

50¢ Drive Safely!

Enjoy the holiday, but please don't drink and drive.

Happy New Year!

Snow for 2004!

New Year's forecast calls for cold and more snow on Friday.

The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'

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Week in The Review

U.S. Orders Armed Officers on Jets

Amid a heightened state of alert for terrorists, the U.S. government said Monday it will require international air carriers in certain cases to place armed law enforcement officers on flights over the United States.

France Finds No Proof of Hijack Plot

Air France said flights between Paris and Los Angeles resumed Friday after investigators found no evidence of a Christmas Day terrorist plot to use an aircraft to attack American targets.

Chinese Describe Escape From Toxic Gas

Villagers were preparing for sleep when the gas well burst with a bang in Chongqing, China. Families dashed out of their homes in terror, struggling to breathe in the searing cloud of choking fumes. Survivors gave harrowing accounts Friday of the disaster that killed at least 191 people in China's southwest, forced 41,000 to flee and left a 10-square-mile "death zone" strewn with bodies lying in fields, road sides and in homes.

Report: Saddam Says He Siphoned Billions

Saddam Hussein has acknowledged depositing billions of dollars abroad before his ouster and has given interrogators the names of people who know where the money is, a member of the Iraqi Governing Council said.

Mars Lander Missing

Scientists trying to find Europe's Beagle 2 Mars probe ruled out weather problems and a faulty onboard clock for its five-day silence, but considered a new possibility Monday - a crater that may be blocking its signal.

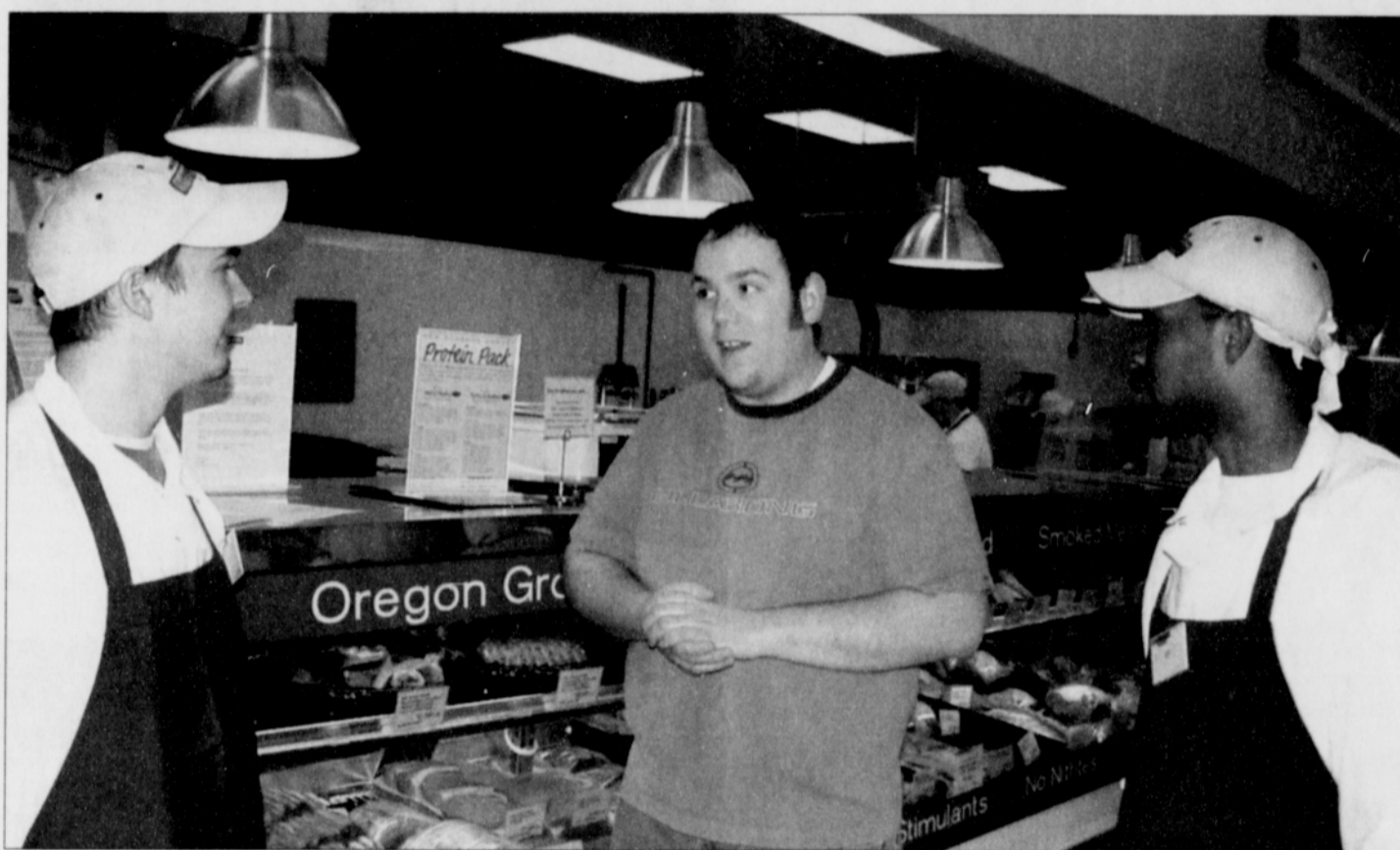
Four Iranian Quake Survivors Found

Rescuers found a 12-year-old Iranian girl alive in the rubble of the devastated city of Bam, Monday, followed by three men believed dead who stirred in their burial shrouds. More than 25,000 bodies have been retrieved since Friday's 6.6-magnitude earthquake shook the city and surrounding region in southeast Iran, according to a government spokesman.

AIDS Infection Rises in Native Americans

The remoteness of many American Indian reservations largely protected tribes from the full force of HIV and AIDS for years, but that has begun to change. Indian infection rates are 1.5 times that of white Americans.

Markets Quell Mad Cow Concerns



Meat cutter Zan Tuck (from left) discusses the safety of New Seasons Market's meat supply with butcher Adrian Hacker and Thabiti Waters, a meat counter service clerk.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Organic and natural markets confident about beef supplies

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Local merchants are addressing consumer worries after the discovery of a Washington cow infected with mad cow disease, a brain wasting illness.

While the federal Department of Agriculture is recalling some 10,000 pounds of suspect beef, merchants at local grocery stores specializing

in organics and wellness-related products are getting their message out to the public—we know where our meat comes from, and it's safe.

"My confidence level is 100 percent because we're a local business buying from local ranchers, not these industrialized distributors," said Brian Rohter, president of New Seasons Market. "It's completely different

than the rest of the meat industry." New Seasons quickly generated a letter from Rohter and posted signs at its meat counters, including the Concordia store on Northeast 33rd Avenue, assuring consumers that the beef they've purchased is safe and answering questions about the beef's passage from slaughterhouse to display case.

At New Seasons and some other local natural markets, beef is bought from a rancher's cooperative in Eastern Oregon, where animals are never fed animal byproducts, the believed path of mad cow infection.

Many other markets, including Safeway and Fred Meyer, are responding to the mad cow scare with a recall, asking customers to return meat products with sell dates between Dec. 22 and Dec. 30.

Meat from the stricken cow was distributed primarily in Oregon and Washington and in seven other states. However, the risk of tainted parts entering the food supply was extremely low, authorities said.

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Safety rules improved

(AP) — Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman on Tuesday announced a list of new restrictions to further enhance the safety of the American beef supply, including a meatpacking ban on the use of sick "downer" cattle like the one discovered last week with mad cow disease.

She also announced bans against the use of small intestines and head and spinal tissue from older cattle in the U.S. food chain, as well as changes in slaughterhouse techniques with the aim of preventing accidental contamination of meat with cow nerve tissue. Mad cow disease is spread through such brain and spinal cord tissue.

Under the new regulations, the sick cow slaughtered in Washington on Dec. 9 would not have been allowed to enter the U.S. food chain.

The meat from that cow was allowed to be sold for human consumption after its brain and spinal column were removed and a federal inspector saw no indication of neurological disease. From now on no downed cow can be used for meat. The Agriculture Department estimates that 130,000 down cattle are sent to meatpacking plants each year.

The other new measures include:

-Any animal tested for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) will not be allowed into the food supply until test results are confirmed. The Washington cow was sent to meatpacking plants

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Portland Observer Looks Back

May 14, 2003 — LaPryce Cheney is in tears as she stops by a memorial to remember her friend Kendra James, the African-American motorist killed by police on May 5 while trying to flee a traffic stop on the North Skidmore I-5 overpass. A sampling of some of the top stories and pictures in 2003 from the Portland Observer are inside on pages A2, A3 and A5.

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Waterfront Job Goals Unmet

Minorities seek involvement in new neighborhood

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Four months ago local workers and contractors challenged the Portland City Council to set goals for minority and women involvement in the South Waterfront project, a gigantic plan to build a new neighborhood of medical research facilities, housing and other businesses along the Willamette River south of the Marquam Bridge.

The Portland Development Commission recently reported that the development, backed by Oregon Health and Sciences University and developer Homer Williams, represented "a unique opportunity - 31 square blocks of development, worth well over \$1 billion.

"The end result should be "not just to count noses at work sites, but to shift to a growth in people ready, willing and able to participate in this work force on an ongoing basis," PDC representative Chip Lazenby said.

But Andre Baugh of the Community Coalition, a group that includes the African-American Chamber of Commerce and other minorities and women, are disappointed with the lack of a specific plan for minority contracts.

The coalition wants 35 percent women and minority participation in the Waterfront workforce at the end of seven years.

"It is important to have ambitious numeric goals to get a high level of achievement," said Connie Ashbrook of Oregon Tradewomen and a partner in the minority coalition.

At the same time, Ashbrook said she doesn't want to get hung up on the minority and women exact participation rates.

"I'm not so concerned with numbers as I am with seeing the city make sincere, sustained, consistent effort, because it's the right thing to do. Women who pay taxes deserve a chance to get these high wage jobs," she said.

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