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# Portland Observer

Established in 1970

Volume XLVIII • Number 31



www.portlandobserver.com  
Wednesday • August 21, 2019



Committed to Cultural Diversity

## Bracing for Food Stamp Cuts



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Shannon Long, Multnomah County Library programming assistant, welcomes kids for free lunches as part of a summertime Meals 4 Kids program at the county library system's Midland location near Southeast Stark Street and 122nd Avenue, one of 15 locations served by the new program.

## Summer program fills a hunger gap

To help stave off summertime food insecurity for families that would normally receive free or reduced lunch for their kids during the school year, more than 1,200 children are receiving nutritious lunches daily as part of the Meals on Wheels People's popular Meals 4 Kids program.

Launched this summer as part of a contract with United States Department of Agriculture and other partners, the meals provide lunches to Portland's children in need

of nutritious food at 15 locations throughout the Portland area.

More than 21 million children in the U.S. rely on free and reduced-priced meals at school, and food insecure children are at higher risk of hunger when they are out of school in the summer. To address this need, Meals 4 Kids offers an expanded summertime lunch service for children and families who have a hard time affording nutritious meals.

"The Meals 4 Kids summer lunch program helps to fill the gap when the USDA free and reduced lunch program that operates during the school year is not available," said Meals 4 Kids Director Jessica Morris. "We're honored that the USDA Summer Food Service Program contracted with Meals 4 Kids to further reduce food insecurity by serving areas where

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## Advocates for the hungry decry proposal



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Kenneth Green of the Salvation Army collects food donations for distribution to needy families from the Oregon Food Bank in northeast Portland. Advocates for the hungry are bracing for a rule change from the Trump Administration that could kick three million people off of food stamps, including over 60,000 in Oregon.

BY DANNY PETERSON  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Advocates for the hungry are bracing for the impacts while fighting against a proposed rule change from the Trump Administration that could kick more than three million people off of food stamps, including over 60,000 in Oregon.

Under new regulations that are scheduled to take effect after a Sept. 23 public comment period, qualified recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)—a form of cash welfare—will no longer automatically be enrolled in food stamps, also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or "SNAP."

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue  
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PHOTO BY JENNY GRAHAM/OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Kimberly Monks (Riley) and Christiana Clark (Tami) star in "How to Catch Creation" at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, a play featuring an excellent cast of six African American characters and projecting voices that ring with a clarity borne of struggle.

## Black Voices Ring with Clarity, Integrity

### OPINIONATED JUDGE

BY  
DARLEEN ORTEGA



Every once in a while, I stumble on the opportunity to see a play that I didn't realize I was longing for. The richly realized production of Christine Anderson's marvelous play, "How to Catch Creation," at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland through October, was such an experience for me--an opportunity to spend an evening with six African American characters who I

wish I knew in real life, not one of which I've seen in a play before.

Griffin (especially well played by Chris Butler) is newly out of prison where he served 25 years for a crime he did not commit. Tami (an equally remarkable Christiana Clark), an artist and professor, has been Griffin's friend since they were both young adults. Their friendship is deep,

familiar, lived in, but not romantic; each talks truth to the other as Griffin searches for a way to become a parent and Tami befriends Riley, a young woman who awakens her artistic and romantic passions. Riley, too, is inspired by Tami, but also entangled with and committed to her boyfriend Stokes, a frustrated painter who is inspired to write after being introduced to the works of black feminist writer G. K. Marche.

These intersecting relationships unfold in overlapping scenes and overlapping conversa-

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## The Week in Review

### Desperate for Answers

A local black family was desperate for answers after their loved one was found dead at the Oregon Zoo. Carl Ross Sr., 62, went missing while attending a Saturday night concert Aug. 10 with a friend and reported missing. His body was found the following Monday morning in an area under construction at the zoo. Police are investigating.



ple's yards in southeast Portland. Police said the victim in one of the incidents received intimidating text messages from the suspect and may have been targeted due to their sexual orientation, according to law enforcement.

### Mental Health Crisis

Mental health crisis negotiators spent five hours trying to calm a man throwing furniture from his third story apartment window on North Interstate Avenue on Saturday before spraying a chemical agent into his home and arresting him. The man was identified as Joseph J. Lee, 40.



### Rule Ends Family Planning

Planned Parenthood said Monday it was pulling out of the federal family planning program rather than abide by a new Trump administration rule prohibiting clinics from referring women for abortions. "Our patients deserve to make their own health care decisions, not to be forced to have Donald Trump or Mike Pence make those decisions for them," said the group's president and CEO.

### Officer Fired for Choke Hold

After five years of investigations and protests, New York City's police commissioner on Monday fired the officer involved in the 2014 chokehold death of an unarmed black man whose dying cries of "I can't breathe" fueled a national debate over race and police use of force.



### Discrimination Claim

A former employee at the Oregon Department of Corrections is suing the state for almost \$1 million accusing the department of retaliating against him for aiding employees with discrimination complaints. Gary Sims, who is black, says he stopped working with the department after a superior reprimanded him in 2017 and his office was closed over reported budget concerns.

### Fire Bomb Intimidation

Police arrested a Portland man last week for allegedly throwing Molotov cocktails in two peo-

### Cremated Remains Found

The Portland Police Bureau asked for the community's help Tuesday in locating the loved ones of Floyd "Frank" Leslie Hill who passed away on Oct. 17, 2000. A box labeled as his cremated remains were found outside, near the intersection of North Chase Avenue and North Chautauqua Boulevard on Monday. The bureau has exhausted all resources to try and find any family or friends.

The Portland Observer

Established 1970

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PUBLISHER: Mark Washington, Sr.

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# LOCAL NEWS



AP PHOTO/NOAH BERGER

Portland police officers hold ground against a group of left wing protesters who gathered downtown Saturday to confront opposing groups of right-wing protesters who picked Portland as a city to demonstrate nationally. Although some arrests were made and some skirmishes erupted in the following hours, dueling protests remained largely peaceful.

## Tensions Ease after Protests

### Police keep dueling groups apart

The tension felt across the city by many expecting violence Saturday in Portland at the long-hyped national right wing rally and the counter demonstrations in response was met with relief when it was over due to it not being as violent as feared, even as one East Coast-based far-right organizer has vowed to return to Portland monthly.

At its peak, the dueling protests drew in more than 1,200 people, with both far-right protestors and antifascist counter-demonstrators, arriving at about 8:30 a.m. downtown, police said.

Almost immediately, officers started seizing weapons including bear spray, metal and wooden poles,

knives, shields and a stun gun. But by using barriers and bridge closures — and allowing a large contingent of right-wingers to leave when they asked to — authorities were able to mostly keep the two sides apart. Six minor injuries were reported as well as several bursts of skirmishes throughout the day.

Police ended up arresting and releasing 13 people on “civil disturbance” charges.

“I’m grateful this was largely a peaceful event,” said Mayor Ted Wheeler. “We were preparing for and planning for a worst-case scenario.”

Police reported at least six instances where officers used force, including one deployment of pepper balls and additional “take-downs or control against resistance.”

Joe Biggs, the Florida organizer

of the right-wing gathering, which include the Proud Boys, Patriot Prayer and other far-right groups, said they accomplished their goal of drawing negative attention to Portland’s black-clad antifascist protesters — known as antifa — who showed up to confront them.

President Donald Trump tweeted early Saturday that major consideration was being given to naming antifa “an organization of terror” but made no reference to the violence and deaths attributed to groups associated with racism and right wing violence.

Biggs said he and his group would keep coming back to Portland so long as antifa was around. But Eric K. Ward, executive director of the Portland-based Western

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## Altered Mug Shot before Judge

### Police accused of trying to ‘rig the outcome’

A federal court is weighing whether eye witness accounts to a bank heist case should be thrown out due to the manipulation of a photo from a lineup of suspects in which police used Photoshop to remove facial tattoos on a black suspect, a move the defense attorney said was an attempt to “rig the outcome” of a prosecution.

Tyrone Lamont Allen has unmistakable tattoos on his forehead

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Tyrone Lamont Allen’s actual mugshot showing his face tattoos(left) and the altered photo with the markings removed to match a description of a man in a bank robbery. A judge will decide if the photo manipulation was an attempt to ‘rig the outcome’ of a prosecution.





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# Advocates for the hungry decry proposal

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

due announced the new directives last month, describing them as “closing a loophole,” but the new rules would disrupt Oregon and 42 other states’ streamline of the process for their citizens to receive food benefits.

The rule change would see 66,000 of the some 600,000 Oregonians on SNAP benefits lose their coverage—or 34,990 households—Jennifer Grentz, Oregon Department of Human Services spokesperson, told the Portland Observer.

Jeff Kleen, public policy advocate for the Oregon Food Bank, said the agency is “very concerned” over the new rule.

“We had heard rumors that this proposed rule could come, particularly because this has become kind of routine for this administration to propose these administrative rules when it doesn’t get the provisions and bills that it wants from Congress,” Kleen said.

The technical name for the rule targeted is “broad based categorical eligibility,” Kleen explained.

Currently, recipients of temporary welfare assistance can earn up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level for their household and still qualify for food stamps, a higher level than the typical 130 percent federal poverty level cut off for food stamps alone.



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jeff Kleen, public policy advocate for Oregon Food Bank, expects negative impacts on hunger and food insecurity for thousands of people in Oregon should a Trump Administration policy go through that would restrict the number of people eligible for food stamps nationwide.

In either case, the amount of earnings would not be sufficient to a livable wage for most Oregonians, Kleen said.

For instance, 185 percent of the federal poverty level for a family of four is \$47,638, according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. However \$96,047 per year is the estimated wage a family of two adults and

two children would need to make to afford a modest two bedroom apartment, childcare, and other costs in the Portland metro area, according to the family budget calculator of Economic Policy Institute, a nonprofit and nonpartisan think tank addressing the needs of low- and middle-income workers in economic policy discussions.

The policy as it stands now allows families to pay for unexpected monthly costs without going hungry or missing their bills, Kleen said.

“It basically prevents families from going without food, falling into debt when unexpected costs come up. And that cost could be the car repair that someone needs to get to their job, get their kids to school, or get a medical appointment,” he said.

Another potential ripple effect of the new policy is that some families—an estimated 265,000 nationwide—may also lose free school meals for their children, Kleen said.

“They’d have to go through, again another process, to see if they would qualify for reduced price meals. But now if you have two or three kids and suddenly you’re facing 50 to 75 cents a meal, that adds up over a week for breakfast and lunch. And so that would be an additional loss on top of losing SNAP benefits.”

What’s more, Kleen said that the demand Oregon Food Bank faces would likely increase should the policy change go through.

“For every one meal that the nationwide food bank network provides, SNAP provides 12. So the scale at which SNAP provides food assistance compared to us is 12 fold.”

Kleen added that the Oregon

Department of Human Services reported that every county across the state is likely to be impacted, with big, urban counties being initially hit the hardest, should the rule change become finalized.

Though the USDA estimates a net savings of about \$9.4 billion to taxpayers over five years, research referenced in the federal agency’s own report indicated that for every dollar of SNAP benefits that is spent, it was offset by creating \$1.79 of new economic activity. Officials also conceded that the cuts will impact food security for some people and reduce the savings rates among those individuals.

The change would mean a loss of \$3 million of federal benefits in Oregon each month—or \$36 million over a year, Kleen said.

Oregon Food Bank and Hunger Free Oregon, another nutrition advocacy group in Portland, have been overseeing an effort to generate as many public comments against the new rules, hopefully 100,000 or more, which Kleen said “will at the very least slow down the USDA,” adding that by law, the agency must review and analyze each of the comments.

“Hopefully they will see the error of their ways and decide not to issue a final rule. Or we potentially give Congress time to take action and prevent it from going into place or being implemented.”

The public can make comments on the proposed rule change at regulations.gov from now until Sept. 23. The policy proposal is called “Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” and has already generated over 13,000 comments.



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## Summer program fills a hunger gap

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

need is not being met currently.

This program has been meeting the nutritional needs of some of Portland's most food insecure families for more than five years. The home-delivery program, funded by the Portland Children's Levy, provides a week's worth of dinners, along with fresh fruit, bread and milk to participating children and their caregivers

throughout the year.

The lunches are made possible by additional grants from the Oregon Department of Education, Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon and PepsiCo's Food For Good program. The support has covered the costs of leasing of a delivery van, the employment of five AmeriCorps members and initial program startup costs.

"Our goal with the Meals 4 Kids program is to ensure that vulnera-

ble children and their families have sufficient daily nutrition," said Morris. "Without access to free and reduced lunch program during the summer, many of these kids would go hungry during the day."

Two of the locations served by the Meals 4 Kids summer program that attract more than 50 children on weekdays are the Midland Library at 805 S.E. 122nd and the Meals on Wheels People Two Rivers Center at 9009 N. Foss.

## RELIGION

### Church Hosts Youth Advocate

Augustana Lutheran Church, 2710 N.E. 14th Ave., will host a workshop and jazz gospel service with special guest Rev. Dr. Al Hollie Jr., a youth pastor and mentor and founder of Urban Inspire, a consulting and coaching firm dedicated to improving the lives of urban youth.

A pastor of the Greenforest Community Baptist Church in Atlanta and author of a new book, "All Things to All People" Hollie believes firmly that "Life demands results, not ex-



Rev. Dr. Al Hollie Jr.

cuses."

He will present a community workshop geared to the Millen-

nial generation at Augustana on Sunday, Aug. 25 at 5 p.m. and followed by a 6 p.m. Jazz Gospel Service with Dr. Hollie preaching. Local jazz musicians Marilyn Keller, Ron Steen, Kevin Deitz and George Mitchell will perform. All are welcome at both events.

## Obituary

### In Loving Memory

Carl Ross Sr.

A Home Going Celebration for Carl Ross Sr. will be held Friday, Aug. 23 at 11 a.m. at the Highland Christian Center, 7600 N.E. Glisan. Viewing will take place at the church one day earlier, on Thursday, Aug. 22 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Carl Ross Sr. was married to Keleka Ross for 35 years. He is the father of two children, Keleka and Carl Jr., and five grandchildren.



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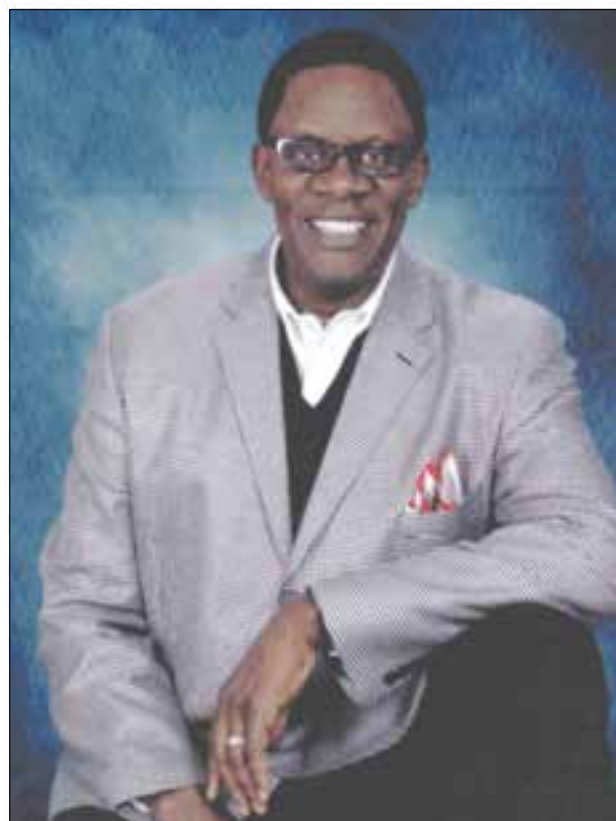
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Middle school students from the Portland area tour a research lab at Oregon State University in Corvallis as part of a black student access and success initiative that aims to create pathways to higher education and increase the retention and academic success of black students.

# Building Blocks to Success

## Middle school kids get a true college experience

This summer, a group of middle school students from the Portland area got a true college experience at Oregon State University in Cor-

vallis as part of a black student access and success Initiative to create pathways to higher education, and to increase the retention and academic success of black students.

The OSU Educational Opportunities Program, in partnership with the College of Engineering and STEM Academy, partnered with Building Blocks 2 Success to bring the students to the campus

for an overnight camp.

The “Beaver Achievers” met with Dr. Charlene Alexander, a university vice president of color to hear about the importance of diversity in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Current OSU students discussed the different paths they took to higher education and the different majors available in STEM at OSU. One OSU student of color

shared stories about the challenges and triumphs as a woman of color in the engineering field.

The younger students also got hands on experience. They were guided through STEM problem-solving tasks to design machines to solve some of today’s real-world problems; got the opportunity to tour some engineering research labs; and used “Activity-Bot 360” robot kits to build and

code a robot that is smart enough to make its way around a room on its own.

The ultimate aim of the OSU outreach was to build the next generation of black engineers at OSU.

Antonio Jackson, the director of Building Blocks 2 Success, said he plans to mentor and keep track of his students through high school graduation.



# Tensions Ease after Protests

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

States Center, a racial, gender and economic justice group, said the right wing rally was a bust.

"Portland won today, and far-right leaders like Joey Gibson and Joe Biggs lost," Ward said in a statement.

In an interview, Ward said Biggs' groups cut short a planned five-hour rally after only one hour and left.

"The white nationalist, alt-right coalition that came to Portland was denied what they sought to create, which were large-scale civil disturbances," Ward said.

While antifa protesters get a lot of attention, Ward said there were many others who came out to oppose the right-wing groups. He also praised police and city officials for their actions.

"What I saw yesterday was the first step in Portland really putting together a citywide response," he said.

Mayor Wheeler said at a Satur-



AP PHOTO/NOAH BERGER

A man tussles with protesters against right-wing demonstrators following an "End Domestic Terrorism" rally in Portland Saturday.

day evening news conference that Biggs and anyone espousing hate or violence was not welcome.

"We do not want him here in my city. Period," Wheeler said.

The mayor said Portland was targeted by "a rising white nationalist movement" and a growing sense of fear in the country, and that because Portland was a progressive community, it would always be at or near ground zero of the battle.

More than two dozen local, state and federal law enforcement

agencies, including the FBI, were in the city on Saturday to help keep the peace.

As of early afternoon, most of the right-wing groups had left the area. But hundreds of people remained downtown and on nearby streets, and there were tense skirmishes—of which some drew blood—mostly between antifa protesters and right-wing rallyers, throughout the day.

Joey Gibson, the Vancouver-based right-wing Patriot Prayers founder was also present

at the Saturday rally, one day after facing a felony riot charge for an incident on May 1 in Portland.

Gibson, who organized similar rallies in 2017 and 2018 that erupted in clashes, appeared in court on Monday and vowed to fight the charge.

Western States Center Deputy Director Amy Herzfeld-Copple called the charges against Gibson and his co-conspirators "welcome, if overdue."

--Associated Press contributed to this story.

## Blood Pressure and Sleep Research Study



Researchers at OHSU are interested in studying how sleep impacts blood pressure in White and Black adults ages 30-60 years old with aims to develop better therapies for hypertension.

Participation requires 2-3 screening visits and a multi-day inpatient stay at OHSU; participants are compensated for their time.

For more information, contact:  
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# Altered Mug Shot before Judge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and right cheek, and though police suspected Allen of being involved in four bank and credit union heists, none of the tellers said the man who robbed them had tattoos on his face.

The digitally altered photo of Allen without the tattoos was presented by police to the bank tellers for identification with the photos of five other, similar looking men. The witnesses were not told about the photo adjustment made, but some of them picked out Allen nevertheless.

Jules Epstein, a law professor at Temple University and leading national authority on eyewitness testimony said in his 40 years as a lawyer and law professor, he had never seen such a blatantly suggestive example of a photo lineup, a standard law enforcement tool that is under ongoing scrutiny.

Epstein also said police were "increasing the risk of mistaken identity" by their actions.

Allen's defense attorney Mark Ahlemeyer argued that the judge should throw out the positive witness identification of his client, claiming police altered the photo to remove the facial tattoos so Allen could more closely resemble surveillance images and eyewitness descriptions of the thief.

A still image from bank surveil-

lance footage shows the suspect in question wearing a baseball cap and black-rimmed glasses, but no facial tattoos.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul Maloney argued the photo manipulation was done "to make Mr. Allen blend in—so his photo wouldn't stand out," adding police's actions were "prudent" and "appropriate."

Detective Brett Hawkinson was the officer who gave the orders to remove the tattoos in the image and he testified such action is considered "standard practice among investigators," though no protocols exist to instruct Portland police to alter photographs and no documentation of the alteration was recorded, beyond the photo itself. He added that Allen could have used makeup to cover the tattoos in the commission of a crime.

Portland police's failure to document the photo changes and reasons for doing so goes against federal guidelines when it comes to adopted standard protocols of how to handle photo arrays to lower the chance of influencing a witness, even unintentionally, the Oregonian reported.

U.S. District Judge Marco A Hernandez said he plans to issue a written ruling soon, which could set a precedent on police practices for future cases in Oregon and the beyond.

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PHOTO FROM CATSAFEATHOME.ORG

Cat lovers and advocates of wildlife are sponsoring a showcase tour of home cat patios, outdoor cat enclosures to keep cats safe from outdoor hazards while also protecting wildlife from cat predation.

## Catios Tour to Inspire Safety

A very popular Portland, one-of-a-kind event, the 7th Annual Catio Tour will showcase 10 diverse outdoor cat enclosures in north, northeast and southeast Portland.

Hosted by the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon and Portland Audubon, the \$10 self-guided tour

is meant to inspire cat owners to build or buy their own outdoor cat enclosure to keep cats safe from outdoor hazards while also protecting wildlife from cat predation. The event sells out so people are encouraged to get tickets early.

Funds from the Catio Tour support the Portland Audubon's and

Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon's "Cats Safe at Home" campaign, which aims to reduce free-roaming cats in the Portland area with solutions that are good for cats and wildlife. To sign up for the tour, coming Saturday, Sept. 7 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., visit Cats-SafeAtHome.org.

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## Portrait of Struggle and Survival

This weekend, the Northwest Film Center presents four screenings of a new documentary that follows three black subjects as they seek justice for the murder of a community member by police.

"What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?" by Texas-based filmmaker Robert Minverini is an extended look at life in New Orleans and the region and the long histories of pain and anger engendered by American society.

According to film critic Daniel Kasman of the website Notebook, the film is a crucial portrait of discovery, struggle and survival, with the personal and spatial devastation of Hurricane Katrina sitting firmly on the horizon behind.

Shot in luminous and high-contrast black-and-white, What You Gonna Do When the World's On Fire? shows at Whit-sell Auditorium at the Portland Art Museum, downtown, on Friday,



"What You Gonna Do When the World's On Fire?" is a new film that takes a look at the long histories of pain and anger engendered by American society and the hopes and struggles of three black residents in New Orleans seeking justice for the murder of a community member by police.

Aug. 23 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Aug. 24 at 4:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and on Sunday at 4:30 p.m.

General admission is \$10 and \$8 for students, seniors and children.



Opinion articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Portland Observer. We welcome reader essays, photos and story ideas. Submit to [news@portlandobserver.com](mailto:news@portlandobserver.com).

# OPINION

## Guns Lethalize Hatred, Anger, Despair

Speak out,  
organize and  
vote

BY MARIAN  
WRIGHT  
EDELMAN



On Aug. 2, I wrote about the relentless scourge of gun violence and the two children killed in Gilroy, Calif. and asked: Why does gun violence remain a uniquely horrible American epidemic and why does it go on and on and on and on? Two days later a new shooting made national headlines when an employee killed two people and injured a police officer at a Mississippi Walmart.

Then came El Paso. 22 died. 24 injured. Then came Dayton. 9 died. 27 injured.

In one week 36 people died and more than 60 were injured not including the dozens of others killed by daily gun violence. A child or teen is killed by gunfire every two hours and 34 minutes in our nation. People of all ages are killed with guns every 14 minutes.

None of this is normal and should not continue to be normalized in the United States of America. In fact it is absurd and morally intolerable in a purported democratic nation where our pledge of allegiance declares liberty and justice for all.

The FBI has opened domestic terror investigations into the Gilroy and El Paso shootings. The El Paso shooter's manifesto echoed the same hateful and racist language permeating our nation, beginning in the Oval Office. We must band together to

fight resurging racism and white supremacy with urgency and persistence at every level and in every institution in our national life.

A kindergartener and third grader have shown us the way with their words. They created the slogan behind "Hate Has No Home Here," an awareness campaign that began in a Chicago neighborhood. These children's message of love, nonviolence and insistence that hate has no home here must spread across our nation and world. I urge families, neighbors, businesses, congregations, schools, city halls, communities and all who oppose hate and violence to take up this cause. If you believe everyone in America should be safe from violence and hate, then act! Visit HateHasNoHomeHere.org to download the free artwork uplifting this simple expression of human decency in a number of languages, and display it on posters, yard signs, bumper stickers, buttons and everywhere you can hang a banner or sign.

Everyone should want and work to ensure that our children, grandchildren, friends, neighbors, worshippers, communities, nation and world are safe from terror. But making children feel welcome and valued is hollow if we cannot protect them from the guns that make hate uniquely dangerous in our nation.

Guns lethalyze hatred, anger, domestic disputes, mental illness and despair. Easy access to guns—including military-style weapons that should have no place in civilian hands—has made expressions of hate and violence devastating. The shooter in Dayton had an AR-15-style assault rifle with 100-round drum magazines. Police responded and stopped him in 32 seconds. But it took only 32 seconds for him to

kill nine people and injure more than two dozen others. The Gilroy and El Paso shooters used similar semiautomatic weapons.

What a difference moral political leadership at the highest levels of government makes. In New Zealand, less than a week after the horrific mass shooting in March 2019 that snuffed out the lives of 51 people of Muslim faith, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern proposed a national ban on all military-style semiautomatic weapons and assault rifles, high-capacity ammunition magazines and parts that allow weapons to be modified into semiautomatic guns and a government funded buyback of existing assault weapons. Within weeks, New Zealand's Parliament enacted her proposed assault weapons

ban.

Between 1994 and 2004 our federal government banned civilian ownership of semiautomatic assault weapons and large-capacity ammunition magazines. In the fifteen years since this ban expired, most members of Congress have refused to renew this urgently needed ban or pass any other common-sense gun legislation. So here we are again with a rash of tragedies and a groundswell of voices demanding Congress and governors do something right now. What will it take to end the indifference to the lives and safety of our children?

Please speak out, organize and vote to save child lives and do not stop until all our children are safe. The House of Representatives has passed several

measures to keep guns out of the hands of those who might harm children and communities but the Senate has refused to act on these measures. Demand Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell end the slaughter of children in Kentucky and throughout the nation and urge him to reconvene the Senate immediately to pass effective gun violence prevention legislation.

All of us must disarm hate and violence in America. We must drown out voices of hate and White supremacy with love and action and end our national gun violence epidemic. We don't have another moment—or life—to waste.

Marian Wright Edelman is founder and president emerita of the Children's Defense Fund.



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## Politics Focused on Policy Alone Bound to Fail Candidates need a moral vision

"Yes we can," went Barack Obama's presidential campaign slogan, inspired by labor rights activist Dolores Huerta.

After mass shootings killed 31 people in Texas and Ohio, I can't help but recall how those three words — "yes we can" — encouraged hope and unity. Nearly 11 years after Obama's historic election, however, it seems like we've been set back four centuries.

Over just two years, Donald Trump's racist and hate-filled rhetoric has influenced a rise in white nationalism and domestic terror, inspiring people like the El Paso shooter to drive 10 hours to kill "as many Mexicans as possible."

Since taking his oath in office, one thing has been made abundantly clear about our commander in chief: He is blatantly racist.

The proof is evident in Trump's immigration policies, the most inhumane we've seen in recent history. Most recently, these policies saw ICE agents arrest over 680 suspected undocumented workers in Mississippi, their children left behind.

It's not just immigration. Across every policy issue — from climate to health care to taxes — our politics have been beset with racism, greed, and violence.

As we approach the 2020 presidential elections, we find ourselves in a tragic gap between who we cur-

rently are as a nation, and who we have the chance to become.



Democratic presidential candidates are clamoring to put forth an agenda that would set right the wrongs of this administration. There are currently 24 candidates running in the primaries with a plan in place on how best to defeat Donald Trump.

Several are offering good policies. But the majority of them — and arguably the party as a whole — don't seem to understand what they're up against.

Marianne Williamson, the most googled Democratic primary candidate in 49 out of 50 states after the last debate, summed it up like this: "Donald Trump is not a politician. Donald Trump is a phenomenon. And it will take a phenomenon to beat him."

Williamson may be a long-shot candidate, but she is absolutely correct.

Over the past few months, we've heard much from Washington — often from Democratic Party leaders — about what can't be done as our democracy unravels. We can't impeach Donald Trump. We can't pass gun control legislation. We can't reunite immigrant families.

Instead of pursuing these bolder ideas, many moderates say it's better to dial back expectations. But why?

"This is a moment," Williamson counters, "where what some might consider a 'safe choice' is the most

dangerous choice we can make." Accordingly, she's endorsed everything from universal health care to reparations for slavery.

No one is suggesting that sweeping progressive policies like those proposed by Williamson, or better known candidates like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, be executed in one fell swoop.

But when a president's agenda reeks of authoritarianism, we desperately need to consider all that is possible — or could be.

Williamson has been referred to as the "left-wing Trump." Her political platform centers on "love" and "healing," a peaceful alternative to the current Trump-driven culture war that is undermining our humanity.

Deriding what she calls "yada yada politics" that focus on policy details without any necessary shift in thinking, Williamson has challenged us to address the root of what ails society — ailments that have been perpetuated by status quo policies and politicians.

It seems the moral infrastructure of our country needs rebuilding. And that's going to take a phenomenon, not just a person or a policy.

From gun control and immigration reform to our integrity and our values, can we get elected officials to make the right choice instead of the "safe" choice?

If we push them — si, se puede. Yes, we can.

*Tracey L. Rogers is an entrepreneur and activist living in Northern Virginia. Distributed by otherwords.org.*

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PHOTO BY KRIS CAVIN

David Lucas (left) son of the late Blazer great Maurice Lucas and the executive director of the Maurice Lucas Foundation, and former Trail Blazer Martell Webster, attend the foundation's Celebrity Golf Invitational, which raised almost \$100,000 for youth academic and athletic programs.

## Supporting Success for Kids

The Maurice Lucas Foundation raised almost \$100,000 to support academic and athletic programs for underserved middle school students in the Portland area at a recent celebrity golf tournament.

The field of 150 golfers contained celebrities and members of the 1977 champion Trail Blazers, including Bill Schonely, Larry Steel, Bobby Gross, Lloyd Neil, Cliff Robinson, Ehren "Danger" McGhehey, Greg Smith, Tom Gorman, Mike Walters, Antonio Harvey, Ken Boddie, Martell Webster, Michael Allen Harrison, Scott Haskins, Charlie

Sitton, Steve Johnson, John McCullough and Dale Osbourne.

The golf tournament is one of the nonprofit foundation's major sources of funds. It continues a tradition started by the late Maurice Lucas, the leading scorer on the 1977 NBA champion Trail Blazers team.

The foundation's other major fundraiser, its ninth annual Celebration Dinner and After Party, will take place Saturday, Sept. 7, at the Portland Hilton. Go to [ML20.org](http://ML20.org) for tickets and more information.

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## Neighborhood Block Party

*The Matt Dishman Community Center will recognize everyday heroes from its inner north and northeast Portland neighborhoods when it hosts a free community block party on Saturday, Aug. 24 from noon to 4 p.m. Bring your family and friends for fantastic free food, activities for all ages, arts and crafts, family fun, and a live music performance by Dina Y los Rumberos! All are welcome.*



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# Black Voices Ring with Clarity, Integrity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

tions, and with flashbacks of G. K. and her partner, Natalie, back in the mid-1960s, when G. K.'s writing was taking off. In a very different time from now, these two women love each other but both social pressure and the lure of artistic inspiration drive them apart.

It's a play about black people apart from the white gaze; they suffer but the play is not about black suffering. It's about love, and intimacy, and mistakes, and artistic inspiration, and mistakes one makes and seeds one plants in one's youth that bear fruit you may never see. It's also about *how to catch creation* -- How does one become a parent? Who creates a child, and how do they do it? What inspires creativity? Why does it feel so precious? Can creation and intimacy co-exist? What makes one an artist?

Anderson's play savors these questions without answering them. It gives us the opportunity to watch these six characters struggle with these questions, which is itself something to savor--because when do we get to

see black people with agency struggle with meaning on stage? Not often enough--and Anderson's play prioritizes the voices of black queer women. G. K., an invented character, stands in for a host of black women writers (Audre Lorde, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Pat Parker, Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni, and so many more) who fought to be heard and to avoid erasure, and whose voices ring with clarity borne of struggle. In this play, black queer women lead the way for six people fighting to speak and love and live with integrity. With a uniformly excellent cast and as directed by Nataki Garrett, the new artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, this production is especially worth making the trip to Ashland before it closes in October.

*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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PHOTO BY NATHAN V. HOLDEN

*In the tradition of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, people have been making these origami Soul Boxes as a way to remember victims of gun violence. The Soul Box Project was started by a Portland artist and a current display is now showing at Milwaukie City Hall through the month of August.*

## Taking Aim at Gun Violence

### Origami boxes represent the toll of lives lost

The Soul Box Project is a national community art project created by a Portland studio artist to raise the awareness to the epidemic of gun violence. In the tradition of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, the project is collecting one handmade origami box for every person killed or injured by gunfire in the US since 2014.

Displayed in public spaces to draw attention to the number of people shot in gun violence, accidents, defense and suicides, the Soul Box Project has collected more than 50,000 3-x3-inch origami boxes from across the country to date. Each box represents one life, one soul gunned down.

Leslie Lee, founder of the Soul Box Project, believes that when people come face to face with thousands and thousands of boxes representing victims, they'll understand the enormity of the

gunfire epidemic and be inspired to take action, from enrolling in gun handling classes to securing firearms, to working towards gun-sense legislation.

Currently, the public is invited to take a look at a Soul Box exhibit now showing through the month of August at Milwaukie City Hall, 10722 S.E. Main St. Soul Box project volunteers have spent the summer doing outreach and area residents have created hundreds of boxes for the project. Earlier this year, a soul box display was presented in northeast Portland.

The goal is to take at least 200,000 Soul Boxes to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. next year, during the election year 2020.

"Soul Boxes can be made for any person killed or injured by gunfire. It can be healing for anyone experiencing this loss. No matter how or why a person is shot, people grieve," says Lee. "The collective spirit of people coming together to take action, to remember and to heal continues to inspire me."

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