

Fred Meyer Tests Bag Ban
Ten Portland Fred Meyer stores, including the Interstate Avenue store in north Portland, officially went plastic-bag free at check-outs on Sunday. The move comes as city and state lawmakers consider passing a law to ban plastic bags at grocery stores and charge for paper. During this trial phase, Fred Meyer says it will not charge for paper, but it does encourage customers to bring in re-usable bags.

Grant Brings the Stars

Former Portland Trail Blazer Brian Grant brought an A list of Hollywood stars and NBA players to Portland for Sunday and Monday fundraisers for Parkinson's disease research. The



celebrities included Michael J. Fox, Muhammad Ali, Charles Barkley, Clyde Drexler, Bill Walton, Alonzo Mourning and Pat Riley. Grant was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2008.

Jarreau Leaves Hospital

Jazz star Al Jarreau was discharged from the hospital Sunday after treatment for heart problems after collapsing on July 22, moments before he was due to perform at a music festival in Barcelonnette, in the southern French Alps. At one point, his condition was deemed critical but the 70-year-old star has since fought his way back to full health.



Week in The Review

Republicans Oppose Birthright Citizenship

Leading Republicans are joining a push to reconsider the constitutional amendment that grants automatic citizenship to people born in the United States. Top leaders of the party in recent days have questioned or challenged birthright citizenship, embracing a cause that until recently was confined to the far right.

Oil Well Plug Begins

Engineers began pumping heavy drilling mud into the blown-out Gulf of Mexico oil well Tuesday in what they think is their best chance yet to achieve the ultimate goal in a deli-

cate process — snuffing one of the world's largest spills for good.

No Charges for Al Gore

The Multnomah County District Attorney has decided not to charge former Vice President Al Gore after reviewing a police investigation of a 2006 sexual assault complaint by a Portland massage therapist. The DA said the accuser's statement was insufficient to support a criminal charge given other contradictory evidence.



Hawaiian Garbage Halted

A federal judge issued a temporary restraining order Thursday barring the shipment of hundreds of thou-

sands of tons of garbage to the Columbia Gorge area for at least 30 days. The order was in response to a lawsuit seeking to halt the shipments until the environmental impacts of transporting garbage laden with invasive species are thoroughly analyzed.

Feds Rate Portland Schools

Nearly 80 percent of Portland Public Schools in 2009-10 met academic performance ratings required by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, according to data released Monday. Highlights include a turnaround for Sitton Elementary in north Portland and all three schools on the Marshall High School Campus. Jefferson and Roosevelt high schools continue to fall short of the standards.

diversity in Print



Young, Black & Gifted
Recognizing kids on right track

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland's African-American youth are often caught up in a net of negative public perceptions brought by news of gang violence, the sobering achievement gap and school drop out rates.

But there's plenty of young black kids in Portland who are on the right path, making good grades, headed to college, and are making positive contributions to the city. A new photographic tribute recognizes the hard work of some of these students and shows that there is still reason to be optimistic.

"Young, Black & Gifted," a photo essay putting the spotlight on the accomplishments of high-achieving African-American students, opens to the public on Monday, April 5 at Portland School District headquarters at 501 N. Dixon St. and will later be moved to the Lloyd Center Mall.

The project is the brain child of Reiko Williams, the district's family and community engagement manager, who said she got the idea after having a conversation with someone who seemed shocked when she mentioned an African-American student that was excelling. After the conversation she worried that all the attention on the problems of young black students was drowning out the hard work of others.

"You hear so much about deficits and achievement gaps," she said.

Williams said the exhibit came together with a call for nominations of black students doing well district-wide, and the recruitment of a photographer and web developer.

Skyler Holt, a freshman at Jefferson High School is one of the 13 students featured in the exhibit.

Holt gets A's and B's in school. She does especially well in English classes, taught by Anne Novinger, one of her favorite teachers, and chemistry is getting steadily easier. Holt plans to go to college and is thinking about law school down the road.

"I'm enjoying it a lot," she said of her high school. "I like

PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Skyler Holt events as freshman at Jefferson High School in north Portland. Her contribution as one of the city's "Young, Black & Gifted" students is part of a new exhibit coming to school district headquarters and Lloyd Center Mall.



A priest kneels in prayer with three women assembled at a gathering point for the families, co-workers and friends of victims in a workplace shooting Tuesday in Manchester, Conn.

Workplace Shooting

Warehouse driver kills 8 co-workers

(AP)-- A warehouse driver who a union official said was caught on video stealing beer from the Manchester, Conn. distributorship where he worked went on a shooting rampage there Tuesday, killing eight people and wounding two before committing suicide, authorities said.

Omar Thornton, 34, pulled a handgun after a meeting in which he had been offered the chance to quit or be fired, Manchester Police Chief Marc

Montminy said.

The gunman, who was black, had complained of racial harassment and said he found a picture of a noose and a racial epithet written on a bathroom wall, the mother of his girlfriend said. Her daughter told her that Thornton's supervisors told him they would talk to his co-workers.

James Battaglio, a spokesman for the families who own the distributorship, said he had no immediate information about the allegations of racial harassment. And a union official said Thornton had not filed a complaint of racism with the union or any government agency.

Blighted Properties

City can't keep up with complaints

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

If think you've seen more overgrown grass in your neighborhood, piles of garbage left on the sidewalk, and properties that are generally deteriorating, it's probably because you have.

Thanks to the budget cuts brought on by the Great Recession and the loss of tax revenue, there is less money for property inspectors in the Bureau of Development Services, the city agency responsible for inspecting nuisance properties and enforcing code violations.

According to bureau spokesperson Ross Caron, the agency has reduced its

staff that deals with residential inspections from 34 to 16, which has severely hampered how well the agency can deal with complaints.

He said that most complaints involve trash left out, overgrown grass and weeds, and disabled cars.

Since late June, the bureau has received 563 complaints of which 149 were in north-east; 104 in north; 4 in northwest; 225 in southeast; and 63 in southwest Portland. Others were in the public right of way.

Caron said the bureau will still respond fairly quickly to issues that pose clear health hazards, like rotting garbage left out. In high priority complaints, BDS staff will do an investigation within about two weeks. The resident of the property has

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