



Uganda Dance Troop Inspires

Ensemble of African musicians coming to Portland
See story, Metro section

The Portland Observer

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Week in The Review

Angry Men at Risk of Stroke

Hotheaded men who explode with anger seem to be at greater risk of having a stroke or dying, new research shows. Angry women, on the other hand, don't run as high a risk of having a stroke or heart problems, according to a study in the American Heart Association journal *Circulation*.

'Passion' Proves Big Moneymaker

After opening with an astonishing \$125.2 million over five days, Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" is positioned to get even bigger as the Roman Catholic season of Lent leads up to Easter on April 11. The box-office total pushed "The Passion" past "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" for biggest debut ever by a film opening on a Wednesday - Ash Wednesday, in this case.

Mars Was Wet Enough for Life

Mars was once soaked with water, enough to support life in a "good, habitable environment," NASA scientists said Tuesday after reviewing data from the Mars rover Opportunity, although they said the finding doesn't prove that life existed.

Marines Enter Haitian Capital

Rebels rolled into Port-Au-Prince the capital and were met by hundreds of residents dancing in the streets and cheering the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The United States denied allegations Aristide was kidnapped by U.S. forces eager for him to resign and be spirited into exile.

U.S. Border Vulnerability Reported

Chronic delays in the integration of FBI fingerprint files with databases used by the Border Patrol leave the United States vulnerable to entry by foreign criminals and terrorists, Justice Department investigators found.

Battle over Chinese Girl Raised from Infancy in U.S.

A 5-year-old Chinese-American girl at the center of a custody fight has bonded with the American couple from Tennessee who raised her from infancy and should stay with them, a court-appointed guardian said.

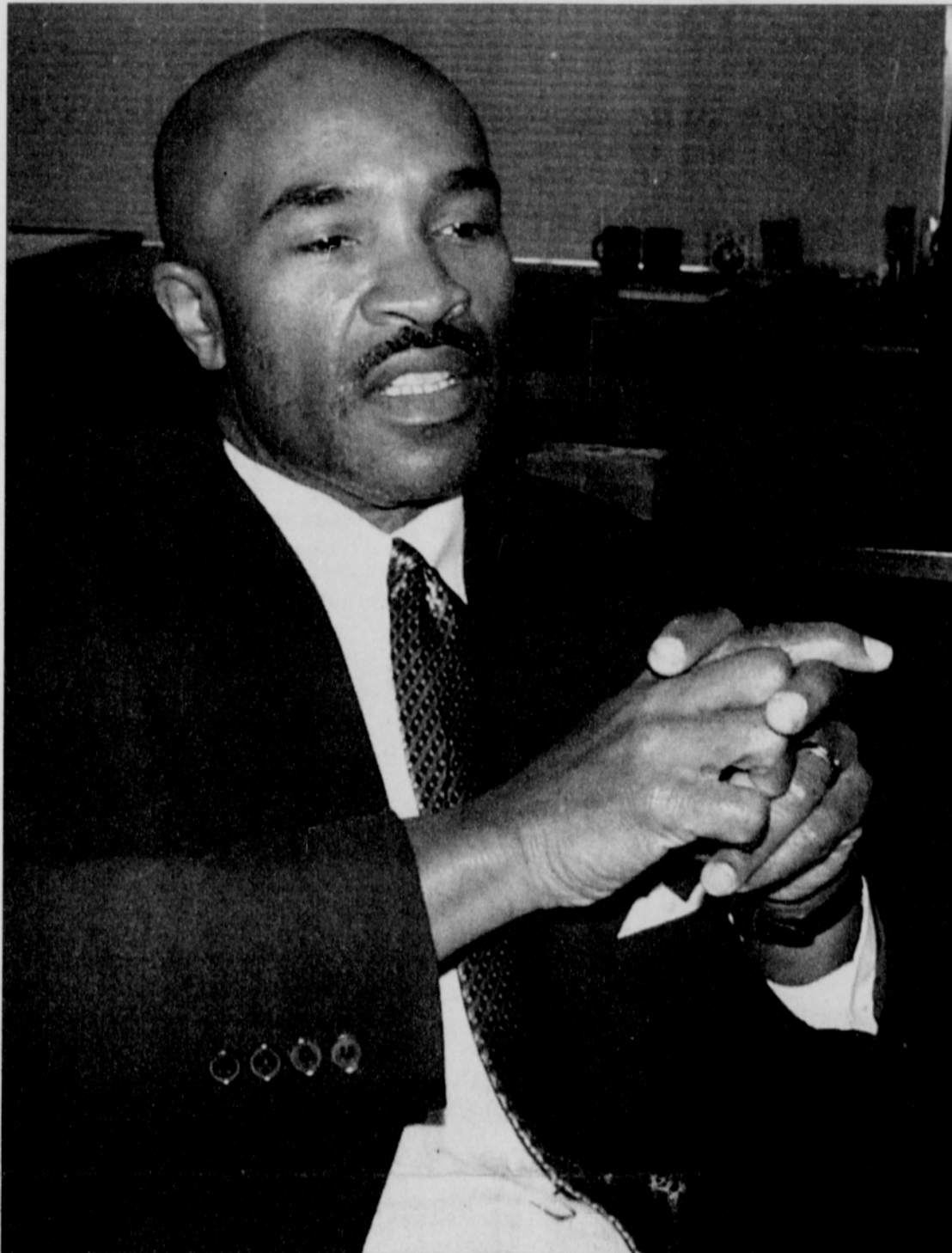


PHOTO BY JAYMEE R. CUTI/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

As co-chair of the Portland School Board, Lorenzo Poe focuses on improving the performance of disadvantaged students in the district as well as reducing juvenile crime and breaking down racial barriers in the city.

A Man with Answers

School leader offers education solutions

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

One school official has some very straightforward ideas for reducing youth gang and drug involvement, curbing crime and street violence and making Portland the first city to close the achievement gap.

Lorenzo Poe, the African-American co-chair of the Portland Public School board, said a strong school system is the way for Portland to live up to its reputation as one of the most livable cities.

Poe welcomes the overall increase in learning in our public school system, but says a stubborn achievement gap persists among children of color.

"For a city that talks about livability and embraces diversity, it looks like Portland may be hypocritical, at best," said Poe, who began his term as chair of the school board in January.

Poe and fellow school board co-chair Julia Brim-Edwards split the duty of conducting board meetings. Brim-Edwards is also responsible for accountability of funds, bond measures and community relations while Poe concentrates on

academic achievements and union relations.

"So many problems in society will go away if we close the achievement gap," said Poe. "From a purely selfish societal and economic standpoint, education is the best prevention of gang and drug involvement."

According to Poe, boosting the accomplishments of minority students is possible.

"I believe we can be the first urban district to close the achievement gap," said Poe, himself a product of Portland Public Schools. Poe has lived in northeast Portland all his life and graduated from Jefferson High School in 1970.

The district has implemented the Education Action Plan, enforced by Portland's Chief Academic Officer Patricia Pickles, another African-American educator. The plan aims to close the achievement gap at each district school and meet federal education benchmarks by 2007.

Poe fights the racist barriers engrained in the local population.

"We do not have the same expectations and vision of rigor for all kids," said Poe. "I'm not calling anyone a racist, but I think the fundamental expectations are not the same and we have to stop that."

Poe also has a solution to balance **continued** ▼ on page A2

PCC Narrows Search

Finalists considered for top college job



Dr. Preston Pulliams

Portland Community College's board of directors has selected three finalists, including an African-American educator from New York, for the position of PCC president.

Preston Pulliams is currently vice-chancellor for Community Colleges for the State University of New York. He previously served as president of Orange County Community College in Middletown, N.Y. as president of the Highland Lakes Campus of the Oakland Community College District in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., and vice president for student affairs at the Community College of Philadelphia.

He earned a doctoral degree in education from the University of Michigan, a master's in counseling and personnel

from Western Michigan University, a bachelor's degree in social science from Michigan State University and an associate's degree from Muskegon Community College.

Daniel LaVista is the executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Prior to that, he served as president of McHenry Community College in Crystal Lake, Ill., as chancellor of Baltimore County Community Colleges in Towson, Md., and president of the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Ill.

LaVista earned a doctoral degree in speech and dramatic arts from Syracuse University, a master's degree in English literature from the University of Dayton and a bachelor of art's degree in English from Siena College in New York.

James Middleton is a visiting scholar for the Community College Leadership Development Initiatives at Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, Calif. Before that, he served as president of the Marin Community College District in Marin County, Calif., as chief academic officer at the Pennsylvania College of Technology in Williamsport, Pa., and the director of Integrated Studies at Williamsport Area Community College, Williamsport, Pa.

Middleton earned a doctorate of arts in English language and literature from the University of Michigan, masters degrees in English from both the University of Iowa and the University of Leeds (England), and a bachelor's degree in European literature from the

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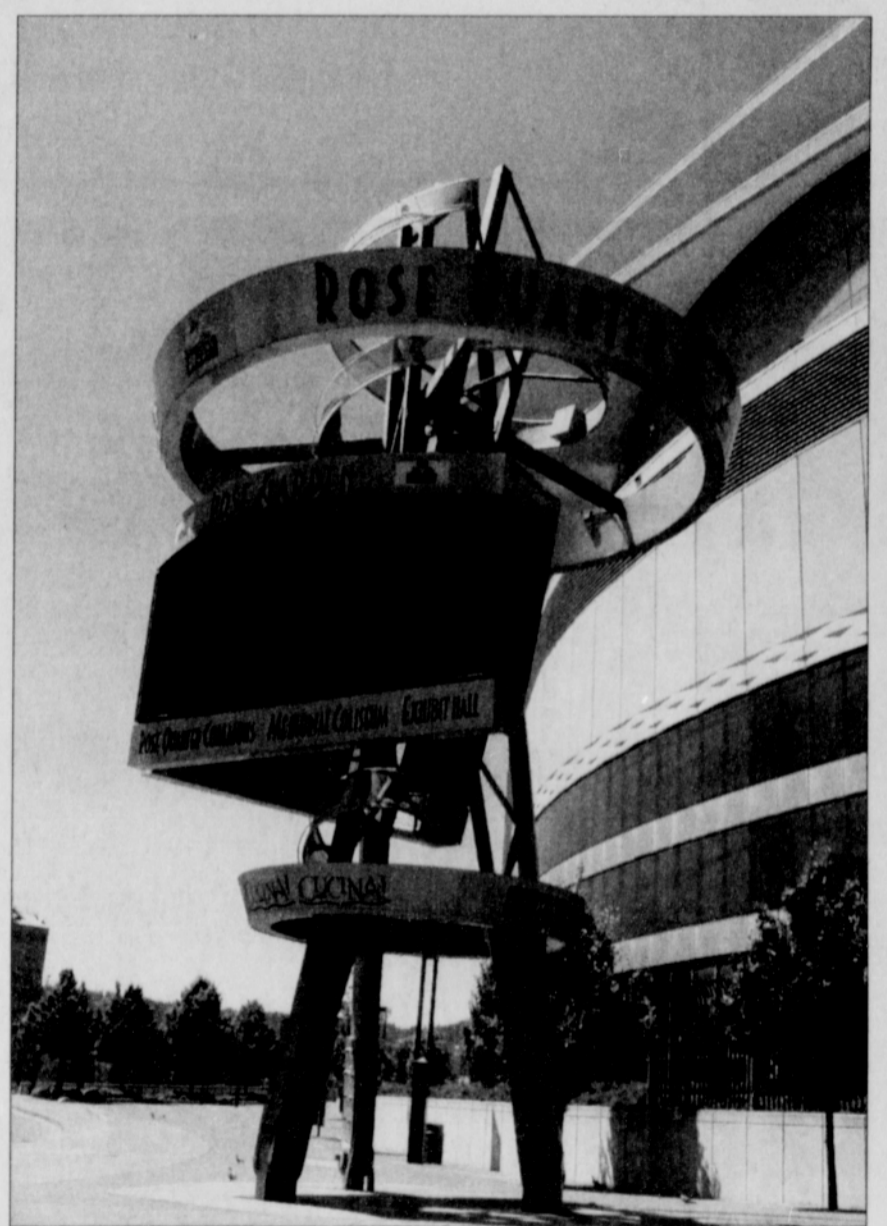


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rose Garden Going Broke?

Oregon Arena Corp., the company that owns the Rose Garden, filed for bankruptcy protection Friday. Company officials said the arena, owned by multimillionaire Paul Allen, has lost \$20 million in nine years and was headed toward a default on interest payments. Allen's ownership of the Portland Trail Blazers was not part of the bankruptcy filing, but the team also has been losing money in recent years because of high player salaries, declining attendance and explosive NBA taxes for exceeding player payroll limits.

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