



Portland Observer

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PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Miracles Club Program Director Maleka Taylor (right) and Wellness within Reach Administrative Coordinator Makda Berhane oversee programs focused on improving health outcomes in the African American community, from the nonprofit club's Miracles Central location at 1306 N.E. Second Ave.

Keeping the Focus on Health

Community steps up to continue programs

BY DANNY PETERSON
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Miracles Club, a Portland non-profit dedicated to substance abuse recovery services and permanent hous-

ing of recovering addicts, most from the African American community, is now managing health initiatives for the black community at large that were previously run by the African American Health Coalition, which dissolved last year.

"Obviously the programs were pertinent to the African American community," said Miracles Club Program Director

Maleka Taylor. "And so we got together behind closed doors and did a bunch of legal stuff so that when they dissolved we were able to take on their programs."

The efforts include Wellness within Reach which distributes affordable exercise passes to the Charles Jordan and Matt Dishman Community Centers—Portland Parks & Recreation facilities in

north and northeast Portland respectively—and a Diabetes Prevention initiative.

The exercise passes promote good health practices and are being distributed from the club's second location, Miracles Central at 1306 N.E. Second Ave. to self-identifying African American resi-

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Mayor Ted Wheeler



Bobbin Singh

City Targets Racism

A city ordinance condemning white supremacy and alt right groups has the unanimous approval of the Portland City Council.

Adopted last Thursday, the resolution calls for the city to work with community organizations to inform the public about the historical discriminatory impacts of white supremacy in Portland and the state and how to identify and push back against racist ideologies today.

"This is not a silver bullet, but I'm hopeful this resolution is the start to meaningful action," Mayor Ted Wheeler said.

The measure comes in part as a response to rise in hate crimes.

The Portland non-profits Council on American-Islamic Relations, Oregon Justice Resource Center, and the Western States Center all voiced support of the resolution and outlined six action items they would like the city to address in regard to white nationalist and alt-right group activity in Portland.

"Our proposals build on the important step Mayor Wheeler and the City Commissioners have taken today," said Bobbin Singh, executive director of the Oregon Justice Resource Center.

In a joint statement, the three organizations said they hope to work closely with City leadership to implement action items.

FBI Task Force Vote Set Hardesty moves on campaign promise

Portland City Council will vote Wednesday whether to pull out from the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, an issue Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty promised to bring to the fore during her campaign last year.

The JTTF, which is a partnership between federal and local law enforcement agencies, was dissociated back in 2005 by then Mayor Tom Potter, a former police chief. It was fully re-established in 2015. San Francisco chose to dissolve a similar partnership in 2017.

Some local advocates have voiced their support of pulling out of the agreement, including those of nearly 50 individuals and organizations who co-signed a letter calling for an end of cooperation with the FBI's Terrorism Task Force.

Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform, ACLU of Oregon, NAACP Portland Branch, Unite Oregon, Veterans for Peace Chapter 72, Portland's Resistance, and Occupy ICE PDX were among the signers and endorses. Critics said the JTTF lacks transparency and oversight, and promotes profiling based on race, religion, or country of origin.

"Now, under a president who targets people based on their re-



City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty

ligion (Muslims), national origin (immigrants), and political beliefs (protestors, Black Lives Matter), it is more important than ever to stop participating in the federal government's dragnet surveillance and spy program," the ACLU of Oregon stated in a message to city councilors.

Supporters of the law enforcement partnership, like Commissioner Nick Fish, who voted to rejoin the JTTF in 2015, said at that time he believes it can strengthen public safety and security.

While Commissioners Hardesty and Amanda Fritz both support pulling out of the FBI partnership, Mayor Ted Wheeler said he recommends preserving it. Commissioner Chloe Eudaly is expected to be the swing vote on the matter, but she had not publicly stated her definitive stance on the issue.

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What's on your list today?



A federal jury has convicted Mary Holden Ayala, 59, the former operator of a foster home serving the black community on Northeast Rodney Avenue of stealing nearly \$1 million from an Oregon foster care agency. The home was purchased by the neighborhood to keep it from being demolished.

Foster Care Provider Guilty

Executive neglected duties; stole \$1 million

A federal jury found Mary Holden Ayala, 59, of Portland, guilty Thursday of stealing nearly \$1 million from an Oregon foster care agency, money laundering and filing false personal income tax returns.

Ayala, a longtime Portland resident, served as the president, executive director and primary agent of Give Us This Day, a private foster care agency and residential program which served youth of

color from a home on Northeast Rodney Avenue.

"Children in foster care rely heavily on the agency to which they are entrusted and these agencies are responsible for protecting and caring for them. Mary Holden Ayala grossly neglected her duties and selfishly stole from children in need," said Billy J. Williams, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

Ayala was accused of using

money meant to assist foster care children and their families to pay for luxury home renovations, a pilot for a reality show, extensive travel to luxury resorts, a music recording studio, luxury shoes and purses.

According to court documents, since its inception in 1979, Give Us This Day was primarily funded by the Oregon state and fed-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Health Clinic Hires Advocate

Local leader to manage Good News facility

The Good News Community Health Center at 18000 S.E. Stark St. in Rockwood has hired Sharon Maxwell from Portland's African American community as its new executive director.

Maxwell, a native Portlander, mother of four, grandmother of five, and graduate of Portland Community College and Warner Pacific University, is known as a unity builder, change agent, innovator, visionary, educator, green engineer and community engagement specialist for over 30 years.

She has run her own company for the past 19 years and founded two non-profits to serve the community.

"We are excited for the many connections she has with our community to engage more of our community in helping those



Sharon Maxwell

weighed down with overburdens to stand and carry their own packs, and helping others with overburdens along the way," clinic officials said.

The Good News Community Health Center serves with a faith-

based mission to provide excellent physical, mental, and spiritual care with the Love of Christ. Many services are low cost and free, available regardless of ability to pay.

The clinic serves a vibrant and radically diverse community. Nearly 90 languages are spoken in the homes within just a few miles of our clinic.

Although, Rockwood is one of the poorest communities in Oregon, home to many with homelessness, addiction, mental illness, isolation and limited access to affordable healthy housing and quality medical care, it is also rich in terms of resilience of its residents, hard working families from many different cultures, thriving small businesses, vibrant churches and dedicated community leadership.

Keeping the Focus on Health

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

dents for \$25 per quarter.

The Diabetes Prevention program addresses the growing epidemic of African Americans developing diabetes at a disproportionate rate. The outreach encourages a healthy lifestyle through diet, weight loss, and exercise, with the desired outcome to prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes.

The African American Health Coalition had dissolved in June when its executive director Corliss McKeever, retired. Miracles Club, which had been a partnering organization to the coalition, then worked with McKeever to make sure the programs continued, explained Taylor, who grew up attending Miracles Club community events as a child and has been its program director for the past four and a half years.

"When [McKeever] decided it was time for her to retire, she didn't want the programs to fall with her. So it was a matter of, hey friends, this is what's going to happen and we want to make

sure we continue to sustain the community," she said.

Wellness within Reach Administrative Coordinator Makda Berhane, who previously worked for the coalition, said the transition is really going well and she wants community members to fully take advantage.

"If people are interested, I want them to exploit this program. It's really a good program," Berhane said.

The Miracles Club has been dedicated to offering addiction recovery services and support for community members, mostly African American, since 1993. Both at their headquarters at 4200 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, and their secondary Miracles Central location in the Lloyd district, where the exercise passes can be obtained, and the location of a community center downstairs and apartments upstairs for people in addiction recovery.

The Charles Jordan Center is located at 9009 N. Foss Ave and the Matt Dishman Center is located at 77 N.E. Knott St. Both centers offer recreational and fitness activities. The \$25 Miracles Club exercise passes allows access to both fitness centers, now through March 31.

Preventative Health Forum

Presented by: African American AIDS Awareness Action Alliance (A⁶) & Albina Ministerial Alliance

Featuring:

- A panel of experts
- Light refreshments
- Health Cards to improve your doctor's visits
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Sunday, Feb 17, 2019
1:00PM—3:00 PM
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This monthly series focuses on health topics that the Black/African American community is more likely to encounter — including info on how to increase positive outcomes, and advocate for services

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- Hypertension
- Nutrition

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7 A.M. - 10 A.M.
 TONI TERRELL

10 A.M. - 1 P.M.
 REV. AL SHARPTON
 (KEEPING IT REAL)

1 P.M. - 3 P.M.
 KENNY SMOOV

3 P.M. - 7 P.M.
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7 P.M. - 9 P.M.
 PAPA SMURF

9 P.M. - 12 Midnight
 MIKE SHANNON

SUNDAY

12 Midnight - 3 A.M.
 MIKE SHANNON

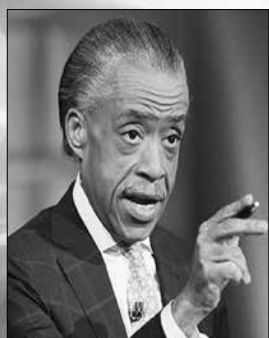
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A Long History of Health Disparities

Black Americans still recovering from wrongful past

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The United States is still recovering from a lack of healthcare access for African Americans and lack of opportunities for black medical professionals.

Critical gains have been made to close the gap in health disparities for African Americans in recent years but there are still significant disparities for African Americans when it comes to high blood pressure, diabetes, and stroke.

According to the Center for Disease Control, more African Americans of middle ages are living with or dying of many conditions typically found in white Americans at older ages. The CDC cites socioeconomic factors, lifestyle behaviors, social environment—like racial discrimination, and lack of access to preventive health-care services—as some of the multiple factors that contribute to the health disparities for African Americans.

On the positive side, the death rate for black Americans has declined about 25 percent over the past decade, and some health experts believe the passage of the Affordable Care Act championed by former President Barack Obama may have lowered socioeconomic disparities in health care access, particularly for states like Oregon that opted in to expand Medicaid.

Disparities in health outcomes are considered a residual effect of segregated healthcare, which persisted through the mid-20th century, until the Johnson Administration used the Civil Rights Act as the basis for requiring hospi-



PHOTO COURTESY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
Dr. James McCune Smith was the first African American physician with a medical degree to hold practice in the U.S. The pioneering doctor dispelled common misconceptions about race, intelligence and medicine.

tals to desegregate as a condition for receiving funds from the then-newly established Medicare program in 1966.

Even after Medicaid was enacted, however, many hospitals continued to discriminate against black and poor people until some legal action was done. In the south “separate but equal” hospitals were often inadequate, providing substandard care to people of color, and rarely provided access for black physicians or nurses.

Despite these barriers, the contribution of African Americans to medicine in the U.S. dates back to the American Revolutionary War.

The first African American man to earn a medical degree to practice in the US was physician and scholar Dr. James McCune Smith, who earned his medical degree in Scotland in 1837 after being denied college admission stateside. He was also the first black physician to run a pharmacy he established. As an abolitionist, he used his medical and statistics training to refute common misconceptions about race, intelligence and medicine.

As the number of African Americans who obtained medical degrees increased, so did a movement by black physicians to form their own medical institutions, teaching hospitals, and medical societies, in response to racism in American medicine.

One of the first physicians to ever perform a successful open-heart surgery in the US was African American Dr. Daniel Williams in 1893. He also founded the first interracial and black-owned hospital, Provident Hospital in Chicago, in 1891. He later became chief surgeon at Freedmen’s Hospital—one of less than a handful of traditional black hospitals that still exists today—in Washington, DC, now called Howard University Hospital. Williams later helped form a professional organization for African Amer-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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A Hunger for More Films Like This

The third on my list of the best films of 2018, “*Hochelaga: Land of Souls*,” didn’t have a U.S. theatrical release and is available for streaming only in Canada. I saw it at the Portland International Festival and actually had the DVD shipped to me via the Canadian branch of Amazon’s platform so that I could watch it again.

So why am I bothering to put it on my list of the year’s best films? Because I really want people to see it, even if it means ordering it from Canada (or maybe persuading Movie Madness to purchase it so you can rent it). Although it’s been a year since I saw it for the first time, this film stayed with me and impacted my perspective in profound ways. If nothing else, perhaps writing about it will awaken some hunger for more films like this one.

“Hochelaga” is the name of the Iroquois village that the French encountered when they first came to what is now Quebec. The conceit of the film is an archeological dig that uncovers pieces of the history of Montreal going back through time to the original indigenous people, to the early European explorers, and to rebels in the 1830s. Much more than we regularly see, the film prioritizes indigenous perspectives, rather than omitting them or presenting them as side notes to a story about white Europeans. In the story about early French settlers, we get a sense of how ill-equipped they were for life in a territory where indigenous people had been living for centuries, and yet we see also how the French somehow operate from an unfounded assumption of superiority. In the rebel story, a black woman and an indigenous man support a white household, yet they are portrayed in a way that conveys unnoticed power and multi-level awareness.

OPINIONATED JUDGE

BY DARLEEN ORTEGA



The unearthing of a long-vanished Canadian village brings new reverence for Native American ancestors and connections across generations in Francois Girard’s ‘Hochelaga, Land of Souls.’

By the time we come to a final story of Hochelaga itself, we can see that it is a thriving village with a sophisticated leadership structure. The natives see the French as crude, smelly, and unsophisticated--and with good reason. Yet despite all that they encounter, the French feel qualified to respond as though they have discovered a wholly uninhabited place and to name it as though for the first time.

The film returns several times to a post-battle scene from 900 years ago, as a holy man grieving the carnage prays for wisdom and

prophesies a time when humans will make sense of the larger story. The film accords a reverence to indigenous ways of naming and processing reality that is all too rare. It was the first time I have ever seen a film evoke a sense that indigenous people have been on this content for many centuries longer than white Europeans, that the remnants of cultures that were nearly obliterated still live in our soil, that we are surrounded by these original caretakers of the land.

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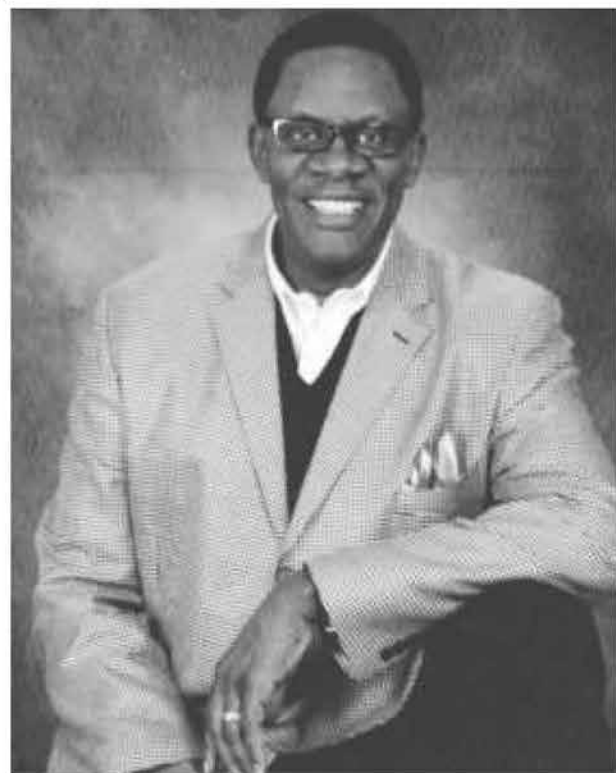
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PHOTO BY ANTONIO HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

The Portland Trail Blazers recognize six African American community leaders during pregame and halftime activities, Tuesday, Feb. 5, and presents them with limited edition game day posters designed by local artist Edmund Holmes. The honorees are (from left) Linfield College President Miles Davis, Meyer Memorial Trust President/CEO Michelle J. DePass, Portland City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw, Oregon Supreme Court Justice Adrienne Nelson, and OHSU President Dr. Danny Jacobs.

Groundbreaking Black Leaders Honored

Portland Trail Blazers spotlighted six leaders from the African American community in a Black History Month celebration during pregame and halftime activities Feb. 5 in a game against the Miami Heat at the Moda Center.

The honorees, representing ground-breaking firsts as top leaders in their professional fields, were Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw; Oregon Health & Sciences University President Dr. Danny Jacobs; Linfield College President Dr. Miles Davis; Meyer Memorial Trust President and Chief Executive Officer Michelle J. DePass; Oregon Supreme Court Justice Adrienne Nelson and Portland City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty.

Each recipient received a limited edition Trail Blazers gameday poster designed by local artist Edmund Holmes. A portion of the event's proceeds were donated to iUrbanTeen, a group whose mission is to expose and inspire underrepresented youth to become tomorrow's business and technology leaders.



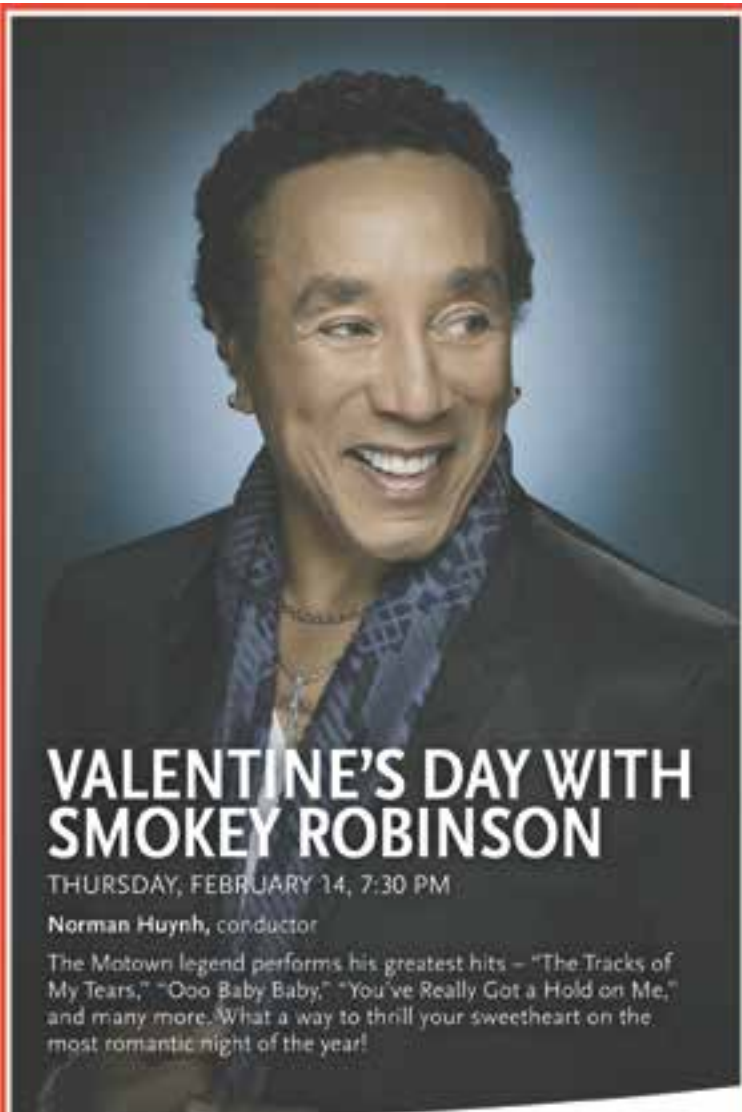
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|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| <div>11</div> <div>Thomas Edison born, 1847 Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk Day National Inventors' Day White T-Shirt Day</div> | <div>12</div> <div>Judy Blume born, 1938 Abraham Lincoln born, 1809 (16th President)</div> | <div>13</div> <div>Get a Different Name Day First Public School established (1635)</div> | <div>14</div> <div>Ferris Wheel Day Valentine's Day</div> | <div>15</div> <div>National Gumdrops Day Susan B. Anthony born, 1820</div> | <div>16</div> <div>Nylon Patented By DuPont in 1937 King Tut's Burial Chamber opened in 1923</div> | <div>17</div> <div>Random Acts of Kindness Day National P.T.A. Founder's Day (1897)</div> |
| <div>18</div> <div>President's Day Former planet, Pluto, Discovered by Clyde Tombaugh in 1930</div> | <div>19</div> <div>Phonograph Patented, 1878, Thomas Edison Mr. Roger's Neighborhood Debuted, 1968</div> | <div>20</div> <div>John Glenn Orbits Earth, 1962 Love Your Pet Day</div> | <div>21</div> <div>Malcom X Assassinated (1965) Washington Monument dedicated (1885)</div> | <div>22</div> <div>George Washington born, 1732 Be Humble Day World Thinking Day</div> | <div>23</div> <div>International Dog Biscuit Appreciation Day U.S. Flag raised at Iwo Jima (1945)</div> | <div>24</div> <div>Steve Jobs born, 1955 Wilhelm Carl Grimm born, 1786</div> |
| <div>25</div> <div>Quiet Day Artist Pierre Auguste Renoir born, 1841</div> | <div>26</div> <div>Levi Strauss born, 1829</div> | <div>27</div> <div>Uri Shulevitz born, 1935 International Polar Bear Day</div> | <div>28</div> <div>Public Sleeping Day Gold Seekers arrived in San Francisco (1849)</div> | <div>CALENDAR 2019</div> <div>February</div> | | |

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



VALENTINE'S DAY WITH SMOKEY ROBINSON
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MOVING MUSIC FORWARD



PHOTO BY RUSSELL J YOUNG

A beautiful woman is haunted by the spectre of a Costa Rican legend in *La Segua*, a Spanish language play with English supertitles now playing through March 2 at Milagro Theatre, 525 S.E. Stark St.

Cautionary Tale of Love

Portland's premier Latino theater group Milagro presents the North American premiere of *La Segua*, a cautionary tale of vanity and narcissism for all to heed.

Set in the city of Cartago in colonial Costa Rica, a beautiful woman, Encarnación Sancho, is haun-

ted by the specter of *La Segua*, a legendary woman who appeared to her former suitor and transformed into a monster with a horse's head, driving him mad. Blaming herself, Sancho resists starting a new relationship with a new suitor who has fallen in love with her.

In his play, Alberto Cañas Escalante takes a hard look at Costa Rican values, including ambition and hypocrisy.

La Segua is a Spanish language show with English supertitles. The production opened Feb. 7 and runs through March 2. For tickets and more information, call the box office at 503-236-7253 or visit milagro.org.

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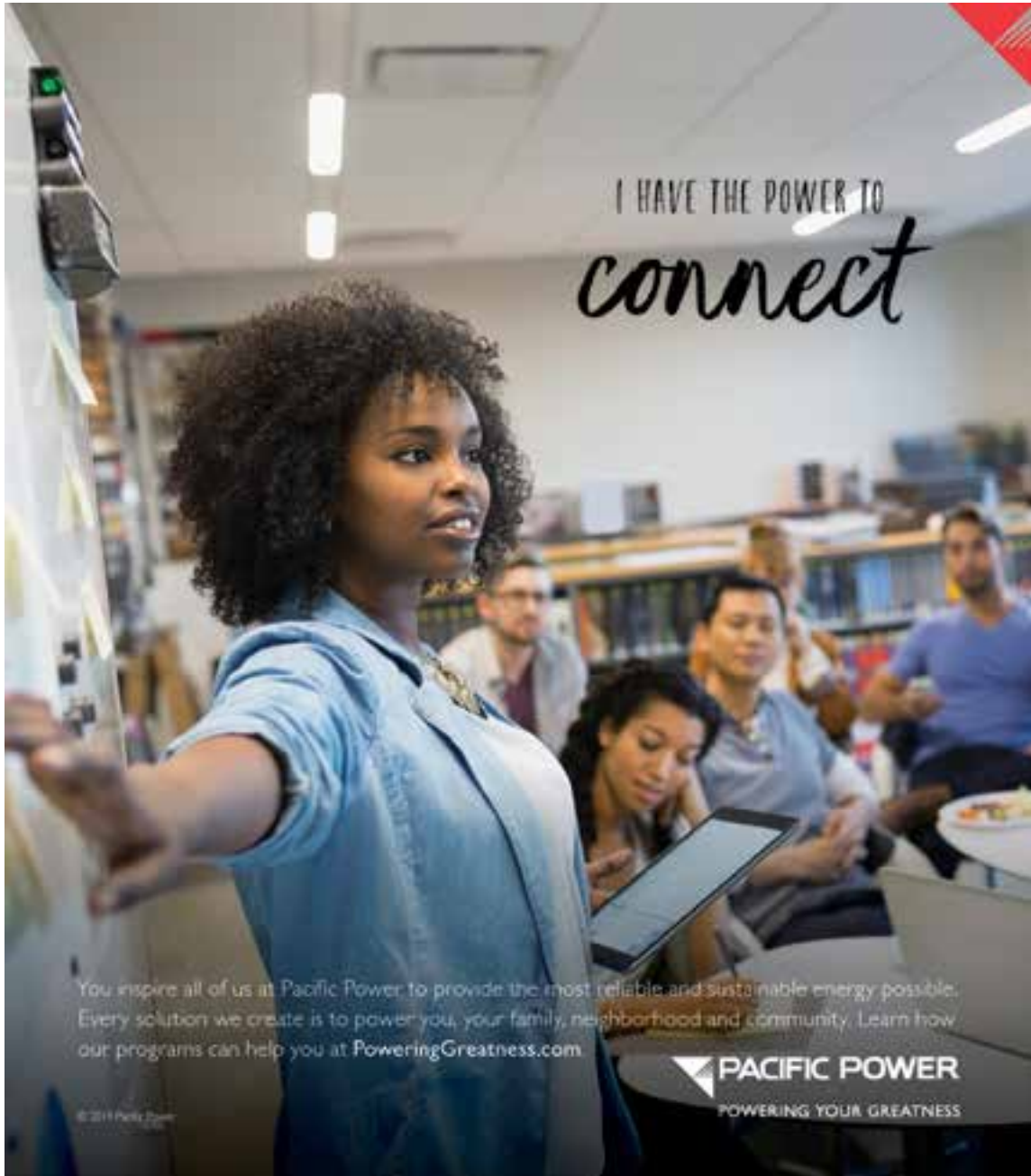


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The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church congregation in Portland celebrating the 30th anniversary of O.B. Williams as pastor in 1975. The Oregon Historical Society Research Library photo is part of a new Experience Oregon exhibit opening Thursday with free admission all weekend.

Unforgettable Stories

‘Experience Oregon’ opens with free admission

Using broad themes connecting yesterday to today and emphasizing why learning about history matters, the Oregon Historical Society unveils a new 7,000 square foot exhibition, Experience Oregon on Thursday, Feb. 14.

The dynamic educational space allows visitors to learn about the

countless people, places and events that have shaped the state.

The opening date is also Oregon’s 160th birthday, and the museum will celebrate the exhibit’s grand opening with a blessing led by members of the Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony at noon.

Other celebrations during the weekend include a Family Day event filled with cultural performances and activities on Saturday, Feb. 16; and free admission all weekend, Feb. 14 through Sunday, Feb. 18.

“From priceless artifacts to breathtaking images to unforgetta-

ble stories, there is truly something for everyone in this exhibit,” said Kerry Tymshuk, Oregon Historical Society executive director.”

The Oregon Historical Society’s museum is open seven days a week, Monday – Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Presenting Jesus Christ Superstar!

Stumptown Stages, Portland's professional musical theatre company in residence at Portland's Centers for the Arts, has kicked off 2019 with the hit rock opera Jesus Christ Superstar!

A timeless work and the first musical by Andrew Lloyd Web-

ber and Tim Rice to be produced for the professional stage, Jesus Christ Superstar has wowed audiences for over 40 years. Loosely based on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Superstar follows the last week of Jesus Christ's life, the story told entirely

Portland's Stumptown Stages presents the hit rock opera Jesus Christ Superstar! Now playing through March 3 at Portland's Brunish Theatre at Antoinette Hatfield Hall, downtown.



through song.

The iconic score contains such well-known numbers as "Superstar," "I Don't Know How to Love Him" and "Gethsemane."

Shows continue through March

3 at Portland's Brunish Theatre at Antoinette Hatfield Hall, 1111 S.W. Broadway. For tickets and more information, call the box office at 800-273-1530 or visit stumptownstages.org.



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Curtis Cook



Tone Hixx

Black Comedy Festival

Four nights of comedy will mark the 3rd annual Black Comedy Festival opening Thursday, Feb. 14 at the Harvey Comedy Club, downtown, and continuing Friday through Sunday, Feb. 15-17 at the Billy Webb Elks Lodge in north Portland.

Produced by Dirty Angel Entertainment in partnership with the Portland Radio Project, the festival will kick off with an open mic Real Comedy Spot production and meet and greet at Harvey's. Perfor-

mances will follow over the next three nights at the Billy Webb Elks Lodge, located at 6 N. Tillamook St.

Some of the comedy headliners include Young Gunz and Mark Caesar, from Louisiana's Funniest Person; Curtis Cook of the Jim Jeffries Show and Portland's Funniest 5; Smokin' Jones with Chaz Carter; The Blackkonteurs and Debbie Wooten-Williams.

Tickets for the nightly shows are \$15. Visit brownpapertickets.com/event/4066393.

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE



Cascade Festival of African Films – Portland Community College's Cascade Campus in north Portland hosts 29th annual Cascade Festival of African Film with more than 30 feature, documentary and short films by established and emerging African directors from 18 countries. Runs through March 3. For a full schedule, visit africanfilmfestival.org.

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.

Norman Sylvester Band – “Boogie Cat” Norman Sylvester plays

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.



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 Sunday, 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.



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

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 documentation 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

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Legal Double Standards Keep Us in Shackles

Pulling back the curtain on unjust laws

BY OSCAR H. BLAYTON

It's time we stop lying to ourselves. The lying has gone on much too long and every time the lie is repeated, we are all the worse for it.

The lie is that in America, everyone is equal under the law. It's time to pull back the curtain on this lie, but in order to do so, first we must have an understanding of what "law" actually is. In its most basic form, law, is a process of authoritative control whereby certain members of a particular community establish and maintain a specific public order.

This definition may seem like a mouthful, but history can help us unpack it. Nazi Germany had anti-Jewish laws, the racist regime of South Africa had apartheid laws and the southern states in this country had Jim Crow laws. The Nazis, the Afrikaners and the Southern segregationists all had authoritative control over their respective national and state communities. And with that control, they each ordered their societies in the manner they desired.

In each of these instances, it

is not difficult to identify those community members who sought to maintain a specific public order, nor is it difficult to identify the "specific order" they sought to maintain.

For blacks in South Africa and the segregated southern United States, subjugation was the public order where they lived. And in the case of Jews living under Nazi

us that what passes for justice in this country is not color-blind.

Our laws are written with high-sounding words, full of dignity and sensibility but words are not deeds. And as in courtrooms, the long arm of the law, embodied in the form of law enforcement officers, reaches out into the streets and neighborhoods where we witness the double standards that are applied in enforcing our laws written in lofty language.

lic order that allows whites to walk the streets with automatic rifles unmolested by the police, but justifies gunning down a black man who is purchasing a BB rifle in an open carry state. And it finds no fault in a police officer executing a 12-year-old black boy for playing with a toy gun in a park. This is the law in Ohio.

Many cities and states maintain a specific public order that targets people of color for fines

arrest. Black men are subjected to this law at a rate vastly disproportionate to their numbers in the general population. A statewide journalism project in South Carolina titled "taken" reports that while comprising only 13 percent of that state's population, black men represent 65 percent of all citizens targeted for civil forfeiture. This is still the law in South Carolina.

The slave codes, the Fugitive Slave Act, the Jim Crow laws of years past and the gutting of the Voting Rights Act just a few short years ago are all part of a process of authoritative control by certain community members to establish and maintain a specific public order that keeps people of color in shackles. There are many more laws that do this, but the list is too long to discuss in this short commentary.

We must pull back the curtain to determine the true public order purpose of each law governing our lives and to identify those community members who seek to establish and maintain them. Once we do this, then we can ask ourselves, if this is the America we want for ourselves. And if not, what are we going to do about it?

Oscar H. Blayton is a former Marine Corps combat pilot and human rights activist who practices law in Virginia.

Ohio maintains a specific public order that allows whites to walk the streets with automatic rifles unmolested by the police, but justifies gunning down a black man who is purchasing a BB rifle in an open carry state.

control, it was extermination. For these people, those were the laws.

A law need not be just or fair or benign to be the law. Law, like a gun or any other tool, can be used for good or for evil.

To disguise the fact that laws can be cruel, unjust and designed to harm certain members of our community, "Blind Justice" was the myth created to foster the notion of a fair legal system in America. But observations in most American courtrooms will instruct

Even though the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ended slavery more than 150 years ago, people of color are still forced to wear the shackles that are the double standards in our country's legal system. Bigots and racists use our system of laws and law enforcement to police black and brown bodies, making it clear to people of color that we are neither welcome nor expected to exist in white spaces.

Ohio maintains a specific pub-

and the confiscation of property in order to fund local and state governments. Ferguson, Mo. was proven to use the disproportionate levying of fines on people of color to fund their municipal activities. That was the law in Ferguson. The state of South Carolina's civil forfeiture law allows police to confiscate money and property from people merely suspected of having committed a crime. This is often done without a trial, and in some instances, without even an

Oprah Winfrey and Her Mom's Strong Finish

A tender story of their last conversation

BY BARBARA COOMBS LEE

Oprah Winfrey's mother, Vernita Lee, died two months ago on Thanksgiving Day, and Oprah recently shared with People Magazine the tender story of their last conversation.

As usual, when Oprah shares a personal experience, her generous and insightful telling contains important lessons for us all in 2019. These lessons are about mustering the courage to admit the life of a loved one is nearing its end. They're about bringing that knowledge into the open and acting on it, so the things that need to be said, will be said. They're about creating an opening for words to come that will

ring in our ears forever, close a life story and heal our wounds.

Two crucial decisions enabled Oprah and her mother to have one of the most meaningful conversations of their lives. The first was to decline aggressive, invasive treatment regimens as bodily functions deteriorated. Three years earlier, when Vernita's kidneys began to fail, she put comfort and quality of life first, and declined dialysis. Recently, as other organs shut down, the family chose hospice care in the home. Without this decision, we might have heard quite a different story, of desperate medical interventions, physical suffering and emotional trauma. Researchers have found these are a recipe for complicated and prolonged grief, haunting loved ones with unfinished business, lingering regrets or unresolved conflict.

So the first lesson here is that we'd best consider our specific

end-of-life priorities before consenting to intensive medical treatments that usually diminish the quality of a waning life, but rarely prolong it. If Oprah had been visiting her mom in a hospital's intensive care unit instead of a very warm, small room in her own home, if her mom were riding a conveyor belt of tests and treatments, technology and misery, there would have been little space for their blessed and beautiful goodbye.

It probably wasn't easy for Oprah and her mom to create the setting for a loving truth to emerge, as it rarely is. Our culture sends constant messages that we must treat death as an enemy to be conquered, deploy every medical technology in the battle and reject the possibility of "defeat." It takes a lot of courage to resist incessant calls to battle. We need a new kind of heroism. We need more hero stories of people standing bravely, alert enough and informed

enough to discern the perfect timing for surrender and retreat. Thank you, Oprah, for telling us this heroic story.

Oprah's second crucial decision came when she recognized the opportunity for sacred conversation was now, and delay would squander the opportunity. She had left her mother's home, but felt compelled to return because their story was unfinished. Anyone who has lost someone close knows this truth: Just because a loved one dies does not mean our relationship with them ends. No, our bond will continue through all our days. But death does seal the story of that bond. The story can only grow and change while our loved one lives.

Oprah tells of returning to her mother's side, resolved to do what she could to craft a fitting farewell. She tells of patiently waiting hour after hour for the mood, the opening to appear. She becomes frustrated with the TV shows that preoccupied and dis-

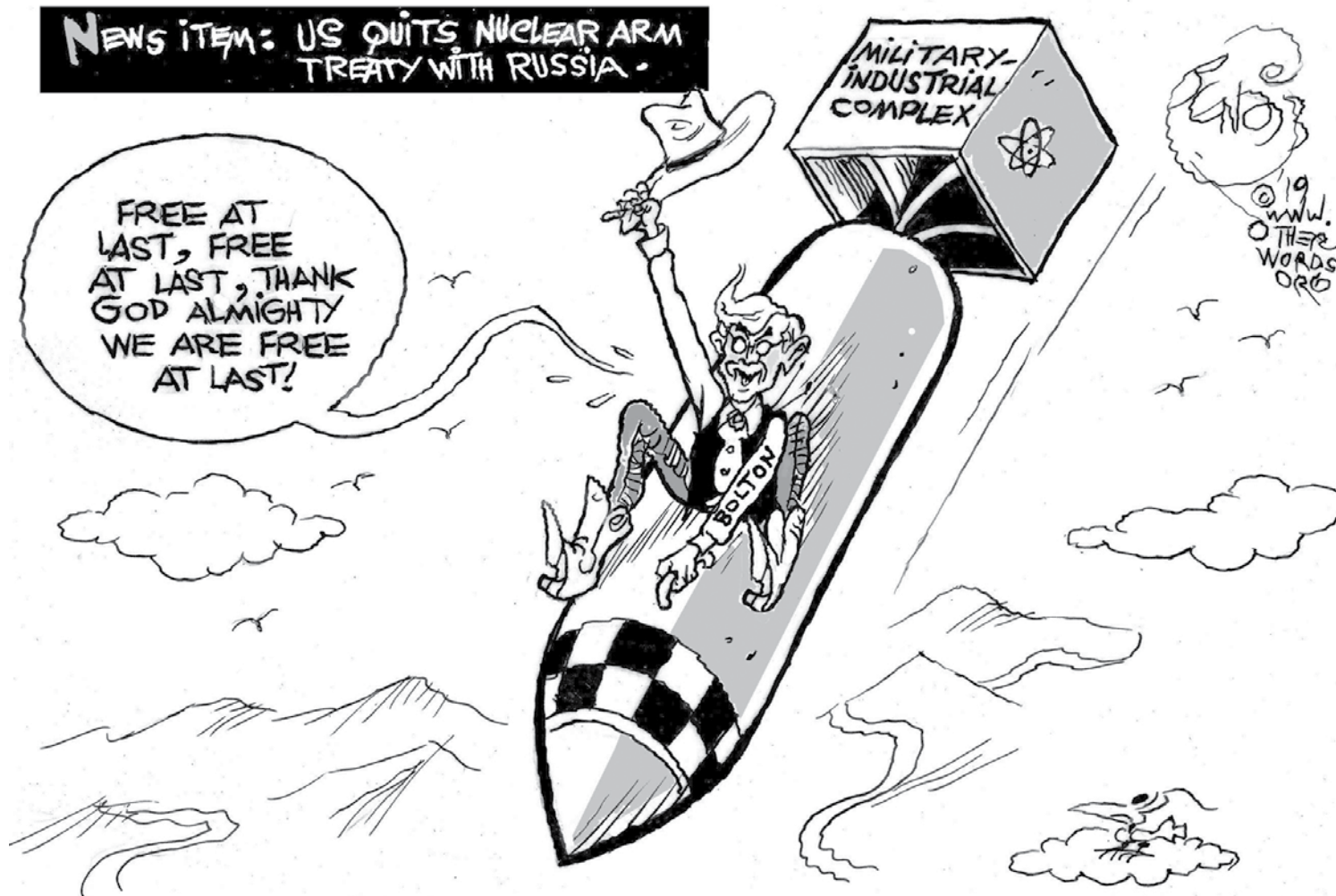
tract her mother. On the second day of her intentional waiting, she turns to music, that it might break through to the deep places of the soul and dislodge the sacred words waiting to be spoken. Thankfully, the music accomplishes this goal.

As Oprah's story about her mother shows, it can take persistence and good timing to have sweet closure at the end. But only our words, and no one else's words, can recall a shared life, celebrate its joys or put its painful memories to rest. May we all have the opportunity to follow Oprah's wise and loving example to a blessedly strong finish.

Barbara Coombs Lee, a former ER and ICU nurse and physician assistant, is the author of the new book *Finish Strong: Putting Your Priorities First at Life's End*. She is President of Compassion & Choices, the nation's oldest and largest organization working to empower everyone to chart their end-of-life journey.

OPINION

NEWS ITEM: US QUILTS NUCLEAR ARM TREATY WITH RUSSIA.



New school discipline guidelines backtrack

Undercutting discrimination protections

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice in 2014 jointly released a 'guidance package' on school discipline to help schools and districts meet their responsibilities under federal civil rights law to use nondiscriminatory discipline practices. Years of data have shown children of color and children with disabilities are disproportionately punished by school discipline practices and suspended and expelled from school.

Many schools and school districts have finally begun reforming their policies to promote positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students and eliminate harsh and exclusionary discipline practices that push students out of school. During the Obama Administration the Departments of Education and Justice supported these positive reforms. Their 2014 guidance was a key step reminding schools of their legal ob-

ligations, followed by resources to help schools make sure they were providing equal opportunity for all students. The Trump Administration is now actively undercutting and eliminating this guidance.

In December, just as most teachers and students were getting ready to leave for winter break, the Departments of Education and Justice announced they were rescinding the 2014 guidance reinforcing pro-

The letter says the 2014 guidance "clarifies that [the Departments of Education and Justice] expect schools and districts to treat all children fairly and provides practical tools and guidelines for educators to create safe, healthy, and inclusive environments for all students ... Rescinding the guidance sends the opposite message: that the departments do not care that schools are discriminating

students with disabilities, and any child who experiences systemic discrimination."

Every day in America 2,363 children are arrested. That's one child every 37 seconds. Thousands of children of color and with disabilities are getting trapped in the cradle to prison pipeline because of discriminatory school discipline policies that often push children into the juvenile justice system. We must continue to enforce the laws preventing discrimination, which remain intact, and the good practices referenced in the 2014 guidance and reject every effort to drag our nation's laws and children backwards.

As we enter Black History Month soon after celebrating what would have been Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 90th birthday, his words inspire us to go forward and resist this administration's attempts to push our children backwards. I often quote his clear words the first time I heard him speak in person during my senior year of college in Spelman College's chapel: "If you cannot fly, drive; if you cannot drive, run; if you cannot run, walk; if you cannot walk, crawl. But keep moving. Keep moving forward." We must not miss a step in our march toward justice.

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

Every day in America 2,363 children are arrested. That's one child every 37 seconds.

tections for students of color and students with disabilities from discrimination in school discipline.

The Children's Defense Fund joined the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and 119 other organizations last month in signing a letter to the Departments of Education and Justice urging them to immediately recommit "to vigorous enforcement of our civil rights laws and to a meaningful response to racial discrimination in school discipline."

against children of color by disproportionately excluding them from school and that the departments will not fulfill their role in helping educators create and maintain safe schools that afford all students equal educational opportunities." The letter also notes that rescinding the guidance is another in a long line of administration actions that "make schools less safe for LGBTQ students, sexual assault survivors, immigrant students, students of color,



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A Hunger for More Films Like This

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

As I mentioned, the film never received a U.S. release; though well-received by Canadian critics, it was described in "Variety" after its Toronto Film Festival run as "grandiose" and "overstuffed." When I think of the number of convoluted battle films I have seen garner accolades, I read these as signs that we have not learned to appreciate the quality of storytelling at work in "Hochelaga: Land of Souls." We have not learned to wonder about all the stories lodged in any particular spot on American soil. This film, which employed 300 indigenous people to play the Iroquois and Algonquin characters and extras, helped me to visualize and to wonder about the ancestors all around us. It deserves a much broader viewing.

"**Eighth Grade**" (fourth on my list of the best films of 2018) is that exceedingly rare film that dares to depict adolescence honestly--unlike the fashionable, air-brushed depictions we generally see where kids are portrayed by art-directed young adults, perpetuating standards of beauty and cool that no actual adolescent could hope to live up to. Even more realistic depictions tend to be played for broad laughs rather than for real insight--yet here writer-director Bo Burnham, assisted by an astoundingly natural lead performance from 14-year-old Elsie Fisher, manages to walk a line between humor and pathos that feels achingly, horribly familiar--and almost too painful to bear at times. This is adolescence as we want to forget it and mostly do.

Conveying truth at this level takes commitment, and Burnham and his relentlessly real lead actress demonstrate a level of commitment that may disarm you. I can barely stand to look at my eighth grade school picture; I can't imagine living life in the same world as a feature-length film depicting me in all the awkward, shame-filled agony of ado-

lescence. But I happen to believe that radical honesty is a much-neglected tool with the potential to awaken empathy and compassion. We would do well to remember

is kind, earnest, and relentlessly aimed toward good behavior. But to her mortification, she is voted "most quiet" in her eighth grade class and feels acutely her so-



PHOTO CREDIT: A24 PICTURES

Elsie Fisher conveys the anxiety and insecurity of adolescence in "Eighth Grade."

that all of us have moments like these in our rear view mirrors if we are brave enough to look.

Burnham, barely out of adolescence himself, has coaxed very natural performances out of all the adolescents in the film, which includes a lot of teenage boys--but he has said that his own struggles with anxiety led to this film's focus on an eighth-grade girl. There is something so epic about what happens to girls at this age; it is as though all the weight of impossible expectations of beauty and assured-but-not-too-threatening competence crash down on them. There are patterns to how girls deal with the pressure--cutting, eating disorders, mean-girl behaviors--but they share a quality of intensity that is uniquely the province of the adolescent girl. For them--I remember it well--the stakes feel stratospheric.

As her devoted but (to her) endlessly irritating father can plainly see, Kayla, the girl at the heart of this film, is a wonderful kid. She

doctored images, and dispenses affirming advice on her own YouTube channel about such topics as "how to be yourself." Although she brightly addresses her audience as "guys" and encourages them not to "care what other people think about you," there isn't much sign that anyone is listening--and it is mostly advice she wishes she knew how to follow. In the hyper-dramatic world of the internet, Kayla misses that the distance between her own reality and what she posts is likely mirrored by the posts that she finds so convincing from everyone else.

In contrast to Kayla's internet world, Burnham (who himself attained actual fame via his own YouTube channel a decade ahead of Kayla) offers a touchingly realistic picture of Kayla's actual world. She is a perfectly lovely kid, but in that awkward, lurching way so common to adolescents. She is never sure what to do with her changing body, makes tragic yet hopeful fashion choices, experiments with makeup (via instructional videos on YouTube, naturally) to distract from skin in the throes of hormonal adjustment. Much of her exasperation at life gets leveled at her dad, who does at good as any parent at balancing giving her room and attempting to engage--yet some of the funniest scenes of the film involve her reacting with irritation to his simplest attempts to connect. Any

adult who has attempted to parent or even to befriend an adolescent will recognize this territory well.

Some of what I appreciated most about the film also involves what is hardest to watch--Kayla's interactions with adolescent boys. She so clearly feels herself in an inferior position, and offers things she shouldn't and doesn't even want, taking the cues the culture gives her--and the boys, too, taking those cues, move for things they don't necessarily want either. Without naming any of these dynamics, Burnham demonstrates how the lies we tell ourselves about love and sex and what makes a person desirable lay traps for both boys and girls. The only comfort here is that, for all her anxiety and insecurity, Kayla has a way of righting herself, though certainly without ever fully appreciating the dangers she has avoided.

The film spends enough time with Kayla to earn some moments at the end confirming that she will be okay. Although her darkest moments feel like agony to her, we also know she is going to be okay. And in a way that may just be (barely) believable, she does too.

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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Foster Care Provider Guilty

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

eral government for foster care services in the black community, including hiring and screening foster parents for community placements, compensating foster parents for services and placing foster children in residential or group homes.

From 2009 through 2015, Ayala exercised sole and complete control over the Give Us This Day finances, officials said. No other employee or board

member had access to the organization's bank accounts or statements during this time. With no internal controls in place, Ayala wrote checks, used the foster home's debit card and withdrew cash at will, using the organization's bank accounts as her own, authorities said.

Additionally, she used the money to fund other business ventures including a media company and Big Mary's, a fish and ribs restaurant in Portland, and to purchase and flip a commercial property,

officials said.

In total, Ayala was found guilty of stealing nearly \$1 million. As a result, her employees, foster parents and foster children in her care suffered tremendously, officials said. Children from the residential center and house managers complained about a lack of basic necessities, including but not limited to food, toiletries and cleaning supplies.

Ayala will be sentenced on May 29 by U.S. District Court Judge Marco A. Hernandez.

A Long History of Health Disparities

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

icans in medicine, the National Medical Association.

Forty years after Williams made history by performing one of the first open-heart surgeries in the US, African American physician Dr. Myra Adele Logan became the first woman to perform the procedure in 1943. It was thought to be the ninth time the procedure had been performed worldwide.

Dr. Charles Drew pioneered methods of storing blood plasma for transfusion and organized the first large-scale blood bank in the

US during World War II. Drew, who was African American, helped develop a blood storage program at the American Red Cross but resigned shortly after officials segregated the blood of African Americans. He later became chief surgeon at Freedman's Hospital and the first black examiner for the

American Board of Surgery.

In 1993, Dr. Joycelyn Elders became the first black female physician appointed as US Surgeon General by President Bill Clinton, who previously, as governor of Arkansas, appointed her as director of the that state's Department of Health in 1987.

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