

METRO

The Portland Observer



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**Def Jam's
Rihanna**
Barbados
beauty grows
as young artist
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37
years of
community service

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Zoo Spring Break Fun

Through Saturday, April 7, the Oregon Zoo will host tropical island fun and events for spring break. For more information, call 503-226-1561 or visit oregonzoo.org.

Vancouver Outdoor Market

Saturdays and Sundays, thru October 27, the Vancouver Outdoor Market will feature fresh produce, food, and arts and crafts. The market also offers free Wi-Fi. Saturday market hours are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays the hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Healthy Kids Fair

Saturday, April 7, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Legacy Emanuel Hospital: Atrium, 501 N. Graham, will host the 23rd annual fair to introduce children to the hospital and caregivers. Scheduled activities include egg hunts, photos with the Easter Bunny, healthy kid checks, and much more. This is a free event.

Rabbit Romp

Saturday, April 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Oregon Zoo, 4001 S.W. Canyon Rd., will host an Easter egg hunt every 20-minute for children ages 3-10 years old with a special hunt for toddlers 2 and under. Visit oregonzoo.org or call 503-226-1561 for more information.

Life after High School

A Career and Educational Opportunities Fair, a venue for insight into local businesses, trade apprenticeships, summer work programs and educational opportunities takes place Monday, April 9, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Portland State University Smith Ballroom, downtown. For more information, call 503-230-9427.

Elephantastic

Saturday and Sunday, April 14 & 15, the Oregon Zoo invites guest to celebrate Packy the elephant's 45th birthday; activities include special performances by Packy's pachyderm-pals, with cake for everyone at 2 p.m. on Saturday. Free with zoo admission.

African American Council

You're invited on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. when the African American Advisory Council meets at the King Facility, 4815 N.E. Seventh Ave. Call 503-823-0000 for more information.

Financial Aid Workshop

Saturday, April 21, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Mt. Hood Community College Office of Financial Aid will host financial aid workshops in the College Library, Room 3333. The seminars begin at 9:30 a.m. and continue each half hour throughout the day. Call 503-491-7262 for more information.

Neighborhood Clean Up

Saturday, April 21, the North Portland-Earth Day clean-up project invites residents to drop off unwanted recyclable goods to 4340 N. Lombard. For more drop off sites and information on how you can help clean up the neighborhood, call 503-823-4099.

Urban Scavenger Hunt

Saturdays and Sundays, April 21-22 and April 28-29, the Give a Buck for Buckman Association will host an architectural urban scavenger hunt to help raise awareness to preserve the historical neighborhood. Join the fun, learn something new and make a difference. Visit pyung.com/dev or call 503-236-2214.

Women's Health Conference

Saturday, April 28, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Oregon Convention Center, New York columnist, Jane Brody, will be discussing issues related to women's health. To register visit ohsuwomenshealth.com or call 503-494-0712.

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.

Japanese Gardens Plant Sale

Saturday, April 28, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Japanese Gardens, 611 S.W. Kingston Dr., annual plant sale will take place.

Want a Free Computer?

Spend 24 hours with Free Geek

BY NICOLE RONAL HOOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Becoming a geek can get you a free computer. Started in Portland on Earth Day in 2000, the non-profit organization has been helping the community learn about computers but also giving families access to technology for free.

Now there are seven Free Geeks across the country. It all originated when Free Geek Founder Oso Martin had too many computers and started shelving them in his dining room.

The first Free Geek is stationed in a large warehouse in the Southeast Industrial Area. Last year, they were robbed of more than \$3,000 of laptop equipment. But their spirit wasn't stolen and their mission is still about helping the community. The community helped them even more as a result with donations and volunteerism for their build or adopt program.

The build program serves as a learning experience, but ends with a benefit. Volunteers build five computers and get the sixth one free. If a volunteer simply wants a computer, they can volunteer at Free Geek for 24 hours. In addition to their effort, volunteers are given free technical support for a year.

"We do an amazing service and people get to learn the technology to be more competitive in the job market," said Shawn Furst, Free Geek volunteer program coordinator, who believes that volunteering breaks barriers in technology.

The warehouse is full of gadgets and



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Shawn Furst welcomes the public to Free Geek in southeast Portland. She's the first stop on the mandatory tour for new volunteers.

gizmos that the average person may not be able to make sense of. It's a new world inside those doors and a new vocabulary. For the technically challenged, walking in Free Geek could be intimidating. However, the organization tries to give access to everyone.

"Many women may think that they cannot build a computer. But sometimes we find those who are self doubters are often the ones who catch on the fastest," said Furst.

How can you help Free Geek if you already have a computer? Feel free to

bring your junky computer to Free Geek just be prepared to pay the \$10 recycling fee. Ten percent of Free Geek's income comes from monitor recycling, but mostly from their thrift store or the Geek Prom, an

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Urban League's Mundy in New Orleans

On 'Flight of Friendship' to aid recovery

Urban League of Portland President and chief executive officer Marcus Mundy is among a large group of Oregonians in New Orleans this week to offer aid and support to residents of the city still recovering from the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina.

Mundy, who has family members living in New Orleans, leads an Urban League delegation on the "Flight of Friendship," an initiative that has more

than 100 Oregon volunteers helping in New Orleans' recovery.

The volunteers are spending time meeting civic and community leaders and working on rebuilding and beautification projects in some of the worst hit neighborhoods. High-profile Oregonians on the trip include Gov. Ted Kulongoski, Mayor Tom Potter and State Treasurer Randall Edwards.

Christopher Lewis, 23, and Ashley Williams, 21, former residents of New



Marcus Mundy

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cane Katrina, are part of the Urban League delegation. Lewis came to Portland without family or friends in the aftermath of Katrina. Williams came to Portland with her mother and seven siblings after they lost everything in the storm. Both have since been supported by Catholic Charities.

Commenting on the Urban League's participation on the trip, Mundy said "The Urban League of Portland is absolutely committed to supporting

the efforts of the National Urban League and Urban League of Greater New Orleans as they work to rebuild New Orleans and revive the welfare of its citizens.

"New Orleans is important to so many of us. We all have a responsibility and a duty to see that the city is restored. The America I grew up in required caring for others and civic participation. I would like to believe that were Portland the victim of such a tragedy, others would step up," he said.

Flight of Friendship was organized by Sho and Loen Dozono of Azumano Travel; Randall Edwards, Oregon State Treasurer; Bruce Samson, senior executive of NW Natural; Brent Stewart of United Way; and MercyCorp.



TriMet Tests Transit Signs

TriMet installs innovative raised-character signs in downtown Portland to help riders who have a visual impairment find their bus. The signs are embossed and printed on high-grade plastic to resist chemicals, light and graffiti. Thirty-seven of the signs will be tested over the next two years to determine whether these or similar signs will be incorporated into the Portland Mall Light Rail Project.