

THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



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CLEANING UP



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Members of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church's youth group picked up trash along 23rd Avenue between Jackson Street and Rainier on Feb. 12, Neighborhood Appreciation Day. The church has adopted the street in effort to keep the area clean.

Oregon Probes Tazo Tea

Former Black workers allege discrimination at Starbucks plant

By Brian Stimson
Of The Skanner News

The Bureau of Labor and Industry's investigation into charges of racial discrimination by Starbucks' Tazo Tea aren't the only allegations the company has faced.

After an investigation last week by The Skanner News found at least four Black Starbucks workers that claim to have been wrongfully fired from the company's Tazo Tea factory, reporters decided to look further. In June of 2009, Starbucks agreed to pay \$120,000 to settle a lawsuit of racial discrimination and retaliation in the case of Victor Washington, an African American lead network engineer.

At the time, Starbucks said an internal investigation found Washington's allegations to be "unsubstantiated and without merit" but decided to settle in order to "avoid further costs of litigation."

Tazo Firings

In total, The Skanner News has confirmed that four Black workers have been fired within the last two years from the Starbucks-owned company. The Skanner News was able to only speak to three of them. A fifth employee – now deceased – was also dismissed, but The Skanner News was unable to confirm details of his employment.

While the complaints and situations around their firings from Tazo are different, each man tells a similar tale of disparate treatment and dismissal by management when compared to the actions of their White co-workers. All of the Black workers were employed in the manufacturing/shipping section of the Tazo Tea factory in Portland.

The complaint alleges that Black employees were placed under closer scrutiny than any other employees at the plant. The former employees who spoke to The Skanner say the atmosphere made the working con-

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Fructose Impacts Brain Responses

Study finds that body processes, reacts to certain sugars differently

By Brian Stimson
Of The Skanner News

That soft drink in your hand is telling your brain to do things.

Researchers at Oregon Health and Sciences University say that a certain kind of sugar – fructose – is found to affect a part of your brain in a different way than other kinds of sugars.

Fructose is an extremely common sugar found naturally in nearly everything we eat. It's an essential nutrient, but it's over-

abundance in processed food has also earned the ire from nutrition scientists who say it is partially to blame for the obesity epidemic in the United States.

For processed food manufacturers, High Fructose Corn Syrup has become a staple ingredient in everything from bread to soda. To fully understand what the study means – and doesn't mean – it's important to understand the basics of sugar.

Basic white sugar – which is typically derived from either

sugar beets or sugar cane – is made up of pure sucrose. Sucrose is a carbohydrate formed from the combination of the molecules of fructose and glucose. When you consume white sugar, for example, your body then breaks down the sucrose (sugar) into its two parts – fructose and glucose.

The research found that fructose and glucose – despite being very similar on a molecular level – affect areas of the brain in different ways. Using a "functional MRI," which meas-

ures brain activity in real time, researchers found that neither fructose nor glucose affected the area of the brain that regulates food intake.

In test subjects injected with pure glucose, the areas of the brain that control responses to food taste, smells and pictures, were activated. Fructose, on the other hand, inhibited these same areas of the brain.

Lead researcher Dr. Jonathan Purnell says the research partially answers why two similar

Serge Severe Falls Back on '90s Love

New album brings best of Portland's hip hop scene to life

By Brian Stimson
Of The Skanner News

Serge Severe wants to break out. With his new album, "Back on My Rhymes" out and an album release party set for Feb. 18 featuring Manimal House— a live, nine piece funk band – as his back-up band, it's not hard to see that he means business.

The album is Severe's second solo record produced with Universal DJ Sect, a work that features some of Portland's best and most accomplished hip hop artists – Destro, Braille, Gen. Erik, Illmaculate, Luck One, Cool Nutz and Theory Hazit. The Animal Farm member is pushing his music career into overdrive, hoping to break out of the Northwest into the music halls across the nation.

Set against the backdrop of 60s and 70s soul and funk – from Universal DJ Sect's private collection — Severe says the samples Sect provided have helped inspire "Back on My Rhymes" to form a self-reflective album about life and the current state of hip hop.

Severe's release show will start at 9 p.m.

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