



## Daddy Day Care

Portland man shares similarities with Eddie Murphy movie  
See Metro section, inside

## Restoration

Students restore neighborhood murals  
See Metro section, inside



# The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'

Established in 1970

Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com

Volume XXXIII • Number 20

Wednesday • May 14, 2003

## Week in The Review

### Saudi blasts kill 7 Americans

At least seven Americans and scores of other foreigners and Saudis have died in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia terrorist bombings that demonstrated the continuing potent presence of Islamic extremists in this country that is the birthplace of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden. Terrorists drove cars filled with explosives into four sites in north-eastern Riyadh late Monday. Three were residential compounds housing many foreigners and well-to-do Saudis. The fourth target was the site of a Saudi-American joint venture company, U.S. embassy officials said.

### North Korea nullifies no-nuke agreement

North Korea said Monday a 1992 agreement with South Korea to keep the Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons was nullified, citing a "sinister" U.S. agenda. The accord was the last remaining legal obligation under which North Korea was banned from developing atomic arms.

### Adding color to \$20 bills

American greenbacks are getting a bit more colorful. A touch of peach, blue and yellow along with the traditional green and black are featured on the new \$20 bill, the first to be colorized in a project to thwart counterfeiters. The Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing, which makes the nation's paper currency, took the wrappers off the redesigned \$20 Tuesday. The new bills won't appear in cash registers or ATM machines until late this year.

### Seattle terrorism drill

Smashed cars, buses and other debris littered an industrial lot Monday in Seattle to represent the aftermath of a radioactive "dirty bomb" explosion for the most extensive terrorism drill in the nation's history. The five-day drill, combining the Seattle disaster with the fake threat of a biological agent in Chicago, is aimed at testing the ability of local, state and federal authorities to handle terrorist attacks. It is the first large-scale counterterrorism exercise since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

### Rainy-day fund defeated

Another effort to establish a rainy-day fund to see Oregon through tough times was defeated in the Legislature on Friday. The proposal would have asked voters to approve a stability fund of up to \$2.5 billion and suspend a refund to voters of tax collections that exceed state revenue forecasts.

## Doubt Cast on Police Inquiry

Many predict officer won't be charged in shooting death

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Community leaders gathering at rallies and vigils since last week's shooting death of 21-year-old Kendra James say they have little faith in a system that has repeatedly let down African-Americans.

A grand jury began hearing testimony this week about

the shot that killed James, fired by 27-year-old police officer Scott McCollister, when he answered a call to backup a traffic stop. Police Chief Mark Kroeker announced that the department will conduct a thorough criminal and internal affairs investigation.

Robert Larry, president of the Portland branch of the NAACP, said he has contacted the organization's national legal team, and is currently conducting an independent investigation.

continued ▼ on page A3



Robert Larry (left), Portland NAACP president and Reggie Hendrix keep the focus on justice in the police shooting death of 21-year-old Kendra James.

PHOTO BY RON WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

## She Loved Life and Music

Family, friends remember young Kendra James

BY WYNDE DYER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Kendra James was a bright and unique young woman who loved life, according to her family and friends. The 21-year-old died May 5 of a single gunshot fired by police during a traffic stop on North Skidmore Street.

As a girl, she roller-skated around town with her mother, sang while her father played bass in local bands, loved it when her beautician-stepmother did her hair, was inseparable from her younger sister and hoped to someday finish school and provide a good life for her two children.

"She was so full of life," said Shirley Isadore of her first-born child. "She loved life."

Kendra was born on Christmas Eve in 1981. Isadore and Kenneth James still remember the night she came into their lives. They'd planned her birth. Kenneth didn't want to have a child until he was 21. They wanted to be able to provide her with the best childhood they could offer.

Isadore remembers her water broke as soon as she walked into the hospital. Almost immediately, she was in the delivery room staring up at a mirror on the ceiling. The minute she saw Kendra's head, she knew what a special child she had.

"She was a beautiful little baby," Isadore said.

As she grew older, Kendra's uniqueness continued to blossom. Her family remem-



LaPryce Chaney is in tears as she stops to pay tribute to her friend Kendra James at a memorial that marks the North Skidmore I-5 overpass where she was killed. "I miss her," Chaney said.

PHOTO BY RON WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

*"She was so full of life. She loved life."*

—Shirley Isadore, Kendra James' mother

bers she began walking at age one and started to show a sharpness of mind.

Isadore said during trips to her grandparents' house, she would rearrange the trin-

kets on the coffee table if they were out of order after a routine dusting.

"If any of those nick-knacks were in different places she'd put 'em back where they belonged," Isadore said.

Kendra had a sense of belonging wherever she went, the family said. She was popular in her north and northeast Portland neighborhoods, at King and Claredon Elementary schools, Ockley Green Middle School and Roosevelt High.

Isadore taught her daughter to ride bikes, took her and other neighborhood kids to the ice-skating rink and supervised them during summer afternoon roller-skating sessions.

Kendra had lots of friends, but no one she was closer to than her younger sister Karisa. They were inseparable, Isadore said.

"They laughed together and cried together," she said. "They fought, played, took baths, went to school together — they did everything together. They loved

continued ▼ on page A3

## Flood of Memories at Vanport Memorabilia Fair

Lost city earns its page in history

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The salvaged bottles, photographs, identification cards and newspaper attempted to preserve the history of a once-thriving ship-

yard city situated between Portland and Vancouver.

But the artifacts faded into the background as attendees to the Vanport Memorabilia Fair listened to survivors share their memories about the Memorial Day in 1948 that their families lost their homes, their possessions and their sense of stability.

According to O.B. Hill, operations manager for Reflections Bookstore, Vanport is largely responsible for Portland's African American population.

"Vanport created Portland's black community," said Hill. "There were less than 2,000 black people in the whole state in 1940. People came here, primarily from the South, to take advantage of labor opportunities and found themselves stranded in a predominantly white state that had a history of exclusionary practices and no option of returning to the South because of the oppression there."

Hill was six years old when the flood destroyed his family's home and possessions.

A group of Portland-area students are working to create a documentary about Vanport's history, scheduled for release at the Hollywood Theatre late in the summer. For the last nine months, the Portland School District's Portland Area Career Training Center and Sabin Community Development Corp. have overseen students analyze records,

conduct interviews, film and edit the story of Vanport.

Many Portlanders know very little about the day 55 years ago when 9,942 poorly-constructed



*Vanport created Portland's black community.*

—O.B. Hill

housing units floated away like matchboxes when a dike broke and the Columbia River flooded the city of Vanport into extinction.

Approximately 6,000 African-Americans lived and worked in the growing town in 1944, as the location became a hub for wartime jobs in the Kaiser Shipyards during World War II. The city housed more than 42,000 people by 1948, when the city was destroyed.

According to Craig Fondren, who oversees the education program for the SCDC, Vanport tells the story of "how a diverse city was built."

"There was a sense of character and power of inclusiveness that came out of Vanport. There are still survivors telling that story that are living and thriving around us," Fondren said.

As a tribute to the thousands of Vanport survivors and the 15 people who lost their lives in the flood, the Interstate MAX's Long Bridge will be renamed Vanport Bridge. The 4,000-foot bridge connecting Kenton to Portland International Raceway will be dedicated with a plaque unveiling ceremony on Friday, May 30, the 55th anniversary of the disaster.



PHOTO BY JAYMEE R. CUTI/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
The history of Vanport, the predominately African American city flooded by the Columbia River in 1948, is brought to life by Kathy Treves who is helping make a documentary video about the once-thriving shipyard city.

PSRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PORTLAND OR  
PERMIT  
NO. 1610

Knight Library  
1299 University of Oregon  
Eugene OR, 97403-1205