

# CLASSIFIEDS/BIDS

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These opportunities are open to First Opportunity Target Area (FOTA) residents - Columbia Blvd on the north; 42nd Ave on the east; the Banfield Freeway on the south, and North Chautauqua Blvd on the west, whose total annual income does not exceed \$25,000 as an individual, or \$40,000 for an entire household, for the past 12 months.

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## PUBLIC NOTICE/ REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

**Worksystems** and the **Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County** are seeking competitive proposals for the provision of services related to **mental, behavioral and vocational counseling for long-term unemployed job seekers and veterans enrolled in the region's Reboot Northwest project.** The Request for Proposal (RFP) will be posted April 22, 2015 on WSI's website: [www.worksystems.org](http://www.worksystems.org). **Proposals are due noon, May 22, 2015.** Worksystems, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. To place a free relay call in Oregon dial 711.

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# A Sharp Focus to Controversy

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gospel, soul, and R&B and the inspiration they offered to the civil rights movement, and HBO recently picked up the U.S. TV rights to this film.

I saw "Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead: The Story of the National Lampoon" late in the festival and, frankly, it was my last choice in its time slot; this brand of raunchy dominant-culture humor is not really my thing. But actually the film is a very smartly assembled history of the humor magazine that presaged "Saturday Night Live" and such feature films as "Animal House," "Caddyshack," and "National Lampoon's Vacation." It cleverly uses clips from the mag's own art to illustrate much of the history, and assembles interviews from a cast of mostly privileged white male contributors who are now in their 60s. It's a worthwhile window into the history of American humor and culture -- though for all its wistful nostalgia, the film lacks any awareness that whole segments of American society (like, uh, women and ethnic minorities) never had a heyday in which their raunchiest humor found a dominant culture audience, and aren't likely



The origins and legacy of the Black Panthers is brought to life in the new documentary "The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution."

to experience that heyday.

"The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution" really is more my cup of tea, and this film directed by venerable documentarian Stanley Nelson delivers a comprehensive look at the controversial organization's origins and legacy. I learned a lot, as I expected to, but I have to say that the National Lampoon film juggled its various story lines a bit more successfully; I got lost at times in Nelson's assemblage of stories and left with lots more questions, even after two hours. However, that would have been particularly hard to avoid in telling this piece of history; as the film points out in its opening scenes, each participant has his or her own history of the Black Panther party that they were part of -- and that doesn't even account for the popular culture perceptions of the group. Anyone interested in furthering her education on this important piece of American culture won't want to miss this film.

"How to Dance in Ohio" won an audience award, which surprised me a little, but the film is well worth a look. In Columbus, Ohio, a group of teens and young adults on the autism spectrum prepare for an American rite of passage that is the setting for untold agonies even for those of us not on the spectrum: a Spring Formal. They are all working with a kind and quite brave psychologist who prepares them for and stages the event as part of their work to practice social skills. The film particularly follows three young women in their journey of preparation for the dance, and its tender exploration of their ups and downs in experiencing this event that might otherwise have been inaccessible to them is not only illuminating about autism, but is also achingly familiar terrain for anyone. The film's subjects and particularly their relationships with their caring parents are often quite moving and this depiction gently affirms common experiences that we don't always perceive so accurately.

"Tocando la Luz" took home an award for the best first-time documentary feature, though I think others outshone it. It follows the stories of three blind women in

Havana, Cuba and their parallel stories of struggling for the independence. Though each individual story contained interesting features, the film needed further shaping to establish a more defined link or purpose between them.

"3 and 1/2 Minutes" probes the story of Jordan Davis, an African American teen who was gunned down by a middle-aged white man who had confronted Davis and his three friends about their loud music. I so wanted this film to be better than it is, given the importance of its subject matter, but it seems the filmmakers were so intent on releasing a film about the trial of Davis's killer that they didn't take the time to assemble a very careful analysis of the larger issues. They benefit from their compelling subjects, particularly Davis's repellent assailant, but I am still wishing for a more nuanced examination of the escalating problem of gun violence against young black men.

The final three films are worth seeing for their specialized subjects. "Tell Spring Not to Come This Year" documents the experiences of one inexperienced and ill-equipped unit of the Afghan National Army charged with maintaining security after the departure of international forces. The filmmakers embedded with the unit and captured heartbreaking scenes of the chaos and bloodshed experienced by young men with few real other options. "Devil's Rope" artfully captures a sense of the legacy of barbed wire fences in the American West, including long, silent tracking shots and laconic commentary from barbed wire enthusiasts. Finally, "Love Marriage in Kabul" follows the efforts of a dynamic Afghan woman who runs several orphanages and seeks to help a young couple accomplish a love marriage against relentless social odds in an unyielding society.

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie review column *Opinionated Judge* appears regularly in *The Portland Observer*. Find her movie blog at [opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com](http://opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com).



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