

# First Families Picnic Set

## Vancouver embraces African-American heritage

Sparked by the recent publication of a book telling their story, some of Vancouver's earliest African American residents are inviting "First Families and Friends" to a community picnic starting at 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 8, at the city's historic David Douglas Park.

"The whole purpose of this is to gather together the people we grew up with, people who were born and raised in Vancouver," said Kay Swar, who is helping to plan the event.

Her parents, Henry and Margie Swar, were among workers from all over the U.S. who came to Vancouver and Portland after Pearl Harbor to build up the Navy fleet at the Kaiser shipyards.

Until then, Vancouver had almost no black population — hence the book's title, "First Families of Vancouver's African American Community: From World War II to the 21st Century."

Vancouver felt like home to many of these families. They stayed here after the war and put down roots.

Children who grew up here and graduated from Vancouver schools in the 1950s and '60s now lament that the only time they ever see each other is at funerals.

"We've been saying that forever," Swar said at a recent planning session. Her longtime friend, Juanita Young, laughed in agreement.

"It was really starting to bother us," Young said. "We kept telling each other, 'We have to stop meeting like this!'"

When the original community reunited at Clark College last spring to celebrate the book's release — an occasion of joy, not sorrow — they knew it was time to take action.

Ralph Griffin's family was part of the wartime migration, coming first to the Vanport housing projects, then settling in Vancouver after the great Columbia River flood of 1948.

Griffin's aunt, Laura Mae Smith, died here this year on his birthday, April 22. His mother and other family members still live here.

Now he and Willard Nettles Jr., a longtime Vancouver teacher and former city council member who recently moved to Newport, are working with Swar, Young and others to plan a gathering that they hope will be the first of many.

People are asked to bring their own picnic fare, plus potluck dishes if desired. The planners will have extra plates, flatware, napkins and water on hand if needed. The park has no cooking facilities and does not allow alcohol.

In a brief program starting at 2 p.m., Bob Knight, Clark College president and early friend and supporter of the First Families book project, will deliver a personal wel-

come to the families. Musical performances and other activities will take place throughout the afternoon.

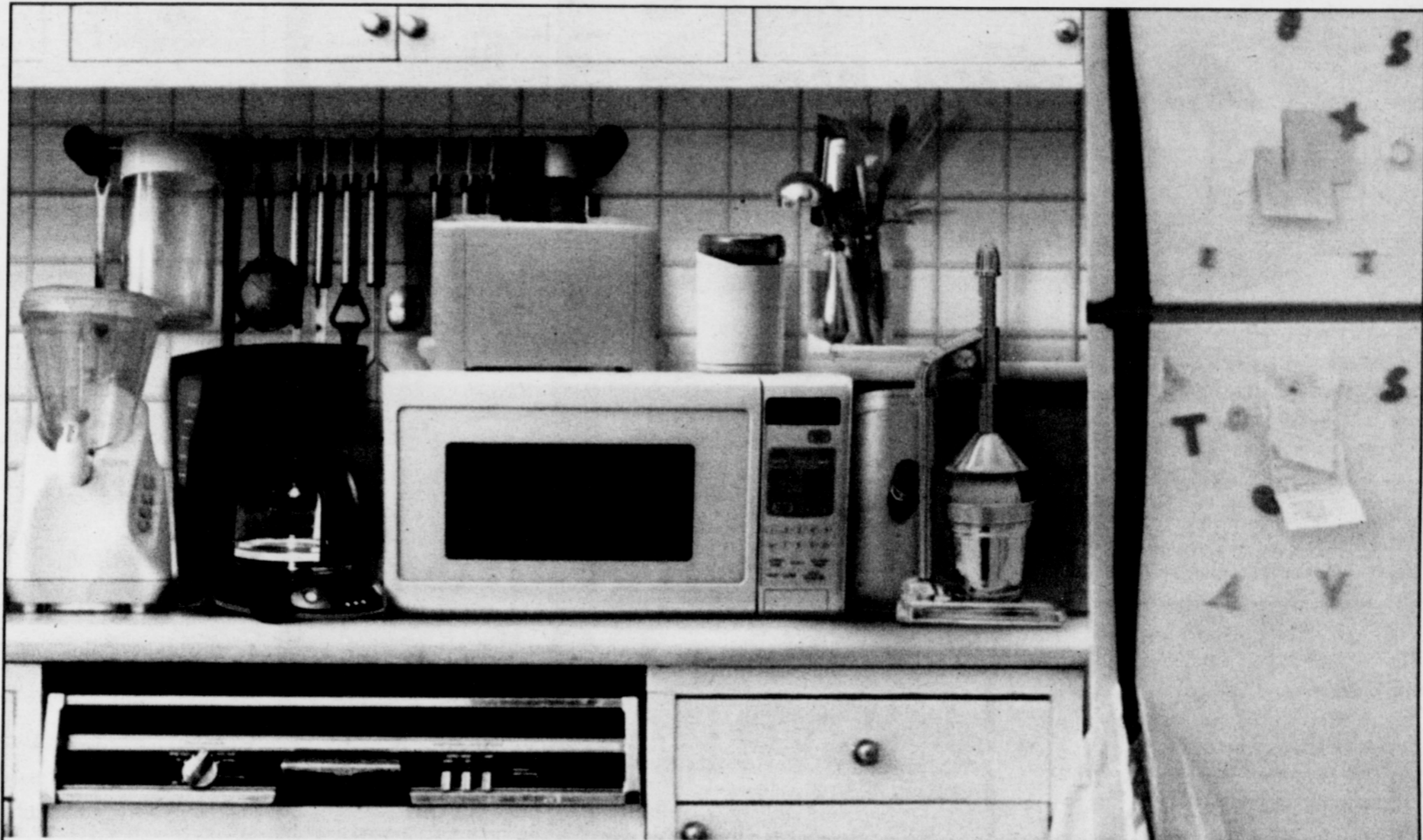
Members of Vancouver NAACP Branch #1139, which was founded

by the original community in 1945, will be selling "First Families" books at the picnic.

"We're evolving and shaping it this year," Griffin said. "The first

one's always trial and error. It can only get better."

For more information, call Ralph Griffin at 360-980-6203 or Juanita Young at 360-921-9482.



## At this rate, you might think about remodeling your kitchen.




### Get a great rate on a Home Equity Line of Credit.

Rates as low as  
**3.99%** APR<sup>1</sup>

There's never been a better time to make those home improvements you've been thinking about. U.S. Bank is offering a Home Equity Line of Credit at a great rate of just 3.99% APR with no closing costs.<sup>2</sup> Not to mention potential tax advantages,<sup>3</sup> great service and convenient branch locations. Start adding value to your home today.

All of **us** serving you®

**usbank**

 branch  [usbank.com/lowrate](http://usbank.com/lowrate)  800.209.BANK (2265)

1. 3.99% Annual Percentage Rate (APR) is available on Equiline Home Equity Lines of Credit with a U.S. Bank Package and a 70% or 80% loan-to-value (LTV) or less. Minimum credit limit conditions may also apply and vary, depending upon the market. The APR will vary with the Prime Rate as published in the Wall Street Journal. As of August 1, 2012 the variable rate for home equity lines ranged from 3.99% APR to 8.99% APR. Higher rates apply depending upon the credit limit and a higher LTV. The rate will not vary above 25% APR or applicable state law, nor below 3.25% APR. An annual fee up to \$90 may apply after the first year. Offer is subject to normal credit qualifications. Rates are subject to change. 2. Property insurance is required. 3. Consult your tax advisor regarding the deductibility of interest. Some restrictions may apply. Home Equity Loans and Lines of Credit are offered through U.S. Bank National Association ND. © 2012 U.S. Bancorp. All rights reserved. Member FDIC.