

National Black History in Focus

This is the 75th year that our nation has officially honored the achievements and accomplishments of African Americans during Black History Month. Our continuing series on the subject started during the first week in February on Portland's own Black History, later covering the Black Pioneers of the Old West and Oregon's Black Trailblazers. For our conclusion this week, we put the spotlight on famous African American firsts. See our Focus section, inside.



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Peninsula Little League Struggles to Survive

By MICHAEL LEIGHTON
PORTLAND OBSERVER

Peninsula Little League, a non-profit organization that is chartered under Little League Inc., is struggling to survive after 45 years.

Low enrollments and falling financial support have put a big strain on the 2001 season.

Many of the players in this inner city league come from single-parent homes with low to middle incomes who can't manage the \$30 and \$40 registration fees.

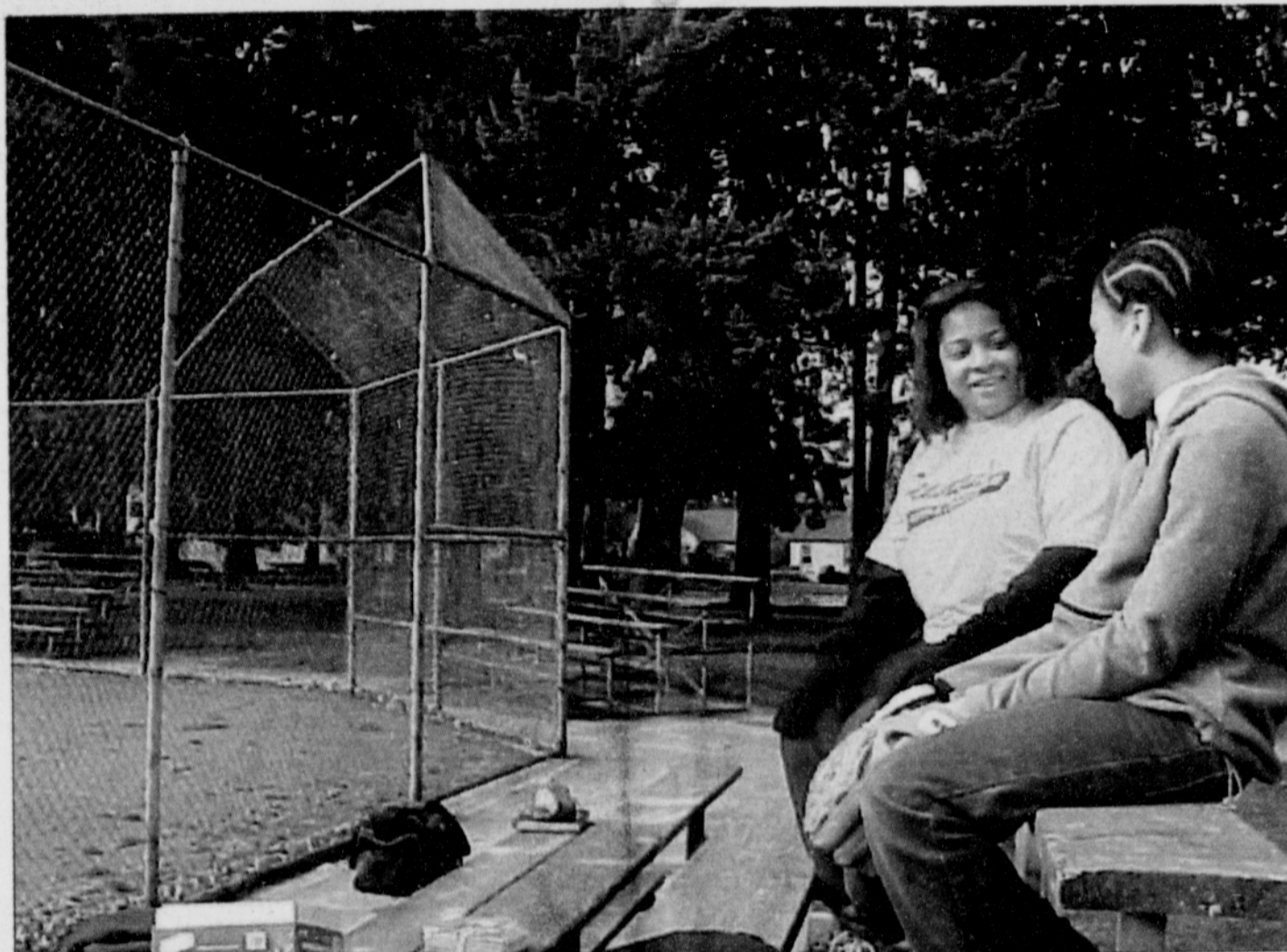
"One parent can't afford it and sometimes it's easier to tell a kid, no. It would be a tragedy to lose our charter," league representatives said.

A major effort to reverse this trend and win back more players will take place during recruitment drives Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Peninsula Community Center in Peninsula Park and at Self Enhancement, Inc., 3920 N. Kerby.

The Peninsula district is bounded by Northeast 15th Avenue, west to North Albina, north to Dekum and south to Glisan.

All of the league's officials and coaches are volunteers who give tirelessly to make sure the children and their families have a quality program. The league is also among the most successful on the playing field, winning their district championship last year. The bottom line is the kids need your support. "We are always looking to business in the community to be apart of our program by sponsoring a team or purchasing an ad in our roster books," said league President Sharon Mitchell Hendricks.

But this support has grown less with many businesses changing in the surrounding area by moving away from the neighborhood and because new businesses have a tendency not to support the



Peninsula Little League President Sharon Maxwell Hendricks (left) is trying to keep the league afloat as she meets with player Athena Curry, 10, at Peninsula Park. The league is struggling to survive in the face of declining enrollments and financial support.

(PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/PORTLAND OBSERVER)

league because of start-up costs.

"We need help from the community. Our league has gone without new equipment over the last 10 years," Hendricks said.

New volunteers, umpires, board members, coaches, managers and scorekeepers

are also urgently needed.

The league is planning an alumni softball game April 7th at 10 a.m. to help generate support. Anyone who played in the Irving, Sportsman, and Peninsula leagues from 1956 to 1998 are invited and encouraged to

sign-up for the event by calling 503-599-9929 and leaving a voice mail message.

Boys and girls looking to sign up for the 2001-baseball/softball season can also call the number above as league officials will be sure to call you back.

11-Year Old Rescued From Forced Prostitution

(AP) - Three Portland area residents are being held in a Canada jail on charges they abducted an 11-year-old Portland girl, drugged her and forced her to work the streets as a prostitute.

The girl, whose name was not released, was returned to her foster parents in Portland over the weekend.

She told Canadian authorities that she met her captors in a Portland shopping mall a few weeks ago and that they promised she would make money by going with them to Canada. The group crossed the border together on Feb. 21.

Police say the girl was then dumped onto the streets of Vancouver, British Columbia, to

sell herself and was loaded with acid, speed, caffeine and Ecstasy.

On Saturday, a Vancouver police officer spotted the girl on a street known for prostitution - "the kiddie stroll" - and stopped to check on her.

The girl quickly told her story - including the fact that she was only 11.

Police arrested her captors soon after when they showed up to reclaim her.

Jabari McCrory, 26, David Martin Walker, 25, and Melinda Mae Carter, 24, face charges including assault and abduction of a minor under the age of 14, and possession of con-

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE A2

'I Have a Dream'

Portland Area Students Honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Irvington Elementary School fourth-graders Louie Reckford (left) and Rhys Pinkley hand over books to school librarian Nancy Sullivan. The two students were winners of a Washington Mutual essay contest entitled "I have a Dream: A Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr."

Three students from north and north-east Portland have earned free books for their school libraries by writing essays in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Harrison Dark, a seventh grader at Holy

Redeemer, and Rhys Pinkley and Louie Reckford, both fourth graders at Irvington Elementary School, are winners of Washington Mutual's I Have a Dream: A Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. essay contest.

They each received a \$200 coupon to spend on books for their school library, and selected titles through Book for Kids, a nonprofit organization that offers books at discounted prices.

The awards were made for Black History Month.

"The legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lives on, and Washington Mutual is

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE A6



Holy Redeemer seventh-grader Harrison Dark (left) delivers books to school librarian Tracy Eslinger. Dark selected \$200 in books for his library as the winner in the seventh- to ninth-grade category of a essay contest honoring the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

American Leaders Pay Tribute in Kuwait

KUWAIT—On the 10th anniversary of Kuwait's liberation from Iraqi occupation, American leaders paid tribute to the U.S. soldiers who died in the conflict. At the U.S. Embassy, Secretary of State Colin Powell, former President Bush and retired Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf laid a wreath at a memorial for Americans killed in the war. Of more than 540,000 Americans deployed at the peak of the fighting, 148 were killed and 467 wounded.

Powell to Suggest Easing of Export Restrictions

DAMASCUS, Syria—Secretary of State Colin Powell will recommend to President Bush an easing of curbs on export of civilian goods to Iraq to make sanctions more palatable in the Arab world, a senior U.S. official said. Even some goods that conceivably could be useful to the Iraqi military—such as water pumps and refrigerators that are now controlled—may be exempted from the sanctions, which have been a bedrock of a tough U.S. policy toward Iraq for more than a decade.

Crews Search Through Rubble Left by Storm

PONTOTOC, Miss.—Trees snapped like matchsticks and those left standing were littered with clothes, furniture and insulation from hundreds of homes damaged by a tornado that left at least five people dead in Mississippi. Two more fatalities were reported in Arkansas and Kansas. The violent weather was part of a vast storm system that swept across the eastern half of the nation this weekend and dumped more than 20 inches of snow on northern Minnesota.

Source: U.S. Attorney

Investigating Commutations
NEW YORK—The U.S. attorney's office is investigating whether former President Clinton commuted the sentences of four convicted swindlers in exchange for votes for his wife's Senate campaign from their community. The Hasidic community voted overwhelmingly for Hillary Rodham Clinton in November.

Florida Firefighters Hope for Rain

POLK CITY, Fla.—Firefighters trying to contain a central Florida brush fire are hoping for heavy rain, saying that without it, the 11,000-acre blaze could burn for days. Florida is coming off its driest year in over a century, according to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration records, and continuing drought conditions across much of the state have been blamed for the spread of wildfires. Since Jan. 1, more than 83,000 acres have burned.

Former Luftwaffe pilot challenges Yeager's record

BERLIN—A former Luftwaffe pilot is challenging Chuck Yeager's record for having broken the sound barrier first. The German's claim, however, cannot be verified, at least not yet. Flying alone over Austria on April 9, 1945, at the end of World War II, Hans Guido Mutke pushed his Messerschmitt 262 to full throttle in hopes of reaching a friend who had bailed out under U.S. attack.

Mormon Church Releases Post-Civil War Database

WASHINGTON—The Mormon Church published records from the post-Civil War Freedman's Bank for newly freed slaves, making ancestral records available for as many as 12 million black Americans. The records have been available for years through the National Archives but not in organized form. The result is a searchable database on compact disk which includes information such as family names, birth locations and names of former slave owners.