



**The Cotton Club Returns, Sort of**

A slice of old north Portland in east county  
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**Making it in a Man's World**

Trades group helps women into good paying jobs  
See story, page A7



**Minority Contractors Get an Edge**

Green Line small business boost  
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# Minority & Small Business Week

2009 special edition

## Small Business Owner Fills a Niche

Creates fabulous fashions for real women

BY AMANDA GREAR  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

You might be surprised to know that our community has a fashion design business that caters to the full figured and fabulous women of Portland.

Operating since 2003, Betty Jean Couture is a high fashion clothing boutique that specializes in plus size fashions 12-3x.

"At Betty Jean Couture, skinny does not equal beauty. It's about wearing fashion that flatters your form - fashion that fits your shape, whatever that shape may be," said owner, Kenneth Doswell.

Doswell admits that designing and manufacturing clothing for plus-size women is a challenge, as women carry their weight in different areas, but he is committed to this niche market.

"No one is addressing their need for high fashion clothing," said Doswell. "There



A Betty Jean Couture suit combines classic style and current elegance.

are still lots of bias and stereotypes of what fashion should look like. I believe the consumer should decide."

The Betty Jean Couture line consists of Ready to

Wear, Couture, and Urban apparel, and will soon begin expanding their line to include custom wedding gowns. The fashion house has some of the best seamstresses in the



Betty Jean Couture owner Kenneth Doswell oversees the production of superior quality fashions at his business located at 3537 N. Williams Ave.

northwest, and will customize any of their designs to fit you perfectly.

"We're going to build the fashion industry here in Portland," said Doswell.

And they are doing so in strides.

BJC just wrapped up their 2009 fall fashion show, and their evening wear pieces will be featured in FUSE, an up-

coming fashion show and fundraiser hosted by Portland Fashion Synergy, of which Doswell sits on the

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## Doubling Down on Past Success

### Afrique Bistro opens on Russell Street

BY LEE PERLMAN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
Restaurateur Alem Gebrehiwot is realizing the American dream. Having invested in and made a suc-

cess of his Ethiopian restaurant Queen of Sheba, he has used that investment, and a lot of hard work, to open Afrique Bistro two blocks away.

How does he manage two such enterprises at once? By investing in his own family.

"I don't really have much  
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Gary and Amy Xie are the owners of Gary's Bakery tucked inside a cluster of Asian-oriented business at Southeast 86th Avenue and Division.

## Melding Western and Eastern Tastes

Bakery serves the familiar and the exotic

BY JAKE THOMAS  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Whenever school is in Gary's Bak-

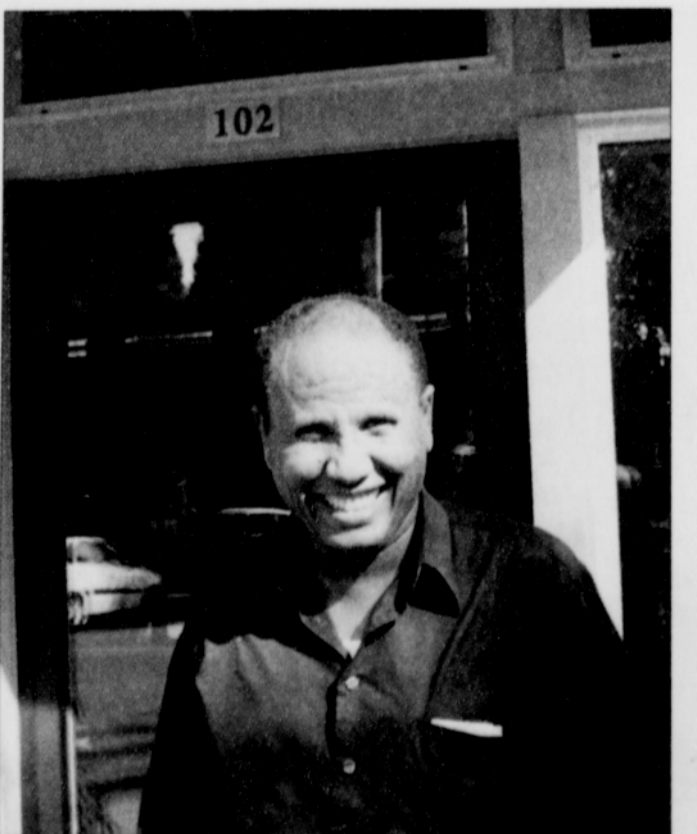
ery, in southeast Portland, is flooded in the morning with students from the nearby junior high school looking to cram their faces with fresh maple bars and cream cheese pockets before starting their day. In the afternoon they're back sipping on bubble tea and smoothies.

But this isn't like other outlets for

adolescents to get their sugar fixes. Gary's Bakery was founded by Gary Xie, a Chinese immigrant who seeks to meld western and eastern tastes.

"We use less sugar, less oil. It's healthy," said Xie, who explains that Chinese palates aren't accustomed

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Alem Gebrehiwot welcomes customers to his new Afrique Bistro at 102 N.E. Russell St.