

METRO

The Portland Observer



Civil Rights Movement Pins

Easily-made, low cost pins were the badges and insignia of a generation seeking equality

See Black History Month, page B3



37
years of
community service

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Morning Star Concert

PO Soul Entertainment has organized a benefit concert to assist with the rebuilding of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church. Many of Portland best Gospel acts will be present and performing. The event is Saturday, March 3 at 6 p.m. at Calvary Christian Center, 126 N.E. Alberta. A \$10 donation is requested.

Humboldt 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.

Zoo Teens Needed

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.

Gloria McMurtry

Wednesday, Feb. 28, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Enterbeing, 1603 N.E. Alberta St., Gloria McMurtry, proprietor of the Talking Drum and Reflections, will share her personal story. All are welcome.

Used Book Sale

Wednesday, March 28, from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m., the Multnomah County Library used book store at 216 N.E. Knott St. will celebrate its 19th anniversary by offering all used merchandise at 55 percent off.

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.

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.

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.

Redefining 'Black Woman'

Performance poet revolutionizes with her words

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Much like feminist and race studies author bell hooks has been known to change the way we perceive the world, Portland artist Rochelle D. "Ro Deezy" Hart writes, sings and slams her words to transform our perception of African Americans, and specifically black women.

Through her stage presence in the local hip-hop scene, Ro Deezy is an activist, spoken word poet and recording artist. She believes in advocacy for all, but identifies as a Black Nationalist, which makes some people nervous. She has fought for civil rights professionally in a former position at the public defender's office, helping people reclaim their lives by expunging certain convictions from their records.

During the day she studies as a psychology student at Concordia College in northeast Portland. Her ultimate dream is to receive her doctorate in forensic science and write a book dealing with the legal aspects of psychology.

2007 has already proved to be an impactful year — she is getting married this summer (but she won't divulge any details about him) and plans to study abroad in Ghana later this year.

With her hand in so many pots at the age of 30, Ro Deezy is pursuing higher education so she can bring all these elements together.

"I've been doing this non-academically," she said, "but with a degree I'm taking it to the next level."

But it is through her written words, an artistic outlet she discovered in a typewriter as a child, that Ro Deezy has experienced one of her most successful achievements — giving voice to black women to change the way we perceive the world.

Through her book "I Woke Up and Put My Crown On," Ro Deezy collected the biographies of everyday women around the United States. Across all backgrounds



PHOTO BY MATTHEW GINN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rochelle D. "Ro Deezy" Hart tackles issues of social justice in a collision of careers as a local hip hop performance poet, author and recording artist. She is pursuing a doctorate in forensic science to bring all these elements together.

I find it alarming to still equate black womanhood with struggle. We obviously haven't come that far.

- Rochelle D. "Ro Deezy" Hart

of income, age and social status, together these "76 voices" offer a glimpse of black women not often portrayed in mainstream society. With each individual story, their words prove wrong common stereotypes.

"I find it alarming to still equate black womanhood with struggle," she said. "We obviously haven't come that far."

Each woman was asked the same 19, open-ended questions. Their replies run like a thread through the pages; with never a passive response, they offer personal

descriptions of strength and accomplishment mixed with dignity and grace.

The title refers specifically to black women waking up from previous lifestyles that were unhealthy, and becoming who they are," Ro Deezy said.

"I was running into the most phenomenal women," she said, "but we don't hear their stories...this gives them a voice."

The book doesn't scrutinize or criticize, and it doesn't preach or lament. But by exposing the multiple dimensions of the 76 voices, Ro Deezy has created a politically charged composition in its ability to redefine the perception of black women.

Many of us have allowed our views to be shaped by society. For hundreds of years Americans were fed the image of a black woman as just a mother and wife. Today the media tells us black women are suffering more and more from depression and HIV/AIDS. And in this age, the phrase "strong black woman" is still sometimes twisted into something negative or intimi-

dating.

Ro Deezy's 76 voices contradict these myths. These women are admirable because yes, many are wives and mothers, but they have lived through divorce, won awards, dreamt of writing novels in Paris, moved to strange cities and walked across many stages. Their stories are ordinary and extraordinary all at once.

There isn't a person with nothing to gain from this book.

"76 Voices" is for anyone who has been threatened by the phrase "strong black woman." For anyone who has begun a sentence with "I'm not a racist, but..." For anyone who hasn't had a black female in their life, and for anyone who has never had the luxury of getting outside of their own head and trying on a new perspective.

Ro Deezy's sixth book, "What Else Did You Think I Would Say," will be released nationally later this year from Publish America.



Adrienne Livingston

Black United Fund Promotes Director

Adrienne J. Livingston is the newly promoted executive director of the Black United Fund.

The native Oregonian has worked with the community group for over six years as its campaign manager, director of major gifts and as an associate director. She became interim executive director when Amina Anderson relocated to Washington, D.C.

"There is power in unity and I look forward to building strong partnerships

in the community," Livingston said.

Livingston received a Bachelor's degree in marketing, international business and international studies from Oregon State University. She received the 2002 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to study in the Dominican Republic for two years. While residing there, she worked at the American Chamber of Commerce of the Dominican Republic.

Black United Fund of Oregon is a phil-

anthropic and community development institution committed to the social and economic empowerment of Oregon's low-income communities.

The organization was created in 1983 to address the disproportionately low level of charitable dollars given to organizations serving communities of color. Over 20 years, the Black United raised \$4 million through workplace giving campaigns and other generous donations.

McMenamins to Renovate Old Temple

Ethos gives up music center plans

Ethos, Inc. has given up plans to restore the dilapidated Masonic Temple on North Commercial Avenue into a music academy, instead selling the property to the local McMenamins brew pub chain.

The non-profit music education group decided that its limited funds would best be used to increase the capacity of its existing programs and to complete the renovations on its headquarters located a few blocks away at 10 N. Killingsworth St.

Originally built in 1923, the Masonic Temple has been boarded up and vacant since a fire rendered it uninhabitable in 1981.

The transfer of ownership greatly increases the presence of McMenamins in the neighborhood across from Jefferson High School, the North Portland Library and Portland Community College.

Just last month, the chain known for preserving historic buildings across Portland and the Northwest opened the



The dilapidated Masonic Temple on North Commercial Avenue across from Jefferson High School has been purchased by McMenamins. The local brew pub empire just opened its latest restaurant and bar next door to the site at the former Killingsworth Chapel of the Chimes.

Chapel Pub and moved its administrative offices into the former Little Chapel of the Chimes property, adjacent to the temple.

McMenamins said it plans to use the temple acquisition for community event space and for possible office expansion. The company has also agreed to let Ethos use the temple for community events several times a year once renovations are complete.

In the meantime, the McMenamins is donating use of its Crystal Ballroom to Ethos once a year for community concerts.

"As neighbors, we're glad that a community minded business like McMenamins can complete the restoration of this historic structure. We're confident that the Masonic Temple will be in good hands," said Charles Lewis, Ethos founder and executive director.

Shortly after purchasing the Masonic Temple in 2003, Ethos also purchased its current 7,500 square foot headquarters. Unlike the temple, however, Ethos staff and volunteers have been able to do much of the renovation work themselves.