



Focus on Housing
Special coverage issue

Building a Resume

At Mississippi's
Pasta Bangs
restaurant



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'City of Roses'

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Week in The Review

Withdrawal Vote Passes

Defying a veto threat, the Democratic-controlled Senate signaled support Tuesday for the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq by next March. Republican attempts to scuttle the non-binding timeline failed on a vote of 50-48. The roll call marked the Senate's most forceful challenge to date of the administration's handling of the war.

Iraq Bombs Kill 58

Two truck bombs in Iraq struck markets in Tal Afar and a suicide car bomber exploded his payload near Ramadi on Tuesday — the latest attacks in a surge of violence outside the Iraqi capital. The three bombings killed at least 58 people, including 48 in Tal Afar.

Snoop Dogg Snubbed

Rappers Snoop Dogg and Sean "Diddy" Combs scrapped five planned British concerts Tuesday after Snoop Dogg was refused a visa to enter the country. Last April, Snoop Dogg was arrested on suspicion of violent disorder at London Heathrow Airport and was banned from the United Kingdom for life.

Pet Food Cases Double

The number of Oregon pets sickened after eating tainted pet food almost doubled on Monday to 47 cases, including 13 deaths. The latest figures include 31 cats and 15 dogs being treated for kidney failure; the fatalities include seven cats and six dogs.

Cancer Returns

White House Press Secretary and former Fox television commentator Tony Snow, 51, has been diagnosed with recurrence of cancer and the disease has spread to his liver, his deputy said Tuesday. He was treated for colon cancer in 2005.

Accidental Overdose

Playboy Playmate Anna Nicole Smith died of an accidental overdose of a sleeping medication and at least eight other prescription drugs, including methadone for pain and valium, officials determined Monday, six weeks after her death.

Nonstop Lava

Scientists say Mount St. Helens may be replacing magma from a reservoir beneath the volcano as fast as it emerges as lava at the surface. It means that eruptions may continue for decades.

Public Schools Divided by Race

Charter schools add to equation

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jefferson High School's majority-black demographics are not the result of majority-black populations in its north and northeast Portland territory. Even as gentrification whittens its surrounding neighborhoods, Jefferson's percentage of black students increased 14 percent in the past 14 years. At 68 percent black, Jefferson now has more than two African American students for every student of other ethnicities.

Just half a mile away from Jefferson on North Interstate Avenue, the 66 percent white Trillium Charter School has almost exactly the opposite demographics.

As Portland Public School board member Dilafruz Williams says, "If there's a greater percentage of white kids in the Jefferson neighborhood, then they must be not going to their neighborhood high school." Jefferson's main feeder middle school, Ockley Green, has more balanced demographics at 46 percent black.

Some students of Jefferson's neighborhood have always attended private high schools or public magnet programs like diverse Benson High School (34 percent white, 26 percent black, 26 percent Asian), but the flood of public charter schools has complicated matters.

Student flight has caused Jefferson to capture just 26 percent of its neighborhood student population as opposed to 47 percent a decade ago.

Since the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2002, the district has

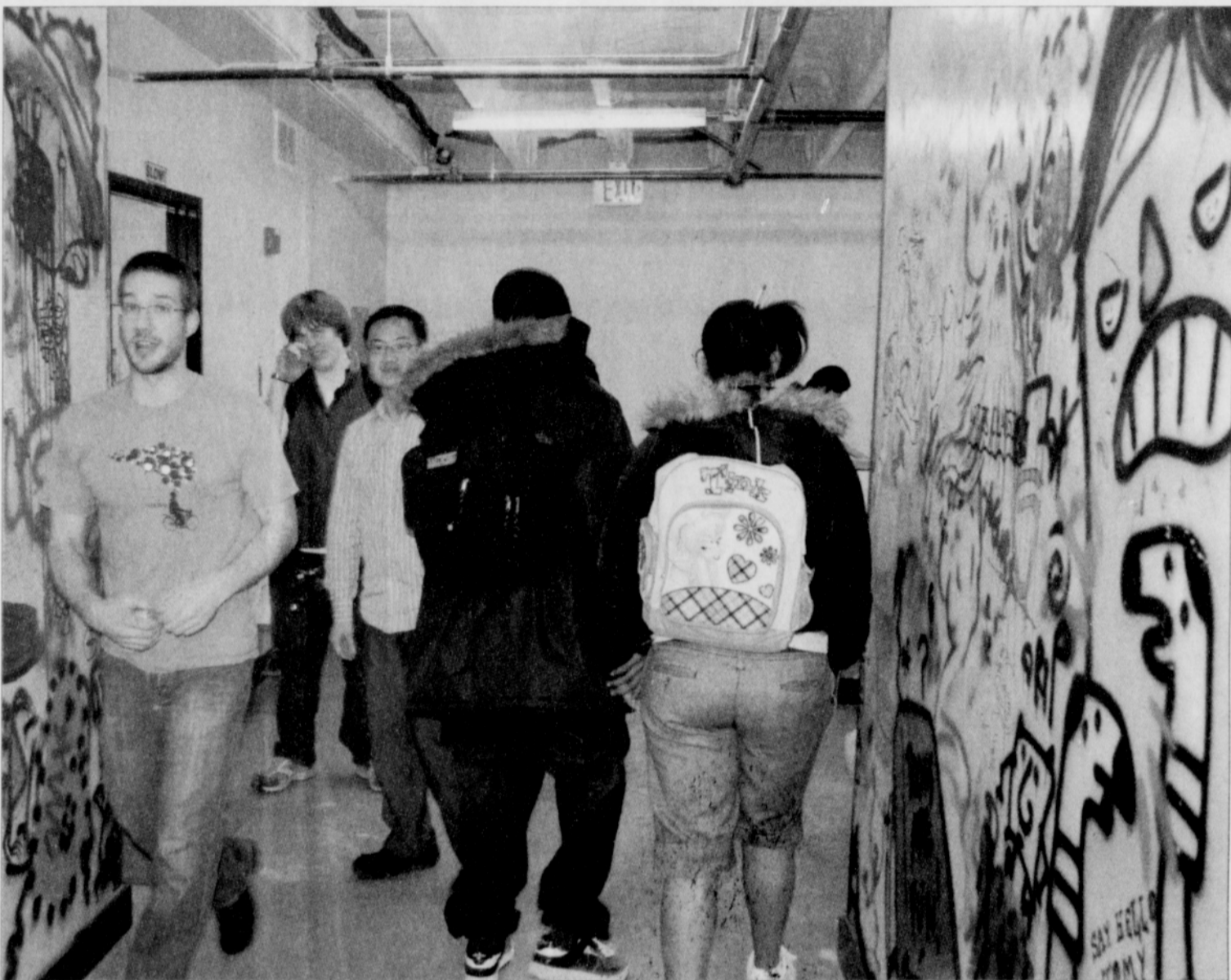


PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

High school students make their way to classes at Trillium, a public charter school that attracts a far higher percentage of non-minority students than its close by neighbor Jefferson. Trillium also allows students a greater control over curriculum and projects that include the hallway mural.

been forced to allocate funds to specialized charter schools that can draw students from all over the city, especially from neighborhood schools that failed Adequate Yearly Progress ratings like Jefferson, whose students had the right to transfer under the Bush Administration's law.

While Jefferson struggled with federal requirements, Trillium out-

grew its previous location near Tubman Middle School and its high school population has more than doubled to 80 students in the past three years. The new majority-white Leadership and Entrepreneurship Public Charter High School, also serving north and northeast Portland, expects to have 400 students by 2009.

Jefferson has responded by

splitting up into four academies, three to be located at the Jefferson Campus.

In addition to single-sex academies, there will be two academies of arts, science and technology, which bear quite a bit of resemblance, at least on paper, to Trillium High School's smaller size and "focus on important skills, such as writing, research methods and com-

puter literacy."

It remains to be seen whether Jefferson's reconfiguration can stem the district's increasing segregation.

The Young Women's Academy, to be inaugurated this fall at the Tubman campus, will be administered by Aurora Lora, who says,

continued ▼ on page A8

Tax Help is Out There – Here's Where



PHOTO BY SARAH BLOUNT/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

AARP volunteer Carol Krikava (right) helps Fary B. Miles with her taxes at the Multicultural Senior Center on Northeast Killingsworth and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The assistance is free by appointment only each Friday through April 13.

Taxpayers get two extra days, deadline is April 17

When northeast Portland resident Jane Steele retired, paying out of pocket for tax return assistance was not an option.

Fortunately she discovered free tax help at the Multicultural Senior Center in northeast Portland where volunteers told her she

was eligible for the earned income tax credit. Their expertise has made it easier for her to live on a fixed income.

"I've told my friends about this," she said. "So they don't have to pay additional taxes."

Each year Steele and other senior citizens have their tax returns prepared for free by volunteers at a number of sites around Portland, including the senior center at northeast Killingsworth and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Tax volunteers are often accountants or bankers who undergo training through advocacy programs like the American Association of Retired Persons, who certifies volunteers through a training series at Portland Community College.

AARP volunteers like DuWayne Dockter help seniors each Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Clients must make appointments for the eight slots available each week.

Dockter said missing the earned income credit is one of the biggest mistakes people make when preparing their own tax returns.

Fellow volunteer Carol Krikava added that many people aren't aware of the deductions they can make. That is where TaxWise, the in-depth tax program they use, comes in handy.

The Internal Revenue Service provides the AARP with computers and software, Krikava said.

In addition to the senior center, many volunteers throughout Portland offer free help with federal tax returns. (Remember - this year's deadline to file your returns has been extended to April 17 because April 15 falls on a Sunday and the District of Columbia celebrates a legal holiday on April 16. This deadline applies to all 2006 federal and state individual income tax returns.)

- The AARP and IRS help low to moderate-income taxpayers and individuals age 60 or older through walk-in visits on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday through April 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the west side of the Lloyd Center Mall, third floor near the food court, in suite 2010. Call Kathy Howell of the IRS for more information, at 503-326-7256 or 1-800-829-1040.

- The AARP also sponsors a program for

continued ▼ on page A3

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