

PORTLAND OBSERVER

Introducing ...



Beverly Bonher
Senior, Jefferson High School



Mr. Don Dixon
Counselor, Jefferson High School



Allen Biggers,
Natural Hair Sculpture,
Owner, Operator of
The Studio Gallery
Coming Soon To NE Portland

Saluting ...



Ms. Aida M. Rashad
Administrative Secretary
Region X
Blacks In Government

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Walnut Park Fred Meyer: To Stay Or Not To Stay???

by Leon Harris, Managing Editor, Portland Observer

In recent weeks, this publication has been besieged with community concern regarding the rumored closure of the Walnut Park Fred Meyer store. As of press time, officials of the grocery/variety store chain had yet to respond to the Observer's request for a statement of affirmation or denial.

One thing is for certain, the Senior Citizens Complex, less than two hundred yards away, can ill afford to lose the convenience of the pharmacy and the grocery outlet, as well as other conveniences offered.

As one concerned senior stated, "This is another example of how a major and much needed business abdicates its responsibility to a community in need."

The Observer invites comments from its readership regarding this alleged action. Please forward your written comments to: The Portland Observer, 525 N.E. Killingsworth St., Portland, Oregon 97211.

Saluting



The Portland Observer salutes the Rev. Jesse Jackson for his visit and his message to the children, parents, and residents of Columbia Villa. The Observer also salutes the Rainbow Coalition and the Portland Chapter of the Dukakis Campaign for combining forces to make it happen.

American Bridge Association Hosts Roast Honoring Chatman

The Northwestern Section of the American Bridge Association, Inc. will host a ROAST honoring Vernon V. Chatman, Saturday, Oct. 29, University of Portland Commons, 5000 N. Willamette Blvd., no host social hour 6:30 p.m., buffet dinner 7:30 p.m.

Chatman, a member of the Challengers Bridge Club, is a Life Member of the Bridge Teachers Academy and a first place winner in the 1986 World Bridge Tournament.

A well-known resident, Chatman's interest in Portland youths far exceeds his interest in bridge. He has been responsible for designing and implementing projects which amounted to more than \$1 million dollars for scholarships and loans to benefit minority and disadvantaged college students. He has also served as Scholarship Chairman for the Portland Bridge Unit. He is former

Director of Education for the Portland Urban League. He has received numerous awards for community service.

Among those roasting will be: Ray Leary, Ken Adair, Paul Knauls, Ellen Law, Lucious Hicks, Ed West, Herbert Jackson, Helen Rawlins, Ida McClendon, Beatrice Leverett and Bobbie Nunn. Michael Grice is Master of Ceremonies. The Street Corner Singers have been invited to entertain also.

Donations for the ROAST are \$25.00 per person and are tax deductible. Tickets available at Mrs. C's Wigs and Cash's Barber Shop, or call 254-3026.

The Northwestern Section which includes Portland, Seattle and Tacoma will be hosting the 1989 American Bridge Association Summer Nationals to be held at the Portland Hilton Hotel, August 2-12.

An Observer Special Report

The Struggle To Dream:

by Nyewusi Askari
Editor, Portland Observer

This special report is in response to numerous requests from members of the African-American community: (1) provide a profile of the so-called "average criminal" in the Oregon prison system and (2) give an explanation of who he/she is.

Many of the requests were accompanied by statements that revealed a growing frustration with the way African-Americans are portrayed regarding crime by the major broadcast and print media, especially in North/Northeast Portland.

Asked to provide a profile using real numbers, the Observer has compiled the following:

• According to statistics gathered by the Oregon Law Enforcement Data System, the average criminal in Oregon is (1) undereducated, (2) young, (3) unemployed and (4) white.

• At Oregon State Penitentiary, 77 percent of the prison population is white (2,561).

• The most marked differences in incarceration rates were: homicide, 93 percent for minorities vs. 57 percent for whites; rape/sodomy, 52 percent vs. 39 percent.

• Whites received significantly shorter sentences than minorities convicted of rape/sodomy, 14 years vs. 22 years; or drug possession, 3-3/4 years vs. almost seven years.

• Among first offenders, the difference in the average prison sentence imposed for whites relative to minorities was 16 months.

The study confirms what most Black Oregonians have suspected all along—in Inner Northeast Portland where whites make up more than 55 percent of the population, and in North Portland where they are more than 80 percent of the population, a large portion of the crimes committed are being committed by a white criminal element. Nonetheless, the media continues to paint the picture Black.

Blacks are also committing their percentage of crimes. The study pointed out that "minorities are over-represented in most areas of the criminal justice system and Oregon courts are no exception. Non-whites were reported by the U.S. Census as 5 percent of the state population in 1980, but this group made up 14 percent of the felons in the study."

Black Oregonians are working very hard to eliminate crime from their neighborhoods. To them, a criminal is a criminal. It makes no difference if he/she is Black or white. However, they detest media's attempt to cripple their neighborhoods by inaccurate, negative, biased reporting.

The African-American communities in Oregon are no worse or no better than other communities throughout the state. Witness the recent drug bust in Josephine County of more than 30 suspects or the proclamation issued to the African-American community by East County Skinheads, "We are determined to keep Blacks out of our neighborhood."

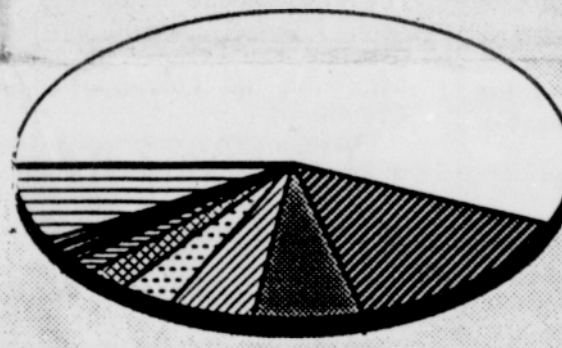
Without a doubt, many Black Oregonians blame media irresponsibility for the current flight of panic stricken residents from the North/Northeast communities. It would serve these citizens well to realize that the communities of North/Northeast Portland is as safe as the communities they have moved to.

Black Oregonians have and will continue to carry their share of the burden of removing crime from their communities. They will continue to press for adequate, workable programs. However, they will not continue to allow the media to create illusions that work against the general health and welfare of all citizens.

And, if crime, as the media project it, is a matter of color, Black Oregonians have much to be worried about ...

Percentages of felons sentenced in 1986 by number of prior felony adult convictions

From a total of 6,693 felons

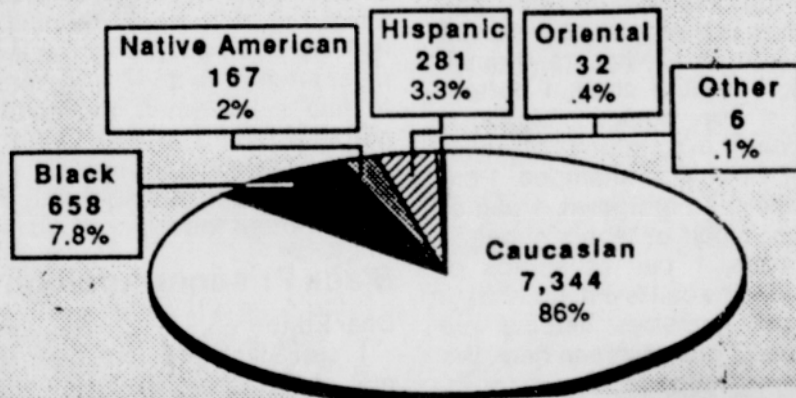


of prior convictions

- None: 56.6%
- One: 14.5%
- Two: 6.3%
- Three: 5.1%
- Four: 3.1%
- Five: 2.5%
- Six: 1.4%
- Seven: .7%
- Eight: .6%
- Nine: .6%
- Ten: .3%
- More than ten: .7%
- Amount unclear: 7.7%

Note: Percentages have been adjusted for data which was missing in 1,749 (21.1%) cases.
Graphics by B. Nichols - Statesman-Journal
Courtesy of Statesman-Journal Publishers

Felons sentenced in 1986 by race



• Of the 8,487 felons sentenced to prison in 1986, in Oregon, 86 percent (7,344) were white.

On the same hand, Black prisoners make up 15 percent of the prison population at Oregon State Penitentiary (491+). Of the 8,487 felons sentenced to Oregon's prisons, 7.8 percent, (685) were Black.

According to a study, "Felony Sentencing Practices in Oregon's Circuit Courts: 1986," African-American prisoners are discriminated against when sentenced by the courts. The study found:

• A high percentage of non-whites, 22 percent, were convicted of person offenses than whites, 17 percent.

• Drug offense were more prevalent among whites, 20 percent compared to 15 percent.

• Higher percentages of racial minorities were convicted of robbery and assault, while whites were more likely to have been convicted on one of the other sex offenses, such as sex abuse or incest.

• Overall, whites were moderately less likely to be committed to prison relative to minority offenders, 17 percent to 24 percent.

• Racial differences in commitment rates were most pronounced for drug offenses and person offenses, with minorities more likely to be sentenced to prison.

CITIZEN OF THE WEEK



A native of Shreveport, Louisiana, Ms. Ermine Gates is very active throughout Portland's African-American community. The mother of four beautiful children, Ms. Ermine is an active member of the Tri-County Section of The National Council of Negro Women; a member of the Les Femmes Club of Oregon; a member of the National Council of Negro Women Scholarship Committee and a member of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church.

Ms. Gates has been an employee of Tektronix, Inc., Beaverton, for the past 21 years. Presently, she works as a Press Operator and a Lab Technical Assistant.

The Portland Observer is proud to salute Ms. Gates as its' Citizen of the Week.