

EDITORIALS for the Portland Observer

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Name: _____ Phone: _____

Send your response to: The Portland Observer Editorial Staff, 4747 NE MLK Jr. Blvd., Portland, Or. 97211 or fax 503-288-0015. Submissions can also be made by emailing news@portlandobserver.com

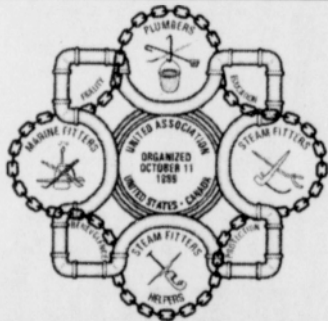
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CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN APPRENTICESHIP

Are you interested in a FUTURE in the Piping Trades?

U.A. Local 290 will be accepting applications for Metal Trade Pipefitters Apprentices (MA #1043)
This is a notice to establish a pool of eligibles.

- WHEN:** MONDAY, June 30 through FRIDAY, July 11, 2003, 9:30am – 4pm weekdays
- WHERE:** Apply in person: U.A. Local 290 Training Center, 20220 SW Teton Avenue, Tualatin, Oregon 97062; 691-1997. Contact: Robert Kimes
- AGE:** Must be at least 18 years old (proof required – non-returnable copy of birth certificate, or current driver's license)
- REQUIREMENTS:** High school graduate with C average or better **OR** GED with a minimum score of 255 if test was taken before 1/1/02 or a score of 2550 if the test was taken after 1/1/02; **AND** C or better in one year high school algebra. Official transcripts are required and must be mailed **directly** from the institution to Local 290 Training Center before July 18, 2003.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

The United Association Local 290 Apprenticeship and Journeymen Training Trust Fund admits students of any gender, race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to apprentices at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its apprenticeship policies, admission policies and other Trust-administered programs.

John Endicott, Business Manager

OPINION

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Change the System

Community finds unity in outrage over Kendra James' death

The following is an editorial of The Portland Observer:

The voices were strong, determined and from the heart.

Saturday's march for justice in memory of Kendra James was a defining moment for north and northeast Portland.

A sea of African Americans joined by people from all races gathered peacefully in one of Portland's largest civil rights protests.

People from all walks of life joined together to call for accountability and changes in our police department, the office of the district attorney and the office of the mayor.

James' death remains completely unacceptable in our view.

We question the fairness of the police investigation, the district attorney's presentation of the facts before a secret grand jury and the attack on James' background.

Authorities have painted the 21-year-old mother of two children as a "crack addict", but as African American Pastor LeRoy Haynes cried out to marchers Saturday, "We say she was a child of God."

We echo the words of Bishop

A.A. Wells, another black leader, who spoke of good cops who are true peace officers who have respect for all human life, compared to "outlaw cops, cowboy cops, trigger happy cops, rude cops and disrespectful cops that must be weeded out."

James obviously made a mistake when she resisted arrest by getting behind the wheel of a car to escape a traffic stop. But police must be accountable for their actions.

We encourage you to support another rally for justice on Wednesday, June 4 at the capitol in Salem. The voices raised will call for changes in the grand jury system and the laws governing police use of deadly force.

Letter to the Editor

Guilty of Driving While Black

What exactly is a routine traffic stop and why have I, as a white female, never been stopped for "failing to come to a complete stop?"

I see all kinds of questionable driving, including failure to stop at stop signs, failure to use turn signals while driving fast and reckless driving in freeway traffic. Yet I rarely see police officers stopping someone for "failure to come to a complete stop."

White privilege means I don't have to worry much about these

things. Driving while black resulted in the tragic death of a young woman of color who was out late—the same activity white people take for granted. White people don't worry about a police officer following their car or keeping their hands in view so cops don't shoot them.

The Black community puts out brochures on how to interact with police, outlining what your rights are. Why? To save lives and prevent tragedies such as the Kendra James shooting.

In her case, the ultimate price was paid during an interaction with "public servants" out to supposedly keep the peace and protect the public.

Then, the white officer walks and people say this has nothing to do with race.

I don't understand why the entire city is not on fire with rage about this injustice.

Linda Kanzinger
Northeast Portland

Whacked Budgeting

Tax breaks for the wealthy should not be the priority now

BY MICHAEL LEACHMAN

Public policy decisions often come down to a matter of priorities. Which spending proposals are more important to fund?

During the state budget process, legislators scour state agency budgets, demanding that various services and programs be reduced or eliminated. At the same time, Oregon spends millions of dollars through tax breaks with little oversight. These tax breaks are not accounted for in agency budgets, but they are government spending all the same.

Because tax breaks have received so little scrutiny while state agency budgets are being slashed, Oregon's priorities are increasingly out of whack. For instance, over the next two years, Oregon will provide tax breaks worth about \$36 million to well-off residents, those earning over \$100,000, to help cover the costs of medical and dental care.

Meanwhile, legislators are eliminating the Medically Needy program which provides prescription drugs and other medical services for low-income seniors and disabled Oregonians. The cost of this program over the next two years will be \$37 million, roughly the same as the cost of the medical care tax breaks.

Which of these two programs is

more important? The Medically Needy program is a matter of life or death for some recipients. Douglas Schmidt of Portland fell into a coma after losing access to prescription drugs for epileptic seizures when the Medically Needy program was eliminated on Feb. 1. The medical care tax breaks, on the other hand, are typically a luxury for high-income Oregonians.

While low-income seniors are losing access to prescription drugs through the Medically Needy program, tax breaks are helping high-

Because tax breaks have received so little scrutiny while state agency budgets are being slashed, Oregon's priorities are increasingly out of whack.

— Michael Leachman, Oregon Center for Public Policy

income seniors purchase both prescription drugs and a wide variety of less vital products, including contact lenses. While low-income Oregonians of all ages are losing access to alcohol addiction treatment services, the tax breaks are subsidizing the same services for wealthy residents. While thousands of low-income Oregonians are losing all access to preventive and dental care, the tax breaks help wealthy Oregonians cover the costs of these same services, and help pay for other services such as acupuncture and chiropractic care.

If the medical care tax breaks were budget line items, would they have survived the last two years of budget cuts?

Imagine your local legislator standing before her colleagues to defend the "Contact Lenses for Rich Ladies program," while at the same time voting to eliminate anti-seizure medication for low-income Oregonians.

Other tax breaks would likely not have survived as direct spending programs. Would you support an affordable housing assistance program that helps millionaires buy mansions? In fact, you do. Under the guise of making housing more affordable, Oregon allows people buying million dollar houses to deduct all of the interest they pay on their mortgages.

Meanwhile, one-fifth of Oregon's renters are paying more than half their income in rent with no additional low-income rental assistance in sight.

By offering tax breaks that provide government assistance to the well-off, Oregon spends money that otherwise could be used to help pay for good schools and safe neighborhoods. At a time when vulnerable Oregonians - children, disabled people, low-income seniors and other poor families - are bearing the burden of extreme state budget cuts, tax breaks for the wealthy ought to be receiving more scrutiny.

It's time to put our priorities in the right order.

Michael Leachman is a policy analyst at the Oregon Center for Public Policy.