



# The

# Portland Observer

Volume XXXX, Number 22



## Bicycle Safety First

Busy streets get the red flag  
see page 3



## Taps Open for Zoo Brew

see A & E, page 9

# 40

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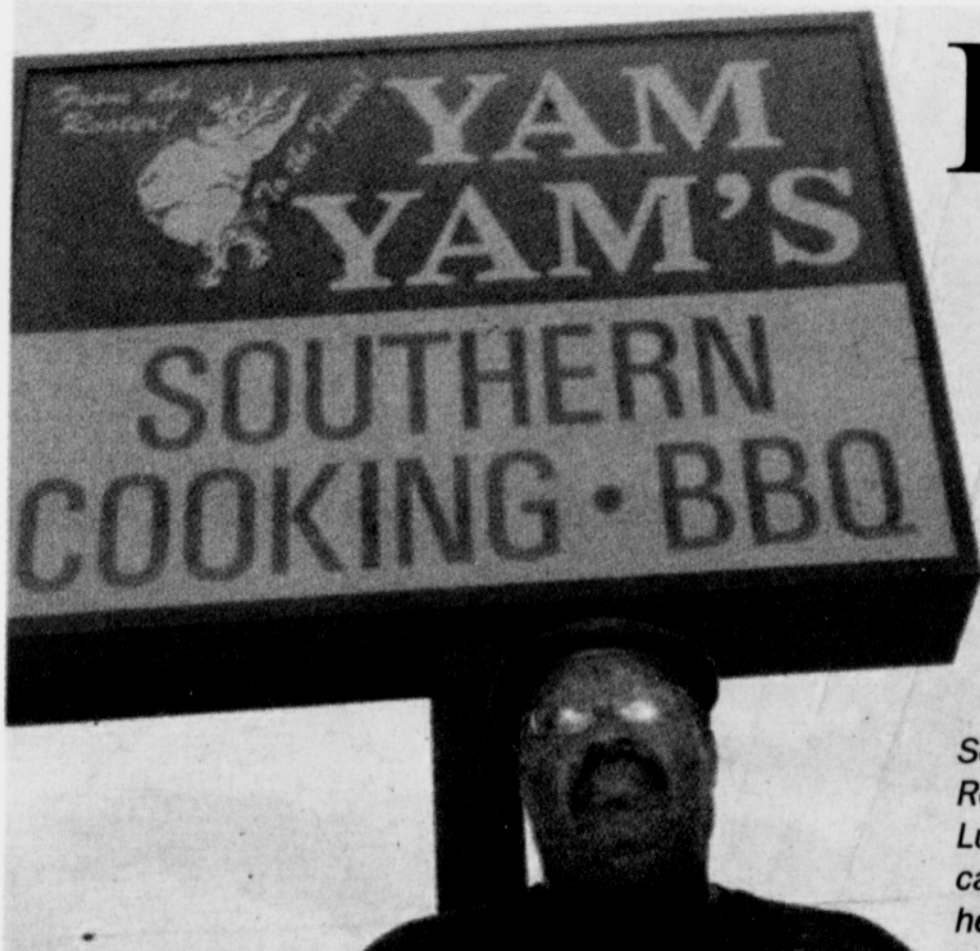
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Wednesday • June 2, 2010



## Rose Festival Fun

The Portland Rose Festival turns the downtown waterfront into a fun destination for rides, foods and entertainment. Waterfront Village opened over the Memorial Day weekend and will stay open over the next two weekends. See Rose Festival events in our entertainment calendar, page 12.



## Rough Patch

### Owner denies wrongdoing; says he's staying open

BY JAKE THOMAS  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

At Yam Yam's Southern Cooking and Barbecue Restaurant on North-

← Larry Matthews stands outside his eatery Yam Yam's Southern Cooking and Barbecue Restaurant on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. It's been called a drug front, a characterization he resists.

east Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard greasy plates full of chicken bones are stacked up in bins from the day's lunch rush. The purple coat of paint on the building's exterior looks brand new. Smells of barbecue and fried cat fish waft out of the kitchen as an episode of "Cops" quietly blares on the television set in the dining room.

From the looks of it, you'd never guess that it was branded as drug

front during a federal investigation that toppled a large cocaine distribution network.

The prosecution came to a climax last week when James Ray "Lonnie" Yoakum was sentenced to 13 years in prison for playing a central role in a \$300,000-a-month Crips gang-affiliated cocaine trafficking ring. Federal investigators claimed that money for the operations was laundered at Yam Yam's, and law enforcement seized \$60,000 from the eatery last fall during a raid.

In the aftermath, Larry Matthews, the owner of Yam Yam's, has been shy about talking to the media. But in an interview with the Portland Observer, shortly after Yoakum was sentenced, he asserted that he has

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