

To: All Attendees at the 2007 Juice Conference

From: Participants in the Multicultural Workshop led by Victoria Mares Hershey, Noel Bonam, and Ron Stegall

Subject: Follow-up to Juice Conference

In our Juice Conference workshop on life in a multicultural Maine, participants shared their questions and knowledge as well as excitement about the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of Maine and its people, throughout history and today. Long-time Mainers and newer arrivals said interaction among diverse Maine people, from the old and newest communities, from across the world and across the U.S., across races, classes, ages and life styles, make for a robust and interesting life for everyone. What an uplifting way to end our session and think about next steps.

But shortly after Juice in Camden, we in Maine were faced with new reports of hate crimes and threats in Bangor and Portland, causing planners of Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations to think about cancelling them. These critical incidents tell us that along with participating in and being energized by a multicultural Maine, new action is needed to counter an outbreak in bigotry and intolerance in our state. These behaviors and their outcomes are no more unique to Maine than to the rest of the nation. However, we are committed to embracing the energy and inspiration of multicultural community-building across all people in the state.

Those blatant actions of bigotry add impetus to the many reasons we discussed at the Conference, for increasing the awareness and celebration of Maine's future as a vibrant, multicultural society, robust in its ability to thrive and excel in the 21st century.

1. The economic well-being of Maine depends on the creativity offered by a diverse population providing different outlooks and histories, different intellectual and labor skills, and a broader range of cultural offerings. It has been documented that innovative companies seek communities that are more open to new ideas and to change. They want to locate in communities where immigrants are welcomed, ordinances protect people with different sexual orientations, and cultural life draws on the richness of our global heritage. Maine is on the right track but more efforts are needed.

2. Demographic studies show that future labor and skill shortages can be met only by diversifying the current population.

3. Creative and commercial success in the global economy is encouraged through the stimulus of differing assumptions, perspectives, preferences, and through international exposures. The State of Maine needs this stimulus to propel it into new awareness. Culture-bound individuals are simply shut off from contemporary reality and opportunities for personal growth. Culturally isolated communities stagnate.

4. Also, as our workshop participants concluded enthusiastically, multicultural living is interesting and fun...and it is boring without a diversity of cultural communities, ideas and activities.

Our workshop proposed that its members pledge to make a personal commitment to increase interaction between cultural groups, and that we challenge all the attendees to the conference to do the same. We agreed that the term “cultural groups” included not only those that were identified by ethnicity, race, or religion, but also those separated by class, income, occupation or sexual preference.

Our belief is that it takes individual action to make an impact in this area, and we ask you to join us in the following three part program:

First, take the challenge presented in the pledge detailed below.

Second, provide us with information on multicultural organizations, events, opportunities in your community. We are preparing a list of such resources for the State, and will make it available on line and in print form. It will probably be a list of lists accessible on line. In the meantime check out the resources included at the end of this communication. The opportunities available to you will probably surprise you.

Third, report back to us as you make progress on your pledge. We will assemble the stories and statistics, ideas and anecdotes you report and make them available on the Juice web site, in op-ed pieces in Maine newspapers, and through other means. Donna McNeil, Director of the Maine Arts Commission, has also offered their website for the purpose of advancing public awareness of these efforts. This “movement without meetings” could make a major difference in Maine’s future.

The pledge has three parts:

A. “Within the next six months I will make contact in some way with an individual or organization from a cultural grouping different from my own.”

B. “I will invite someone or some organization from another cultural grouping to participate in some way in my some activity in which I am involved.” (The Juice conference itself could have benefited from a broader diversity of presenters and leaders, and this is often true of many public gatherings and organizational events. Remaining mindful of such opportunities is also part of the pledge.)

C. “I will join in a celebration of a culture or religion different from my own.” (This could include preparing ethnic food at home, perhaps a mutually prepared one with a guest family from another culture; visiting an ethnic restaurant or church service; participating in Day of the Dead, Eid, Chinese New Year or National Day celebration; reading a book out of another tradition or adding one to your book club list; or visiting a gallery, music venue, or museum featuring an ethnic artist or another culture.)

Imagine the impact and multiplier effect of 500 people enriching their normal life each 6 months through expanded multicultural interaction! If you are willing to join in this effort, let us know. Then, over the next 6 months, tell us what you are doing and help us tell others!

We ended our Multicultural workshop of private citizens, artists, artisans, educators and museum professionals on such joy of discovery of the exciting, multicultural community that Maine is and has been for generations. If we are a part of that community, then let our joy and actions of embracing it include speaking up against threats to its safety and survival.

Let there be no place for bigotry and intolerance in our large and wide community of Maine. When we know our neighbors, across all boundaries, we can say, ***not in Maine***.

Here, we celebrate and grow on the energy of all.

It was indeed a pleasure to meet you, and we look forward to hearing from you,

Ron Stegall
Victoria Mares-Hershey victoriamareshershey@yahoo.com
Noel Bonam

Current list of suggested resources on separate page

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Radio: The *“Mama Africa Show”* highlights the African Diaspora through history & music and cultivates space for multicultural voices to share experiences, opinions & current events focusing on human rights and social justice on the *“Multicultural View”*. The Mama Africa show is the first forum of its kind in Maine dedicated to unifying people across class and racial divides. The show was conceived by and is produced and M.C.'d by Keita Whitten, MSW and founder and director of Cultivating Multicultural Alliances as well as a Co-Interim Director of the University of Southern Maine's Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

**The Mama Africa Show & Culture Beat Live! featuring the Multicultural View
Sundays 12-2:00 P.M. on USM's WMPG community radio 90.9/104.1**

Email: themamaafricashow@gmail.com

On Air : 207-780-4909

Listen nationally or internationally on your computer: www.wmpg.org

The Mama Africa show production team:

Program Assistant & Co Host, Bethany Tremblay Social Work Intern

Program Assistant Heather Shattuckfaegre

Producer & Host, Keita A. Whitten, MSW, Co- Interim Director MSA, USM

The show is sponsored by:

University Of Southern Maine (USM)

the *USM Office of Multicultural Student Affairs*

CMA (Cultivating Multicultural Alliances)

The Museum of African Culture

The Black Artist Forum

WMPG's programs are provided by community volunteers who are trained by WMPG.

Are you interested in Radio? The Mama Africa show is still looking to build a production team of dedicated volunteers. WMPG & the Mama Africa Show provides *many* of the trainings needed for these following positions:

- music coordinator
- community calender coordinator
- radio engineer
- field interviews
- grant/funding coordinator
- co- host
- program/event coordinator
- technical engineer

Other Media Resources

Maine Public Broadcasting <http://www.mpbn.net>

Portland Press Herald <http://pressherald.maintoday.com>

The new newsprint weekly, SWITCH

Cultivating Community Alliances (CMA) is a wonderful new entity founded by **Keita Whitten**. (see her bio below).

Give yourself the pleasure of going on the website www.callcma.net. This is a great place to start, finding your way into a multicultural connection across all the boundaries that we human beings have made. A good source for finding out what is happening in Maine.

From the website:

CMA addresses racism and misconceptions about diversity, class, identities, lifestyles and culture. The CMA concept was established in Maine in July 2007 by a social worker named Keita -Annie Whitten. The need for this work became apparent to Whitten after working with numerous individuals, groups and organizations struggling around issues of inclusiveness, racism and differences.

Diversity is nothing new, but multiculturalism and anti-racism are. CMA is a wholeistic approach to race & economic oppression designed to create multicultural alliances based on equity, alliances & reciprocity.

CMA offers cross-cultural dialogues and anti-racist peer education trainings designed to develop student and organizational leadership. CMA assists individuals, groups, non-profits and businesses cope with racism & internalized oppression associated with race, power, & economics.

CMA brings participants together from all walks of life. We expect you to come just as you are. We do not ask you to check any parts of your identity or experience at the door. We believe that each person is unique; bringing with them their own set of perspectives and life experiences, which adds to the rich dynamics of critical cross-cultural engagement.

Participants learn to make connections between one's own values and beliefs regarding race, power & economics with one's behaviors and actions, with CMA you learn more about yourself while in relationship with others.

Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate, but that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, handsome, talented and fabulous? Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. And, as we let our own light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others”

Nelson Mandela

About Keita A. Whitten, MSW- For the past 27 years Whitten has worked as an performance artist, a community organizer, a social justice advocator and social worker in New Your City and throughout Maine. Ms. Whitten graduated from the University of

Southern Maine (USM) with a BA and MSW in social work and is a former USM Dialogues in Diversity Anti- oppression peer educator. She has been serving as the Co-Interim Director Of Multicultural Student Affairs at USM since 2005. Whitten is an adjunct professor, specializing in matters of culture and diversity, and currently lecturers at Andover College.

Since the summer of 2006, Whitten produces & hosts The "*Mama Africa Show*" (see description above).

<http://www.wmpg.org/> This is the radio station for the University of Southern Maine in Portland. And this is the place to go to keep up with any kind of music that you know and don't know but must try. Shows in many languages along with English...French, Spanish, Somali, Russian,...and more. Tune in. Also a great schedule of what's happening around Maine.

Dr. Kolawole Bankole, Minority Health Program Coordinator:

I receive cultural events news and news of issues, health advice and events around good health from Dr. Bankole who directs a City of Portland program. His office often gives wonderful celebrations that invite the entire public and get the minority communities too, to come in for health news. His outreach workers speak Russian, Somali, Acholi, Spanish...and on and on. You would really enjoy one of his events. Everybody goes! I asked him how others could get on his list. This is what he wrote:

Yes, you can send in a blurb and how to get on my list serve, but here is my email and our website for info. Though it's not up to date but it's quite informative as is:

email: bak@portlandmaine.gov

web site: <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/phminority.asp>

Thanks and Cheers.

Bankole

**Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." MLK, Jr. http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King,_Jr.*

Kolawole Bankole, MD, MS
 Minority Health Program Coordinator/
 Access Project Director
 Public Health Division, HHS Department
 City of Portland
 389 Congress St., Portland, ME 04101
 Tel 207-874-8773, fax 207.874.8913
 email: bak@portlandmaine.gov
 web site: <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/phminority.asp>

Now you may or may not think **gardening** is cultural, but when you can get so many young people from long-time Mainers to children of the newest immigrant families participating in growing a garden, getting to know each other and actually going to market with their food, as well as feeding the elderly, well, what a culture!

And, their gardens are beautiful...sitting in the middle of the City of Portland. As well as other places.

Cultivating Community
107 Elm Street, Suite 305
P.O. Box 3792
Portland, Maine 04104-3792

Check out these stories on Cultivating Community.

http://blueroomproject.org/12_06/compost.shtml

- *People, Places & Plants*,
"The New Faces of Organic Gardening,"
Autumn 2006 issue, pages 30-37.
- *The Forecaster*,
"Falmouth Garden to Feed Portland's Hungry,"
April 27, 2006. <http://www.theforecaster.net/story.php?storyid=5970&ftype=search>
- *Maine Sunday Telegram*,
"Saving the Earth, One Tilled Acre at a Time,"
April 23, 2006, page B1.



***Chinese & American Friendship Association of Maine
(CAFAM)***

provides forums and outreach that promote cultural interchanges between the US and China. Wonderful festivals and information.

Blanca Santiago is a trainer and project coordinator at the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence in Portland, Maine. It is an organization with national stature and does good work. Check it out at www.preventinghate.org

The Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence is a non-profit organization that develops and implements training and educational programs to assist businesses, non-profit organizations, schools, colleges, law enforcement agencies and other institutions to prevent bias, harassment and violence.

She is also the contact person at:

Centro Latino, Maine

Contact Person: Blanca Santiago, President
P.O. Box 1242
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: (207) 749-8823

Centro Latino, Maine aims to improve the quality of life for Hispanics in Maine. It provides access to services and information and brings voice into action regarding the rules and laws that will benefit Hispanic people, while celebrating their cultural heritage, preserving their human dignity, and inspiring them to realize their aspirations.

Centro Latino board meetings are open to the public and are held from 5:30-7:00pm the first Tuesday of every month at the Community Television Network offices (516 Congress Street, Portland). Centro Latino also publishes Mi Gente, a bilingual directory of Latino-owned businesses, Spanish-speaking service providers, and community events and activities relevant to the Latino community.

Reverend Virginia Marie Rincon puts her heart and soul into helping families make a good life for themselves, people so willing to work day and night for this. She is an ordained minister.

Tengo Voz- I Have Voice

Contact Person: Reverend Virginia Marie Rincon
Immanuel Baptist Church
156 High St.
Portland, ME 0401
Phone: (207) 553-2252

Email: tengovoz@hotmail.com

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10AM-1PM, but individuals can call to make an appointment outside of these hours

A grassroots organization committed to Latino women and their families in the greater Portland area. Help with finding jobs and housing, domestic violence prevention and referral, cultural support, spiritual direction, Latino women's focus groups, educational referrals and support, social service collaboration and referrals, and interpreting.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

Culture is found everywhere of course. The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is a place to get connected to how global our neighborhoods really are in Maine. This church also serves another orthodox Christian community, the Coptic Christians of Ethiopia, Eretria and Albania. There is wonderful community, celebrations open to the public and a visit on a Sunday will give you opportunity to see the beautiful interior of the building and experience a warm welcome.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Contact: Pastor Constantine Sarantidis
 133 Pleasant Street
 Portland, Maine 04101
 Phone: (207) 774-0281
 Fax: (207) 774-2049
 E-mail: htrinity@maine.rr.com
 Website: www.holytrinityportland.org

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is the only Eastern Orthodox Church in the Portland area.

Aserela is over 10 years old actually and a combination of Americans in Maine and the newest Sudanese immigrants. They started this non-profit for the benefit of the refugee camp in Uganda that many Sudanese had experienced. Together they have built a school and started cottage industries for people to become self-sustaining. The Aserela group has also visited the camp in Uganda and helped to build with their own hands. Meanwhile a whole generation of new Americans, Sudanese-American children, are learning about their own culture that parents and families were separated from, by circumstance of war.

Give Aserela a call and get on its mailing list. Their fundraisers are a treat and a learning experience. Warm welcomes can be expected.

ASERELA - Action for Self Reliance Association

c/o Cathedral Guild Hall
 307 Congress Street
 Portland, ME 04101
 Ph: (207) 774-3314

Founded in 1994 by a group of Sudanese refugees, ASERELA has over 100 active members. Programs include helping newly arrived families learn about Portland and teaching traditional Sudanese culture to the children.

The Irish Heritage Center in the west end of Portland - first, don't miss putting this website on your "must check" list.

www.maineirish.com - It will give you the wonderful history of the Irish community in Maine from the 1800's; and update you about events, music and fundraising to rebuild the bell tower and renovate the 100 plus year old St. Dominic's Church that is now the Maine Irish Heritage Center.

The Franco-American Heritage Center of Lewiston-Auburn

<http://www.francoamericanheritage.org/> is not to be missed for understanding and enjoying the unique and beautiful culture of Maine's Franco-Americans. The language is preserved, the history is rich and this center brings in cultural events on a continuous basis.

Watt Samaki Temple

Catch up to what is happening with this Cambodian temple.

When this temple was in Portland, I visited several times during religious holidays and during mornings when people bring food to the monks. It is a soothing and welcoming experience. You might want to read more about how this community of Cambodians has not been able to find a hospitable place for their temple in 20 years. Maybe stop by and visit the monks.

Watt Samaki Temple

Buddhism

2 Dedham Street

Portland, ME 04103

Phone: 207-797-8554

A place to pray

By Robert Lowell, American Journal, Jan 24, 2008

Buxton, Maine (USA) -- A bid by Maine's only Cambodian Buddhist temple, located on a rural road in Buxton, to hold celebratory gatherings drew strong opposition from neighbors Monday at a packed Buxton Planning Board meeting.

No decision was made on the request by Watt Samaki Cambodian Buddhist Temple, at 128 Back Nippen Road. Several residents voiced their concerns, citing traffic, noise and the septic system capabilities. This week's public hearing was continued until Feb. 11.

Twenty years ago, the same temple, facing heavy opposition, was unable to establish a house of worship in Buxton.

"It's been an uphill battle all the way," said Beth Sturtevant, a volunteer from North Yarmouth who is lending a hand to the temple.

The Watt Samaki Temple, which began in 1985 in Portland, serves more than 350 families. The temple bought the Buxton house and attached building, which formerly housed a printing business, about three years ago. Two monks, Bak Him and Chantrea Mean, live in the home. The temple holds four large celebrations a year.

NAACP in Maine

As in the rest of the nation, the NAACP has played a serious role in the winning of civil rights for African Americans and set the model for winning civil rights and fairness for all people in Maine. Check it out on line for updates of events, which are frequent and often are collaborations with other organizations such as the state government, Maine Humanities Council, school and other peace and justice venues.

NAACP – (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)

As the nation's oldest civil rights organization, the primary focus of the NAACP continues to be the protection and enhancement of the civil rights of African Americans and other minorities, and to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. The NAACP has three branches in Maine: the Portland branch (covering Maine from the New Hampshire border up to Augusta), the Bangor branch (covering Maine from Augusta to the Canadian border), and a prison branch (hosted by the Bangor branch).

Greater Bangor Area Branch

James Varner, President

P.O. Box 477

Old Town, ME 04468

Phone: (207) 827-4493

Fax: (207) 827-8115

Prison Branch

Michael Parker, President

Maine State Prison

807 Cushing Road

Warren, ME 04864

Portland Branch

Rachel Talbot-Ross, President

P.O. Box 3631

Portland, ME 04104

Phone: (207) 253-5074

Fax: (207) 253-5079

E-mail: naacpportland@hotmail.com

Website: www.naacpportland.org

Peace Action Maine. Never leave home without knowing what they are up to at Peace Action. The people are wonderful and all ages. www.PeaceactionMe.org is the website. **There is an office in Portland at THE MEG PERRY CENTER 644 Congress St., Portland, Me.** But Peace Action is all over Maine.

If you want to get involved with a good cause, express your ideas at a forum or find a good schedule of exciting events from protests to forums, speakers, art shows, potluck nights and musical performances, go to this website.

Museum of African Culture in Portland

A wonderful new home for the **Museum of African Culture in Portland**, about to celebrate its 10th birthday, is at 13 Brown Street near Monument Square in downtown Portland. Don't miss the doings at this museum and see the original design and architecture by Stephen D. Oliver and the permanent installations, such as the handle to the front door, designed and handmade by artist Daniel Minter (www.danielminter.net). The website tells almost all. Oscar Mokeme is the founder and executive director as well as curator and expert of cultures of the sub-Saharan. It has one of the best collections of masks and artifacts, some centuries old, in the country.

Films from African filmmakers or lectures on the collection happen every Friday at 6:30 pm, with wine and cheese. On the first Friday of each month, the museum participates in the First Friday Art Walk with a new exhibit from a contemporary artist. The next few months will feature artists of the African Diaspora living and working in Maine. That includes Shaun Harris, photographer, and the internationally recognized David Driskoll.

Museum of African Culture

<http://www.africantribalartmuseum.org>

Portland Freedom Trail

<http://www.portlandfreedomtrail.org/>

Maine's new African American History trail, which can be walked by anyone. Wells Staley-Mays, a local historian also does a guided tour on request.

The markers for the Freedom Trail were designed and cast by African American artist Daniel Minter, who lives and works in Maine, but his work is shown all over the country and beyond. www.danielminter.net

PortTango

www.porttango.com

If you ever thought you would try to tango...now's the time. This is a great group and it moves around the city. The North Star Café is wonderful, even has poetry slams on some nights. But the Tango...with live music, wow. They also have teaching sessions at Portland's new Empire room on Congress Street.

ILAP

The Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, a §501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, is Maine's only provider of immigration law information and legal assistance to low-income Maine residents who cannot afford private attorneys. Initiated in 1994 as a volunteer attorney project with extremely limited capacity, ILAP began its transformation into a staffed legal aid agency in 1999. Annually, ILAP now serves over 2200 individuals from more than 100 different countries around the world.

309 Cumberland Ave. Ste 201
PO Box 17917
Portland, Maine 04112
info@ilapmaine.org
PH - 207.780.1593
FX - 207.699.2313
Toll Free Hotline: 1.800.497.8505

Maine Center for the Arts

The Maine Center for the Arts at the University of Maine in Orono contains stages for performance culture and for material culture and both stages are dedicated to presenting the richness of our global cultural heritage. Check out <http://www.MaineCenterfortheArts.org> or <http://www2.umaine.edu/mca> or Google the Hudson Museum at the University of Maine for upcoming events and special exhibits. The Hudson annually sponsors celebrations such as Day of the Dead, Chinese New Year, Eid, Kwansa, and other holidays in association with the foreign student associations. The Museum also provides school and group tours of museum exhibits and helps teachers with curriculum development related to other cultures. Most colleges and universities in the state advertise events related to other cultural traditions, so check their websites or contact their foreign student advisors.