

**Wilshire Park Thriftway To Close**

The Wilshire Park Thriftway on Northeast 33rd Avenue will be torn down to make way for a new store.

See Metro, inside.

**Volunteers Help Children Read**

Older men and women are taking time to help young children learn to read.

See Metro, inside.

**Farmers Market In Full Swing**

It's the peak of the season for Vancouver's open-air Farmers Market.

See Vancouver, Page A6.

**Save**

A call goes out to Americans to volunteer as donors.

See Health, Page A5.

# The Portland Observer 25¢

**THE WEEK IN REVIEW**

**Chavis Denies Allegations**

NAACP executive director Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. has denied allegations of sexual harassment made by a former administrative assistant, saying that he entered into a private financial settlement with the woman to shield the 85-year-old civil rights organization from "false and slanderous allegations." The ex-worker, Mary E. Stansel, filed suit in June claiming that Chavis and the NAACP failed to comply with a settlement reached last November in which she was to receive as much as \$330,000 in return for not filing a sexual harassment and discrimination complaint. Chavis denied "All allegations set forth in the lawsuit. Any allegations of sexual harassment are particularly disturbing, given my strong opposition to and long history of defending victims of racial and sexual discrimination. The NAACP opposes sexual harassment and we believe we will be fully vindicated of the false allegations."

**Simpson's Team To Add More Black Lawyers**

NNPA's Los Angeles-based courtroom reporter, Dennis Schatzman reports that African American criminal defense lawyer Johnnie Cochran, now firmly a part of the O.J. Simpson defense team, says that he is making arrangements to bring two other black trial attorneys, Carl Jones and Edi O. Faal, onto the team. Simpson's initial decision to hire a popular, but all-white defense team, had rankled some Los Angeles black leaders.

**Arena Passes Minority Work Goals**

Goals for minority hiring and contracting on the Oregon arena construction are being met and exceeded, according to Portland Trail Blazers officials. The latest figures from Oregon Arena Project show about 17 percent of the public and private sub-contracting bids for the construction have been awarded to minority-owned firms. The work represents about \$12 million in business. Women-owned firms have 8 percent of the bids and emerging small business have about 12 percent of the work. The contracting goes beyond the minimum targeting goals Oregon Arena officials set last fall at 10 percent minority, 5 percent women-owned and 10 percent emerging small business. Employment figures for the project show 638 people have been hired to work on the construction. Of those workers, 446 were caucasian (70 percent), 158 were African American (25 percent) and 34 were Hispanic, Native American or Asian American (5 percent). Equal employment opportunity consultant Lou Boston said the PDC and North/Northeast Work Force Center have helped bring minority workers into trade unions to work on the construction.

## Twins Earn Success Over Troubled Past



Twin brothers Johnnie William Gage (left) and Johnnie Alfred Gage each serve as executive director in programs for troubled youth.

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON & PROMISE KING

Identical twin brothers Johnnie William Gage and Johnnie Alfred Gage are beacons of hope. Johnnie William is the executive director of the Minority Youth Concern Action Program (MYCAP) and Johnnie Alfred, is the executive director of the House of Umoja. Both programs are residential facilities for troubled youth in North/Northeast Portland.

The brothers have worked as independent businessmen and as youth counselors. They are owners of residential properties and rentals and recently, with two other partners, opened a non-alcoholic espresso bar called

Miracles at 700 N. Killingsworth St.

Two years ago, Johnnie Alfred was acting executive director at House of Umoja and Johnnie William was outreach coordinator for the organization.

And last year, Johnnie Alfred received his masters degree in non-profit agency management from Lewis and Clark College in Portland. His brother plans to go back to college and earn the same degree. Sometimes they wear the toga of a positive father and almost always they share the chills and frills of their own past with the youth in their domain.

Life for the Gages has not been a bed of roses. Born in Connecticut, their parents divorced and they moved to Portland at a young age. They scrubbed floors and washed

bathrooms to make ends meet in a job provided by Floyd Booker of Booker Janitorial in Portland, whom they remain grateful.

**Mom never stopped believing in us, even when we were at the pit.**

--Johnnie Alfred Gage, executive director of House of Umoja.

"Mr. Booker gave us discipline and a general sense of responsibility," Johnnie Alfred said.

They pursued an education at Benson and Washington high schools. After gradua-

tion they enrolled at the University of Oregon, majoring in business administration.

"We always wanted to be self-employed," Johnnie Alfred explained.

The twins worked as crew leaders for a youth and environmental project after college.

Then like a bang in 1977 and 1978, these young and aspiring brothers started a fall with the use of drugs and alcohol. And for a while they were enmeshed in criminal activities.

Their dreams went bleak before their very eyes.

Both served time in prison. "I had time to think about the future and also to focus on my life. At some point, I begin to think seriously about changing my life," Johnnie William said.

"I don't think we were bad kids. We saw a positive role model in our single household," Johnnie Alfred said. "Mom never stopped believing in us, even when we were at the pit."

Johnnie Alfred's message for the youth of today is "look for a winner and stick with them."

Adults should also be realistic, he added, encouraging parents to push toward good role models in the broader spectrum of life instead of a particular vocation.

The executives are modest in their own success.

They say the opportunity to give back to the community is what's important.

"It certainly helps to give back and be a

role model", Johnnie William noted. "A lot of what we do is supported and sustained by the community."

They look at themselves as the products of healing.



George Fraser, author of *Success Runs In Our Race*, presents a powerful seminar on minority business networking at a breakfast meeting Friday from 7 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. at the Benson Hotel. The Portland Urban League is sponsoring the session.

## Teachers Retire In Drove

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON

Students returning to school this fall are going to see more new teachers than normal because of early retirements.

Particularly hard hit are Benson and Wilson high schools, Portland School District officials said.

The teachers are retiring early because of financial incentives, said Lew Frederick, director of public information for Portland schools.

Frederick said the district offered special compensation as an incentive to retire. The reason was to save money. New hires cost less than veteran employees.

There's also fear that future retirement benefits for state employees will not be as lucrative. Fueling those concerns is a proposed ballot measure in November which calls for eliminating some of the retirement and sick leave benefits of the Public Employee Retirement System.

Bringing down the district's budget on teaching salaries was a bottom line reason for the early retirement incentive, according to Ed Schmidt, head of personnel for the district.

Under the plan, retirees receive a one-time lump payment of 35 percent of their salary.

But another reason for the incentive was to stave off a possible flood of retirements in the middle of the school year, Schmidt said, should the ballot measure pass and teachers want to retire before the initiative goes into effect.

He said recruiting quality teachers at mid-year is much more difficult.

Even summer retirements present problems for finding quality teachers.

At Benson, for example, good replacements are more difficult to find because there's less of a supply of teachers with the kind of vocational needs the school requires.

This is the second year the district has offered incentives to retire early and each time the district has doubled the number of employees who normally would retire.

Schmidt said 226 teachers took early retirement this summer, last year 192 teachers retired, and in a normal year there's only about 100 retirements.

In order to be eligible, the teacher must have 30 years of experience or be at least 58 years old. They also must have at least 10 years of employment in Portland public schools.

EDITORIAL

A2

HOUSING

A4

HEALTH

A5

METRO

B1

SPORTS

B2

ENTERTAINMENT

B3

CLASSIFIEDS

B6