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## St. Johns Return

Police move traffic division to former precinct

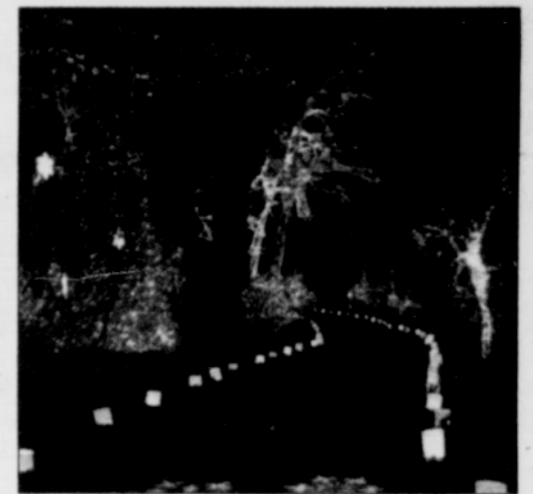
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## The Grotto's

### Christmas

Gift of music makes Festival of Lights shine

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# The Portland Observer 43

'City of Roses'



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# Unfathomable Acts

## Tragedies spark discussion of gun laws, prevention

BY CARI HACHMANN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Unfathomable acts of violence last week which began at the quick pull of a trigger and ended in the death of countless innocent people has stirred emotion among Portland residents.

The first shooting fell close to home Tuesday when 22-year-old Jacob Roberts of southeast Portland rushed into the food court at the Clackamas Town Center mall around 3:30 p.m. wearing a hockey-style facemask and opened fire on a crowd of holiday shoppers.

Armed with a stolen AR-15 rifle and several fully-loaded magazines, witnesses heard Roberts fire close to 60 shots. Two were dead and several injured, including a 15-year-old girl still in recovery, before the gunman shot and killed himself, authorities said.

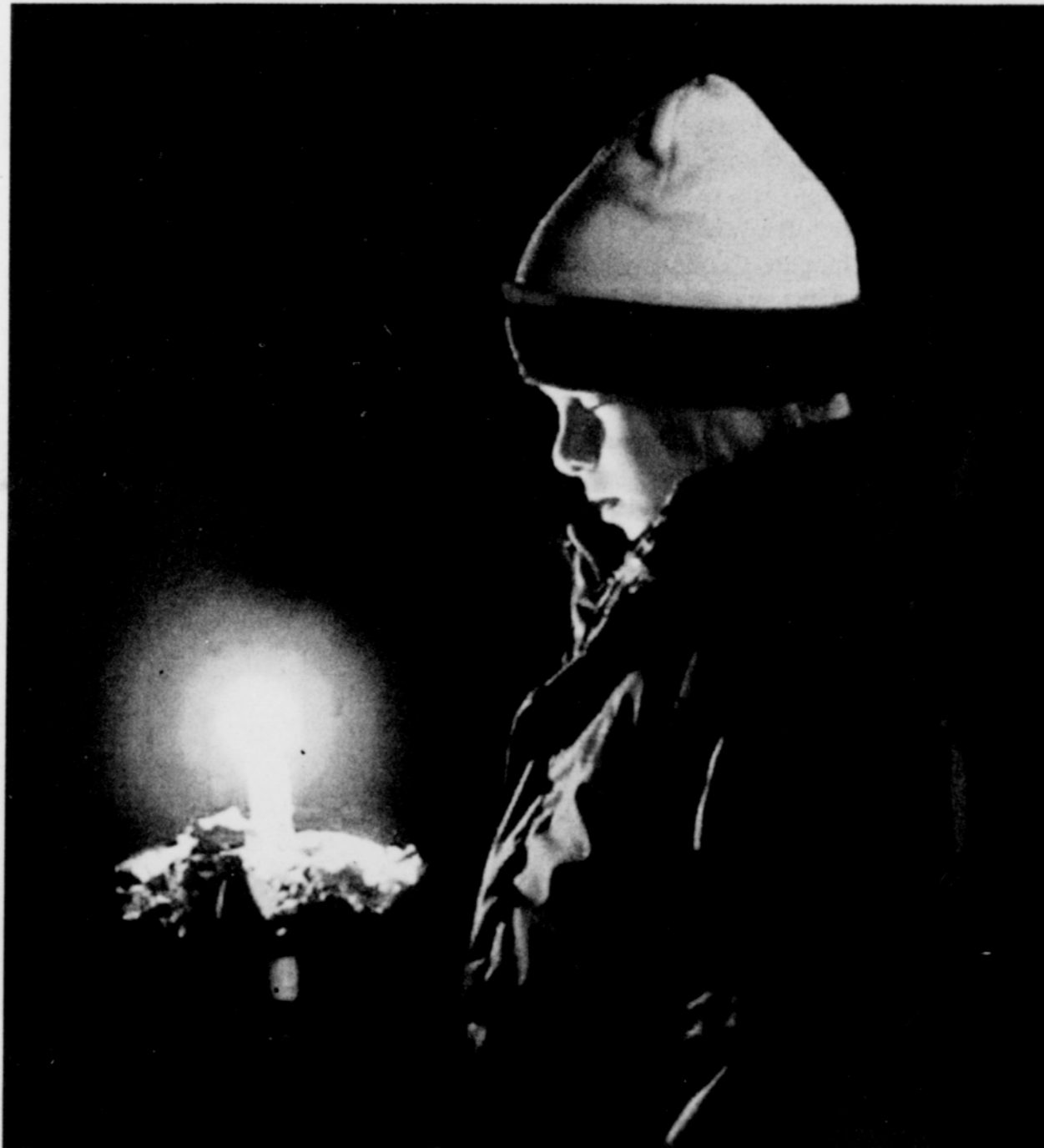
The tragic rampage in Portland was followed by another senseless killing spree Thursday in Newtown, Conn. Adam Lanza, 20, killed his mother before driving her car to Sandy Hook Elementary School. Wielding two semi-automatic handguns and an assault rifle, Lanza shot 20 first graders multiple times at close range inside their classroom along with six school staff members before committing suicide.

"We can't tolerate this anymore," said President Obama at a candlelight vigil for Newtown's victims. "These tragedies must end. And to end them we must change." Solving gun violence is complex, he admitted. No single law or set of laws can eliminate evil from the world or prevent every senseless act of violence in our society.

"But we can do better," he said. The question is how? "To save another child, another parent, another town, we surely have an obligation to try," said the President.

Northeast Portland resident Edith Smith was surprised and deeply saddened by both shootings. Her opinion has always been the same. "I don't own a gun," she said. "I think they should ban them. They are killing too many kids with them."

Berkeley Moore, 23, has never been a supporter of guns and thinks there should be



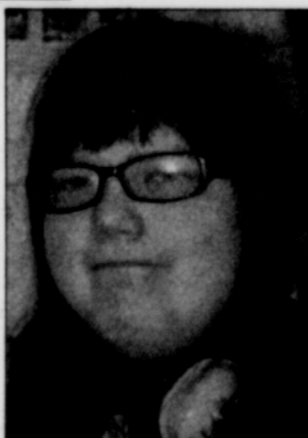
A young mourner attends a candlelight vigil to remember the 20 children and 6 adult educators killed in a school shooting Friday in Newtown, Conn. (AP photo)



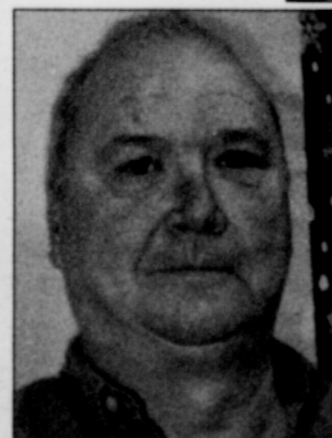
'Guns shouldn't be so easily accessible,'  
-- Brandon



'Needs to be more gun enforcement,'  
-- Laura



'Never been a supporter of guns,'  
-- Berkeley Moore



'The issue is access to mental health services,'  
-- Micky Starks

stronger guards on those who can obtain guns. "I'm surprised that people would assume that it is all safe in the first place," said the Portland Community College student at north Portland's Cascade campus.

"This isn't the first shooting," she said. "It seems we should have taken a closer look the first time it happened."

"I've always thought there should be a lot more gun control," said Marti Lituczy, another local resident.

Lituczy says she's owned a gun before, but she threw it out when her husband and his children moved in. She believes people with guns should have them locked up better. "If you get one, you need to keep it safe."

Laura, last name anonymous, 38, says there needs to be more enforcement on the distribution and availability of guns. "They should extensively check someone's background and hold liability to that person for keeping it safe and secured," she said.

As Obama said, the issue is complex. Congress reported more than 310 million privately-owned firearms in our country in 2012, the highest gun ownership rate in the world. While many people believe we need stricter gun control and regulations, others believe the root of the problem is a less material condition, the human psyche.

"I really think that every one of these individuals had some kind of psychotic break," said Tom Martin, 43. "And that's not abnormal." Both shooters were young men emerging into adulthood, he said, and needed to have a support network that validates them. "Every single guy has been through that," said Martin.

The issue of gun violence goes far beyond the sales and regulation of guns, says Martin in considering the reasons why neither young adult got help. He argues individuals need better access to social and mental health services.

"If we saw a person crawling around on bloody stumps, most of us would do anything to get that person a wheelchair," said Martin. Why should helping a person heal their mental pain be any different? "Just because we don't see it, we ignore it," he said. "It's sickening."

Martin mentions a friend currently undergoing a mental health crisis who is attempting to get the help, but says she still must pay

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