

Lost to Gun Violence

Community gathers to remember victims

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A row of mothers stand next to each other with photos of their children framed in handcrafted ornaments. They are reminiscing on their loss – each of them, having lost a son or daughter to gun violence in Portland. They write the names above the pictures, sometimes the year of death, and place the ornament on a holiday tree.

Perlia Bell holds up a picture of her daughter Asia Bell. Lucy Mashia rounds up her son's life – he was born in 1976 and killed on 82nd avenue on June 6, 2011 while just getting off work. A father of three children, his name was Leonard J. Irving Jr.

The Office of Youth Violence Prevention hosted Friday's gathering for the benefit of everyone who has lost a loved one due to gang or gun violence.

Antoinette Edwards, director of the office, welcomed the families, many who still struggle with the grief and helplessness of random gun violence. Earlier the same day, Mayor Charlie Hales arrived to show solidarity with the lives of those lost by also hanging an ornament.

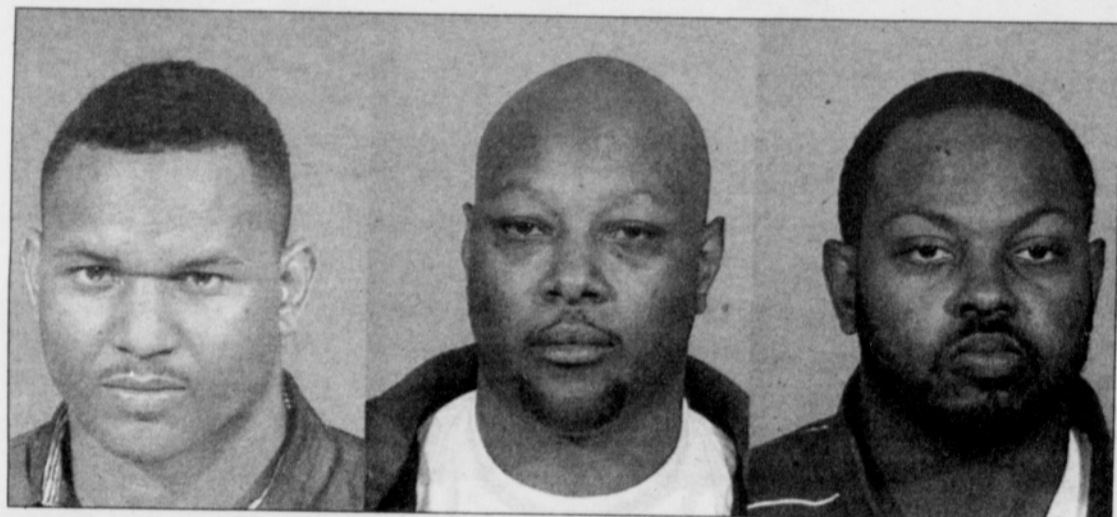
Marci Jackson, the Portland Police Bureau's Crisis Response Team program coordinator, praised the strength of the black community in recent years.

"I know it's not easy, but this community has always been strong," she says.

The night ended up with several visitors attending a Kwanzaa dinner across the street at the Blazer Boys and Girls Club, where the spiritual solidarity of the community united with their hope for an end to gun violence in Portland.



PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Lucy Mashia (left) and Perlia Bell, both mothers of gun violence victims, hang ornaments in memory of their lost loved ones, during a gathering of community members at the Office of Youth Violence Prevention in northeast Portland.



Vinson White, Adrian Stafford and Selwyn Stafford are charged in a 1995 cold case murder investigation.

Cold Case Murder Arrests

Three men in prison on other charges were indicted for murder last week following a 1995 cold case murder investigation by Portland Police.

Adrian Cavett Stafford, 45, Selwyn Terris Stafford, 43 and Vinson Louis White, 51, are charged in the death of Darrin Ezell, a 24-year-old man who was killed the morning of Dec. 20, 1985 while sleeping in his own home

in southeast Portland. Two children were also inside the home but were not harmed.

Authorities said few details about the homicide can be released at this time as the case is still an active investigation. Portland's Cold Case Homicide Unit has solved more than 40 of the city's 250 unsolved murders that have come to them since their inception in 2004.

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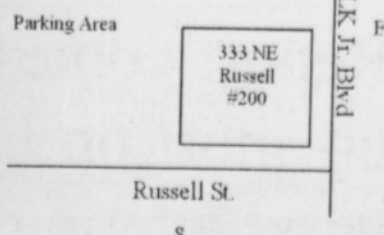
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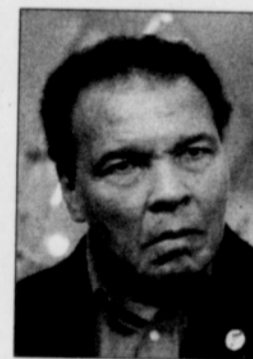
We are located on the corner of MLK and Russell Street, on the second floor above the coffee shop.



Week in The Review

Boxing Great in Hospital

Boxing great Muhammad Ali was hospitalized Saturday with a mild case of pneumonia that was caught early and should result in a short hospital stay, an Ali spokesman said. The three-time world heavy-weight champion, who is battling Parkinson's disease, is being treated by his team of doctors and is in stable condition, said his spokesman.



Gunman Hated Police

The gunman who fatally ambushed two New York City police officers in their squad car Saturday had a long criminal record, a hatred for police and the government and an apparent history of mental instability, authorities said Sunday. Ismaaiyl Brinsley was black; the slain officers were Asian and Hispanic.

Diplomacy with Cuba

President Obama announced last week that he was normalizing diplo-

matic relations with Cuba. The change comes after more than five decades of Cold War acrimony with the communist island nation and follows secret talks in Canada that included representatives of the Vatican.

Officer Walks Free

The Milwaukie County District Attorney stated Monday that a local police officer who was fired after fatally shooting a mentally ill black man in April will not face criminal charges because it was self-defense. It was at least the third white police officer to avoid charges in the past month after a confrontation with a black man that resulted in the black man's death.

Naked Man Arrested

A naked man reported to be exposing himself to children in Holladay Park in Northeast Portland Monday got into a physical struggle with a Portland police officer who was able to remove the cartridge from her Taser before the man fully took it from her. He was then taken into custody by back up officers on charges of assaulting a public safety officer, indecent exposure, and theft.