

Brooks

continued from page 1

20 slides shown for 20 seconds each, backed by commentary. <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5011456&file=1>)

In the Brooks case, which caused a national sensation, 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judges Cynthia Holcomb Hall and Diarmuid F. O’Scannlain in 2010 ruled the Seattle Police use of force justified against the pregnant mother.

tions of a Taser, in response to such a trivial offense.”

Berson wrote in her ruling that the officers had no idea whether their use of force would send Brooks into premature labor.

Brooks’ lawyer, Eric Zubel, asked the 9th Circuit to rehear the case, which they did – a rare event.

“This is outrageous — that something like this could happen to a pregnant woman, in



A coalition representing organizations including Mothers for Police Accountability, the Seattle/Martin Luther King Jr. County NAACP and The United Black Christian Clergy, expressed concern about the King County Sheriff’s Department’s re-introduction of the choke hold at the Sept. 8 meeting of the King County Council.

‘This is outrageous — that something like this could happen to a pregnant woman, in front of an elementary school, at 8:30 in the morning, to someone who posed no threat whatsoever’

In her opinion, Hall wrote: “It seems clear that Brooks was not going to be able to harm anyone with her car at a moment’s notice. Nonetheless, some threat she might retrieve the keys and drive off erratically remained, particularly given her refusal to leave the car and her state of agitation.”

Dissenting Judge Marsha Berzon argued that failure to sign a traffic ticket “is not an arrestable offense.”

She wrote, “I fail utterly to comprehend how my colleagues are able to conclude that it was objectively reasonable to use any force against Brooks, let alone three activa-

front of an elementary school, at 8:30 in the morning, to someone who posed no threat whatsoever,” he told the Associated Press.

The case then went to a panel of 11 federal appellate court judges, who ruled that – even though there was evidence of an unconstitutional use of force by the officers against her — Brooks’ lawsuit could not proceed because legal guidelines on Taser use as set out in 2004 were not clear enough.

“After almost eight years of litigation, we are pleased to have this matter resolved,” City Attorney Pete Holmes said last week.

Sickle Cell

continued from page 1

Annual Charles Drew Blood Drive, held right at the church at the same time.

Although in the United States this blood disorder affects primarily African Americans, millions more people across the globe inherit the trait including people with ancestry from Africa, South or Central America, the Caribbean Islands, India, Saudi Arabia, Mediterranean Countries, such as Turkey, Greece and Italy.

In the United States, sickle cell disease affects 1 out of every 500 Black births, and health experts say that’s why African-American donors can often provide blood that is the best match — because blood from donors of the same ethnic background as the recipient is less likely to cause complications, especially for patients like those with sickle cell disease.

There is no real cure, only ongoing treatment with blood transfusions and bone marrow transplants.

“It is estimated that sickle cell disease affects as many as 100,000 people in the U.S.,” says Red Cross Communications Manager Jared Schultzman. “Many of these patients face a lifetime of blood transfusions to help reduce the risk of stroke, damage to

major organs and other complications that can arise as a result of sickle cell disease.”

Taylor, now the executive director of the Sickle Cell Foundation of Oregon, started volunteering with the group in the 1960s.

Sickle cell disease affects 1 out of every 500 Black births, and experts say that’s why African-American donors can often provide blood that is the best match

Back then, the Portland Black Panther Party – which ran a health clinic and a children’s breakfast program — made sickle cell outreach a priority with public events and a door-to-door educational campaign.

That effort was famously led by Taylor’s good friend, legendary community organizer Willie Mae Hart, one of the original founders of the first Sickle Cell Foundation who had lost a granddaughter to the disease. After a period of years that group disbanded, but Taylor formed another in 1980.

Last weekend the Metropolitan Seattle

Sickle Cell Task Force held its 9th Annual Walk and Bike for Sickle Cell, attracting hundreds and raising funds for their activities.

The group was created in 1994 and their programs include NW Sickle Cell Camp,

the group’s outreach – a lot of which goes towards supporting the children’s activities.

“These kids can’t really go to regular summer camp,” she says. “A lot of what we do is directed towards fundraising to give the children that special experience.”

The key is to diagnose sickle cell sufferers in infancy, Taylor says, because the damage done by the disease can shorten sufferers’ lives; with the proper diagnosis patients can live longer.

With that in mind the Sickle Cell Foundation of Oregon is partnering with Legacy Health to provide free and low-cost sickle cell tests for those who can’t afford them.

The other important piece is that more Black blood donors and bone marrow donors are needed.

For more information on the Metropolitan Seattle Sickle Cell Task Force, go to www.mssctf.org.

More on the Sickle Cell Foundation of Oregon is at www.sicklecelldisease.org.

Make an appointment to donate blood with the Columbia-Willamette Red Cross by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS or go to www.redcrossblood.org, using the sponsor code “charlesdrewpdx.”

Forum

continued from page 1

ask them to pursue a racial impact statement. He hopes people who care about racial justice will attend a forum in Salem next Tuesday, Sept. 16, that will explain how the new law works and how it can be used to reduce disproportionate numbers of Black children in the welfare system and Black inmates in our prisons. The law also requires the statement to include the impact on victims.

The Racial Impact Statement forum will run from noon-1 p.m. Tuesday, September 16, in Hearing Room 50, at the Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE, Salem.

Why is the law needed? One example of a federal law that had a disproportionate impact on African Americans were the laws that treated crack cocaine more severely

than powder cocaine. Crack was cheaply available in Black communities while pow-

Another good example of a law that has had a disproportionate impact on minorities

‘Maybe there is another way to reach out shared goals without locking more people up’

der cocaine was largely used by well-off whites. As a result blacks who prosecuted on federal cocaine charges faced a five-year mandatory minimum sentence while whites usually did not. The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 eliminated the five-year mandatory sentence for crack possession, although sentencing disparities were not completely eliminated.

is Seattle’s ordinance against using marijuana in public, which resulted in homeless people receiving 41 percent of the tickets and Blacks 37 percent, even though just 8 percent of Seattle residents are black.

African Americans make up about 2 percent of Oregon’s population, but about 10 percent of Oregon’s prison population. Research has found disparities at every

level of the criminal justice system, from traffic stops and arrests to sentencing.

Shields says legislators need to look harder for ways to make our streets safe and keep children safe without locking up more people of color.

“Maybe we don’t have to add 2 or 3 years to your sentence if you are a member of a criminal street gang,” he says. “Maybe we should fund gang outreach workers. Maybe there is another way to reach out shared goals without locking more people up.”

Iowa and Connecticut require racial impact statements before any new laws are passed. And a fourth state, Minnesota has a sentencing project that often provides racial impact information to lawmakers.