

The INSIDE

The Week in Review page 2

OPINION pages 6-7

METRO page 11

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT pages 8-10

CLASSIFIEDS

pages 14

CALENDAR

page 15

page 16

FOOD

This page
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PHOTO BY ZACHARY SENN THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Police Bureau officers face off against protestors during a Jan. 20 rally decrying the inauguration of President Donald Trump.

Police Oversight Hurdles

Community fight to keep reforms on track

BY ZACHARY SENN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland community leaders are fighting to keep efforts to reform the Portland Police Department on track amidst a slew of delays, complications and opposition from the Trump Administration.

A framework for Portland police reforms was established after a federal Department of Justice investigation found that the Portland Police Bureau had used excessive force against those suffering from mental illness. As a result of the subsequent 2012 court case,

“United States v. City of Portland” a settlement between the Justice Department and City Hall was reached which spelled out what law enforcement policies, procedures and oversight measures needed to be enacted or changed.

But since that time, the citizen committee formed to track progress has been slow going and was essentially dissolved in January due to constant in-fighting. A new blow came earlier this month when Attorney General Jeff Sessions spoke out against being involved and ordered a review of all Justice Department agreements with local law enforcement offices across the country.

Rev. Dr. Leroy Haynes Jr., a lifelong black civil rights activist, beginning with his commu-

nity organizing work in Dallas in the 1960s, and since moving to Portland in 1997, has been instrumental in the push for police reforms. Haynes serves as the pastor of Allen Temple CME Church in northeast Portland and as the chair of the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform.

Following a series of officer-involved killings, including those of James Chasse and James Jahar Perez, the AMA justice coalition successfully joined other activists including the Portland NAACP and Copwatch to call for a federal audit of the city’s law enforcement department.

“Out of that audit, we had the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Arrest in Fire Attack at Denny’s

Scott Ranstrom, the 69-year-old man who suffered critical injuries when an apparent stranger set him on fire at a Denny’s restaurant near the Clackamas Town Center was on life support Tuesday at a Portland hospital, his family said.

The attack happened last Wednesday night when a young man entered the restaurant and sat in booth adjacent to the victim. Police said surveillance vid-



Deshaun Swanger

eo showed the man dousing the victim with gasoline and tossing a lit match.

Police arrested Deshaun Swanger, 24, on Friday on a charge of attempted murder after getting a tip from one of his neighbors. They said he was living in transitional housing with about 18 people.

A GoFundMe page was established to help with Ranstrom’s medical expenses.