

Health Care Blues

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“Single payer would make such a difference in everyone’s life, especially our local musicians,” said Donna Richards, one of the organizers of the event.

The cause has extra meaning for musicians who as a group have gone without health insurance more than most and which as a profession has not benefited from a growing economy.

Clubs have closed for various reasons over the years and the pay is even lower than it was 30 years ago, the musicians lament. A tight group that loves to support each other, they hold regular fundraisers for players that are ill. But even a successful fundraiser can’t make much of a difference. Costs of medicine and procedures have skyrocketed. People that are self-employed can’t buy policies way out of their price range.

That’s why over the last five years, band leader Norman Sylvester and his wife Paula have worked hard to book entertainment for this popular event. Last year the festival pulled in 750 people. The goal this year is to raise \$40,000.

Norman and Paula don’t have to look far to find tragic examples of a system that isn’t working. In fact they are putting together a “Go Fund Me” for friend and fellow musician Frankie “Funk Master” Redding. Frankie has been playing in the Portland area since he was 15 back when the post-World War II legendary Cotton Club graced North Vancouver Av-

enue. Later he was asked to play in their house band and backed some of the greats of the music business like Etta James and Tyrone Davis.

For over 55 years he been a mainstay in over a dozen bands, but medical insurance costs were always out of the question and he now faces a plethora of health problems. Eleven years ago Jan Bisconer, a fan and friend donated her kidney to him. As grateful as he was, years of diabetes and complications have taken its toll. His Medicaid doesn’t cover his prescription drugs, his painkillers or dental care needs.

It’s estimated that 8,000 families in Oregon will suffer health-care-related bankruptcies this

year alone and 600 people will die because they lack affordable health care. Let’s work together to spread the word that we can “Heal the Healthcare Blues.”

The 5th annual Inner City Blues Festival will take place Saturday, April 16 at the North Portland Eagles Lodge, 7611 N. Exeter Ave., off Lombard Street. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. and the show will begin at 6 p.m. and last until midnight.

Admission is \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. For tickets, visit the website tickettomato.com

or stop by Peninsula Station, 8326 N. Lombard; Music Millennium, 3158 E. Burnside Ave; Geneva’s Pure Perfection: 5601 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd; or the Musician’s Union Local 99, 325 N.E. 20th Ave.

Career Workshops for Teenagers

Local youth are invited to attend the Beaverton Youth Summit: Connecting You to Creative Career Paths on Friday, April 15 from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Beaverton Building, 12725 S.W. Millikan Way. The free event is open to youth ages 14 to 18 years old.

Hear from two different panels on how local government leaders and business leaders carved out their career pathway. Learn tips and tricks for building your resume, brush up on your networking skills, and learn the most effective interview skills to land you your next internship or job.

The evening will close with a mini social where you can put your new skills to the test, visit various booths and enjoy some food. Raffle prizes will be awarded at the end of the night.

Seating is limited to 100 attendees. RSVP to surveymonkey.com/r/BeavertonYouthSummit. For more information, email mailboxmayorMYAB@Beaverton-Oregon.gov or call 503-350-4083.

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