

# The Portland Observer 25¢

## THE WEEK IN REVIEW

### Potter Retiring

After leading city into community Policing, Police Chief Tom Potter will retire June 30, 1993. Chiefs Dave Williams, Chuck Karland, Charles Moose are possible candidates.

### Packwood's Actions Focus

The Senate select committee on Ethics makes decision to focus on Senator Bob Packwood's actions and not the 23 women's sexual histories.

### Abortion Doctor Killed

David Gunn paid a high price for his belief in women's choice. This is a first for our nation. He was shot in the back by Michael Griffin.

### Health Proposal In Jeopardy

The plan to assure health care for the poor in Oregon might not make it because of the state governments financial squeeze.

### Yeltsin In Power Fight

Boris N. Yeltsin's economic reform program is threatened by the Congress of People's Deputies. They canceled his planned referendum and are rejecting most proposals. He storms out of session.

### New Attorney Takes Oath

Janet Reno takes Oath of office as Attorney General. She is the first woman in that post.

### King Trial Continues

A day and a half on the witness stand left Rodney King exhausted as he explained in his confusion of what happened two years ago. "I thought I was going to die."

### Tigard Tigers Winners

The Tigard Tigers took the Oregon Class 4A high school Boys Championship over Hillsboro 52-48.

### Snow Hurricane

It was a snow hurricane that wiped out the east coast costing at this point 114 lives, temperatures as low as 2 degrees, hikers missing, airlines shut down, highways closed a millions without power. Worst ever in our history.

1st Rose Princess Chosen  
Kurra Lee Turner, a senior at Central Catholic High School chosen as first rose princess for 1993.

### Public Schools Face Cuts

School Superintendent Jack Bierwirth proposed cuts of 500 to 600 jobs, eliminating the sports division and closing Vocational Village, "is going back to a...classroom teacher and a principal."

### Clinton Potpourri

Considering more cuts, Democrats advance job creation package; will attend Portlands' Forest Summit; swore in new attorney general.

## African-American Contractors-Construction Workers To Picket

An informational picket will be conducted at various sites to make the public aware of the problems African American contractors and construction workers are having in gaining contracts and jobs on federally funded highway construction projects in the state of Oregon.

This is not a new problem, however, it has intensified over the past three years. The plight of Black contractors and highway construction workers was likened to that of the spotted owl as early as July 22, 1991. Statistics released by the Oregon Department of transportation (ODOT) in 1990 indicated that thirty-four Black-owned firms were certified as disadvantaged business. Only 15 of these firms were able to obtain subcontracts during the previous four years, i.e., since 1987.

In 1991 three Oregon-based Black firms received contracts. By 1992 only one Black firm received awards. Since the new fiscal year which began October 1, 1992, no contracts have been awarded to an African American contractor. ODOT is aware of this problem but poses no meaningful solution. Corrective measures and suggestions have been met with hostile majority contractors, organizations which represent them, as well as unions and related state agencies. This represents persistent anecdotal evidence that the state and private construction industry has not provided equal access to contracting and employment opportunities and have discriminated on the basis of race.

On April 10, 1992 congressman Ron Wyden consented to holding an congressional hearing on the matter. It was planned for later on in the year, however, ODOT has been able to stonewall the hearing. In the meantime the situation has gotten worse, placing African Americans at the point of extinction in the highway construction field.

## House Of Umoja Spotlights Grandparents

"...It is our belief that our youth are whole beings deserving the opportunity of a full and meaningful life."



Saturday March 13 was Grandparent's night at the house of Umoja. The House of Umoja hosted a well spread dinner which included glazed ham, bar-b-que chicken, tossed salad, deviled eggs, rolls, pound cake, chocolate mocha, and much more.

Music was provided by Teddy Freeman-singing some oldies, but goodies for the "older generation, one of which we all recognized "My Girl." The younger set were quite patient about the choice of tunes. It was an emphasis on grandparents, but every age was represented, as well as a broad representative group from the community. It met one of the African proverbs that is in the resident handbook; "It takes a whole village to raise a child." "Umoja is dedicated and fully committed to saving the lives of endangered youth, who would otherwise be lost to the destruction and devastation of gang life, drug involvement and violent behavior.

...It is our belief that our youth are whole beings deserving the opportunity of a full and meaningful life."

One of the parents, Margaret Bain, had nothing but high praise for the program, she is also a volunteer for the program as well as others that lend themselves to helping our youth.

Grandparents and other community members took advantage of the beautiful surroundings, the good food and a chance to mingle and share thoughts and ideas. It was an evening well worth the time. No one seemed to be in a hurry to leave.

## Speeding Cars To Be Focus Of Neighborhood Meeting

During the past year, Sabin Community Association has increasingly been faced with real public safety concerns over speeding cars and unregulated intersections. Last year neighbors raised concerns about traffic speeding

down the hills from the ridge being a threat to school children. The Principal of Sabin Elementary School, Michael Jordan, reiterated the need for push button crossings on Prescott and Fremont. In our neighborhood surveys, speeding cars and the need for speed bumps and more regulated intersections turned out to be of primary concern to many, many neighbors. Numerous complaints have been made about accidents at unregulated intersections and hit-and-runs with speeding vehicles crashing into parked cars. Most recently a speeding car crashed into a house on Prescott near 16th, causing serious damage to the property which had been painstakingly improved and landscaped over the past year.

In response to this accident, a number of neighbors have begun to organize around speeding cars and public safety particularly on Prescott Avenue near NE 15th street. They have sent a letter to the district traffic engineer requesting speed bumps or some other appropriate measure to control traffic in order to ensure reduced speeds and pedestrian safety.

On Monday March 2, at the Pacific Power and Light Sabin Community Room, the Sabin Community Association general meeting focused on speeding cars. Commissioner Blumenhauer, Susan Hartnett, director of Neighborhood Traffic Management and others spoke on how to go about making the necessary changes to ensure community safety. Sabin hopes to launch a campaign for long-term improvements as a means of reclaiming our streets.

*The Principal of Sabin Elementary School, Michael Jordan, reiterated the need for push button crossings on Prescott and Fremont.*

# Reinventing Welfare

BY KEVIN W. CONCANNON

The next time you go shopping, the sales person who helps you could be a former welfare recipient.

An example is a woman named Betty, a 32-year-old Portland resident who is among 600 people a month who make the move from welfare to work thanks to state-supported job training.

The mile posts along her road to welfare included her parents' divorce, the murder of her father, alcohol and drug abuse that began in the fifth grade, her won single parenthood, and few job skills beyond bartending.

If that sounds hard, consider her path to the workforce and a good job with one of the Northwest's premier merchandisers.

She enrolled in a job-training program for welfare recipients, daily riding the bus to Mount Hood Community College, nearly two hours a day. She also walked 16 blocks to get her child to a babysitter then to the bus stop, sometimes in the pouring rain without an umbrella. She

was learning so much, she says, that she hardly dared miss a day.

Her payoff was a GED certificate plus skills and self-esteem that led to a job, a near doubling of her hourly wage in 18 months, and an ambition for a better job. "I guess it was always there," she says of her success, "but somebody just had to find it."

Her persistence matches Oregon state government's nationally recognized commitment to helping people get and stay off welfare.

During the campaign, president Clinton talked about "ending welfare as we know it." Oregon is already doing that, trading in the old welfare model for one that stresses jobs, and we will tell that story to the new administration.

Nationally, 10 percent of eligible welfare heads of households are in welfare-to-work job training. But in Oregon, the figure exceeds 20 percent. In a given month, more than 8,000 welfare recipients are being assisted from welfare and trained for jobs whose average starting wage exceeds \$6 an hour.

In Lane County, a welfare recipient recently told me that welfare without job training is like a crutch—it helps people walk, but it's really hard to heal.

Although Measure 5 budget cuts would sharply reduce job training for welfare recipients like her, Governor Roberts is proposing that \$37.8 million in Oregon Lottery revenues and increased beer and wine tax revenues be used in the next two years to continue getting welfare recipients back to work.

Here's another element of Oregon welfare reform: When a teen-ager becomes pregnant, she typically drops out of school to have her baby. But Oregon leads the nation in getting teen parents to re-enroll in school. Like AT&T, we want them back.

As a result, 85 percent of Oregon's teen mothers who dropped out to have their babies are back in school, and additional mothers are waiting for classes. No other state even comes close to those numbers.

Since October 1990, about 2,400 teen parents have earned high-school diplomas or GED certificates. I've attended their commencements, and I've head them talk proudly and tearfully about their achievements.

Finishing school is important because 49 percent of current welfare recipients either are or were teen parents, rendered uncompetitive

in the job market owing to their failure to graduate. Child abuse is a frequent and tragic companion.

Our commitment to getting people off welfare—and helping them stay off—extends to a family necessity that recently made headlines: child care.

In order to help welfare recipients enroll in classes, get job training and accept employment, the state provides help with child care costs. I recently talked to a young mother in Medford who said that, without this help, she would have been unable to get off welfare to take the job she now relishes at which she excels. She's only one of many.

The importance we place on child care is reflected in Oregon's No. 2 ranking nationally in our use of transitional child care to help parents and their families become self sufficient.

The next time someone argues that it's time to "reinvent" welfare, you can nod knowingly—and point to your state as a model for how to do it.

(Kevin W. Concannon is director of the Oregon Department of Human Resources. He is one of 10 people, including five governors, recently named to a national task force to advise the Clinton Administration on welfare reform.)

### Editorial

#### "A Recap Of Black History Month For 1993"

Are we to be the only people on God's earth that alleged "historians" are permitted to defame and degrade?

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### MetroLife

#### "Emanuel's Healthy Kid's Fair"

Children can meet the life flight crew, see inside the helicopter and an ambulance

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### Arts & Entertainment

#### "Falling Down"

Movie Review: Someone will be hurt including ourselves, our family and friends.

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### Religion

#### "Thirst For God"

I will not ask you to deliver me out of my situation because a lot of it was brought on by myself.

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