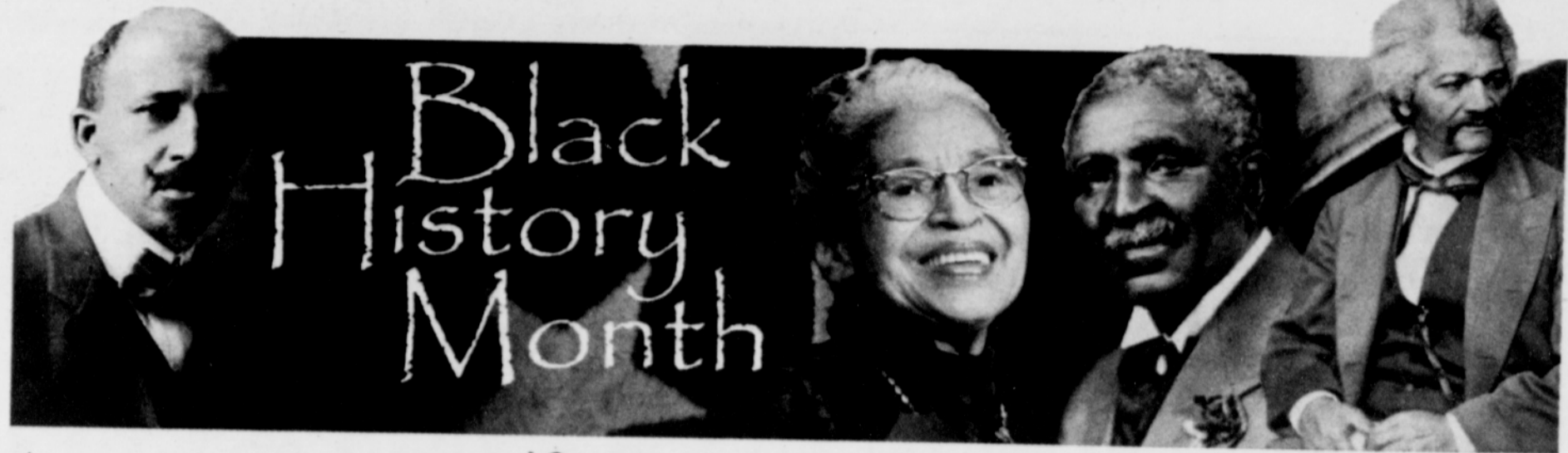




The Portland Observer



The Portland Observer 41

Volume XXXXI, Number 5

www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • February 2, 2011

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Jefferson's Middle College Point Man

Damon Hickok is a key figure in school's future

BY CLIFF PFENNING
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

At the public meeting promoting the Middle College at Jefferson High School, parents and students heard from a variety of speakers, including Self-Enhancement Inc., founder Tony Hopson, Jefferson Principal Toni Hunter and Portland Community College Cascade Campus President Algie Gatewood.

They didn't hear from Damon Hickok, although he got acknowledged several times for his efforts.

Hickok is in charge of the Middle College program on the PCC Cascade Campus, which makes him something akin to a coach of a sports team as he works to produce a healthy program while attracting new students.

His outlook on the Middle College program is similar to a college coach as well.

"We have a great program here and we want it to reach as many kids as possible," says Hickok, 39. "I'm on the lookout for kids who are doing things above and beyond going to school because they're good candidates for success here.

"But, they have to want to come here. They have to put that effort in. They have to be able to walk across the street, make that first, basic, commitment to be in our program. If they can't do that, they're not going to be successful here," he said.

The Middle College program will become the main focus at Jefferson in the fall when the new school year begins. It's such a major selling point to parents that Jefferson's name will change to Jefferson High School - Middle College for Advanced Studies. While students are not required to engage in the Middle College program currently, they will be in



Damon Hickok works to get Jefferson students ready for college as director of the Middle College program at Portland Community College's Cascade Campus, which sits directly across Killingsworth Street from the north Portland high school.

the future, starting with the upcoming freshman class. During their four years, they'll take between two and 15 classes on the PCC campus.

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Film Director Opens Festival Series puts Africa and black history into focus

Portland Community College's Festival of African Films, organized by dedicated volunteers, is bringing an acclaimed director to Portland this week to kick off the 21st annual event.

The festival honors Black History Month and is held

Acclaimed film director Mahamat-Saleh Haroun will be in Portland this week to help kick off Portland Community College's 21st Cascade Festival of African Films and attend a screening of his award winning film, 'A Screaming Man.'

Thursdays through Saturdays from Friday, Feb. 4 through March 5.

It will open with the visit of Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, who will show his latest award-winning film, "A Screaming Man" at the Hollywood Theatre, 4122 N.E. Sandy Blvd. on Friday, Feb. 4.

The director hails from Chad and lives in France. "A Screaming Man" won the prestigious Jury Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010 and Haroun's previous films have been festival favorites over the years. Attendees will

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