

Portland, Oregon

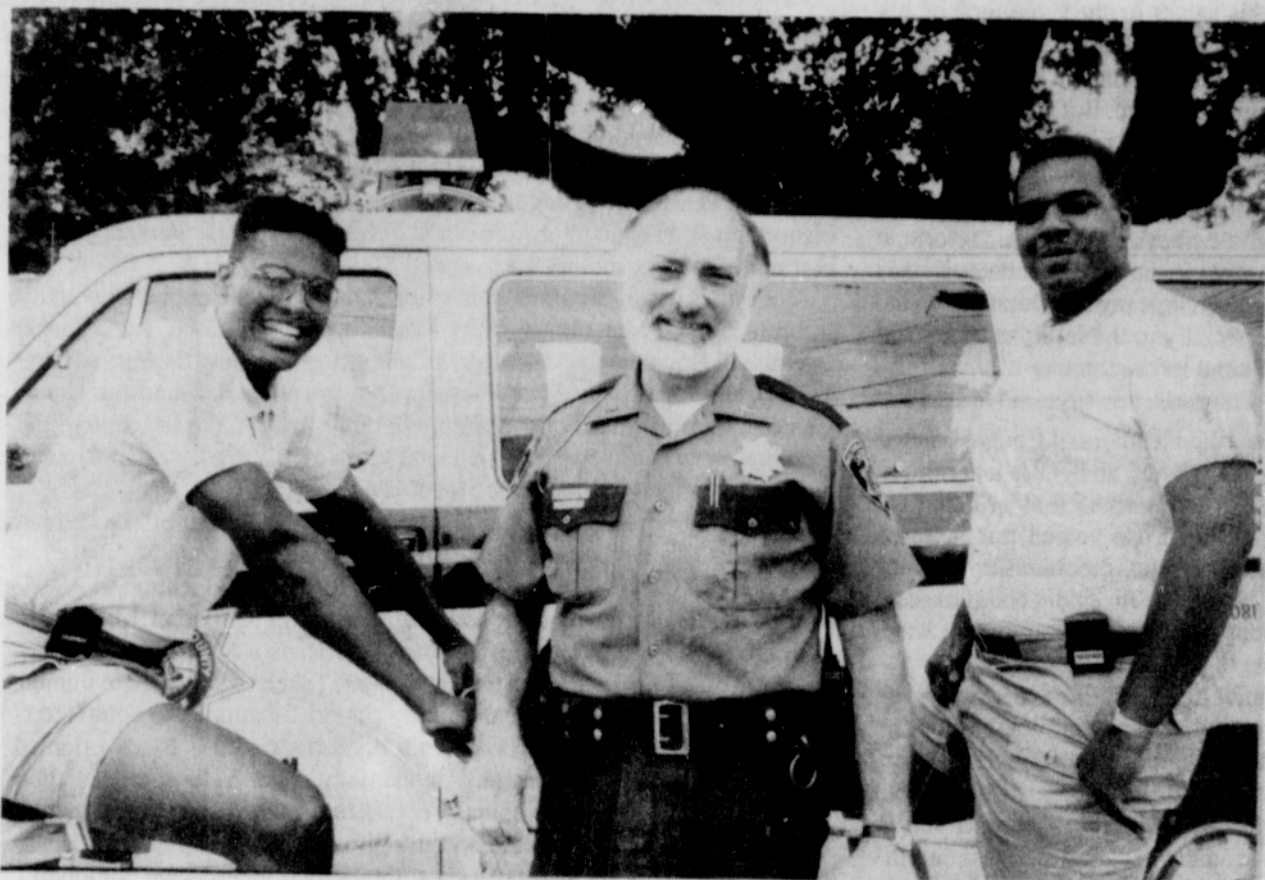
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MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Columbia Villa Safety Action Team Community Service Officers Chris Shelton, Left, and David Dixon, Right, Flank Team Leader Rod Englert

The caller from the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) had asked me to check out the changes at Columbia Villa in North Portland and hung up. Since this was the same Columbia Villa that has received the "death" sentence from Portland's major media outlets on more than one occasion, our curiosity made it a major priority. So check it out we did - and what we witnessed and heard was hard to believe. Hard to believe because Columbia Villa has been stigmatized as Portland's "Watts" or "Compton". It has the largest concentration of low-income families (1200) in the City. It is alleged to be headquarters for the CRIPS. It is also alleged to be headquarters for heavy concentration of drug dealers. Factually, it has had more than its share of shootings, gang violence, drug activity etc. According to the Portland Police department, Columbia Villa is a high crime area. And many Portland police are accused by tenants in the Villa of using this excuse as reason to "show no mercy".

It has been called by some members of the media "A Haven for drugs, prostitution, gang violence and welfare deadbeats".

We shall argue neither pro or con concerning the allegations. Those are written accounts, undoubtful, somewhat accurate, but grossly exaggerated, if one were to believe what has been written or reported about Columbia Villa in the months past. This struggling community could be "persona non grata", or not welcomed. And that is the problem. Because of the adverse publicity, Columbia Villa is virtually "off limits". At least two concerned tenants expressed dismay that, "Nobody visits anymore, the only people we see out here are neighbors and police, unless there is a problem and then, we see the press."

But as of April, 1989, some one does care. Thru an arrangement worked out by HAP with Multnomah County, a small police force of well trained, well disciplined county officers have policed Columbia Villa with great success. It is a rare occasion these days when a community of poor and downtrodden would welcome with virtually open arms a police force that moved in "next door". But the Multnomah County sheriff's safety patrol under the supervision of Lt. Rod Englert has made a difference. Lt. Englert has put new meaning into the community policing concept. Using this approach at the Villa, he has gained the confidence of welfare families and some gang members alike. His style is not just to police, but to interact and down play the communities fears that all policemen are anti-Black, anti-poor, John Wayne clones.

The safety team counselor, teacher, interprets the law if needed, feeds some of the kids who are hungry, provides medical attention if needed, plays basketball with tenants and generally speaking, goes beyond the usual day to day operations of a law enforcement agency. This twenty-seven year veteran of police work (twenty years with Multnomah County) has adopted the Villa as his own community. And he has selected a crew with equal strength and commitments. Their interaction with the tenants has introduced "officer friendly" to Columbia Villa. The Green uniform at the Villa is a welcomed sight.

When I left, the tenants were planning a barbecue for the officers. This is in appreciation for showing that they, the Multnomah County sheriff's department, truly cares.

The tenants are once again mingling freely in the Villa with little fear of violence. The playgrounds are active once more with activity other than violence. The Multnomah County sheriff's department is truly making a difference at Columbia Villa. It is an approach to community policing that the Portland police could well introduce to Portland, and perhaps they too could make a difference.

PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL OPENS NEW OFFICE



Targeting adults age 22 and above, the Portland Private Industry Council celebrated the opening of its Northeast office last week. The facility, located at 3034 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd. will provide job training, which hopefully will lead to successful job placement for 150 adults. A conference room is available for community use and the public is invited to inquire. The telephone number is 241-4644.

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SPENCER RECEIVES DMAC AWARD



Ruth Spencer was given a Special Recognition Award by the DMAC Committee at a school Board meeting, June 26. The award cites Mrs. Spencer for the consistent endeavor to bring about better educational opportunities for African American children. Since 1948 she has taught in 10 Portland Schools including Boise, Eliot, Woodlawn, Irvington, and Beaumont.

Mrs. Spencer taught at Georgia State College and Boston College and holds a Master of Arts Degree from New York University. She has done advanced studies at Boston College.

Answering questions about the changes her activism brought to the

House Passes Legislation To Record Hate Crimes In Oregon

Salem - Members of the House of Representatives today voted 40-20 to Pass Senate Bill 606 which requires police departments to keep statistics of hate crimes committed in Oregon.

"I am very pleased this bill passed as few issues are as dangerous to our dream of realizing the full promise of America as the continuing tragedies of bigotry, religious intolerance and racial hate," said Representative Beverly Stein, carrier of the bill. "For too long, hate crimes have either been swept under the rug or ignored, in part because no mechanism is in place to distinguish them from other crimes, and no statistical records are kept.

Throughout the country, anti-Semitic and anti-homosexual incidents have reached their highest levels in more than five years. Oregon has not escaped infiltration by racist, violent groups such as the Skinheads as well as other gangs. Gang related violence is on the rise throughout the state, occurring in Portland, Corvallis, Eugene and Medford. The crimes range from harassment to murder based on race, color, religion and sexual orientation of the victim.

SB 606 requires police departments to keep statistics of crimes motivated by prejudice based on a victim's perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation and other classes described in the bill. It also provides for training of officers to recognize and report properly.

"This bill will enable law enforcement agencies and police to track and deter hate related crimes," Stein said. Stein represents District 14 in southeast Portland. Earlier in the year, an Ethiopian man was beaten to death in this neighborhood by local Skinheads.

Minnesota, Wisconsin, Maryland, Virginia, Oklahoma, Connecticut, Illinois and Pennsylvania are the only other states that have legislation for hate crimes. Of the seven, Maryland has had the most success. Maryland state police have recorded much progress in tracking hate crimes and stopping them before they become felonies.



Portland Public Schools Mrs. Spencer said: "There are two actions that brought about permanent changes. The first was the 1969 Civil Rights Suit against the PPS in which the Oregon Supreme Court gave the Civil Rights Bureau the right to review personnel records of public institutions. This was a systemic institutional change. The second was the 1977 suspension & expulsion complaint that resulted in the Dept. of Health Education and Welfare finding the PPS guilty of imposing disciplinary practices which discriminated against African American students. As a result of this finding, the PPS enacted, for the first time, uniform policies, rules, and regulations governing suspensions and expulsions. However this does not mean the rules are not violated.

Looking toward the future, what needed changes do you see?"

The complaints filed with Region X in 1981 concerning achievement of African-American students, insufficient African-American staff, teaching African-American History, and high school drop-outs continue to be highlighted by DMAC and the Black United Front as unfulfilled promises. The future; more now, than ever, must include continued effort in these areas."

PHILADELPHIA MAN KEEPS NAVY BLUE ANGELS FLYING STRAIGHT



by Jeffrey Perron

Bruce Dillard will spend about 300 days this year on the road, flying from town to town, making sure all goes as planned for the Blue Angels 1989 air show season.

Dillard, the son of Philadelphia resident Marian Dillard, is this year's events coordinator for the Navy's Flight demonstration Squadron -- Blue Angels.

"I set up all the air shows, from start to finish, for the whole team," said the 29-year-old Navy lieutenant. "I handle any logistics or operational support that we need in dealing with the FAA, getting hotel accommodations and making sure we have transportation. "I start planning for the season with winter visits to the various sites from December to February. During the visits, we set the groundwork for the show and talk to everyone involved. Safety is our number one concern so everything from crowd placement to area observation must be checked. After that, I keep in touch with them throughout the year to make sure all that bases are covered before we show up," he added.

To give you an idea of the responsibility Dillard has, keep in mind that the Blue Angels appeared before crowds of more than eight million people last year.

Dillard has to keep everything running smoothly, while constantly being in the spotlight, and he seems to thrive on it.

"I think the exposure we get is awesome. It's a lot more than in other Navy jobs because of all the different people we meet," said Dillard.

"I really enjoy talking to people, talking to children. The visibility is great and it's fun. I think I'm having a too good of a time to feel the pressure," he added.

The Blue Angels are a handpicked group, chosen from the finest in both the Navy and Marine Corps. The crew is mixed with enlisted men and officers. Before becoming eligible for the team, the pilots have to log over 1,500 flight hours and have been part of an aircraft carrier deploying squadron.

Dillard, who graduated from Drexel University with a degree in operations and systems management, is a naval flight officer, which means instead of flying the plane, he rides in the back. He flies in the number seven jet with the narrator, Blue Angels number seven, and loves that aspect of this job the most.

"I always wanted to fly, but I never got serious about it until a few years ago," said Dillard. "And the flying you do as a Blue Angel is the best."

The Blue Angels were established by Adm. Chester Nimitz as a way to keep people interested in naval aviation after World War II. That's still true today because the Angels target audience is young, talented people in the 17 to 28-year-old range to inform them of programs offered by the Navy.

"I think a career in naval aviation is a lot of fun," said Dillard. "The challenges and rewards are unlike anything you'll do anywhere else. I think it tests your strengths and weaknesses unlike any job in the world. It's just a neat way to live."

NOTICE!

A July ceremony at the corner of Martin Luther King Blvd. and Ainsworth will celebrate the placement of the first King Blvd. sign. The public is invited to the ceremony, which will begin around 11 a.m.