



The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'

Volume XXXVI, Number 21

Established in 1970
Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com

Wednesday • May 24, 2006

Driving While Black

No relief from racial profiling

Driving While Black is a mock charge many people of color use to describe the likelihood of being involved in a traffic stop.

Now a perception of unfair law enforcement has just been reinforced by a Portland Police Bureau report that shows black and Latino drivers are pulled over 2.4 times more than whites.



Acting Chief Rosie Sizer

Although the data doesn't prove blatant racism within the police force, the higher number of stops for people of color, considering they make up a smaller percentage of the population, strongly suggest a racial disparity.

For example, whites make up 79 percent of the city's population and account for 54,218, or 68 percent of all stops. Blacks make up 6 percent of the population and account for 10,702 or 27 percent of police stops. Latinos also make up 6 percent of the population and account for 6,801 or 9 percent of all stops.

The 2004-05 report also shows that the African Americans and Latinos were more likely to be searched when stopped. About 27 percent or 2,933 African Americans and 26 percent or 1,750 Latinos were searched, more than twice the percentage of whites.

What's more, police were more

likely to discover drugs or contraband while searching white drivers: drugs were found on 131 or 4 percent of African American drivers, 64 or 4 percent of Latino drivers, and 392 or 6 percent of white drivers.

Acting Chief Rosie Sizer said the overrepresentation of both blacks and Latinos in Portland police traffic stops are of concern and should raise questions among officers as to what's causing the racial dis-

respectfully explain the reasons for traffic stops whenever they make them.

"I believe we must reinvigorate our efforts to build relationships within the community, particularly communities of color," Sizer wrote in an internal memo distributed May 23 to officers, the day before the data was made public.

The Portland Police Bureau began data collection in 2001 under former Chief Mark Kroeker, who formed a Blue Ribbon Panel on Racial Profiling to address concerns that officers disproportionately target minorities.

The information on stops was meant to be reviewed and released quarterly to help police administrators and the community determine whether the stops are influenced by racial bias.

The Independent Police Review has

continued ▼ on page A6



PHOTO BY ISAIAH BOUIE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
An African American man is handcuffed and questioned at the Rose Quarter Transit Center Thursday by Portland Police shortly before being released.

Blacks make up 6 percent of the population and account for 10,702 or 27 percent of police stops.

African Americans were more likely to be stopped than whites in each of the Police Bureau's five precincts. Latinos were more likely to be stopped than whites in four of the five precincts.

parity. She said many factors could be at play. She asked that officers and community members find ways to work together to counter distrust. She also encouraged officers to

PDC Hostility

City agency defends against discrimination

Two African Americans at the Portland Development Commission have filed formal complaints that accuse a PDC executive of racial discrimination and allege a pattern of discrimination at the city agency.

Tyrone Henry, a former contract compliance manager, and Christina Cain, a senior executive assistant, say executive officer Lori Sundstrom retaliated against them after they put their names on a memo offering ideas to improve the PDC's treatment of minority employees.

Also, Rita McCain-Walker, an African American and PDC's home ownership coordinator, recently resigned. She said she left in part because of the "removal of African American employees from this organization."

Henry's lawsuit, filed May 16 in federal court, claims that "there is a pattern and practice of racial discrimination at PDC" and that he was wrongfully fired in March.

He says Sundstrom micromanaged and harassed him after becoming his direct supervisor last fall. The lawsuit names the PDC, Sundstrom and executive director Bruce Warner as defendants.

Cain filed a complaint with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries on the same day, making similar allegations.

According to the complaint, she says she previously received positive job reviews but was unjustly criticized by Sundstrom when she told her "You should be happy to still be making the same amount of money here."

Elissa Gertler, PDC spokeswoman, refused to respond to the complaints, saying the agency doesn't talk about pending lawsuits or personnel matters.

Henry said PDC executives haven't addressed complaints by minority employees.

"There is a double standard on the way people of color are treated," Henry said.

Frederick in Runoff for Commission Seat

Only minority candidate in Portland

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Now that the primaries are behind us and the remaining candidates prepare for a November runoff, one thing is clear this election season: Portland can expect most of our leaders to remain white and male.

Diane Linn will lose her position

as County Board of Commission Chair to Ted Wheeler; and Ginny Burdick, Amanda Fritz and Lucinda Tate failed to oust incumbents Erik Sten and Dan Saltzman on the all-white male City Council.

This leaves only Lew Frederick, in a race for a district two seat on the county board, as the only minority candidate left running for top positions in both city and county government.

Frederick, who is on leave as a spokesman for Portland Public Schools, faces the runoff against Jeff Cogen, chief of staff for



Lew Frederick

Saltzman.

If Frederick wins the seat, he'll be the first African American city or county commissioner in over a decade, but for him, the principle concerns before our city and county transcend race and gender.

Frederick is focusing on three issues: health care, disaster preparedness and after-school programs.

"There are basic things people want, and I'll bring visions of different groups in Portland to the County Commission," he said.

Frederick's success in the pri-

mary may be a result of his grassroots approach in the community, two decades in the making. He's got his share of high-profile endorsements, but doesn't come close to matching Cogen's campaign spending.

"We didn't have the money, but we targeted the passion," he said.

The long-time northeast Portland resident has a laundry list of former occupations, including television reporter, teacher and actor. When Frederick talks about diversity, he doesn't just speak in terms of race. When he outlines his

agenda, he doesn't narrow it to anyone demographic. When asked to comment about minorities, he refuses to be pinned down.

Referring to issues he'll address: "I'm including African Americans, and elderly people out of their homes, fourth graders with parents who can't afford to feed them, and 18-34 year olds trying to get into the middle class but aren't being offered benefit packages."

"These are the issues that resonate," he said.

continued ▼ on page A6

Week in The Review

CIA Nominee Wins Vote

Gen. Michael Hayden moved a step closer to becoming the nation's 20th CIA chief Tuesday. The Senate Intelligence Committee recommended confirmation, 12-3, with just Ron Wyden, D-Ore. and two other Democrats voting against the Bush nominee.

Osama Backs Up Moussaoui
Osama bin Laden said Zacarias

Moussaoui, the only person convicted in a U.S. court for the Sept. 11 attacks, had nothing to do with the operations, according to a Web site audiotape released on Tuesday.

Trojan Tower Demolished

The cooling tower from the decommissioned Trojan nuclear power plant collapsed in on itself Sunday in a cloud of dust and flying debris as it is imploded northwest of Portland near Rainier. Portland General Electric stores radioactive fuel rods from the defunct

plant on another part of the site. See story, page A6.

Veterans ID Stolen

Thieves took sensitive personal information of 26.5 million U.S. veterans, including Social Se-

curity numbers and birth dates, after a Veterans Affairs employee improperly brought the material home, the government said Monday.

Bribery Charge Disputed

A congressman under investigation for bribery said Monday he would not resign in the face of allegations that he was videotaped accepting \$100,000 from an informant, telling reporters, "There are certainly two sides to this story." Meanwhile, Democratic Rep. William Jefferson, called an FBI search of his Capitol office "an outrageous intru-

sion." See story, page A2.

Hurricane Warnings

The next Atlantic hurricane season could produce up to 16 named



Rep. William Jefferson

storms, six of them major hurricanes, suggesting another active year of devastating storms, scientists said Monday. Some parts of the Gulf Coast are only starting to rebuild from Hurricane Katrina, the worst of last year's record 28 named storms, 15 of which were hurricanes.



Trojan Tower

PRESORT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND OR
PERMIT
NO. 1610



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