

Bridge

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game derived from the 16th century game “whist.”

For those who may not know, contract bridge is played with a regular deck by two teams of two players. As explained by Wikipedia, “The game consists of several deals each progressing through four phases: dealing the cards, the auction (also referred to as bidding), playing the hand, and scoring the results.”

In addition to playing bridge, ABA members support community events and provide funds annually for college scholarships

For people who have never played it, watching a game is confusing; you have to learn by doing it.

Polk says the Challengers group is already a dynamic organization, playing weekly

games at the Miracles Club.

“It’s like old home week,” Polk says. “We have two national tournaments every year—one in the spring and one in the summer, and it’s like a family reunion every time we get together.”

That’s part of the reason the club wants to invite more people, Polk says: It’s an important opportunity to learn a stimulating hobby that pushes players to learn more no matter how good they already are.

And everyone is welcome despite their age, race or background – the only prerequisite to playing bridge is a desire to learn.

“It’s a game that you can play starting as a youngster all the way until your senior years,” Polk says. “Always something new to learn.”

For more information about the American Bridge Association call 253-365-4229 in Washington; 503-703-7365 in Oregon; send an e-mail to: aba-nws@comcast.net; or go to www.ababridge.org.



Challengers Bridge Club is looking for new members. From lower left corner, Karen Tillis, George Herold, Brenda Polk, Ray Giles, and Ernest Hill.

Sanctuary

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foreclosure.”

Umi should know. He worked in the financial sector during the height of the sub-prime lending frenzy, growing increasingly disillusioned with what he says were common deceptive practices.

Homeowners trust loan officers to give good advice, Umi says. But lenders make more money from selling higher-risk loans. So they ignored their responsibility to make sure borrowers could repay. They could make a loan, then turn around and sell it the next day.

In Umi’s view the fraud perpetrated on homeowners steered into high-risk loans should have led to prosecutions. But faced with the collapse of the U.S. financial system, U.S. political leaders bailed out the banks and took a pass on criminal prosecutions, in exchange for a \$25 billion settlement.

If the big banks were too big to fail, individual homeowners were too small to save.

“The court system is completely rigged against us. The best we can get is that the illegal foreclosure is rolled back, and then the person has to pay a lot of money or go back into foreclosure.”

That’s what’s facing Annette Steele and Alicia Jackson, both longtime Northeast residents whose homes are in foreclosure.

Steele is a 79-year-old grandmother who was talked into taking a sub-prime loan in order to do maintenance on her home. She has lived in her home on Northeast 14th Avenue for 26 years.

“I love my house and I’ll do everything I can to keep it,” Steele says.

Jackson is a veteran of Desert Storm and

says.

Both women looked for help but found none.

Steele says she paid \$35 to the Bar Association on three occasions, in an unsuccessful attempt to find a lawyer to fight her corner. She also paid \$2,158 to American Homemakers, who promised to help her refinance, but did not give her even a receipt. She’s been going to court alone and trying to represent herself for the last

If the banks were too big fail, were individual homeowners too small to save?

Desert Shield. Her family has lived in its Northeast Portland home since the 1970s. In 2008, when the windows needed repaired, an unscrupulous lender steered Jackson into a sub-prime loan that soon ballooned beyond her ability to pay.

“If you look at these cases, they have paid far more than the houses are worth,” Umi

three years. Now, out of fear of being evicted, she naps during the day and tries to stay awake all night.

“They told me, ‘You’re going to be living in a cardboard box on the street,’” she says. “I’m just not going to let them walk in and take it away from me.”

Terrified when she got her first foreclo-

sure notice, Alicia Jackson moved out of her home, and turned off the utilities. But after talking to members of the Black Working Group, she moved back home and decided to fight. Part of her property already has been sold to a developer, who has built two row houses next to her home.

Jackson didn’t realize she’d have to take on Portland City Council. The city refused to turn her water on, citing a rule that they can only turn on water for a homeowner whose name is on the title. Jackson is disputing the foreclosure, but Commissioner Randy Leonard, who is in charge of the Water Bureau, has refused to budge. The City issued a vacate order to Alicia Jackson, effective Oct. 25.

“They are hiding behind a rule that they’ll only turn water on for a homeowner,” Umi says. “The city is taking the side of the bank and serving as an agent for the bank.”

As things stand, Jackson expects police to arrive with an eviction notice at any moment. Armed with her phone, she plans to call in the community activists to help her resist.

Read the rest of this story online at www.theskanner.com



Jackson

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Jackson felt the subjects covered in “Oversoul,” such as friends who played sports but didn’t make it to the pros, and others who got caught up in gang life, were underrepresented in literature.

Being a writer, he says, lets him tackle these subjects with nuance in ways others can’t.

“There’s no shortage of rappers who are telling these kinds of stories,” says Jackson. “However, there’s an immense pressure on rappers to tell a hackneyed or, in some ways, a clichéd story about the urban – I hate that word urban – experience.”

“Authenticity is important to me because I don’t want those people I write about or those stories to be underrepresented.”

This speaks to the larger issue of lack of representation of people of color in the publishing industry, says Jackson.

“From a business level, we’re not really

the decision makers in the publishing industry,” he says. “If one of us doesn’t push through we lose those stories.”

By coming to speak at places like SEI, he hopes to inspire youth to continue pushing through that door.

First and foremost, he encourages kids to simply tell their stories.

If people don’t have a relationship with language, it’s hard to communicate what they’re going through, says Jackson.

He doesn’t remember anyone coming to give him that talk when he was an SEI kid, over 20 years ago.

“I wasn’t a reader,” says Jackson. “I had the same dream as everyone else. I was at the Salvation Army trying to work on my three pointer, while everyone else, my contemporaries, were holed up their rooms trying to write a short story.”

Despite his basketball focus, Jackson was

always a good student. His teachers would tell him he was a talented writer but he didn’t consider how to apply that skill into a career.

He moved around a number of schools in the Portland area before going on to play junior college basketball.

When the pro athlete dream ended, Jackson earned an academic scholarship to attend Portland State University (PSU).

While at PSU, he got into petty drug dealing. He got caught and served 16 months in prison.

Jackson considers himself lucky. He says he wasn’t a drug kingpin, but the amount he got caught with could’ve landed him in prison for 10 years.

The economy is now dependent on the war on drugs, he says.

“The population of prisons keeps going up and they’re getting all of this cheap

labor,” says Jackson. “I don’t think the government is truly set on eradicating drugs from the inner city. Too many businesses are thriving and political structures are thriving. And who are they losing? The Black men. They don’t care.”

Jackson makes it clear that a drug conviction can ruin someone. He wasn’t able to get a number of jobs because of his criminal record. In addition, he wasn’t given the chance to have that record expunged.

Jackson hopes this message will get through to SEI kids.

“We need to give our kids other avenues and other things that they can emulate,” he says. “It’s one thing to say don’t go sell some dope. It’s another thing to say, ‘Don’t go sell some dope and I’ve got this over here for you.’”