

THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



Federal Attorney Cuts

Public defender offices face closure from sequestration

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The lawyers who represent poor people charged with federal crimes across the country say they already face an unfair fight when they head into court against the resources of the Justice Department — and that's only going to get worse if draconian budget cuts occur as planned next year.

As a result of the automatic cuts known as sequestration, federal public defender offices have recently been told they must reduce spending by 14 percent for fiscal year 2014, on top of the roughly 9 percent suffered this year.

The result, the lawyers say, will be drastic layoffs for public defenders, expensive case delays and costly appeals — all for nothing, as pricier private attorneys are expected to step in to fill the void at government expense.

"Absent some immediate action, federal defenders will begin the process this summer of laying off between a third and half of their staff," said a memo prepared by several federal public defenders. "They will begin closing many offices. The cuts will result in irreparable damage to the criminal justice system, and paradoxically, greater expense to the taxpayer as indigent defendants are increasingly assigned private counsel."

Congress provides about \$1 billion for the representation of poor people charged with crimes. The money is split evenly between federal public defender program, which was established in 1970, and private attorneys, who are generally paid \$125 an hour to represent defendants who can't be represented by the public defenders because of conflicts of interest or other reasons.

Because the right to counsel is a constitutional guarantee, the federal defenders have no control over their workloads. When someone is charged and needs a lawyer,

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THE FAIR QUEEN



Ruth Harrington, queen of the Queen Esther Chapter of the St. Joseph Grand Lodge of Oregon, freemasons based in Northeast Portland, stood out among many participants in last weekend's Good in the Hood parade. Look for Multimedia Editor Helen Silvis's Good in the Hood parade slideshow on our website, www.theskanner.com.

Baby Precious Memorial Held

Those who care honor her by committing to care for other children

A memorial service was held at Maranatha Church on Northeast 12th Avenue Friday, to celebrate the short life of a baby found dead at the North Portland recycling center May 29. Baby Precious weighed 5 lbs and was hours or days old when she died. Her parents are unknown.

A group of women from the African American community, including Joyce Harris, Marci Jackson and Antoinette Edwards named the baby Precious, and organized the memo-

rial and burial.

Harris spoke during the ceremony saying she at first felt anger that a baby had been abandoned to die.

"My initial reaction was shock, disbelief, anger, and then sadness," Harris said. "I probably said and thought many of the same things you did: Who would do this? And why?"

But over the next days, the educator and equity advocate started thinking about what situation could have led a new mother to abandon her child. As

she worked with Portland police officer Marci Jackson and others to find a way to honor the baby's short life, she found many people were angry and upset.

"I realized I've got to help people refocus their anger," Harris said. "First of all we don't know what circumstances led to this baby being in this condition. We don't know but there may be a mother out there who is hurting terribly. We just don't know. So we should not judge... We need to come

together as a community out of love and care... So one lesson that I want you to take from here today is: Let's not judge. Let's not judge."

Harris said those who care about Baby Precious could honor her life and death by committing to care for other children.

"We know she deserved to be loved and embraced. As do so many of our children. We are sad and maybe feeling a little sorry for ourselves because

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Artharee Put on One Week Suspension

Punishment comes after remarks at an event to promote equity

Mayor Hales has ordered his public safety policy advisor Baruti Artharee to take a leave of absence the week of July 4. An investigation by the Department of Human Resources found Artharee broke city policy against harassment and discrimination at an event June 6, organized by *The Skanner News*.

In a statement, Hales said, Artharee will lose a week of pay and will have to take

training on the city's workplace harassment, discrimination and retaliation policy.

"Further, I have informed Baruti no such incident in the future would be tolerated," Hales says. "...In addition to my apology to Commissioner Smith, I apologize to the community at large. Everyone deserves respect for their competence and accomplishments. Women in particular. I and my staff will treat everyone in the community

with respect."

Hales released the Human Resources report, saying that while employee files are usually confidential, city leaders are held to a higher level of responsibility. Investigators interviewed nine witnesses who were present at the event and Artharee himself. They asked the witnesses about two contro-

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