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local information.

I-200 Cited in Hiring

Activists ask federal
probe of Washington
State Corrections

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

A coalition of civil rights activists this week called on the Federal Department of Justice to investigate the Washington State Corrections Department on its dismal hiring record for people of color.

A dozen Washington state civil rights activists gathered to announce their call for US Attorney General Eric Holder to dig into why the state's prison system only employs three people of color in its administrative services division, out of a total of 39 administrative officials.

The community leaders also demanded a look into why corrections has systematically failed to post job openings or hire from outside of the system, instead using direct appointments to fill high-level jobs.

"A culture of institutional racism has become systemic and experienced at all levels in this state agency," the letter to Holder reads.

"It is absolutely essential that diverse employees be hired to help inform the agency on how to best manage those individuals and connect with communities of color to elicit their help to appropriately re-enter offenders after their release," the letter says.

The spokesperson for the Department of Corrections was preparing a comment at press time; The Skanner News will follow up with more on this story next week.

Renton City Councilor Greg Taylor told The Skanner News that the issue is about improving employment trends for communities of color and holding top state officials accountable for fairer hiring practices.

"Out of the 39 people who work within the administrative services of the State Department of Corrections, you have one African-American, one Latino and one mixed-race Asian/White as well," Taylor said. "And these positions are not posted or

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OCTAVIA BUTLER FEST

Portland artist Intisar Abioto leads a dancing procession of Octavia E. Butler fans from a small celebration at Edwin T. Pratt Park to Jaam Rek on Jackson Street in Seattle. The group walked to the art studio for "Wild Seed," an event celebrating the life and works of Butler with singing, readings from the science fiction author's novels, and an art show inspired by Butler's Xenogenesis trilogy, also called "Lilith's Brood."



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Renewed Dawson Park Reopens

At the heart of a gentrified neighborhood, natives return to play

By Helen Silvius
Of The Skanner News

Dawson Park, a longtime gathering place that was central to Portland's African American community, has reopened after a \$2.7 million makeover.

The park has kept its signature gazebo, crowned with a dome that used to grace a pharmacy on Williams Avenue, when that street was the center of a thriving African American neighborhood.

Angela Taylor, who works at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center and has family nearby, said she loves the redesign.

"I like that they have kept the dome, because it symbolizes where this park came from," she says. "They have always had concerts here."

The new park design is open plan with entrances at all four corners leading into a circular walkway around a central lawn. The park has a shelter, picnic tables, a barbecue, a children's playground with some of the

bounciest artificial turf you've ever walked on, and a splash pad play fountain where visitors can cool off in the refreshing mist. Artist Isaka Shamsud-Din is making decorative medallions inspired by African Ndebele patterns that will be added at a later date.

The fountain, funded by a grant from Legacy Emanuel is surrounded by smooth oval boulders of granite inscribed with the story of the park.

"What's really cool about the fountain is it tells a story of

what's really cool about this place in the neighborhood and how significant this place has been as the neighborhood has developed over the years," said Parks director Mike Abbate. "This is a place that's been very important going back into the 1920s. In the 1940s this was seen as a major community gathering place. So what we're looking at here is a major renovation of an incredibly historic park."

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White Supremacist Gets Life for Murders

Killer apologizes not for crime, but for discrediting racist movement

By Steven Dubois
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A woman who took part in a Pacific Northwest killing rampage fueled by white supremacist beliefs apologized for her actions, but not her views.

Holly Grigsby, 27, was sentenced Tuesday to life in prison with no chance for release.

My actions have further damaged the
reputation of a movement misunderstood

She apologized in federal court to friends and relatives of the victims. Grigsby said she realized any explanation for her actions, such as her drug addiction, would come

across as an excuse, "or make it feel like I'm rationalizing my own insane behavior."

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