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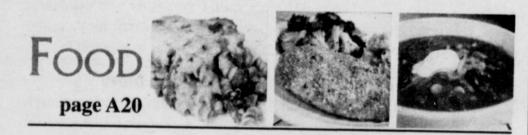
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What's on your list today?



PHOTO BY DONOVAN M. SMITH/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Verna Glass looks to the treasure of her family history for inspiration.

Power of the Pen

Getting through hard times by writing

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The domino effect has certainly left its mark on Verna Mae Glass. Continually faced with tragedy, the Portland woman arrived at the point where despair had almost overtaken her completely. But an opportunity to exercise her deepest thoughts with just a pen and paper offered a gateway for positivity to once again house anymore," she said. flow into her orbit.

son, daughter-in-law, and one of her grandchildren all at once in a heated domestic dispute turned tragic.

"I really had no will to live at that point." The struggle for answers berated her consciousness every day, she said.

deported. Less than a week after her dressed and went." son's funeral, he was sent to prison back to his native Mexico.

With her family seemingly falling apart, depression washed over her. "I didn't even want to go out of the

That was until the day her daugh-In the fall of 2010 Glass lost her ter came to her, ecstatic about a writing workshop she had been attending, called Write Around Portland. Her daughter urged her to attend.

"I'd never really gotten a chance to express how I feel, so rather than just sit in the house every day and make my mind wander through what

The unfortunate series of events happened and what possibly could did not stop there. Her partner of have gone wrong and make scemore than 12 years was soon to be narios, I got up every day and I got

Write Around Portland is a 10in Washington State to be deported week free creative writing workshop offered to people in low-income apartments, hospitals, senior centers, prisons, schools, homeless youth centers, social service agencies, and treatment programs.

They provided Glass with a journal, and she began to write feverishly. She was told by a facilitator to write in it every day for 20 minutes; she wrote more.

Naturally, much of what she wrote initially was her attempt to process

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Portland Remembers Kendra James

The shooting death of Kendra James galvanized Portland when it occurred in 2003.

The Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform will lead a memorial vigil on Sunday, May 5, for James, the 25year-old African American woman who was killed by Portland Police exactly 10 years ago on the Skidmore overpass in Portland.

The memorial, beginning at 5 p.m., will be held outside the Greater Faith Baptist Church at 931 N. Skidmore.



Kendra James

Members of James' family will be in attendance.

James' death was a touchstone for many in Portland who saw the shooting of an unarmed African American woman as a symptom of a Police Bureau needing major re-

The event is endorsed by Portland Copwatch and other community organizations.

For more information call Dr. LeRoy Haynes Jr., chair of the AMA Coalition at 503-287-0261.