

HEALTH MATTERS

For Your Health

I recently registered at the Sylvania campus of Portland Community College for a class in women's studies. I'll take it for credit. That will require some studying and tests. Good. A challenge to help keep my mind sharp and focused.

A school campus has always been a venue of success of subsequent parental praise and approval. I bless my parents everyday! And thank them - wherever they are or in whatever dimension - but fully alive somewhere!

I'm headed toward a someday Bachelor's degree in English! Started in that direction in the autumn of 1944 when I was just 20 and a recently arrived immigrant from Canada.

I've been an American citizen since 1957 - I prefer to call myself a North American citizen - and seem to have a love/hate relationship with the good old U.S. of A. As a young girl, I learned about the American Revolution and identified with the revolutionaries, even though I was indoctrinated also about being a loyal British citizen.

The United Empire Loyalists were lauded in my history books. My teachers were generally open-minded and traveled freely back and forth across the U.S./Canadian border. We were entertained and influenced by American-made movies and radio.

Returning to the present and my tenure at school, I'm getting the



Life is Sweet

BY JUNE POTTER ACOSTA

nicest, warmest reception wherever I go on campus. I've pondered this, and decided that the kids - many 18 and 20-year-old students - are very likely cheered and delighted to encounter an obviously old woman who seems to be up-beat and optimistic - and busy! Maybe a groan about my arthritis! But very involved with life and strongly opinionated about everything!

There is a wonderful vitality that seems to hum and vibrate across the campus - a beautiful campus at over 700 feet elevation. I feel it even before I step off the bus that carries

me to 12000 S.W. 49th Ave. Learning should be life-long. Not an original idea and one that's been spread broadly across the universe.

Unfortunately, I can't get the bachelor's degree with PCC. The lady I spoke with in the counseling office said I would need another math and lab-science class to qualify for the degree.

Nope. It won't happen. At 83, fast heading to 84, I can't honestly contemplate years and years from now. My frame of reference is limited to half decades. I'll accept that and be grateful!

Meantime, life is sweet. Spring is here. We've been promised several days of 'no precipitation.' I'll go for that!

Teen Girls Empowered

While many local teens spent their spring break shopping, vacationing or hanging out with friends, 27 girls from three northeast Portland high schools spent their free time at a workshop designed to empower and educate African-

American teens. Sistas Informing, Healing, Living and Empowering is a specialized training and education program to reduce risky sex behavior among African-American adolescent females. The program aims to

Workshop focus: risky behaviors

reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection rates.

Planned Parenthood of the Columbia Willamette partnered with the Multnomah County Health Department and Cascade AIDS Project to launch the program that has been fully tested and endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Throughout the SiHLE program,

girls participate in interactive group discussions that emphasize ethnic and gender pride while enhancing awareness of HIV risk-reduction strategies.

Participants reported learning a variety of valuable lessons, including, "I learned I can be assertive when it comes to protecting my body," and "I learned about the importance of loving myself."

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HEALTH WATCH

Children's Wellness Fair -- Wednesday, April 23, from 4 to 8 p.m., the Children's Community Clinic will sponsor a wellness fair at Self Enhancement, Inc. promoting nutrition, health issues and fitness.

What About Boys -- Wednesday, April 23, from 7 to 9 p.m., Legacy Meridian Park Hospital, 19300 S.W. 65th Ave., will host the forum discussing the developmental perspectives of raising young boys and the problems they are facing today; \$5 fee at the door. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Do You Know Your Numbers? -- Thursday, April 24, receive a personalized measurement and analysis of blood pressure, cholesterol levels, lean body mass, fat weight and optimal weight; \$30 fee. Appointments available from 7 to 10 p.m. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Welcome to Medicare -- Saturday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to noon, Multnomah County will conduct a free workshop at Mt. Hood Community College for those new to Medicare, explaining the public service's fundamentals. For more information, call 503-491-7572.

Women's Health Conference -- Saturday, April 26, from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center, will focus on how green living can benefit your health, with guest speakers and workshops; \$40 all-day fee. To register, visit Ohsuwomenshealth.com.

Are you at Risk? -- A focus on leg and carotid disease takes place Tuesday, April 29, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. with experts discussing what puts you at risk, treatment options, nutrition and prevention; free workshop. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Groovin' a New Weight -- Wednesdays beginning April 30, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; join the weight program designed for women only, this eight-week program guarantees an energy boost, education and support; fee \$180. To register, call 503-574-6595.

Stop Smoking! -- Thursdays, starting May 8 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., a four-week quit-smoking program offers the tools to for real success minimize the risk of relapse; \$95 fee. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Women's Wellness; Breast Health -- Saturday, May 10, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Legacy Good Samaritan, Building Two - lower level, 1040 N.W. 22nd Ave., a free event features a catered brunch, guest speakers and booths with topics including cancer genetics, breast imaging, bone density and more. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Ready or Not? -- Thursday, May 28, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; learn how to prepare your family for a major disaster strike; federal assistance could take up to 72 hours before being available, would your family be ready? This free class will prepare your family to survive with self-sufficiency for the first few days. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Peer-to-Peer Recovery -- Peer-to-peer education recovery course is a free, nine-week course on the topic of recovery for any person with a serious mental illness. The courses are led by mentors who are recovering from mental illness and are trained to teach coping strategies to others. For more information, call 503-228-5692.

Health Inequities -- The public is invited to join in the dialogues with community members, organizations, business leaders and local elected officials to discuss the root causes of health inequities as well as long-term solutions in a this seven-part series. For neighborhood locations, dates and times, visit mchealth.org/healthequity.

Tools for Caregivers -- A six-week educational series is offered to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend with a chronic illness. The classes are being held at several locations and dates. Call 503-413-6465 for more information.

Bereavement Support Groups -- Free, safe confidential group meetings for those who have experienced the death of a loved one offered on various nights and locations. For info and registration, call 503-215-4622.

Stroke Alert Screening -- Check your carotid arteries with a painless ultrasound to assess your risk. Fee \$40. To schedule a screening, call 503-251-6137.

From Fear to Focus

continued ▲ from Metro Church in northeast Portland. Kinter left the exam room expressing confidence that lab results would discover any infection or other ailment. Not all patients are as easy to deal with, according to Riggins. Even so, she considers it her duty to relate to needs of people, even if they seem confrontational, biased or impossible. "Life's not easy, but we all have to do the best we can to be sensitive," she says. In caring for the patient with the Klansman tattoo, she repeated in her head, "Overcome evil with good," a biblical saying that her grandfather used after losing his home to the Vanport Flood of 1948. Riggins argues that medical practitioners, along with many others in positions of power, make the biggest mistake in assuming knowledge of a problem before listening. "You have to be really clear who you are and not let other people define who you are," she says. "On the other hand, you have to be willing to say you're sorry."

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