

LAW & JUSTICE

Police Work to Stop Racial Profiling

Chief outlines plan to build trust

By Jake Thomas
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
 Police Chief Rosie Sizer presented the bureau's latest plan to address racial profiling before about 20 people at the East County Community Center on Thursday.
 The public will have another chance to comment on the recommendations during a meeting Wednesday, April 8 at 5:30 p.m. at King Elementary School in northeast Portland.
 The report recognizes that racial profiling exists in Portland, stating, "The fact that

people of color are disparately impacted by police activity is undeniable."
 It includes data from 2007 that shows that Latinos and African Americans are searched disproportionately, even though they are less likely to carry contraband.
 The plan recommends increasing the diversity of the police force, enhancing the training officers receive to help sensitive them to race, and collecting the right data on police stops to better understand the issue.

After the report was issued last month, police have been required to hand out business cards at traffic and pedestrian stops and must issue a warning or ticket stating the reason for the stop.
 "There's certainly things we can do to improve the situation for community members and police officers alike," said Sizer at the meeting.
 The city began taking steps to eliminate racial profiling when it convened a meeting of law enforcement in 1999. The officers endorsed a resolution

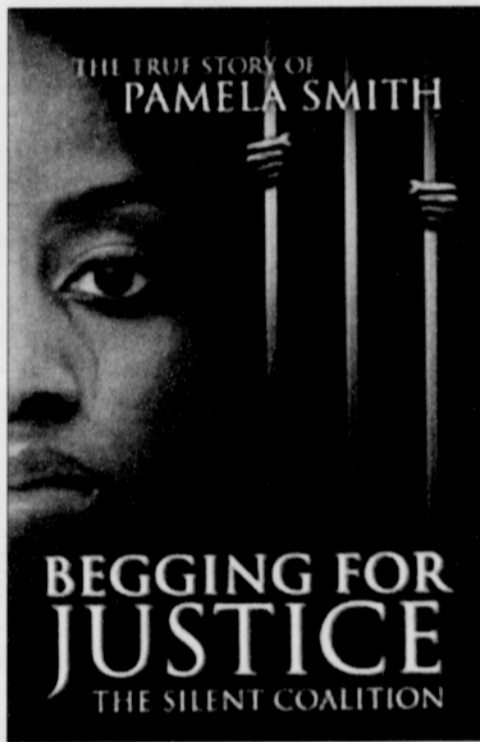
condemning racial profiling.
 In 2000, a blue ribbon panel of community leaders and law enforcement was formed to examine the issue further. It recommended hiring more minority officers, collecting data on traffic stops, improving communications with community members, and introducing a complaint process.
 In 2006, the bureau held listening sessions with community groups and began training officers in cultural competency. From these sessions, and at the behest of the city's Racial Profiling Committee, Sizer was prompted into drafting the most

recent report.
 Sizer said that what's different this time is that the bureau is reaching out to minority communities in hopes of building mutual trust, which she says is critical.
 The bureau has been holding "living room conversations" in conjunction with community groups like Native American Youth Association, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, and Self-Enhancement, Inc.
 "We are farther along today than we were three years ago," said Sizer, but added, "You can't change things overnight."

Another thing that's different is the role of the recently created Office of Human Relations, which is charged with helping Portland overcome racial tensions.
 The office will be using its staff to help facilitate these meetings and provide outreach for the bureau. However, not everyone is on board.
 Jo Ann Bowman, who served on the Racial Profile Committee, isn't sold on the plan either. She said that while there are some good ideas in the report it places too much emphasis on building relationships at the expense of holding police officers accountable.

Silenced by the System

Silenced by the grand jury, district attorney, state attorney general, department of corrections and even the halls of justice in Washington, D.C., Pamela Smith finally had enough.
 In her true live story, "Begging for Justice, the Silent Coalition," Smith tells what really goes on behind prison walls and the plight faced by thousands of women and men for centuries: Rape behind prison walls.
 This is Smith's battle cry for justice after she was raped, tortured and dehumanized by a state employee. What was once a personal cry for help has morphed into her life being dedicated to speaking out for those whose voice has been silenced.
 The book will make you laugh, cry and realize the importance of humanity. You will applaud Ms. Smith's spirit and find yourself joining in her fight, that everyone deserves the right to have their voice heard and that justice includes everyone.



The True Story of Pamela Smith -- Begging for Justice: The Silent Coalition (is now available at Barnes and Noble, Borders, Amazon.com and bookstores nationwide. It is also available by visiting bbotw.com.

Race, Class and the Economy

Activist sets agenda for talk

Kweisi Mfume will visit the Portland area to address "Race, Class and Economic Recovery in Obama's America" at the Washington State University Vancouver Public Affairs Lecture Series.
 The lecture will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15 at Fort Vancouver High School Auditorium, 5700 E. 18th St. The public is invited to attend.
 From activist to Congressman to head of the NAACP,



Kweisi Mfume
 Mfume has become one of America's most provocative public intellectuals.

In Congress, Mfume advocated for landmark business and civil rights legislation, including the American's with Disabilities Act and the Civil Rights Bill of 1991.
 Most recently, he served as national surrogate speaker for the "Obama for America" presidential campaign.
 Tickets are \$10 and can be obtained by calling 360-694-2588 or ordering online at vancouver.wsu.edu/pals. WSU Vancouver student tickets are free, but available only in the Office of Student Involvement.

Santana wishes President Obama would Legalize Pot

(AP) -- President Barack Obama brushed off a question about legalizing marijuana in his online town hall last month, but guitar god Carlos Santana says he wishes he would seriously consider it.
 "Legalize marijuana and take all that money and invest it in teachers and in education,"



Carlos Santana
 Santana said in an interview last week, "You will see a transformation in America."

During his online town hall on March 26, Obama fielded a question about whether legalization of the illicit drug would help pull the nation out of recession. Obama said he didn't think it was good economic policy, and also joked: "I don't know what this says about the online audience."
 But Santana said making pot legal is "really way overdue, like the prohibition with the alcohol and stuff like that."

10 Years for Bank Heist

Mahmoud Ibrahim Gilani, 32, of Portland, was recently sentenced to 114 months in prison for an armed bank robbery at the Rose City branch of Bank of America.
 A mandatory seven-year term for brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence, and a consecutive 30-month term for the robbery was imposed by U.S. District Judge Ancer L. Haggerty.
 During the bank hold up inside the Safeway store at 6901 N.E. Sandy Blvd., Gilani pointed

a pistol at tellers and customers, pulled back the gun's slide, and demanded money. He received \$6,903 in cash and fled from the building.
 Portland police officers apprehended Gilani driving alone in a car a short distance away. In a pants pocket they found a 9 mm semiautomatic pistol, loaded with a round chambered. An Investigation showed that Gilani had robbed the same bank a year earlier.
 Gilani is a citizen of Ethiopia. Upon completion of the prison

sentence, immigration authorities will determine whether he is allowed to remain in the United States.

Stimulus Scam Emails

Scammers are using President Obama's economic stimulus package to try and rip off consumers.
 Email messages ask for bank information, claiming they will directly deposit stimulus money. Instead, scammers drain the consumer's bank account and vanish.
 The Oregon Attorney General's office says the emails sometimes appear to be from legitimate government agencies and ask consumers to "verify" that they are eligible for payment. By clicking on links, consumers download malicious software that can be used by identity thieves.
 Some Web sites suggest that for as little as \$1.99 consumers

can get a list of economic stimulus grants to apply for. This allows the scammer to get the consumer's credit card number or lock them into an illegal "negative option" agreement that can charge hundreds of thousands of dollars if the consumer doesn't cancel.
 Also beware of offers that charge consumers for a seminar that will show them how to apply for federal stimulus grants and get rich quick with the money they receive.
 Consumers who believe they have been scammed or have questions about stimulus-related offers or scams should call the Attorney General's consumer hotline at 1-877-877-9392.

The Portland Branch NAACP membership meeting is Saturday April 11 at 11:00 A.M., and the Executive Committee meeting is at 10:00 A.M.

Location: PCC Cascade Campus, Terrell Hall-Room 107

Everyone is invited to the membership meeting. You are welcome to come, give your support and assistance in developing "Unity in the Community".

Bishop H. L. Hodge, PhD.
 Portland Branch President

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