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'City of Roses'

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Week in The Review

Housing Slump Deepens

U.S. home prices dropped at the sharpest rate in two decades during the first quarter, a somber economic indicator revealed Tuesday. The national home price index fell 14.1 percent, while Portland homes lost on average more than 4 percent of value.

Falling Consumer Confidence

Soaring gas prices and weakening job prospects left shoppers gloomier about the economy in May, sending another key barometer of consumer sentiment to its lowest level in almost 16 years. The Conference Board said Tuesday that its Consumer Confidence Index dropped to 57.2, down from a revised 62.8 in April.

Energy Price Standoff

French President Nicolas Sarkozy on Tuesday called for a cut in European oil taxes to help consumers as fishermen and truck drivers across the continent staged protests against soaring prices. Riot police in Britain, Spain and southern France were called out in response to the strikes.

Oregon Cross Burning

Medford Police are investigating the burning of a cross into the lawn of a couple with Jamaican heritage, saying that the letters "KKK" were burned into the lawn just before midnight on Monday. Sol White says she and her husband have never before encountered such racist behavior.

FEMA Toxic Trailer Fears

Doctors fear tens of thousands of youngsters may face lifelong health problems because the temporary trailer housing supplied to Hurricane Katrina victims by the Federal Emergency Management Agency contained formaldehyde fumes up to five times the safe level.

Clinton Comment Uproar

Sen. Hillary Clinton triggered a firestorm on Friday after bringing up the 1968 assassination of Sen. Robert Kennedy to justify her decision to prolong her long-shot White House campaign, arguing that history showed that some past nominating contests had gone on into June.

'Slick Rick' Pardoned

Pioneering rapper Ricky "Slick Rick" Walters, who spent more than five years in prison on a 1991 attempted murder conviction and faced threats of deportation years after rehabilitating his life, was granted a full and unconditional pardon Friday by New York Gov. David Paterson.

Harlem Teens Shot

A string of shootings near Harlem's Marcus Garvey Park sent eight people, including half a dozen teenagers, to nearby hospitals with gunshot wounds on Tuesday. All of the victims, found on several blocks along Lenox Avenue, from 125th Street to 128th Street, were expected to recover from their injuries.

Vanport after 60 Years

Future flood catastrophe likely

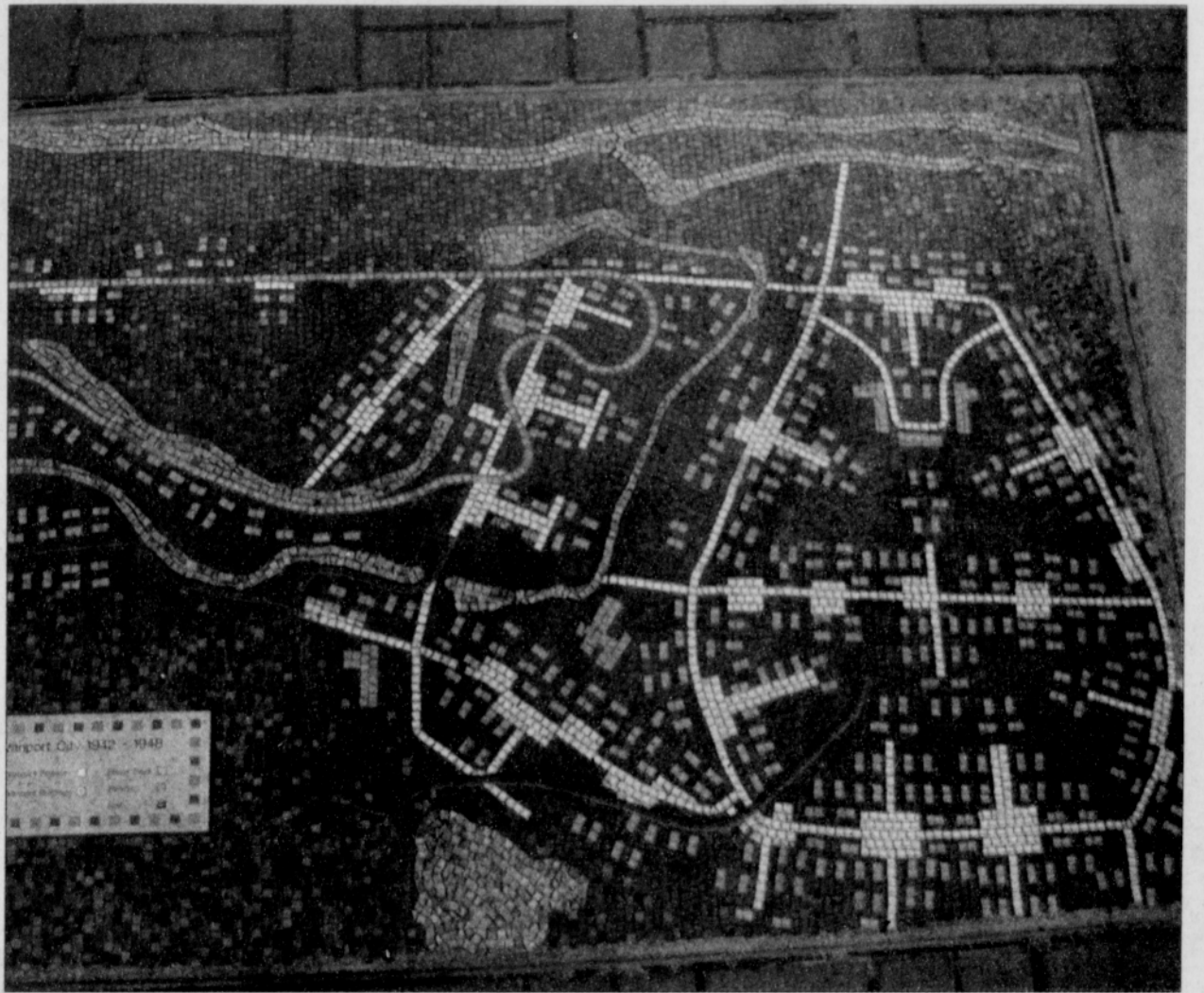
BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

On the 60th anniversary of breaching levees destroying the second-largest city in Oregon, one question looms above all others. Could a similar disaster strike a vast area of Portland's northern reaches and wipe out the ever-increasing developments on the Columbia River's historic floodplain?

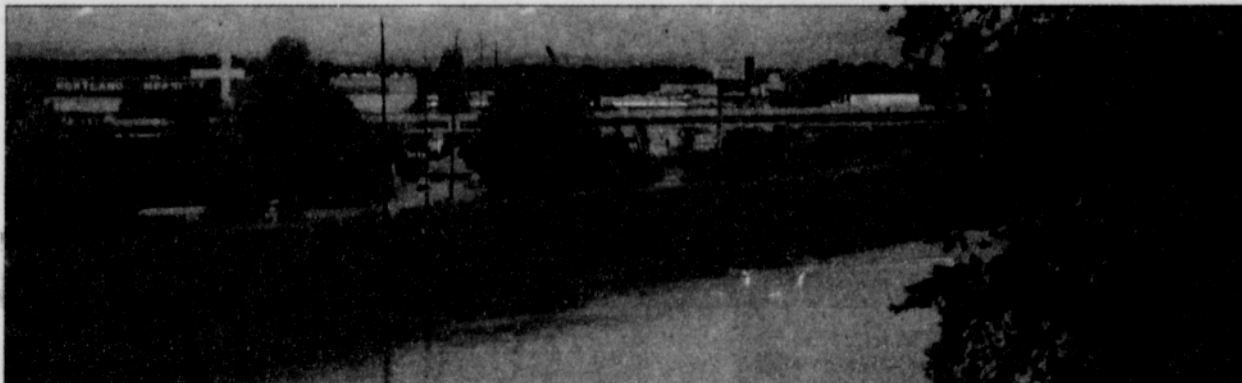
For the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose inspections of the flood protection surrounding Vanport city preceded the loss of at least 15 lives, the question is not an "if" but a "when."

Vanport showed the top flood-control authority that nature will eventually present situations with the capability of overcoming any level of human technology of the time.

"We're not God," says Amy Echols, public affairs liaison for the corps' Portland district. "We're not in the position where we think we can control all



A map cemented into the sidewalk at the Interstate Max transit station for the Expo Center shows the placement of streets and buildings in the former city of Vanport, destroyed by floodwaters on a Memorial Day weekend 60 years ago. Flood risks from the nearby Columbia River continue to this day.



A levee designed to prevent a repeat of the Vanport Flood disaster of May 30, 1948, keeps the Columbia River Slough from flooding Hayden Meadows, a mostly commercial district that also includes Delta Park in north Portland.

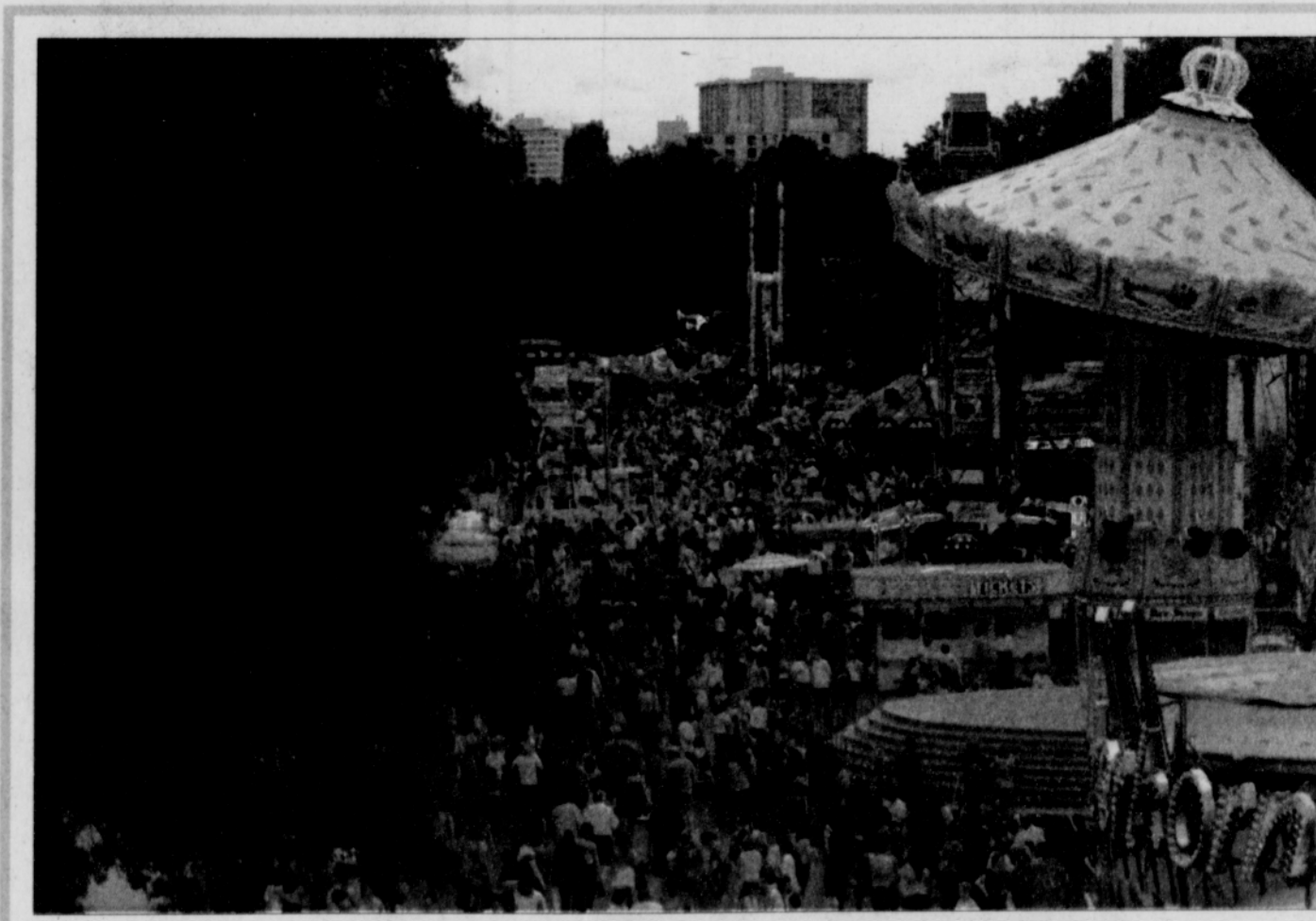
PHOTOS BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

(floods), but we can help reduce their impact and reduce the risks associated with high water."

Echols also points out that "Vanport had huge impact regionally" in encouraging coordination among dams throughout the Northwest. A computerized system extends along the Columbia into Canada to hold back as much water as possible for crises down the river, as with the rare combination of snowmelt and heavy rainfall that hit Portland in February of 1996.

No one knows when flooding like Vanport will happen again, but the official weather forecaster on the subject can be reasonably sure it won't happen

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Waterfront Village Opens Thursday

"Romancing the Rose" is the theme of the 2008 Portland's Rose Festival, which opens with the popular WaMu Waterfront Village on Thursday at Tom McCall Waterfront Park. Fireworks will light up the waterfront Friday night, and the Starlight Parade is on Saturday night, downtown. The Grand Floral Parade is held Saturday, June 8 beginning with the Queen's Coronation at Memorial Coliseum.

Fighting for Children's Health

Initiative racks up 30,000 signatures

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A proposed ordinance to guarantee health insurance for all children attending Portland Public Schools has succeeded in amassing the momentum of endorsements and signatures needed to appear on the November ballot.

With more than 30,000 signatures turned in on Tuesday to the city auditor's office, the Why Not Port-

land campaign is confident that the measure will gain citywide support.

"The progressive nature of this initiative is plain," says Matthew Deschaine, the campaign's field director. "This is a problem that there's been no viable solution for at the state and federal level, and so what we wanted to do was create a grassroots campaign to address the crisis locally."

Responding to the suggestion that everyone should have health insurance, campaign backers argue that universal health care has to start somewhere, so "why not start with those who need coverage most?"

"We're focusing in on a small population of very vulnerable people," Deschaine says.

Why Not Portland not only seeks to improve the situation for the approximately 9,000 children attending public school in Portland without health insurance, but also hopes to create a powerful incentive for families to live within city limits. Campaigners see the prospect of coverage as a good mechanism for slowing down or even reversing the effects of gentrification.

Increased PPS enrollment would increase the district's funding based on the more than \$6,000 allocated per

student from the state, in turn helping to pay for the health insurance.

Organizers also point to health coverage as prevention against catastrophic illnesses that end up costing more in the long run.

"This initiative makes good economic sense because, by ignoring the problem and letting these kids go untreated, the extra cost of emergency rooms taking care of youth is passed on through health-insurance premiums and taxes," Deschaine says.

Some community members recog-

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