

METRO

The Portland Observer



High Octane Action Australia's Leigh Warren Dancers dazzle

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SECTION B

Community Calendar

Community Wellness Fair

The non-profit Holladay Park Plaza retirement community will host its 4th Annual Community Wellness Fair on Friday, March 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the main floor of the Holladay Park Plaza, 1300 N.E. 16th. RSVPs are appreciated but not required. For more information call 541-280-2216 or toll-free at 1-800-777-5517.

Grant Rummage Sale

A community rummage with quality items and baked treats sale takes place Saturday, April 8 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Rose City Park United Methodist Church, 5830 N.E. Alameda Ave. benefiting the Grant High School Royal Blues Chamber singers.

Lead-Safe Remodeling

Metro offers household lead test kits and home improvement manuals for do-it-yourselfers working on homes built before 1978 during a free workshop on Saturday, April 8 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Historic Kenton Firehouse, 8105 N. Brandon Ave. No registration required, for more information call 503-988-4000.

Get Wet Indoors

All March, spring break extended hours take place at the Columbia, Matt Dishman, Mt. Scott and Southwest Community Center pools. Register for spring classes by calling Portland Parks and Recreating at 503-823-5130.

Courageous Moms Seminar

Rick Johnson will present Courageous Moms: Raising Boys to Become Good Men. March 18, 9 a.m. to noon at Parkrose High School and Community Center, 12003 N.E. Shaver St. Childcare and activities for kids provided. Cost is free, but limited to first 100 registrants. To register call 503-665-3761 or e-mail rick@betterdads.net.

Elephant Birthday

Celebrate Elephantastic! It's Packy's 44th birthday party, Saturday, April 8 and 9 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Oregon Zoo. Birthday cake for everyone, Packy too! Cake served at 2 p.m., free with zoo admission. For more information, call 503-226-1561.

Creative Space For Dance

Aurora Dance Studio, 5433 N.E. 30th, 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 more information.

Women in NAACP

Women in NAACP meets from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first Saturday of each month at the American Red Cross Building, 3131 N. Vancouver. For questions, call 503-249-6263.

Work Against Abuse

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.

Red Cross Teaches Safety

The American Red Cross offers a range of safety classes for crisis situations, from learning how to baby sit to performing CPR. The courses are intended for children aged 8 through adult. For more information visit www.redcross-pdx.org.

36
years of
community service

Sharing Creative Expressions

Siren's Echo backs student show

Jefferson High School students will share their creative expressions about their lives, their community, and their world during a "Take Back the Mic" celebration featuring the hip-hop and R&B group Siren's Echo.

The community is invited to the free-for-all-ages event, Friday, March 24 on the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College in north Portland. A student arts show kicks off the special night at 6 p.m. in Room 104 of the new Moriarty Arts & Humanities building, followed by student poets at 7 p.m. and a special performance by Siren's Echo at 8 p.m.

Siren's Echo will light up the stage with themes of justice, community, rhyme and soul. The Portland group is known for its tight cuts and neck-breaking beat, bringing real, crafting songs with intelligence and heart. These ladies have the ability to bring it hard and rugged or soft and soulful. With the combination of powerfully, emotional production and lyrics of struggle, Siren's Echo pull you out of pain and lift you above the madness.

"Take Back the Mic" is sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee's United Voices Youth Program, Veterans For Peace Chapter 72, Portland Community College, local visual and performing artists and Jefferson High School teachers and students.



Siren's Echo will perform Friday on the Portland Community College Cascade Campus in north Portland for a "Take Back the Mic" poetry and art show featuring Jefferson High School students.

Mt. Olivet Drawn into School Battle

Over church backed academy

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A redesign strategy for Jefferson High School is finally coming together, but amid the shuffle, the recent approval of a church-backed academy has incited alarms by some parents and community members.

The Academy of Character and Ethics is sponsored by one of Portland's oldest African American congregations, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. It is slated to become an alternative school inside Jefferson High School this fall.

Maxine Kilcrease, assistant superintendent for the Portland School District, said final approval for the school is pending before the School Board.

The academy plans to focus on character, ethics and academic rigor, and includes elements of an early college high school model. But the opposition comes from those unhappy with its connection to a church.

"My primary concern is the outrageousness of a church-sponsored school in pub-

lic school," said Julie Poust of the watchdog group Neighborhood Schools Alliance.

Anne Trudeau, another member of the group, accused the academy of being formed undemocratically, violating the district's non-discrimination rules and ignoring the separation of church and state.

Basic Rights Oregon, a gay rights group, raised the issue of Mt. Olivet providing \$15,000 to the backers of Ballot Measure 37, the initiative that outlawed marriage between same-sex couples in the state.

"What type of ethics will be taught at a school with leadership whose values include the core value, according to Mt. Olivet's website: 'Marriage is the permanent union of one man and one woman,'" Basic Rights executive Roey Thorpe said.

Kilcrease flatly rejected that religion will play a role at the school.

She said the academy will have a contract with the school district and receive public monies on a daily rate per student. A self-elected board will make all school decisions.

Another complaint was in how the school was approved.

Other opposition is coming from how the academy was approved.

Trudeau said the school was not

brought up at any community Jefferson Design team meetings. Only one member of that team is on the new implementation team, a follow-up committee formed last month, which includes Mt. Olivet's pastor, James Martin.

A letter written by Phillips earlier this month didn't offer a direct response about religious concerns, but focused ideally on the academy forging new territory and creating a niche at the newly redesigned school. Phillips expressed regret that many inaccurately believe the academy is a faith-based program.

One of the academy's main architects, school administrator and coach Paula Kinney, said a church/school partnership is actually a good thing for the community.

Kinney has a track record of starting alternative schools. She grew up attending a black church in Des Moines, Iowa. She said the church was her central source of information.

"In the African American community, black churches are the hubs. It's not uncommon for a church and a community to come together."

She said Mt. Olivet won't influence curriculum, but congregation members will provide after-school tutoring.



Portland School Superintendent Vicki Phillips

'Open Eyes' Unites Social Consciousness

Art and social justice are coming together with local men and women committing themselves to supporting the principles of the Millions More Movement.

Troy Muhammad and Sultan X of the Muhammad Study Group, through their company Open Eyes Productions, are among those working to unify artists through their talents for the upliftment of the human family.

Similar to the Million Man March in 1995, many of these attendees are striving to unify their local communities. Their televised production, "Open Eyes," a post tribute to Saviors' Day 2006, was recently televised on public access Channel 22.



For more television broadcasting pertaining to artistic and cultural development, Portlanders can tune to "Open Eyes" each Friday at 5 p.m.

Muhammad Study Group participants gather for the production of "Open Eyes," a media presentation to support the principles of the Millions More Movement.