

Portland FOCUS

Check out Portland's best Dee Baker, and a tribute to theatre



See, FOCUS

Happy Birthday NW Natural

NW Natural Gas Celebrates its 140th Birthday, Oregon's second-oldest locally owned company.



See Metro, Section B.

Look For Our Special Martin Luther King, Jr. Special Next Week!

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The Portland Observer 25¢

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Elizabeth Dole Campaigns

Elizabeth Dole recently announced her resignation as president of Red Cross and plans to run for presidency in 2000. She has earned national prominence and popularity among Republicans with her appeal to women, her experience as secretary of labor and secretary of transportation, and her work for the Red Cross. Other prospective candidates running against her are Gov. George W. Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle, Sen. Bob Smith, Vice President Al Gore and Steve Forbes, the publisher.

Euro Trading

The Euro currency had its first day of trading in the stock market, faring well by climbing in value against other major currencies. Millions of computers had to be reprogrammed throughout the world to handle the new bill. In Europe, euros are usable only for electronic payments and will be available as coins and bills within the next three years.

Improving Cuban Relations

The U.S. government has decided to "promote a peaceful democratic transition" by injecting U.S. money, culture and ideas into the isolated island. President Clinton is allowing Cuban citizens to receive millions more dollars from American friends and family members, allow them to buy more U.S. food and medicine, permit more direct flights between the two countries, renew direct mail service from the United States and let the Baltimore Orioles and the Cuban national baseball team play ball in March.

Funding For Elderly

President Clinton's new budget proposal consists of a \$6 billion package to help provide long-term care for people with chronic illness or disabilities. The initiative proposes a tax credit of \$1,000 a year to people who need long-term care, whether at home or in an institution. It will serve 2 million people at a cost of \$5.5 billion, from 2000 to 2004.

Military Spending Increase

President Clinton is proposing an increase in Pentagon's budget, the largest since the mid-1980's. Within this new budget, Clinton plans to increase spending for the Department of Defense to nearly \$269 billion. Pentagon alone would receive \$12 billion for new equipment, spare parts and raises for the nation's soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines.

Oregon Health Care

Oregon's plan of health care paid for by government where the poor would be required to join health maintenance organizations and have their care rationed has run into problems. For the poor, access to care has become more difficult. About 350,000 Oregonians are still uninsured. The state has abandoned its promise of universal care that was designed nearly five years ago.

Community Members Welcome Newly Elected Multnomah County Commissioner



Serena Cruz was officially recognized as the Multnomah County Commissioner for District 2 representing Northeast Portland.

(Photo by M.Washington)

By YEMA MEASHO

With room a full of supporters and friends, Commissioner-elect Serena Cruz was sworn in on Monday as Multnomah County Commissioner from District 2. The ceremony was held at the L.I.F.E (Low Income Families Emergency Center) in Northeast Portland where Cruz actively serves as a board member and previously held the presidency seat.

Her foremost supporter and colleague, City Commissioner Erik Sten, introduced Cruz to attendees and Multnomah County District Court Judge John Wittmayer who administered the oath of office to her.

Cruz's political career began two years ago when she left the Ball Janik LLP law firm to work for Commissioner Sten. She advised him on administrative and

policy issues regarding poverty, affordable housing as well as the energy office.

"We share the same interest and issues such as poverty and affordable housing for low income families," said Sten, "and I believe it is important that the city and the county have good working relationship." Being in charge of the energy office, Sten added, I might go back to her for advice on the matter.

Although she began running for office a year after she entered politics, both Cruz and Sten believe the time was right for her to make the move.

"When the seat opened, Sten encouraged me to get involved and I thought he was crazy," Cruz said. "However, after I talked to a lot of people, I decided to run because I wasn't excited about the people who were running for the office."

At 31, Cruz is the first Latino American woman to hold the position. "She is very young, energetic, passionate and has a good vision for what this region can be like," said Mary Carroll, Cruz's executive assistance. The same age himself, Sten said that it is important to have young candidates in both private and public sectors.

She is ready for this office, remarked Sten, because she inspires lots of people to get involved and to foster the Latino community, which is the fastest growing community in the region.

During her years with Sten, Cruz served as intermediary between the Latino community and the commissioner's office and hopes to continue to abridge the diverse community in her district.

In her speech during the formality, Cruz reassured her supporters that she is

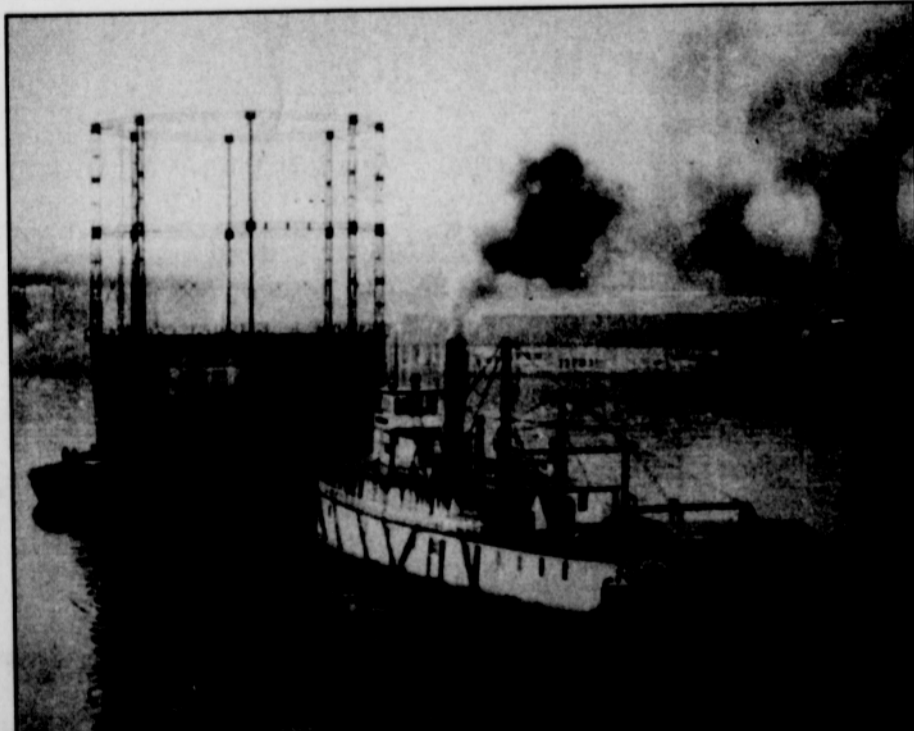
committed to making her district racially, culturally and socio-economically serviceable. Cruz said she plans to be in communities, schools and businesses to provide services and listen to them.

"It is important to build a partnership between the community and the county to work together," Cruz said, "we need to be accountable for the community and the community to the agencies."

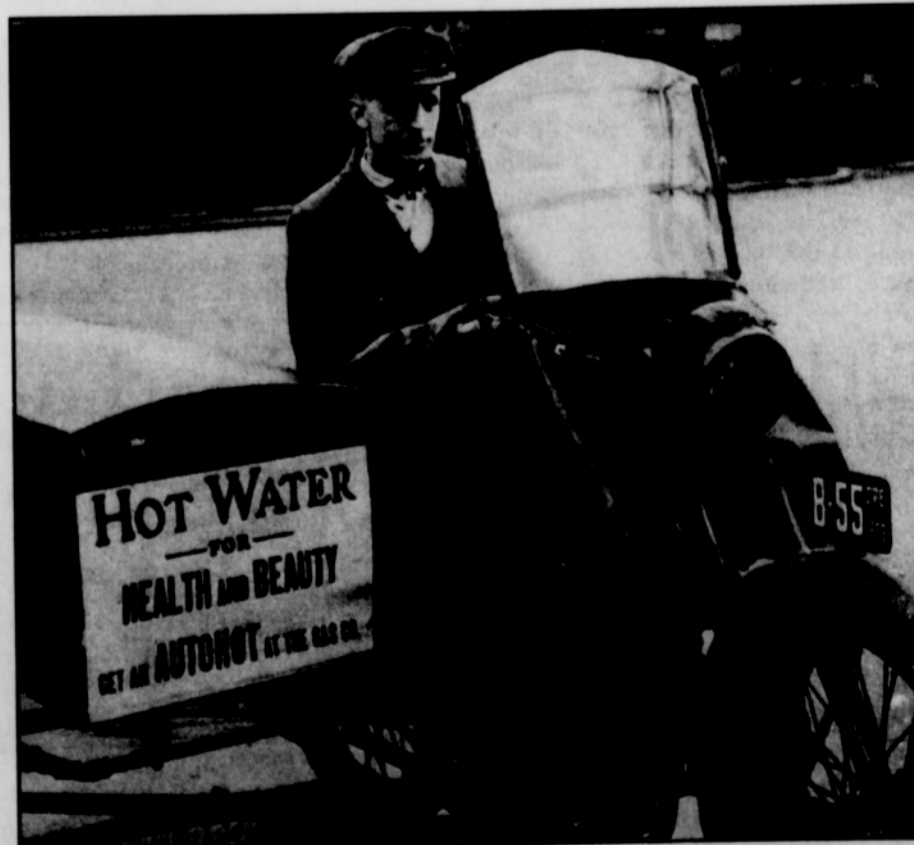
Cruz holds a masters degree in Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and a law degree from the University of California at Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law.

An additional profile on Commissioner Serena Cruz can be found in the El Observador section.

NW Natural Reaches A 140-Year Milestone



This 1918 photo shows a tugboat moving a gas holder to a site on the Willamette River. Portland Gas & Coke (now called NW Natural) made gas by carbonizing coal and stored it in giant holders. When the demand for gas rose, the tanks would deflate and inject gas into underground pipes, which provided fuel to local homes and businesses. NW Natural is celebrating its 140th birthday on January 7.



In 1929, serviceman Conrad Teber used a motorcycle to service gas appliances for Portland Gas & Coke (now called NW Natural).