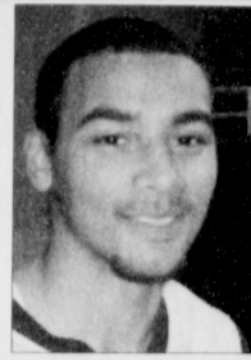


METRO

The Portland Observer



Clowns Without Borders
Local performance to support world ambassadors
See A&E section, inside



Jefferson Alum Excels
Marquis Hall wins MVP at Lehigh University
See inside, page B4

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Town Hall

Saturday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to noon. Sen. Avel Gordly and Sisters of the Road invite the public to join in an open forum on homelessness in Mt. Tabor Hall at Portland Community College's Southeast Center, 2305 S.E. 82nd Ave.

Diversity Dialogues

Friday, April 25, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., at Mt. Hood Community College invites guest to participate in a variety of discussions and presentations that explore multiculturalism in the city and on campus. For more information, call 503-491-7224.

The Rule of Law

Tuesday, April 29, at 6:30 p.m., the Hollywood Theater, 4122 N.E. Sandy Blvd., will host the 2nd annual Youth Film project, featuring creative student films on the rules of law.

Annual Spring Revival

Monday, April 28 through Friday, May 2, at 7 p.m. nightly, Greater Faith Baptist Church, 931 Skidmore St. will host the annual revival with Bishop L.W. Bolton, Jr. of Grandview, Mo. as guest speaker. For more information, call 503-710-2000.

Mayoral Candidates

Wednesday, April 30, from 5:30 to 9 p.m., Reflections Coffeehouse and Bookstore, 446 N.E. Killingsworth, will host a Red Beans & Rice dinner as an opportunity to meet Portland's Mayoral candidates. For more information, call 503-445-1321 or 503-267-8713.

Health Inequities

The public is invited to join in a dialogue with community members, organizations, business leaders and local elected officials to discuss the root causes of health inequities as well as long term solutions. For neighborhood locations, dates, and times visit mhealth.org/healthequity.

Remodeling Seminars

Saturday, May 10, beginning at 9:30 a.m., Neil Kelly Showrooms at 804 N. Alberta St., and 15573 S.W. Bangy Road in Lake Oswego, will host free kitchen and bath remodeling seminars. For more information, visit neilkelly.com or call 503-335-9204.

Educate, Empower, Engage

Thursday, May 15, the Portland NAACP Branch Freedom Fund Dinner will take place at the Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, 8235 N.E. Airport Way, doors open at 6 p.m. and dinner is at 7 p.m. Tickets must be purchased by May 7. Visit pdxnaacp.org.

Growing Gifts

Friends of Trees, is currently offering the opportunity to give the gift of trees; for more information, visit FriendsOfTrees.org.

Spin-Gardening Workshop

Saturday, May 10, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Spin-Gardening workshop will premiere in Portland at 1900 S.W. 4th, the workshop will teach the art of growing an intense garden in a small plot; \$40 fee includes lunch, and the first addition guidebook. To register, call 503-823-7553.

Free First Fridays

The Portland Children's Museum has partnered with Target to provide free admission to everyone the first Friday of each month from 5 to 8 p.m.

Homebuyer Programs

PDC's homebuyer-assistance programs address the gap in home ownership rates between whites and communities of color. For information about the new and expanded homebuyers' assistance programs, visit pdc.us/nhp or call 503-823-3400.

Walk Run for the Animals

Saturday, May 3, beginning at 7:30 a.m., at the Esther Short Park in downtown Vancouver, a walk-run will benefit the Southwest Washington Humane Society. To get involved, visit southwesthumane.com.

Learning English

Every Tuesday and Thursday, currently through May 29, the SUN Center at Marshall Campus, 3905 S.E. 91st Ave., will offer the free open English as a Second Language classes. For more information, call 971-570-1384.

Health Disparities Need Improvement

Report finds successes, concerns

Disparities in health outcomes between populations of color and non-Hispanic whites show room for improvement, according to a new report by the Multnomah County Health Department.

Among the indicators examined, six of the disparities that existed in the 1991-95 had been eliminated by 2001-05, and an additional 14 disparities had been reduced. However, many other areas of the report card received red flags because disparities had widened or not improved significantly.

The report shows lower percentages of pregnant women in all communities of color receiving first-trimester prenatal care, higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea and Chlamydia among African Americans and Hispanics, and higher diabetes mortality among black Americans.

"Despite our successes, there are areas of concern for the African-American and Hispanic populations in the county," said department director Lillian Shirley. "The report card underscores the continuing need for Health Department programs that address differences in health status among various racial groups. It also indicates the need for sustained efforts by community leaders and organizations to improve health for all residents."

The National Institutes of Health has defined a health disparity as "a population-specific difference in the presence of disease, health outcomes or access to care."

In comparing communities of color with the white non-Hispanic residents of the county, researchers calculated disparity rate ratios labeled as "No disparity," "Needs improvement" and "Requires intervention."

No significant disparities were found in heart-disease mortality or cancer mortality, including breast cancer and lung cancer. Disparities have also measurably disappeared in motor-vehicle crashes over the past few years.

The department has initiated a variety of programs to move towards reducing and, ultimately, eliminating health disparities. These include the Health Equity Initiative, sponsoring public screenings and discussions of the documentary series "Unnatural Causes," the Healthy Eating Active Living program, a coalition-building effort intended to change environmental conditions that contribute to chronic disease, and the Healthy Birth Initiative, providing services to pregnant African-American women and their families to promote good pregnancy outcomes.

The newly revamped Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention and Treatment Program has prioritized cases of gonorrhea and Chlamydia in African Americans.



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Bernestine Dew gets her blood pressure checked by Dr. Kristin Behle at Multnomah County's North-east Health Center, located next door to the Multicultural Senior Center at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Killingsworth Street.

From Fear to Focus

Nurse promotes trust to help diverse patients

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

You would understand if an African-American nurse did not continue checking the blood pressure of a patient revealing a Klansman tattoo.

But Gwen Riggins did, having started work with HIV patients in the uncertain period of early '80s.

As a nursing assistant to internists at Kaiser Permanente on North Interstate Avenue, Riggins believes strongly in providing high-quality treatment and compassion for all people no matter what their background.

As a team leader, she also tries to help others in her profession by serving as a diversity liaison for the Multnomah County Health Department, tackling health disparities and sharing information with co-workers on how to develop a trusting connection with various populations.

"I always thought it was sad that people didn't want to take care of people just because they were afraid," she says.

On a recent visit, 72-year-old Joan Kinter arrived in pain after discovering blood in her urine. Riggins' first step was to establish rapport, and they quickly discovered that they both knew a pastor at Irvington Covenant

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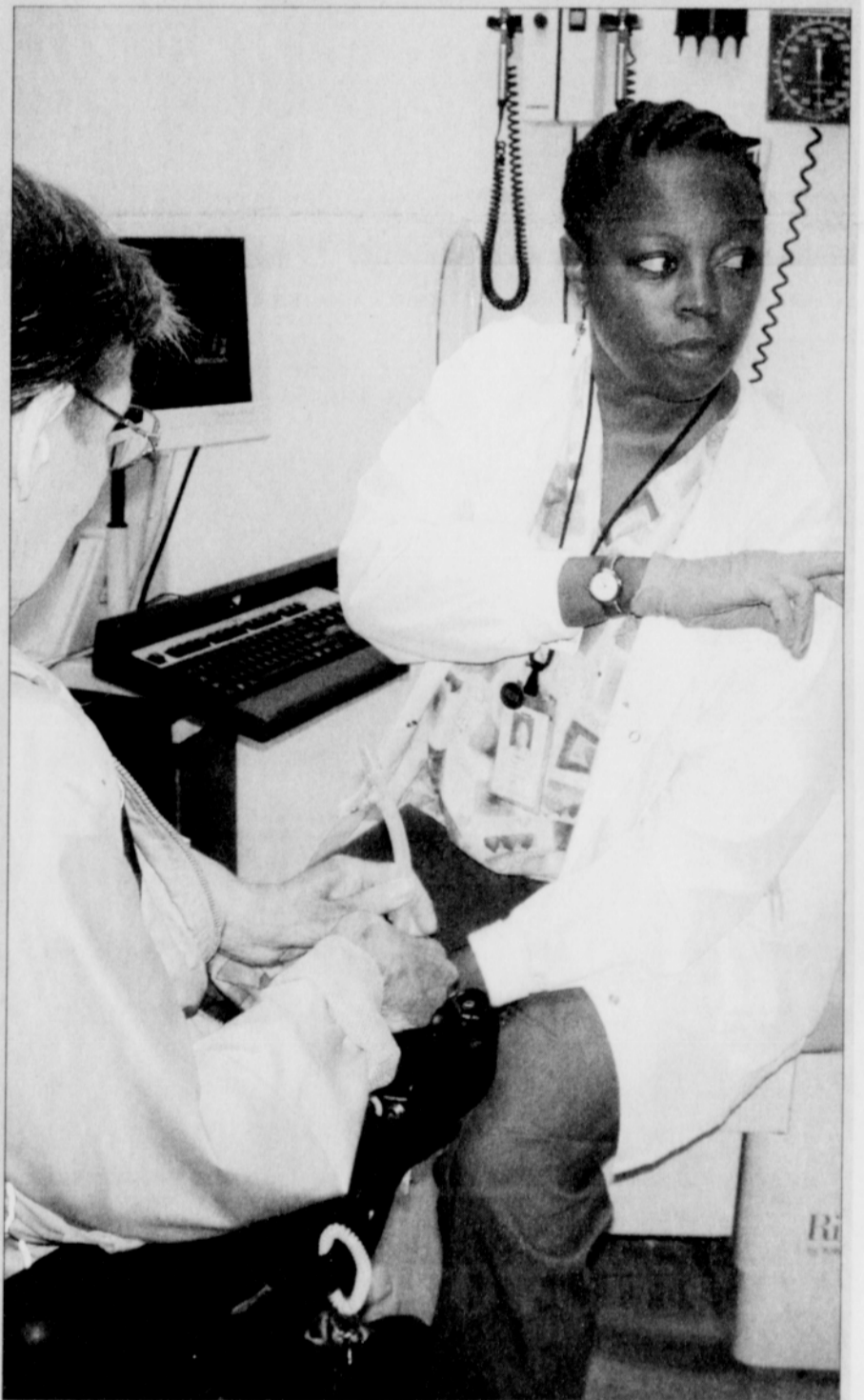


PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Kaiser Permanente registered nurse Gwen Riggins attends to patient Joan Kinter on North Interstate Avenue. Riggins is driven by her belief in caring for all people with the highest standards and compassion.

Rose Festival Honors Roy as Grand Marshal



Brandon Roy

All-star brings excellence, sportsmanship

Portland Trail Blazer and NBA All-star Brandon Roy will serve as Grand Marshal of the KeyBank Grand Floral Parade, the premier event of the 2008 Portland Rose Festival.

"Brandon represents both excellence and sportsmanship, qualities we can all embrace," said Mark McGirr, president of the Portland Rose Festival Foundation. "We thought it

was a perfect choice."

After being selected sixth in the 2006 NBA draft, Roy, 23, made an immediate impact on the Trail Blazers and was named the 2006-07 NBA Rookie of the Year. He bested his outstanding freshman campaign this season by being named a 2008 NBA All-Star and helping rekindle the spirit of Blazermania.

"I am very honored to have been asked to be the Grand Marshal," said Roy. "It will be a thrill for me and my family to ride in the parade and greet all the fans of the Rose Festival and Trail Blazers."

The Portland Trail Blazers' rich heritage includes 26 playoff appearances, an NBA cham-

ampionship in 1977 and a commitment to community service. With its current corporate mission to "Make It Better," the Trail Blazers strive to help children and their families throughout Oregon and southwest Washington learn, play, grow, get involved and live healthier lives.

Tickets are on sale now for the Grand Floral Parade at the Memorial Coliseum Saturday, June 7. Reserved seats are available both inside and outside the Coliseum; prices are \$30 and \$25.

Purchase tickets on-line on the web at www.rosefestival.org, the Rose Quarter Box Office or charge by phone at 1-877-789-ROSE (7673).