



Special Housing Edition

The Portland Observer
Congrats Grads

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The Portland Observer

Volume LII • Number 10



'City
of
Roses'

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Committed to Cultural Diversity



Ivory N. Mathews, the new executive director for Home Forward (upper left), addresses the housing crisis during a meeting in Portland this month with President Biden's Housing Secretary, Marcia Fudge (center, head table), and other local officials, including members of Oregon's congressional delegation.

New Leader in Housing Crisis

Ivory Mathews takes helm at Home Forward

By BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

For Ivory Mathews, the first Black woman to lead public housing authority Home Forward, the job is a continuation of a life-long journey from poverty to activism.

Public housing has changed drastically over the years, even in Home Forward's decades long history for Portland and Multnomah County, she said, which in the past had harmful policies, as did other public housing organizations.

"When you look at all the properties that we purchased early on, they had harmful restrictions, like properties that might say only white people can live here," she said. "And in the early 1960s when fair housing came about, those things were supposed to have changed during that time."

But change has been a long time coming, and is still an ongoing process, and a recent memorandum from Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia L.



Ivory N. Mathews

Fudge directs all HUD organizations to eliminate barriers that prevent those with criminal histories from participating in HUD programs, examine all policies and report back by Oct. 14.

That work is already underway at Home Forward, Mathews said, as she promises to meet the deadline with ease.

"We've come a long way, but we still have a long way to go," she said. "Home Forward is an organization that has over 80 years of harmful policies and we're doing the work to make sure that as a part

of our reparations is getting rid of those harmful policies."

That means "Creating a culture where people who are our residents, and where our community understands that we will no longer tolerate these inequities in providing services to the families that we serve," she said.

Over the years of working in public housing, Mathews said she realized that she wanted to work in her career at a higher level.

"I wanted to work my way up to the highest point of oversight in the affordable housing arena so that I can have the opportunity to sit on boards and talk to the media and try to provide truth and mitigate all this negative conversation about what affordable housing might mean to some people," she said.

That goal has come to fruition not only as executive director of Home Forward, but her recent appointment to the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, and as assistant chair for legislation for the National Association and Redevelopment Officials, both national organizations.

In addition to her work heading up the local office, as a member of those two

organizations, both based in Washington D.C., Mathews also has the opportunity to lobby for local support, and she's getting it.

"HUD is very responsive now," she said. "They're not just appeasing us, they're actually listening and coming back and giving us the autonomy that we need to do this work better."

Home Forward is much more than housing, Mathews said, more than brick and mortar.

"We look at our families from a 360-degree lens," Mathews said. "We care as much about putting a physical unit in place as we do about making sure that the family is thriving and that what we provide to individuals is more than a house. It's a place they can call home, something where they can live, and thrive and work, as any other citizen does in the city of Portland, or Multnomah County, or Gresham, or wherever our footprint is."

Part of that Home Forward lens is creating of a new strategic plan, Mathews said, which will be released in about a year.

That means a lot of internal work with

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Muslim Center Arson Arrest



Surveillance cameras show the suspect who used an accelerant on May 3 to start a fire at the Muslim Community Center of Portland, located at 5325 N Vancouver Ave. Four days later police arrested the man and identified him as Michael E. Bivins, 34, of Portland; also charging him with recent attacks at two synagogues in Portland.

Man also charged with attacking two synagogues

Portland police have arrested a man who used an accelerant to start a fire at the Muslim Community Center of Portland, also charging him with recent acts of arson and vandalism at two synagogues and a black-owned restaurant in the city.

Michael E. Bivins, 34, of Portland was lodged Saturday, May 7, into the Multnomah County Detention Center for the May 3 arson at the Muslim Community Center, located at 5325 N. Vancouver Ave. On Tuesday

he was arraigned for arson, bias crimes and other charges for acts of criminal mischief on April 30 at Congregation Shir Takvage, 2420 N.E. Sandy Blvd.; for breaking a window at Everybody Eats PDX on May 1, and for May 2 and May 4 vandalism at Congregation Beth Israel, 1972 N.W. Flanders.

Fortunately, there was only limited damage in each of the cases and no injuries.

Police said Bivins was arrested with the assistance of the Beaverton Police Department after he visited a television news station where he demanded to speak to a reporter.

Bivins attended Benson High School as a student and has worked as a free lance photographer and journalist in the past.

Racism, Conspiracies Fueled Massacre

10 Blacklives lost on a trip to the store

(AP) — They were caregivers and protectors and helpers, running an errand or doing a favor or finishing out a shift, when their paths crossed with a young man driven by racism and hatred and baseless conspiracy theories.

In a flash, the ordinariness of their day was broken at Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, N.Y., where in and around the supermarket's aisles, a symbol of the mundane was transformed into a scene of mass murder.

Carts lay abandoned. Bodies littered the tile floor. Police radios crackled with calls for help.

Investigators will try, for days to come, to piece together the massacre that killed 10 people, all Black and apparently hunted for the color of their skin.

Those who loved them are left with their memories of the lost, who suffered death amid the simple task of buying groceries.

"These people were just



Wayne Jones holds his son Donell, while speaking during an interview with The Associated Press about his mother Celestine Chaney, who was killed in Saturday's shooting at a supermarket, in Buffalo, N.Y. (AP photo)

shopping," said Steve Carlson, 29, mourning his 72-year-old neighbor Katherine Massey, who checked in often, giving him gifts on his birthday and at Christmas, and pressing money into his hand when he helped with yardwork. "They went to go get food to feed their families."

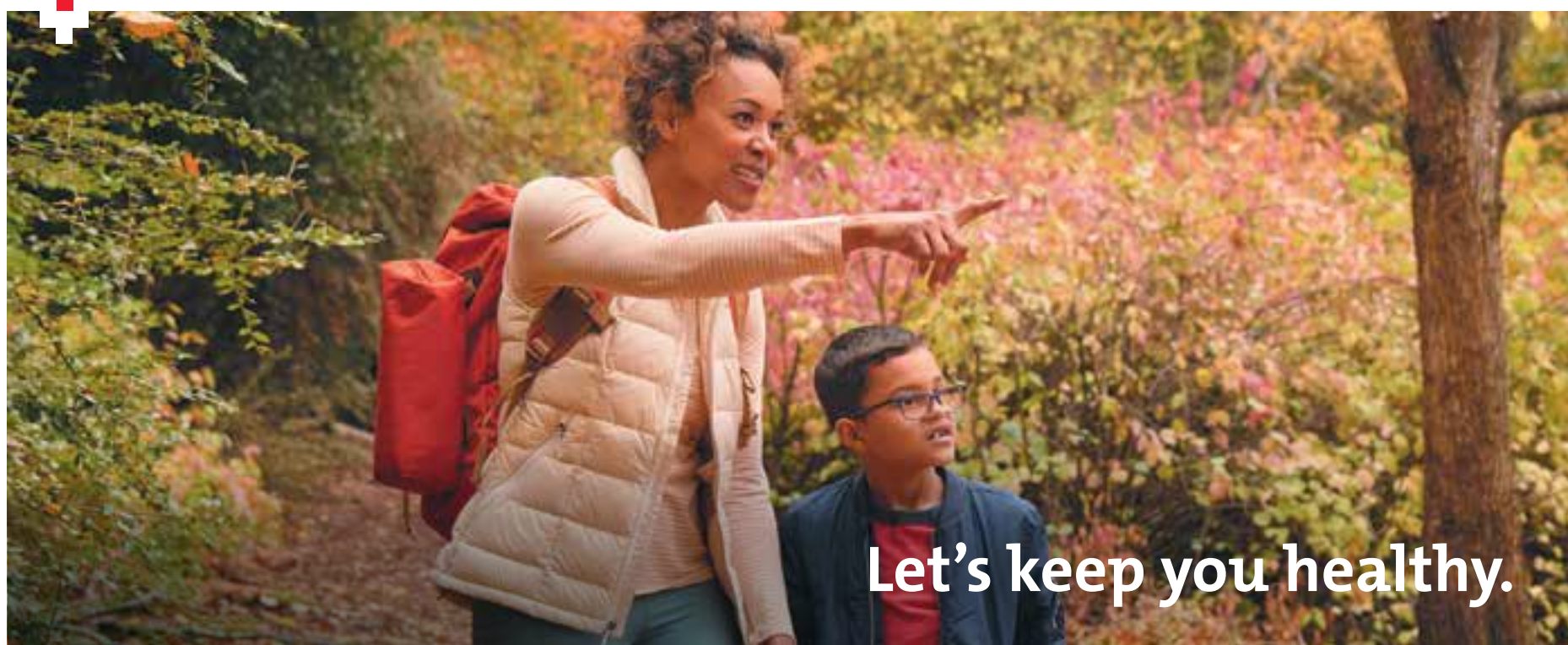
One came from volunteering at a food bank. Another had been tending to her husband at his nursing home. Most were in their 50s and beyond, and were

destined for more, even if just the dinner they planned to make.

Shonnell Harris, a manager at the store, was stocking shelves when she heard the first of what she figured must have been more than 70 shots. She ran for the back door, stumbling a few times along the way. She wondered where her daughter, a grocery clerk, was, and went

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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LOCAL NEWS

Ending Stigma of Addiction

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, a Portland lawmaker and Native American leader known for advocating for children and families, has been honored for sharing her own story of recovery and for her work giving back to the community in meaningful ways.

Sanchez represents inner north and northeast Portland in the state Legislature. She recently received the annual Freedom award from Fora Health, formerly known as De Paul Treatment Centers, to recognize community members who foster healthy communities with outspoken support for addiction treatment access and quality.

Sanchez, a long-term recovery patient herself, has been a behavioral health champion in the legislature for years and, with a personal understanding of the direct impact funding has on a patient, recently helped lead Oregon's historic investments to support those who struggle with addiction and mental health conditions.



Rep. Tawna Sanchez is recognized for her work ending the stigma of addiction and giving back to the community in meaningful ways, receiving the annual Freedom Award from Fora Health, formerly known as De Paul Treatment Centers. Sanchez represents inner north and northeast Portland in the Oregon Legislature.

Lives Saved at Care Facility Fire



Countless lives were saved by the heroic efforts of employees and firefighters when a fire broke out overnight at Hope N Care, a southeast Portland residential care facility located at 12045 S.E. Pardee St.

Employees, firefighters rush into action to make rescues

Countless lives were saved by the heroic efforts of employees and firefighters when a fire broke out overnight May 11 at a southeast Portland residential care facility.

At least 16 people were evacuated out of the front of the structure and 8 more victims were safely evacuated by firefighters from at attached two-story building, saving everyone in both buildings and preventing a horrible tragedy, officials said.

The fire broke out just after

1 a.m. at Hope N Care, located at 12045 S.E. Pardee St. Officials said the fire had the potential to be a mass casualty event had it not been for care facility employees and Portland Fire & Rescue's firefighters, who together evacuated everyone in the building and prevented a horrible tragedy.

"I want to express my deepest appreciation and thanks to everyone that was involved in this successful, lifesaving operation—Our IAFF Local 43 Fire Fighters at Portland Fire & Rescue, the Hope N Care staff, Portland Police Bureau, AMR, TriMet, Red Cross, and mutual aid partners Clackamas County Fire and Gresham Fire," said Portland City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty who oversees the Fire Bureau.

Hardesty said the timely response saved lives and underscores the importance of a well-resourced Fire Bureau that maintains 4 person crews.

"These dangerous fires demand extra resources throughout the entire City and I'm thankful to all that stepped up to ensure the continuation of services for all Portlanders while this rescue operation was underway," Hardesty said in a prepared statement.

Fire Chief Sara Boone also commended firefighters along with the heroism of two on-site employees who risked their lives starting the initial evacuation of the residents under heavy fire conditions.

There was no word on the cause of the fire which is under investigation.

DIVERSITY

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Crescent Court to Serve Families



The grand opening of Crescent Court Apartments brings 138 new affordable housing units for low and very low-income families to Southeast 115th and Division. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Portland also plans a new 1,700 square foot club at the site, providing a safe and positive place for neighborhood kids and after-school activities.

Affordable housing site comes with support services

Executives from Related Northwest and Central City Concern celebrated the grand opening of 138 new affordable housing units for low and very low-income families last week in southeast Portland.

The Crescent Court Apartments at 11560 S.E. Division will be geared to serve people at 30% to 60% of Area Median

Income. Of the new units, seven are designated as permanent supportive housing for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The development is comprised of studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. Rents will range from \$341-\$1,410 per month. Common area amenities include a community room with kitchen, shared laundry, internet stations, teen room, resident services space, playground, and picnic area with barbecue.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Portland will inaugurate their new 1,700 square foot club inside Crescent Court Apartments and

provide a safe and positive place for neighborhood kids, and free after-school activities for school-aged residents.

Outreach and leasing support will be from Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), and intensive, on-site social services will be provided by Central City Concern.

The major funders for Crescent Court are both public and private backers, including the Portland Housing Bureau; Oregon Housing & Community Services; Enterprise Housing Credit Investments; US Bank; and the Multnomah County Joint Office of Homeless Services.

41 NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS COMING SOON TO NE PORTLAND

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Housing Crisis

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

staff, the Home Forward board, residents and community partners to fine-tune the framework of the new plan.

"We want to be the best we can possibly be," she said. "Everyone who takes a paycheck from Home Forward is an ambassador for affordable housing and quality of life."

There's also a lot more positive energy at the national HUD level with the new Democratic administration, she said.

"They are extremely responsive to supporting and giving housing authorities what they need to work on addressing local solutions for affordable housing," she said. "It certainly warms our heart. It's a big sigh of relief."

Mathews grew up in rural South Carolina and said the first time she experienced quality housing was when she went to college. She had great parents, but both had low levels of education and though they worked hard, it was never enough to secure stable housing.

"We were truly the working poor," she said. "They made a dollar too much to qualify for any type of government assistance or anything like that, but it also left us with missing some of the basic necessities, and that was housing."

Mathews was able to go to college because of a basketball scholarship to Newberry College, a small liberal arts college in her home state.

"That was really the gateway for transforming and transitioning my life," she said. "When I was in college I did a lot of volunteer work through my basketball team with children who lived in affordable housing through the local housing authority."

Through that program she worked with the local housing authority in mentorship and after-school programs.

"I always felt a strong connect

with the families there and the children because I knew exactly their life experiences because I had lived those experiences," she said.

Because of her volunteer work, at her college graduation Mathews was surprised to be named the recipient of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award for excelling in community service, one more sign of the direction her life was to take.

"I had no idea this award was even given until my name was called at graduation and was totally a shock to me," she said. "So these were the kind of things that overlaid my purpose."

Mathews majored in sociology, which she said helped her understand her own life and her journey.

"It made me more focused on reaching those goals that could transform my life, having been a first generation college student," she said. "I knew this would be an opportunity for me to change the trajectory of my life and then my children's and their children's children."

After graduation, Mathews landed a job working in compliance for the Aiken Housing Authority in Aiken, S.C., where she looked at all the federal regulations in specific programs to make sure there are standard operating procedures, that staff is property trained and getting feedback from residents.

"Working in that arena I felt like it was a way to advocate for families," she said, noting that federal regulations can be interpreted in different ways.

"So I helped people in that role, helped people understand that sometimes you are dealt these cards, that some of us, like myself, were born into poverty," she said, as well as having health issues or the need for older people to age in place.

"We all need a place to call home," she said.

Summer Tennis Camps Offered



Tennis Coach Don Johnson is the nonprofit chief executive officer and co-founder of Kids N' Tennis, a culturally, ethnically and economically diverse youth-tennis program.

Coach puts out word on diverse program

Kids N' Tennis, a nonprofit tennis program serving culturally, ethnically and economically diverse young people, is reaching out to encourage sign-ups for free spring and summer tennis camps, while encouraging all ages to support the group's annual Juneteenth fundraising tournament.

Tennis is booming and Coach

Don Johnson, the CEO and co-founder of Kids N' Tennis, says this is a great time for young people to put themselves in the game by signing up for the organization's special events, promotions and play opportunities.

A free Tennis Play Day last Saturday at the Portland Tennis Center marked the 35th year of free summer tennis for 7 to 18 year old participants. The camps are run at Irving Park in northeast Portland for two months, from June 20 through Aug. 11 and will meet Mondays through Thurs-

days from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The annual Kids N' Tennis Juneteenth Classic, June 17-19, will be a fundraiser for junior tennis programs with play at the tennis center and Grant Park, also in northeast Portland. Last year was a huge success with 125 participants.

For more information and to sign up for Kids N Tennis activities or the Juneteenth tournament, visit kids-n-tennis.org, call Coach Don Johnson at 503-880-0582 or email donjohnson8@me.com.

Mask Up for Rising COVID

Multnomah County health officials are asking people to wear masks indoors until new COVID-19 counts and hospitalizations start to decline.

Health Officer Dr. Jennifer Vines issued the recommendation last week, saying it was not a mandate but a request for everyone to put their masks back on for a few weeks as they go to school, work and other indoor events. Officials strongly recommend people wear masks in schools.

Multnomah County has been averaging about 350 new cases a day, up from less than 100 in early April.

The current COVID-19 wave



Photo by Lukas Smilan on Pixabay is expected to peak in about a month, according to Oregon Health and Science University.

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Oregon Public Defender System Sued

(AP) — Criminal defendants in Oregon who have gone without legal representation for long periods of time amid a critical shortage of public defense attorneys filed a lawsuit Monday that alleges the state violated their constitutional right to legal counsel and a speedy trial.

The complaint, which seeks class-action status, was filed as state lawmakers and the Oregon Office of Public Defense Services struggle to address the huge shortage of public defenders statewide.

The crisis has led to the dismissal of dozens of cases and left an estimated 500 defendants statewide — including several dozen in custody on serious felonies — without legal representation. Crime victims are also impacted because cases are taking longer to reach resolution, a delay that experts say extends their trauma, weakens evidence and erodes confidence in the justice system, especially among low-income and minority groups.

“There is a public defense crisis raging across this country,” said Jason D. Williamson, executive director of the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law at New York University School of Law, who helped prepare the filing. “But Oregon is among only a handful of states that is now entirely depriving people of their constitutional right to counsel on a daily basis, leaving countless indigent defendants without access to an attorney

for months at a time.”

The lawsuit specifically names Gov. Kate Brown and Stephen Singer, the recently appointed executive director of the state’s public defense agency, and asks for a court injunction ordering criminal defendants to be released if they can’t be provided with an attorney in a reasonable period of time. The lawsuit doesn’t specify what would be considered “reasonable.”

Oregon’s system to provide attorneys for criminal defendants who can’t afford them was underfunded and understaffed before COVID-19, but a significant slowdown in court activity during the pandemic pushed it to a breaking point. A backlog of cases is flooding the courts and defendants routinely are arraigned and then have their hearing dates postponed up to two months in the hopes a public defender will be available later.

A report by the American Bar Association released in January found Oregon has 31% of the public defenders it needs. Every existing attorney would have to work more than 26 hours a day during the work week to cover the caseload, the authors said.

The Oregon complaint focuses on four plaintiffs who have been without

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Housing Grants Target Needs Federal investments made to address crisis

Oregon will be receiving \$71 million in federal grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to tackle various housing issues around the state, Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley announced Monday.

“Housing is a human right, and these federal resources will help to make that right a reality for Oregonians needing a floor under their feet and a roof over their heads,” said Wyden, author of the Decent, Affordable, Safe Housing for All (DASH) Act.

The monies allocated are good step forward to help provide affordable housing statewide, Wyden said, but he indicated there’s more to be done and he promised to continue pushing for an even greater response to the housing crisis.

The Community Planning Development awards include nearly \$35 million for Community Development Block Grants to build and secure decent housing and suitable living environments, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

The funding includes nearly \$20 million for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program which provides grants for building housing, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or



U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden

homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income people.

Another \$10 million was allocated for the Housing Trust Fund, giving local governments monies to exclusively produce and preserve affordable housing for extremely low and very low-income households; and another \$2.5 million for the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS program which provides stable and permanent housing assistance and supportive services to one of the most vulnerable populations — low-income people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

In addition, nearly \$3 million was awarded to the state’s Emergency Solutions Grant program, providing support for first responders helping people in a housing crisis and engaging with people living on the streets.

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Racism, Conspiracies



Katherine Massey, one of the victims killed in the grocery store shooting in Buffalo on Saturday, is pictured back in 2011. Her sister called her "a beautiful soul." (Photo courtesy The Buffalo News via AP)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

around to the front of the store.

She saw someone being shot, she said, and a man who looked like he was dressed for the Army.

"Like a nightmare," Harris told The Buffalo News, shaken but grateful to have found her daughter safe.

The grisly scene was broadcast online by the gunman, a video notable not just for the cold-bloodedness of the killings, but how fast they unfolded. In the deafening rat-a-tat of gunfire, 10 voices were silenced, their stories left for others to recite.

Of a woman whose niece swore she was "the apple of God's eye." Of a longtime policeman who became a guard at the store and whose son knew he died a hero. Of an ace baker who'd give you the shirt off her back.

Garnell Whitfield Jr., whose 86-year-old mother Ruth Whitfield was killed in the attack, said she had come to Tops after her daily ritual of visiting her husband of 68 years in his nursing home. In so many ways, for so many years, Whitfield Jr. said his mother had devoted her life to those she loved.

"That day was like every other day for my mom," he said Monday as he pondered how to break the news to his father.

Heyward Patterson, a 67-year-old deacon at State Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, was similarly doing the things he'd long been known for. He had just come from helping at his church's soup kitchen and now was at Tops, volunteering in the community jitney service that shuttles people without a ride to and from the store.

Pastor Russell Bell of the Tabernacle Church said he believed Patterson had been loading someone's groceries into his trunk when the shots took him down.

"Anywhere he was, he was encouraging people to be the best that they could be," Bell said.

As customers arrived at Tops

ahead of the shooting, their purpose was clear.

Roberta Drury, 32, was in search of something for dinner. Andre Mackneil, 53, came to pick up a cake for his son's third birthday. Celestine Chaney, 65, needed some shortcake to go with the strawberries she sliced.

For some in the store, it was likely a trip of necessity, to fill an emptied fridge or get a missing ingredient. For Chaney, though, it was more than some stubborn chore. Stores were her passion. Her 48-year-old son, Wayne Jones, said he'd typically take his mother shopping each week, stopping at grocery store after grocery store in search of the best deals, with the occasional stop for a hot dog or McDonald's.

"We'd hit four or five stores looking for a deal," he laughed even as his face was wet with tears.

On Saturday, it was Chaney's older sister, JoAnn Daniels, 74, who accompanied her shopping, and the two sisters made a meandering trip through Tops' aisles. Chaney knew she needed shortcakes, but flitting around the store, she decided she wanted to make shrimp salad, too, giggling with her sister as they filled the cart. She surveyed the roast beef and complained about the price of rolls before taking interest in chicken legs.

"You done?" she finally asked her sister, who said she was.

Pops suddenly ricocheted. The sisters thought they were firecrackers, but others started running. They went to follow, but Chaney was knocked down. Daniels said she reached to help, but her sister said she was fine.

"I'm coming," Daniels said her sister assured. She thought Chaney was behind her.

It would be hours before she learned the truth, when her nephew saw the video of the shooting: Her baby sister, who had survived breast cancer and three surgeries for aneurysms, died on a trip to the grocery store.



PLANS CHANGE. DREAMS DON'T.

Josh Griffie knows the difference. He was a teenager with big plans. Then he was diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder. His soccer career? Over. His other plans? Rearranged. But when one path closes off, Josh sees two more in its place. "One of my biggest strengths is my ability to adapt, dream and persevere," he says.

Despite chronic health issues, he started a photography business in Portland, then landed an internship and a job at Nike. Soon he'll finish his business administration degree online through [Oregon State Ecampus](https://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/josh). And he's ready for whatever comes next.

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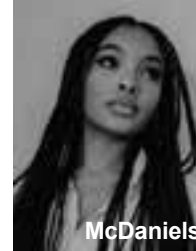













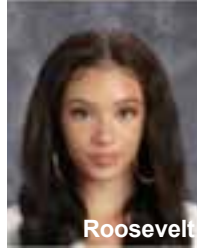












Congratulations 2022

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Not Pictured: Jazzmin Perry, *Benson*; Tait Quinlan, *Benson*; Maralee Martinez, *Benson*; Angela Johnson, *Benson*; Kennedi Thurman, *Gresham*; Amyah Warren, *Parkrose*; Aron Habtemariam, *Parkrose*; Isaac Rowden, *Parkrose*; Mikias Beyene, *Parkrose*

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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

My People's Market Coming



The June 3-5 weekend will bring the next My Peoples Market, an event that focuses on culture and community with a collection of ethnically diverse vendors, food and beverage providers, entertainment and more. Sponsored by Prosper Portland, the roving market will next take place at the Workshop Blocks, 1125 S.E. Water Ave. Mark your calendars and watch for updates at mypeoplesmarket.com.

Dealing with the Truth

OPINIONATED JUDGE

BY
DARLEEN
ORTEGA



Portland play holds mirror to racist impacts

Whatever is true is true; it doesn't stop being true if we ignore it, deny it, dress it up, rewrite it, appropriate it, or defend against it. Either we deal with the truth, or it deals with us. The family depicted in Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins' brilliant play, "Appropriate," is typical—its members, gathered to dispose of what remains of their material legacy, haven't cultivated the skills it would take to deal with that legacy. The play offers a window into the result: their relationships are fractured, they are angry and lost, and they are safe for nei-



PHOTO BY DAVID KINDER/COURTESY PROFILE THEATER

Linda Haden and Sara Fay Goldman star in "Appropriate," a Profile Theater production centering on a family in conflict and speaking truths to the impacts of America's history of chattel slavery and anti-black racism.

ther themselves nor anyone else.

That description could apply to a whole genre of plays—Tracy Letts' "August Osage County" comes to mind, or the far superior plays of Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill. Like those works, this one is full of family conflict, and characters who are

broken and dishonest and not especially likeable, though fascinating to watch. But in contrast to Letts' play, this one has a lot to say. Sitting through the ugliness is less like ogling the scene of a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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OPINION

Roe V. Wade and the Extreme Right

Pay attention, things are about to get worse

By BEN JEALOUS

Things are about to get worse for millions of vulnerable people in our country.

It looks like the far right-wing majority on the U.S. Supreme Court is getting ready to reverse Roe v. Wade, the 50-year-old ruling that recognized a pregnant person's right to have an abortion. Abortion is legal today, but pretty soon that will no longer be the case in most of the country.

A leaked draft of a Supreme Court ruling expected to be released in June indicates that the Court will rule that there is no constitutional protection for abortion. Bans will go into effect in many states immediately, and others will follow soon. That will leave millions of women and LGBTQ people—and their spouses and partners—less free and less in control of their own health, lives and families.

Like many laws and policy decisions handed down from on high, the harm will fall hardest on those with the fewest resources and political power—people of color and low-income people. It is hard to take.

How did this happen?

In the long term, it happened because opponents on the right to choose spent decades building a movement to make it happen. They invested time and money to elect like-minded politicians. They pushed Republican presidents to fill federal courts with judges who were willing, if not eager, to restrict or ban legal access to abortion. They made it a



Ben Jealous

top priority when deciding whether and how to vote.

In the short term, it happened because Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election. To energize the Republican Party's ideological base, Trump promised them judges who would overturn Roe v. Wade. They took the deal Trump offered. They turned out to vote. And with help from Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, Trump gave them kind of judges they wanted.

And now that they have the power to impose their will, Americans' freedom will shrink and American families will suffer.

In fact, many are already suffering. Anti-choice activists have harassed and sometimes killed abortion providers. Judges have been letting state legislators pile on more and more restrictions on abortion care. As a result, in some states, the right to abortion care may exist in theory, but in reality, it is virtually nonexistent, because clinics and providers have disappeared.

There are hard times and hard decisions ahead.

There are also lessons to be learned and acted on.

One important lesson is that the Supreme Court has a big impact on our lives, even though most of us don't think about it in the day to day. We should all pay more attention.

We should pay attention when the far right tells us what they plan to do with their political power. They have been loud and clear about their intent to overturn Roe v. Wade. But many Americans refused to believe that the threat to Roe v. Wade was real. They just could not imagine a 21st Century America in which women and doctors are treated like criminals for seeking or providing abortion care.

We no longer need to imagine that kind of scenario. We're about to live it.

And that's why we also have to pay attention to the consequences of our voting behavior.

For the most part, the judges who are letting states eliminate access to abortion are the same judges letting states limit voters' access to the ballot box. They're the same judges who restrict the government's ability to regulate harmful corporate behavior. Many of them are the same judges who tried to deny millions of Americans access to health care provided by the Affordable Care Act.

The Supreme Court justices and other federal judges who are put in place by the president and U.S. Senate have jobs for life. That means we are stuck with Trump's judges for many years to come. And that means we all need to think long and hard about who we vote for—and about ever passing up the opportunity to vote.

Ben Jealous serves as president of People for the American Way and Professor of the Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Dealing with the Truth

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

car crash and more like looking into our own souls, if we are willing; “Appropriate” holds up a mirror to the impacts of American chattel slavery and anti-Black racism on its “beneficiaries.” And if we are honest, the beneficiaries include more than the descendants of former slaveholders like this family.

Profile Theater’s production, playing through May 22 at the Imago Theater in Portland, is essential viewing. Its uniformly stellar cast, benefitting from courageous direction by Jerry Ruiz, goes all the way in to the play’s most difficult elements, sparing neither us nor themselves. I expect it is a heavy lift; the play’s action assembles a remarkably comprehensive menu of moves people make to avoid seeing what is right in front of them. Embodying that takes a relentless commitment to the truth.

The reunion of three siblings, Toni, Bo, and Franz (rebranding himself from his given name of Frank), and their families occurs six months after the death of their father, at the debt-burdened family “plantation” in Arkansas, where none of them live any longer. Through casual references, we learn that the grounds include two cemeteries (one for the slaves), and we can see that the house is laden with junk that they need to sort through for an estate sale. (Franz describes their dad as a “hoarder,” though I can think of additional explanations.) Sorting through the mess, Bo’s children haplessly unearth a series of signs that their Harvard-educated lawyer grandpa was a member of the Klan and an unrepentant racist, beginning with an album of postcards of lynchings. (I’ll leave you to discover the rest of their finds.)

Naturally, no one manages to directly deal with or even name the significance of these discoveries. Perpetually furious Toni (Linda Hayden), who is recently divorced and ousted from a job as a school administrator due to the misdeeds of her teenage son Rhys (Colin Kane, desperate for respite), cared for their father in the end and administers the estate. She carries that role to extremes, quashing any suggestion that their father was even slightly prejudiced—and tellingly, Toni’s defense against attempts by Bo’s wife Rachel (Sara Fay Goldman) to describe her own experiences of anti-Semitism from their father quickly devolves into epithets. For her part, Rachel’s obsessive focus on sheltering her children evidently has left them without skills to process reality. Bo (Gavin Hoffman, tightly wound), seemingly the most successful sibling, appears to have begun

avoiding the family legacy as far back as his own childhood visits to the plantation, and has honed an inability to imagine that he is seeing really everything that is materializing before his eyes. And bringing further chaos into what the others have likely experienced as equilibrium is Franz (Tyler Caffall, more sorry for himself than sorry), estranged from the family for 10 years after a series of misdeeds including a conviction for child sex abuse. He has arrived with the self-styled River, his much-younger fiancée (Elizabeth “Lizzie” Rees, embodying River’s confidence that does not appear to be hard-won). Franz and River, trained in Reiki and New Age platitudes, exercise a reflex to turn every unfolding discovery into an occasion for redemption, though they both appear to lack much practice at self-application of the wisdom that River beatifically employs.

In a multitude of ways, each of the family members, including Bo’s children making the discoveries (Tiffany Groben, not nearly as helpless as her mother assumes and not understanding as much as she thinks she does, and Nico Spaulding, innocent, ignorant, and yet perhaps the most clear member of the family) is ill-equipped to understand what is crumbling around them or how they are carrying forward the rot. Bo and his well-schooled daughter separately suspect, and then confirm, that the photos might be “worth” money—and then they and each of the family members mishandle that information along with everything else. Each family member unwittingly contributes to the further disintegration of themselves and their “legacy.”

The New York Times review of an earlier production of this award-winning play described Jacobs-Jenkins as a “thief” of other playwrights (like Letts) while purporting to praise the play. That strikes me as an ironic and tone-deaf way of describing what this African-American playwright constructed before he even turned 30: an endlessly insightful assemblage of how generations of stolen lives and wealth have dehumanized the “beneficiaries” of that theft. What’s true is true, and this excellent production of the work of this gifted playwright offers us some help in seeing and maybe even understanding more of what is hidden in plain sight before it further destroys us.

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie and theater review column Opinionated Judge appears regularly in The Portland Observer. Find her review blog at opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com.


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Obituary



Damarion Jackson

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Service at Rose City Cemetery,
Tuesday, May 24th at 1:00pm

Cold Case Murder Reward Offered



Danae Williams

The FBI has announced a new \$15,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the individual or individuals responsible for the murder of Danae Williams.

A year ago, on May 12, at 8:55 p.m., Danae Williams, 25, was in her car, stopped at a red light at Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Dekum Street when a silver sedan pulled up along the passenger side and someone fired multiple rounds

into the vehicle.

Williams was shot and died of her wounds the following day. A passenger in the car was also shot in the head but survived. Investigators believe Williams and her passenger were innocent victims of an ongoing violent dispute between rival gangs.

"Today we announced a \$15,000 reward for information leading to the identification, arrest and conviction of the individual or individuals responsible for Danae's death," FBI Portland Special Agent in Charge Kieran Ramsey said. "It's long past time for us to come together as a community and find justice for Danae and the many other victims of violence in Portland."

If anyone has information, witnessed any part of what happened, or has video of anything that happened prior to, during, or after these shootings, they are asked to contact PPB by emailing crimetips@portlandoregon.gov or contacting the FBI at 1 (800) CALL-FBI or at tips.fbi.gov.

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Celebrating 160 Years



First A.M.E. Zion Church, now located at 4304 N. Vancouver Ave., was first established in Portland in 1862, the oldest African American church in the Pacific Northwest.

First A.M.E. Zion Church, located at 4304 N. Vancouver Ave., has announced plans for the church's upcoming 160th anniversary and appreciation celebration for Pastor Rev. Dr. Lamont D. Brown.

First established in down-

town Portland in 1862, First AME Zion is the oldest African American church in the Pacific Northwest.

The community is invited to join the anniversary and appreciation celebration which will take place June 5 at 4 p.m.

at The Red Sea Community Church, 7535 N. Chicago Ave. The speaker will be Pastor J.W. Matt Hennessee of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. For more information, email the church at info@firstamezchurchpdx.org.

northbynortheast
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Black Health Matters

North by Northeast Community Health Center is the only clinic in Oregon devoted to African American health. We provide welcoming, high quality health care to adults who have Oregon Health Plan. Since 2006, our priority has been to serve the local African American community and to reduce the deadly effects of high blood pressure and diabetes. We are accepting new patients, and if you're uninsured, we can help you get covered!

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We want to see our community stay safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please:

- Protect yourself and others by getting the COVID-19 vaccine when you are eligible. Visit covidvaccine.oregon.gov for more information.
- Wear your mask.
- Keep 6 feet of distance from people who do not live with you in your home.

CLASSIFIEDS/BIDS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ONE-STOP OPERATOR

Worksystems is seeking qualified and experienced organizations or individuals to serve as the Operator of the WorkSource Portland Metro One-Stop system. The RFP is posted on Worksystems' website at www.worksystems.org. Proposals are due no later than noon on June 20, 2022.

Worksystems is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request. To place a free relay call in Oregon, dial 711

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REQUEST FOR BIDS

Vancouver Housing Authority Apartments Drainage & ADA Improvements

The Vancouver Housing Authority will receive bids for project 322-2021-04 Fishers Mill Apartments Drainage & ADA Improvements until 2:00PM on June 6, 2022 at Vancouver Housing Authority, 2500 Main Street, Vancouver Washington 98660, at which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. The project includes, but is not limited to, drainage improvements, ADA improvements, asphalt patching and repairs, and concrete flatwork. An optional pre-bid walkthrough is scheduled for May 11, 2022, at 1000 SE 160th Avenue, Vancouver, WA 98661.

Solicitation documents will be available on May 6, 2022; Please obtain complete IFB solicitation documents at this link: <https://www.j2b.com> Information found anywhere but this link or www.vhausa.org might not be accurate. Solicitation contact is Amanda Chezem at (360) 993-9579 or achezem@vhausa.com.

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Jefferson's Future in Discussion

Comments taken on new master plan

Portland Public Schools this week formerly began receiving public input on what direction to take in the plans for a renovated Jefferson High School, the most prominent school in Portland's historic Black community.

The passage of a school district bond in 2020 provided funds for the design and construction of a modernized Jefferson High School Middle College for Advanced Studies.

Master planning is the first step in determining the shape of the new school. PPS is seeking input from the Jefferson community and looking for volunteers to join the Jefferson Master Planning Committee.

The goal of the Committee is to develop a comprehensive, equitable, integrated and visionary high school campus design with authentic school community engagement. To apply, send an email to JHSMOD@pps.net or visit pps.net/JeffersonBond.

PPS is preparing a robust



The elite Jefferson Dancers of the nationally known dance department at Jefferson High School. The school district is taking public comments on a new master plan for the school, the first step in renovating the most prominent school in Portland's Black community.

engagement process and wants to hear from the many diverse voices within the Jefferson community. With full recognition of Portland's history of inequity, especially related to redevelopment efforts within historically black neighborhoods, PPS is committed to making sure all voices are heard as this important project moves forward.

ant project moves forward.

The process began on Tuesday with an open house meeting at Jefferson. A Jefferson Master Planning Committee will be selected by the end of May and will begin work that will last for several months, according to the time established for making decisions.

In addition, several public

design workshops will be held to allow the greater community an opportunity to weigh in on the design process as it develops. After a master plan is finalized, the project moves into design followed by construction starting in 2024. A newly modernized Jefferson is scheduled to open at the start of the 2026-27

school year.

Jefferson will be the seventh high school to be modernized as part of Portland Public Schools long range plan to upgrade all of their aging school buildings over the next few decades. Most PPS school buildings were built before World War II and many are in need of vital upgrades.

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PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Help Us Create a Modernized Jefferson High School



Join the Jefferson Master Planning Committee

PPS is seeking input on how Jefferson should be re-imagined and seeking volunteers to join the Jefferson Master Planning Committee.

For applications and more information please visit:
<https://www.pps.net/JeffersonBond>
 or call (503) 916-2222

Oregon Public Defender System Sued

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

legal representation for more than six weeks, including a man who can't afford his bail but has been jailed for 17 days without an attorney and can't seek a bail hearing without representation.

In two other cases, the lawsuit alleges, plaintiffs were released from custody after their arrest and told to call a number to be assigned a defense attorney. They left voicemails and called repeatedly and have not had any reply, the complaint says. They show up for hearings alone and have their cases pushed back because no public defenders are available.

Jesse Merrithew, an attorney representing the plaintiffs, said not having legal representation right after an arrest causes a cascade of problems for criminal defendants that are almost impossible to overcome later on. One such example, he said, is the ability to secure any surveillance video that could back up the defendant's case because looping security videos are often erased after days or weeks.

"The time directly after arrest is the most critical time, as



Carl Macpherson, the Portland-based executive director of Metropolitan Public Defender, says his firm of 90 public defenders recently stopped taking certain types of new criminal cases for a month because they had so many cases that the attorneys were violating their ethical obligations to clients.

any criminal defense lawyer will tell you, in the representation of a client," he said. "It's unacceptable to allow a delay in the

employment of the council for weeks or months on end."

The shortage of public defenders also disproportionately

affects Black defendants, the lawsuit alleges. Studies in the Portland area in 2014 and 2019 showed that 98% and 97% of

Black defendants, respectively, had court-appointed lawyers in those years, whereas 91% of White defendants had them.

In the current crisis, 23% of people waiting for an attorney were Black statewide on a recent day, despite the fact that Black people overall make up 3% of Oregon's population.

The Oregon Justice Resource Center, a legal nonprofit representing the plaintiffs, said repairs to the system shouldn't just focus on hiring more public defenders. Rethinking criminal defense should also mean reducing penalties and jail time for lower-level offenses and offering more alternative resolutions for crimes.

"The state's failure in this regard requires urgent action. But the problem cannot be solved with more attorneys," said Ben Haile, an attorney with the Oregon Justice Resource Center who is representing the plaintiffs. "There are effective alternatives to prosecution of many of the people caught up in the criminal justice system that would make the public far safer at lower cost and with less collateral damage to the families of people facing prosecution."

Helping Overcome Problem Gambling

Spring is Here

This time of year, Oregon is dressed up in her finest. Tree buds burst into flower and mountains come out from hiding behind cloudy skies. It becomes just a little easier to set aside the things that worry us, to perhaps try to ignore habits that we developed during darker days. If gambling is one of those habits, it's a great time for a new start. Spring is a perfect time for renewal, for change.

Help is Available

If you have a gambling habit that has grown beyond your control, help is available. Through the Oregon Problem Gambling Resource (OPGR), gamblers and those who love them can get support from trained addiction counselors, often right from home. Treatment is effective. People are ready and waiting to provide better mechanisms to cope and to heal. And, best of all, it's free.

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For more information, visit

OPGR.ORG
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