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Established in 1970
Committed to Cultural Diversity

A Heroine for Transit Rights

Rosa Parks' civil rights activism started early

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

An often overlooked aspect of the story of Rosa Parks, the civil rights icon whose refusal to move from her seat for a white passenger during the segregated south in the mid-1950s and subsequent arrest helped spark the modern civil rights movement, is that Parks' choice that day was part of a planned, intentional act of demonstration against the racist Jim Crow laws of Montgomery, Ala., her hometown at the time.



Rosa Parks

A pervasive narrative not entirely accurate is that the seamstress, tired from working on her feet all day and well worn to the maladies of the racist societal norms that had affected her entire life up to that point, decided spontaneously in that moment of the confrontation to take a stand by remaining seated.

The fuller truth is the late Parks, whose birthday was on Monday, Feb. 4 had been a dedicated civil rights activist her entire life.

More than 10 years before her famous refusal to move on that bus in Alabama in 1955 when the white section filled and the first row of the black section was to make way for more white passengers, Parks was thrown off another bus by the same bus driver, James Blake, for using the white entrance--at the front of the bus--while she was the secretary of a city chapter of the NAACP, in 1943. During that time she also witnessed her brother, a veteran of the Second World War, face discrimination after returning home.

Several months before the Dec 1, 1955 arrest, Parks attended a two week long



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Community leaders with Bus Riders Unite and OPAL Environmental Justice train volunteers in de-escalation techniques Saturday in southeast Portland to get them ready to become unofficial transit rider advocates on TriMet buses and trains. Pictured (from left) are first-time volunteer Arius King, de-escalation training facilitator Tristan Isaac, OPAL volunteer Keith Scholz and OPAL staff member Janaira Ramirez.

Transit Riders Organize

Ad hoc 'rider advocates' push TriMet to act

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A grassroots effort to bring back civilian volunteers on public transit to help de-escalate conflicts and provide information and support to riders is currently in an unofficial prototype phase, thanks to OPAL—a civil rights and environmental justice organization which stands for “Organizing People, Activating Leaders”—and a bus riders union called Bus Riders Unite.

The grassroots idea is modeled after the “Rider Advocate” program, a similar initiative that was funded by TriMet for 15 years, but ended in 2009. OPAL, which does much of its organizing by speaking with people on buses, often with clipboards, etc., said it's currently testing out the idea by dispatching some trained volunteers.

“We're always going to be on the buses organizing, building community, and this is just one more extension of how we do that, that also happens to be sort of a proof of concept of the model of the rider advocate program,” OPAL spokesman Shawn Fleek told the Portland Observer.

The initiative, which has been incubating in the development phase for the past year, is in response to what organizers said is a recent increase in police and security presence on TriMet trains and buses. They hope the revived pilot version of rider advocates will inspire TriMet to fully fund the program again.

As many as 25 volunteers have received de-escalation training through OPAL that readies them to eventually don yellow vests, help resolve conflicts, and show riders how to safely navigate the public transportation system. Some have even ridden on transit already, in this capacity.

Though this revived program has not been officially sanctioned by TriMet, each volunteer is provided a transit pass by their sponsoring groups so they can board transit's public spaces to look out for oth-

ers and speak with them.

TriMet spokesperson Roberta Altstadt told the Portland Observer that TriMet appreciates the support of community groups that value transit and understand the desire to help others, but the agency would prefer to rely on their own employees for public safety outreach. TriMet currently has paid customer service staff performing the same type of functions as rider advocates, Altstadt said.

“We believe that that role would be better with trained employees and security personnel. We believe that would then increase the safety of our riders and for our employees,” she said.

Fleek told the Portland Observer their volunteer program is meant to bolster the accessibility and safety of riders from some of the most marginalized groups, like low income people and people of color.

“[Public transportation is] one of the last places in society that are multicultural, multiclass, multigenerational. All on the same bus you'll have youth, seniors, peo-

Black Business Pioneer

Harvey Garnett, 82, Portland's first black theater owner, was the first person to take out an advertisement when the Portland Observer began publishing in 1970. He was the proprietor of then Alameda Cinema, now known as the Alberta Rose Theatre.

Garnett, who is originally from Waco, Texas and moved to Portland



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Harvey "Mr. Alameda" Garnett, the first black movie theater owner in Portland, visits the offices of the Portland Observer. The former owner of Alameda Cinema, now the Alberta Rose, Garnett was also the first business owner to purchase advertising in the Portland Observer in 1970, the black-owned newspaper's first year of publication.

in 1945, ran Portland's only African American owned theater at the time. In 1965, and co-owned by childhood friend Ron Leverett, the theater screened second-run films, and later, blaxploitation films like Shaft and Superfly. In 1971, Garnett took full ownership of Alameda and screened the now-classic In the Heat of the Night, starring Sidney Poitier, as its first iteration of a theater for new releases.

Garnett, who's also known as "Mr. Alameda," was raised in a house near present-day Legacy Emanuel Hospital on North Gantenbein Avenue and told the Portland Observer he was also the first African American to work for Pepsi, in 1965. He also took ownership of one of the few black-owned record stores in town, Bop City, formerly located on North Williams Avenue in 1968.

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The Week in Review

Police Faulted on Death

A new report by outside consultants faulted Portland Police for placing themselves in a dangerous position with no available cover when they shot and killed Quanice Haynes, a 17-year-old African American burglary suspect two years ago. The analysis said police must strive to use cover, time and distance to their advantage when responding to potentially violent encounters.

Mayor Targets Hate Groups

Citing a moral obligation to lead on the issue, Mayor Ted Wheeler has put forth a city ordinance condemning white supremacy and all right groups. An hour and a half will be reserved for public testimony on Thursday, and then the council will vote on whether to adopt the resolution.

Masonry Placard Pause

City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty directed Portland Fire and

Rescue last week to pause enforcement of new placard warnings on unreinforced masonry buildings until further outreach by her office is completed. Hardesty said she wants to look at ways to better support businesses and nonprofits in seismically upgrading their buildings.



Vancouver to Build Army Ships

Portland shipbuilder Vigor Industrial announced last week that it will build a new class of Army landing craft ships in Vancouver. As many as 36 of the new vessels would be built over the next 10 years, eventually adding 400 jobs and \$1 billion to the local economy, company officials said.

Employee Claims Retaliation

A black Multnomah County employee filed a \$420,000 lawsuit last week claiming the county failed to foster a racially sensitive workplace and that colleagues retaliated against her after she complained about a co-worker who pinned up a "Blue Lives Matter" flag in his office in 2017, an action seen as demeaning to the Black Lives Movement for social justice.



The Portland Observer

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SPORTS

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PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A community market featuring a bevy of locally-owned black businesses, food, and live music kicked off a series of Black History Month events at Self Enhancement, Inc. Saturday, the nonprofit serving hundreds of local black families. Pictured are Bryan Walden (left), CEO of Black Mannequin clothing line, and Daunte Devon Paschal, the organizer of the Junction Avenue Black Owned Business Pop-up.

Black History Month at SEI

The Center for Self Enhancement on 3920 N. Kerby Ave. has begun a series of free community events this month in honor of Black History Month.

The kickoff was held Saturday when SEI hosted the Junction Avenue Black Owned Business Pop Up featuring and supporting a lineup of products and services offered by locally-owned black businesses.

This Friday, Feb. 7, the educational and family-resource nonprofit will welcome the community to hear special guest speaker Dr. Jason Okonofua give

a talk on "Bias Impeding Academic Achievement," presented by the community group Kúkátón, which is from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

On Saturday, Feb. 9, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., SEI will host its 5th annual Community Day of Service. The film "The Hate U Give," presented by Black Mental Health of Oregon, will screen on Friday Feb. 15 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.; and an African American women's luncheon, We Are Overcomers, which has sold out, will take place Thursday, Feb. 28. For more information, visit selfenhancement.org.

State Panel Adopts Diversity Rule

Giving guidance to \$100 billion in investments

The Oregon Investment Council has amended its overarching management values and beliefs to highlight its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The six-member Council establishes policy and determines asset allocation for the investment program managed by the Oregon State Treasury, which as of Dec. 31 totaled more than \$100 billion and includes the \$75 billion Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund.

To help guide day-to-day decision-making and investment priorities, the council occasionally revises its investment and management beliefs to articulate its primary investment philosophy,



Oregon Investment Council Chair Rukaiyah Adams



Oregon Treasurer Tobias Read

from managing risks to seeking cost efficiencies to improving corporate governance practices.

At its meeting Thursday, the council explicitly articulated that diversity and inclusion are aligned with its imperative to pursue positive, risk-adjusted and sustainable investment outcomes – officially

reflecting in policy what has become an increasingly standard business practice at the Oregon Treasury department.

"Finding returns means seeing things that others don't," said State Treasurer Tobias Read, a

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Transit Riders Organize

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

ple with disabilities, people of color, low income people, a lot of mom with kids.” Fleek said. “It’s really a microcosm of some of the most diverse parts of our society.”

Many members of Bus Riders Unite, which includes transit-dependent people and transit riders, have expressed in public forums facilitated by OPAL an uneasiness with the rise of police and uniformed security presence on public transportation, particularly in the months since the May 2017 fatal stabbing of two men who came to the aid of two young girls on a MAX train who were being harassed with racist taunts, Fleek said.

Last year, a ruling in *State v. Valderrama* determined that an incident involving Portland police officers doing a fare check of a TriMet passenger and public official, Ana del Rocio, was unconstitutional. That incident, which started as a fare evasion encounter from a TriMet officer in March, resulted in del Rocio’s temporary arrest. Fleek said that case is a great example of why TriMet should seek to have a more customer service, rather than public policing, focus.

“I ride the bus every single day. And I feel less safe now than when I did on the transit system before, not because I’m worried a white supremacist is going to stab me [...] I’m scared because I see police officers on the bus with guns all the time. In no way does that calm me or make me feel like I’m a safer person,” Fleek said.

Through those community forums, it was brought to the attention of OPAL the existence of a former Rider Advocate program for public transport in Portland from 1994-2009. The program was run by the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods and funded through a contract with TriMet. The year it was cut, the Rider Advocate program was the recipient of the City of Portland’s Public Safety Partner Award for creating what the City called “a safer environment for all who ride TriMet by using conflict resolution skills and de-escalation techniques.”

TriMet’s Altstadt said the previous Rider Advocate pro-



PHOTO COURTESY OPAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE OREGON

Yellow-vested Tristan Isaac (left) and Shanice Clarke (right) are leaders of the transit equity advocacy group Bus Riders Unite. The photo (above) shows them at a transit stop speaking to community members about how to obtain reduced-price fares for low income people.

gram saw “limited success” and was cut due to budget shortfalls, the qualifications of the advocates, and some of the intervention methods they used.

Altstadt said that TriMet tries to make sure their own staff and contracted security personnel are trained in “conflict avoidance, that they pass all safe certification that is needed, and to make sure that there’s accountability for any issues that would rise up.”

“We cannot speak to the training of third-party ‘rider advocates’ or the accuracy of the information they provide,” Altstadt said, adding that any customers who have questions about their services should contact TriMet customer service at 503-238-7433.

OPAL was able to test the waters with their version of the citizen-led advocate program thanks in part to a

\$17,500 city grant they received last year, which helped them pay for things like training and bus passes for the volunteers. The revived, and unofficial, rider advocate effort is also endorsed by the bus driver’s union, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757.

It’s OPAL’s aspiration that TriMet officially take on the program once again, and add an official Rider Advocate program back into their budget.

There are about 25 of the volunteer advocates in the meantime who have gone out at least once, and a core group of about 10 who have gone out multiple times on buses and MAX Lines, Fleek said. The program had been building since the middle of last year, with volunteers first coming onto the buses as rider advocates this past October, after receiving training, he added.

Another component of the OPAL’s pilot program is for volunteers to carry TriMet tickets with them, to be used as a resolution to conflicts.

“Most of the time on transit, the problems that arise can easily be resolved through a kindly, de-escalated practice, and occasionally just assisting people with their fare. Which is substantially less expensive than trying to put that person through the court system or spending money on police officers to be enforcing their fares,” Fleek said.

The volunteers aren’t vigilantes, Fleek emphasized. “When somebody has a weapon and is threatening to use it, those are situations where we think it’s appropriate for the police to intervene, if there’s imminent danger.”

To honor an icon of transportation-related civil rights, OPAL celebrated its second annual Transit Equity Day on Rosa Parks’ birthday Monday, Feb. 4.

Fleek said it’s important to remember that Parks, whose refusal to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus in 1955 during segregation in Montgomery, Alabama, and helped spark the Civil Rights movement, was more than just a tired seamstress who spontaneously decided to refuse to move that day.

“Rosa Parks was an organizer and that’s something that’s often lost when we talk about the struggle for civil rights,” Fleek said. “Transportation has always been a really central consideration of the civil rights struggle. We see ourselves as continuing that.”

Fleek said the kind of non-violent, direct action that Rosa Parks engaged in has been reflected in the Bus Riders Unite’s efforts, particularly in TriMet’s recent adoption of a low income fare and the extension of transfer times by half an hour.

Eventually, Fleek said, OPAL would like to see the complete elimination of fares and instead pay for public transport entirely by utilizing state and federal taxes that already partially fund public transportation in the state.

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Celebrating Black History Month



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS





PHOTO BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rosa Parks being fingerprinted in February 1956 by Deputy Sheriff D.H. Lackey after being arrested for boycotting public transportation in Montgomery, Ala.

A Heroine for Transit Rights

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

workshop on Highlander Folk School in Tennessee where several activist groups developed skills on leadership and civil disobedience.

Two other arrests of young black women activists refusing to move to the back of the bus occurred that same year, one of which Parks and another woman, Virginia Durr, raised money for.

Parks action was the first phase of a planned boycott of the bus company, whose ridership was 70 percent black at the time, a campaign that would cripple the bus line and spearheaded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The campaign had focused on Parks' case, but she was as integral to that campaign as she was merely a symbol of it. Indeed, the fliers announcing the boycott of the bus line were dropped on the doorsteps of African American homes in Montgomery the very afternoon of her arrest and the campaign launched King as a national civil rights figure.

Even the photos of Parks have been misconstrued in history. For instance, the photo of her getting finger-printed, which is often cited as taking place on Dec 1, 1955, actually occurred months later, when Montgomery criminalized the carpools that she participated in, in support of the bus boycott.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was ultimately successful and in December 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a district court decision that had declared Montgomery's system of segregated seating unconstitutional.



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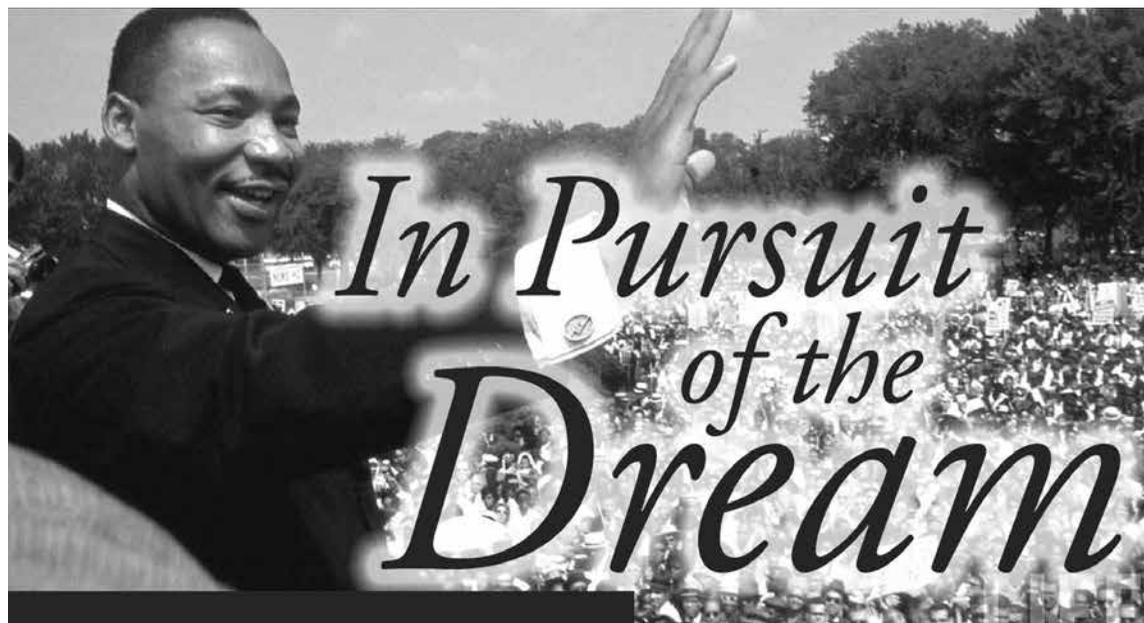
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BY KAY NEWELL

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Feb 15.....11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

MULTNOMAH COUNTY

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Feb 6 9-11 a.m.
Feb 13 9-11 a.m.
Feb 20 9-11 a.m.
Feb 27 9-11 a.m.

CLACKAMAS SERVICE CENTER
8800 SE 80th Ave, Portland
Feb 12 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
50 SW 2nd Ave, Portland
Feb 5 9-11 a.m.
Feb 12 9-11 a.m.
Feb 19 9-11 a.m.
Feb 26 9-11 a.m.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ALBERTA
30 N Webster St Ste A, Portland
Feb 5 1-3 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SE
8129 SE Malden St, Portland
Feb 12 1-3 p.m.

JOIN
1435 NE 81st Ave Ste 100, Portland
Feb 14 12-2 p.m.

PORTLAND RESCUE MISSION
111 W Burnside, Portland
Feb 14 8-10 a.m.
Feb 28 8-10 a.m.

SALVATION ARMY SOCIAL SERVICES FAIR
5325 N Williams Ave, Portland
Feb 8 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

UNION GOSPEL MISSION
3 NW 3rd, Portland
Feb 26 2-4 p.m.

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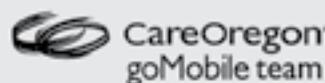
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State Panel Adopts Diversity Rule

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

member of the council. "If we are not serious about diversity, we risk losing out."

"We are investing in a diverse world, and diverse perspectives will help ensure we are making good decisions and recognizing the best opportunities," said Oregon Investment Council Chair Rukaiyah Adams, the chief investment officer for Meyer Memorial Trust. "If you want to achieve long-term financial and investment success, a commitment to diversity and inclusion must be embedded in your business practices."

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY SEAN GENTRY

The Cosmic Messenger by Miki Masuhara-Page is an example of the many illuminated creations that comprise the Portland Winter Light Festival, returning to the Eastbank Esplanade, OMSI grounds and Tom McCall Waterfront Park, Thursday night, Feb. 7 through Saturday night, Feb. 9

Winter Light Festival Encore

More than 100 illuminated installations, artists, performers, interactive activities, and events will brighten the Portland cityscape and capture the city imagination this week for the 2019 Portland Winter Light Festival presented by Portland General Electric.

This free, all-ages festival, the fourth annual program of the Willamette Light Brigade, opens on Thursday night, Feb. 7 and repeats on Friday and Saturday nights, Feb. 8-9, mainly along the Eastbank Esplanade and OMSI

grounds, but also at Tom McCall Waterfront Park, Portland State University and other locations.

“The Portland Winter Light Festival showcases some of Portland’s best characteristics – especially its collective creativity and ingenuity. Whether it’s the interactive high tech light installations or the magic of fire and performance,” said Mayor Ted Wheeler.

The Portland Streetcar will once again offer free rides on all routes after 5 p.m. on every night

of the event, and Portland Spirit’s Crystal Dolphin will ferry attendees across the Willamette River from Salmon Street Springs to Caruthers Landing. Parking is extremely limited and alternate means of transit strongly recommended.

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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Heartfelt Black History Production

Portland's 5 presents the 13th annual "Who I Am; Celebrating Me," a community of youth and adult artists exploring black history through theater.

From soul-encompassing singing and dancing to heartfelt poetry and prose, the production highlights a montage of African-American figures and movements of the good, bad, great, ugly past and present.

Written and directed by Portland resident Shalanda Sims of World Stage Theatre, "Who I am' Celebrating Me,' will be performed on Sunday, Feb. 10 at 3 p.m. at the Dolores Winningstad Theatre, 1111 S.W. Broadway. Tickets are \$10-\$20.



A community of youth and adult artists explore history through artistic expression in the annual theater production 'Who I am; Celebrating Me.'

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MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>● 4 <i>Facebook First Launched, 2004</i> Create a Vacuum Day <i>Rosa Parks born, 1913</i></p>	<p>5 Chinese New Year - Year of the Boar Weatherman's Day Disaster Day</p>	<p>6 <i>Babe Ruth born, 1895</i> Monopoly Board Game Goes on Sale in Stores, 1935</p>	<p>7 <i>Charles Dickens born, 1812</i> <i>Laura Ingalls Wilder born, 1867</i></p>	<p>8 Boy Scouts' Day (Founded 1910) <i>Author Jules Verne born, 1828</i></p>	<p>9 <i>National Weather Service Established (1870)</i> Toothache Day</p>	<p>10 Umbrella Day <i>Ratification of the 25th Amendment in 1967 (Presidential Succession)</i></p>
<p>11 <i>Thomas Edison born, 1847</i> Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk Day National Inventors' Day White T-Shirt Day</p>	<p>☾ 12 <i>Judy Blume born, 1938</i> <i>Abraham Lincoln born, 1809 (16th President)</i></p>	<p>13 Get a Different Name Day <i>First Public School established (1635)</i></p>	<p>14 Ferris Wheel Day Valentine's Day</p>	<p>15 National Gumdrop Day <i>Susan B. Anthony born, 1820</i></p>	<p>16 <i>Nylon Patented By DuPont in 1937</i> <i>King Tut's Burial Chamber opened in 1923</i></p>	<p>17 Random Acts of Kindness Day National P.T.A. Founder's Day (1897)</p>
<p>18 President's Day <i>Former planet, Pluto, Discovered by Clyde Tombaugh in 1930</i></p>	<p>○ 19 <i>Phonograph Patented, 1878, Thomas Edison</i> <i>Mr. Roger's Neighborhood Debuted, 1968</i></p>	<p>20 <i>John Glenn Orbits Earth, 1962</i> Love Your Pet Day</p>	<p>21 <i>Malcom X Assassinated (1965)</i> <i>Washington Monument dedicated (1885)</i></p>	<p>22 <i>George Washington born, 1732</i> Be Humble Day World Thinking Day</p>	<p>23 International Dog Biscuit Appreciation Day <i>U.S. Flag raised at Iwo Jima (1945)</i></p>	<p>24 <i>Steve Jobs born, 1955</i> <i>Wilhelm Carl Grimm born, 1786</i></p>
<p>25 Quiet Day <i>Artist Pierre Auguste Renoir born, 1841</i></p>	<p>☾ 26 <i>Levi Strauss born, 1829</i></p>	<p>27 <i>Uri Shulevitz born, 1935</i> International Polar Bear Day</p>	<p>28 Public Sleeping Day <i>Gold Seekers arrived in San Francisco (1849)</i></p>	<p>CALENDAR 2019 February</p>		



Nike designer Marcellus Johnson shows off the “culture collection” bike wrap he created for Black History Month and Portland’s Biketown bicycle rental service.

Biketown Salute to Black History

First in a year-long ‘culture collection’

A new, striking design that celebrates Black History Month joined the fleet of Portland’s Biketown bicycle rental service Friday.

The collage of traditional African fabric designs to reflect the multiple dimensions of the African diaspora was created by NIKE, Inc. Color Designer Marcellus Johnson, who also worked on the color and design elements for Nike’s Black History Month footwear that debuted in January.

An alum of Portland’s Pensole Footwear Design Academy and a member of Nike’s Black Employee and Friends Network, Johnson joined the company in 2015.

“Design and the arts let us tell our stories in authentic ways. For this bike wrap, I drew from Pan-African culture and used methods of print and collage relative to our journey, in a way that speaks to how we as a people can reimagine our future,” said Johnson.

Karol Collymore, a longtime Portland African-American leader who is now a senior manager for Nike’s Global Community Impact division, called the bike wrap design “an opportunity to reflect on our city’s creativity and rich African American culture, and to highlight our commitment to celebrating a diverse and inclusive Portland.”

The bikes are part of the Culture Collection, a new series of wraps rolling out across the year that celebrate some of the communities and cultures that make up the fabric of Portland.

The Nike Black Employee and Friends Network, part of Nike’s employee networks that collectively are called NikeUnited, led the design process for the Black History Month wrap. Future Culture Collection designs will be created in collaboration with other Nike employee networks.

A companion book for Biketown’s celebration of Black History Month, created by Scout Books, will include a map of select Portland-area, African American-owned businesses located near Biketown stations, plus images of the Black History Month bike wrap and a statement by Johnson.

NIKE, Inc. is the title sponsor for Biketown, the City of Portland’s bike share system that began in July 2016 as a means to make Portland a more physically active, vibrant and innovative city.



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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



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Stephan James and Kiki Lane star as a young couple relying on their love to sustain them through unspeakable hardships in "If Beale Street Could Talk."

If Beale Street Could Talk

Love survives hardships in top film from 2018

BY DARLEEN ORTEGA

Based on the novel by James Baldwin, the prophet of modern African American thought and literature, "If Beale Street Could Talk" (number 2 on my list of the best films of 2018) opens with this quote from Baldwin:

"Beale Street is a street in New Orleans, where my father, where Louis Armstrong and the jazz were born. Every black person born in America was born on Beale Street, born in the back neighborhood of some American city, whether in Jackson, Mississippi, or in Harlem, New York. Beale Street is our legacy. This novel deals with the impossibility and the possibility, the absolute necessity, to give expression to this legacy."

The great writer-director Barry Jenkins (whom Hollywood appallingly recognized with only an Oscar nomination for screenwrit-

ing, but not for best director and not for the picture itself) adapted Baldwin's novel before receiving permission from Baldwin's estate to film it. And though there is no record of a Beale Street in New Orleans, what Baldwin created and Jenkins has brought to the screen pulses with the urgency of imparting what is true about the lived experience of American blacks. Beale Street is the back street--"Backatown," as they would say in New Orleans--where blacks are born and are generally forced to live, save for those few who become useful to white supremacy in some way. Baldwin sought to express what would be heard about black experience if anyone would listen, and Jenkins' film evokes that intention with sound, images and care that will break your heart if you let it.

And a broken heart is the only appropriate response to this story

of two young people, Fonny and Tish, who have only love to sustain them through unspeakable hardships that are thrust upon them, as they are upon black people in America to this day. Their love is what grounds the story because it is so clearly what enables the young lovers to withstand, without entirely breaking, the blows that would and do break many others--the daily indignities, the violations of their bodies, the constant messages that, as Tish explains, black people receive from childhood--"that they weren't worth shit--and everything around them proved it."

The love story of Fonny and Tish (a luminous Stephan James and Kiki Layne) works in another important way: it helps us to grieve as we should for their stolen potential. From the very beginning, the film cuts back and forth between achingly beautiful scenes of a love built on friendship forged as children, and Tish's visits to the jail where Fonny is awaiting trial for a brutal rape that he did not commit. It lingers over their early and sweet longing, the tenderness of recognition that they belong to each other, the grasping for hope and for dreams of a future beyond what the culture has imagined for them. The ways they reach for one another are imbued with an appropriate sense of reverence; somehow these two have discovered and reflect back to each other what so many black young people have been deprived of seeing: their inherent beauty and worth.

There is nobody better than

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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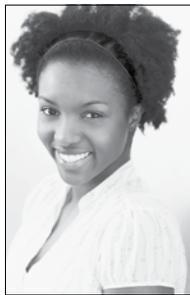
Chinese New Year – Portland’s Lan Su Chinese Garden, downtown, kicked off the Year of the Pig Tuesday with special events that will continue all week and next, including lion dances, Chinese lantern viewings and cultural activities and demonstrations. For a complete schedule, visit lansugarden.org.



Following Your Own Bliss – The ‘Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience,’ an Oregon Children’s Theater musical with

an important message about being yourself plays through Feb. 17 at the Newmark Theater, downtown. For tickets, call 503-288-9571, visit octc.org or the box office at 1111 S.W. Broadway.

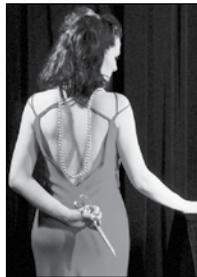
Sense & Sensibility – Danae C. Osseni (The Color Purple) returns to Portland Center Stage as Elinor Dashwood in *Sense & Sensibility*. Bursting with humor and bold theatricality, the classic romantic comedy is now playing through Sunday, Feb. 10. Tickets can be purchased by calling the box office at 503-445-3700 or visiting t pcs.org.



Norman Sylvester Band – “Boogie Cat” Norman Sylvester plays Saturday, Feb. 9 at the Spare Room; Friday, Feb. 15 at Wilf’s; Saturday, Feb. 16 at the Vinyl Tap; Friday, Feb. 22 at Clyde’s; and

Saturday, Feb. 23 at the Half Penny in Salem.

Dial M for Murder – Lakewood Theatre Company presents “Dial M for Murder,” a bone-chilling thriller about a marriage gone wrong. Now playing through Sunday, Feb. 10 at Lakewood Center for the Arts in Lake Oswego. For tickets and more information, call the box office at 503-635-3901 or visit lakewood-center.org.



A Habit Forming Musical – Join the Little Sisters of Hoboken for a hysterical variety show to raise emergency funds for the convent. The Rose Theatre Company presents “Nunsense” at the Broadway Rose New Stage in Tigard, 12850 S.W. Grant Ave. Now playing

through Feb. 24. For tickets, visit broadwayrose.org, call 503-620-5262 or visit the box office.

Life under Nazi Rule – The Portland Art Museum and Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education jointly present two exhibitions featuring photographs by the late Polish-Jewish photojournalist Henry Ross offering an extraordinary rare glimpse of life under Nazi rule. Both facilities are offering offer a full slate of exhibit-related programming.

Zoo for All – The Oregon Zoo has launched “Zoo for All,” a discount program that provides \$5 admission for low income individuals and families. Visitors may purchase up to six of the \$5 tickets by bringing a photo ID and documen-

tation showing they participate in low income service, like the Oregon Trial Card, Medicaid, Section 8, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Head Start.

Discount Tickets – Low income families and individuals can purchase \$5 tickets to classical musical performances in Portland as part of a unique program called Music for All. Participating organizations include the Oregon Symphony, Portland Opera, Oregon Ballet Theater, Chamber Music Northwest, Portland Youth Philharmonic, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Friends of Chamber Music, Portland Chamber Orchestra, Portland Piano International, Portland Symphonic Choir, Cappella Romana and Portland Vocal Consort.

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OPINION

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.

Career Education is Pathway to Opportunity

BY DR. KARIN EDWARDS

There's something about the turning of the new year that gives people a mind to make changes. The new year presents us with a blank slate, a chance to reinvent ourselves. People want to eat better, get into shape, spend more time with their families, do more of the things they love to do.

All of these things are worthy goals, but why not aim for a fundamental change? Why not decide to make this the year that you find a great new career?

The fact is, having a steady job with good pay and benefits — in other words, a career — leads to a more satisfying life with more self-determination. I'm not suggesting that money buys happiness, but a gainful job offers a person more choices: choices on where to live, what to do with your spare time, how you wish to raise your family, and much more.

Today's gainful employment, according to a recent Georgetown University study, can increasingly



be found in "skilled service fields," which include industries such as health care, finance, and information technology. In addition, as members of the Baby Boom generation transition into retirement, there is a rising demand for traditional skilled workers, like electricians, welders, and mechanics. For example, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, by 2024 our economy will need as many as 165,000 new trained electricians to meet market-place demand.

What these trends mean is that most living-wage jobs today require a significantly higher standard of technical training and education than in generations past. According to the Georgetown study, more than 95 percent of the jobs created during the recent economic recovery have gone to people "with at least some college education, while those with a high school diploma or less are being left behind."

What does this mean, then, to someone contemplating a change

in career, or to a young person considering options for their future? It means it's time to enroll in community college.

Why community college, you might ask? For two reasons: First, not everybody is interested in earning a four-year degree, and there are lots of living-wage jobs out there that don't require a four-year degree. Second, the price of a bachelor's degree has increased exponentially over the past three decades. Community colleges remain the section of the higher-education system with the fewest barriers to entry. For many students, particularly low-income students and students of color, this can mean the difference between a bright future and not much future at all.

Third, community college career and technical education programs maintain a very high standard of training and education, and remain in constant communication with private-sector to ensure that students are trained with the latest cutting-edge equipment, technology, and techniques to ensure that they're ready to enter the workforce.

Here's just one example of what

I'm talking about. Vigor Industrial Inc. operates a 60-acre facility on Portland's Swan Island, where they build, repair, and refit ocean-going ships of all kinds. Through our partnership with Vigor, Portland Community College maintains a training facility at Vigor's site where PCC Maritime Welding students can learn their trade on real ships alongside skilled industry veterans. These students are supported by faculty and staff at PCC's nearby Swan Island Training Center, where people can also learn to become electricians, millwrights, industrial mechanics, and a range of other skilled trades.

Newly-minted maritime welders can expect a starting wage of around \$17 per hour to as much as \$27 per hour, depending on the specifics of the job and the workplace. And these are jobs that are unlikely to be outsourced — as long as the world needs ocean-going ships, it will need welders to work on them.

What's more, PCC is pursuing a federal designation of its Swan Island facility as a Maritime Center of Excellence, which would

expand its capacity to train domestic maritime workers by admitting more students, expanding facilities, creating new maritime career pathways, and awarding credit for prior learning experience — including military service.

These kinds of opportunities didn't come to pass by accident. They're part of a deliberate push by PCC to become our area's premier job training and workforce development engine. In fact, at PCC, we call them "Pathways to Opportunity," and they are spelled out under our president's work plan.

The Maritime Welding program is but one example of the many Pathways to Opportunity available through PCC. Whether you want to be an electrician, a medical assistant, a paralegal, a web designer, a medical lab technician, or any one of a wide range of gainful occupations, PCC could be the right fit for you. There is a path to a living-wage career, economic security, and a prosperous future — and it leads through community college.

Dr. Karin Edwards is president of Portland Community College's Cascade Campus.

Reparations as Answer to Racial Wealth Divide

Black America's vanishing wealth is bad for all

BY BOB LORD

Want an impossible task? Try identifying the most disturbing trend in America today.

Consider the choices: Climate change denial, extreme political polarization, gun violence, etc.

Those are just the ones on the national radar. Here's one that isn't, but needs to be: the systematic destruction of black wealth.

The reality is horrific, according to the recent Institute for Policy Studies report *Dreams Deferred*. "Between 1983 and 2016, the median black family saw their wealth drop by more than half after adjusting for inflation," the report notes, "compared to a 33 percent increase for the median white household."

Further, the report finds, "the median black family today owns \$3,600 — just 2 percent of the \$147,000 of wealth the median



white family owns."

This affects you regardless of your color. Because inextricably connected to the widening racial wealth divide has been the extreme concentration of wealth at the very top.

During the same three decades over which black wealth eroded,

wealth at the very top also explain why the racial wealth gap existed in the first place? No — but two and a half centuries of slavery and another century of Jim Crow do. (Although those same immoral laws also created incredible family fortunes for plantation owners and others, whose descendants still

reach parity with their white counterparts.

Narrowing the racial wealth divide must necessarily involve not only de-concentrating wealth — the nearly exclusively white wealth — at the very top. It also must address a moral imperative that's been neglected for too long:

“Narrowing the racial wealth divide must necessarily involve not only de-concentrating wealth — the nearly exclusively white wealth — at the very top. It also must address a moral imperative that’s been neglected for too long: America must repay its centuries’ overdue debt to the descendants of enslaved Africans, the children and grandchildren of Jim Crow, and the victims of mass incarceration.”

three of the wealthiest American families — the Koch, Walton, and Mars clans — increased their wealth by an astounding 6,000 percent. With the racial wealth gap dragging down America's median wealth, that gives these billionaires ever greater say over what happens to the rest of us.

Does the concentration of

benefit today from that accumulation of extreme wealth.)

Concentration of wealth at the top doesn't even explain fully the destruction of black wealth that's occurred in recent decades. Structural and overt racism contributed as well. America's policy of mass incarceration has hamstrung the ability of black Americans to

America must repay its centuries' overdue debt to the descendants of enslaved Africans, the children and grandchildren of Jim Crow, and the victims of mass incarceration.

Only one policy fits the bill: A reparations program. Wealthy Americans should pay the most, but nobody that's benefitted from

the discrimination should be exempt.

Designing an effective reparations program will be tricky, to say the least. At a time when the country's billionaires are systematically fleecing not just black Americans, but all Americans, reparations would have to lift black America in way that isn't temporary. That will be a monumental challenge.

But the challenge involved in designing a reparations program pales in comparison to the challenge that shouldn't be a challenge at all: getting a critical mass of white Americans to recognize that the wrongs of the past have never been righted, that they've continued to this day, and that repaying America's debt to black Americans cannot be ignored any longer.

And before we even begin the challenge of persuading white Americans to do right, we first must persuade ourselves to stop doing wrong. Racism, structural and overt, is alive and well in America today.

It's time for decent Americans to recommit themselves to these challenges. If not now, when?

Bob Lord is a Phoenix-based tax attorney and an associate fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. Distributed by OtherWords.org.

OPINION



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Moving Forward to Prevent Gun Violence

We make progress by never giving up

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

When 26-year-old Stockton, Calif. councilmember Michael Tubbs was elected in 2016 as Stockton's first black mayor, its youngest mayor ever, and the



youngest mayor in U.S. history of a city with a population of at least 100,000, he had a mission to make positive change in his hometown.

Last year the city made progress towards a key goal: reducing gun violence. Stockton police reported 40 percent fewer homicides and 31 percent fewer shootings between 2017 and 2018 and said increased police resources and community involvement are making a difference.

Mayor Tubbs shared his thanks in a social media post: "The murder of my cousin is what brought me back to Stockton after college and I've spent the last six years as an elected official focused on reducing shootings and homicides and making our community safer...I want to thank Stockton Police Department, the Office of

Violence Prevention and community partners like Friends Outside, Fathers & Families of San Joaquin and Advance Peace for the amazing work they did in 2018." He added: "Let's continue in 2019."

Stockton isn't the only place making progress on gun violence. Across our nation, state leaders have responded to our children's cries and advanced common sense gun violence prevention measures to keep them safe. Last year more than half of all states passed at least one gun violence prevention measure:

Eleven states enacted laws to keep guns out of the hands of those convicted of domestic abuse; nine states banned bump stocks or strengthened existing bans; eight states and D.C. enacted extreme risk protection order laws which empower families and law enforcement officers to temporarily limit gun access for those who pose a danger to themselves or others; and seven states added new background check requirements or strengthened existing requirements. In total, 20 states and D.C. currently extend background checks beyond federal requirements.

The majority of these laws were enacted in the months after the Parkland shooting—a testament to the courageous children

and youths who organized and demanded leaders protect children, not guns.

There have also been signs of positive progress at the federal level. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives issued a ban on bump stocks which will take effect on March 26 and remove these dangerous devices which can be attached to semiautomatic rifles to mimic machine guns. Bump stocks were used by the gunman who killed 58 people at a Las Vegas country music concert in 2017. The ban prohibits future sales of bump stocks and requires current bump stock owners to destroy the devices or turn them in.

The midterm elections ushered a "gun sense" majority into Congress and established gun violence prevention as a national moral imperative and top legislative priority. Most notably, on Jan. 8 Congress introduced the bipartisan Background Checks Act which would require universal background checks for all gun sales, not just sales by licensed gun dealers, which is what current law requires. In the most recent Quinnipiac University poll, 92 percent of American voters supported these checks. This bill is a critical step towards keeping guns out of the hands of those who would use

them to harm our children. While background checks don't prevent legal gun purchases, they could prevent child and teen gun deaths.

In 2017, 3,410 children and teens were killed with a gun. How many more senseless child and teen deaths will we allow before we enact common sense gun safety measures?

While we are encouraged by these modest first steps, the fact that more preschoolers were killed by guns in 2017 than law enforcement officers in the line of duty reinforces that this is still an urgent crisis and we still have a long way to go.

Every 2 hours and 48 minutes we fail to act, a child or teen is killed with a gun. We cannot afford to wait—our children's lives are at stake. We must continue making progress and never give up. All of us must stand up and demand our elected officials pass the Background Checks Act with urgency and act to keep the momentum going. Every child and every person should be able to walk our nation's streets without fear. With the anniversary of the tragedy in Parkland only a few weeks away let's show our children they can finally count on us to protect them not guns.

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

If Beale Street Could Talk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Jensen and his cinematographer James Laxton to impart that reverence on screen. They know how to linger on the beauty of black skin and Afro-textured hair and black bodies--indeed, Jenkins has spoken about the adaptation required to do this justice given that film was originally created to

represent white skin, which leaves black skin underexposed. (I think there's a metaphor here somewhere.) Here, black is beautiful, and bright colors and long close-ups help us to see what is most deeply and genuinely true rather than literal. It's the truth we haven't learned to see.

It's only in that context of love and genuine beauty that we can be

expected to grapple as we should with the violence that is perpetrated on Tish and Fonny, and on black people in general. In keeping with Baldwin's intention, the film feels like a series of overheard conversations, what black people would (and indeed, sometimes do) say outside the hearing of white people if they could articulate their innermost thoughts. We see how white men feel entitled to Tish's body, how Fonny endangers himself by standing up for her, how his wounded dignity reacts when she stands up for him, how she is so often the only person in a position to receive his understandable rage and pain. We watch Fonny learn to dream and find a way to express his heart, only to watch (as Tish does) as the light and hope drain out of him in jail. We see Tish struggle with the weight of each burden she must bear alone--telling Fonny through glass that she is carrying his child, breaking each bit of bad news about his prospects, absorbing the senselessness of a case in which her own testimony is useless against that of a white police officer with an axe to grind. In a pivotal scene, Fonny and an old friend (an amazing Brian Tyree Henry), recently released from prison for a crime he did not commit, speak of the indignities that each finds impossible to escape; they wear the costs on their souls and on their faces for a few moments of nearly unbearable

honesty, before returning to laughter and gratitude for Tish's simple and good cooking.

We also overhear the courage and raw power it takes for Tish and Fonny and those who love them to keep fighting. "Unbow your head, sister," Tish's elder sister firmly chides her in an early scene--and before long, of necessity, Tish acquires the power to insist that Fonny's lawyer refer to him by his nickname rather than by Alonzo, the legal name that is always used in official proceedings, and also the power to pull Fonny back from the brink of despair by reminding him that "I understand what you're going through, because I'm with you." Even as he is dwindling away behind bars, we watch Fonny dredge his depths for hope; "I want to hold you in my arms, and I got to hold our baby in my arms." Tish's father Joseph reminds Fonny's father Frank, also at the brink of despair, that, even without resources, they have already managed the impossible in their lives, so they will find ways to get the money to fund Fonny's defense; I sadly expect that few white people will know how to process the truth of Joseph's recognition that the wealth of white people is almost entirely stolen. And Regina King as Tish's steely mother knows suffering and offers only and entirely what she knows she has to give, advising Tish in a moment of anguish, "Remember,

love is what brought you here. And if you've trusted love this far, don't panic now. Trust it all the way."

Yet even that much love and that much power can't save Fonny from the fate reserved for him. Another of the film's agonies is how marginalized people are pitted against each other; an affectionate rapport with a Mexican restaurant owner is contrasted with the anguish of the rape victim, a Puerto Rican woman who was instructed by police to identify Fonny in the line-up and then is left to her trauma. The entrenched patterns of senseless brutality feel and are intractable.

In this story, love manages to survive, but it can hardly be said to thrive. It does not cushion Fonny and Tish and those who love them, and their love should not lull us into believing that their losses are uniquely unjust. In this wrenching and beautiful depiction, we are meant to listen, to grieve as we ought, and to aspire to the determination that has been modeled for us, the quality of determination that will be needed to end such suffering.

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.

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SPORTS



Lawrence Guy of the New England Patriots kisses the NFL championship trophy after his team won the Super Bowl Sunday against the Los Angeles Rams, 13-3. (AP photo)

Defensive Super Bowl Patriots score 13-3 victory

(AP) — In a Super Bowl short on scoring, it was the New England Patriots' defense that set the tone.

The Patriots battered and bewildered quarterback Jared Goff and the Rams, stopping the NFL's second-ranked scoring team en route to a 13-3 Super Bowl victory

Sunday in Atlanta.

"They played unbelievable," New England quarterback Tom Brady said of the Patriots' defense.

The Rams' 3 points equaled the fewest scored in a Super Bowl.

When Goff began to find his groove late in the fourth quarter and the Rams trailing 10-3, Los Angeles drove inside New England's 30 for just the second time in the game. But the momentum proved to be short-lived.

Safety Duron Harmon combined with cornerback Stephon Gilmore to break up what would have been a touchdown pass to Brandin Cooks. Then, on the next play, Harmon pressured Goff on a blitz and forced him into a throw into coverage that was intercepted by Gilmore.

New England's offense took it from there, sealing the victory with a 9-play, 72-yard drive that ate up 3:05 and ended with a 41-yard field goal by Stephen Gostkowski.

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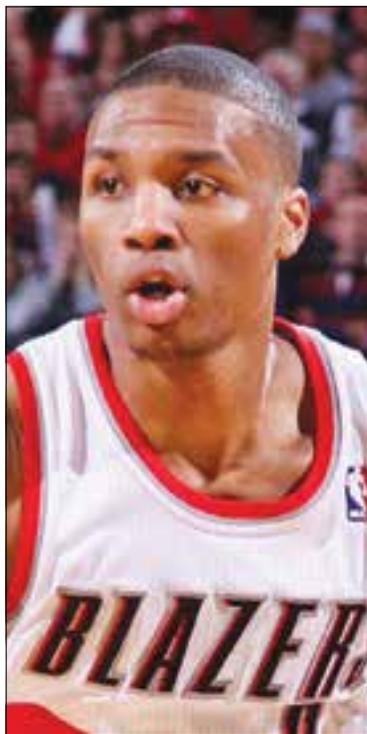
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NBA All-Star Again

Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard was named an NBA Western Conference All-Star by a vote of NBA head coaches last week.

Lillard is averaging 26.4 points, 4.6 rebounds, 6.3 assists and 1.08 steals for the season. An NBA All-Star in 2014, 2015 and 2018, he is only one of four players in Portland franchise history to become a four-time All-Star.

The five starters from the Western Conference, decided by player, media and fan balloting, consist of Stephen Curry (Golden State), Kevin Durant (Golden State), Paul George (Oklahoma City), James Harden (Houston) and LeBron James (L.A. Lakers). Lillard will round out the reserves from the West, including LaMarcus Aldridge (San Antonio), Anthony Davis (New Orleans), Nikola Jokic (Denver), Klay Thompson (Golden State), Karl-Anthony Towns (Minnesota) and Russell Westbrook (Oklahoma City).



Damian Lillard

The 2019 NBA All-Star Game will tip-off at 5 p.m. (Pacific) on Sunday, Feb. 17 in Charlotte, N.C. The game will air live on TNT.

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