

Good in the Neighborhood, a Family Affair

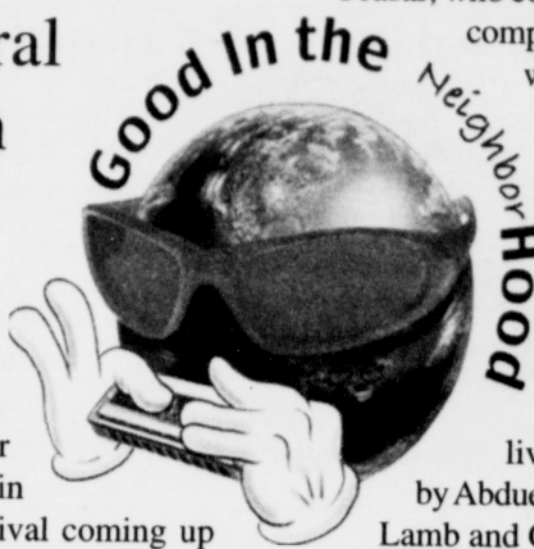
Table set for annual multicultural celebration

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND
OBSERVER

The month of June has finally arrived, and people throughout the city are getting ready for the 19th annual Good in the Neighborhood festival coming up on June 24-26 at King School Park, where families and friends will come together to once again celebrate the unique diversity of the community.

The mission of the festival is to celebrate cultural diversity found throughout the north and northeast Portland community.

Stakeholders have been preparing all year



to bring the festival to life, explained Lafreda Ceasar, who co-owns one of the sponsoring companies, Baseline Entertainment, with her husband William. After four months as a member of the planning committee, she is excited for June to finally arrive.

The schedule for Good in the Neighborhood is packed with talented musicians. N'Touch will appear live with special performances by Abduel Hall, Saeeda Wright, Patrick Lamb and Chatta Addy.

This year's theme is 'It's a family Affair,' which Ceasar said goes hand in hand with new featured events that will take place for youth.

"We have new additions of what we are bringing to the table," she explained. "This year there will be a kid's space, which will feature hula-hoop lessons."

A basketball tournament was also added to the agenda as a way to have more events for the youth to take part in. "In the past, young people haven't been as engaged in the event," she said. "And we wanted to give them something to feel good about."

The festival, with free admission, will feature a wide variety of musical entertainment, as well as allow members of the community to represent their own multi-cultural traditions and educational opportunities. There will be ethnic foods, an arts and craft area, ethnic marketplace, and a community information village.

Ceasar emphasized the importance for people to understand that, even with the influx of recent the gang violence, the celebration will be a safe event for people to come together. She told how the festival's planning committee has been in coordination with the Portland Police Bureau, which is committed to providing security all weekend.

Good in The Neighborhood is a Rose

Festival sanctioned event that attracts more and more people each year, but Ceasar said more sponsors and pledges of support will help make the event be an even bigger success.

She commended the work by the chairs of the festival as the reason the event has been able to happen for so long.

"They keep this thing going every year, and they do this at no charge," she said. It's amazing how much they do."

Ceasar further expressed her excitement for the Good Neighbor night on Friday, June 24, which will be a red carpet event. "Often we don't take the time to honor each other," she said. "This will be a great opportunity for people to come out and walk the red carpet, hear some good music, and let people know we are the stars of the community."

For further information on ways to become involved with the Good in the Neighborhood, visit the festival's website, goodinthenighborhood.org.

Debutante Ball Celebrates 60 Years

Celebrating 60 years of community service, the Les Femmes youth organization presents its annual and Debutante Ball on Sunday June 12, at the Red Lion Hotel on the River at Jantzen Beach.

The prestigious event is a who's who among the influential and prominent in the community. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m.

Among the night's list of exciting events, guest will be served a formal and elegant dinner, dance to one of Portland's best DJs, as well as be captivated by the presentation of future leaders from the high school graduating class of 2011.

The ball is the culmination event of a year-long process that starts in early September when applications are due from prospective participants.

Debutantes attend workshops in etiquette college preparation, relationships, and a host of other empowering subjects. They meet, work with and establish positive, lasting relationships. They also work effectively and cooperatively with adults from the community.

For Debutante Ball tickets and more information, call 503-284-3591, leave a message at 503-660-3327 or email LesFemmesDebutantes.org@gmail.com

Keeping Theater in View

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proposes to close this and replace it with a public plaza. Closing the street at end ends would create some new curb parking, but the plaza would mean a net loss of five spaces.

Paul Clark, realtor and longtime local activist, said an adequate supply of parking was essential to the health of local businesses, and several shop owners agreed with him. Gary McCready, owner of the nearby Hollywood Court Apartments, said, "At least 50 percent of your tenants will own cars." Others said that at the Bookmark Apartments, above the Hollywood Library to the north, there has been an overflow parking impact on the surrounding neighborhood despite easy access to transit.

Sowieja said Creston Homes is seeking to secure parking space atop

the Rite Aid building across Sandy Boulevard. But local resident Edward Love said that people would not use such parking because they would have limited access to it.

Love was particularly vehement about the effect on the theatre façade. "If you put a five-story building next to a three-story building, it becomes the building of pre-eminence." He called the plan "making pate' of our golden goose." Others called the theatre "our gem, our namesake," and pointed out that it was on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sowieja replied, "As often happens with designs, I disagree with you. This won't rob the theatre of its significance."

The project will require two Type II Design Review processes, one each for the building and the plaza.

1948 Vanport Flood remembered

With the Columbia River rising to within a few inches of flood-stage level, remembering the May 30, 1948 Vanport Flood and its aftermath is all the more poignant.

Tens of thousands of families lost their homes in a matter of seconds when the devastating flood swept away the entire com-

munity of Vanport. Records indicate that as few as 15 lives were lost, but some community members believe the number to be much higher.

Alyse Kay Spencer, an African American woman whose mother, now deceased, was a survivor of the Vanport flood wants to remind people of the event that directly

affected so many people.

Spencer said, "Survivors survived, became an intrinsic part of communities, families, neighborhoods and are still here if not in body, in spirit and the hearts and souls of those that love them..."

Contact Spencer at vanportsurvivors@spiritone.com.

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