

METRO

The Portland Observer

'Middle Passage' Author Coming to Portland

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37

years of
community service

SECTION B

Community Calendar

ZooTeens

The Oregon Zoo needs 300 high school students, for the summer, to assist in educating zoo visitors. If you love animals and teaching others, call 503-220-2449.

International Night

Saturday, Feb. 17, the University of Portland will host a night of international sights, sounds, and tastes from around the world in the University Commons. Dinner will be held from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and the show runs from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tickets are \$8 per adult at the door.

Ghana Women's Art Exhibit

WSU Vancouver, 14204 N.E. Salmon Creek Ave., hosts a powerful West African art exhibit with guest lecturer and well-known Ghanaian art historian Nii Quarcoo. The gallery hours are Monday thru Thursday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Fridays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 360-546-9580.

School Rally in Salem

Monday, Feb. 19, show your support to improve Portland Public Schools. Supporters will rally rain-or-shine on the capital steps in Salem at noon.

Sisters Fat Tuesday

Tuesday, Feb. 20, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 137 S.W. Sixth Ave., Sisters of the Road, a community advocacy group, will celebrate breaking ground on the Personalist Center expansion, with free Fat Tuesday festivities include music, gumbo, and Mardi Gras fun.

Wolf Family Encounters

Saturday, March 3, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., the Oregon Zoo, presents "Don't be afraid of the big bad wolf", a unique opportunity for children ages 8-13 years old (children must be accompanied by an adult), to explore and learn the nature of wolves. Call 503-220-2781 for more information.

Weight Loss Series

New Seasons Market at Northeast 33rd and Killingsworth Street will host free weight loss classes on Feb. 28, March 28, and April 25 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Humboldt Elementary Fund Raiser

Tuesday, March 6, McMenamins Chapel Pub, 430 N. Killingsworth, will contribute 50 percent of all food and beverage sales after 5 p.m. to the Humboldt Elementary School programs. Enjoy a delicious meal and help support the school.

End the War Now Rally

Sunday, March 18, Pioneer Courthouse Square. Oregonians will mark the 4th anniversary of the Iraq War, with a peaceful march through downtown Portland at 1:30 p.m. Call 503-230-9427 for more information.

Fostering Diversity

Thursday, April 26 thru Friday, April 27, Mt. Hood Community College and Portland State University, will host the two-day conference to address critical diversity-related issues in the Portland and Gresham communities, with educational, business and cultural leaders. Call 503-491-7254 for more information.

Black History Foundation

The Black History Museum of Oregon is seeking the brilliant minds of concerned individuals to help in restructuring the museum foundation's committee. Call 503-284-0617 for more information.

Community Support

The African American Health Coalition, a non-profit that touches the lives of millions of African Americans each year, reminds you to support your community organization. All donations, grants, and gifts are tax deductible. For more information, visit aahc-portland.org.

Bradley-Angle House

The Bradley-Angle House needs volunteers to help its outreach against domestic violence. Women of color and bilingual women are encouraged to call. For more information, call 503-282-9940.

Parenting Classes

Newborns don't come with instruction manuals but parents and parents-to-be can attend classes through Providence Health Systems to learn about a variety of topics from pain and childbirth to breastfeeding to infant CPR and much more. For a schedule of events, call 503-574-6595 or visit: providence.org/classes.

Portland Observer 'Mother of the Year'

Opal Strong lives up to her name

BY NIA DIVG
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In ancient cultures much importance was given to the naming of a child, for it was believed that he or she would live up to the inherent qualities of that name. Although Opal Strong came to her name via marriage, this belief holds true today.

The Portland Observer has named Mrs. Strong our "Mother of the Year" following her recent surprise 90th birthday gala at New Song Church Community Center.

Family members came from as far away as Tulsa, Okla. and New York City, and Ghana, West Africa, to attend the Feb. 3 celebration.

Special guests included such dignitaries as State Sen. Avel Gordly, Major Lewis "Bud" Fuqua of the Salvation Army, Willie Brown of the Northeast Neighborhood Coalition and African American Chamber of Commerce President Roy Jay.

Each presented Strong with commemorative awards honoring her many decades



PHOTO BY NIA DIVG/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Opal Strong glows with matriarchal pride at festivities held in her honor.

of community service and activism in a variety of endeavors.

Featured surprise guests were Strong's sister, Lucille Reed and her niece Patrice McDonald, both of Tulsa, who reunited after 17 years in an ecstasy of joyful embraces and tears.

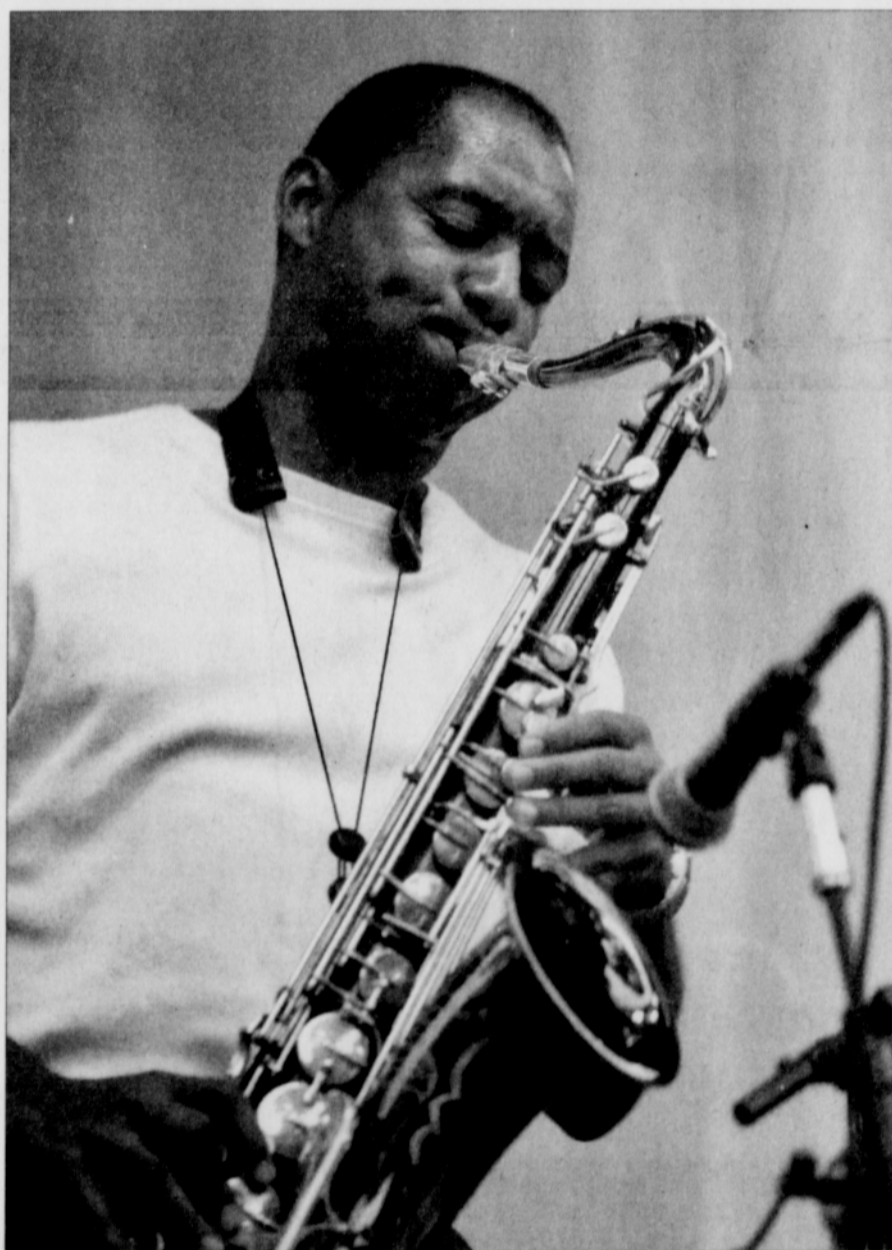
The three-hour gala featured poetry, vocal and musical performances by various members of this tremendously talented and successful family, who poured out their hearts and souls to an appreciative audience and a sometimes emotionally overcome matriarch.

Daughter Gail Strong-Price and grandson Sean Strong sang musical selections; granddaughters Sonda Fields and Catherine Rhodes performed a violin duet; original poems were read by daughter-in-law Bea Strong, great-granddaughters McKenzie and Michelle Strong and great-grandson Demetrius Rhodes. Son Luther Strong Jr. and family member Eileen Gilchrist also hosted the celebration.

After an invocation prayer by grandson Dr. Rev. Mark Strong, pastor of Life

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Two Hot Weeks of Portland Jazz



Saxophonist Branford Marsalis kicks off the 4th Annual Portland Jazz Festival on Friday, Feb. 16 at Newmark Theater at the Portland Center for the Performing Arts.

Festival opens Friday with Chick Corea and Gary Burton

The 2007 Portland Jazz Festival kicks off Friday with two full weeks of events.

Festivities begin with dual headline concerts featuring Chick Corea and Gary Burton, 7:30 p.m. at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, and Branford Marsalis, 9:30 p.m. at Newmark Theater at the Portland

Center for the Performing Arts.

Grammy-award winning trumpeter Roy Hargrove, performing with his jazz quintet as a fundraiser for Cascadia Behavioral Health Care, kicks off the second week on Friday, Feb. 23 at 8 p.m. at the Newmark Theater.

The festival will officially close with the



Jazz pianist Geri Allen performs with the Geri Allen Trio Saturday, Feb. 17 at the Portland Hilton Pavilion Ballroom.



American jazz legend Chick Corea is one of the most influential artists in his genre. Corea performs with Gary Burton on Friday, Feb. 16 at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

annual "First Jazz" performance, presented by the Jazz Society of Oregon, Sunday, Feb. 25 at 4:00 p.m. at the Hilton Portland

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Report Finds Living Wage Jobs Scarce

Gap widening for working families

When it comes to finding a job in Oregon, the numbers just don't add up.

For every job opening that pays a living wage in Oregon, there are as many as 20 job seekers. These are the findings of the annual study, Searching for Work that Pays: 2007 Northwest Job Gap Study,

compiled by the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations.

The study compares the number of available living wage jobs to the number of job seekers and calculates the percentage of available living wage jobs based, primarily, on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The report finds that the Northwest economy is not creating enough jobs to meet the demands of everyday life, with the gap widening for workers that have

families. In Oregon, 84 percent of open jobs pay less than a living wage for a household of three, a single adult with two children.

The consequences for workers struggling to make ends meet are staggering. Many families are forced to make tough decisions, juggling scarce dollars between buying milk for the baby or gas for the car.

There are renewed calls before the Oregon Legislature in Salem to help people find living wage jobs.

Gov. Kulongoski has introduced the Skill Up Oregon bill that will establish a program to award grants to local and regional workforce investment boards to provide workforce training to individuals to become employed in high-demand occupations.

The advocacy group Oregon Action has proposed an amendment to this bill that would help evaluate its success if

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