



Established in 1970



Dispelling Misconceptions

A summit to bridge African and African American divide

See Local News, page 3



Black Experience on Canvas

New works reveal inequities born out of privilege

See Metro, page 6



PO QR code

The Portland Observer

Volume XLVIII • Number 47



'City of Roses'

www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • December 4, 2019

Committed to Cultural Diversity



PHOTO BY BEVERLY CORBELL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Aanaiyah Jones, age 10, started taking ballet at age 3 at Peninsula Park Community Center in north Portland, but now takes lessons at Classical Ballet Academy, a serious training ground for future professional dancers in southeast Portland, where she will star as Clara in the school's production of *The Nutcracker* on Dec. 20.

Big Dreams for Young Ballerina

By BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Aanaiyah Jones has been taking dance lessons since she was three years old and though she's only 10 now, she's already preparing for a future on the biggest stage of them all, becoming

a prima ballerina in New York City.

"I love to dance because you can totally express yourself and be yourself," she said recently as she was working out dance exercises at her school, the Classical Ballet Academy in southeast Portland, where she's been taking

classes under director Sarah Rigles for the past three years.

Jones got her start studying ballet at Portland Parks and Recreation's Peninsula Park Community Center, a program serving a diverse population in north Portland before moving on to the

more advanced classes at the academy.

According to Portland Parks' spokesman Mark Ross, this is the first time an African American child will have the lead in the academy's Christ-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Steeped in African Consciousness

OPINIONATED JUDGE
BY DARLEEN ORTEGA



Portland theater audiences have an all-too-rare opportunity this week to see the work of the great Lynn Nottage on stage. The African-American playwright and screenwriter is a focus of Profile Theater this season, beginning

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Lynn Nottage



La'Tevin Alexander



PHOTO BY TONY BROWN

The Walnut Park Shelter on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard had a full Thanksgiving Day meal thanks to the hard work of volunteers who stepped up at the last minute to feed scores of homeless residents.

Stepping Up for the Homeless

BY BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After a story appeared in the Portland Observer that there would be no Thanksgiving dinner served at the Walnut Park homeless shelter on Thanksgiving Day,

about 30 people contacted Bora Harris, community liaison for the shelter, and put on a spread that was more than enough to feed scores of people a traditional

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



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The Week in Review

Harris Ends Presidential Run

Sen. Kamala Harris ended her 2020 presidential campaign on Tuesday. The California Democrat and the only African American female in the race acknowledged that financial pressures led to her decision, saying "My campaign for president simply doesn't have the financial resources we need to continue."



Impeachment Case Made

Directly accusing President Donald Trump of a "scheme" that leveraged his power in office for his own personal and political gain, a sweeping new report on behalf of Democrats was filed on Tuesday that lays out their case for the impeachment of the president.

Vigil to Murdered Wife

Dozens gathered in Vancouver's Esther Short Park on Sunday for a candlelight vigil to remember the life of Tiffany Ojeda Hill. Authorities said Hill's husband, Keland Hill shot and killed her, injured her mother, and then killed himself in a shooting last Tuesday in the parking lot of Sarah J. Anderson Elementary in Vancouver.

Free Soup Group Sues

Free Hot Soup volunteers who serve

meals to homeless people in Portland parks sued the city last week over a rule that would restrict such meal service to one day a week. The group's use of Director Park, downtown, drew the ire of nearby businesses and led to the rule change.

Tax Directed to Homeless

The Portland City Council voted last week to support using some of the revenue from hotel and rental car taxes to support homeless services, creating new resources for people in affordable housing. Tourist tax revenue has more than doubled this decade in the Portland region.

New Blazer Honored

Carmelo Anthony has been with the Portland Trail Blazers less than two weeks, but he's already earning accolades. Anthony was named the Western Conference Player of the Week for the 19th time in his 17-year NBA career last week for leading the Blazers to three straight wins, while averaging 22.3 points, 7.7 rebounds and 2.7 assists.

November in Portland will be recorded as one of the driest in decades. The National Weather Service said the Rose City just saw its fifth driest November in about 75 years. Portland had only 1.52 inches of rain for the month, just less than a quarter of the average amount.

Driest November in Years

November in Portland will be recorded as one of the driest in decades. The National Weather Service said the Rose City just saw its fifth driest November in about 75 years. Portland had only 1.52 inches of rain for the month, just less than a quarter of the average amount.



The INSIDE

The Week in Review page 2



METRO page 6



Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

page 8-11



OPINION pages 12-13

CLASSIFIED/BIDS pages 16

page 12
FOOD



LOCAL NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRIDGE

Leaders from both the African and African American communities in Portland brainstorm to plan a major summit to focus on improving relations between the two populations. The summit will take place Friday and Saturday, Dec. 13 and 14 on the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College. To learn more go to bethebridge.ucraft.net.

Dispelling Misconceptions African and African American experiences explored

BY BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When Rev. Hilary Gbotoe moved here from Liberia in 2003, he would only let his children have white friends because of the stereotypes he had learned about African Americans.

"I was told when I came here not to engage with black people, they will bring you down and your children will become gang members," he said.

It was only after Gbotoe (pronounced BOW-TOW) came to befriend some African Americans in Portland that he under-

stood his perceptions were misguided.

That growing awareness of the differences within the African and African American communities led Gbotoe and other black leaders in Portland to start a series of discussions leading to a major summit later this month, called the African and African-American Summit Bridge.

The event will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 13; and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14 at Moriarty Arts & Humanities

Building on the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College, 705 N. Killingsworth St. There is no charge for the summit, but donations will be accepted. Attendees can register online at bethebridge.urcraft.net.

The summit will start out with song and dance music that will tell the stories of both the African and African American experience, said Levell Thomas, who is working with Gbotoe and Rev. Cliff Chappell to pub-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

One in Three Can't Meet Basic Needs

Most low- and middle-income workers in Multnomah County are being left behind, according to a new report on poverty. Among the key findings: 34 percent of Multnomah County households are unable to meet their basic needs.

The 2019 Poverty in Multnomah County report, produced by the Multnomah County Commission for Economic Dignity, examined poverty in the region based on years of economic data. Researchers looked at every angle of poverty, including its demo-

graphics, geography and how it affects residents' well being and access to opportunities.

The findings paint a picture different from recent headlines about Portland's economic growth. Since 2010, Portland has become the 10th wealthiest major city in the U.S. and the number of households with incomes of \$100,000 or more has grown by 45 percent. But more than a third of households fall below the region's self-sufficiency standard.

The report also found that since

1990, the county's population in poverty grew at almost twice the rate of the population as a whole. The highest poverty area was east of I-205, where up to 22% of residents are impoverished.

The report also found that median hourly wages in 8 out of the 10 most common jobs in Multnomah County are unable to support a family with young children, and the poverty rates for African Americans, Native Americans, and Latin Americans are more than twice the rate as white residents.

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Dispelling Misconceptions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

lice the event, presented by REAP, Inc. and Africa House in partnership with The Bridge.

“It’s the journey,” he said. “We all recognize that we come from the same place – Africa – so the journey begins with the sounds of Africa with music by different groups with African drums and African bands.”

Thomas is also preparing a video presentation of the journey, he said, “that shows all the experiences we’ve had – colonization, slavery – and our experiences to try to be free with our own rights.”

There will also be presentations of the history of blacks in Oregon, “from Vanport and beyond,” Thomas said.

At the day-long event on Saturday, the sounds of Africa will again welcome attendees before a day of seminars and speakers on a wide variety of topics relating to the black experience, Thomas said.

“There will be (morning) seminars on PTSD, misconcep-

tions among Africans and African Americans, how religion was used to divide us as a people, and more,” he said. After a “Taste of the World” lunch, afternoon seminars include topics such as fathers in the home, self-love, building bridges: working together intentionally, and economic empowerment.

Many prominent members of the black community will also speak during the event, including Nkenge Harmon-Johnson of the Urban League of Portland, Ron Herndon of Albina Head Start, Djimet Dogo of Africa House, Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capua and Daniel Capua of the Capua Foundation and Dr. Koffi Dessou, City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights, and Imam Mikal Hammad Shabazz of the Oregon Islamic Chaplains Organization.

The day will end with a healing session, Thomas said, “on what was learned in the two days along with a declaration of how we build going forward – a time to hear one another out, and to heal and move forward.”

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CLACKAMAS COUNTY

- Beavercreek Clinic Free Food Market**
110 Beavercreek Rd, Oregon City
Dec 3 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Clackamas Service Center**
8800 SE 80th Ave, Portland
Dec 10..... 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Mulino Child Development Coalition**
13700 S Freeman Rd, Mulino
Dec 17 12-2 p.m.
- Orchid Health Center**
535 NE 6th Ave, Estacada
Dec 20..... 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

MULTNOMAH COUNTY

- Rosehaven**
627 NW 18th Ave, Portland
Dec 2 2-3:30 p.m.
- Department of Human Services: Alberta Office**
30 N Webster St, Portland
Dec 3 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- CareOregon Open Hours**
315 SW Fifth Ave, Portland
Dec 4 9-11 a.m.
Dec 11..... 9-11 a.m.
Dec 18..... 9-11 a.m.
- Department of Human Services: East County Office**
11826 NE Glisan St, Portland
Dec 6 12-2 p.m.
- Department of Human Service: SE Malden**
8129 SE Malden St, Portland
Dec 10..... 1:30.-3:30 p.m.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

- Family Promise of Beaverton Day Center**
Sunset Presbyterian Church
14986 NW Cornell Rd, Portland
Dec 2 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Beaverton City Library**
12375 SW Fifth St, Beaverton
Dec 11..... 12-4 p.m.

- Portland Rescue Mission: Burnside Shelter**
111 W Burnside, Portland
Dec 12..... 8-10 a.m.
- PSU Free Food Market**
In front of Shattuck Hall
1914 SW Park Ave, Portland
Dec 16..... 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Transition Projects Laurelwood Center**
6130 SE Foster Rd, Portland
Dec 19..... 1-3 p.m.
- Union Gospel Mission**
3 NW Third Ave, Portland
Dec 31..... 1-4 p.m.



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PUBLISHER: **Mark Washington, Sr.**

EDITOR: **Michael Leighton**

ADVERTISING MANAGER: **Leonard Latin**
Office Manager/Classifieds:
Lucinda Baldwin

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: **Paul Neufeldt**
REPORTER/WEB EDITOR: **Beverly Corbell**
PUBLIC RELATIONS: **Mark Washington Jr.**

OFFICE ASSISTANT/SALES:
Shawntell Washington

CALL 503-288-0033
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Portland area residents train in the construction trades thanks to Constructing Hope, a pre-apprenticeship program rooted in Portland's African American community.

Fostering Employment in the Trades

Program turns lives around; grows support

The city of Portland is investing \$100,000 to help the northeast Portland nonprofit Constructing Hope provide construction training and records expungement for low-income residents.

The recent grant will pay for the training of 50 community members in the skilled construction trades and add new records expungement services for people with a criminal justice history.

"Traditionally, people of color were disproportionately tarnished with a criminal record for minor offenses, including cannabis possession," said Pat Daniels, executive director of Constructing Hope. "So this grant will have a tremendous impact on Portland's communities of color."

Construction is one of the few industries that will hire people with a criminal record, but that

record can bar graduates from many projects, such as federally-funded contracts. Constructing Hope will help people reduce or remove their criminal records history and secure their driver's license in a timely manner.

The grant will help people like Robert Thomas. When Robert came to Constructing Hope, he was struggling to find a life direction after eight years in the criminal justice system. With custody of his 10-year-old daughter, it became even more important to gain the skills to better not only his life, but his daughter's.

Robert completed Constructing Hope's no-cost, 10-week pre-apprenticeship program last December.

"The day the program ended, I got a call to go to work" as a first-term ironworker apprentice with Local 29—earning \$22.25 an hour.

With this grant, Robert can potentially reduce his felony record to a misdemeanor and qualify for desirable contracts such as Port of Portland and the Port-

land airport."

Last year, Constructing Hope placed 65 previously unemployed or underemployed Oregonians in new careers with an average starting wage of \$18.50. Community members from low-income households seeking no-cost construction training can learn more by visiting constructinghope.org or call the organization at 503-281-1234.

Stepping Up for the Homeless

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

meal. "I had about 30 people that contacted me and about 18 who served," Harris said. "We put together a menu and delegated what everybody would bring. Our goal was to get people to respond and spread the word."

It obviously worked, to everyone's delight, and there was more than enough food to go around.

"They could have as many servings as they wanted and we had food left over and to make

sandwiches the next day," Harris said.

The shelter at Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Killingsworth is run by Transition Projects and was only one of two of their shelters that did not have a meal scheduled to be served on Thanksgiving Day. But thanks to the added effort, shelter residents got two Thanksgiving meals in one week. On Monday, a Thanksgiving meal was also delivered to shelter residents by the Daniels Memorial Church of God in Christ.

HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

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7 A.M. - 10 A.M. TONI TERRELL	6 A.M. - 12 NOON SUNDAY MORNING GOSPEL WANGELA
10 A.M. - 1 P.M. REV. AL SHARPTON (KEEPING IT REAL)	12 NOON - 1 P.M. HIGHLAND C.C. LIVE BROADCAST
1 P.M. - 3 P.M. KENNY SMOOV	1 P.M. - 4 P.M. PAPA SMURF
3 P.M. - 7 P.M. D.L. HUGHLEY	4 P.M. - 12 Midnight DOUGLAS WILLIAMS
7 P.M. - 9 P.M. PAPA SMURF	
9 P.M. - 12 Midnight MIKE SHANNON	

Rev. Al Sharpton
10am - 1pm

Tom Joyner
3am - 7am



Mississippi
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Portland artist Arvie Smith, a renowned painter of the black experience, will showcase some of his new work in a solo exhibit '2 Up and 2 Back,' opening on Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Disjecta Contemporary Arts Center, 8371 N. Interstate Ave.

Black Experience on Canvas

The Disjecta Contemporary Art Center, 8371 N. Interstate Ave., presents "2 Up and 2 Back," a solo exhibition of new work by Arvie Smith, a renowned painter of the black experience.

Smith takes messages from pub-

lic discourse, advertising, news media, pop culture and daily micro assaults on marginalized people and groups, to deliver two dimensional master works.

The pieces reveal the normalized and seemingly accepted inequities

born out of privilege that are designed to interfere with truth, advancement and release from the chains of a dominant hierarchy based on skin tone.

Curated by Linda Tesner of the Jordan D. Schnitzer Museum of Art at Portland State University, '2 Up

and 2 Black,' opens at Disjecta on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. Smith will be on hand for the opening reception and artist's talk. Disjecta will feature the exhibit through Feb. 2, open weekends, Friday through Sunday, from 12 p.m. to 5p.m.

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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO FROM WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

The one and only Darcelle XV will be in attendance when the Oregon Historical Society holds its 52nd annual Holiday Cheer Book Sale and Signing on Sunday, Dec. 8. The free event will also mark the final day of the exhibit *Many Shades of Being Darcelle*, a selection of Darcelle's more than 1,500 extravagant costumes, many made by Walter Cole himself.

Festival Holiday Book Sale

You're invited to meet 80 local authors and find a book for everyone on your holiday shopping list at the Oregon Historical Society's 52nd Annual Holiday Cheer Book Sale and Signing event, Sunday, Dec. 8 from noon to 4 p.m.

Admission to both the book sale and entry to the downtown museum's exhibits is free, including the current feature *Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences during World War II*.

Notable local authors in attendance for the book sale will include children's authors Eric Kimmel, Elizabeth Rusch and Dawn

Babb Prochovnic; It's Different Every Day Calendar creators Brooke Barker and Boaz Frankel; New York Times best-selling novelist Kristina McMorris and Guinness World Record holder for "oldest performing drag queen," the one and only Darcelle XV (Walter Cole).

Holiday Cheer will also mark the final day of the exhibit *Many Shades of Being Darcelle: 52 years of Fashion, 1967-2019*, featuring a selection of Darcelle's more than 1,500 extravagant costumes, many made by Walter Cole himself.

Still using paper tickets?

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Big Dreams for Young Ballerina

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

mas production of the Nutcracker. The performance will be at 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 20 at the Lincoln Performance Hall at Portland State University. The academy will have two other performances of the Nutcracker on Dec. 19 and 21, Rigles said, with different leading cast members for each performance, giving more kids the opportunity to share the spotlight.

But the spotlight is where Jones, a Russell Elementary fourth grader wants to be, she explained, as she moved lithe across the dance floor in the practice studio, preparing her moves. Eventually, she wants to open her own dance school and teach, she said.

Aanaiyah's grandmother, Bettye Jones, has been a mainstay in encouraging her granddaughter's passion for dance, which began the moment she crashed a ballet class that was underway at Peninsula Park when she was three.

"She saw a group of little

girls and she just went over a joined them," Bettye Jones said.

Ross said it's gratifying that a young dancer got her start through Portland Parks.

"She took dance instruction from teacher Sandy Shaner at Peninsula Park Community Center for two years starting at age three," Ross said. "Her skills and prowess led her to lessons at Portland's prestigious Classical Ballet Academy where her talent allowed her to skip ahead in their rigorous program and to begin advanced training year-round."

The young Jones said she picked the academy to advance her skills not just because of its dance curriculum, but also for its philosophy, in that it promotes "principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion in relations to, and across, intersections of race, age, color, disability..." among other values she holds dear.

"I like what's being taught here, I like the teachers, the students, the parents and the whole program," she said.



PHOTO BY BEVERLY CORBELL/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Aanaiyah Jones (center) is learning the skills necessary to become a professional ballerina thanks to the mentorship and instruction she receives from Sarah Rigles (left), director of the Classical Ballet, and the support and the encouragement of her grandmother, Bettye Jones.

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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

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The Oregon Symphony's annual Gospel Christmas show features premier gospel singers and the Northwest Community Gospel Chorus. A free and open-to-the-public sneak preview of this year's show will take place Saturday, Dec. 7 at noon at Maranatha Church of God, 4222 N.E. 12th Ave.

Gospel Christmas Preview Show

The community is invited to a free sneak preview to the Oregon Symphony's annual Gospel Christmas featuring the Northwest Community Gospel Chorus and other premier gospel singers on Saturday, Dec. 7 at noon at Maranatha Church of God.

The historically black and diverse congregation at 4222 N.E. 12th Ave. will also host a community marketplace for holiday shopping in conjunction with the holiday concert preview show, beginning at 10 a.m. and running until 2 p.m.

The main Oregon Symphony's 21st Gospel Christmas shows will take place at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 12 and Saturday, Dec. 14; and at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 15. For tickets, visit orsyphony.org or call 503-228-1353.

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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Shopping and Cultural Exchange

Beaverton is welcoming a new multicultural shopping experience to its Old Town. The Beaverton Night Market Bazaar is a unique downtown shopping destination held on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 22. One-of-a-kind arts and craft merchandise from nearly 30 emerging small business owners representing cultures across the world are featured.



The Beaverton Night Market Bazaar takes place in Beaverton's Old Town on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 22. A winter extension of Beaverton's summer international night market, the bazaar will feature local vendors specializing in international craft and merchandise.

The market takes place at the Bank of Beaverton Building (formerly the Arthur Murray Dance Studio) at 4500 S.W. Watson Ave., a public use for space that is scheduled for redevelopment.

The bazaar is a winter extension of the Beaverton Night Market event reminiscent of international night markets. In addition to the unique shopping opportunities, the bazaar will also feature pro-

gramming that fosters a space for cross-cultural exchange and interaction, such as music, storytelling, craft-making and children's pro-

gramming. Admission is free. For details, visit BeavertonOregon.gov/NightMarketBazaar.

Peppermint Bear Saves Christmas



The Peppermint Bear once again saves Christmas in the 28th production of The Peppermint Bear Show, a breakfast theater production for kids and the whole family during December at the Lakewood Center for the Arts in Lake Oswego.

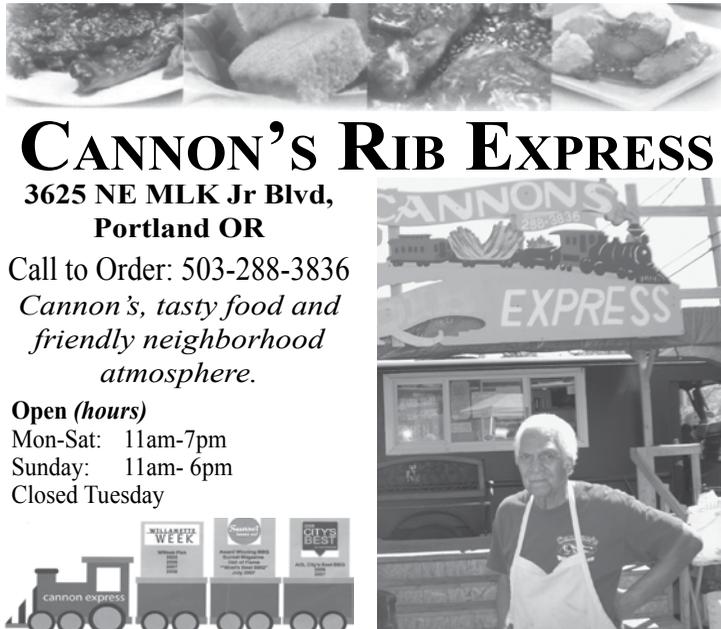
The Lakewood Theatre Company presents their annual Holiday Magic Breakfast Theatre production of The Peppermint Bear Show: Seasoned Greetings, a holiday favorite for the whole family. Shows begin on Saturday, Dec. 7 at noon, and continue the following weekends at 10 a.m and noon through Monday, Dec. 23 at the Lakewood Center of the Arts, 368 S. State St. in Lake Oswego. Audience members enjoy a special holiday continental breakfast 1/2 hour before the show and performers interact with young audience members to help them celebrate the holidays.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for children with advance reservations required. Call 503-635-3901 or visit Lakewood-center.org.



Matilda Sparks a Revolt

Matilda revels in the anarchy of childhood, the power of imagination and a girl who won't let being 'little' stop her from putting an unjust world right. 'Matilda the Musical' shows Saturday, Dec. 7 through Jan. 5 on the NW Children's Theater stage at 1819 N.W. Everett St. For tickets, call 503-222-2190 or visit nwcts.org.



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OPINION

More Truths About Guns in America

Common sense gun safety laws work

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

On Nov. 6, 17-year-old Da'Qwan Jones-Morris, a former Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools scholar from St. Paul, Minn., was killed when he was accidentally shot in the chest by a 15-year-old friend playing with a stolen gun in our gun saturated nation.

Da'Qwan and a group of friends were playing video games after school when the boy who had stolen the gun a few days earlier pulled it out of his bag to show it to the 15-year-old, who fired it without realizing it was loaded. Da'Qwan, a high school senior, was the co-captain of his football team and excited about applying to college. His mother said she always sought out positive opportunities like the CDF Freedom Schools program, sports, and the church choir to keep her son busy—but she still couldn't keep him safe.

When will parents be able to protect their children from guns? CDF's [Protect Children Not Guns 2019](#) report sets the record straight about critical truths you need to know about gun regulations, gun laws, and the gun industry in America to fight the scourge of gun violence in our nation that takes 3,410 child lives a year—one every 2 hours and 34 minutes.

It is outrageous and irresponsible that the only unregulated consumer product in America is one that takes the lives of nine children and teens a day and injures another 50.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission can regulate teddy bears and toy



guns but not real guns. A 1976 amendment to the Consumer Product Safety Act specifically states that the Commission "shall make no ruling or order that restricts the manufacture or sale of guns, guns ammunition, or components of guns ammunition, including black powder or gunpowder for guns." This disgraceful restriction remains in effect today.

The gun industry has been granted broad immunity from liability lawsuits, preventing consumers from holding negligent gun manufacturers and dealers accountable for irresponsible be-

Federal law requires anyone purchasing a gun from a federally licensed dealer to complete a background check but does not cover private sales at gun shows, sales over the internet, and between individuals.

havior unlike every other major industry. The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act —passed by Congress in 2005 with pressure from the NRA—grants gun manufacturers and dealers broad immunity from federal and state liability lawsuits. No other industry enjoys such blanket immunity. Given these special protections, gun manufacturers and dealers face virtually no penalties for failing to make guns safer or preventing their guns from getting into the wrong hands.

Virtually anyone can buy a gun without a background check under current law. Federal law requires anyone purchasing a gun from a federally licensed dealer to complete a background check but does

not cover private sales at gun shows, sales over the internet, and between individuals. These hugely dangerous loopholes allow people unable to pass a background check—including those convicted of violent crimes and domestic abuse—to easily obtain a gun.

But common sense gun safety laws work and have effectively reduced gun violence without preventing law abiding citizens from owning guns.

A study with data from 54 U.S. cities found diverting guns to criminals is much less common in states that license retail gun sellers; require careful record keeping that

Firearm prohibitions for high-risk groups reduce the risk of violent crime. A California study suggests denying handgun purchases to people who have committed violent misdemeanors is associated with a decreased risk of arrest for new gun and/or violent crimes.

Child access prevention laws save lives. Studies of child access prevention laws requiring gun owners to store guns so children and teens can't access them unsupervised have found they reduce accidental child shootings as much as 23 percent and adolescent suicides 8 percent.

Well-designed assault weapons bans reduce homicides, suicides and mass shootings. An Australian law banning and buying back assault weapons—including semi-automatic rifles, pump-action rifles and shotguns—was associated with lower homicide and suicide rates. No mass shootings occurred in the decade following the law's enactment compared with 11 in the decade before.

The majority of American voters, including gun owners, support common sense gun safety regulations. As of August 2019, 60 percent of voters supported stricter gun laws and 93 percent of voters and gun owners supported universal background checks. Three in five voters (60 percent) favored a nationwide ban on assault weapon sales and about 3 in 4 American voters (72 percent) said Congress must do more to reduce gun violence.

The American people want change. Our children are crying for it. Please make sure your lawmakers know and act on the truth about guns.

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

America's Racial Wealth Divide is Shocking

Inequality holding down entire country

BY DEDRICK ASANTE-MUHAMMAD

Americans are more aware than ever that America has a race problem — and, more specifically, a racial wealth divide problem. As researchers from the Institute for Policy Studies and I found earlier this

year, median white families are 41 times wealthier than median black families in the United States.

As our country becomes more diverse, this shocking racial wealth divide is no longer a challenge for disenfranchised minorities alone. It's a threat to the entire American middle class.



Let me show you how.

Since the early 1980s, median wealth among black and Latino families has been stuck at less than \$10,000, while median white wealth has grown to \$140,000. Yet in spite of this growing white wealth, this huge divide means that national median wealth has actually declined.

The racial wealth divide, in short, is weakening our country as a whole.

Contributing to this divide is ongoing racial inequality in the two largest assets in most Americans' portfolios: business ownership and homeownership.

For the last 40 years, black and Latino homeownership rates have stayed below 50 percent, while white homeownership has remained steady at about 70 percent.

And although 13 percent of the U.S. population is black, only 2 percent of U.S. businesses employing more than one person are black-owned. Hispanics are 17 percent of the population but own just 6 percent of these businesses.

How do we fix this? By making smart investments.

The white middle class was built by major investments promoting education and homeownership, among other things, after World War II. But African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans were almost entirely left out of these programs. Now these groups deserve significant investments of their own.

What could that mean, exactly? This year, my colleagues and I presented several options in another report called Ten Solutions to Bridge the Racial Wealth Divide.

One of our ideas is to create Baby Bonds — that is, government-seeded investment accounts — for every child born in this country. Sen. Cory Booker offered a similar proposal in a 2018 bill called the American Opportunity Accounts Act.

We also call for significant investments in affordable housing and homeownership. Sen. Elizabeth Warren's American Housing and Economic Mobility Act and Sen. Bernie Sander's "Housing for All" plan would both be a good start.

We also believe that Congress should finally establish a commission to study reparations, and that all government agencies should improve their data collection on race and wealth.

For another thing, we could start enforcing laws already on the books.

My organization, the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, advocates requiring the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau to collect and disclose better data on loans made to minority, women-owned, and small businesses. Under the Dodd-Frank Act, it's already supposed to do that.

For centuries, America has turned its back on struggling families of color. This year, it's time we turned our back on the racial wealth divide. We need stronger data, better monitoring, and bold policy proposals across the board.

The data is right there: By bridging the racial wealth divide, we can reduce the economic inequality that's holding down our entire country.

Dedrick Asante-Muhammad is the chief of Race, Wealth and Community at the National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

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.

OPINION



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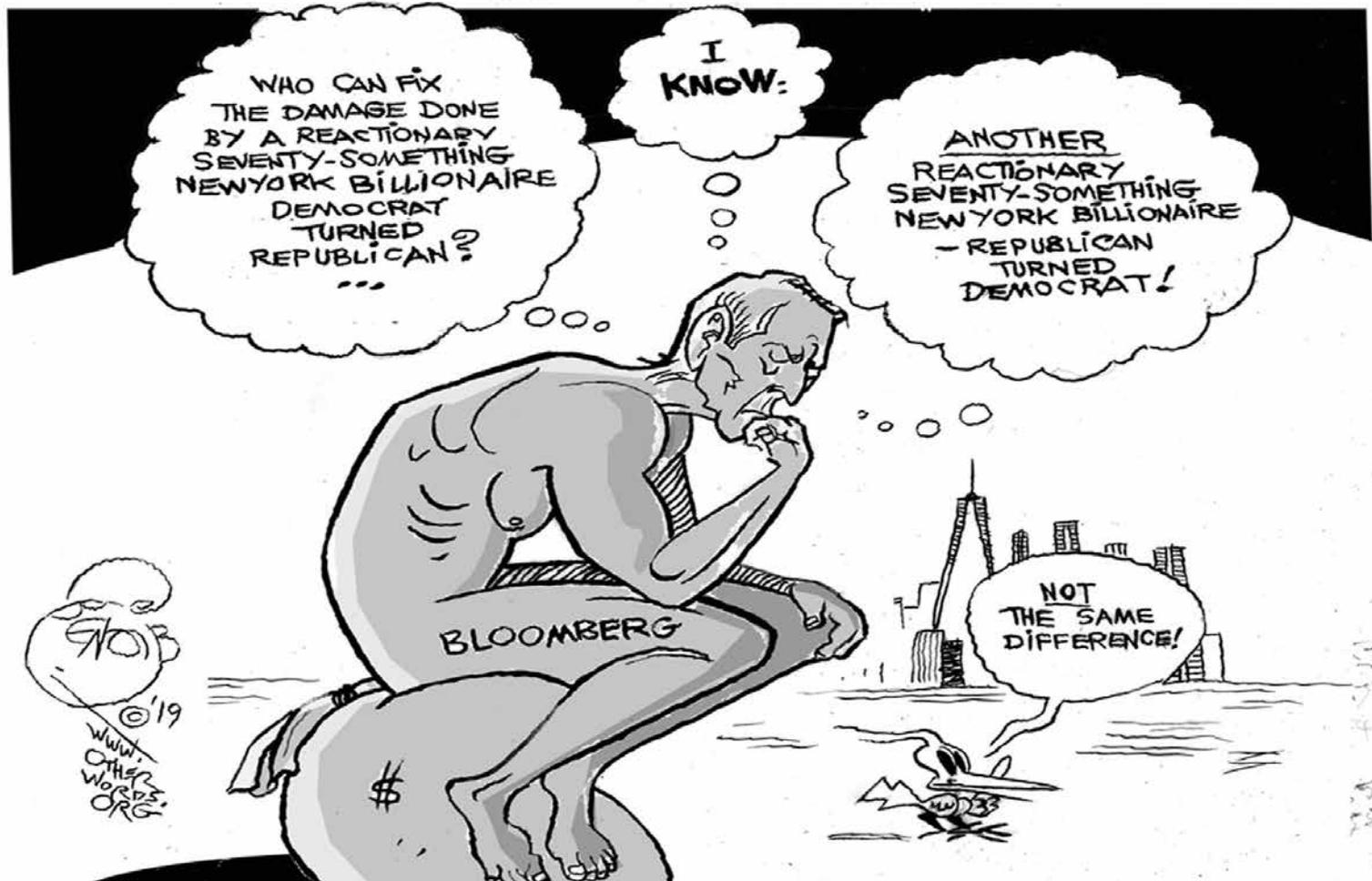
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Slave Quarters and Reconciling the Past

Tours help us lean into our discomfort

BY TRACEY L. ROGERS

Thomas Jefferson may have written that all men were created equal in the Declaration of Independence. But he, along with so many of his fellow plantation owners, was still complicit in the institution of slavery.

Jefferson's famous Monticello plantation, a picturesque venue most popular today for hosting weddings and other special occasions, was a place of terror for those African captives who would never gain freedom in Jefferson's lifetime.

During a recent visit to Monticello, I learned that Jefferson personally kept upwards of 600 people in bondage. It was ironic — the very man I was taught to revere in history class kept my ancestors as property.

My trip to the plantation was emotional. I had heard stories of the slave quarters along Mulberry Row, and the recent discovery of unmarked graves of enslaved people who died at Monticello. Seeing the place firsthand was an altogether heavy experience.

But I also felt something else on that trip — something surprising: relief.

I had been certain that the dark history of slavery would be watered down at a tourist destination like Monticello. But thankfully, that was not the case. Instead, I was impressed by the site's thorough, honest, and critical depiction of slave life at Monticello.

Our tour guide shared the brutality endured by slaves along Mulberry Row. He spoke of how they lived, and how they were severely punished to the point of death.

Our tour guide retold the radical truth of what my ancestors ex-

perienced under the purveyance of Thomas Jefferson. I was simultaneously angered by what I learned and satisfied that this history was offered in a way that demanded compassion and understanding by those present.

One man asked if Thomas Jefferson had been a "kind slave owner," to which our tour guide — himself a white man — responded there was no such thing.

Another woman commented that the slave quarters weren't "so bad." Our tour guide responded with a simple question: "Would you live there?"

Such questions are not uncommon, and reports abound of white visitors complaining about having to confront facts about slavery during plantation tours. All this

society. Racism is as American as Apple pie; to shirk away from the awful details is as shameful as the details themselves.

After 250 years of chattel slavery, and another 100 years of Jim Crow, one can only imagine the trauma Blacks have endured. Imagine our ancestors being bought, sold, beaten and separated from their families. Imagine the lynchings that took place in this country, and the justice that went unserved.

If it's difficult for white Americans to discuss racism, how must Black Americans must feel?

In her book *White Fragility*, author Robin DiAngelo wrote that many white people lack the "racial stamina" to even engage in such conversations. As an activist, I would have to agree. But it's hardly impossible, as the dedicated white tour guide at Monticello showed. And it's worth it.

It's been 400 years since the first enslaved Africans arrived on these shores, and that's why we must talk about the history of race in America. In doing so, while bravely leaning into our discomfort, we heal. We reconcile our history. We're no longer beholden to the guilt and shame of the past. Humanity is restored.

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

During a recent visit to Monticello, I learned that Jefferson personally kept upwards of 600 people in bondage. It was ironic — the very man I was taught to revere in history class kept my ancestors as property.

Yet, I was also appalled by the comments and questions of some of the white people on the tour.

White America needs to acknowledge that, like it or not, racism is alive and well today because of the horrors of our past that helped shape who we are as a

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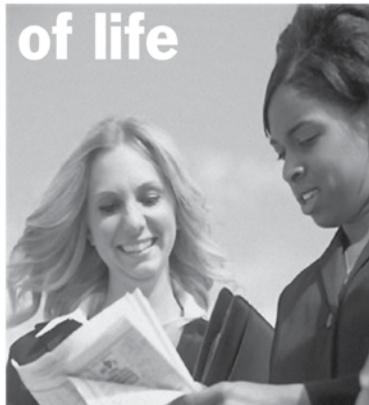
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Steeped in African Consciousness

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

with this week's concert staging of her Pulitzer-prize-winning play, "Ruined."

Part of the inspiration for that play is "Mother Courage and Her Children," an anti-war play written in 1939 by German playwright Bertolt Brecht. Set in the European Thirty Years' war of 1618-1648, Mother Courage focuses on a canteen woman with the Swedish army who stops at nothing to make a profit from the war and loses her own children in the process. Where Brecht's approach is purposefully stylized, distancing the audience from emotions so that they can make critical judgments, Nottage sought to grapple with similar material in a way that

navigates the characters' emotional lives and uses emotion to help us see. Drawing from time spent in Uganda, Nottage sets "Ruined" in current times and tells the story of Mama Nadi, whose brothel serves soldiers and includes women brutalized by the Congolese war.

Profile seeks to illuminate the work of specific playwrights and, in this instance, promotes understanding of Nottage's work by also exploring its origins. Audiences will have the opportunity to see staged readings of both plays featuring the same talented cast of mostly African American actors. "Ruined" is directed by Portland's La'Tevin Alexander, and "Mother Courage" is directed by Jamie M. Rea, and concert stagings are

paired-down productions with book in hand, allowing a focus on the actors and the text.

This is the first time that audiences will have the opportunity to experience "Ruined" here in Portland. It's a devastating play, steeped in African consciousness and also deeply universal in the questions it explores about suffering, exploitation, and survival. Pairing this staged reading with Brecht's work, interpreted by the same cast, offers a particularly rich opportunity to experience this material in a way that does not prioritize the white gaze. And audience members of color have the opportunity to see "Ruined" in an affinity space as well; Profile invites people of color and allies to meet for drinks, snacks and music an hour before the performance on Sunday, Dec. 8 and offers discounted tickets that night. The two shows will play in alternating repetitions, Wednesday, Dec. 4 through Dec. 8.

What happens when we become acclimated to strife and violence? What will we do to survive? When does courage become exploitation? These two shows offer an opportunity to sit with these questions, as explored by talented artists of color.

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie and theater review column Opinionated Judge appears regularly in The Portland Observer. Find her review blog at opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com.

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Celebrate the Season – The community is invited to celebrate this holiday season at Beaverton’s annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on Friday, Dec. 6. Activities begin at 5 p.m. at City Park located at Southwest Hall Boulevard and Third Street, with the tree lighting at 7 p.m.



Da Vinci Arts Fair – Da Vinci Arts Middle School, 2508 N.E. Everett St., hosts its annual arts fair fundraiser on Saturday, Dec. 7 from

10 am. to 5 p.m. The free event will feature over 100 marketplace booths, works by local artists, craft makers and student artists, as well as live theater, music, food, drinks and more for the entire family.

Norman Sylvester Band – “Boogie Cat” Norman Sylvester and his Band plays Saturday, Dec. 7 at Catfish Lou’s; Friday, Dec. 13 at the Hillsboro Elks Lodge for members & guests; Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Spare Room; Saturday, Dec. 21 at 9 a.m. for the AFL-CIO holiday party at the Elsinore Theatre in Salem; Friday, Dec. 27 at Clyde’s; Saturday, Dec. 28 at the Vinyl Tap; and Tuesday, Dec. 31 at 7 p.m. for the New Year’s Eve party at Catfish Lou’s

Vancouver Mall Santa – Now through Dec. 24, children and their families are invited to drop off letters to Santa, share their Christmas wish lists and have a professional photo taken with Santa Claus as part of a new “The Polar Express” holiday exhibit on the lower level near H&M. For hours and more information, visit shop vancouvermall.com.



All Things Being Equal – A thought-provoking look at how art can show how modern culture perpetuates discrimination, titled “All Things Being Equal” by African American artist Hank Willis Thomas, runs through Jan. 12 at the Portland Art Museum. Features more than 90 works, including sculptures based on archival photographs, quilts constructed from sports jerseys and prison uniforms, video installations, and more.



Black Nativity Gospel Play – Portland’s African American producing theater company PassinArt presents Black Nativity by Langston Hughes, a special holiday gospel play that retells the famous nativity story. Now showing through Dec. 15 at Bethel AME Church, 5828 N.E. Eighth Ave. For tickets, visit passinart.org.



Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in World War II – On loan from the National WWII Museum through Jan. 12, The Oregon Historical Society, downtown, presents exhibit on the African American experience in World War II and in the Civil Rights era following the war.

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Obituaries

In Loving Memory

Annie Marie Mann
Sunrise: June 26, 1930
Sunset: Nov. 24, 2019

Annie Mann was born in Conway, Ark. to Earl and Rozzie Rosemon. She moved to Portland at the age of 13 and graduated from Jefferson High School. She met her husband Ernest Mann at 14 and married him at 17; they stayed married until his



death in 1983. She leaves behind her daughters Deborah Mann and Joan Mann-Green (A.J); son Ronald Mann; her oldest niece Georgia Ann Allen; two grandchildren Ronald Jr. and Shyrita; four great-grandchildren, a great-great-grandchild, and a host of nieces, nephews, family and friends.

Her homecoming service will be held at 12 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 4 at Skyline Memorial, 4100 N.W. Skyline Blvd.

In Loving Memory

Louise Wedge
Sunrise: March 1, 1941
Sunset: Dec. 1, 2019

Funeral services for Louise Wedge, also known as “Mother Wedge” and by some as “Zodia” will be held Saturday, Dec. 14 at 11 a.m. at Highland Christian Center, 7600 N.E. Glisan St.





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FOOD

Crispy Garlic-Sage Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 4 pounds potatoes
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 6 sage leaves, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 8 garlic cloves, smashed

Directions:

1. Put a baking sheet on the bottom oven rack and preheat to 375 degrees F.
2. Peel potatoes and cut into wedges. Toss with olive oil, sage, salt and pepper.
3. Spread on the hot baking sheet and roast 30 minutes.
4. Stir, then add garlic; continue roasting until golden, about 30 minutes.
5. Increase the temperature to 400 degrees F and cook until crisp, 15 more minutes.
6. Season with salt.



Whole-Wheat Spaghetti with Leeks and Hazelnuts

Ingredients:

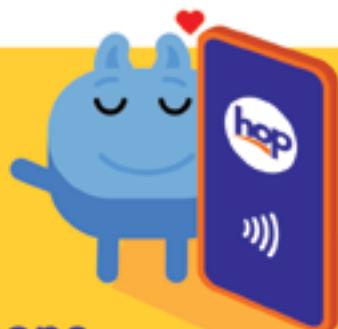
- Kosher salt
- 12 ounces whole-wheat spaghetti
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 large leeks, white and light-green parts only, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar (preferably aged)
- 1 small head radicchio, halved, cored and thinly sliced
- 6 ounces creamy Italian cheese, such as fontina or taleggio, cubed
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup hazelnuts, toasted and chopped

Directions:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the spaghetti and cook as the label directs.
2. Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over medium-low heat and add 2 tablespoons olive oil. Scatter the leeks in the skillet and season with 1 teaspoon each salt and sugar. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Drain the pasta, reserving about 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Add the pasta and the reserved cooking liquid to the skillet with the leeks. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons oil, 1 teaspoon sugar and the balsamic vinegar.
4. Increase the heat to medium-high and add the radicchio and cheese. Toss until the cheese melts, 3 to 5 minutes. Season with salt and top with the hazelnuts.



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