



Diversity in the Ranks
Firefighter trainee program
opens doors
See story, Metro section inside

Black Studies Major Wanted
PSU brothers are activists on a mission
See story, Page A3



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Week in The Review

Elephant dies in Portland

The Oregon Zoo's oldest bull Asian elephant died of unknown causes. Keepers and vets used a sling to get 43-year-old Hugo on his feet and started feeding him fluids and antibiotics, but they couldn't save him. Hugo weighed about 10,000 pounds and stood 10 feet tall.

Dracula theme park has teeth

A Dracula theme park will be built near the Romanian capital rather than deep in the Transylvania region to draw more visitors, a tourism official said Sunday. A study by an international auditing firm found a park devoted to the legendary vampire would attract more than a million tourists a year if located near Bucharest.

Dog-beater shoots self

A man trying to beat his dog to death with a gun was fatally wounded when it apparently went off accidentally, said police in Winchester, Va. Raymond Poore Jr., 43, called his wife at work Thursday and told her that their dog had bitten him and he intended to kill the animal. The wife came home about 6 p.m. and found her husband dead, with a number of dog bites and scratches.

National Geographic on swimsuits

It's the middle of winter, so it must be time for a swimsuit issue to liven up magazine reading. No, not that one. National Geographic is doing a swimsuit issue. It's a special newsstand-only issue that takes a detailed look at people wearing swimsuits but without quite the titillation some other magazines muster. Instead, National Geographic takes the reader on a historical tour of the swimsuit over the last 100 years.

Laxative ad upsets Park Service

The National Park Service is fuming over a commercial in which a park ranger pours a glass of Metamucil into Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park to help the geyser stay regular. Park Service officials scoff at the notion the famous geyser would ever need help, and point out the damage that can be caused by dumping things into the park's thermal features - not to mention that venturing near geysers and hot springs is often very dangerous.

Stalking by satellite

Paul A. Seidler, 42, of Kenosha, Wis., is accused of using a satellite tracking device to trace the movements of his ex-girlfriend after their breakup. Connie Adams testified that Seidler stalked her relentlessly for months with the aid of a global positioning system device that police later found planted under the hood of her car. She said the system recorded her movements - to work, on dates, shopping and even to buy gasoline - and Seidler would show up wherever she went.

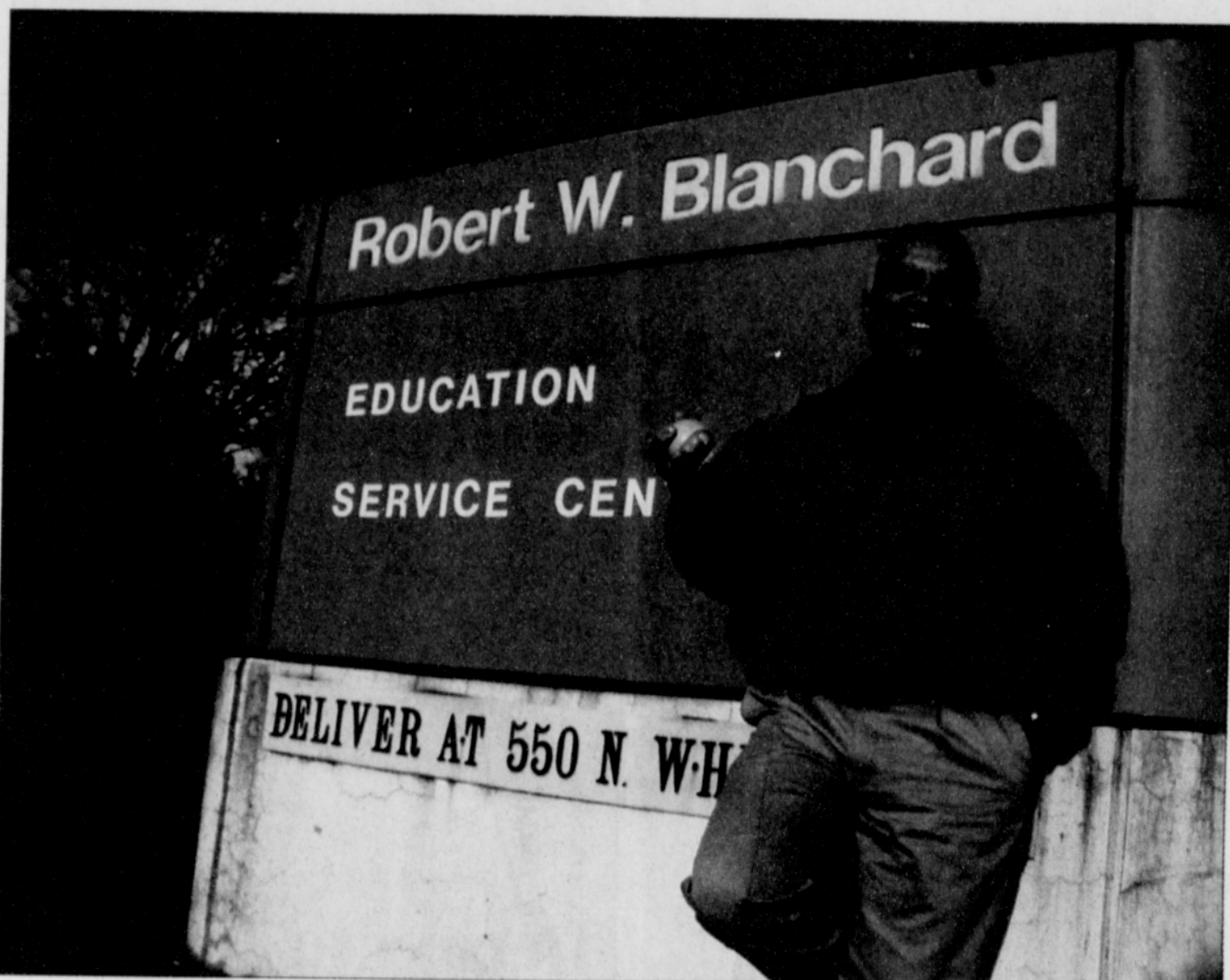


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Carl Flipper steps in front of the Portland School District administration building just a couple of blocks from the Rose Quarter — one of a handful of sites being considered for a new Major League stadium. The north Portland promoter of baseball is convinced a big league team and stadium could employ minorities in north and northeast Portland.

Let's Play Ball

Major Leagues promoted as jobs creator

BY SEAN P. NELSON,
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

An African-American and north Portland resident has a remedy for the economic blues besetting the city. Carl Flipper wants to take us out to the ballgame. Not Little League—the Majors.

Two years ago he saw a newspaper article saying Major League Baseball was considering putting a franchise in Portland. He urged Portland Mayor Vera Katz and Metro regional government to consider the formation of a ballpark as a community development initiative. He also proposed that the proceeds be used to ensure affordable housing for low-income Portland residents.

Katz liked the idea. She referred him to Steve Kanter, the president of the Portland Baseball Group, a local non-profit organization working to find ways to bring Major League baseball to Portland.

"We had the votes in the Oregon House

and Senate, but the bill was prevented from coming to the floor by the leadership at that time," Flipper recalled.

Despite that initial defeat, he and supporters of the idea haven't given up. Now a co-chair of the Portland Baseball Group Community Development Committee, Flip-

per sees a potential economic windfall for minorities in north and northeast Portland if such a stadium could be built.

"A Major League baseball franchise employs, as I understand it, about 200 people from the field all the way to the front office. This includes everything from part-time seasonal employees to full-time year round employees."

Flipper said. Flipper estimates the cost of building a Major League baseball stadium at \$300 to \$350 million, a potential windfall for minority and women owned contractors.

Currently five sites are being considered.

They include the current Portland School District administration building at 501 N. Dixon; the main Post Office at 715 N.W. Hoyt; land adjacent to the Amtrak Train Station at 800 N.W. 6th; a site capping I-205 just north of Burnside; and land occupied by Lincoln High School on 1600 S.W. Salmon.

The school administration building, main Post Office, and Amtrak Train Station sites are all located in Enterprise Zones designed to stimulate future economic development for disadvantaged and minority businesses.

The Major League team being considered for relocation here is the Montreal Expos.

— Carl Flipper, Portland Baseball Group
Community Development Committee co-chair

A Major League baseball franchise employs, as I understand it, about 200 people from the field all the way to the front office. This includes everything from part-time seasonal employees to full-time year round employees.

continued ▼ on page A7

FBI Considers Hate Crime in Shooting Spree

Chad Debnam's family twice the victim of a racially motivated shooting

BY WYNDE DYER

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When shots rang out in the early morning on Sunday, Jan. 19, Chad Debnam thought it was engine back-

fire when he went outside to find his car shattered by gunfire, he thought it must have been kids causing trouble. When Debnam heard that the shooting may have been caused by

three white teens and one white young man suspected of racially targeting a largely black northeast Portland neighborhood with shotgun blasts, his heart dropped.

"This shows us that the enemy is still out there," Debnam said. "Hate and evil is still out there."

Although no one was injured, the event opened an old wound for Debnam. The shooting marks the second time his family has been victimized by racist violence. In 1971, Debnam's brother Clarence Jr. was shot and killed in a telephone booth on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard by white shooters randomly targeting black men.

"For this to happen 32 years

later shows that not much has changed," Debnam said. "It leaves a lot of people of color wondering when they are walking down the street if they are going to be a victim of violent crime."

Debnam said he was proud of the Portland Police Department for apprehending the suspects after a chase that led them across the I-5 Bridge into Vancouver. The assailants in his brother's murder were also caught.

He said he doesn't care about the damage to his car, but the damage done to the sense of safety in his neighborhood concerns him.

continued ▼ on page A6



PHOTO BY WYNDE DYER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
NAACP member Chad Debnam meets with reporters in front of his northeast Portland home two days after car windows were shot out of his vehicle in a Jan. 19 shooting spree police say may have been racially motivated.

HIGH DRUG COSTS BATTLED

Free and low-cost alternatives promoted

As state and county budget cuts threaten to eliminate health care services for tens of thousands of Oregonians, mental health advocates held a news conference on Thursday to draw attention to programs that provide free or low-cost prescription drugs.

State Sen. Avel Gordly, an African American from northeast Portland, organized the group of legislators, service providers and pharmaceutical company representatives to help get the message out.

"In times like these, it is crucial that we make prescription drugs available to mental health patients who need help right now. It's equally critical that we let them know how they can get them," Gordly said. "These drug programs can be an essential piece of the safety net that catches patients who will fall through the cracks. Getting the message about these programs out to people is the key."

Gordly will be asking legislative leaders and Gov. Ted Kulongoski to accelerate the implementation of programs to assist patients with applications for programs that provide discounts on prescription drugs, particularly for mental health patients. Pharmaceutical company representatives will also be asked to help ease the blow once the cuts go into place.

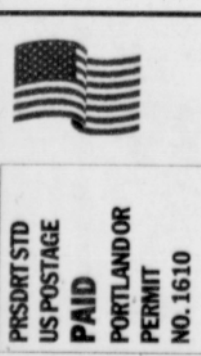
"We're here to show we want to be part of the solution," said Nate Miles, a representative of Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company. "We're doing a lot of things to help people, but if the message doesn't get out, nobody can benefit."

Miles said in 2001 over 34,500 patients in Oregon benefited from the pharmaceutical industry's patient assistance programs.

Gordly also urged legislators not to remove protections on "life-saving medications" for mental health patients from new assistance programs run by the state.

"I know what a difference the right medication makes for a mental health consumer," she said. "The costs to the system associated with a mental health treatment failure — both financial and personal — are much too great."

Prescription drug assistance programs are available by calling 800-762-4636 or on the web at www.benefitscheckup.org.



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