

6-2-1994

Casco Bay Weekly : 2 June 1994

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Casco Bay Weekly

The Old Port... **NIGHT & DAY** "Last Call" see page 15 Attend the Old Port Festival on June 6

DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH: Candidate suffers memory lapse, credibility gap. Page 6.

JUN 2, 1994



Sixteen-year-old boxer (and Portland High School honors student) Won Choi is headed for the Junior Olympic boxing championships in Michigan at the end of this month.

MAKING THE ROUNDS

Portland's boxing scene, in decline for two decades, edges toward a comeback

By Kevin O'Kendley
Photos by Colin Malakie

"Can you believe that? The kid said boxing is a hobby."

Gene "Hurricane" Herrick smiled in disbelief at Won Choi's comment about his priorities in life. "Me," sighed Herrick, "I trained like an animal and fought like one, too. I wanted to be the middleweight champion of the world. I had nothin'. Boxin' gave me everything."

Herrick, 54, was watching the fighters at Choi's Karate, the martial arts and boxing emporium on Congress Street. Herrick ruled the city during Portland's Golden Age of Boxing in the '60s and early '70s, chalking up a 77-12 record with 49 knockouts. Now he's among the chorus of old-timers who watch from ringside and offer advice. "I was one of the best middleweights in the world," he said. "Silverman [a Boston promoter] used to screw me, but I didn't care. He used me up and cheated me. But, I just fought. It was a good life, anyway."

After a two-decade slumber, the good life is reawakening in Portland. The nonprofit Portland Boxing Club opened near Morrill's Corner last January. The club now has about 30 serious amateurs in training, along with one active pro, John Webster. Frank Thiboutot's Fitness Plus Studio opened at One City Center a year-and-a-half ago, offering a Rocky-meets-Jane Fonda hybrid that's introducing young professionals and a growing number of women to "the sweet science." And the buzz is building at Choi's Karate about Master Choi's 16-year-old son, Won, whom many predict could be the next Portland boxer to take national honors.

"This kid's got talent," Herrick said. "But you have to live right and train right. I was scared of nothin'. I'd fight anybody. Choi's boy can have it all. He's better than anybody around here."

"But boxing's a full-time mission," he added. "It's not a day job."

continued on page 8



Won Choi hits the ring for yet another training session with Tom Daniel.

INSIDE FIND THE OFFICIAL '94 OLD PORT FESTIVAL PROGRAM

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Salem, Massachusetts

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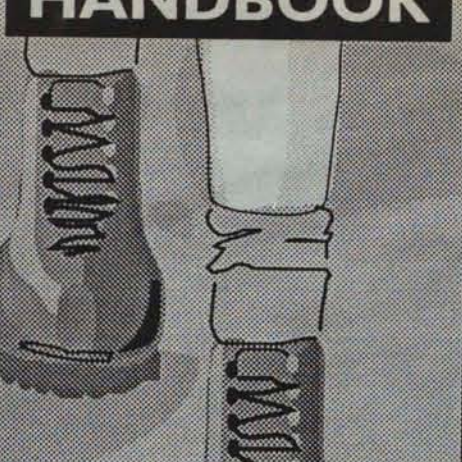
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Casco Bay Weekly

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Don't miss the opportunity to promote your business in the **Summer Handbook**. To reserve your space, contact Casco Bay Weekly.

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Publication date: Thursday, June 30, 1994
Space and Proof deadline: Friday, June 24, 1994

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A conversation with Benny Brem



Benny Brem: "I love this business. I meet a lot of good people. No two days are the same."

Benny Brem is the co-owner (with his wife, Jeri) of Baxter's Army-Navy, a year-old business on Washington Avenue. Brem can be found most days presiding over the store, which is stuffed with a variety of nonlethal military equipment. Brem also stars as the manic, Ramboesque Cap'n Camouflage in commercials touting the store on local cable.

Any shady or covert-type characters shop here?
My wife had a guy come in, he told her that he was in a secret government training base out in the woods somewhere. It was so secret that hardly anyone in Washington knew about it. It was so secret that no one in Maine knew about it. But I guess it wasn't secret enough not to tell my wife. And, I think, there are about 2,000 Navy Seals in the country, but I've met 4,000 of them in the store. Since the movie came out, everybody is a Navy Seal.

Anything weird ever happen here?
Hmmm... I sold some handcuffs to this guy once. I guess he handcuffed his wife to their bed and after doing whatever it was that they did, he stood up on the bed and got his head caught in the overhead fan. He collapsed, knocked out, bleeding all over the

place. But the thing was, his wife was chained to the bed and couldn't reach the phone. She was frantic, I guess. So, she had to scream and scream until the neighbors came to the rescue.
The guy was alright, but I guess he was really embarrassed.
Another time I had these two women come in. One woman grabbed a pair of pants and they both went into the [same] dressing room. They stayed in there for 30 minutes. I was too embarrassed to bother them. They seemed pretty happy when they came out, but they didn't buy the pants.

By Kevin O'Kendley; photo by Kathy Plonka

STATE THEATRE

NRBQ



Thursday June 9th
Cabaret Seats
\$12.00 plus \$10.00 Dinner Ticket
General Admission
\$6.00
Doors open @ 6:00pm • Showtime @ 8:00pm

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June 2nd - 4th • The Godfather Trilogy
June 9th • NRBQ
June 11th • Randy Newman
June 13th • Cheap Trick
June 14th • King Sunny Adé
June 16th • Adrian Belew & The Psychodots
June 18th • The Maine Gay Mens Chorus
June 25th • Tori Amos (SOLD OUT)
June 27th • Maura O'Connell
July 2nd • Yellowman
July 12th • Ted Nugent
August 9th • Emmy Lou Harris

RANDY NEWMAN



Saturday June 11th
Cabaret Seats
\$22.50 plus \$12.00 Dinner Ticket
General Admission
\$18.50
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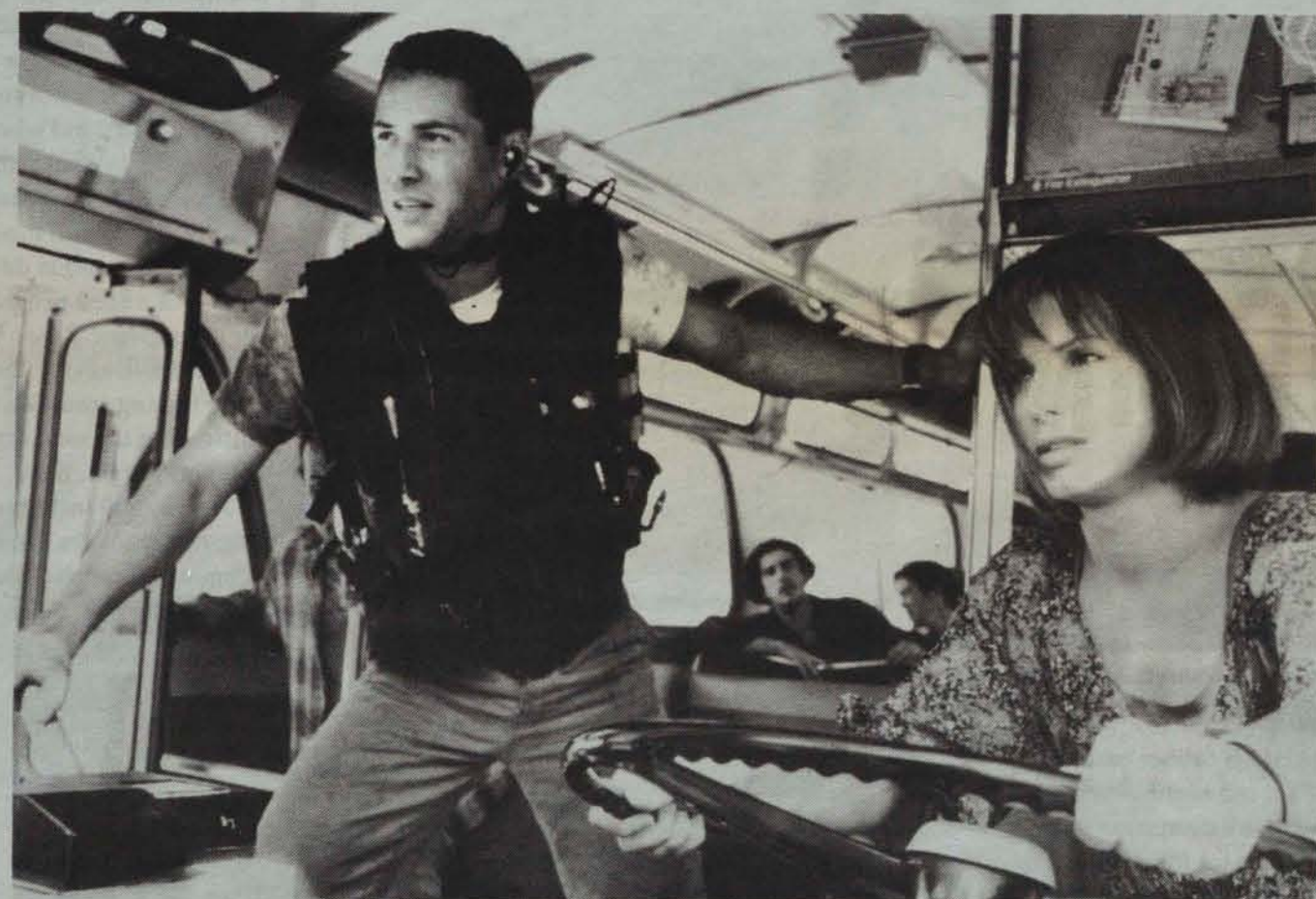


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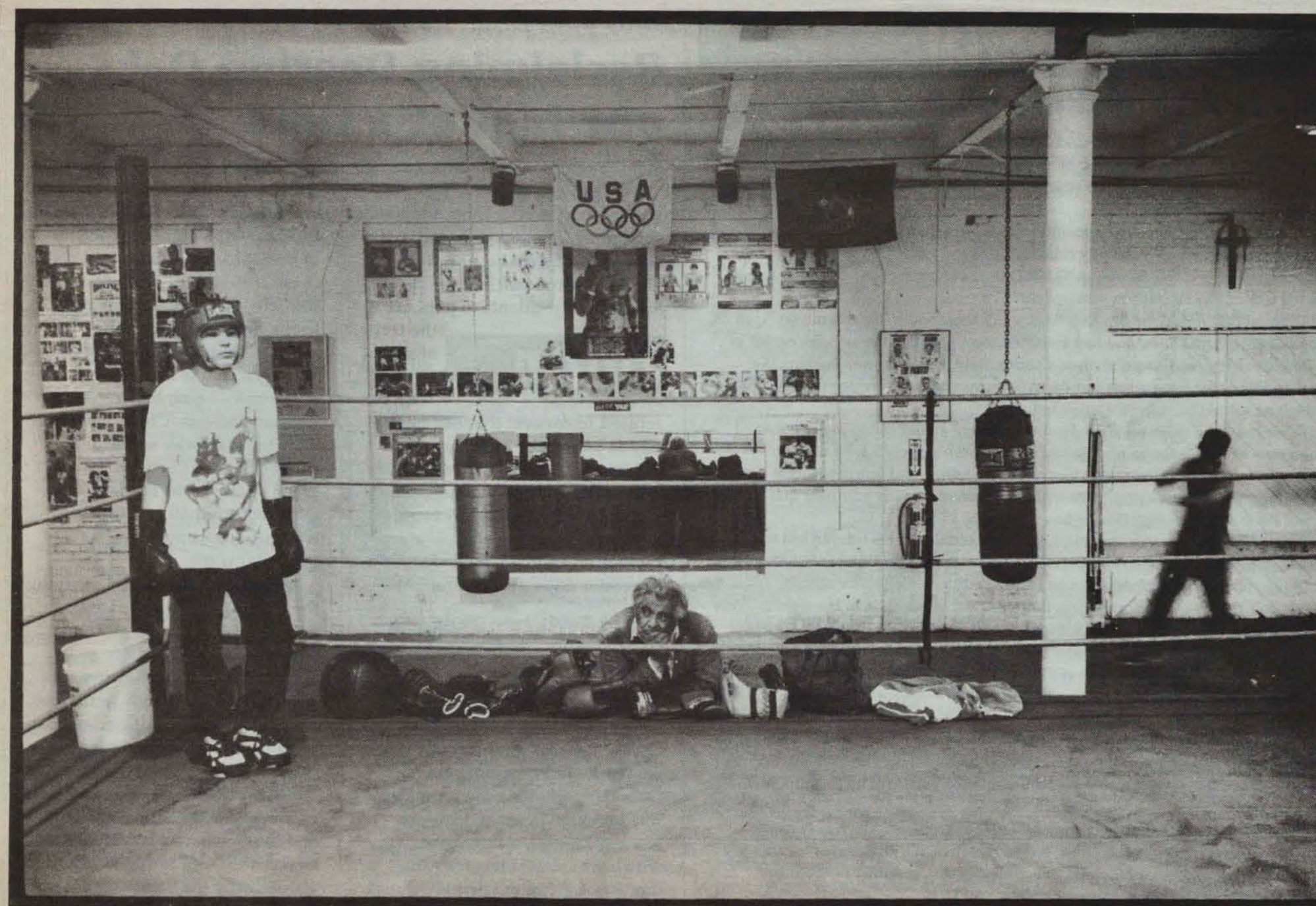


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FREE MOVIE TIX FREE MOVIE TIX FREE MOVIE TIX FREE MOVIE TIX FREE



Fourteen-year-old Chad Powell takes a break under the watchful eye of trainer Dave Collazo at the Portland Boxing Club.



The club is taking a grassroots approach to restoring Portland's boxing scene - it's designed as a seed program for youngsters. Bobby Russo hopes the gym will revive the city's boxing tradition by cultivating the next crop of competitive pugilists.

MAKING THE ROUNDS

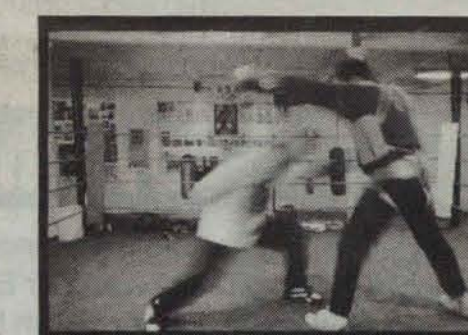
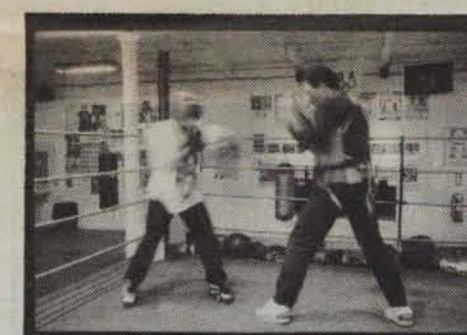
continued from page 10

events were hugely popular during boxing's golden era.) Smokers were held at the club in March and May, and Russo reported that both sold out at \$10 a head. Russo's lining up another smoker for the end of June, but the date hasn't yet been set.

The club's promising crew of up-and-coming amateurs include Joey Verzosa, a 26-year-old heavyweight who works as a doorman at The Moon; Dave Lawhorn, a light-heavyweight boxer and kickboxer from South Portland; and Tim Lyons, a Portland middleweight. Russo also singles out Chad Powell, a tough 14-year-old whom he says "already has a pro style."

Russo has a lot of respect for his boxers, but he and the other trainers demand plenty in return. "When you box, you can't just hand the ball off to someone else," he said. "When you're training, there can't be any smoking and drinking. It's just you up there. It's the most honest sport there is."

Kevin O'Kendley is a former boxer and current freelance writer.



DARK SIDE OF THE RING

Even the most fanatical of boxing supporters will admit that boxing has its dark side. Constant blows to the head simply aren't good for the mind. Permanent injury can and does happen.

Some boxers claim they feel the effects of years in the ring. Some don't. It's a crapshoot. But everyone agrees that boxers decide to become boxers - no one is drafted. It's a personal decision like getting married or ramming your head against a wall.

Because of the obvious dangers of the sport, states take steps to regulate the sport and those who participate in it. Some states are far more restrictive than others. In California, for instance, aspiring pro fighters need to submit to a tough physical exam, then be observed during a gym bout by a member of the state's boxing commission.

Maine is not among the aggressive states when it comes to licensing boxers. Here, anybody who

can cough twice, generate a pulse and pay \$15 can get a pro boxing license.

In 1972 Portland boxing legend Dave Collazo told a reporter that Maine's boxing regulations were outdated and dangerous. In the two decades since, Collazo believes little progress has been made to improve Maine's substandard pro boxing laws.

For instance, computerized boxing records in some states help ensure that fighters are healthy and ably matched. In Maine, Collazo said, it's possible to fight immediately after being knocked out in another state, something prohibited elsewhere.

"It's easy for a fighter to lie about his record and experience in Maine," the ex-heavyweight explained. "This causes mismatches and accidents."

"Something bad is gonna happen around here someday."

- K. O'K.



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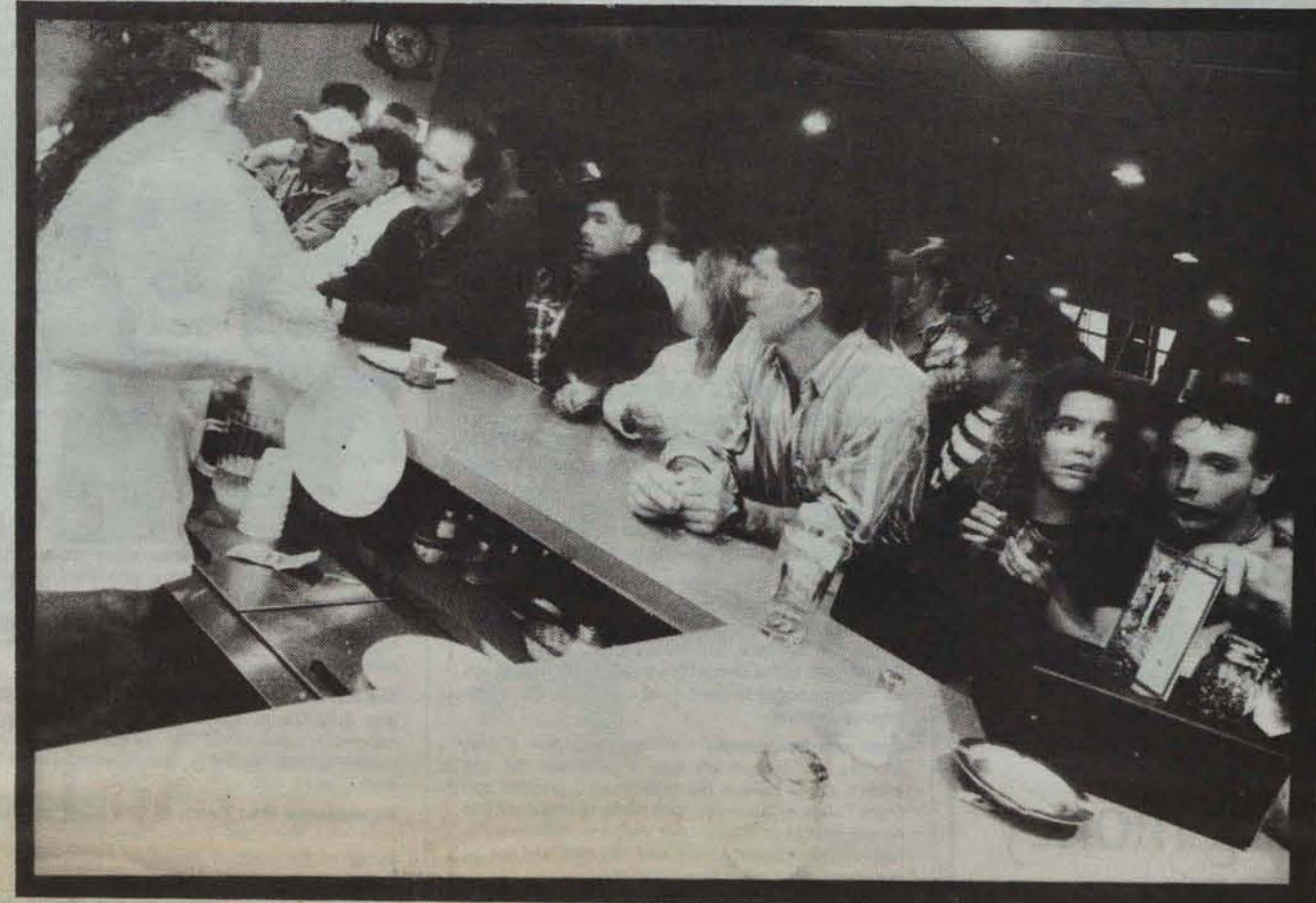


This course is one in a series being offered by the City of Portland and area banks, ask about our other topics and dates.

art & soul

silver screen 16
"Two" and "Rasputin" 17
calendar 18
clubs 20

1 a.m.
Photo Essay
by Matthew Robbins



Last call. Night's end. Last call. Night's end. Stay up all night. We can live forever. hunger for more. We want more and more. Don't stop now. Not now, not yet. We own these streets. These streets are ours. We make the loud noise, this night, this town.

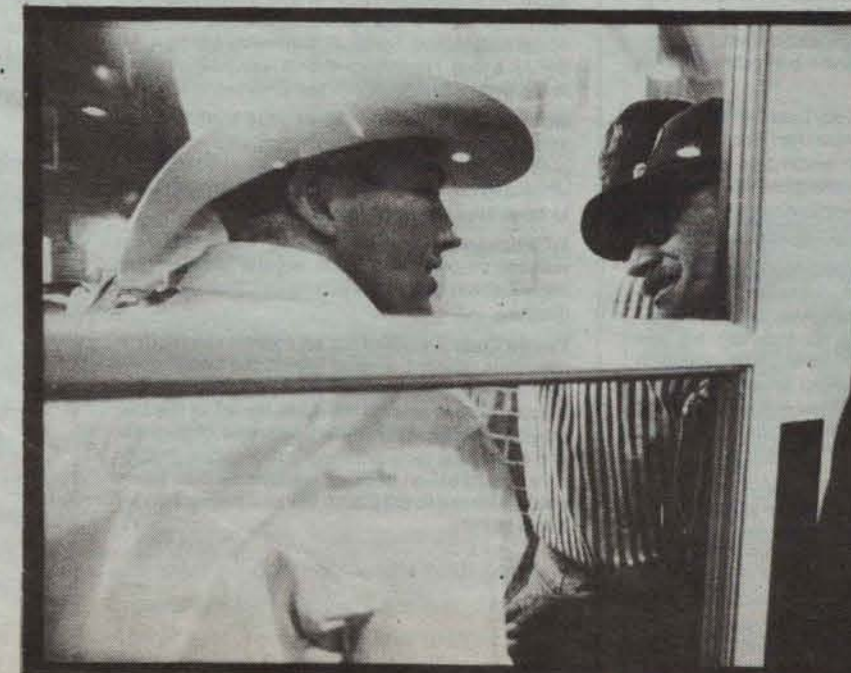
Last call NIGHTS end.

and more. Don't stop now. Don't get us started. Don't go yet. N

own these streets. These streets are ours. We make the loud no



Portland. We own these streets, t



Not yet, though. Not yet. Take the streets. Get out, stay out, stay up. Stay up all night. We can live forever. This night can be forever. We are young and we have the hunger. The hunger for more. We want more and more and more. Don't stop now. Don't get us started. Don't go yet. Not now, not yet. We own these streets. These streets are ours. We make the loud noise, we do the big dance. We own these streets, Portland. We own these streets, this night, this town. (EP)

of yet. We own these streets. These streets are ours.

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Advertisement for The Ball Park at Old Orchard Beach featuring various acts like Meat Loaf, Moody Blues, Spin Doctors, Peter Frampton, Traffic, John Mellencamp, Allman Brothers Band, Aerosmith, Michael Bolton, and Yes.

clubs

The Raze (rock) The Wrong Brothers' Pub at Port Billiards, 39 Forest Ave., Portland, 775-1944. All Ages Vertigo (all ages dance) Zootz, 31 Forest Ave., Portland, 773-8187.

saturday 4

Jazz Duet Bebop's Café, 548 Congress St., Portland, 828-6551. Jimmy & the Soul Cats (blues/R&B) The Big Easy, 416 Fore St., Portland, 780-1207.

sunday 5

D.W. Gill & the Blues Train The Big Easy, 416 Fore St., Portland, 780-1207. Comedy Showcase The Comedy Connection, 434 Fore St., Portland, 774-5554.

monday 6

Laser Karaoke with Ray Dog The Big Easy, 416 Fore St., Portland, 780-1207. TBA Brian Boru, 57 Center St., Portland, 780-1506.

wednesday 8

The Red Light Revue (R&B/blues/soul) The Big Easy, 416 Fore St., Portland, 780-1207. TBA Brian Boru, 57 Center St., Portland, 780-1506.

thursday 9

The Boneheads (original rock) Raoul's Roadside Attraction, 865 Forest Ave., Portland, 773-6886. Fat Alice (rock) Spring Point Café, 175 Pickett St., S. Portland, 787-4627.

friday 10

Deejay Ken Gardner (progressive house) Kaos, 137 Kennebec St., Portland, 774-2242. Big Hot Sun and the... (Hot Sun — day, revues — night) Moose Alley, 46 Market St., Portland, 774-5246.

art openings

The Art Gallery at Six Deering Street 6 Deering St., Portland. Opening reception June 3 from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm by watercolorists by Lou Bonamarte.

around town

African Imports and New England Arts 1 Union St., Portland. "Recent Acquisitions/New Dimensions," traditional African arts, works by modern artists from Nigeria and New England and rare carvings.

clubs

Kaos, 137 Kennebec St., Portland. Thurs and Sun 9 pm-1 am no cover. Fri-Sat 9 pm-3 am with a \$4 cover on Fri, \$5 cover on Sat (includes free beverage coupon).

events

Maine Film & Video Festival The works of seven Maine film and video producers and directors are featured in a four-part series at Raffles Cafe Bookstore.

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—Portland Press Herald, May 19, 1994

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