

REUTERS/STEVE DIPAOLA

## 'People will be talking about it'

*Activist Jo Ann Hardesty reflects on the police, the charter commission and the work to be done*

**BY JAKE THOMAS**  
STAFF WRITER

A common pattern often emerges after a citizen dies at the hands of police. There is public rage. The city promises reform, and then the rage simmers off until the next incident. Less noticeable, however, is the constant work of people dedicated to bringing reform to the Portland Police Bureau, notably Jo Ann Hardesty (formerly Jo Ann Bowman).

Originally from Baltimore, Hardesty has been an Oregon state legislator, the head of the civil rights organization Oregon Action and one of Portland's most vital and outspoken critics of the Portland police.

Two years ago, Hardesty was part of a coalition that helped pass a city ordinance aimed at strengthening oversight of the police by expanding the Independent Police Review (IPR) division's powers to investigate police and giving it more of a role in how officers are disciplined. The ordinance was passed in response to a string of incidents where Portlanders were killed in standoffs with the police. But despite the efforts of the city, the bureau now finds itself the subject of a civil rights investigation by the U.S. Justice Department.

Recently, Hardesty served as a member of the city's charter commission, a group of citizens selected by City Council and charged with making changes to what is basically Portland's constitution. Although City Council intended the commission to refer "house-keeping" amendments to voters for final approval, Hardesty used the occasion to propose two measures related to how police can control crowds.

That opportunity was dashed when the commission adjourned Feb. 27, amid controversy and acrimony, with no significant policy proposals

recommended for a public vote. Still, Hardesty hopes that the proposals, which were inspired by people involved in the Occupy Portland movement, will spark a broader discussion on police accountability while voters are also getting ready to select their next mayor.

**Jake Thomas:** *Regarding the charter commission, you proposed two amendments that would bar police from using animals or chemicals to control crowds. Why should this be in the charter?*

**Jo Ann Hardesty:** It actually shouldn't be in the charter. We should have a police chief that would just implement it, or we should have a police commissioner who would say make it so because it's good public policy. But since we have neither of those, the charter is the only option to the public right now. It's not the whole police accountability package, but it certainly starts us on the process, and what I love is the opportunity to talk about it during the election season. Really, what does police accountability look like? I'd say that there are certainly other things that should be included with police accountability, but these two things are the most visible today right now and mostly on peoples' minds because of Occupy and because of some of the most recent encounters with police. If it's on the ballot, people will be talking about it, and we can create real community dialogue about what real police accountability looks like, and it forces people on the ballot to have this conversation.

I think the charter commission was set up for failure, quite frankly, because the mayor and the City Council didn't want us doing policy issues.

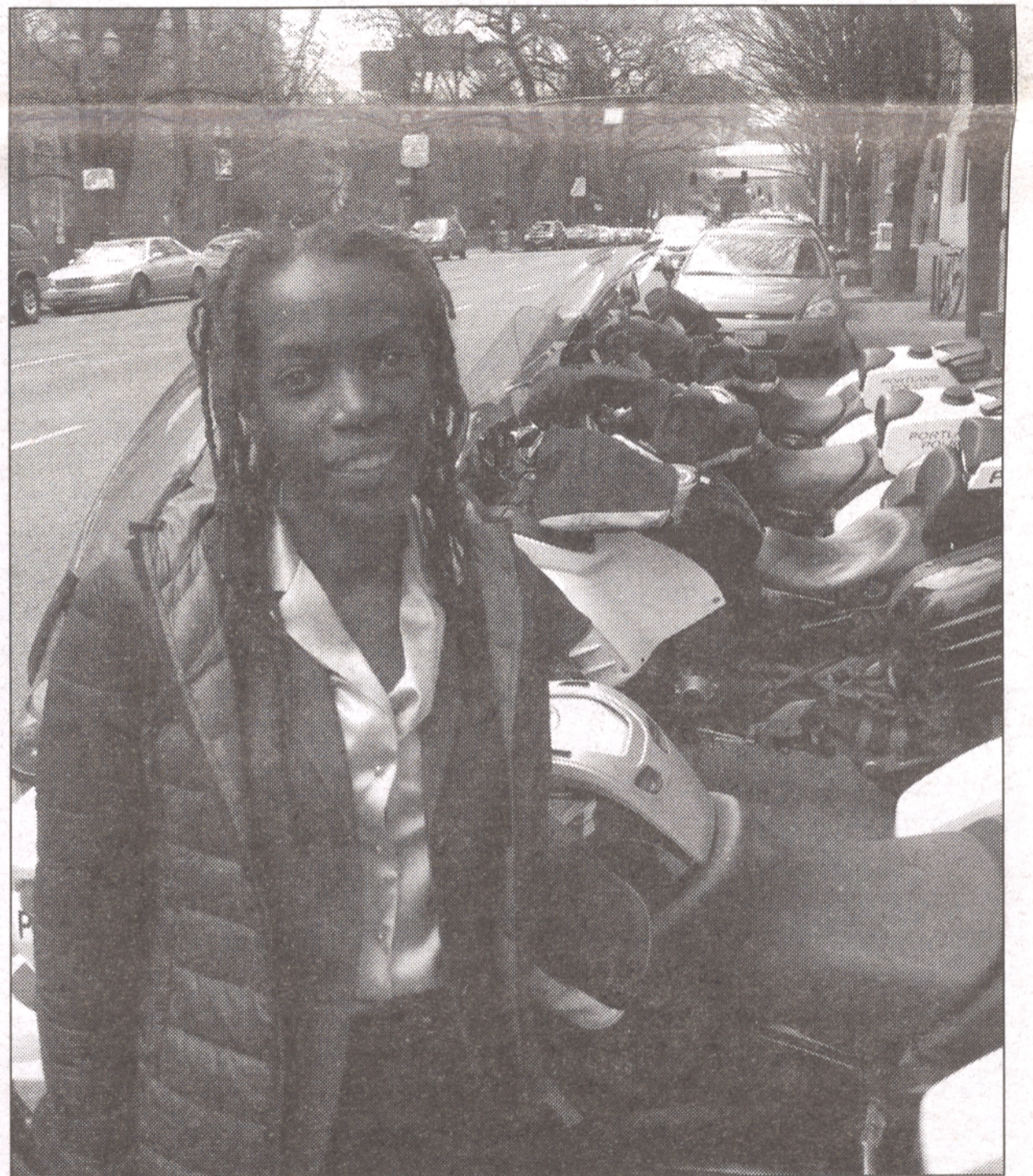
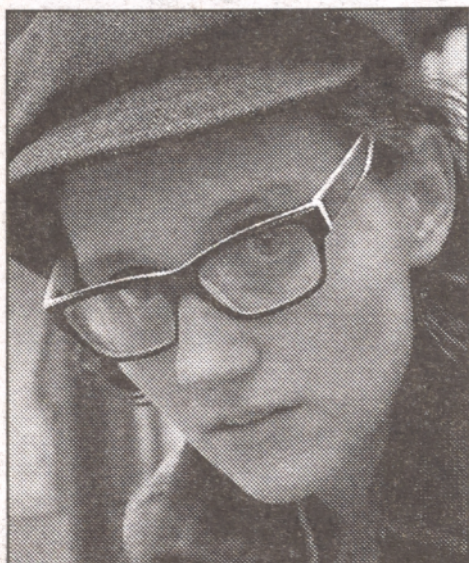


PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS

*Above, Jo Ann Hardesty says the Charter Commission missed an opportunity to initiate real reform in police accountability. At top, riot police monitor Occupy Wall Street protesters in Downtown Portland.*

See HARDESTY page 4

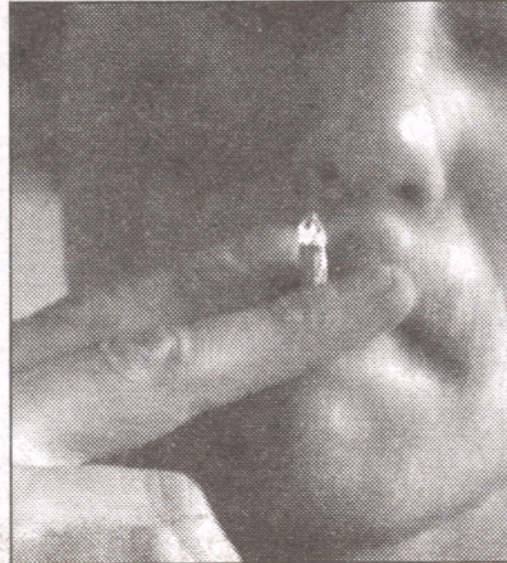
### Inside



**'Play your heart out...'**

*Musician Lindsay Fuller talks about her unusual sound*

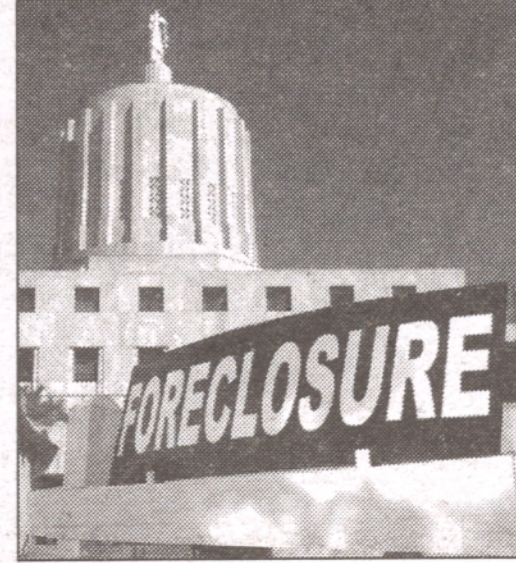
**Page 7**



**Vancouver, B.C.'s drug revolution**

*The Canadian city pushes the envelope on harm reduction, recovery*

**Page 8**



**And so the madness continues**

*Lawmakers flail on foreclosure reform*

**Page 10**