



Heritage Preserved

Rescuing historic
African-American homes
See Metro section, inside

Learning Center Construction

Officials welcome support
See Metro section, inside



The



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'City of Roses'

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Week in The Review

Election Turnout Heavy

Bush and challenger John Kerry fought to the wire in their long, bitter race for the White House on Tuesday as Americans turned out in droves to choose between their embattled wartime president and a Democrat who vigorously questioned the invasion of Iraq. Pre-election surveys indicated the presidential race could be as close as 2000.

Arafat's Health Improves

Yasser Arafat's health has improved enough for him to undergo tests he couldn't have stood before, and the Palestinian leader was following the U.S. presidential election, his aides said.

Teen Sniper Gets Life in Prison

Teenage sniper Lee Boyd Malvo avoided the death penalty and was sentenced to life in prison without parole under a plea deal for one of 10 slayings that terrorized the Washington area in October 2002.

Hostage Deadline Approaches

The kidnapers of aid worker Margaret Hassan threatened to turn her over to an al-Qaida affiliated group within 48 hours if the British government refuses to pull its troops from Iraq, Al-Jazeera television reported.

Justices Debate Prison Segregation

The Supreme Court took up a racial segregation case that asks if black California inmates are being unconstitutionally banded together for months at a time, in the name of keeping prisons safe. The Bush administration has sided with a black convicted killer who claims he has been humiliated by forced prison segregation.

British May Spank

After a passionate debate in the House of Commons, British lawmakers voted overwhelmingly against banning parents from spanking their children. Some lawmakers argued that even mild spanking should be outlawed and insisted children should have the same legal protection as adults when it comes to being hit.

Closing Arguments for Peterson

Prosecutors failed to prove that Scott Peterson murdered his pregnant wife, Laci, and were telling jurors, "don't bother with the five months of evidence," a defense attorney said Tuesday.

PORTRAIT of Dignity

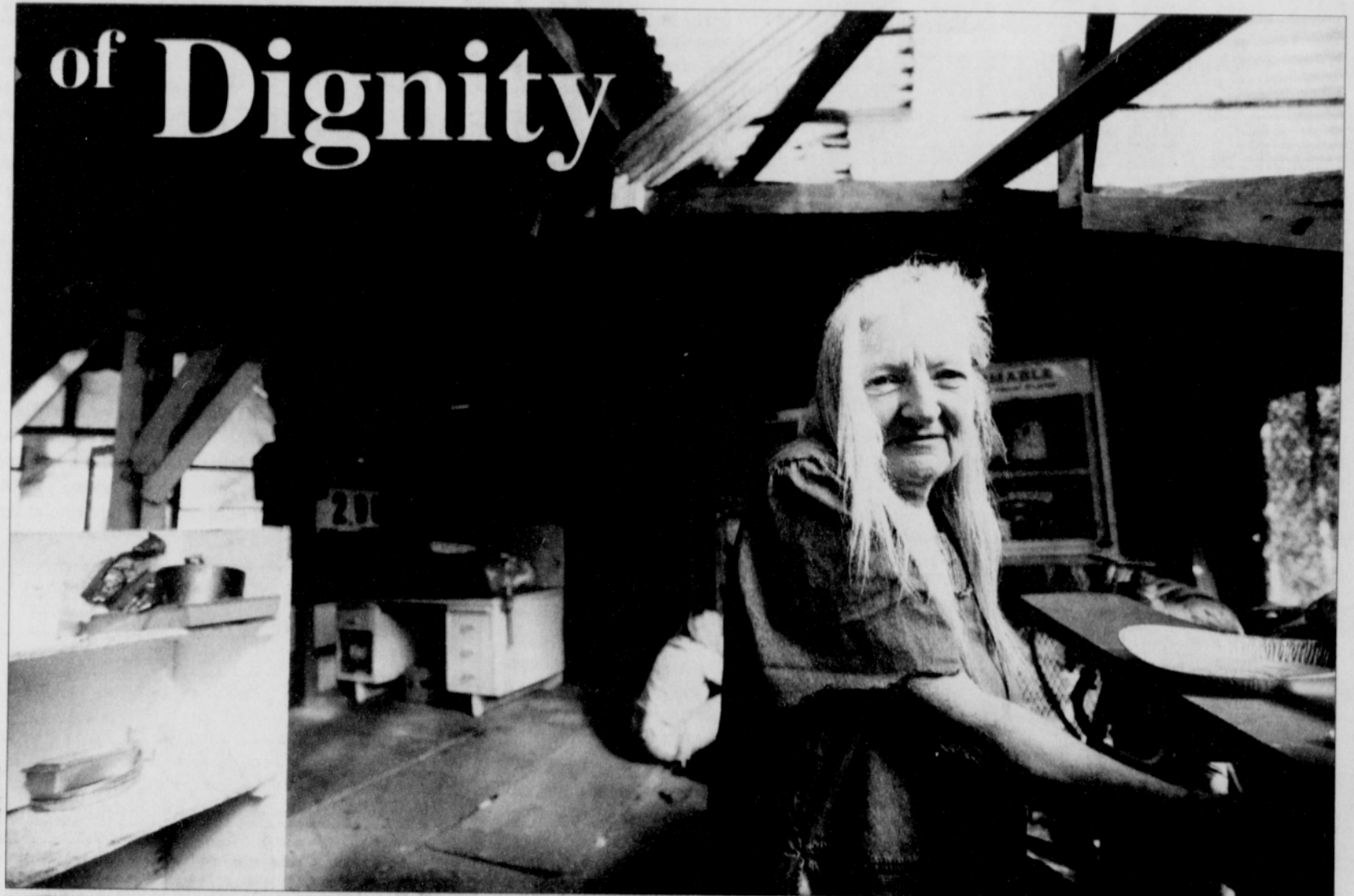


PHOTO BY
MICHAEL
RUBENSTEIN/
THE PORTLAND
OBSERVER

Dignity Village resident Patricia Cook is 71 years old and lives in a community built shanty near the Portland Airport off Northeast 33rd Avenue.

Inside Portland's homeless camp

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

They were tired of being harassed by police and the city's anti-homeless policies. They were fearful of being victims to thieves and perverse predators. They were frustrated by operations at overburdened shelters with rules that kept couples separated and families apart.

Portland's homeless weren't getting respect and they weren't going to take it anymore. On Dec. 16, 2000 Dignity Village was born as a group of eight homeless men

and women in five tents near downtown Portland.

Today, the village has grown to a capacity of 60 residents on a parcel of land near the Portland Airport off Northeast 33rd Avenue. What began as a cluster of tents became shanty structures and now, quaint and semi-permanent straw bale houses are being built with mostly donated materials.

"We're kind of evolving," said Tim McCarthy, who has lived at Dignity Village for three years.

McCarthy, 56, became homeless after losing his job managing a convenience store for health reasons. He is the outreach coordinator at Dignity Village. While everyone has responsibilities in the collective-style community, from security to building crew to

council seat to garden tender, McCarthy says he chose to work in outreach for a deliberate reason.

"I hate stereotypes," he said. "People think if you're homeless you don't have an education or are addicted to drinking or drugs and that's not the case."

McCarthy studied accounting and business at Ohio State and the Toledo University.

Dignity Village has occupied Sunderland Yard, a city-owned leaf-composting facility for three years. It does not possess a lease to the land and is by no means confident about the location's permanence.

The Dignity Village Council has proposed to enter into a long-term lease with

the city, promising safe and ecological transitional housing with access to showers, toilets, computers and a home for 60 homeless residents at a time.

The camp's aesthetic is artistic and eclectic, with environmental policy in mind. Common areas reflect the village's cultural diversity through decorative and creative architecture. Residents may eat crops from the common garden and eggs from the chicken coop. They cook on barbecues or wood-burning stoves and propane heats water for showers and cooking. The half-acre plot is abuzz with building projects and green renovations to help achieve the goal of creating an ecologically sustainable environment.

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Untold Tragedy in Sudan

Local refugees say crisis more widespread

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A northeast Portland resident is returning to his native land this week to witness atrocities against his people by its own government.

Mayak Bilkuei, a refugee from Sudan's Ruweng County, will collect data and take interviews from Ruweng's residents, many of whom he says hide in bushes and along riverbanks since their villages were burned down by militia forces.

Bilkuei plans to stay in Ruweng until January, at which time he wants to confront the Canadian Talisman Corp., which drills oil from Sudan. That oil is then sold on the open market to Russia, China and Malaysia. Some have raised the issue that Ruweng County has been a focus of Arab militia aggression because of greed over its oil-rich land.

"A lot of people have been dying through disease, hunger and so forth," said Bilkuei, who has been living in Portland for the past nine years.

Coping with war, rape, forced displacement, fires and a lack of sanitary water has become the norm for the people of Ruweng County in southern Sudan.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Koch Dudi (left) and Mayak Bilkuei are refugees from Sudan's Ruweng County, living in northeast Portland. They are bringing local attention to the plight of Sudanese people.

Ruweng County has been under siege by its government since its first attack by the militia in 1983.

"No one is talking about our area being victim because there is oil there," said

Koch Dudi, roommate to Bilkuei, who is also a Ruweng County refugee. "People are living with disease and dying from no safe water since the beginning of war, but no civil agency has gone there."

To date, no relief efforts or supplies have reached Ruweng County.

He estimates death tolls in the hundreds of thousands since the beginning of the war.

From Portland, Bilkuei and Dudi are organizing Sudanese refugees in the United States and garnering the assistance of agencies or individuals that may help research the genocide and demand action from federal agencies.

Jennifer Doncan, a teacher at Jefferson High School, is among the few allies of the people of Ruweng County. She spreads the message of Ruweng people in need during the school's Multicultural Film Festival series.

"The media gives the impression that (Sudanese) people are killing each other but it's the oil that's causing this huge problem," Doncan said.

Before and after showing films on the first Monday of the month, through May, Doncan discusses the humanitarian crisis in Ruweng County with the public.

Bilkuei and Dudi still have family living in Ruweng County, whom they communicate with only if their relatives travel to

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