



## Electrifying Theater

Memories race from childhood to death row and from white dresses to orange jump suits in *El Grito Del Bronx*  
See El Observador, page A7

## Storm Large

Portland singer tackles her life's struggles in a raw, musical production at Portland Center Stage  
See A&E, page A11



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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Pastor Robin Wisner and April Murchinson voice their concerns to possible police bureau budget cuts. They are local volunteers with the Bureau's Crisis Response Team which helps people cope with violent crime and other tragedies.

## Crisis Team Fights for Survival

### Program on police cuts list

BY JAKE THOMAS  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Valerie Dionne sometimes has people approach her in the grocery store to thank her for helping them in rough times.

Dionne is a volunteer worker with the Portland Police Bureau's Crisis Response Team. The program provides trained volunteers for victims of traumatic events as well as their

families and loved ones. They help comfort people who are experiencing events they thought they would never face, like the violent death of a loved one, and help them with the next steps.

However, with each city bureau facing a 5 percent cut because of the bad economy, the program could end up getting trimmed.

Last week, over 20 volunteers and others concerned about the program gathered at the Northeast Portland Police Precinct to voice their concerns.

Assistant Police Chief Brian Martinek was at the meeting to answer questions.

"I appreciate the passion and commitment you all have" said Martinek. "I have a lot of respect for the people in this room."

Martinek was vague on details, saying at this stage he doesn't know how the program will be trimmed. It might be merged with another program, he said, and is hopeful that City Council won't cut the police bureau's budget as drastically as others.

The Police Bureau is in the process of reorganizing and its precinct structure, which would close the North and Southeast precincts, in hopes of not having to cut any programs like crisis response.

Martinek wasn't sure how much money the crisis team runs on. A coordinating officer and administrative assistant are the program's only paid positions. The team's volunteers are unpaid.

"We offer support for in ways of

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## Activists Decry 12 lanes:

### See a bridge to more pollution

BY JAKE THOMAS  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A green light to the most car-friendly option for a proposed new I-5 Portland-Vancouver bridge has left lingering concerns over what the health and environmental impacts a 12-lane bridge will have on north and northeast Portland neighborhoods.

According to environmental justice advocates and federal Environmental Protection Agency documents, the \$4.2 billion project could end up pumping more toxic chemicals into an area that already is one of the Portland's most polluted sections.

The proposed bridge is the Columbia River Crossing project's centerpiece solution over concerns that the Pacific Northwest's ballooning population trends will severely strain transportation infrastructure.

Last year, the Federal Highway and Transit Administration released rosy draft environmental impact statements that estimate that under all options for building the bridge, which included varying numbers of lanes, use of light rail and motor vehicle tolls, pollution emissions would actually drop by 30 to 90 percent.

But the EPA has expressed serious concerns over how those emission figures were drafted and asserts that not enough information or analysis has gone into measuring what impacts the bridge will have on air pollution, along with water quality and environmental justice issues.

North and northeast Portland suffers higher pollution impacts than many other areas of the city because of its proximity to freeway emissions and industrial pollutants. Chemicals such as benzene, arsenic and formaldehyde contribute to elevated risk of cancer, and diesel emissions in the area are some 20 times the health standard.

Last month, the Portland City Council approved the 12-lane option for the bridge on a 4-1 vote, the only dissenting voice was that of first term Commissioner Amanda Fritz.

Fritz tried to tack on amendments that would have required that health and environmental justice advocates be put in oversight positions, but the motions died for a lack of a second.

"People were focused on the big picture and not enough on the details on how this will affect people in north and northeast Portland," said Fritz.

Jill Fuglister, the co-director of the Coalition for a Livable Future and a member of the Columbia River Crossing task force which was charged with coming up with options for the new bridge, also opposed the 12-lane option.

"We are concerned about putting more tailpipes on the road," said

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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

## Honoring Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The King Elementary School Choir under the direction of Kathryn McVey honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of peace and non-violence on the 41st anniversary of his death. The observance Saturday outside the Oregon Convention Center included a walk to the Japanese-American Memorial Plaza, downtown, and speeches, and was sponsored by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, the commission to End Racism, and the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon.

## Week in The Review

### State Looks at Huge Cuts

Every government agency in Oregon would be required to cut 30 percent of their budget to close a revenue gap of at least \$3 billion in the 2009-11 state budget, lawmakers decided Friday. Still the state has some cushion with reserves and proposed tax increases that make it likely the final cut will be less.



### N.C. Takes NCCA Crown

The North Carolina Tar Heels stomped out Michigan State's inspirational run for a NCAA basketball championship Monday night with an 89-72 blowout

that wasn't that close. See story, page A8.

### Brown Pleads Not Guilty

Chris Brown pleaded not guilty Monday to threatening and assaulting his girlfriend, fellow music star Rihanna. The 19-year-old R&B singer entered his plea, speaking in a soft voice, while standing alongside his lawyer, Mark Geragos. His mother sat in the first row, red-eyed.



Chris Brown

### Lincoln Coach Resigns

Lincoln High School baseball coach Michael Todd resigned Friday after allegations that he took three 18-year-old Lincoln baseball players to an adult entertainment venue while in San Francisco for a spring break baseball tournament.

### Beating at MAX Station

Three Native Americans were beaten last week while they waited for a MAX

train at Goose Hollow in southwest Portland. Police said five assailants used slurs that referenced the victim's Native American heritage.

39  
years of  
community service