

Shootings Exhaust Police Resources

continued ▲ from Front

students, teachers, parents and the community to give at-risk youth an alternative.

Hendricks said that having the community cooperate with the unit by bringing forth any information they have is a vital key of piecing together gang activity in particular areas.

"We've had more success solving gang shootings in the last year because people who have seen things have been more willing to come forward with the information they've had," Hendricks said. "The citizens are the eyes and ears of the police. When these shootings occur, there's not an officer on every corner to witness a gang shooting. When they work with us, we have much greater luck in solving the gang shooting and putting the persons responsible in jail."

According to the website Gangsandkids.com, there are steps you can take in figuring out whether your

The citizens are the eyes and ears of the police.

—Lt. Eric Hendricks

child is prone to gang activity.

"If you are afraid that your kid is in a gang, he or she probably is. It is better to try to protect a kid who doesn't need it, than to bury a kid who tried to hide the truth from his parents," the site says.

Look for tattoos of possible gang names or insignias, question extra money that can't be explained, as well as changes in wardrobe, attitude, music and cars, colored bandanas, and examine why your child is having trouble with school or getting into fights.

Gang Violence Intensifies

continued ▲ from Front

else," Baker said, describing gang members as people who are hurting inside and looking for companions in the same state of affairs.

Like some people crave material goods such as cars, clothing or houses, gang members strive for a territory, he said. "Something to have control over and to call your own."

"Gangs are not a problem in themselves - they are a result of a much bigger problem," Baker said. "The family environment, the structure and resources. The gang is a result of a whole bunch of things that are wrong with our system."

Being in a group allows gang members to feel like they have a place in the world, often something they can't find at home or in school.

"Everyone's looking for a sense of belonging. Your child is going to get your attention one way or another, if you don't respond to your child with positive attention, they'll go somewhere else for negative attention. They want to be loved and

Gangs are not a problem in themselves - they are a result of a much bigger problem.

—Dr. Vernon Baker

some of them have come from environments where that doesn't happen," Baker said.

Beyond lack of attention, a gang member may find it's much easier to make money selling drugs than it is to work nine to five at a minimum wage job.

"A lot of it has to do with economics. The drug trafficking and involvement can be lucrative depending on who you are," Baker said. "A lot of times people just see the glamour and the pretty things on the surface but don't factor in all the things below the surface."

What a large part of gang life comes down to is a family structure that is neglectful, careless and unmindful of what's going on in a child's life.

"If I'm hurting and I have some issues, I can't be good to anyone else unless I take care of myself. Reinstating the family focus and union is what we have to do. That won't be the cure-all, but that's a real positive start with community involvement and accountability," Baker said.

With recent public shootings, it's obvious that gang violence doesn't just affect those in the gang.

"You throw a rock in the water and the ripples go beyond sight," Baker said. "It impacts families, communities. I can't count the number of funerals I've done eulogies for over the past 9 or 10 years. You have children losing parents, parents losing children. The overarching affect of gang violence itself is horrifically tremendous."

For more information in getting involved with the House of Umoja, located at Northeast 17th and Alberta Street, call 503-282-3296.

School Closures Pick Up Steam

continued ▲ from Front

Most objected to moving seventh and eighth graders into Jefferson.

Vesia Loving, a long time African-American resident, parent and community leader, called it an insane idea and another in a long list of ill-advised changes to schools serving north and northeast Portland over the past 30 years.

Many were worried about students being inappropriately exposed to older students at Jefferson.

A large group of students from Sisters in Action for Power spoke eloquently in opposition to the proposals, likening the

plans to racial discrimination and redlining. Their comments drew loud cheers from the audience.

Elisha Williams, 17, said the district was continuing a pattern of gentrification, forcing a high proportion of students of color and low-income students into a very small area.

Parents in Applegate and Kenton Elementary pleaded for the continuation of their schools, arguing their neighborhoods were growing with new residents and prosperity fueled in part by its new light-rail transportation link.

Phillips said several modifications were made to her original proposals based on sug-

gestions from the community and school board members.

One example is that Whitaker seventh and eighth graders would relocate to Tubman Middle School next year, before both schools merge into Jefferson in two years.

School district officials said all the proposals are designed to improve educational services and close the achievement gap, stabilizing schools impacted by declining enrollment, and maximize the use of staff.

The board will vote on the recommendations at their regularly scheduled meetings on Monday, March 14 and Monday, March 28.

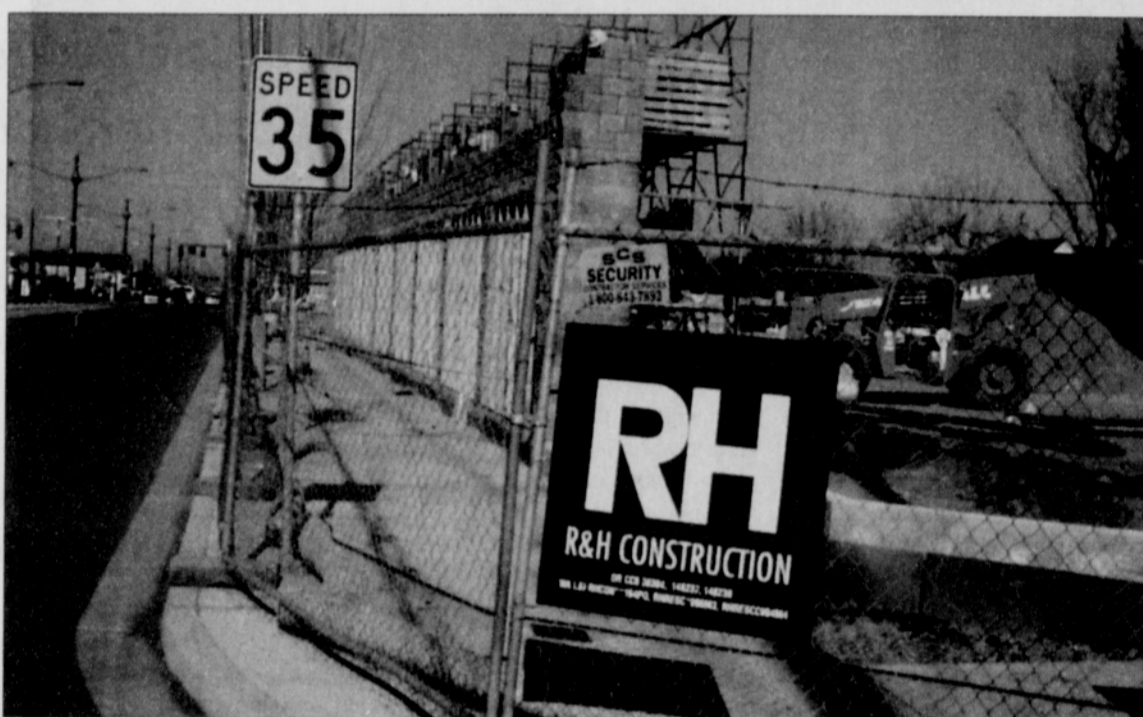


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The New Seasons Market on North Interstate Avenue between Holman Street and Portland Boulevard is in the early stages of construction.

New Seasons Market Builds

Construction has begun for opening a new location of New Seasons Market on North Portland Boulevard and Interstate Avenue.

The store is scheduled to open this fall with more than 33,000 square feet and employing approximately 120 to 130 staff members for this location.

"We've had wonderful responses from the neighborhood. People in the community have been very supportive," said Claudia Knotek, community relations manager for New Seasons.

"The biggest reason for the new store is that we had gotten so many requests from customers," Knotek said. "We had so many people saying 'We love your store but it's too far to drive.' We thought this would be a great location because it's on the brand new MAX line. What a nice way to use public transportation to do grocery shopping."

The independently and locally owned store chain celebrated its fifth anniversary last weekend, noting five store openings in five years.

Senate Shoots Down Minimum Wage Increase

(AP) — The last increase in the minimum wage was in 1996. And if Republicans now in control of Congress have their way, don't look for another one anytime soon.

The GOP-controlled Senate defeated a labor-backed increase in the \$5.15 wage floor on Monday, saying it would only hurt the entry-level workers it was designed to help.

Democrats then helped kill a Republican alternative, arguing it would have weakened existing worker protections.

"I believe that anyone who works 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year should not live in poverty in the richest country in the world," said Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., arguing for the Democratic proposal to increase the minimum wage by \$2.10 over the next 26 months.

Republicans countered with a smaller increase, \$1.10 in two steps

over 18 months, they said would help workers without hampering the creation of jobs needed to help those with low skills. But the Republican bill would have also gutted minimum wage provisions for restaurant workers, even in states like Oregon who have passed a higher minimum wage for all workers.

The Democratic amendment was defeated, with 46 votes for and 49 against. The GOP alternative fell by a wider margin, 38 for and 61 against.

Kennedy accused Republicans of advancing a "deeper poverty agenda" for the poor by including several provisions to cut long-standing wage and overtime protections for millions of Americans. He took particular aim at Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., a conservative who is atop the Democratic target list for 2006 and the lead supporter of the GOP minimum wage alternative.

Chimney Fall Kills Student

(AP) — A University of Oregon student died when he fell down a chimney shaft at the Ione Plaza, a 14-story apartment building next to Portland State University.

Firefighters found the man buried under burning ash at the bottom of the shaft early Sunday, said A.J. Jackson, a spokeswoman with the Portland Fire Bureau.

The victim, Timothy D. Buras of Palatine, Ill., was visiting Port-

land for the weekend with a friend, who said he had watched Buras fall into the shaft on the roof of the building.

It was the second death in a decade involving the chimney shaft. In August 1994, police found the body of Michael Louis Hall, 20, at the bottom of the ventilation shaft a month after he was reported missing. Hall had been attending a party in the apartment building.



It's not whether you win or lose,

but how you play
the game

The game is just a game... it's how you play that makes it fun, or frustrating, or dangerous. It's true for all types of games — including gambling. Less than three percent of Oregonians may have a gambling problem — but when they play, it's more than a game. The way they play puts them and their families at financial and emotional risk.

If playing isn't fun anymore, call:
1-877-2-STOP-NOW

Licensed treatment providers are there to listen, help and make referrals to local treatment centers 24 hours a day.

Or visit www.oregonlotteryhelp.org for:

- Warning Signs
- Treatment Centers
- How to Get Help
- Reaching Out

▶▶ When gambling is more than a game, no one wins.