

EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily Reflect Or Represent The Views Of The Portland Observer

Attention Readers!

Please take a minute to send us your comments. We're always trying to give you a better paper and we can't do it without your help. Tell us what you like and what needs improvement... any suggestions are welcomed and appreciated. We take criticism well! Get your powerful pens out NOW and address your letters to: Editor, Reader Response, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR

The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680) Established in 1970

Charles Washington
Publisher

Gary Ann Taylor
Business Manager

Mark Washington
Distribution Manager

Larry J. Jackson, Sr.
Editor

Joy Ramos.
Copy Editor

Heather Fairchild
Graphic Designer

Tony Washington
Director of Advertising

Contributing Writers:
Richard Luccetti
Lee Perlman,

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.,
Portland, Oregon 97211

503-288-0033 • Fax 503-288-0015

Email: Pdxobserv@aol.com

Deadline for all submitted materials:

Articles: Friday, 5:00 pm Ads: Monday, 12:00pm

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes To: Portland Observer,
P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

Subscriptions: \$60.00 per year

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and cannot be used in other publications or personal usage without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1996 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

The Portland Observer—Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication—is a member of the National Newspaper Association—Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc, New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association • Serving Portland and Vancouver.

SUBSCRIBE TO The Portland Observer

The Portland Observer can be sent directly to your home for only \$60.00 per year. Please fill out, enclose check or money order, and mail to:

SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER; PO Box 3137
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State: _____
Zip-Code: _____

THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

To The Editor

• Protecting Oregon's Air Quality With Cleaner Cars, Cleaner Gas

Picture a sunny Oregon day in 2030. Crystal clear skies. You can see all the mountains and hills. There are more Oregonians and we continue to drive more for work and play. But the air we breathe is clean because the sports utility vehicles, pickup trucks and comfortable cars we love to drive are virtually pollution free. Once the state's number one source of air pollution, car exhaust no longer causes smog that can damage our health or haze that destroys our views.

This pleasant vision is what the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposes to make a reality in the 21st century with new federal standards to ensure cleaner cars and cleaner gasoline.

The proposed standards, beginning in 2004, will dramatically reduce emissions from cars and light trucks, including sports utility vehicles, minivans and pickup trucks. These vehicles, which emit two to three times more pollution than passenger vehicles, now represent more than 50 percent of the market.

Under this proposal, automakers would sell cleaner cars, and refineries would make cleaner gasoline with ultra low sulfur content.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) applauds this comprehensive program to reduce the effects of ozone, particulate matter and other toxic emissions from motor vehicles.

The proposed new standards would cut the sulfur content in gasoline by 90 percent. Sulfur in gasoline reduces the effectiveness of a vehicle's emission control system by fouling the catalytic converter, the device that

removes pollutants from auto exhaust. In Oregon, the new standards would mean an immediate 30 percent reduction in pollution from vehicles throughout the state, equivalent to taking half a million cars off the road in the Portland-Salem region.

Oregonians have made tremendous progress in improving air quality over the past number of years. While our communities currently meet federal air quality standards, Oregon needs the tighter tailpipe standards and cleaner fuels to keep our air clean and allow us the freedom to choose the type of car we want to drive.

When fully implemented in 2030, the proposed cleaner cars and cleaner gasoline standards will reduce smog-producing nitrogen oxide emissions by 77 percent for passenger vehicles and 95 percent for sport utility vehicles and light duty trucks. The proposed standards would reduce particulate matter emissions from vehicles by about 84 percent.

Oregonians can be proud of the leadership role our state has played in getting EPA to introduce these standards. John Kowalczyk, retired manager of DEQ's air quality planning section, played a major role in convincing EPA to propose the low-sulfur gasoline program.

In December, I led a state delegation that urged EPA Director Carol Browner to go forward with the new vehicle and fuel standards. Now I urge Oregonians to support these clean air standards that will make an enormous difference in protecting our air quality.

Langdon March
Director, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

An Admission Of Guilt

By HUGH B. PRICE
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

The swaggering pretense of innocence of New York City police officer Justin A. Volpe ended this week in a Brooklyn Federal courtroom.

Faced with the overwhelming evidence of his depraved sexual assault on Abner Louima, an innocent man, Volpe was forced to declare his guilt—and to thereby admit that he's not fit for the company of decent people.

Volpe admitted that he beat Louima, a Haitian immigrant he had wrongly arrested after a fracas two years ago outside a Brooklyn nightclub, while transporting him to the local police station house. And he admitted that, once there, he marched a handcuffed Louima, his trousers around his ankles, into a bathroom, sodomized him with a broom handle and then thrust the stick into the injured man's mouth, breaking several of his teeth.

This was the behavior of a savage, an individual who is not fit for the company of decent people.

Volpe's brief, flat declaration of guilt was devoid of remorse, or of any acknowledgement of the pain and suffering he caused an innocent man. The New York Times reported that the Reverend Al Sharpton, who was sitting with Louima's mother in the courtroom, used one word to describe Volpe's statement. He called it "chilling."

If the trial had continued and he had been found guilty, Volpe could have

been sentenced to life in prison. Now, his sentence will be less, but legal experts say the minimum sentence for his crimes is likely to be at least 30 years. So be it.

Four other New York City police officers, charged in connection with the assault, remain on trial. Like Volpe, they are white.

There are some who, from the beginning of this horrific case, have quickly declared that the assault on Abner Louima was so unusual that no generalizations can be drawn from it.

Well, they are right in one sense: this was a police beating of "unusual" brutality. This was the work of a sociopath who deserves no mercy.

But it is not correct to say that no generalizations can be drawn from it.

To understand that, one need only remember what happened to Patrick Antoine, another Haitian immigrant, who was at the nightclub that fateful night, but had no connection with Louima and had not been involved in the melee that had brought the police racing there.

In fact, Antoine was several blocks away from the club walking home when Volpe and the police in his squad car shanghaied him off the street and took him to the station house, beating him on the way there.

Why? Apparently to "cover" their

assault on Louima. The police report Volpe made at the time stated that both men's injuries had resulted from their being involved in the melee.

We should consider that second crime—the sweep-up of a second innocent man in order to cover the first crime—as frightening an indicator of the attitude of some white police officers toward people of color as the attack on Louima itself.

This is not super-heated rhetoric.

The Louima trial opened this month against the backdrop of a nationwide protest of African Americans and other people of color, and of whites too, of several singular, controversial acts of questionable police force across the country. That led to increased attention to police policy decisions and practices that have turned the phrases "driving while black" and "racial profiling" into commonly-understood argot.

They have also made two things unmistakably clear.

One is that, in its specific, horrible details, the brutalization of Abner Louima was an aberration.

The second is the false arrest of Abner Louima, and of Patrick Antoine, were not aberrations.

Rather, they were part of a widespread pattern of police misconduct under which hundreds of thousands

of Americans, especially people of color, have been victimized by rogue police officers—and the pernicious policies that have given them leeway to do their dirty work.

These are, as writer Joe Davidson noted in an article evocatively titled, "The Scales on Injustice" in the May issue of *Emerge* magazine, among the "disparities in the criminal justice system [that] are fuel to the fire of U.S. racial tensions."

American society cannot afford to assume that admitted guilt of Justin A. Volpe in any way addresses the larger issue of police disrespect and mistreatment of people of color.

It remains to be seen whether the Federal government, and state and local governments, and more state and local police forces have gotten the message that a broad coalition of Americans have mobilized to ensure that all police officers extend to all law-abiding citizens the courtesies and presumption of innocence they deserve.

The disgrace of Justin A. Volpe, rogue cop and sadist, must be used as another stepping stone to the establishment of proper relations between police departments and the American citizens—including people of color—all law enforcement officers are sworn to protect and serve.

Not A Part of Their Sentence:

By BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

There are nearly 140,000 Women in U.S. jails and prison. More than half of these women are mothers - some 200,000 children under 18 have incarcerated mothers. And over the past five years the incarceration rate for African American women has increased an astounding 828 percent, with most serving sentence for nonviolent offenses. As troubling as these numbers are, what is more disturbing are the stories behind these numbers - stories of real women and real families.

In a recent report, *Not Part of My Sentence*, Amnesty International looks at the frightening increase of incarcerated women in the U.S. It looks at some of the reasons for this increase and at the conditions under which these women are forced to live and what happens to them while they are locked up. What they found does not speak well of a nation which calls itself civilized or espouses a belief in rehabilitation or fair treatment.

One of the report's findings was that the rapid rise of women incarcerated is directly attributable to some

of the draconian drug laws passed in the past decade or so. "Without any fanfare, the war on drugs" has become a war on women," it reports. For instance, women are placed at a distinct disadvantage by "gender-neutral" federal sentencing guidelines which do not allow the court to consider the impact of imprisonment on single mothers or the minor role that many women play in drug possession and sale crimes as a result of abusive relationships that they are in.

One of the most shocking parts of

Continued on page A6

1999

TRI-MET NEWS

Tri-Met Offers Youth Summertime Bargain

Youth can again enjoy unlimited travel at a bargain price this summertime on Tri-Met. "The Pass," which goes on sale Thursday, May 20, also offers discounts at local merchants.

With "The Pass," youth 18 and under can ride Tri-Met's buses and MAX light rail trains all June, July and August for just \$43. That's half the regular price of three monthly youth passes. The special pass is available at participating schools, and Tri-Met sales outlets including Fred Meyer, Safeway and most Albertson's stores in the Portland metropolitan area.

Pass holders qualify for these special discounts:
McDonald's: Free dessert with purchase of an Extra Value Meal. Offer excludes McFlurry dessert.
Ice Chalet at Lloyd Center & Clackamas Town Center: \$1 off general admission.

OMSI: \$1 off general admission.

North Clackamas Aquatic Park: \$1 off general admission.

"We're really pleased to bring back this affordable way of helping youth meet their summertime travel needs," said Fred Hansen, Tri-Met General Manager. "We expect The Pass to continue to be a big hit."

More information about The Pass and Tri-Met is available by calling 238-RIDE.



How we get there matters.

TTY 238-5811 • www.tri-met.org

Regards,

Ed L. Wilson

Member OAME, Black Contractors Alliance and National Association of Minority Contractors-Oregon