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# The PO



## Kirk Reeves Mural

*Celebrating the  
completed portrait  
of late performer*

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## Business Focus:

### Hip and Street

*Duo brings menswear  
and art to Old Town*

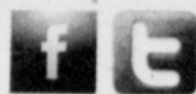
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# The Portland Observer 44

'City of Roses'



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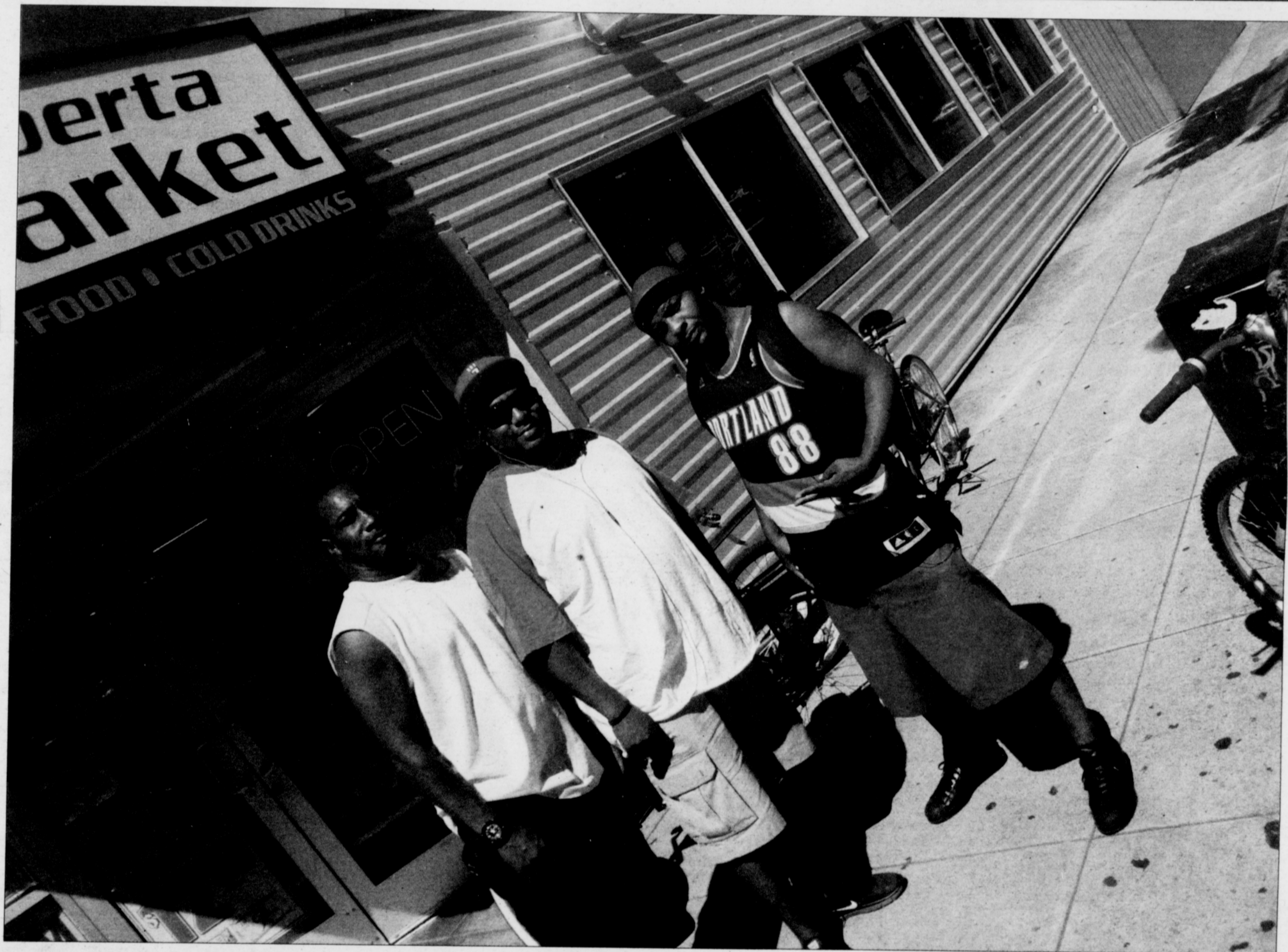


PHOTO BY JASON WASHINGTON

Frank Bain (from left), Jason Washington and Bernard Brandon are members of a black bicycling group stepping up to promote a "Take Back the Streets" event in north and northeast Portland as a peaceful response to a surge in violence on city streets.

# Stepping Up

## Community bike ride a call for peace now and beyond

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH, THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Hop in your seat, put rubber to the pavement and ride. You're invited to help take back the streets as the longtime Northeast Alberta Street non-profit Community Cycling Center hosts a public bike ride in response to a surge in violence by local youth and other young men.

The upcoming "Take Back the Streets" rally is the brainchild of two active north Portland residents DeMarcus Preston, 44 and Jason Washington, 44. They are members of a local group which explores the cityscape regularly by way of biking.

After a rash of summer violence that saw two young men killed in separate incidents within a week of each other, one in outer southeast Portland and the other in New Columbia of north Portland, they brought their idea to the cycling center. The fatal shootings of Andre Leon Coggins Jr., 24, and Hahrachio "HB" Branch, 26, have served as grim high-

lights to a summer that has seen its fare share of gunfire.

For Preston, a former gang member, it's about stepping up to make the community better.

"I've seen friends and family killed. I've been lucky enough to make it out, and I want to help others do the same," he said.

Within a month, Preston and other members of his bicycling group, joined members of the cycling center to turn their idea into an event with a budget. A Facebook posting after just 12 hours saw over 100 people expressing an interest in attending.

The cycling center's director of programming, Zoe Pillafas, calls the effort a model for true collaboration.

Thanks to some funding from Metro, a host of resources will

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