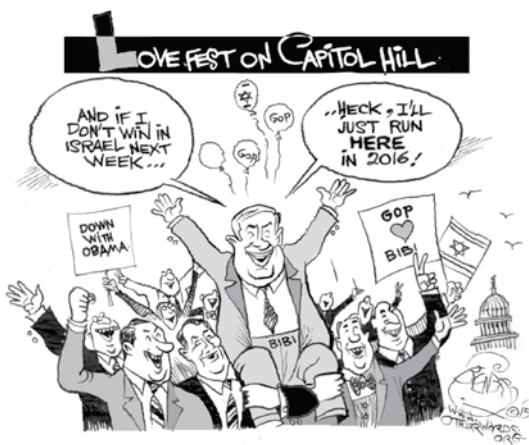


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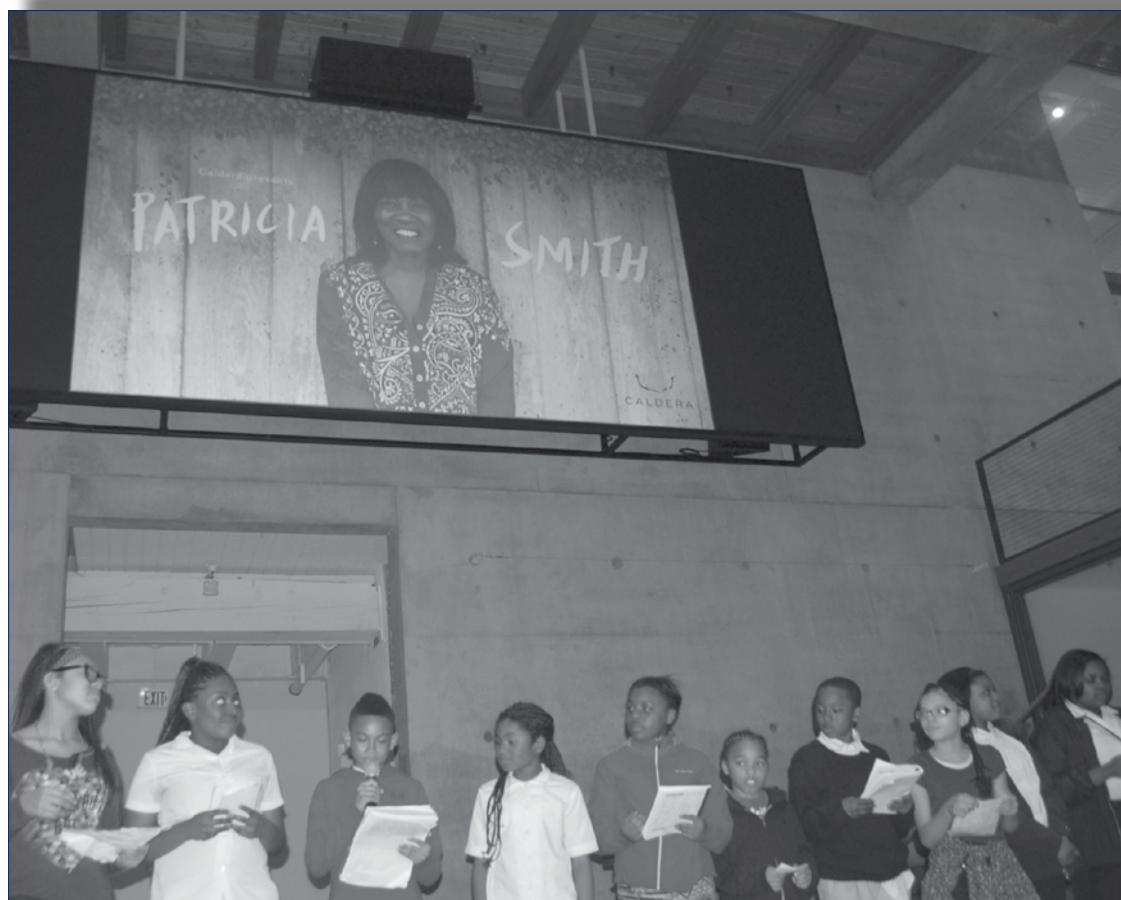


PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Students from Self Enhancement read from poetry they created in a workshop taught by internationally renowned black poet Patricia Smith.

Poetry Slam

A reach out to young black writers

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A local nonprofit organization that works to create positive change in the lives of underserved youth through a unique and powerful blend of arts, nature, community building, and long-term group mentoring recently selected international renowned black poet Patricia Smith, author of six critically acknowledged volumes of poetry, as a resident teacher.

Smith's visit to Portland was in partnership with Caldera, a mentoring group that provides a summer arts camp and other services to disadvantaged youth. She taught a week-long, in-school poetry residency at Self Enhancement, Inc. Academy, a public charter school serving Portland's African-American community.

Over 100 SEI students took the opportunity to work with Smith to create original works of spoken word and slam poetry based on their own personal and cultural history.

The young writers were ecstatic to perform alongside Smith on Thursday and celebrated her joining their community by reading some of the poetry they creat-

ed through her class at Wieden + Kennedy, the national advertising powerhouse located in northwest Portland.

Almost all of them black, the SEI students spoke of the homes and backgrounds they came from and how they represent not just themselves but their cultural histories when they move, write, or speak.

Caldera hopes to prolong the interest brought through Smith's workshop and the group's other outreach efforts by inviting the students to apply for their summer arts camp and to join in the group's other mentorship programs. Students can learn more at calderaarts.org.

March Madness in Portland

March Madness is about to descend on Portland as eight of the nation's best college basketball teams compete at the Moda Center for a chance to advance past the opening rounds of the NCAA College Basketball tournament.

The championship series tips off Thursday as the 5th ranked Arizona Wildcats take on Texas Southern, followed by a terrific match-up between VCU and Ohio State. Utah faces upset-minded Stephen F. Austin in Thursday's second session, fol-

lowed by Georgetown vs. Eastern Washington.

Winners from the incredible day of college hoops will advance to games on Saturday at the Moda Center and the chance to advance to the tournament's 'Sweet Sixteen' of finalists.