

Portland's first annual International District Festival

By **Ronault L.S. Catalani**
The Asian Reporter

The irresistible aroma of African-American ribs and Thai fried noodles, mingled with heart-pounding Tahitian rhythms by the Kanani O Ka Aina dance ensemble, filled Northeast Portland's 72nd Avenue grassy median blocks. Add to all that runaway Saturday sensuality, packs of squirmy kids of all colors under twisty-balloon animal hats, and fantastical quilts hung by congregants of the Word of Life Community Church — and there's not a thing more you could ask from a midsummer Oregon afternoon.

"Wow!" said Thomas Wright, vice president of Portland's International District board of directors. Just wow. It was evidently just that gratifying for the organizers of the Portland International District's first annual International Day.

"Our vision," said Dr. Wright, "is to make this a destination for our community, for people not to leave here to go shop or to eat elsewhere. But to spend our money here."

Dr. Wright reasoned that festivals like this July 14 event would give neighbors and local business a chance to better know each other by celebrating their diversity and their common cause, together.

Lohani Lal, U.S. Bank's Sandy Boulevard branch manager, agreed entirely with the proposition. "Promoting a neighborhood starts with neighbors getting together, knowing each other and knowing



NEIGHBORS. Polynesian dancer Kari (above, left) of Kanani O Ka Aina teach keiki (kids) how to ocean-wave arms, swivel narrow hips, and bend deep into their bony knees at the International District Festival, held this month in Portland. Lohani Lal (right), U.S. Bank's Sandy Boulevard branch manager, gave away prizes to spinners of the wheel of fortune. (AR Photos/Ronault L.S. Catalani)

businesses in your area." He paused to spin his booth's big wheel of fortune for a Viet Kieu family of four. They won and walked away happy with refillable water bottles and foamy footballs. "Knowing your neighbors is the key," he concluded. Mr. Lohani's family is Fijian Indian; they migrated to Canada and then to the United States. Along with his elementary school kids Silas and Shannon, Mr. Lohani's Viet-speaking staff worked U.S. Bank's bright blue booth. Their Ukrainian speaker got Saturday off.

Neighborhood preservation concerns

Half a block north, on the west side of N.E. 72nd's plum-treed median, Azmat Hussain was just as committed to the concept of community. Mr. Hussain, who was born in New Jersey and then raised in Michigan by his

Pakistani family, was working the "Think Outside the Big Box" booth. The group Save Madison South is an energetic citizen association critical of current development plans to place a massive, thus far unnamed, big box super discount retail store with a 900-slot parking lot between N.E. 82nd and Siskiyou.

"This is the first Portland International District festival," said Mr. Hussain. "And maybe the last if a big box comes in. They'll push everybody else out. Neighborhood businesses cannot compete with them."

"Everybody out here" — he swept his arm at next-door booths belonging to M&C Tofu, Addie's U and I Travel Services, and KHS Bicycles — "everything out here, is local. That's what Portland's all about. That's what we're celebrating here today."

Mr. Hussain moved to Portland



"Promoting a neighborhood starts with neighbors getting together, knowing each other and knowing businesses in your area ... Knowing your neighbors is the key."

— Lohani Lal, Sandy Boulevard U.S. Bank branch manager

three years ago and recently purchased a house in this neighborhood. He said he did a lot of research before buying and was reassured by the City of Portland that zoning restrictions were not consistent with a Wal-Mart-type retailer, along with that kind of incidental livability degradation, settling in their area.

Back at the top of N.E. 72nd Avenue's grassy blocks, Polynesian dancers Kari and Nicole of Kanani O Ka Aina were teaching unabashed and apparently unconcerned keiki (kids) how to ocean-wave arms, swivel narrow hips, and bend deep into their bony knees. For

them it was an afternoon in paradise; for their parents, for neighborhood business and homeowners it was certainly all that, but also the citizen's burden of preserving his or her distinctive neighborhood's character. It was, as put so well by the International District's Dr. Wright, U.S. Bank's Mr. Lohani, and neighborhood activist Azmat Hussain: what Portland's all about.

To learn more about the Portland International District, visit <www.PDXID.com>. For more information about concerns of International District neighborhood livability, visit <www.SaveMadisonSouth.org>.

A.C.E. CALENDAR

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land), or call (206) 634-3400 or visit <www.bookstore.washington.edu> (Seattle).

Raku and gyotaku camp

July 30-Aug 3, 8:30am-2:30pm, Portland Children's Museum (4015 SW Canyon Rd, Portland). Take part in the day camp "One Fish, Two Fish, You Fish, Raku Fish," for kids age five through eight. A trip to the Portland Japanese Garden will inspire raku glazing and gyotaku (fish prints), and campers will also study watercolors and make sculptures. Aftercare is available from 2:30 to 5:30pm. Space is limited, and advance registration is required. For info, or to register, call (503) 471-9911 or visit <www.portlandemc.org>.

Asian talent auditions

July 31 (deadline to register). Audition for a chance to compete for a share of \$2,000 in cash and prizes in the Asian Talent Show. Auditions will be held Aug 12 (3-5pm) at Tai Tung Restaurant (655 S King St, Seattle). Individuals or groups should come appropriately costumed with a performance of three minutes or less. The Asian Talent Show will be held Oct 19 at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Seattle's *Northwest Asian Weekly* and *Seattle Chinese Post*. For info, or to request an entry form, call (206) 223-0623, fax (206) 223-0623, or visit <www.nwasianweekly.com>.

Teen acting workshop

July 31, 2-4pm, Fairview-Columbia Library (1520 NE Village St, Fairview, Ore.). Find out what Shakespeare and anime have in common at an acting workshop for teens, presented by Artists



Tekkonkinkreet will be shown at Portland's Cinema 21 from July 27 through August 2. (Photo courtesy of Sony Pictures)

Repertory Theatre. Participants will use improvisation and role-playing to find their inner voice. For info, call (503) 988-5655 or visit <events.multolib.org>.

Portland Classical Chinese Trio at PCCG

July 31, 7:15pm, Portland Classical Chinese Garden (NW Third Ave & NW Everett St, Portland). Enjoy the penultimate performance of the Portland Classical Chinese Garden's 2007 "Tuesdays by Twilight" summer concert series. The Portland Classical Chinese Trio will serenade the twilight garden with Chinese music written 500 to 1,000 years ago. Beer, wine, and dinner boxes from sponsoring restaurants will be available for purchase at the event for music lovers age 21 and older. Coolers and large folding chairs are not allowed, but small, armless chairs or stools are acceptable. For info, call (503) 228-8131, ext. 2001 or visit <www.portlandchinesegarden.org>.

Tao Lin

July 31 & Aug 2; July 31, 7:30pm, Elliott Bay Book Company (101 S Main St,

Seattle); Aug 2, 7:30pm, Powell's Books on Hawthorne (3723 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland). Join New-York-based writer Tao Lin as he presents his first collection of stories — *Bad* — as well as his debut novel, *Eeeee Eee Eeee*. Lin's writing has been described as lyrical, hilarious, and a little warped. For info, call (206) 624-6600 or visit <www.elliottbaybook.com> (Seattle), or call (503) 238-1668 or visit <www.powells.com> (Portland).

Kids' raku workshop

Aug 1, 2-4:30pm, Portland Children's Museum (4015 SW Canyon Rd, Portland). Learn the ancient Japanese pottery technique of raku at a workshop for kids. For info, call (503) 223-6500 or visit <www.portlandemc.org>.

Fifth Ave. Street Fair

Aug 2, 5-10pm, NW Fifth Ave between W Burnside St and NW Glisan St (Portland). Join a free event celebrating the completion of major construction on Fifth Avenue in the Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood. For info, call (503) 962-2150 or visit <www.portlandmall.org>.

N.W. JOB MARKET



RESIDENT SERVICES COORDINATOR

Will provide information and referral to residents with low incomes to increase success in permanent housing and prevent evictions. Provide assistance with food and other necessities as needed. Database experience helpful. Must have one or more years experience in community organizing and or social work an AA or BA degree as well as strong computer skills. Part time (20 hours a week). Submit résumé to Linda Davidson, REACH, 1135 SE Salmon, Portland, OR 97214 or e-mail to <ldavidson@reachcdc.org> by August 3. Please visit our web site <www.reachcdc.org>. Competitive salary and benefits after 90 days. Equal Opportunity Employer.

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Position is responsible for performing security and patrol duties for a career technical training program serving young adults. Qualified candidates will have a Commercial Drivers License with passenger endorsement and a minimum of one year experience with either an organized police security department or fire fighting organization. Competitive salary and benefits offered.

Please mail résumé and cover letter of interest to:

Springdale Job Corps Center
Attn: Human Resources
31224 E. Historic Columbia River Hwy.
Troutdale, OR 97060

All responses must be received no later than August 3, 2007.

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