

Merkley cont'd from pg 1

in a telephone interview. “That is completely outside the soul of our nation, where virtually all of us have family history, in one branch or another, where somebody fled persecution to come to the U.S.”

Merkley said he was able to enter another facility used for processing migrants and run

over 100 shelters in some 17 states, and that children spend an average of 51 days in them.

Merkley live-streamed on Facebook his attempt to visit the Brownsville facility.

He said he and the press should be able to see conditions inside.

“Every American citizen has a stake in how

“It reminds me a little bit of a dog kennel, constructed of cyclone fencing

by the Department of Homeland Security. He said he saw men, women and children crowded in cages.

“It reminds me a little bit of a dog kennel, constructed of cyclone fencing,” Merkley said. Some of the areas contained men, while others had only women and some had women holding children, he said.

Merkley was accused of grandstanding by Victoria Palmer, a spokeswoman for the Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families.

It was out of concerns for “the safety, security and dignity of the children” that Merkley was barred from entering the Brownsville facility, Palmer said in an email. “No one who arrives unannounced at one of our shelters demanding access to the children in our care will be permitted, even those claiming to be U.S. senators,” the statement said.

Through a contractor, the agency is caring for the children being held in a former Walmart with blacked-out windows in Brownsville, a city along the border between Texas and Mexico.

The Department of Health and Human Services says it operates

these children are being treated and how this policy is being enacted,” Merkley said in the video.

In Brownsville, a supervisor emerged from the building and said he wasn’t allowed to make any statement. He gave the senator a phone number of the public affairs office in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington.

Meanwhile, Brownsville police arrived and asked Merkley for his name and birth date. Merkley provided the information and then tried to explain to the officer why he had come to the facility.

“The attorney general’s team, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement, they don’t want anyone to know about what’s going on behind these doors,” Merkley told the police officer.

Sen. Bob Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat, said on Twitter that his team was also barred from a migrant facility where families were being separated.

He said the federal government’s actions were “outrageous” and called for an explanation from Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen.

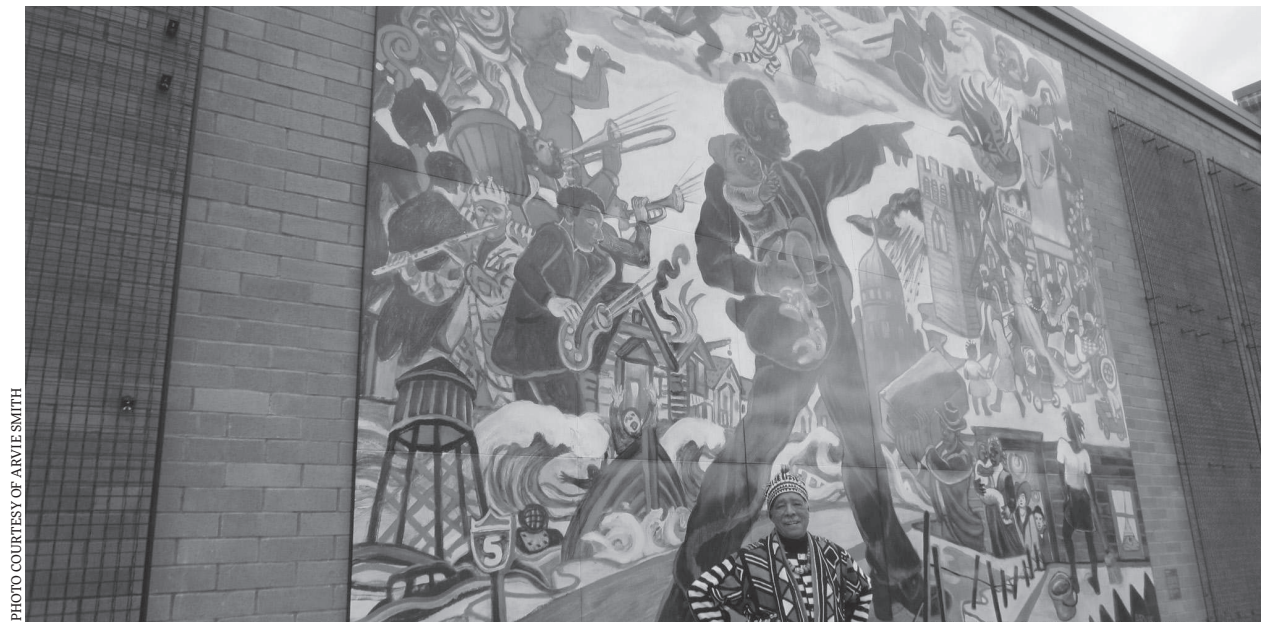


PHOTO COURTESY OF ARVIE SMITH

New Mural Tells Story of the Neighborhood

Portland artist Arvie Smith’s new mural, “Still We Rise,” was unveiled earlier this spring at the intersection of MLK and Alberta. “Starting with the Vanport Flood of 1948, this work tells the story of the upward struggle of the Albina neighborhood residents. Despite the systematic dismantling of the neighborhood by the local government and housing market, the community forged ahead to maintain unity with resilience, determination and hope,” reads a statement from Smith. “The historic events, landmarks, and resolve depicted in the mural include the legendary jazz scene, property red lining, police brutality, human struggle and the ravaging of Black spaces through ‘urban renewal.’”

Inspired by the words of Maya Angelou in her poem, “Still I Rise,” “the nobleness of the human spirit” and the resolve to move beyond a “past rooted in pain,” the artist created the central figure pointing to the Still We Rise flag to encourage strength, pride and hope for future generations.

Hayes cont'd from pg 1

The complaint argues that on the morning of Hayes’ death, officers shouted conflicting commands. It also notes that while Hayes was carrying a replica handgun at the time of his death, there is no evidence that he drew or reached for it during his interaction with officers.

“When the officers came upon Quance, different police officers shouted contradictory commands at him,” the suit says. “He obeyed the commands of Officer Robert Wullbrandt, and crawled on his hands and knees as ordered, coming to a stop when ordered to do so. Defendant Hearst, while Officer Wulbrandt was ordering Quance to crawl on his hands and knees, was ordering Quance to crawl on his knees with his hands in the air. Quance bent forward to comply with Officer Wullbrandt’s command and Defendant Hearst shot him.”

The complaint also notes that Hearst was involved in the 2013 shooting of Merle Hatch, but was not disciplined by the police bureau. (In March, a Multnomah

County grand jury declined to indict Hearst in connection with Hayes’ death.) The suit mentions the Department of Justice’s 2012 settlement with the city, which found the Portland Police Bureau had a pattern and practice of ex-

“Different police officers shouted contradictory commands

cessive force against people experiencing mental health crisis. It also notes the city has a pattern and practice of over-policing African-Americans:

“The Portland Police Bureau has a history of disproportionate policing of African-Americans, including stops, searches, and seizures of African-Americans at an elevated level disproportionate to their presence in the population. The City is well aware of this history of discriminatory policing. The City is also aware that their police officers wrongly perceive African-Americans,

and particularly young African-American men and boys, to pose a greater threat of violence than other members of the community. Despite being aware of these well-known biases, the City has not acted to correct them,” the suit reads.

The complaint argues Hayes’ death is at the intersection of those two patterns, noting Hayes’ erratic behavior on the final morning of his life suggested he was experiencing a mental health crisis, which officers should have sought to de-escalate.

An article published on the website Longreads.com in February paints a detailed picture of Hayes’ life through his final weeks and suggests he struggled with substance abuse and may have been intoxicated at the time of his death.

The lawsuit, which seeks unspecified damages from the city and Hearst, was filed with funds from a crowdfunding effort that is still ongoing. Those wishing to assist can visit www.crowdjustice.com/case/quance.

Dispensary cont'd from pg 1

and even record expungement.

Locally, the city of Portland passed a milestone last year when voters approved a three percent tax on recreational cannabis, a portion of which will help fund programs that support workforce development and minority-owned cannabis businesses.

The tax was championed by Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who said in a press release that she admired the new dispensary’s “goal of increasing the participation and success of people of color in an otherwise white-dominated field.”

Fritz will join Crews and Green Hop co-owner Nicole Kennedy, alongside US Congressman Earl Blumenauer and Mayor Ted Wheeler, for a ribbon-cutting on June 16 at the dispensary, located in Crews’ childhood neighborhood in Northeast Portland.

The grand opening is also in celebra-

tion of rapper and actor Tupac Shakur, who would be 47 years old that day.

“The link between hip hop culture

“The link between hip hop culture and the normalization of cannabis is a natural partnership

and the normalization of cannabis is a natural partnership,” said Mayor Wheeler in the release. “Green Hop’s mission to promote community health and wellness, and increase economic opportunities for people of color is something the City of Portland wholeheartedly supports.”

Crews and Kennedy, who works as both a nurse and a teacher, have also launched the Green Hop Academy, an

educational program in partnership with Portland Opportunities Industrial Center (POIC) to educate Black youth, ages 21 to 24, about entrepreneurship in the cannabis sector.

“It kind of gives them the 101 on how to enter into the cannabis industry,” said Crews.

Having already run the first cohort of 20 budding entrepreneurs through the 10-week program, Green Hop Academy will also be establishing an apprenticeship, where participants can work on-site at dispensaries, labs or cultivation centers.

“We’re giving employable skills to people who typically wouldn’t get hired at a normal dispensary,” said Kennedy. “It’s a very network-based industry, so this gives them a chance, if they don’t know anybody, to get their foot in the door.”

Alongside Green Hop’s educational



Green Hop is the world’s first hip hop dispensary, celebrating its grand opening on June 16 in Northeast Portland

arm and extensive medical and recreational menu – which will incorporate online ordering and delivery services – the dispensary will also host hip hop concerts, monthly art exhibits, and educational seminars. Green Hop (5515 NE 16th Avenue in Portland) will be open seven days a week, beginning June 16, with a grand opening at 12 p.m.