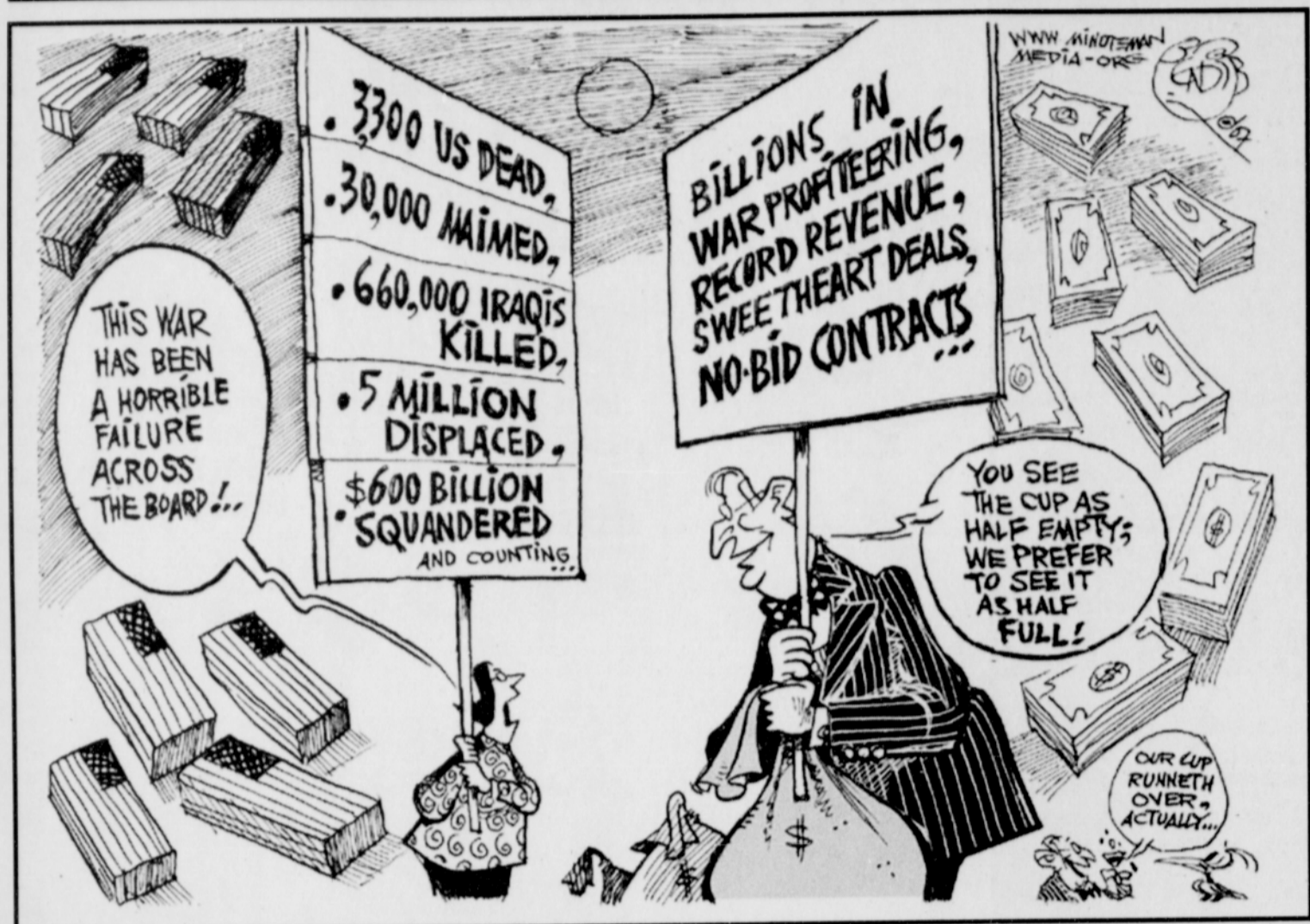


# OPINION

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## Getting Your Groove On:

### Busting a move can pave way for better health

BY MARC H. MORIAL  
In 2003 the National Urban League undertook a more focused and aggressive approach to health issues in light of serious disparities in the physical well being of African Americans compared to whites.



women. Roughly half of African Americans lead inactive lifestyles compared to 38 percent of whites, the CDC contends. And cancer is most likely to hit black men than any other ethnic group and gender, followed by white men. If the African American community continues down this road, we'll never be able to close the gaps that exist between us and mainstream America. That is why we need to get serious about becoming more active and eating less. And that is not as difficult as you think. Incremental changes to your lifestyle - adding 2,000 more steps a day and cutting calories by 100 - can halt weight gain.

America on the Move found that dancing is double the workout that walking is. So we banded together with the group, PepsiCo, YMCA and the National Council of La Raza to help communities of color get their dance on.

to stave off major illness for as long as possible - not only in terms of physical but fiscal health as unforeseen medical expenses can wreak all kinds of havoc on a family's bottom line, especially if your uninsured as 19 percent of African Americans are.

Back in 2006, the health non-profit America on the Move (AOM) joined with us to launch the Healthy Steps program to get more Americans, especially in communities of color, off the couch and into their walking shoes.

Even when you're covered, there's no guarantee that you won't be driven into the poor house by an unexpected medical emergency. According to a 2005 Harvard University study, 50 percent of bankruptcy filers, a majority (68 percent) with health insurance, attributed their situation to unforeseen medical crises. And the average out-of-pocket medical debt incurred by those who declared bankruptcy was roughly \$12,000, which is twice the average net worth of African Americans.

AOM found that dancing is double the workout that walking is. So we banded together with the group, PepsiCo, YMCA and the National Council of La Raza to help communities of color get their dance on. We kicked off the Smart Spot Dance! initiative with Mario Lopez of Dancing with the Stars, LaChanze of Broadway hit The Color Purple and veteran choreographer Maria Torres.

This is an issue we cannot afford to ignore, especially in the African-American community, where rates of diabetes, heart disease and obesity are higher than other ethnic groups. In our 2006 State of Black America, the health status of blacks was almost 76 percent of that of whites. According to the Centers for Disease Control, African-American women are roughly twice as likely to suffer from hypertension and to be overweight or obese as white

Busting a move is so much more than a leisure activity. It's also a great way to get fit and lose weight, which translates into an improved quality of life on so many levels - physical, spiritual and financial. Given the current state of health of African Americans nationwide, our community must take some major steps now later to ensure that we'll be around for our golden years. If not for ourselves, for our children and their children. Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.

## PCC CASCADE CONNECTION Weekend College for Busy People

BY ALGIE GATEWOOD  
GUARANTEED OPPORTUNITY

My past two years as President of Portland Community College's Cascade Campus have been marked by an unusual honor: during each of those years, the top community college scholar in Oregon has been a Cascade Campus student. Now, among the ranks of campus presidents, such a thing is a feather in one's cap. It brings recognition to Cascade Campus, it stimulates interest among members of the community, and it adds a little healthy competition into the mix. It gives me a measure of bragging rights, even though it is the students themselves who have done the heavy academic lifting. But this year in particular, amid the accolades and hoopla, a salient fact stands out. This year's top scholar, Lisa Hummel, is an extraordinarily hard-working and

dedicated student who deserves every bit of the recognition she has received and will receive when she is honored next month at a nationwide convention of community colleges in Tampa, Fla. Lisa's achievements, however, were made possible by a seemingly simple but all-important factor: accessibility. Had she not been in a position to attend classes at PCC, she would not have been able to excel in the way she has, and her future would look decidedly different than it does as this moment. There is no Ivy League exclusivity on community college campuses. It is a point of pride for us that we exist to serve everyone in the community, regardless of background, age, race or economic status. To get a start on her education, Lisa took advantage of a Cascade Campus program called Project Independence, which helps displaced

homemakers transition into higher education or the workplace. The program enabled her to bridge the gap between her dream of going to college and the reality of actually doing it. This question of accessibility must always be at the front of my mind and those of my fellow community college administrators. We must always look for ways to make community college more accessible to everyone, to help would-be students bridge their personal gaps the way that Lisa did. It is with this notion of accessibility in mind that PCC is launching the Weekend College program this Spring Term, which Cascade Campus is privileged to host. Weekend College exists to help those people who want to attend classes but are barred by that most elusive of factors - time. By offering courses from Friday evenings through Sunday afternoons, Weekend College reaches out to those people whose



BY ALGIE GATEWOOD

work and/or family lives simply prevent them from attending classes during the week. So for those of you who would like to go to school but are busy living your lives during the week-day hours, I would like to propose a bargain. If you will give Weekend College at Cascade Campus a try - and take that first step toward a degree, a change of careers, or simply a broadening of your personal horizons - I will continue to do my utmost at Cascade Campus to make higher education even more accessible to you, your family, your friends and your neighbors. Trust me on this one - it's a good bargain, one in which everybody wins. You will never regret seizing an educational opportunity. I guarantee it. Just ask Lisa Hummel. Algie Gatewood is president of the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College in north Portland.

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## Letters to the Editor

### Hate Crimes

Recent events in Eugene at the 5A Basketball Tournament show exactly how far this NCAA-sanctioned college town has improved in 40-plus years. I am a former "Teddy/Roughrider" from 1962-1966 (Vincent Earl Waites, four-year letterman and high school All American artist/fine arts.) In all my years at Roosevelt, we were always the school from the 'sticks,' etc. But we were never treated with racial slurs, threats and federal hate crime violations. Eugene has continually passed itself off as the last vestiges of the 1960s love era. Now we know what kind of love for their fellow man they intend. I've read the articles in the Oregonian about the students wanting to sit and talk with the

perpetrators of these vicious crimes. You do not sit with them and want to have a "friendly chat!" You prosecute the Eugene School District, the schools involved and the Oregon High School Athletic Association for permitting these events to take place. If the state Board of Education cannot and will not protect students of any ethnic, gender or age group at state of Oregon athletic events or any other public taxpayer-sponsored student activities, then we are reverting to pre-desegregation eras. Prosecute the violators in federal court for the commissions of hate crimes. Do not condone the behavior at any level of life in this state! Jean E. Vincent (Waites) Northeast Portland

### Reconsider Community Colleges

Once again the Legislature is furthering the deterioration of Oregon's community colleges and higher education system. The newly released Ways and Means Co-Chairs' budget does little to reverse the six-year slide in state support for higher education. These reductions have resulted in lost opportunity for thousands of Oregon students, and this new budget level doesn't begin to restore those losses. We need a strong K-12 school system, but if public community

colleges and universities can't offer the courses and programs students need, at the price they can afford, where will our high school graduates go? I hope the Legislature reconsiders this budget, finds revenue to fund needed programs and services at all levels of education, and begins to rebuild what was once a world-class education system in this state. Preston Pulliams Portland Community College District President