

METRO

The Portland Observer

MISSISSIPPI AVENUE Street Fair

Live music, local vendors and lots of food at this weekend's festival in north Portland

See Arts & Entertainment, inside

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Tax Help in Rockwood

Beginning, Wednesday, July 11, VITA tax aide for low-income families will begin to assist clients at the Rockwood Community office, 18709 S.E. Stark. Clients are seen by appointment only. Appointments will be made on Wednesdays only from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., by calling 503-816-1530.

Moonrise Film Festival

Friday and Saturday, July 13 and July 14, Portland State University's 5th Avenue Cinema, 510 S.W. Hall St. will host the Philippines Moonrise Film Festival featuring eight independent short films. Both evenings the doors will open at 6:30 p.m., with screenings beginning at 7 p.m.

African Arts Camp

Homowo African Arts & Culture will be immersing students in traditional African culture music and dance. The last available camp is scheduled on Monday, July 16 thru Friday, July 20, for more information call: 503-288-3025.

Friends of Trees

Saturday, July 14, the Friends of Trees will be training volunteer neighborhood coordinators for the Boise, Humbolt, Eliot and Piedmont neighborhoods. Contact Kathryn at 503-282-8848, extension 12 or visit friendsoftrees.org.

Mississippi Street Fair

Saturday, July 14, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., the Mississippi Avenue Street Fair takes place between North Skidmore and Fremont. The Boise-Eliot Kid's Corner will be providing music, art, magic, games and more with special free events at the Mississippi Ballroom. This is a free event benefiting the Boise-Eliot Elementary School.

International Day Festival

Saturday, July 14, from Noon to 6 p.m., the Roseway Neighborhood presents an International Day Festival at Northeast 72 Avenue and Sandy Boulevard with free family-friendly fun and food, followed by a free movie showing at the Roseway Theater. Visit PDXID.com for more information.

Harry Potter Book Party

Friday, July 20, at 8 p.m., In Other Words Bookstore, 8 N.E. Killingsworth Ave., and the Rock and Roll Camp for Girls will host a midnight release party for the long-anticipated, 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'. For more information, call 503-232-6003 or visit inotherwords.org.

Zoo Support Party

On Saturday, July 21, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., the Oregon Zoo Foundation's annual fundraiser promises to be the social event of the season, featuring the nocturnal antics of the exotic zoo residents, delicious food and drink and a live performance by the Beatniks. Visit oregonzoo.org or call 503-226-1561 for more information and tickets.

Chunky Dunk PDX

Sunday, July 22, from 5:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., the Peninsula Park Community Center and Pool, at the corner of Rosa Parks Way (Portland Boulevard) and North Albina Street, will host the private pool party for people of size and guests. Admission is \$5 per person.

Eliminating Racism

Thursday, Aug. 2, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., an eliminating racism workshop will be hosted in the YWCA Clark County agency's community room, 3609 Main St. in Vancouver. Call 360-906-9103 or email jkinsey@ywacclarkcounty.org.

Mock Crest Home Tour

Saturday, July 28, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Rejuvenation's and Neil Kelly Co. will sponsor the tour of six charming 1920's vintage homes in the historic Mock Crest neighborhood. Call 503-231-7264 for more information.

Native American Home Fair

Saturday, July 28, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Legacy Emanuel Medical Offices, 501 N. Graham, will host a free event featuring homebuyer assistance information, raffles and Native American dance performances. For more information, visit nayapdx.org or call 503-288-8177, extension 232.

Art Classes for All Ages

The Portland Art Museum is offering a variety of classes and workshops for all ages. Call 503-276-4254 for more information.

Grandmother Confronts Human Services

Claims abusive policies and racism

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A grandmother's protest is helping raise awareness about the need for reform in Oregon's child-protection system.

For well over a month now, Carolynn Smith, 60, has held a weekly three-hour vigil in front of the Oregon Department of Human Services building on North Vancouver Avenue and Alberta Street to dispute the state custody of two of her grandchildren.

Since she already cares for five grandchildren, Smith can't see how DHS justifies revoking custody of her two youngest, Clynn Black and Koffee Owens.

The human-services agency claims that Smith's age and modestly-sized house prevents her from caring for so many children in a hygienic and nurturing manner.

She refuses to worry about her protest turning DHS officials against her case, and she becomes particularly resolute when people question her public expression on this issue.

She asks, "Did God wake me up this morning to fight for my grandchildren and ask me if I had a permit? I don't think so."

While she awaited word from a DHS inquiry into her house's size, cleanliness and general suitability for children, a non-profit radio station criticized the department's practices.

"It looks like all the other houses in the neighborhood, so I was shocked that they would pick on her," says Yvette Maranowski, a volunteer reporter for KBOO.

Foster-care advocates have warned for years that diminishing funds for DHS services might lead to systematic problems.

"The foster care system is only as good as the people who choose to be a part of



Carolynn Smith protests outside the Oregon Department of Human Services building on North Vancouver Avenue with pictures of two of her grandchildren who are in foster care. She is trying to gain custody of the children and accuses the state agency of abusive policies.

it," wrote Don Darland, president of the Oregon Foster Parent Association.

Smith's protest comes at a time when two-year-old Stephanie Kuntupis is requiring brain surgery at Legacy Emanuel Hospital after sustaining injuries while in the state-sponsored system. "I get the impression that if my wife were white, we would have reunification," says the father, Steven Kuntupis.

These cases also mark the recent release of DHS's annual "Status of Children in Oregon's Child Protection System" report, citing 2006 as the 10-year high in the state's child-abuse rate.

The report showed that Oregon's system for preventing abuse is far from perfect.

For example, foster families abuse children at a higher rate than the general

population, although these cases account for a small percentage of overall violence toward children. DHS claims that African and Native American families are about three times as likely to have children who are victims of abuse or neglect.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski was inspired to sign five bills on the day DHS released the

continued ▼ on page B6

Spike Lee's Katrina Film Featured

July 21 at Portland Art Museum

Portland will get a repeat performance of Director Spike Lee's "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts" when the documentary plays Saturday, July 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the Northwest Film Center's Whitsell Auditorium at the Portland Art Museum, 1219 S.W. Park Ave.

On Aug. 29, 2005, the city of New Orleans was forever changed when Hurricane Katrina destroyed much of the city, killed more than a thousand residents and displaced well over a million people.

Like many who watched the unfold-

ing drama on television, Lee was shocked not only by the scale of the disaster, but also by the inept emergency response and recovery efforts. Compelled to come to grips with the disaster with his own "film document," Lee interviewed nearly 100 people - politicians, activists, artists and ordinary victims - to tell the stories of those who endured the harrowing ordeal and survived to tell their tales of misery, heartbreak, despair and triumph.

Composed in four acts, "When the Levees Broke" is a sweeping chronicle

continued ▼ on page B6



Director Spike Lee's documentary "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts" deals with the Hurricane Katrina disaster and the inept emergency response and recovery efforts. The film comes to the big screen July 21 at the Portland Art Museum.

College Tuition Paid in Full PCC graduates are in rare company

Portland Community College graduates Nikki Hurtado and Elizabeth Bair are in rare company.

The two are recipients of three-year, \$90,000 Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarships, two of 51 nationwide awardees who are high-achieving students from low-income households.

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation awards the undergraduate transfer scholarships each year to students attending two-year institutions in the United States who plan to transfer to four-year institutions. This year, the Foundation received 723 applications for the scholarships.

"I had no clue," Hurtado said. "I'm just amazed. It is such a big award that I thought I couldn't ever win it."

Bair was equally surprised.

"It's a huge opportunity for me," said



Portland Community College Cascade Campus President Algje Gatewood recognizes Elizabeth Bair with the ceremonial presentation of a \$90,000 Jack Kent Cooke scholarship, dedicated to high-achieving students from low income households.

Bair, who earned a two-year degree in gerontology and a transfer degree at PCC. "I'm a later student and by the time I finish my bachelor's degree I'll be 52. This makes all the difference. I can't believe it."

Bair, 48, of northeast Portland, plans to attend Pacific University. In 2004, Bair was working at a call center in Portland while supplementing her income by making jewelry and cleaning houses when she decided to enroll at the college to become an

occupational therapist.

An occupational therapist helps those injured in accidents to live independently. She was inspired by her mother, who was diligently cared for by therapists, marveling at the difference they made in her life.

"I decided I'd rather do that than be a manager of a call center," said Bair, who lives part time in Coos Bay. "The hard part was believing that I could do it at my age. I went through a lot of changes at that time,

a divorce, a lot of things changed in my life. So I decided to take a few months off. I wanted to spend some time alone to think what I wanted to do with my future. I have a lot of life left and I didn't want to sleep through it."

Hurtado, who once gave up on her education, enrolled at PCC in 2004 for one reason: she wanted to be the first in her

continued ▼ on page B6