# Local Grads **Honored**

#### Bridge Builders Celebrate

The community is invited to join the Bridge Builders as the mentoring group celebrates its African ancestors and local high school gradu-

The Bridge Builders Maafa Commemoration and Announcement takes place Saturday, June 16 at 8 p.m. at the University of Portland -Buckley Center Auditorium, 5000 N. Willamette Blvd.

Maafa is a Swahili word meaning, "great catastrophe." So this special event marks the great catastrophe of centuries ago when 50 million Africans died as they were transported during the middle passage from Africa to slave-trading countries including America.

The Bridge Builders will first recognize its senior graduates who are participating in the organization's African-centered rights of passage program through the Prospective Gents and Imminent Ladies of Virtue clubs at the Announcement program.

More than 15 passage candidates from schools, including Benson, Central Catholic, Grant, Aloha, David Douglas, Roosevelt, and Jesuit, will take part in the ceremony and give awe-inspiring speeches that they have spent months preparing.

After the Announcement the students, their families and guests will gather at the knoll on the campus, where the Ben York statue honoring the black member of the Lewis and Clark Exposition is located. White helium-filled balloons will be released to commemorate the millions of lives in the Maafa. Negro spirituals will also be sung.

Because this is a special ceremony all attendees are asked to where white in accordance, and bring several of their own white helium balloons.

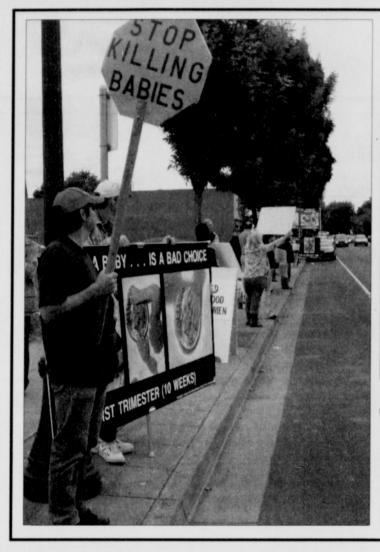
For more information, visit www.thebridbuilders.org.

#### Interim Superintendent **Selected**

Ed Schmitt, retiring superintendent of the Multnomah Education Service District, will take the helm of Portland Public Schools as interim superintendent after Vicki Phillips leaves June 30.

Phillip is leaving PPS to join the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The school board has launched a recruitment and hiring effort. Monday it hired Schmitt to lead the district on a temporary basis.

A former English teacher, Schmitt worked for Portland Public Schools from 1980 to 1996, and served as PPS Director of Personnel before he became Superintendent of the Multnomah ESD.





# Twin Protests on Martin Luther King

Opponents to a Planned Parenthood clinic rally on one side of Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard where it crosses Beech Street (left) while proponents express their support on the opposite side (above). The duo protests were held Thursday at the proposed site of the family planning center, which is controversial because of abortion services. The Portland Development Commission approved the plans earlier this year after hearing from both sides in the issue.

# Finding a Voice with Poetry and Songs

#### **Inspirations** from a local author

BY NICOLE RONAL HOOPER THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When Darlene Solomon-Rodgers read a poem by the famous African American author Nikki Giovanni she found her call-

As a little girl, she hadn't heard Giovanni's story about Santa Claus being a black man, especially since she was bused to a school where the majority of the students were white. Some two decades later, Solomon-Rodgers, also known as Blacque Butterfly, is now a poet, singer and motivational speaker. She's a Jill of all creative trades in addition to her job as Health Access Coordinator at the Portland teen homeless shelter Outside In.

Butterfly took her name from a Sounds of Blackness song, "Black Butterfly." She believes it was divine intervention brought about after two friends in the same threeway phone conversation talked of butterflies in their car and on

top of a flag pole. "From that point on, I was Blacque Butterfly," she said.

In 2005, she became an author with the self-published "Black Girl



Blacque Butterfly

Can I Comb Your Hair," a collection of 30 pages of poetry. She made 250 copies and managed to sell them.

"I was opening for (local singer) Liv Warfield and wanted a product self," she said.

didn't stop there.

In 2006, she came out with Collide-A-Scope, a spoken word CD set to music and with other local artists, including her best friend, activist Rochell "Ro Deezy" Hart.

Powell's Books earlier this year.

Because of the book seller's fallout with her home girl she said ping only at black-owned busi- social based," said Butterfly. nesses to help rejuvenate the community.

never do is watch certain television dren. Butterfly, who is the mother spin-off "Charm School."

"I think its television or ders hellivision that is doing a dissersupposed to be doing by watching don't speak to them, that is just as blacquebutterflypdx.com. TV," she says. "If we spent more time with our kids then things would be better."

Butterfly watches Vh1 Soul, but true to form, the once neo-soul channel is piggy backing on the same tried and true rap videos chock full of booties, booze and bling.

"I was so mad at Nelly for his to sell and there's nothing more song "TipDrill," said Butterfly. The satisfying than publishing it your- video is more famous than the song, in which rapper Nelly is shown slid-Butterfly's entrepreneur spirit ing a credit card in between a woman's buttocks.

"The rap game is run by media moguls," said Butterfly. "That goes back to people thinking there is no integrity in our art."

Technology, she feels, is partly Butterfly can understand as a to blame, with people more confellow artist and Oregonian, the nected to iPods than each other. disappointment Ro felt when she She recalls days when blacks in was rejected for a reading at Portland were segregated and how

the "clan" used to march on North bad as gentrification," she said. Williams Avenue.

she will never shop there again. other because we didn't have a She says she committed to shop- choice. It was more community and

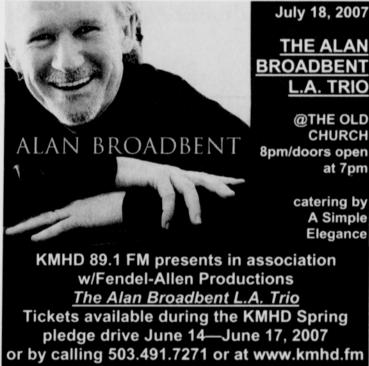
She grows frustrated when the black community acts negatively Another thing Butterfly will towards each other, especially chilinstill him with respect towards el-

In the winter, Butterfly plans to

"We learned to lean on each move to Atlanta, a city she says is more conducive to her creativity.

"It's been hard but it's time for me to go. If it would have been up to me I would have left five years ago," said Butterfly, "But, it wasn't

You can catch Blacque Buttershows, like "Flavor of Love" or the of one adult son, made an effort to fly on June 15 at 9 p.m. at New Born Tribe, 3525 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. For more "When you see someone on the information about upcoming vice and showing us what we we're street who looks like you and you shows visit myspace.com/



## **MHCC President Takes** Job in California

to Mt. Hood Community College, his sons and grandchildren. Dr. Robert Silverman has decided

ning early July, to be within rea- state funding.

Following six years of service sonable driving distance to both of

Silverman leaves a legacy of to leave the college to be closer to growing the college's Nursing his family in Southern California. program, building a new allied Silverman has accepted the health facility and guiding the presidency at Victor Valley Col- college through a difficult period lege in Victorville, Calif., begin- of budget cuts due to insufficient



# THE

An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession.

Part 9. Low Back Surgery:

#### The unkindest and most unnecessary cut of all.

have surgery and get it "fixed right?"

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for my low back pain or hospital bills. With Chiropractic, fore you make any decision, heed the only side effects are the disap- the advice of the "father" of low pearance of symptoms and the re- back surgery: "exhaust all meth-

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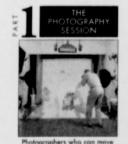
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