

Lady Pilots Win Big

University of Portland beats Santa Clara.



See Sports, page B2

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25th
ANNIVERSARY

Observer Celebrates Black History

Special Black History Month Edition features history of Albina Ministerial Association.



See Black History, page B8

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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Teen Charged In Bicycle Slaying

Tyrone Anthony Thurman, 15, has been charged with shooting another teenager last week across from the Northeast Police Precinct on Killingsworth. Troy Alex McCollum, 16, died from a gunshot wound to the head. Thurman allegedly shot McCollum about 6 p.m. Jan. 25 as he rode his bicycle on Northeast Church Street. Police say the slaying was related to gang activity.

Riders Board New Train

Amtrak's new Mount Rainier line, which provides service between Seattle and Eugene is surpassing expectations. The service which opened Oct. 30 is doing so well that Amtrak may offer extended service to Vancouver, British Columbia, something that hasn't been available for more than a decade.

Simpson Book Hits Shelves

O.J. Simpson's new book and audio tape "I Want To Tell You" hit area book stores Friday. Simpson released the publication to again proclaim his innocence and answer over 300,000 pieces of mail he has received since his arrest last June for the murder of his ex-wife Nicole Simpson and a male companion.

Supreme Court Begins Review

The nation's highest court has begun its largest review of government programs designed to curb racism. The increasingly conservative court is expected to declare many of these programs unconstitutional. Most likely to fall are programs giving minorities preferential treatment in contracting, scholarships and the creation of voting districts.

Marsalis Takes Leave From Tonight

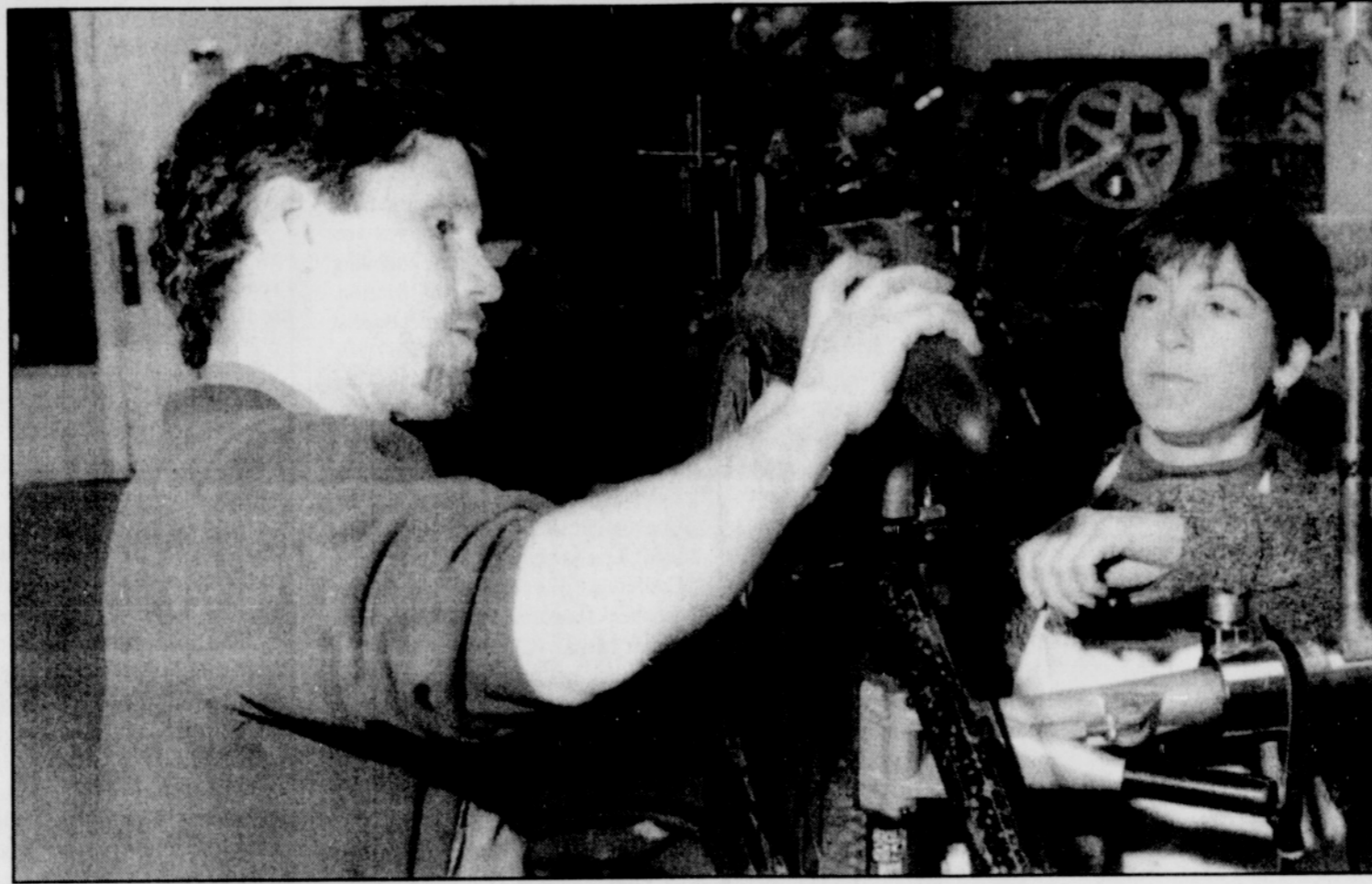
Branford Marsalis bid goodbye to The Tonight Show Friday with a montage that included him in drag. Marsalis has conducted the NBC Orchestra since Jay Leno replaced Johnny Carson in 1992. At one point in the farewell, Marsalis said the show "helped me find a side of myself I didn't know existed." His farewell bit included a camera cut to him dancing on stage wearing bikini underwear, a bra, sunglasses and baseball cap.

Clinton Loses Support On Gun Ban

More than two dozen House Democrats are prepared to oppose President Clinton and join a band of Republicans who are about to try to repeal the nationwide ban on assault-style weapons.

Police Officer Shot In Arm

A Portland policeman who had just got off work suffered a wound to his left arm early Wednesday of last week when he confronted three men breaking into a car in southeast Portland and exchanged gunfire with them. Sgt. Andrew Kirkland, 33 was treated for the injury and released from the hospital.



Director and founder Brian Lacy (left) of the Community Cycling Center, 2407 N.E. Alberta, and volunteer Karen Holtz repair a bike that will go into free public use.

Photo by Don Thomas

Where Trust Rides A Yellow Bicycle

SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

In New York City, it would be madness. But here in Portland, where cars slow for pedestrians and trolley car fare is collected on the honor system, urban whimsy has become reality.

One hundred lemon-yellow bicycles have been scattered along downtown sidewalks by a local community group, free and available to anyone who needs one. Dangling from the back seat of each single-speed two-wheeler is a license plate that reads "Free community bike. Please return to a major street for others to reuse. Use at your own risk."

What has been remarkable since the program began about four weeks ago is that, as far as anyone knows, all the bicycles have indeed been returned, something that might not happen in other cities.

"Would it work in New York? I doubt it," said Joe Keating, the Manhattan-born director of the United Community Action Network who started the Portland bike project with a friend. He said that while it is impossible to keep track of every bike, he believes none has been stolen. "But if someone needs a bike that bad, let them have it," he said.

No one is more delighted by the peaceful distribution of low-tech vehicles than the Mayor of Portland, Vera Katz, a former Brooklyn resident who has never learned to drive.

"If these bikes were left in midtown Manhattan they'd disappear instantly," Mayor Katz said. "That's why I love this city."

Mr. Keating said he got the idea for the bike project after he and a friend saw a documentary, "Sex, Drugs and Democracy," about life in Holland. "There was this wonderful scene about the free community bikes in Amsterdam," Mr. Keating recalled. "We looked at each other and said, 'O.K., let's do it.'"

Mr. Keating and some comrades scouted neighbors' garages, acquiring 10 somewhat damaged bikes, which they took to a nonprofit center that teaches children the art of bicycle maintenance. The bikes were free and an auto shop donated buckets of yellow paint.

Since the bikes hit the streets, Mr. Keating said he has been flooded with donations of even more of them. And government officials up and down the West Coast have inquired about how to launch similar programs.

"So I'm putting together a packet of instructions - can you imagine, instruction?" Mr. Keating said.

"It's more like a haiku sort of thing. Really, this is the essence of simplicity."

So far, the only problem has been an occasional flat tire. There is a telephone number to call, but some riders fix the tires themselves and return the bikes to the street.

Portlanders now exchange stories about odd sightings of cyclists offering social com-

mentary.

"Last week someone was surprised to see an elderly woman in a smart tweed suit hop on," Mr. Keating said. "She wobbled a bit and clearly wasn't an avid cyclist."

This week Mr. Keating received a call from a perplexed new Portland resident who seemed overly anxious about the bike she had found.

"Take a ride and leave it for someone else," Mr. Keating said. "She was utterly befuddled."

Cynicism was the immediate response of the Portland Police Chief, Charles Moose, who was born in Harlem. "See any cops ride away with one?" he asked. But soon he became as nonchalant as the Mayor. "It's just an Oregonian kind of thing," he said.

In fact, many migrants to Portland say the free bikes remind them that though their new city has its share of crime, it is far different from the grittier places they left behind. "People don't shoot each other over parking spaces here," one transplanted New Yorker said.

Perhaps the poet Robert Hass of Berkeley, Calif., understood it best. In his poem, "The Yellow Bicycle," he wrote:

*The woman I love is greedy,
but she refuses greed.
She walks so straightly.
When I ask her what she wants,
she says, "A yellow bicycle."
In Portland, she could have her wish.*

Report Card On City Services Released

Ihe city of Portland continues to do a good job at providing services to the public and public opinion about city services continues to be positive.

These are the conclusions of a report released Monday by Portland City Auditor Barbara Clark.

The report card on city government highlights how the city provides services in its six major areas: Police, fire, parks, streets, water and sewers. Auditors check and verify the data collected on performance and also compare Portland's performance to that of six other cities. The report also contains the complete results of its fourth annual citizen survey.

Auditors found positive performance in many areas: public safety has improved, the environment is benefiting from wastewater treatment efforts and most city streets are clean and in good condition.

However, the report also warns of problems with high crime in certain areas of town and a growing backlog of needed street maintenance work.

Overall, 53 percent of those responding to the auditor's citizen survey rated city and county services as either "very good" or "good." About 37 percent rated services neither good nor bad. Only 11 percent rated services "bad" or "very bad." Almost 10,000 households were selected at random to participate in the survey. About 5,000 completed it and mailed it back.

Citywide, 78 percent of the survey respondents rated the livability of their neighborhood as "good" or "very good." While the overall average is good, residents in northeast and north Portland rate livability lower than other areas, according to the report. In total, about 5 percent of respondents rate their neighborhood livability as either "bad" or "very bad."

The report notes that the overall crime rate in Portland has steadily declined in the past four years. The property crime rate has declined 14 percent since 1989. The survey shows citizens are much more satisfied with police service and more Portlanders know their neighborhood police officer than in recent years - perhaps indicating the effectiveness of community policing.

For the fourth consecutive year, fire and emergency services had the highest satisfaction rating on the survey, with 89 percent of respondents rating the service as "good" or "very good." Fire was followed by parks with 77 percent. Recycling with 76 percent and police with 70 percent feeling "good" or "very good." The lowest rating on a city service in the survey was traffic management which had only 40 percent rating it "good" or "very good."

A majority of Portland residents are satisfied with street maintenance, cleanliness

and smoothness, but traffic safety still remains a concern for most residents.

Only 41 percent of respondents to the survey indicated they think traffic safety is either "good" or "very good." Street cleanliness and smoothness were rated as "good" or "very good" by 63 percent and 60 percent of respondents, respectively. However, the percent of streets rated in good condition dropped from 65 percent to 60 percent.

While satisfaction with parks is very high, auditors point out the Bureau of Parks and Recreation continued to lack information to measure performance and to account to the public. They noted that park facility condition assessments are not reliable, cost of service, information is incomplete and participation data is inaccurate.

Overall spending for the city's major services increased by 15 percent above inflation since 1989-90, while total staffing grew by 11 percent.

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