



## Beauty and Grace

Alvin Ailey dancers  
move to music by  
jazz greatsSee Focus  
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## The Portland Observer

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Week in  
The Review

## Blazers Future in Doubt

Trail Blazer officials are visiting with political leaders about needing public assistance in order to stay in Portland, blaming red ink since owner Paul Allen built the Rose Garden Arena and then lost the stadium in a bankruptcy that saw major revenues from the complex go to his creditors. See story, page A3.

## Black Writer Dies in Fall

Octavia E. Butler, considered the first black woman to gain national prominence as a science fiction writer, died Sunday in a fall at her home in Seattle. She was 58. See story, page A2.

## Mardi Gras in New Orleans

Revelers celebrated Mardi Gras in New Orleans Tuesday, trying to cheer itself up after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Some of the costumes put a spin on the storm's aftermath with several people draping themselves in blue tarpaulins like those used to cover damaged roofs.

## Supremes Take on Ex-stripper

Former stripper Anna Nicole Smith faced the Supreme Court Tuesday with hundreds of millions of dollars on the line. The legal issue stems from the fortune of her late husband, J. Howard Marshall II. Smith married the oil tycoon in 1994 when he was 89 and she was 26.

## Bush Approval Lowest Yet

The latest CBS News poll finds President Bush's approval rating has fallen to an all-time low of 34 percent. Americans are also overwhelmingly opposed to the Bush-backed deal giving an Arab-owned company operational control over six major U.S. ports. Seven in 10 Americans say they're opposed to the agreement.

## Multiple Bombings Kill 41

A suicide bomber detonated an explosives belt at a crowded gas station Tuesday - one of five attacks that rocked Baghdad, killing at least 41 people, police said. The surge of violence, including three car bombs, unsettled an Iraqi capital already shaken by fears of civil war.

## Hope Raised in King Dispute

Martin Luther King III expressed hope that the dispute over the future of the Atlanta center that bears his father's name can be resolved soon.

Nurse Locked Out  
Files complaint,  
awaits arbitrationBY SARAH BLOUNT  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mariah Taylor, the beloved African American nurse practitioner at the North Portland Community Health Clinic, remains locked in a struggle with her board of directors leaving her future at the free and low-cost children's clinic in question.



Mariah Taylor

Mariah Taylor's letter to  
the community  
See page A4

Taylor has spent much of the past three months sitting at home instead of tending to medical needs of children she so dearly calls her "babies."

Days before a hip replacement surgery last December, she was asked by the clinic's board to take a three-month leave of absence for her health. Shortly after the operation, the clinic's locks were changed and Taylor was barred from entering the medical facility she founded almost 26 years ago.

Taylor and the board offer different perspectives on the stalemate, with contradictory stories as to why she is gone and whether she'll return.

Taylor said she's being forced out after a series of conflicts between her and a newly assembled board. She claims the board, which grew from one member to 11 in the past year, wants her out because of insubordination. She said her troubles began last October, after she refused to hire a medical assistant because of a lack of funds.

Since being barred from her clinic practice, Taylor has filed a complaint with the Civil Rights Division in Salem.

"The dream has become a nightmare," she said. "I don't know when this will end."

Clinic Board Chairman Bud Bylsma said the board is looking for another executive director because of a need for a more "efficient operational ad-

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## Rosa Parks Way Proposed



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

North Portland Boulevard at Vancouver Avenue is anchored by Holy Redeemer Catholic School, a well-known local landmark. Portland Boulevard would become Rosa Parks Way under a proposed city ordinance to honor the woman who sparked the modern Civil Rights movement.

## Name change would honor civil rights leader

BY SARAH BLOUNT  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Boulevard may be renamed to honor Civil Rights hero Rosa Parks, who passed away last October. The proposal gained momentum in City Hall last week after garnering support from Commissioner Dan Saltzman.

The suggestion to rename the north and northeast Portland thoroughfare for Rosa Parks originally came from Rev. B.E.

Johnson of Cornerstone Community Church of God in Christ, a northeast Portland congregation.

Johnson said he considered Portland Boulevard over other streets, like Portland Highway, because it has a bus route and would symbolically represent Parks, whose refusal to give up her seat on a bus for a white man, sparked the modern Civil Rights movement.

Johnson said he and a committee of

pastors plan to meet this week to determine where they stand on the street name issue. The Portland City Council tentatively scheduled a hearing for the name change on April 19.

Portland Boulevard wasn't the first street considered to honor Parks. After Parks died, Rev. Willie Banks petitioned the city to rename Sandy Boulevard in

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## How Much Negro? Author has people talking

BY NICOLE HOOPER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Maybe she started it as a joke or maybe she didn't, but one thing is for sure, "damali ayo" has people talking about race.

In 2002, ayo decided that she was fed up with being asked questions in regards to her hair or about other "black" issues as if she was the spokesperson for her race. She developed a website called Rent-A-Negro.com that discusses race relations with a humorous twist.

Now she is the author of "How to Rent a Negro," a printed version of the website.

ayo will reflect on her success and the use of humor as a means of improving race relations during two upcoming visits.

On Tuesday, March 7, ayo will read excerpts from her book and participate in dialogue in a relaxed atmosphere from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in Terrell Hall, Room 122 on the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College, 705 N. Killingsworth St. On March 18, she will be at the downtown Central Library for



'How to Rent a Negro' author damilo ayo uses humor and compassion to disarm personal defenses and strike a chord for better race relations.

a 1 p.m. writers talking program.

In How to Rent a Negro, renters are white and the rented are black. ayo says that some of her critics view this notion as modern day slavery. The website shows how much you should charge for your services. Jokingly, ayo lists touch-

ing her hair as a \$35 charge and dance lessons for the rhythm challenged at \$250 an hour.

"It (the book) combines the notion of being funny while making the reader ac-

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PHOTO BY TIM FULLER

Erika LaVonn in Portland Center Stage's production of 'Crowns.'

"Hat Queens"  
Reign Supreme  
African-American  
women celebrated

"Crowns," a play benefiting breast cancer awareness, explores the relationship between black women and the hats they wear. A preview performance of this award winning, gospel-filled musical will raise money for African American Women For Breast Cancer Awareness, Prevention and Education.

The evening begins with a private reception featuring music, a hat exhibit, fashion show and refreshments. A preview performance of Crowns follows.

Crowns is the story of a young woman from Brooklyn, who, after her brother is killed, is sent to South Carolina to live with her grandmother and the six remarkable "hat queens" who enter her life.

The smash-hit musical celebrates the strength and spirit of African American women. Crowns was written by Regina Taylor and directed by Andrea Frye.

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