



Daylight Savings
Set clocks forward
at 2 a.m. Sunday

T.D. Jakes Crusade

"America's Best Preacher,"
brings his Portland Crusade
See Religion, page B6 inside



The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'

Volume XXXIII • Number 11

Established in 1970

Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com

Wednesday • March 31, 2004

Week in The Review

Kenyan Activist Wins Environmental Prize

Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement in Africa, has been selected as the winner of the 2004 Sophie Prize. The \$100,000 prize was created in 1997 by Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder and his wife, Siri Dannevig. The prize is intended to foster work aimed at improving the environment and sustainable development.

Statue of Liberty to Reopen

The Statue of Liberty, closed immediately after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, will reopen to the public this summer. Pledges of \$7 million in donations, including a \$100,000 gift from Mayor Michael Bloomberg, will finance upgrades that were necessary at the national monument before it could be reopened.

Rice to Testify in Public Under Oath

Bowing to pressure, the White House will allow National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice to testify in public under oath before the commission investigating the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney also agreed to speak with the full panel privately.

Man Confesses After Seeing 'The Passion'

A 20-year-old Arizona man confessed to a half dozen burglaries, saying he felt guilty after seeing the movie "The Passion of the Christ."

Same-Sex Marriage Loses Steam in Mass.

With one chapter closed in Massachusetts' gay marriage debate, several new ones now open, as gay couples look ahead to what may be a short-lived chance to tie the knot and lawmakers prepare for crucial November elections. Legislators approved a constitutional amendment Monday that would ban gay marriages while legalizing civil unions. If passed during the next two-year legislative session, the measure would go before voters in November 2006.

Michigan Town Facing Racial Tensions

When a 13-year-old black student was accused of bringing a loaded gun to school, his apparent reason shocked residents: he wanted to fend off racial harassment. The incident last month, followed by a similar one less than two weeks later involving a knife, has provoked soul-searching about how this bedroom community just outside the city of Saginaw has dealt with diversity.

Another Deadly Traffic Stop



It's a war right now. This needs to end right now.

—Northeast Portland Resident Nicky Taylor

Lela Barnett pauses in disbelief at the site of Sunday's deadly traffic stop that resulted in the death of an unarmed black motorist in the St. Johns neighborhood of north Portland. Mayor Vera Katz said the shooting raises legitimate questions and has called for a public inquest in addition to a grand jury investigation.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Outrage again follows police shooting

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Before deep wounds have healed between the African-American community and the Portland Police Bureau over the death of Kendra James, another unarmed black motorist has been shot and killed by police

during a routine traffic stop.

Again, cries of public outrage and demands for justice are echoing through north and northeast Portland. James Jahar Perez, 28, died Sunday after being shot by a police officer in the St. Johns neighborhood of north Portland. Perez had been pulled over for not signaling a turn.

His death follows the May 5 shooting of James, an unarmed black woman, who was killed while trying to escape a traffic stop on the North Skidmore Street I-5 overpass.

Police Chief Derrick Foxworth and Mayor Vera Katz are asking the community to remain patient while it demands answers.

Tuesday, Katz asked District Attorney Mike Schunk to conduct both a public inquest and a grand jury investigation. She also asked Foxworth to include citizens in the police review of the shooting. A homicide investigation is already underway.

Police said North Precinct Officer Jason Sery shot Perez three times in the chest during a struggle with a second officer, Sean Macomber, after being pulled over for the traffic violation shortly after 5 p.m. Sunday.

Foxworth said a preliminary investigation of Perez and his vehicle yielded no weapons.

Perez was driving a Mitsubishi Diamante

when he was pulled over outside of City Food Market on North Fessenden Street at Burr Avenue. Police said he failed to produce a driver's license or identification.

At a news briefing on Monday afternoon, few questions were answered about events leading up to his death, including what prompted Sery to use deadly force.

Police officers in Oregon can legally use deadly force if they reasonably believe their life is in danger.

Foxworth met separately with Perez's family, the mayor, leaders in the religious community and the media, but said few details

continued ▼ on page A2

Careers on the Line

Commissioners brave recall, death threats over gay marriage

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Multnomah County Commissioners say they followed the letter of the Oregon Constitution when they granted marriage licenses to same-sex couples earlier this month. They say their action was sparked by threats of discrimination lawsuits by both gay rights organizations and individuals.

Since then, critics have been as loud and severe as supporters.

Commissioners say they see same-sex marriage licenses as an issue of civil rights, and that withholding them is unlawful discrimination.

"We should all be afforded equal rights. It's as simple as that," said Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey, at a fundraiser for her upcoming reelection campaign.

Commissioner Serena Cruz added, "Why should my husband and I have access to privileges, rights and responsibilities that other families in this community don't have access to?"

The backlash from allowing gay couples to marry has been especially fierce for County Chair Diane Linn and Commissioner Lisa Naito, who have been targeted for a recall.



PHOTO BY JAYMEE R. CUTI/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey upholds her support for equality in the treatment of gay couples who want the protections and benefits of marriage.

Naito faces reelection along with Rojo de Steffey, with a primary election just six weeks away.

Johnny Belgarde, a Christian Coalition employee, filed the recall petition under the organization, Committee to Recall Diane Linn and Lisa Naito. He did not return calls for comment.

According to Cruz, the recall has no teeth.

"I think they're going to have a hard time collecting the signatures required," she said, in support of her colleagues.

About the recall and upcoming reelection she faces in May, Rojo de Steffey said, "I stand on my record. I have many accomplishments that have supported our economy, our children and senior citizens, and I think that's going to carry me."

Cruz was rattled, however, by threatening phone

messages.

Both Cruz and Naito received death threats on their voicemails on March 10, seven days after gay couples

continued ▼ on page A5

Sticker Shock

at the Pump



This Chevron station on Martin Luther King Boulevard featured one of the highest prices in north-east Portland, with supreme unleaded gas priced at well above \$2 per gallon. Analysts say there is little chance that gas prices, which have reached a record high, will fall significantly in the near future because of higher demand and tighter supplies.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

PRSDRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND OR
PERMIT
NO. 1610

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