

RELIGION

Mississippi Pastor Thanked by Congregation

Looks back one year after displacement

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

It's been one year since Rev. Byron A. Bolton and his family made a new home in Oregon.

Now his Portland congregation will thank him during an appreciation service Sunday, Nov. 5.

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast the Boltons were uprooted along with their former home and all of its surroundings from Hattiesburg, Miss. They landed in Portland, a place as foreign to the Mississippi family as another country.

Bolton and his wife Marvia were invited to Portland, along with their two daughters and a three-year-old granddaughter, by the Greater Faith Baptist Church, 931 N. Skidmore St.

Shortly after receiving a phone call from the deacon of Greater Faith, he questioned the validity of moving his family so far.

"But then again, to come to a congregation of 30 people, how could I survive?" he asked himself. "But God directed my path here."

Culture shock, greater expenses and a total absence of their large family have made for a difficult path, but the minister said his faith is now stronger than ever.

"For my daughters to adapt is mind wrecking," he said. "They are still working through this, because our phone bill is still tremendously high."

Bolton has made strides since becoming pastor of the established but fledgling church that has grown from 30 members to nearly 100 in the year since he arrived.

He has found success in growing congregations before, as in



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rev. Byron Bolton and his wife Marvia left the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast one year ago to pastor the congregation of north Portland's Greater Faith Baptist Church.

Mississippi where he expanded the youth program six times over.

But Portland has presented its own set of opportunities, namely in the number of people addicted to drugs and alcohol.

Along with an innumerable number of people he's ministered to at Miracles Club, a recovery center for African Americans, Bolton personally recalls the six individuals he has ministered to at Greater Faith who chose to turn from drugs.

Bolton and his wife keep busy

with the church, and his daughters stay occupied as students at Roosevelt High School, but homesick feelings stir within them often.

"It's hard to return to Portland," Bolton said of his trips back to Mississippi to deal with his national ministry. "Every time I talk about it, to at least smell the different trees and smell the different flowers... it brings it all back."

Greater Faith invites the public to participate in the Nov. 5 appreciation service for Bolton, at 4 p.m.

at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 3138 N. Vancouver Ave. The Bolton Brothers Gospel of Hattiesburg, Miss. will perform during the gala event, joined by other performers, ministers and evangelists.

A Brother-to-Brother Crusade will precede the service, happening Wednesday, Nov. 1 through Friday, Nov. 3 at 7 p.m. at Greater Faith Baptist Church.

For more information about these events or others, call 503-710-2000 or 503-247-2992.

Diversity Commission Forming

continued ▲ from Metro

It will also serve as an early warning system for tensions in the community, offer programs to help neighborhoods resolve conflicts and reach out to members of under-represented communities.

The mayor's office has spoken with dozens of community leaders to discuss the need for such a commission. It found people wanting a standing, independent agency that could shine a spotlight on problems and advise the City Council on policies critical to diverse communities, including such areas as minority homeownership, urban renewal, racial profiling, and community policing.

Other Northwest communities with similar commissions include Seattle, Salem, Eugene, Medford, Washington County, Jackson County, King County, Thurston County and Kitsap County.

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& November 5th 1pm-6pm

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- (4) Homemade baked holiday pastries-cakes, pies, cookies, brownies and fudge.



Call for more information at
503-317-0622

'Love One Another' Memorial

"Love One Another," a candlelight memorial vigil for James Chasse Jr., the mentally ill man who died in police custody after a confrontation in downtown Portland, will be held Friday, Oct. 27 at 7 p.m. at the First Congregational Church 1126 S.W. Park Ave.

Chasse is being remembered as a peaceful man who wished no harm on anyone. People attending the vigil are asked to honor the family's wishes for a respectful event. Messages to be communicated apart from memo-

ries of James should be focused on simple, positive phrases such as "Justice," "Love," and "Remember James Chasse, Jr."

The event is being co-coordinated by members of the Chasse family, the Parkrose Community United Church of Christ, Portland Copwatch, a grassroots group promoting police accountability through citizen action.

For more information call Portland Copwatch at 503-236-3065.

Girls Club Fashion Show

The Community Girls Club will host a fundraiser and fashion show, titled I'm All I Can Be, on Saturday, Oct. 28 at 6 p.m. at Calvary Christian Community Center, 126 N.E. Alberta St.

The evening will feature a show by the club, plus local acts The Light, 1st Infantry and other artists. A cover charge of \$7 includes refreshments.

Homecoming Parade Fun



Jefferson students wrap up a tailgate party and assembly with a Homecoming Parade last Friday. The Demos played a strong game that evening under new coach Anthony Stoudamire, defeating Madison 49-6. The Demos will play at Marshall this Friday, Oct. 27.

PHOTO BY ISAIAH BOUIE/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Greater Faith Baptist Church
presents
Our Pastor's 1st Year Appreciation

featuring

"The Bolton Brothers Of Hattiesburg, MS"



November 1-5, 2006

"Brother-to-Brother Crusade", 7:00 pm, Wed-Fri, November 1st, 2nd, & 3rd, at Greater Faith Baptist Church.

"First Lady's Day Banquet", 11:00 am, Saturday, November 4th, at Vancouver Ave Baptist Church. Ticket price \$20.00 per person.

"Fight Against Drugs Gospel Concert featuring The Bolton Brothers of Hattiesburg, MS", 6:00 pm, Saturday, November 4th, at Vancouver Ave Baptist Church.

"Pastor Bolton Appreciation Service", 4:00 pm, Sunday, November 5th, at Vancouver Ave Baptist Church.

For More Information, call: 503-710-2000 or 503-247-2992

Home buying Classes at PCLT

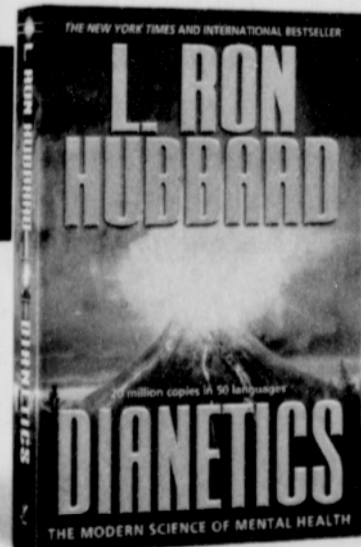
Portland Community Land Trust helps first time and low-income homebuyers purchase homes at below market price. Attend a free, one-hour class to learn more about the program. Contact Kelly@pclt.org or call 503-493-0293.

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