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CAREERS
Special Edition

Police Bill Under Debate

Mayor Hales battles Salem Dems over police accountability

A dispute over the consequences of a bill under debate in the Oregon Legislature has the City of Portland pitted against Democrats in Salem.

Mayor Charlie Hales and city staff believe the bill — HB2418 — could destroy chances to improve police accountability in Portland.

“Things would be a lot worse than they are now,” said Dana Haynes the mayor’s spokesperson.

The bill changes the definition of a supervisory employee, in order to increase the number of public employees eligible to join a union. The rules would apply to all public employees, but just one clause that affects police, firefighters and emergency responders, set off alarms at city hall.

The clause says public employees who are not allowed to strike are not classified as supervisors unless they have, “the authority to impose economic discipline,” on other employees.

City attorney Lori Kraut says if it passes the Senate—it already has passed the House—the bill would allow every serving police officer to become a union member—right up to the chief of police. Every serving police officer would have the right to go to a state arbitrator over disciplinary action.

“Under the City Charter only the mayor and city commissioners have the power to hire and fire employees,” Kraut says. “They have the appointing authority. The police chief and the fire chief can recommend, but they do not have the authority to make the decision.

“So under this bill even our police and fire chiefs would not be considered supervisory employees.”

A string of cases involving police use of force sparked public outrage after arbitrators overruled city firings and discipline. Arbitrators overturned disciplinary suspensions over the death in custody of James Chasse, for example, and reinstated Officer Ron Frashour who was fired after he shot

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FAMILY FUN DAY



PHOTO BY HELEN SILVIS

The service workers union, SEIU, Local 49, held a Family Fun Day in Pioneer Place May 19. Union members gathered with their families and friends to enjoy food and fun with clowns, a dunking station and games. The crowd heard messages from union and community leaders and put in a group phone call to Gov. Kitzhaber, asking him to pay attention to falling living standards and the decline of middle-class jobs.

Film Explores Origin of Afro-Cuban Music

Seattle-based bata drummers prepare for performance in Nigeria

Bruce Poinsette
Of The Skanner News

Two local documentarians are bringing the Afro-Cuban bata drumming tradition to the screen.

Alex Riedlinger and Sidony O’Neal will be traveling with the Seattle-based Omo Alagba, or “Children of the Sacred Elders” project for their performance at the historic 10th International Congress of Orisa Tradition and Culture in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. They will be capturing

the experience to both expose viewers to the music and further the dialogue of the African diaspora.

“I feel like the process of making this film will be just as powerful as the drumming that we capture,” says O’Neal.

She and Riedlinger are working in conjunction with producer Chaz Mortimer of Ibori Records to put out this film. Riedlinger will be doing all the filming while O’Neal will write and translate. Both are doing extensive research.

Mortimer, in addition to producing, will be doing sound for the film. Their collaboration will be the first project for O’Neal and Riedlinger’s vehicle, Ibeji Pictures. Recently, the group raised \$6,840 through an Indiegogo campaign.

The Omo Alagba are a Lukumi Orisha band, which means they perform Afro-Cuban praise music that has roots in Nigeria.

Mortimer received grants to produce a full album of all the praise songs performed by practitioners to pay homage to the

Orishas, or deities in the Yoruba religious system. This is the first studio recording of the songs in their completion.

Omo Alagba features three drummers, a singer and a chorus.

The drummers play the bata drums, which are considered “talking drums.” The drums have different tones and the drummers talk to each other through them.

Riedlinger says this tradition survived amongst the slaves and

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Rockwood Gets Set to “Rock the Block”

Community feast and celebration will kickoff summer programs

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Gresham’s Rockwood neighborhood is getting ready to Rock the Block on May 31 and June 1. Neighbors are invited to enjoy a community feast, an all-day celebration, and a summer of fun and activities for youth. And Rockwood Nation plans to keep up the momentum all

summer long.

“We’re having a big kickoff on May 31 through June 1,” says Mindy Clark, outreach director for Pathfinders of Oregon, one of a group of social service agencies and nonprofits supporting Rock the Block. “We’ll be serving dinner for 500 people with foods from all over the world including Africa, Asia and Mexico. This is a highly multicultural area so we want everything we

do to reflect that.”

The Feast of All Nations will be celebrated from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday May 31, at the Plaza del Sol, 18535 S.E. Stark Street. Food will be served at 6 p.m. Then on Saturday June 1, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., families are invited to a community celebration that will include a kids’ parade at noon,

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