

MAN SENTENCED FOR CHURCH THREATS

A man plead guilty Aug. 7 to charges of threatening to bomb Vancouver's Metropolitan Community Church of the Gentle Shepherd and to kill its pastor in May.

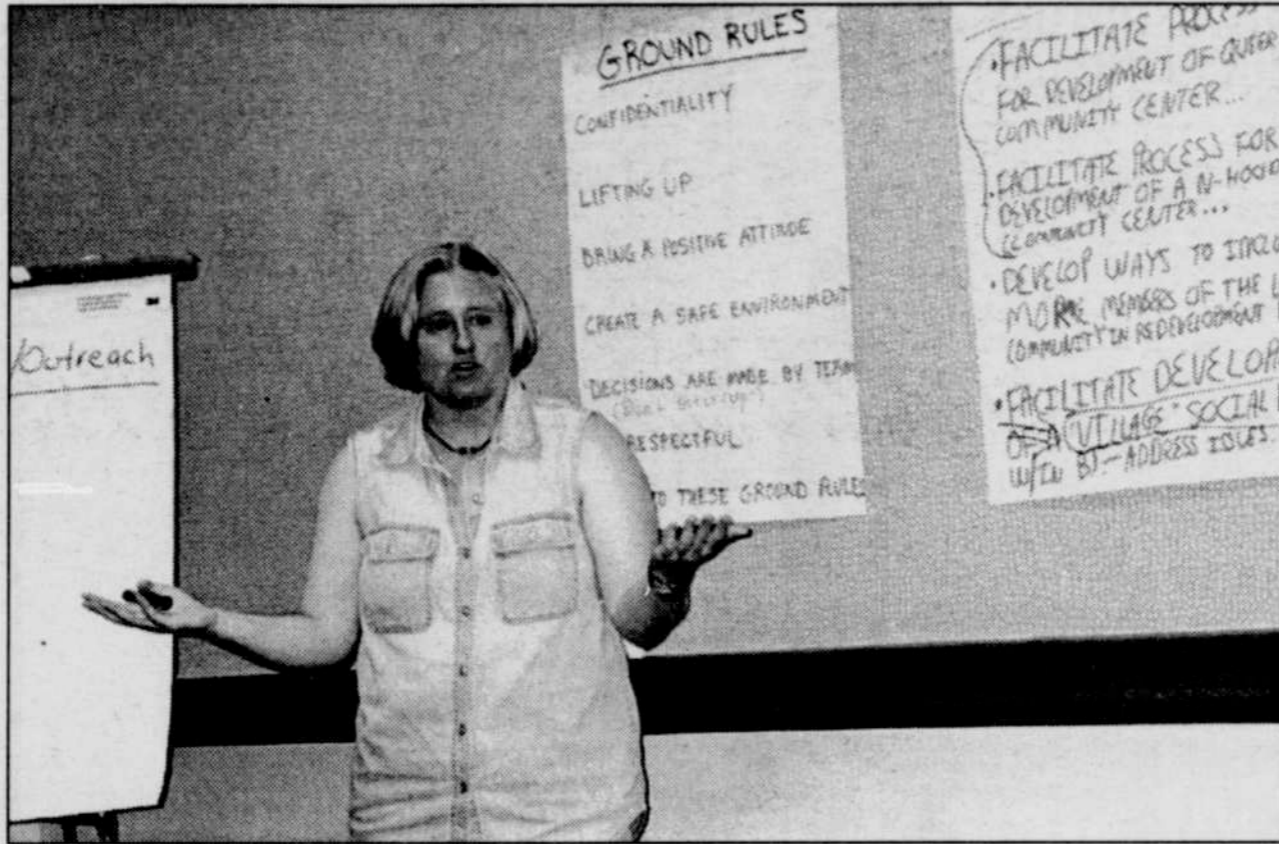
Washington State Superior Court Judge Roger Bennett asked Casey Gene Piersol about the telephone calls, saying that the Rev. Dianne Shaw's deposition "claims you knowingly threatened to bomb the church" and that "you threatened to injure Dianne Shaw" and "put her in fear." He admitted the calls had been made from his home but insisted he didn't remember making any of them because he was entertaining friends and was drunk.

"I don't even know this person," Piersol said. "I'd been drinking. I don't remember anything."

Prosecutor Kurt M. Rylander reminded the court that the arresting officer had stated, "Casey admitted he made the threat but claimed to be drunk and is disabled because he has a bullet in his brain." The attorney brought up several instances of the defendant's previous interactions with the justice system, including threats similar to those made against the church and Shaw.

Piersol was sentenced to 150 days' incarceration, of which 77 had been served; was ordered to serve two years on probation; and was fined \$500 to benefit the Crime Victims' Fund as well \$110 for court costs. He will be released from jail by Sept. 24.

"It was hard to rehear [the transcript of the tapes] and it was very disturbing to hear him deny that he did it," Shaw said. "I don't believe he got the message at all. I don't believe he



Melinda Marie Jette, Burnside Triangle Advisory Group co-chairwoman, brainstorms ideas Aug. 8

understood that when you do that, there are consequences."

The term "hate crime" never was used in court, but Shaw is clear Piersol's threat was motivated by hatred of sexual minorities. "You drop a hate crime like a pebble into the water," she said, "and it just keeps circling out and out and out forever."

Shaw added in a statement: "When we gather for worship and any other activities, we find ourselves looking out the windows when someone walks by. Before, we did not pay any attention to people going by outside our doors and windows.... Now all that has changed."

THE PROTEST THAT WASN'T

A rumored uprising never materialized when the Burnside Triangle Advisory Group met Aug. 8. According to the *Portland Tribune*, "evangelical groups" and "Christian conservatives" were planning to protest the committee, which makes recommendations about the downtown gay district's redevelopment.

Although police officers and security guards remained on alert about the potential demonstration, no naysayers showed up. In fact, only seven people came altogether—media included.

Landlord Gary Nelson expressed shock that the business community isn't more involved in the advisory group. "It really does affect them to a great extent," he said.

The group decided to compile a survey assessing community needs before taking any further action. The next meeting will start 7 p.m. Aug. 22 in the Pettygrove Room at Portland City Hall, 1221 S.W. Fourth Ave.

NATIONAL HEALTH REPORT RANKS PORTLAND NO. 1

A new report ranks Portland No. 1 among the nation's 100 largest cities in meeting key Healthy People 2000 goals. The Rose City tied with San Jose, Calif.

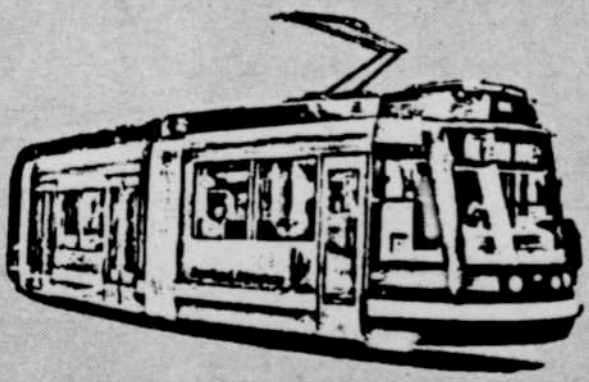
Portland or its suburbs met or exceeded six of the seven Healthy People goals examined: low birth weight, infant mortality, AIDS, syphilis, tuberculosis and homicide. The city's low birth weight rate, 5.4 percent, was the nation's lowest in 1999.

"This achievement is not just about health care; it is a reflection of the lifestyle of our entire community," said Lillian Shirley, Multnomah County Health Department director. "It includes issues of housing, urban planning and alternative transportation along with more conventional awareness of healthy diet, exercise and preventative care."

According to Shirley, her agency has a history of developing successful and innovative programs by emphasizing prevention and promoting healthy behavior. A communitywide effort to reduce the rates of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases sought the involvement of law

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