

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Reincarnation of a Neighborhood

Dude Ranch becomes Left Bank Project

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The building at 240 N.E. Broadway Ave. began life in 1908 as the Hazel-nut Ice Cream Factory. During the Prohibition years it was a speak-easy and today is the newly renovated Left Bank Project. But for many in the African-American community, it will always be remembered as the site of the Dude Ranch, a black nightclub.

In the heady post-war days of 1945, as Robert Dietsche noted in his definitive book on Portland jazz, "Jumptown," any cabbie worth his fare in those days would have known that Portland's "black Broadway" made connections with Williams Av-



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Sweeping windows show North Broadway near the Rose Quarter from the second floor of the refurbished Left Bank Project, the building that once housed the former Dude Ranch black nightclub and a neighborhood of African-American residents long lost to redevelopment.

enue, the heart of the black community.

As the author described, 50 years ago you could stand in the middle of Williams Avenue, where the Trail Blazers play basketball today at the Rose Garden, and "look up at the chili parlors, past the barbecue joints, past the beauty salons, all the way to Broadway and see hundreds of people dressed up as if they were going to a fashion show. It could be four in the morning; it didn't matter. This was one of those streets that never slept."

The main attraction was jazz. There were more than 20 venues where it was played in those days. The Dude Ranch had one of the shortest runs - opened on May 29, 1945, it closed after barely a year later. Still, it stands out for two reasons.

First, it was the acknowledged hub of the scene. Indeed, as Dietsche notes, "There never was and never

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Tax Time Help

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aimed at working people who don't earn a lot, but can put a wad of cash in your family's pocket.

For instance, in 2006 \$43.7 billion went out to taxpayers with this tax credit. Families who earn less than \$41,646 a year are eligible. Individuals making less than \$15,880 are also eligible. The amount you'll get back varies depending on your income and number of children, but could be up to \$4,824.

You can also get tax credits for being a first time home buyer, having children under 17, paying for childcare or your child's college tuition, and others.

According to the IRS's website the recently passed stimulus package will generally not affect peoples' income tax returns this year. For some people, it may mean that less money will be withheld from their paychecks this spring with the \$400 to \$800 "Making Work Pay" provision of the stimulus package.

There are a number of organizations that will help you out with your tax preparations for free. If you go this route you'll need the following documents: W-2, 1099 forms, unemployment form, Social Security forms for dependents, last year's return, bank account and routing number for direct deposits, and identification.

The non-profit CASH Oregon has partnered with organizations such as the American Association of Retired Person-Tax Aide, KeyBank and the United Way to provide free tax preparation.

Although no one will be turned away, the free help is geared toward low to moderate-income people. Its IRS-certified volunteers will go over your federal and state return with, and their work will be checked by two additional people. It takes about 10 to 14 days to get your return.

Additionally, CASH Oregon will also sit down with you, free of charge, and take a look at your overall finances to help with planning and organization.

ACORN offers a similar service. It's also geared toward low to moderate income people. Olin said that her organization doesn't do complicated returns that contain many itemized deductions or a patchwork of revenue from rental properties, for example.

The non-profit organization also provides pre-screening to see if your household is eligible for other government benefits such as the Oregon Health Plan and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Lastly, ACORN also has a foreclosure prevention program that will help you re-modify your mortgage if it runs the risk of being foreclosed.



Hannah Caneff, a volunteer from Key Bank, assists Miguel Rivera with his stack of tax documents during a free community tax help outreach effort hosted by CASH Oregon, KeyBank, AARP, and the United Way.

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