



Saturday, May 17  
10 am - 4 pm

GAMES AND CRAFTS  
Learn how to attract wildlife  
to your yard using wildflowers!

Free With Zoo Admission



www.oregonzoo.org TAKE MAX TO THE ZOO! CALL 503-238-RIDE

# OPINION

Opinion articles do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of The Portland Observer

The Portland Observer

USPS 959-680

Established 1970

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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER  
Charles H. Washington

EDITOR  
Michael Leighton

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER  
Mark Washington

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
Paul Neufeldt

OFFICE MANAGER  
Kathy Linder

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Wynde Dyer

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.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Portland Observer PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208  
Periodical Postage paid in Portland, OR  
Subscriptions are \$60.00 per year  
503-288-0033 • FAX 503-288-0015  
news@portlandobserver.com • subscription@portlandobserver.com  
ads@portlandobserver.com • classifieds@portlandobserver.com

## Justifiable Outrage

### Kendra James' death requires open investigation

The following is an editorial from The Portland Observer:

No wonder questions flew after the first formal response to the police shooting of Kendra James.

Four days after the deadly traffic stop, Police Chief Mark Krocker could provide little on what happened.

According to the sketchy police account, James was shot and killed when she tried to drive off as three police officers were engaged at the car. The fatal shot followed another attempt to get her into custody with the use of a stun gun.

We join the chorus of African American leaders and others who are outraged. With no evidence to the contrary, it appears that this death was excessive and unjustifiable.

James was just 21-years-old. She was a mother of two who weighed just 110 pounds. She had no history of violent crime. How could she be considered dangerous? Why didn't police just move away from the car and keep themselves out of danger?

Unfortunately, the details are withheld as the Multnomah County District Attorney's office presents the case to a secret grand jury.

What's really needed is an open and public process.

The few scraps of information in this case are

breeding contempt for the justice system. Unfortunately, there is no history to believe a grand jury will find an officer at fault when he or she uses deadly force.

We thank our African American leadership, the NAACP and the Albina Ministerial Alliance for taking this incident so seriously.

Sen. Avel Gordly was disturbed that it took four days to interview the police officer who fired the fatal shot.

During a memorial service Sunday on the Skidmore Street overpass where the fatal shot ended James' life, Sen. Margaret Carter demanded justice, calling on "the dignity and integrity that is given to the best of us, also be given to the least of us."

Chief Krocker promises African American leaders that he will push for "intense community dialogue" and "a revisiting of everything we do as an organization."

That's not enough if police policies don't change. It's not enough if more people of color are not a part our public safety system — that means more police of color, more firefighters of color, more prosecutors of color and more judges of color.

We can only hope the truth behind Kendra James' death will eventually be known. May peace and justice prevail.

## A World Turned Upside Down

### Government drops compassion and protection from duties

By MILTON J. LITTLE JR.

In the "old days," from the early 1930s to, say, the mid-1990s, it was accepted that part of government's duty was to be compassionate toward and protect those Americans who were the poorest and neediest among us.

Who among us will say now that government in America intends to maintain that obligation?

Instead, more and more, we see the transformation of government from protector of the working and middle classes to their scourge, as some seek to reserve all the "compassion" in the society for the wealthiest of Americans, who, it is glibly asserted, are being "victimized" by an unjust tax structure.

That change of heart is apparent in the draconian budget cuts in social services rolling like a tidal wave through state legislatures.

Perhaps the most dismaying example of this change, however, is the Internal Revenue Service's new proposal to target for intensive investigation those poor American workers who claim the earned-income tax credit.

During the past quarter-century this program, limited to families with total earnings less than \$35,000, has helped millions stave off poverty and given them an incentive to continue to work and be productive members of society.

Now, the Bush Administration, arguing the program is bogged down with error and fraud, has proposed onerous new rules that are certain to reduce the number of poor workers who will both

apply for and receive the tax credit.

We're all for minimizing waste in government programs. But this action doesn't make sense—especially given the far, far larger tax amounts the I.R.S. has shown comparatively little interest in attempting to collect from individual taxpayers, offshore accounts, and corporations.

In the last two years, more than 2.6 million jobs have disappeared—525,000 of them in the last three months alone. Now nearly 9 million Americans are out of work, and nearly 2 million have been without work for 6 months and more. More than 4 million former jobholders have stopped looking for work altogether, and thus aren't officially counted in the employment/unemployment calculations.

There's a seeming paradox in citing all these numbers. They sketch the magnitude of the economic difficulty choking the nation. But they also tend to obscure the wrenching plight of individuals—those elderly or ill or disabled now being cut off of Medicaid, those children left in the lurch by cuts in school aid, those able-bodied jobless workers who've spent months and years now in a fruitless search for work.

These are people, our fellow Americans, who've seen their world turned upside down.

What are they to do?

Let me put that another way: What are we to do?

Milton J. Little Jr. is the interim president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.

## GEAR

### AT A CROSSROADS WITH GAMBLING?

If your gambling is getting out of hand, there is a new program that can help you take it in a different direction.

The Gambling Evaluation And Reduction Program (GEAR) is an educational, phone-based counseling program designed for people who want to steer away from potentially dangerous gambling patterns — without traveling to a treatment center.

GEAR is free, confidential and it's easy to enroll. Call the toll free problem gambling help line at 877-278-6766 today and an advisor will help determine if GEAR is right for you.

Choose the road to a brighter future.

PROBLEM GAMBLING  
HELP LINE (877) 278-6766

Sponsored by the Oregon Lottery in conjunction with the Department of Human Services.