

50¢

Taking Flight

See Metro, back page

Dance company inspired by the black experience

Feeling Good

Destiny's Child defies odds by regrouping

See Focus, page A5



The

Portland Observer



'City of Roses'

Volume XXXIV
Number 47

Established in 1970
Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • December 1, 2004

Week in The Review

NAACP President Steps Down

NAACP President Kweisi Mfume is stepping down as the head of the nation's oldest and largest civil rights group, a spokesman said Tuesday. The organization's legal counsel, Dennis Hayes, will serve as interim president while a national search is conducted.



Kweisi Mfume

Canadians Protest War, Bush

President Bush sought to patch up relations with Canada after years of bickering, flying there for tough hemispheric and global talks amid boisterous demonstrations from opponents of the U.S. led-war in Iraq.

Shriver Supports Presidential Run

Maria Shriver believes there should be an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would allow her husband, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, to run for president - but she has her doubts that it will be enacted.

U S Death Toll in Iraq at Record

Fueled by fierce fighting in Fallujah and insurgents' counterattacks elsewhere in Iraq, the U.S. military death toll for November equaled the highest for any month of the war, according to casualty reports.

Teen Sentenced to Life Goes Home

Lionel Tate, the Florida youth once sentenced to life in prison for the death of a playmate, can return to his mother's home while he serves probation, a judge ruled. Tate, 17, was the youngest person in modern U.S. history to be sentenced to life in prison.

Most Want Roe V. Wade Upheld

A majority of Americans say President Bush's next choice for an opening on the Supreme Court should be willing to uphold the landmark court decision protecting abortion rights, an Associated Press poll found.

Marsalis to Perform Jazz Narrative

Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis will star in the premiere of a 90-minute jazz concert narrative he composed - "Suite for Human Nature" - at Washington's Lincoln Theatre on Dec. 10.



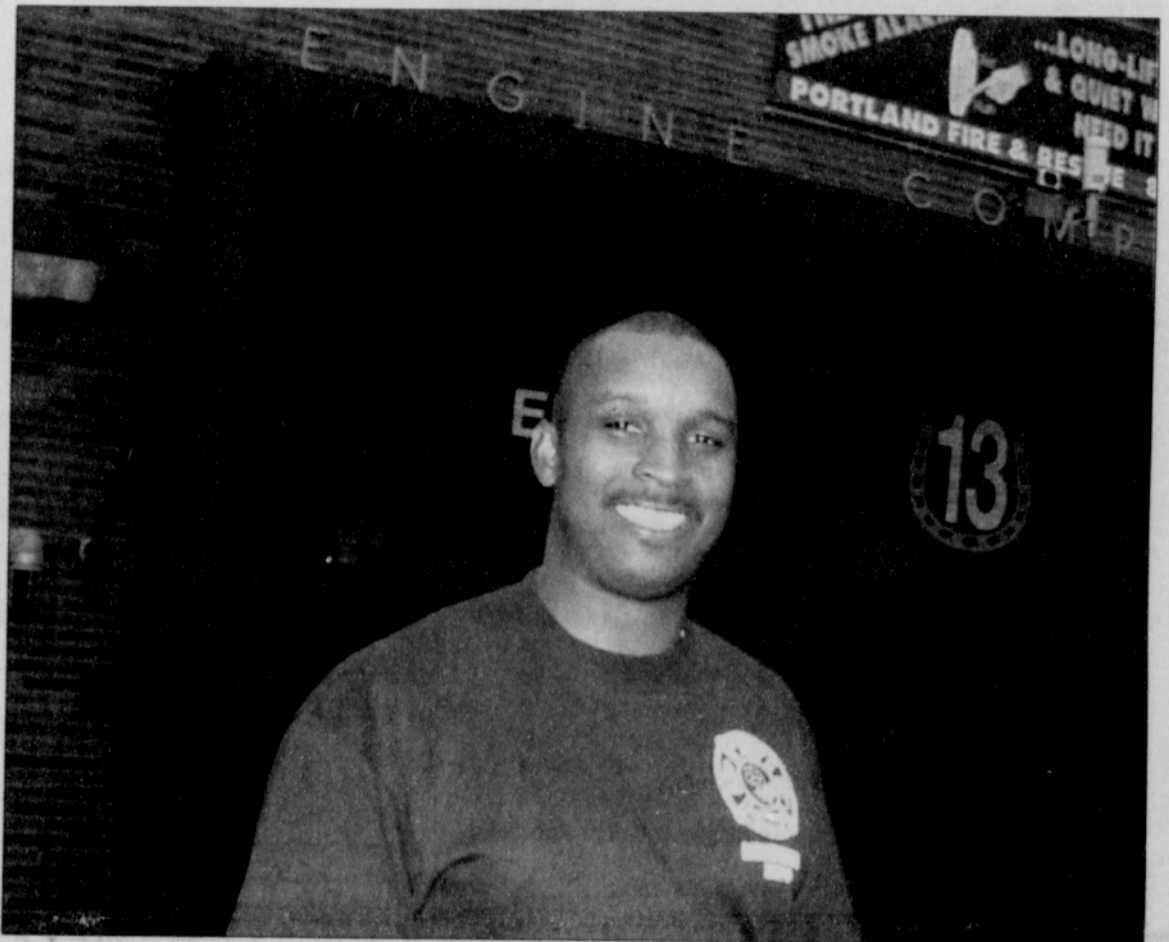
PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Downtown Holiday Tradition

Portland's downtown living room, Pioneer Courthouse Square, turns festive with a giant evergreen decorated for Christmas and the holiday season. The tree was lit during a ceremony Friday to help kick-off the shopping season for area retailers.

Fire Bureau Behind on Minority Hires

Environment haunted by past racism



Lt. Teddy Mayes of Fire Engine Company 13 is a rare firefighter of color in the city of Portland.

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

With a past smattered with civil rights violations and accusations of a "good ole boys" culture, the Portland Fire Bureau has failed to attract minorities to its ranks.

The number of firefighters of color has actually dropped from 13.4 percent to 12.9 percent since 2002.

Officials blame the reduction on minorities retiring from the bureau, though the numbers also show poor progress in recruiting a new, diverse force.

Of potential firefighters recently taking the bureau's qualifying exam, only a handful were minorities. The bureau will draw its force over the next two years from this pool of applicants.

Few minorities hold high-ranking positions in the bureau, with none ranked higher than captain. The

bureau also struggles with retention of people of color. About 89 percent of white men stay on the job, compared to 76 percent of minority men.

City Commissioner Erik Sten, who oversees the Fire Bureau, says he's confident that the few new minority

There's been a real push over the last six or seven years to diversify the bureau...

— City Commissioner Erik Sten

hires view the bureau as a welcoming environment. Still, he says, more can be done in recruiting.

"There's been a real push over the last six or seven years to diversify the bureau and we're making progress but we still have quite a ways to go," Sten said.

Firefighting officials say they spend time recruiting at college campuses, job fairs and cultural events to reach more minorities and will continue aggressively recruiting people of color to the profession.

continued ▼ on page A4

Call Center to Occupy Neglected Site

Big plans for Vanport Square scaled back

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

How the mighty Vanport has been swept away.

In place of what was once a half-million square foot mixed-use mega-development for the heart of inner-northeast Portland, the Portland Development Commission is now proposing to renovate just a fraction of the once touted Vanport Square.

Current plans call for remodeling the old Frank Chevrolet dealership on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Sumner Street into an electronic calling center, employing about 300 people, in addition to adding about 7,000 square feet of retail space.

For this purpose, PDC would use \$7 million of tax increment funds from the Oregon Convention Center Urban Renewal District, plus \$3 million from the new federal New Market Tax Credits program.

Original plans, conceived in 1999, called for revitalization of the entire western edge of the boulevard between Alberta and



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The former Frank Chevrolet dealership on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, one block south of Killingsworth Street, is set to become an electronic calling center job site with help from the Portland Development Commission.

Killingsworth streets, containing a major grocery store, housing, public plazas and underground parking.

Local African-American entrepreneurs Ray Leary and Jeana Woolley, as well as one of the city's largest developers, the Gerding-Edlen Corp., creators of the massive Brewery Blocks in the Pearl District, were behind the

plans, but somehow, the pieces never came together.

The developers were able to make sales agreements with only four of six homes on Northeast Garfield Avenue that would have to go to make way for the project's anchor tenet. Multnomah County, which owns the Multicultural Senior Center, a former J.C.

Penny store, was willing to consider a sale, but not at terms the developers could meet. The planned underground parking proved prohibitively expensive.

Most importantly, planners were unable to obtain an anchor tenant, negotiations

continued ▼ on page A4

POSTAGE AND
PERMIT NO. 4510
PORTLAND, OR



University of Oregon
Knight Library
1299 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1205