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'City of Roses'

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Week in The Review

Bombs Kill 63 Iraqi Laborers

Two car bombs targeting day laborers looking for work exploded within seconds of each other Tuesday on a main square in central Baghdad, killing at least 63 people and wounding scores, the government said.

Obama Draws Crowds

Illinois Sen. Barack Obama drew large crowds during his first trip to the pivotal presidential campaign state of New Hampshire while he decides whether to enter the Democratic race. See story, page A2.



Annan Criticizes Bush

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his farewell address Monday, criticized the Bush administration, warning that America must not sacrifice its Democratic ideals while waging war against terrorism. "Human rights and the rule of law are vital to global security and prosperity," Annan said.

Sea-Tac Christmas Trees Return after Dispute

The Christmas trees are back up at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Maintenance staff restored the 14 plastic trees that had been removed during the weekend because of a rabbi's threat to sue over the lack of a menorah in the airport's holiday decor.

Oldest Person Dead at 116



Elizabeth "Lizzie" Bolden, recognized as the world's oldest person, died Monday at a Memphis nursing home. The daughter of former slaves was 116. "She lived a full life and we are very, very proud of her. She had a good life," said grandson James W. Bolden, 69. "She was a dutiful Christian."

Prince to Rock Super Bowl

The NFL has announced that veteran funk rock star Prince will perform during the halftime show at the Super Bowl in February. See story, page A2.



Passing Grade for School Uniforms

Rigler sees less
tension, fights

BY CHARITY PRATER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

School uniforms may have reduced tensions between students and lessened conflicts at Rigler Elementary in northeast Portland.

Since becoming the first public school in Portland Public Schools to adopt the uniform dress code this fall, Rigler hasn't had a single fighting referral, according to school principal Kathleen Kaczke.

A major amount of school resource time sending kids home because they were wearing inappropriate clothing, such as low cut shirts and baggy pants, has also been eliminated.

Every one of the 560 kindergarten through sixth grade kids is expected to come to school wearing clean khakis, shorts or blue plaid skirts along with a plain navy blue or white shirt with a collar.

"We wanted to set ourselves apart," says Kaczke. "It helps the image of the school to look more professional and it also helps the kids here that live in poverty."

Ninety-two percent of the children that attend Rigler live on or below poverty level. Since each uniform can be bought new for as little as \$20 dollars per outfit, families can save hundreds of dollars from the prices of major brand clothing.

The school staff has also bought and donated clothing for families. Rigler oper-



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

School uniforms at Rigler Elementary in northeast Portland make students look like they are part of the same team. Jackie Sanchez is at the keyboard with her sixth grade classmates (standing, from left) Jackie Pacheco, Irley Mejia-Uc, Josh Smithers, Carlos Decker-Martinez, Elias Pierce (background) and Miguel Cedillo.

ates a free clothing closet as well as an annual clothing exchange so growing kids can give their used clothes to the younger students.

Rigler is one of the most diverse schools in the city with 60 percent of the students of Hispanic origin, 23 percent African American and 11 percent Caucasian.

"We also have some Vietnamese, Asian, and also some Somalian kids," says Kaczke. "We've even gone out of our way to make sure some girls have long skirts because of their religion."

The school won't know for sure until later in the year if grades and test scores have improved because of the uniforms, but some

kids already know that the distractions of clothing have decreased and they are putting more attention towards academics.

Francisco Bautista is an 11-year-old fifth grader that began attending Rigler in the second grade. He and his friends spent a considerable amount of time choosing clothes to wear to school before the uniform policy took effect.

"We would choose shirts that had drawings on them that looked cool," says Bautista. "Now when I get ready for bed I don't have to think about what clothes I'm going to wear the next day. They are

We've even gone out of our way to make sure some girls have long skirts because of their religion.

—Kathleen Kaczke, Rigler Elementary Principal

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Investors Take Aim at Miracles' Site

Recovery club
tries to match
\$1 million offer

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In perhaps one of the most evident signs of gentrification along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, a creeping culture of northeast Portland development may displace the non-profit Miracles Club, the city's only social outlet specifically for African Americans recovering from drugs and alcohol.

Miracles serves as a gathering ground for individuals who count their sobriety by days and decades. But as city urban renewal dollars, investors and new residents recreate the surrounding King neighborhood, Miracles may soon succumb to the district's insatiable housing boom, as investors want to raze the property and build apartment units in its place.

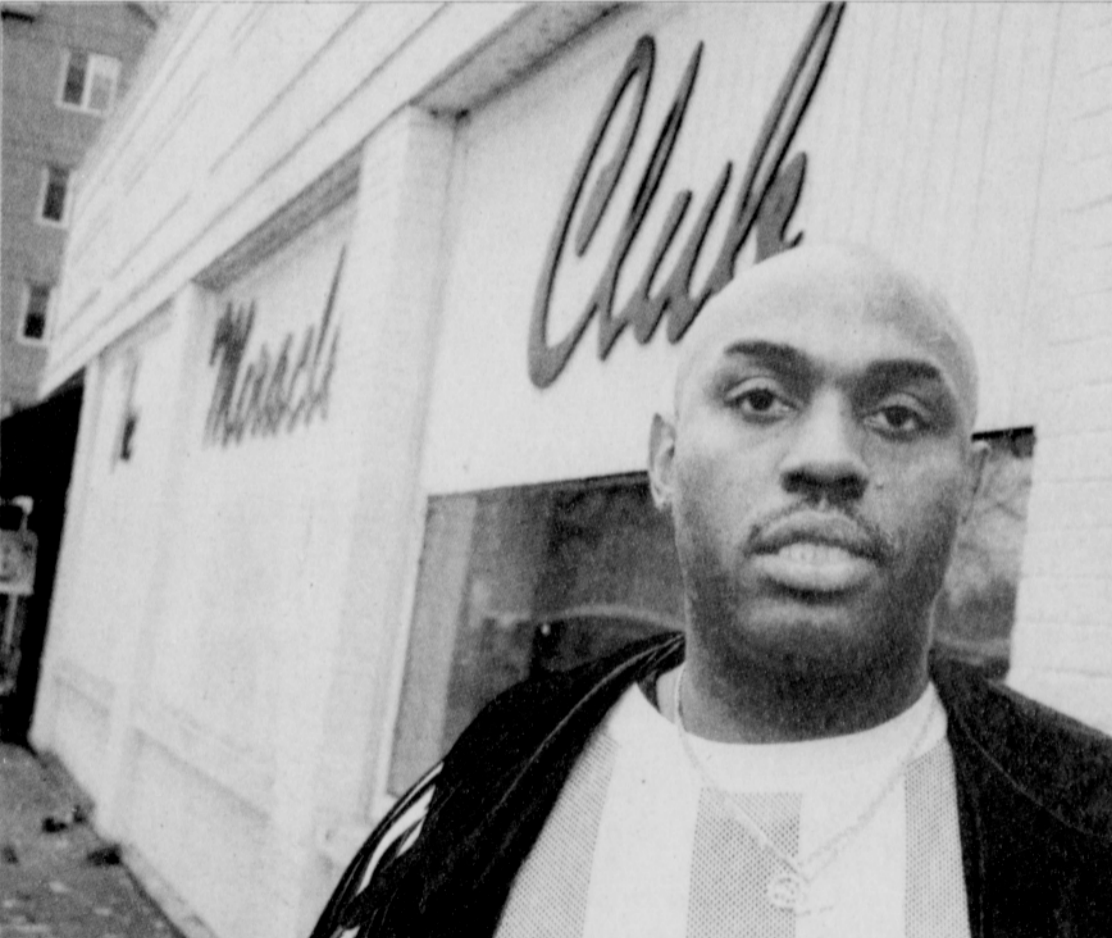
Miracles' non-profit board of directors faces a Dec. 29th deadline to raise \$500,000 to purchase the building. The amount is only half of the \$1 million that has been offered to landlord Jack Gorman, reportedly by a group of local and Japanese investors.

If Miracles can successfully raise the first half million, Gorman will allow the club's board to carry the other half on contract. The board maintains there is a positive relationship with Gorman and both parties want to find a solution.

"Our landlord has always been very supportive of Miracles staying where we are," said board chair Herman Bryant.

Board secretary Sarah Friedel takes a similar stance and quells any talk of imminent closure.

"There is no way we will be closed on



Michael Carr enjoys the activities at the Miracles Club, an outlet for African Americans recovering from drugs and alcohol. The club is trying to raise \$500,000 now and \$500,000 later to keep the building at Northeast Mason and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard from being demolished for future apartments.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Dec. 29th," she said. "Our landlord has told us he would keep us in there at least a year even after he sold the place."

Located at 4069 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., the recovery club has moved around a couple times in its 12-year history before settling into its current address on the corner of MLK and Northeast Mason Avenue.

Miracles is the only one of its kind in the Portland area, where African Americans living close-in north and northeast don't have to travel outside their neighborhood for a social outlet to help curb addiction.

Founded by twin brothers Johnny A. and

Johnny W. Gage and friend Sam Brown, the trio sought to create their own center at a time when Portland and Vancouver only offered recovery clubs in predominantly white communities.

Miracles began leasing the space in 1997, and each month struggles to stay afloat to pay rent and monthly expenses, ranging from \$4,100 to \$4,600. They receive \$2,200 each month from Multnomah County, plus revenue from meetings held in the club and a deli space they lease out.

Even so, they operate with a \$500 a month deficit, Bryant said.

He added that although Miracles will continue regardless of when and where, currently the six-person board is solidifying a contingency plan and new direction.

"Right now our attempt is to save this building, but Miracles will always be Miracles whether we have to lease another building or not," he said.

Bryant added that the board met Saturday with community leaders, including State Rep. Chip Shields, a Democrat whose district covers the King neighborhood.

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