

The **Portland Observer**

'City of Roses'

Volume XXXVII, Number 49

Established in 1970
Committed to Cultural Diversitywww.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • December 19, 2007Week in
The Review**Fuel Standards Boosted**

Marking the first increase in automobile fuel economy in 32 years, an energy bill boosting mileage mandates by 40 percent to 35 miles per gallon passed the House 314-100 Tuesday. The laws would also require increased energy efficiency standards for appliances and buildings.

Roy Leads Blazers Streak

Back-to-back Western Conference Player of the Week Brandon Roy had 24 points and eight assists to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to their eighth straight victory, 88-76 over the New Orleans Hornets on Monday night. See sports, page A7.

Smith Defends Lott

Speaking on the Senate floor Tuesday, Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore. offered a passionate defense of the pro-segregationist comments made by his colleague and friend, Sen. Trent Lott three years ago, asserting that Lott was misconstrued when he asserted that if Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat 1948 presidential ticket had won "we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years."

Wife Accidentally Killed

A man accidentally shot and killed his wife, Kimberly Lynn Osbrink, 23, while practicing drawing a pistol from a holster in the couple's Tualatin apartment Sunday night. Her husband, 24-year-old Ryan Michael Osbrink was scheduled to start work with the Clark County Sheriff's Office on Wednesday.

Sweetener Tax Proposed

To trim the city's waistline and health-care budget, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom proposed Monday charging stores a fee for selling drinks sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup, a culprit in the nationwide obesity epidemic.

Car Mangles Crowd

Nine Egyptians were killed and seven injured on Monday when a car with failed brakes ploughed into a crowd of hundreds celebrating a religious festival on the Red Sea coast.

Inmates Make Escape

Police were still searching this week for two inmates from the high-security unit of New Jersey's Union County jail who used photos of bikini-clad women to hide holes they used to escape Saturday.

Christmas
at The Grotto

The Chapel of Mary at The Grotto is adorned for the Christmas season as the sanctuary off Northeast 85th Avenue and Sandy Boulevard hosts its Festival of Lights. The 20th-annual event takes place with a backdrop of a half-million lights, outdoor caroling, theatrical performances, a petting zoo and puppet theater. Gates will be open each night through Dec. 30 from 5 to 9:30 p.m., except Christmas Day.

Congress Urged to Overhaul Foster Care

To fix disparities,
unequal treatment

Advocates concerned about disparities in the child-welfare system testified last week before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee, citing the need for all children to grow up in safe and caring families with equal access to opportunity.

Representatives from the Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare called a recent Government Accountability Office report on the over-representation of African-American children in the child welfare system a "clarion call to action" for everyone who cares about the nation's children and families.

Alliance leaders called for raising awareness about the over-representation of African-American children in foster care and for recognizing this as an urgent problem that requires immediate action.

"Our overarching objective must be to ensure that every child and family, regardless of race, culture or ethnicity, receives the best and most appropriate support at each and every encounter in the sys-

tem," said William C. Bell, president and chief executive officer of Casey Family Programs. "By focusing on improving the well-being of children and families of color, we have an opportunity to create a more fair and equitable system for all children and families and to substantially reduce the need for

foster care in the generations ahead."

The report, African American Children in Foster Care, found that African-American children are much more likely to languish in foster care, even though research shows no significant difference in the overall incidence of child abuse and neglect between

African Americans and Caucasians within similar income groups.

The GAO also documented unequal treatment of African-American children in receiving services from child-welfare agencies: they stay in foster care longer; they are moved to different foster homes more frequently; they are less likely to be reunited with their own families, and they have less chance of finding an alternative or adoptive family willing to make a lifelong permanent commitment.

The GAO recommendations include amending child-welfare financing, improving technical assistance and accountability, expanding community supports and services, and increasing cultural competencies of child-welfare leaders and staff.

The alliance proposes several specific action steps, including support for programs and services that encourage lifelong family connections for children. This requires amending the federal financing structure to promote more family preservation and prevention efforts that keep children from entering into care, thereby helping increase safe reunification, guardianship care, kinship care and post-permanency efforts.



Regina Schofield, managing director of public policy for Seattle-based Casey Family Programs, speaks during a Capitol Hill briefing on disparities in the foster-care system. Looking on is Patrick McCarthy of Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Community Centers Celebrate KWANZAA

Special activities planned

Kwanzaa, a unique holiday celebrating the strengths and accomplishments of the African-American community, will be celebrated at two Portland Parks and Recreation sites serving north and northeast Portland.

On Wednesday, Dec. 26, the Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 N.E. Knott St., will honor the first day of Kwanzaa, Umoja (a Swahili word for unity), with a presentation of the Feast of the Seven Tables and performance by Liquid Moves Entertainment. The event runs from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., with the candle lighting at 6:30 p.m.

The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, 5340 N. Interstate, honors Kujichagulia (self-determination), the second day of Kwanzaa, with live performances by poets and drummers throughout the IFCC gallery from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 27. The candle lighting ceremony will be held at 6:30 p.m.

IFCC also is presenting a Kwanzaa Marketplace from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sundays through Dec. 30. The Marketplace will also be open during the Kujichagulia celebration on Thursday, Dec. 27.

Great gifts and art finds by Afri-



A family celebrates Kwanzaa.

can American artists will be available, as well as art supplies, décor, and ideas for creating one's own Kwanzaa Celebration. Artists featured at the Marketplace include Donna Smith, Renee Mitchell, Kemi Arigibon, Vivienne Mathis, Kahunya Wario, Marsalis Brown, GG, Romaine Harris, Jaime Lee Christiana, Wanda Wright and Blacque Butterfly.

The IFCC Gallery will feature the works of artists GG, Mo, Art Alexander, Raymond Alexander, Adriene Cruz, Helen Montgomery and Wanda Wright, each of whom have created an altar dedicated to

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