



Merry Christmas from the staff at *The Portland Observer*



Montell Jordan gets it on See inside

9 days left to the new millennium



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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Theft Ring Probe

SEATTLE - An Algerian charged with bringing bomb-making materials into Washington state from Canada may be connected to a theft ring that funneled funds to terrorist groups, authorities say. Ahmed Ressay, who was arrested for allegedly attempting to smuggle nitroglycerin, was jailed for a few weeks in Montreal last year for stealing laptop computers and cellular phones from cars, Montreal police said. Ressay is suspected of being an associate of Said Atmani, who is believed to be the head of a Montreal crime ring that engaged in such thefts, police said.

Venezuela Faces Relief Crisis

LA GUAIRA, Venezuela - In Venezuela's worst natural disaster this century, officials estimates of the death toll range from 5,000 to 20,000 in floods and mudslides. About 1,500 bodies have been recovered, said Foreign Minister Jose Vicente Rangel. Some 150,000 people were left homeless. Economists say the damage to roads, ports, electricity, telephone lines, schools, hospitals and homes could reach \$2 billion.

U.S. Embassies to Delay Visas

WASHINGTON - State Department officials said that U.S. embassies abroad will be open, with extra security, at the start of the new year, but they will not be issuing visas right away. No nonimmigrant visas will be issued the first two working days of January, and no immigrant visas will be issued the first two weeks so personnel can concentrate on Y2K priorities, the officials said. The State Department has issued a worldwide alert to American citizens because of the threat of possible terrorist operations targeting Americans.

Globe Said More Democratic in '99

WASHINGTON - An annual report by a pro-democracy activist group says the world became a little more democratic in 1999, with even "long-resistant" Islamic countries showing signs of moving in that direction. The report by Freedom House said 85 nations, or 44 percent of the globe's total, "were free" and their people enjoyed "a broad range of political rights and civil liberties" this year. The report also said that of the 192 nations existing today, freedom gained ground in 26 and suffered setbacks in 18.

Fed Not Expected to Change Rates

WASHINGTON - Worries about possible millennium computer glitches likely will keep Federal Reserve policy-makers from raising interest rates, despite concerns about inflation. The Fed will be reviewing interest rates for the final time in 1999, and analysts say they would normally expect a rate hike, considering how hot the economy has been.

Introducing Kwanzaa to the hip hop generation

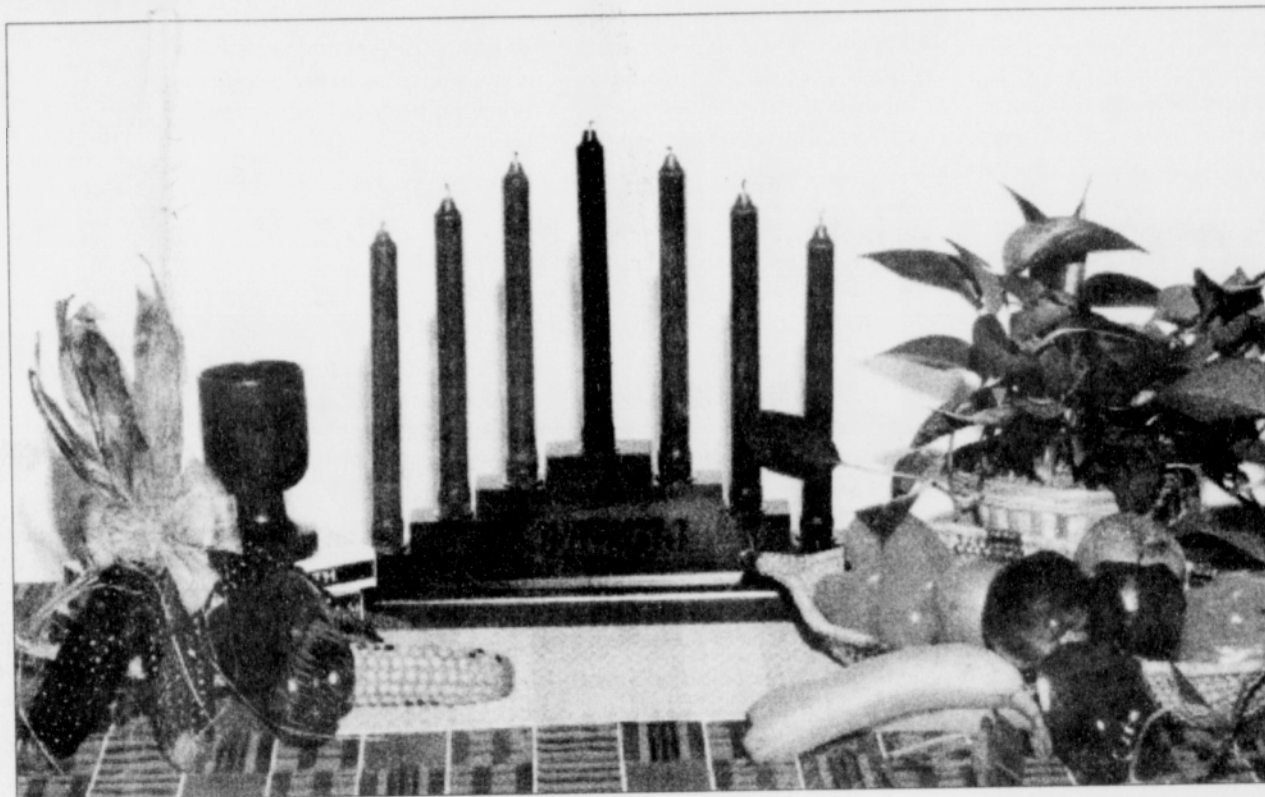
BY JUNIUS R. STANTON FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

MEE (Motivational Educational Entertainment) Productions Inc. has taken on the challenge of educating and promoting the concept of Kwanzaa to a more youthful generation.

MEE researchers discovered that Kwanzaa was on the upswing in urban communities, but that there were numerous questions and misconceptions about the holiday.

"We found that people had misinformation about Kwanzaa," said MEE President Ivan Juzang. "They thought it was a religious event, that it had to be celebrated a specific way or that it was just for Afrocentric African-Americans. We wanted to give it a more contemporary feel so that people would focus on the values and principles of Kwanzaa and not be as focused on the strict observance."

To clear up the misconceptions and make it more comfortable for young people to celebrate and participate in the holiday, an instructional video was created to explain the holiday in everyday terms using various celebration scenarios. In the video, Kwanzaa is celebrated by a diverse cast of young urban actors in a myriad of settings and situations. The video is part of the MEE Complete Kwanzaa Kit, which comes with a poster and user's guide that features information on



Kwanzaa, the principles, terms, symbols and activities for children to reinforce what they've learned.

MEE used the principle of Ujamaa cooperative economics to locate and contract with African-

American suppliers, manufacturers and vendors to assemble the kit to facilitate celebration via one stop shopping.

"The idea of the complete kit came when we looked at the celebration and discovered there

wasn't one-stop shopping. You had to go one place to get the mat, another to get the Kinara, another place to get the candles and

(Please see 'Kwanzaa' page 6)

Portland's new police chief sworn in

BY THE STAFF OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In front of a crowd of about 300 people, Mark Kroeker, a 32-year Los Angeles police veteran, was sworn in last week as Portland's new police chief.

The swearing in occurred at noon on December 17 in council chambers at Portland's City Hall.

Kroeker, 55, is the first chief to be selected from outside the Portland police ranks in 25 years.

Former Chief Charles Moose resigned in July to become police chief in Montgomery County, Md.

Kroeker, a native of Dallas, Ore., who grew up in Africa, France and California as the son of missionary parents, retired in 1997, as one of Los Angeles' most well-respected and popular deputy chiefs. He will be paid \$130,000.

The naming of a new chief comes two months after the city hired Shannon Associates, a California-based firm, to conduct a nationwide search along with the Police Executive Research Forum, based in Washington, D.C.

A 19-member citizens' selection committee appointed by Katz narrowed a field of 37 candidates down to eight semifinalists and recommended their top choices to the mayor after interviews last month. Kroeker and Ronald C. Monroe, a 20-year-veteran of the Metropolitan Police Department in the District of Columbia, were the two finalists.



Portland's new police chief Mark Kroeker and his wife Diane greet well wishers after the swearing in ceremony.

Billy Reed's restaurant and Bar offers more than just food

CONTRIBUTOR STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON

After much anticipation, Billy Reed's Restaurant & Bar has opened on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., bringing to Northeast Portland a high-energy restaurant that presents quality food at affordable prices in a fun and spirited atmosphere.

Located at 2808 NE. MLK Jr. Blvd., Billy Reed's is housed in the newly renovated Standard Dairy Building. The restaurant features rustic, casual dining with a menu that focuses on American Northwest grill. Executive Chef Pascal Chureau, who has honed his skills at a variety of establishments in Paris and Northern Cal., brings to the table an inspired menu that mingles comfort foods with chicken and game dishes, seafood selections, and several vegetarian and pasta dishes.

Billy Reed's Restaurant & Bar is open seven days a week. Lunch is served Monday through

Friday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and dinner is served seven nights a week from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. (Midnight on Friday and Saturday nights). Weekend brunch is served from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The restaurant includes a main seating room, banquet room, full bar, outdoor patio and dance floor. There is also a game room with a pool table, video games and televisions. Billy Reed's features a variety of live entertainment from local bands six nights a week.

Billy Reed's is owned by Lydia Lundberg and Bill Reed, real estate developers who are also responsible for the remodel of the Standard Dairy Building. Lundberg and Reed's buildings are well respected for quality construction, energy efficiency and innovation.

Billy Reed's Restaurant & Bar can be reached at 503/493-8127 or visit www.stdairy.com/restaurant.