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Two Sections

Officers Who Supported Harrington Speak Out

It is generally believed that a conservative element dominates the Portland Police Bureau, a conservative element led by police union president Stan Peters and his cronies.

Rumors abound that Peters and the conservative middle management of the bureau, threatened by former Chief Penny Harrington's reform program, actually plotted to have Harrington removed.

But there is also a progressive element in the bureau: Although they are a minority, a significant number of officers supported Harrington.

Portland has heard from many sources about the power struggle in the bureau that led to Harrington's resignation, almost everyone, that is, except the rank and file officers themselves.

The Observer talked to several officers who supported Harrington, officers whose story has yet to be told in the local media.

They described a bureau moving backward to "old business" -- cronyism, retrenchment from better community relations, especially with the minority community, and a reinforcement of the almost legendary power of Stan Peters.

The reforms that Harrington started -- multi-cultural training, better communication with black leaders, minority recruiting, and the controversial Juvenile Services Unit, may be done away with soon, the officers said.

In general, said the officers, Portland can expect a return to the old style of policing that prevailed before Harrington became chief.

Ominously, these officers reported "better morale" at the bureau, but a morale pointed in the wrong direction. Peters' supporters could hardly contain their glee after Harrington resigned, and some even danced in the locker room, the officers said.

While the hardliners are celebrating, Harrington's supporters are trying to survive in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, said the officers. They are under tremendous pressure to conform. Their choices are to agree, remain silent or to object and face ostracism, they said.

With Peters' well-deserved reputation as a career-breaker, to would be "career suicide" to cross Peters and the conservative middle leadership of the bureau, said the officers.

One thing police officers absolutely don't do is talk to the press about internal police affairs, they said. Granting interviews is considered the equivalent of squealing in the unspoken police code of ethics. The attitude is one of extreme loyalty bordering on that between soldiers under fire. Faced with complaints or criticism, the response is to close ranks and support each other and the bureau, they said.

In such an atmosphere, talking to a reporter can trigger a hate campaign

against the officer that could turn his job into hell in a uniform. Just ask Gary Harrington about the emotional consequences of such a hate campaign, said these officers.

But the press taboo was broken by the Peters clique in the Harrington investigation, the officers said, which is why they were willing to speak out.

The word from inside the bureau, they said, is that a clique consisting of Peters and "lieutenants, sergeants and captains" plotted Penny Harrington's downfall on time paid for by taxpayers. The Peters clique leaked inside bureau information in a carefully-timed smear campaign, said these officers. That's why this group of officers was willing to talk, to get out the other side of the story, a story which has not yet been fully told, they said. And, while they were willing to take the chance, they preferred not to have their names printed for obvious reasons.

What are the chances of getting rid of Peters? "About as much chance as impeaching Reagan right now," one officer replied.

"He delivers," said the officer. In hard-boiled union bargaining, Peters has delivered pay raises, he has gotten officers' jobs back, and he has fought budget cuts. His bargaining successes have won Peters the unwavering loyalty of the majority of rank and file officers, the officer said.

Peters rose from a patrolman to become the ruler of a multi-million dollar personal empire, said the officer. With the loyal majority of the bureau behind him, Peters has launched out from his power base to try and influence police policy, and to topple a chief, the officer said.

But it wasn't just Harrington's career Peters tried to ruin, another officer said. Former Chief Bruce Baker, former City Commissioner Charles Jordan and former Oregonian reporter Linda Williams were all negatively affected by Peters' hate campaigns, the officer said.

Though Chief Ron Still was unpopular with many officers, he had a voice of authority, something Harrington never achieved because she was a woman, said one officer.

Peters and his cronies just couldn't handle a strong woman police chief, especially one who was pushing through reforms that threatened the power of the "old boy network" in the bureau, the officer said.

Coupled with those sexist attitudes is the obvious racism of the Peters' clique, said another officer. He compared the clique's mentality to that of the Ku Klux Klan. Peters' network is powerful in the same way the Klan is powerful -- a lot of quiet, behind-the-scenes support in the bureau and community, the officer said.

In an atmosphere of underlying racism within the bureau, minority officers are treated as outsiders, and that, coupled with racist jokes and insulting comments, adds tremendous tension to the already high stress

level of police work, said one officer.

Racism in the bureau is not the loud and obnoxious type, said another officer. "It's the stares and cold shoulders," the officer said.

According to the officers, the multi-cultural training begun under Harrington is seen as a "joke" and a waste of time by many white officers.

Also, they said, the recruitment and training of minority officers, which Harrington made a priority, may soon be axed. That would be a tragedy, said the officers, because increasing the number of minority officers would help improve police-community relations.

With her reform programs, Harrington sought to reduce the tension that could lead to a riot like the one that tore Miami, the officers said. But with the "old boy network" back in charge, the city is sitting on a powder keg, they said.

"Sometimes I think the guys want that to happen," one officer said about the possibility of a riot. "I get the feeling they want to go out and beat some heads."

Peters' supporters are a majority of the bureau, the officers said. They couldn't say how many supported Harrington, except that it was "a lot." Could the progressive officers affect the bureau's course in the near future? Probably not, they said. Harrington supporters are concerned about surviving, and are not likely to make waves, the officers said. However, one officer said he will continue to speak up for his beliefs regardless of the consequences.

The interim chief, Capt. Robert Tobin, is also not likely to change the bureau's more conservative course. Tobin was a Harrington supporter and doesn't have the support of the bureau majority, the officers said. Some officers call Tobin "Penny II," they said.

The real situation now, the officers said, is that the bureau has two leaderships -- the official chief, with the provisional backing of the mayor and city council, and Stan Peters and the union, with the backing of most officers.

Peters wants a new chief appointed from within the bureau, a situation that would only serve to entrench his power further, said the officers. One alternative is a chief appointed by the mayor from outside the state. That would probably lead to a new confrontation over bureau leadership, and continue to tear the bureau and the city apart, they said.

Much depends on Mayor Clark, on his ability to balance the power of Peters and the conservative bureau majority with the community's need for more police sensitivity and communication, the officers said.

Can the mayor make a decision that will please both Stan Peters and the community-at-large? He has until September 1 to decide, and whatever the outcome, the city's future depends on his decision.



Altash Smith 10, and Bahia Cross 9, get a little relief from the heat over this past week-end.

Photo by Richard J. Brown



SISTER NATASHA, 19 MOS. AND FATHER AND MOTHER, JAMES AND PAM LOVE.

Photo by Richard Brown

"THIS IS NO FUN AT ALL. I'M SCARED." 5 YEAR OLD CORI LOVE SEEMS TO FEEL AT THE DINOSAUR EXHIBIT AT OMSI. CORI VISITED OMSI WITH

Dinosaurs visit OMSI

by Jerry Garner

Have you ever wondered what it is like to live during the age of the dinosaurs? Dream no more, the dinosaurs have arrived at OMSI.

Six model dinosaurs from a historical period spanning 105 million years have taken over the exhibit floor at OMSI. The exhibit includes the vicious Allosaurus; an adult and baby Apatosaurs (also known as Brontosaurus); a Pentaceratops; a Parasauropod which is a web-footed duck-billed plant eater that roamed North America some 70 million years ago; an Ankylosaurus, the armored lizard that resembles a living tank; and the Stegosaurus.

The exhibit, which opened June 21 and lasts through September 14, so far has been a success, according to Leslie Clevenger, Marketing Public Relations Coordinator for OMSI. "Public response to the dinosaurs exhibit has been great.

On the first day of the exhibit, we took in gate receipts that nearly topped opening figures during the muppets exhibit last summer."

The dinosaur models are made by Dinamation, a California company that specializes in recreating prehistoric creatures. They are modeled after fossil records and details such as skin color and dinosaurs' sounds are derived from living reptiles and the creative efforts of the Dinamation designers.

The models move by air compressor-driven pistons inside the dinosaurs and each creature has a computer that remembers when to turn the pistons on and off. Each model is one-half the real dinosaur's actual size. The models' lifelike features are striking. All of the creatures move, make sounds and can give visitors a convincingly intimidating stare in the eye.

Although dinosaurs roamed the earth 140 million years ago, man's study of them dates back only about 165 years. Many questions regarding these creatures still remain unanswered. For instance, scientists do not know what allowed them to evolve and to survive for so long; whether they were cold-blooded or warm-blooded, what creatures today are related to them, and why they became extinct.

One thing is for sure, the exhibit of the dinosaurs at OMSI will mark the first time the creatures visited Oregon. Nancy Stueber, who is coordinator of the dinosaurs project said, "this part of North America's continent was actually under water during the time of the creatures' reign on earth."

After the dinosaur exhibit leaves OMSI in September, it will move to Seattle.