

Countries of Africa

Senegal: Land of beautiful women and gorgeous beaches

BY RON WEBER/FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Bordered on the north by Mauritania and by Guinea-Bissau on the south, this quiet West-African nation also faces the Atlantic Ocean. Smaller than America's South Dakota, Senegal has five hundred and thirty-one miles of pristine coastline. One of Africa's smallest countries, Senegal is made up mostly of low rolling plains, which rise to foothills in the south-eastern region of the country. While many of the plains are often faced with seasonal flooding, much of Senegal's countryside is also threatened with devastating deforestation, poaching, over grazing, soil erosion and over fishing. Occasionally we hear of small third-world countries such as Senegal depleting their natural resources in an effort to stave off their economic problems. Due to hard work, lack of medical care, and poverty, only three in every one hundred persons reach the age of sixty-five or more. The average life of a man is less than fifty-five years. Women are slightly higher, with an average life span of less than fifty-eight years. With a primary Muslim population (94 percent) and a small Roman Catholic following (5 percent), there is still much illiteracy. Only one out of every two men (sixteen years old and above) is able to read and write. The number of literate women is staggeringly low (30.7 percent). The percentage of literate Christians, both men and women is estimated to be much higher.

Senegal is a relatively new member of countries that are considered free. Gaining its freedom from France on April 4, 1960, the country adopted a new constitution only three years ago on Jan. 4, 2001. Just ten years ago, Senegal took a bold move and established a new economic reform program. Devaluating their own currency by a monumental fifty percent, the country

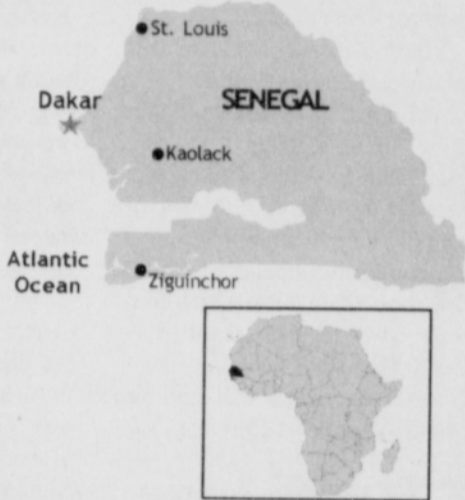
linked their money to the equivalent of the French franc. Greedy, powerful government officials no longer control prices of goods and services. This country, which had a history of a few very rich and millions of extremely poor, is now beginning to see a slow but sure shifting of the balance of national wealth. While a small boom involving information technology-based services gave a much needed economic boost to Senegal in the mid-to-late 1990s, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, and drug addiction still plague much of the inter-city life. A 2001 survey showed a 48 percent unemployment rate in the suburbs.

Senegal and other parts of West Africa have been inhabited for more than 150 thousand years. Some of this earth's earliest humanoids walked this land. From the times of the 15th century, the Portuguese, English, and Dutch have inhabited the country. France was the last nation to rule Senegal. In the 1600s, traders from all over the world came here to trade for hides, cotton fabrics, gold, ivory and slaves.

Senegalese women have often been touted as some of the most beautiful females in the world. Slaveholders were known to pay a premium price for them to bear their children.

Nanon, the famous Senegalese woman who bore Joseph Boulogne Chevalier de St. Georges, a famous mulatto European Symphony director in the 18th century, was said

to be the most beautiful woman God had ever created. Today, much of Senegal is lush and has rich, productive soil. With its entourage of internationally acclaimed musicians, this country brings in more tourists than any other country in the region. In addition to the music, tourists soak up the sun on warm beaches, enjoy upscale resort hotels, and wander through city streets lined with thousands of small gift shops. The country's 10 million-plus inhabitants mostly speak French and welcome the nation's huge tourist industry. While Senegal is a haven for Europeans, visitors from around the globe flock year round to this jewel of Africa. Senegal is a "must-see" hot spot for travelers of all ages.

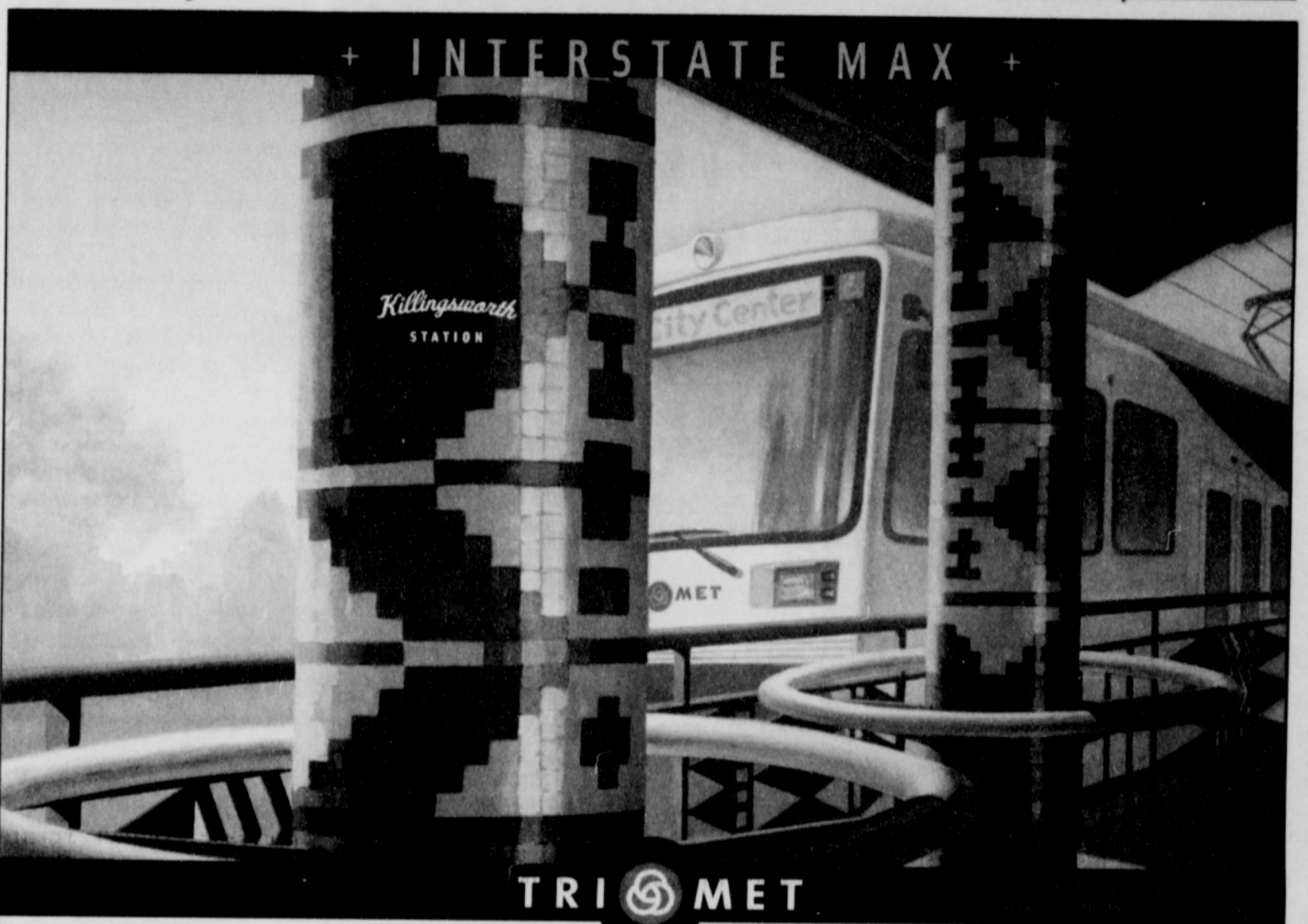


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Interstate MAX Yellow Line
Grand Opening Saturday, May 1, 2004
Free rides on MAX Yellow Line May 1 & 2

Opening ahead of schedule and under budget on May 1, Interstate MAX Yellow Line will serve North and Northeast Portland between downtown and the Expo Center, with 10 new stations along Interstate Avenue. On opening day, we invite you to "Celebrate Interstate." Discover exciting activities at the new stations along the Avenue, and enjoy free rides on MAX Yellow Line all weekend. (Also watch for expanded bus service in North and Northeast Portland starting Sunday, May 2.)

Featured events

10 a.m.

Interstate/Rose Quarter Station The day begins with a grand opening ceremony and community parade.

11 a.m.

MAX Yellow Line opens to the public.

11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Albina/Mississippi Station Enjoy a street fair with jazz and blues by The Beyons, Ron Steen, Norman Sylvester and The Original Cats.

Overlook Park Station Celebrate the neighborhood's Polish cultural history along with activities promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.

N Prescott St Station Take a guided walk down Going Street to the Willamette River, and learn

about the Swan Island Pump Station and new pedestrian and bike paths along the way.

N Killingsworth St Station This multicultural stop will offer food and festivities from around the world, including performances by Obo Addy and Pachamanca.

N Portland Blvd Station Learn about transportation options in the Portland area, and check out TriMet's hybrid-electric bus.

Kenton/N Denver Ave Station Celebrate the Kenton neighborhood's 100th anniversary with bluegrass, barbershop and vintage cars.

Expo Center Station Japanese culture will be honored with Taiko drummers, traditional food and historical information about this former internment site.

For a complete event schedule or to plan your trip, visit us online at trimet.org or call 503-238-RIDE.

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Dear Deanna:

I want to know why you never mention the good men in your articles? Yes a majority of men are dogs but not all of them. Sometimes a man can be telling the truth but the woman seems to think he's lying. It boils down to how well you trust your man. I believe if a man cheated once doesn't necessarily mean he'll cheat again. There are some men that cheat and keep on cheating but some men do tend to stop.
--Ms. Confident

Dear Ms. Confident:

You're absolutely right. There are many good men whose existence and credibility is being destroyed by the so called dogs. A woman must have her own trust, confidence, self-love, and esteem in order to reflect, build and garner trust in a man. There are men out there treating their women well and just as many good men waiting for a good woman. I definitely give props to the faithful, Godly, honorable and caring men that are holding it down and doing the right thing.

Dear Deanna!

I read in your column for the week of April 14 about Jackie who had responded to my condom situation! I just wanted to let her know that just because her man popped up with a baby—mine didn't. All men are not the same. Yes my boyfriend messed up. I'm not making excuses for him but like another person wrote and said, the men are reflected negatively although there are a lot of good ones out there. --Letting You Know in Toledo, OH

Dear Letting You Know:

Men, just like women, make many mistakes in relationships. However, a woman will write, expose the problem and sometimes seek a solution faster than a male. I'm sure your fellow, like others, is a

Ask Deanna!



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good person who made a bad mistake that you both had to address, argue over and decide to split or stay together. It's great to see your relationship learning from a mistake and doing better.

Dear Deanna!

Since everybody is talking about good men, I have to put in my two cents worth. My fiancé has never cheated, never hit me and treats me like a princess. Although I'm a big girl, he sees beyond that and treats me as if I'm a size two. It's time women started sharing and telling the good things in relationships so maybe some of the dogs will learn to be real men.
--Shonda; Birmingham, AL

Dear Shonda:

It's true that men imitate other men when it comes to certain things. Today's real man has an obligation to lead by example so the boys of tomorrow go in the right direction. I applaud your fiancé because he has definitely latched on to the program.

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