



The Northwest Afrikan American Ballet, one of the many events to celebrate Black History Month

Honoring Portland's Black History

The Portland Observer continues its celebration of Black History Month with our special Focus section, inside. Contributions by African Americans in Portland and the state of Oregon are very much a part of our rich heritage. Collectively, Portland blacks have thrived despite discriminatory practices against them. Please join us as we examine the tragic and progressive history of African Americans in Portland from the early 1900's to the 1970's.

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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

1 in 3 urban young gay black men are HIV-positive

CHICAGO — Nearly one-third of young gay black men in six U.S. cities are infected with HIV, the AIDS virus, researchers reported Monday, describing the findings as "chilling." Young gay and bisexual men of all races have fared only marginally better, with infection rates averaging 12.3%. Although medical care can extend life a decade or so, AIDS remains a fatal disease, and most of these men can be expected to die prematurely.

Official says many Indian cities vulnerable to quakes

AHMADABAD, India — Buildings in many Indian cities are highly vulnerable to earthquakes because of government failure to control profit-hungry construction companies, a Cabinet minister said Tuesday. The official said construction companies and architects were guilty of serious safety lapses and that state governments failed to tighten building codes despite a recent study that found many areas vulnerable. The overall death toll from the quake is expected to rise to 30,000.

Nor'easter bombards New England

CONCORD, N.H. — A winter storm that has buried much of the Northeast in heavy snow continued to pummel New England early Tuesday, with parts of New Hampshire seeing up to 5 inches of snow an hour. The powerful weather system dropped as much as 3 feet of snow in parts of the state, and blanketed other sections of New England with similar amounts. Heavy snow fell Monday in parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

Former employee kills four at Illinois engine plant

MELROSE PARK, Ill. — Workers who survived a gunman's rampage returned to the Navistar engine plant Tuesday, meeting with counselors who told them there was almost no way to avoid such tragedies. Employees were allowed to stay home, but the plant reopened Tuesday morning. On Monday, fired Navistar employee William D. Baker showed up at about 10 a.m. Monday with a golf bag filled with weapons and shot four people to death.

Fed cuts interest rates again

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve aggressively cut short-term interest rates another half-point to 5.5% Wednesday in an effort to prevent the weakening economy from slipping into a full-fledged recession.

One acquitted, one convicted in Lockerbie case

CAMP ZEIST, Netherlands — A Scottish court convicted a Libyan intelligence officer of murder Wednesday and sentenced him to life imprisonment with the possibility of parole after 20 years for his role in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. The attack killed 270 people. A second Libyan was acquitted.

New Georgia flag hoisted

ATLANTA — A new Georgia flag with a much smaller Confederate battle emblem was hoisted above the statehouse, nearly a half century after legislators stamped the rebel symbol on the state banner. The flag was raised quietly and quickly, much like the compromise that Gov. Roy Barnes began hustling through the Legislature one week ago with a surprise unveiling.

Portland: Now 150 Years and Going Strong



The City of Portland, also known as the Rose City of the World, officially marks its 150th birthday Thursday. The Mayor and City Council will have a birthday party in City Hall to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the bill signed by Oregon's Territorial Governor that established the city. Mayor Vera Katz has called for other birthday events throughout the year, encouraging people to take lessons from our history and asking them to play a role in shaping our future.

Canada Announces Top-Level Changes

Portland School District Superintendent Benjamin Canada has announced a change in the district's top administration. The change includes the departure of Deputy Superintendent Susan Dyer and two reassignments. Dyer was with the district for seven months, and during that time drew criticism for how she dealt with teachers and principals. "Susan Dyer and the Portland Public Schools District have agreed that it is in their mutual best interest that

she leave the district to complete her doctorate at Harvard University, where she has received a fellowship to participate in a select program for urban school educators," said Canada.

"Her departure is truly a mutual decision. Ms. Dyer was not terminated or forced to resign. She could have remained with the district had she so chosen.

"Ms. Dyer came to the district with a stellar reputation in urban public educa-

tion," said Canada. "While in Portland for the past seven months she has done all that she has been asked to do by the district under difficult circumstances. She has done nothing that detracts from her reputation as a strong leader who creates a positive education climate for urban students."

In the interim, Assistant Superintendent Pat Burk will be assuming the deputy's duties. John Lashley, a former teacher and

district administrator, has accepted a temporary assignment to the vacant position of chief of staff reporting directly to the superintendent.

"Both of these individuals have long histories of being involved in the district and are respected educational leaders," said Canada. "In keeping with our core values, we will continue to evaluate and discuss ways in which the district can best serve the needs of our students."

Job Training Center Coming to Cleanup Site



The former Wagstaff Battery Company on Williams Avenue, a site designated as a Brownfield property because of possible contaminations will be cleaned up and rebuilt into a center for training and jobs for people with developmental disabilities.

(PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/PORTLAND OBSERVER)

Big Construction Project Underway

A \$2.5 million renovation and construction project to provide training and jobs for people with developmental disabilities has begun in North Portland.

Located on Williams Avenue, the new Port City Development Center is the first of five Portland sites scheduled for development under the federal Brownfield Showcase Program.

McCarthy Contracting will completely renovate three existing buildings totaling approximately 17,300 square feet on the site of a former battery remanufacturing plant. In addition, a 5,800-square-foot building will be constructed between these existing structures to connect them. Finally, McCarthy will construct two residential duplexes and a 1,500-square-foot house on site.

The project has a 10-month construction schedule.

"Preservation of older buildings is an important issue to which the city of Portland has committed itself. To help in this effort, we will be working to match existing plaster facades, clay roof tiles, window systems and cornices on existing and new structures to maintain a consistent look for the new center," explained McCarthy Project Manager Julie Richard.