Portland Observer Police News/Vancouver

Inside-A

United Way Invests in Community.....A5
Neighbors Work on Keeping the Peace..A5
Nike Builds on Global Media.....A6

Metro-

Gloria Kelsey Honored for Her Dedication...B2
Civil War Could Lead to Rose Bowl.....B3
History of First Oregon Black Man.....B5

This Week in History

November 15, 1969, a quarter of a million protesters staged a peaceful demonstration in Washington, D.C., against the Vietnam War.

November 17, 1973, President Nixon told an Associated Press managing editors meeting in Orlando, Fla., that "people have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I'm not a crook."

November 19, 1863, President Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address as he dedicated a national cemetery at the site of the Civil War battlefield in Pennsylvania.

Weather

Through the weekend

Today	Scattered Showers	43°F High / 35°F Low
Thursday	Mostly Cloudy	45°F High / 34°F Low
Friday	Mostly Cloudy	48°F High / 32°F Low
Saturday	Mostly Cloudy	46°F High / 35°F Low
Sunday	Mostly Cloudy	48°F High / 38°F Low

Thought for the week

The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he could never be found out.
—Thomas Macaulay

Man Charged With Shooting at Police Officer

Police arrested 21-year-old Geoffrey Louis Young Saturday night for attempted murder, accused of firing shots at a police officer. The officer was not injured.

Young was also charged with unlawful use of a weapon, attempted assault and attempting to elude in a vehicle and by foot, along with one count of possession of a controlled substance, methamphetamine.

He was lodged at the Multnomah County Detention Center on a bail of $362,000.

Police said Young's arrest stemmed from an incident that occurred on Thursday at 8:22 p.m. when Portland Police Officer Brian Jay Sims of the Northeast Precinct attempted to stop a Red Ford Tempo he observed driving in a careless manner.

The driver attempted to elude and at one point crashed into a stop sign and drove through a yard at North Lombard and Kerby. The pursuit continued to the area of North Kerby and Holland.

Police say officer Sims observed the driver raise a handgun, heard multiple gunshots fired and observed the back window of the suspect vehicle shatter out. The vehicle continued to North Kerby and Bryant streets where the suspect abandoned the vehicle and fled eastbound.

As a result of a follow-up investigation conducted by the Youth Gun Anti-Violence Taskforce (YGAT) and the Gang Enforcement Team (GET), sufficient information was obtained for the arrest of Young on the above charges.

A search warrant was authorized for Young's residence at 7015 N. Congress Avenue and the vehicle used which is registered to Young's sister at the same address. The investigation is continuing.

Man Arrested Near Latest Vancouver Arsons

Police arrested and questioned a man witnesses saw near two suspected arsons in Vancouver Sunday night. Investigators said Sunday's fires, near an apartment complex at 924 Hylen Way, may be linked to at least 34 arsons set in the Vancouver area over several months. The man arrested is one of several authorities have under suspicion as a "person of interest." Authorities plan to decide Tuesday whether to charge him in the Sunday fires.

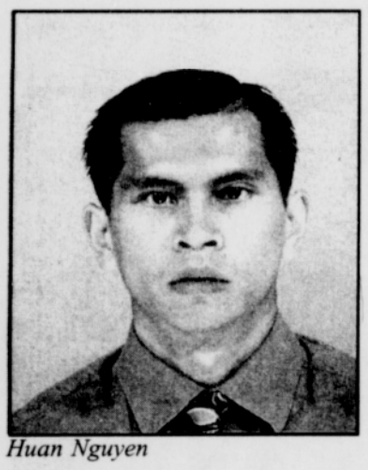
The 52-year-old suspect was questioned Sunday night for several hours. Police picked up the man after two witnesses pointed him out because they saw him near the Dumpsters before and after the time the Sunday fires started. The man was arrested on dangerous weapons charges after police found a steak knife in his pocket. The string of arsons — some of which have targeted home — has residents and business owners in Vancouver rattled. "It's kind of scary because, I mean, the dumpster's not that far from our building," said appartment manager Toni Kapton. "And so it was kind of a relief it was the dumpster. Still, that's just a little bit too close." Investigators said another fire was set in a dumpster just up the street at 7511 highway 99 in Vancouver.

Authorities believe a single serial arsonist set some two-dozen fires, including several that targeted homes. The arson spree is the worst in the city's history, Bivins said. The total toll of the fires: more than $500,000. Vancouver officials will guarantee a minimum $10,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of the serial arsonist. Of the $10,000 reward, $2,000 came from community members. Police set up an arson tip line: (360) 759-4412. Arson experts aren't surprised that the fires were growing more serious — from targeting trash containers a month ago to setting homes ablaze last weekend. Experts say arsonists can get a thrill out of watching an out-of-control fire. To feed the thrill, they set bigger fires.

"They like to see the fire," said Lt. Jeff Larson, arson investigator for the Oregon State Police. "They get some sort of a thrill out of fires, and that's where you talk about starting out small and needing to build bigger and bigger fires because they want to see more and more." The Vancouver Fire Department has enlisted the help of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. A chronology of the Vancouver fires: September 25th: Someone set several trash containers on fire in the downtown Vancouver area.

Crime Stoppers

Man Sought in Bank Fraud Case



Huan Nguyen

The Portland Office of the FBI and investigators from the Portland Police Bureau, in cooperation with Crime Stoppers, are asking for your help in locating and apprehending Huan Tran Nguyen. A no bail felony arrest warrant, charging Nguyen with Bank Fraud, is on file. Huan Nguyen, who also uses the name Alton Tran, has been identified in a large counterfeit check-cashing ring that has targeted Portland area financial institutions.

Huan Tran Nguyen is a 28-year-old male Vietnamese, with a date of birth of November 27, 1971. Nguyen is 5'4" tall and weighs approximately 125 pounds, with brown eyes, black hair, and the letters "NBZ" tattooed on his back. He is known to frequent Vietnamese coffee shops and clubs.

Crime Stoppers Is offering a cash reward of up to $1,000 for information, reported to Crime Stoppers, which leads to an arrest in this case, or any unsolved felony crime, and you can remain anonymous. Call Crime Stoppers at (503) 823-HELP.

Elephant Abuse Leads to Federal Investigation of Oregon Zoo

Federal inspectors have charged the Oregon Zoo with violating the Animal Welfare Act after investigating allegations of elephant abuse. A particular incident on April 17 led to the firing of a handler and the new charges. W. Ron DeHaven is deputy administrator for animal care with the federal Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

His investigation found that former zookeeper Frederick Marion handled Rose-Tu in a way that caused trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm and unnecessary discomfort. Rose-Tu is a six-year-old female and one of seven elephants at the zoo. The investigation blamed the zoo for failing to maintain an adequate program of veterinary care. DeHaven said the zoo did not provide proper care for Rose-Tu after she was severely beaten.

These violations could lead to civil penalties against the Oregon Zoo. The Multnomah County district attorney also investigated the allegations.

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Katz Backs Police Chief in an Effort to Rebuild Trust

Portland Mayor Vera Katz announced Thursday she has no plans to fire Police Chief Mark Kroeker over anti-gay comments he made more than ten years ago.

Kroeker would rather work to rebuild trust among the city's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community than leave, Katz said.

"His performance has met my expectations," Katz said at a Thursday afternoon press conference. "He is leading the bureau in a fair, respectful and inclusive manner." In her announcement, Katz said she fully supported Kroeker, who will work as a spokesman for the Cascade AIDS Project to educate people that AIDS is not a gay disease.

Kroeker's job has been considered in jeopardy since the Portland Alliance, an alternative newspaper, last month published anti-gay statements he made 10 years ago, when he was with the Los Angeles Police Department. Kroeker said the statements had stemmed from his personal religious beliefs and had not influenced his performance. "I have spent many personal hours reflecting on the enormity of the crisis," Kroeker said in a statement. "I want all Portlanders to know that now more than ever I am committed to bringing the police closer to the community."

The newspaper published part of a speech Kroeker gave to a Los Angeles Christian group in 1989, where he refers to the "the terrible issue of homosexuality," blames the AIDS epidemic on relaxed moral standards and criticizes the criminal justice system as the "hall of alleged justice."

The mayor said arguments that Kroeker should be fired because he is out of step with liberal Portland could be used in other communities, when liberal public officials are out of step with a conservative majority. "My 30-year fight for tolerance goes both ways," she said. Katz did not take questions. When she finished, a gay rights advocate immediately stepped to the cluster of microphones and criticized the decision.

"We are not distressed about his 10-year-old beliefs," said Bonnie Tinker. "We are distressed about his inability to accept responsibility for those statements today and to accept responsibility for their political impact in the real world." Kroeker has already taken steps to mend his relationship with the gay and lesbian community. He has agreed to serve as a spokesman for the Cascade AIDS Project and he told officers at roll call Monday that his views have changed. He says he now believes that gays and lesbians are to be valued for their lives, work and contributions.

Dave Mazza, the editor of the Portland Alliance and a frequent critic of Kroeker, said the chief obviously has the right to hold anti-gay views, but airing them in a public forum as a member of the LAPD showed a serious lack of judgment. "There's a lot of people still extremely upset about this and what we heard from the mayor here is not an adequate response," he said.

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