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Week in The Review



Simpson 'Tell Tale' Destructs

The O. J. Simpson book saga took another twist Tuesday when his former sister-in-law, Denise Brown, accused the media company behind the project of trying to buy her family's silence for "millions of dollars." The book, "If I did it," was a sequel to the criminal and civil trials Simpson faced over the 1995 murders of his ex-wife and her friend. See story, page A2.

AIDS Epidemic Growing

The global HIV epidemic is growing, leaving an estimated 39.5 million people worldwide infected with the deadly virus, the United Nations said Tuesday. AIDS has claimed 2.9 million lives this year and another 4.3 million people became infected with HIV, according to the U.N. Spread of the disease was most noticeable in East Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

'Kramer' Apologizes

He called two black hecklers the "n-word" and enthusiastically referenced a time when blacks were often victims of civil rights abuses, but Michael Richards who played "Kramer" in the "Seinfeld" sitcom said his verbal barrage during a stand-up routine was fueled by anger and not bigotry. See story, page A7.

Marine Admits Killing

A third Marine has agreed to plead guilty to lesser charges in the killing of an unarmed Iraqi civilian, the Marine's attorney said Tuesday. Lance Cpl. Jerry E. Shumate Jr. was part of a squad of seven Marines and a sailor who were charged with kidnapping and murder and then trying to cover it up.

Obama Wants Less Troops

Democratic Sen. Barack Obama, who is contemplating a run for the presidency, on Monday called for a "gradual and substantial" reduction of U.S. forces from Iraq that would begin in four to six months.

Imams Kicked Off Plane

Muslim leaders expressed outrage on Tuesday after six imams were removed from a commercial airline flight in Minnesota for what they said was nothing more than trying to say evening prayers. See story, page A2.

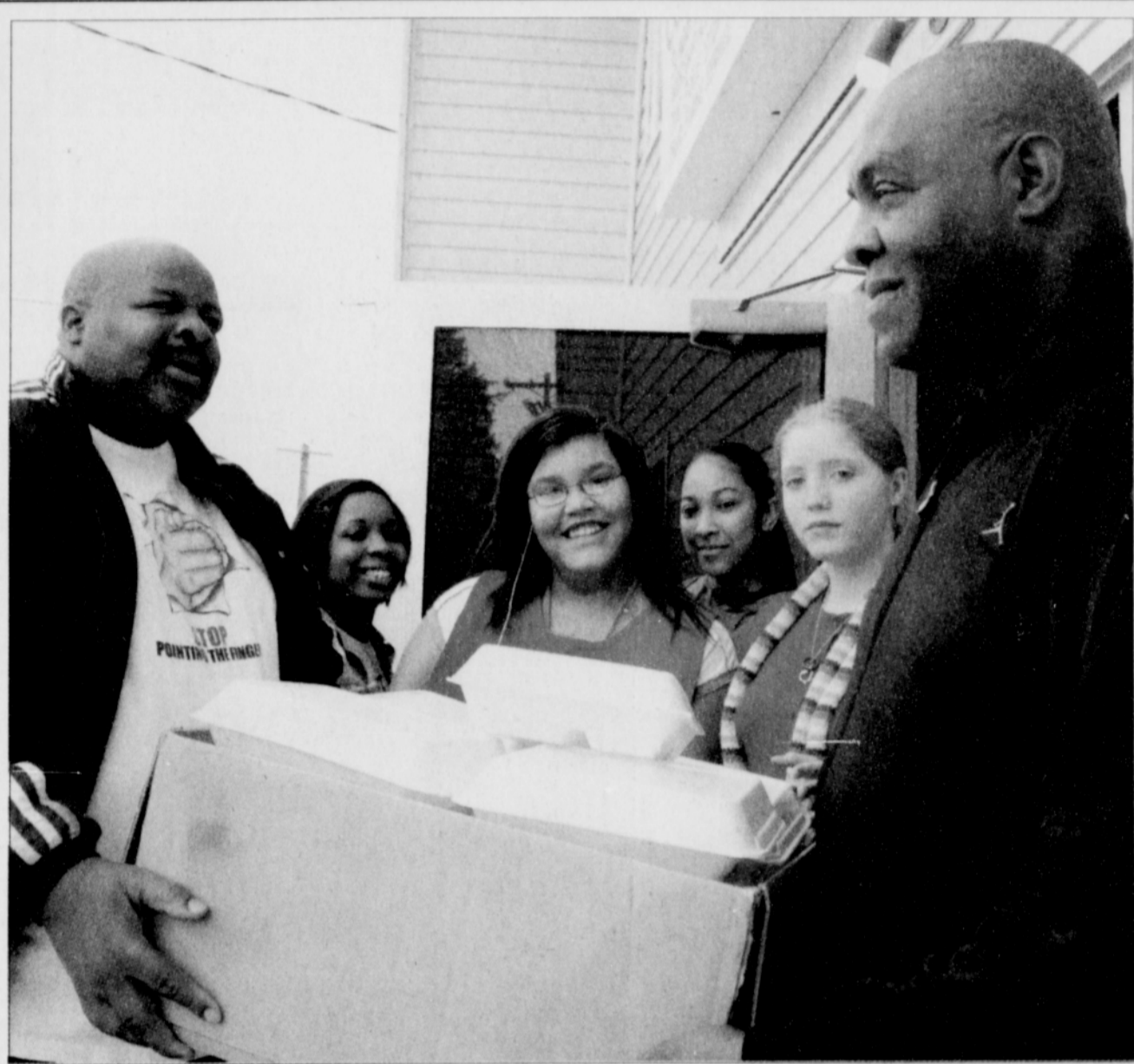


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Giving Season

Corner Stone Community Church of God in Christ, 2216 N.E. Killingsworth St., and Brothers on the Move celebrate the giving season with a Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner serving more than 500 people Saturday, including the homeless which were given free rides to the church. Pictured from left are Larry Collins, Shantell Person, Sara Smith, Erin Smith, Christy Montgomery and Gary Thomas.

Vanport Square Fills Up

Business 'condos' model has appeal

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Vanport Square is on its way to providing owner-occupied life to Portland's African American community and other small businesses entrepreneurs.

Developers Ray Leary, Jeana Woolley and the Portland Development Commission broke ground last month on what is Phase I of the project at 5225 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., the renovation of the old 22,000 square foot Marco Machine Works building, and creation of an additional 16,000 square feet of retail space.

The project is zeroing in on significant community goals, such as local services by local companies and wealth creation for disadvantaged or minority-owned firms.

So far, 17 businesses plan on setting up shop inside the square, and most plan on owning their own space. The list includes the owner of Fife Restaurant on Northeast Fremont Street who plans on opening a new seafood restaurant called Hard Shell at the Vanport location.

Some of the other businesses are the Horn of Africa, an Ethiopian restaurant; Living Color Beauty Supply; Laura Carey Graphic Design; developer Ben Kaiser; and Cascade Energy, a designer of sustainable manufacturing systems.

By owning the spaces inside Vanport Square, the businesses collectively own the building as a whole, in a commercial condominium arrangement. It is a model PDC hopes to replicate elsewhere.

The chance to own the space instead of renting

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Zoo Opens Horizons to Local Youth

Outreach responds to equality hurdles

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Oregon Zoo has countless programs promoting animal diversity, but when it comes to hiring minority staff and attracting them as visitors, director Tony Vecchio has learned it's easier said than done.

A lack of minority representation is shared by zoos nationwide, but it recently hit hard at home when the Oregon Zoo attracted attention for an employee who posed next to the zoo train with confederate flags, and another arrived on his first day sporting a bumper sticker that described the white race as Earth's most endangered species.

Both employees apologized, but the unrelated events caused controversy. While Vecchio says the incidents were not intended to be offensive, he admits that there is a larger problem with shortcomings in zoo staff diversity.

"We have one African American zookeeper and we've attempted to hire more through ads in minority papers but it's been tough," he said. "We've also tried through a volunteer program, but the coordinator is frustrated because they are not able to attract volunteers."

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums has recognized that zoos nationwide do not have diverse workforces with the exception, Vecchio says, of zoos in Brownsville, Texas and Detroit.

"There aren't a lot of good models, and this is recognized as an industry-wide problem," he said.

The zoo industry began taking its own steps to address diversity in 1999, by creating the Diversity Special Committee, a group of 10 zoo and aquarium employ-



Sarah Caney (left) and Anastasia Maze are employed as student interns for the Oregon Zoo's Animal Presenters program, educating visitors at the nocturnal animals petting zoo at the World Forestry Center.



PHOTOS BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Fred Lee takes part in an Oregon Zoo program that brings an ethnically diverse group of youth together to make animal presentations to the public and learn about career opportunities.

ees from across the nation. The group addresses culture, gender, ethnicity and religion, but committee member and Oregon Zoo curator Gil Gomez said it has been a challenge to advance racial diversity.

The committee meets twice a year, once at a regional conference and then again at the national conference. During the rest of the year committee members attend college recruitment fairs and minority-specific programs in agriculture.

One of the group's more concrete moves, an internship program with historical black colleges, fell apart when its champion Darrell McFadden, diversity committee member and former Detroit Zoo

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