the basics in a laid-back workspace.

With a little instruction in a supportive environment, the crescent wrench sitting on the shelf becomes practical, not unfamiliar.

Davis and Kendrick believe that's why the program is successful. They recognize different learning styles and understand the underlying issue of gender socialization.

The tiny shop serves anywhere from four to 20 people weekly. Many come in for single projects, but the shop has its regulars, too.

Janice McKeachern has attended the bike night for the past two years. She's now working on her second bike, converting it from a multi to fixed gear. McKeachern said she's learned a lot about the inner workings of a bike, and is now seeking job as a bike mechanic.

"I was enrolled at a Citybikes overhaul class, but you have to pay," she said. "This has been a great resource."

For more information, email npdxbikeworks@hotmail.com or call 503-287-1098.



BikeWorks mechanic Jackie Davis (left) helps Janice McKeachern convert her bike to a fixed gear.

Church Celebrates 61 Years

Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church, 3138 N. Vancouver Ave., invites the community to its 61st anniversary celebration.

The service will be held at the church on Sunday, March 19 at 3 p.m. The theme is "The

Church that is Moving up and Reaching Out." Dr. R.C. Joints, pastor of New Hope Church and president of the General Baptist Convention of the Northwest, will serve as guest speaker.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Inspiration for Kids

Highland Community Church Rev. Dr. W.G. Hardy, Jr. and his wife Ali (center) join children with new coloring books donated by Amtrak in honor of Black History Month. The Really Big Coloring Books of African-American Leaders were designed to inspire kids.

Open House for Women's Academy Program at Tubman to open in fall

The future Young Women's Academy at Tubman School in north Portland is holding informational sessions for potential students in grades 7 and 8 for the 2006-07 school year.

The Academy is geared toward prepar-

ing students for successful futures by providing them with a rigorous college-preparatory core curriculum while encouraging them to explore the fields of math and science-related careers. The Academy will also work in partnership with families to instill our students with the values that will make them good citizens and strong leaders.

The upcoming informational sessions are scheduled in the Media Center at Tubman,

2231 N. Flint, on Thursday, March 16 from 4-6 p.m.; Monday March 20 from 4-6 p.m.; and Tuesday, March 21 from 6-8 p.m.

The Young Women's Academy is the first all-girls school in Portland Public Schools since the closure of Monroe School for Girls. School leaders say the teaching of a rigorous core curriculum in a single-sex setting is getting increasing national attention as an effective learning model.

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