

The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'

Volume XXXVII, Number 10

Spring Forward!

Clocks move ahead one hour for
daylight savings time Sunday at 2 a.m.

www.portlandobserver.com

Established in 1970
Committed to Cultural Diversity

Wednesday • March 7, 2007

Week in
The Review

Obama Makes Selma March

More than a thousand people, including presidential candidates Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton gathered in Selma, Ala. Sunday to commemorate the 1965 "Bloody Sunday" voting rights march. Participants retraced the steps to the bridge where marchers were beaten back by state troopers. See story, page A2



White House Aide Guilty

The former chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney Lewis "Scooter" Libby was convicted Tuesday of obstruction, perjury and lying to the FBI in an investigation into the leak of CIA operative Valerie Plame's identity to reporters. Libby faces up to 30 years in prison. See story, page A2.

Arrest in Teen Murder

A 16-year-old was arrested Monday for the January murder of another teenager who died after being shot in the head on North Killingsworth Street. See story, page A2.

Suspect Sketch Released

Detectives released a sketch of a suspect in the murder of 23-year-old Jermaine Nyron Davis. Davis was shot downtown around 2 a.m. after partying on New Year's Eve near Southwest Fourth and Stark. See story, page A2.



Belmont Store Clerk Shot

Police are looking for a suspect who shot a store clerk Sunday afternoon after a failed robbery attempt. The attack took place at the Belmont Grocery in southeast Portland. See story, page A2.

NAACP President Resigns

Bruce S. Gordon resigned his position as president of the NAACP Sunday, citing clashes with board members over management style and the civil rights organization's mission.



Shaq Shoots for Reality TV

Shaquille O'Neal is ready to return to the screen to star in a six-episode reality series for ABC in which he will help a bunch of overweight elementary and junior high school students shed pounds while educating the kids and TV viewers about the perils of childhood obesity.

A Record
Retailer's
Last StandMusic Millennium
adapts to downloadingBY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When Music Millennium owner Terry Currier received a call from a friend and competitor who had just lost his lease at his southeast Portland record shop, he did not take the news as one might expect.

"You'd think I'd be happy when competitors go away, but it's a very sad situation," he said.

That's because For What It's Worth Records and Tapes, which at one time had several Portland stores, is one of many retailers to disappear after a fatal drop in business.

Portland has always been a bastion for independent-minded music fans, but a shift in technology has led people out of the stores and onto their home computers, where they can download entire albums illegally or legitimately purchase songs from online music stores like iTunes.

It's been a dismal decade for music retailers, causing national chain Tower Records to shut down completely late last year, as well as another local shop Reverb Records.

Music Millennium has been able to stay

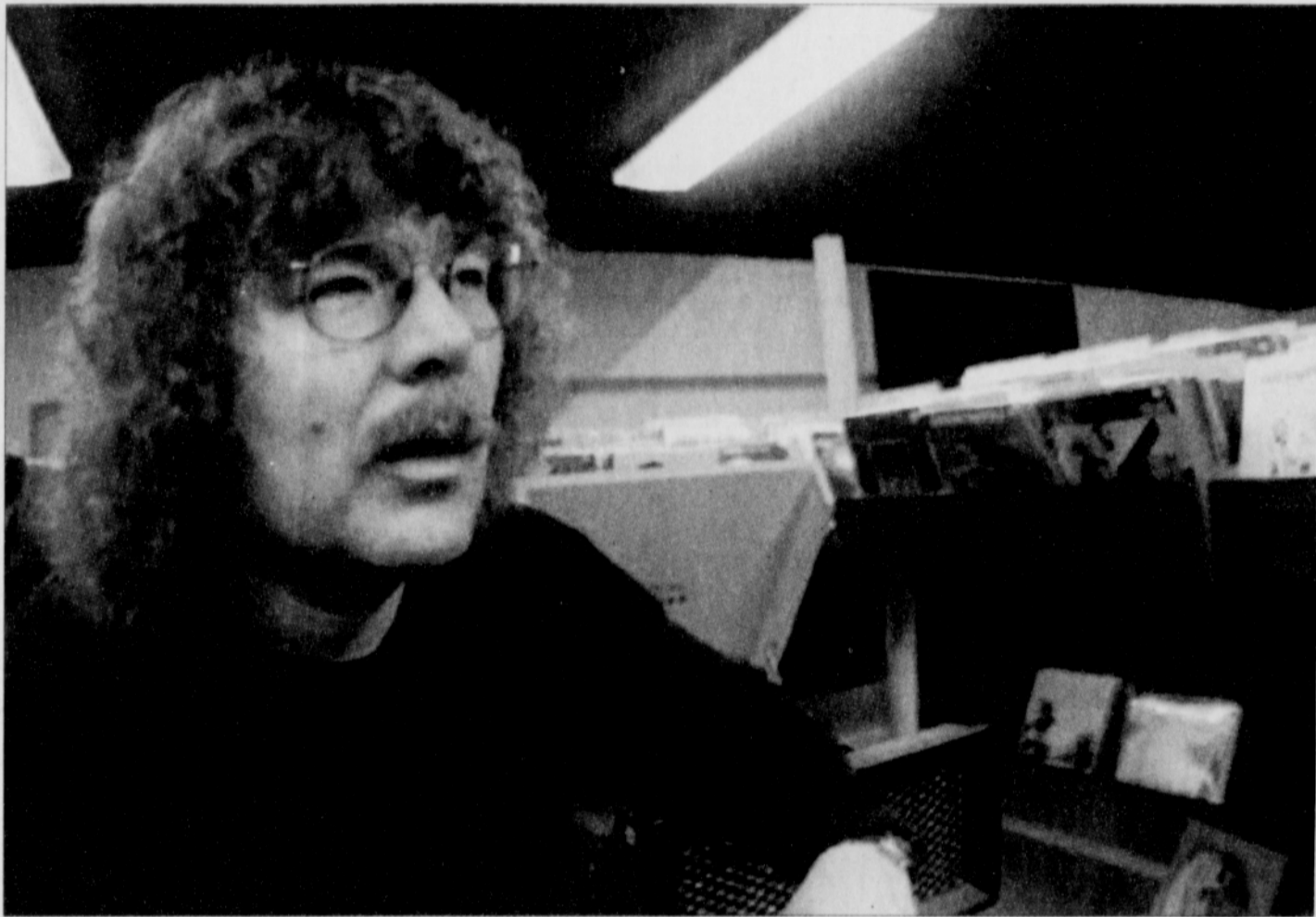


PHOTO BY SEAN O'CONNOR/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Music Millennium owner Terry Currier adapts to changing tastes and the loss of sales because of music downloading.

afloat, but Currier said they've lost money three out of the past six years, and have only turned a minimal profit during the other three. It's the oldest music store in the Pacific Northwest, opened in 1969 at its current East Burnside location originally as a place to find underground music. A second store was soon added, now on North-

west 23rd Avenue, plus a website and a classical music store.

Currier, who took over the business in 1984 and describes himself as a passionate music freak, acknowledges that a "smarter business man" would have called it quits by now.

"Everything I've worked for is in this

building," he said. "My philosophy is that I just want to be a recording music store. But after losing money for two years I had to find another way."

Music Millennium and its fellow small retailers suffered their first blow around a

continued ▼ on page A6



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A Fred Meyer billboard hangs over Paulo Escobar and Juan Escultor as they wait for day labor on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The demographic makeup of the neighborhood was used as criteria for the advertising, according to a company spokesperson.

Advertising in Black and White

Using race to
sell productsBY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Who would have thought that a local baby-food company and a supermarket chain's billboard campaign emerging in the same month could start a meaningful discussion about race? Only in Portland, as they say.

A Fred Meyer billboard featuring a black boy eating an orange appeared on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard next to a pickup site for immigrant day laborers, while similar billboards advertising the supermarket's fruit fea-

tured white people in other areas.

At the same time, Nice Cubes frozen organic baby food debuted in local New Seasons stores with five flavors, each with its own baby model. The sole non-white model is a black girl representing "Sassy Squash," as other models represent "Gentle Lentils" and "Perfect Pear" flavors.

Do these examples reveal Portland's latent and injurious racism? Or are these companies just promoting benign failures in multiculturalism? Some maintain that such campaigns simply mirror our diverse society, but no one says an ad is just an ad.

Fred Meyer Regional Public Affairs Director Melinda Merrill ar-

gues that the company's unwritten billboard-placement policy follows long-accepted standards based on demographics.

"We've tried to make the diversity in our advertising reflect our client base," Merrill says. "We place our ads in the vehicles through which we can reach the largest number of our customers for the least amount of money."

The retail giant points to its commitment to the advancement of African American and other minority populations by the charitable donations received from its employees and change boxes at cash registers. Fred Meyer can cite 63 organizations in northeast Portland alone that it has given \$100 to \$2,500

in the past three years.

But some community members see a lack of responsibility in Fred Meyer's ads.

Hannah Bea's head chef Saan Patterson says, "I think it's messed up. It's not that much about caring about the community because there are definitely things they could put on the billboards that would help the community rather than just selling their products."

Standing under the billboard in question, recent immigrants point out an even more insidious possibility.

"There's a lot of ads that make it seem like everyone has a good life here, but here we are, no work," says Paulo Escobar.

Can the same ad reflect diversity, eschew responsibility and misrepresent American society? Part of the trouble with any critique of advertising is that everyone has a different point of view.

Another recent immigrant by the name of Zach Asfaw drives a Broadway Cab for a living.

"I've seen so many ads taking advantage of black people, but what really bothers me are the women that are practically naked," he says.

Advertising watchdog organizations tend to ignore complaints of racial stereotypes because other abuses are more clear-cut.

Marnie Glickman of Portland-

continued ▼ on page A6

