

A Source of Pride



Portland R&B legend Liv Warfield sings with her band at a well-attended event at Dawson Park that included tables from various neighborhood and city-based organizations.

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in the refinement of the park," says George Lozovoy, Dawson Park's lead planner.

The park's had a small upgrade about six years ago after a spike in criminal activity. Amenities like permanent checkers tables were added. Seeing a threat still looming, park officials are keeping an eye on safety.

"There are some security concerns because of the large and dense trees, so we still need to get a better sense of the neighborhood, but one option is to essentially redo the area with new landscaping that's just more visible," Lozovoy says.

Many local activists expressed satisfaction that Dawson was getting some much-needed attention.

"We've tried to piecemeal a lot of these things, but now they're all going to happen," says Gary Hampton, co-chair of the Eliot Neighborhood Association.

Other residents questioned whether the city's emphasis on safety would encroach on the park's natural beauty and usability.

"To me it's never been a gang park, but the police try to make it that way," says Lee Roberts, who



PHOTOS BY RAYMOND RENDELMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Parks and Recreation planner George Lozovoy (right) discusses the freshly unveiled diagrams of Dawson Park's new look.

met with friends in the park as a teenager in the 1960s and has walked through it regularly ever since.

Roberts wishes that the city would bring back barbecue pits, which he claimed fostered commu-

nity cohesiveness many years ago.

Lozovoy says, "We discussed having barbecue pits, but it just becomes unruly."

Regardless of what the city accomplishes in restoring the park, Roberts declares that it will always

be a key source of African-American pride and connectivity.

"If you want to see someone you haven't seen for a long time, you just have to sit around here, and eventually they will come," Roberts says.

Dear Deanna!

My boyfriend is very overbearing and condescending. He always has something to say about everything and seems as if he waits to pounce on me when I make a mistake. I am becoming stressed because I have to concentrate on everything that I do and everything that I say. The only time things are good is when he's not around or watching television. I want to talk to him about this problem but I feel it will cause problems. Is it me or is he just rude? --Anonymous; Dallas, Texas

Dear Anonymous:

Your boyfriend is a rude, insecure bully. If he has your best interests at heart, he wouldn't talk to you like a dog. The next time he tries to call you out, you need to stand up for yourself and let him know where you're coming from. If you haven't slipped, made a mistake or done anything to deserve his lip service, let him have it full force. You then need to let him know that you will not tolerate anymore disrespect and if he continues, then walk and keep it moving.

Dear Deanna!

I have a few girlfriends and they all have small kids. I don't mind their kids and I love them. However, I have a problem when it comes to our car arrangements. I just purchased a new car and it isn't child friendly. I cringe when

Ask Deanna!

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I hear them pull the seatbelts out for the car seat. Each time I go with one of my friends, I have to go to the car wash because of fingerprints, trash and garbage from the kids. How do I tell my friends I don't want their kids in my car? --Joyce; Tampa, Fla.

Dear Joyce:

Your situation is sensitive but not as uncommon as you think. You have to decide if you're going to choose friends without kids or be mature and handle this like an adult. All you have to do is tell your friends that you prefer they drive because you're uncomfortable with the situation. It's going to be almost offensive but you have the right to care for your vehicle however you choose. On another note, it's not that

serious and you can clean your car and get over it.

Dear Deanna!

I am fresh out of a long term relationship and I really enjoy my single life and freedom. My girlfriends all envy me and now their boyfriends are accusing them of cheating and looking for men when they hang out with me. I am not going to water down my lifestyle right now and my friends are having a hard time with this. They say that I am acting loose and as if I don't have any morals. I think they're tied down to balls and chains and are jealous. Am I wrong? --Happy and Free; Online Reader

Dear Happy:

The men of your friends are insecure and obviously don't know their women as well as they think. If your behavior is affecting them, you need to cool off and slow it down a bit when you're around them. These are your friends and you need to still show some respect and regard for the differences in your relationships, or lack thereof. At the end of the day, enjoy your life and realize that everyone is responsible for their choices. Yours just appears more fun right now.

Ask Deanna is written by Deanna M. Write Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or 264 S. LaCienega Blvd. Suite 1283 Beverly Hills, CA 90211. Website: www.askdeanna.com

An Officer and a Beauty Queen

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Goodwin is trying for the crown and banner again for the 2008 title. This time she is preparing by sculpting her body with the help of a personal trainer and honing her interview skills through a membership with Toastmasters International.

Toastmasters, a club where you make speeches to be critiqued by fellow members. Goodwin and her

husband joined the UO branch in January, where she's been working on limiting the "uh" factor in her speeches.

"I feel even more confident this year," she said.

If she succeeds in winning the Mrs. Oregon title, Goodwin will then take an expense-paid trip to Nationals. After that, she may get to represent married women throughout the world.

Goodwin has another reason to aspire for the domestic and international titles.

"I'm not sure there has ever been a woman of color to win Mrs. Oregon, and I don't think there's ever been an African American Mrs. America," she said. "I'd love to be the first."

This year's Mrs. Oregon pageant takes place Saturday, Oct. 6 at Clackamas High School.



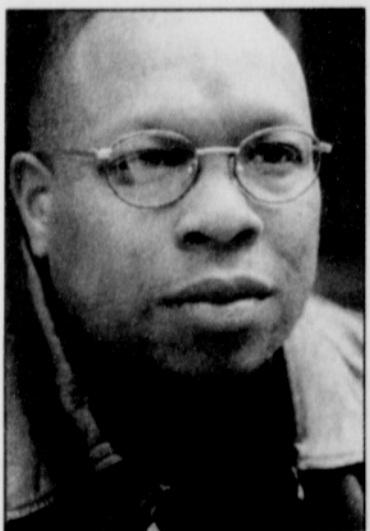
Elvis' Legacy Mixed in Black Community

As the 30th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death approaches, an expert on black popular culture says that Elvis' enduring legacy among fans both black and white has more to do with his display of "unbridled white male sexuality" than his music.

Mark Anthony Neal, an author and associate professor at Duke University, says some in the black community resented Elvis because he made his fortune popularizing black musical forms and because of a myth that he thought blacks were inferior.

"Elvis, in his own way, attempted to show some sort of respect for the musical forms that he was essentially exploiting," Neal says. "There is no concrete evidence of him being a racist."

Elvis, who died Aug. 16, 1977,



Mark Anthony Neal

enjoyed and was influenced by black music, Neal says.

"He emerged at a time when the practice of covers was very prominent. The black version of a song was marketed to black audiences and the white version was marketed to white audiences.

"Take 'Hound Dog.' Everyone knows that Big Mama Thornton recorded the song before Elvis did. What Elvis showed was that you could have a white artist who could record black music and be successful with it.

"He was simply the person that helped popularize rhythm and blues, as well as rockabilly and country."

Neal says Elvis' popularity, including the proliferation of impersonators and the suggestion that he may still be alive, are about Elvis "the package and the icon" rather than his work as a musician.

"He didn't change the musical landscape. Elvis wasn't an innovator. He didn't bring anything musical to the table. He simply popularized derivatives of R&B and country," Neal says.

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