

The **Portland Observer**

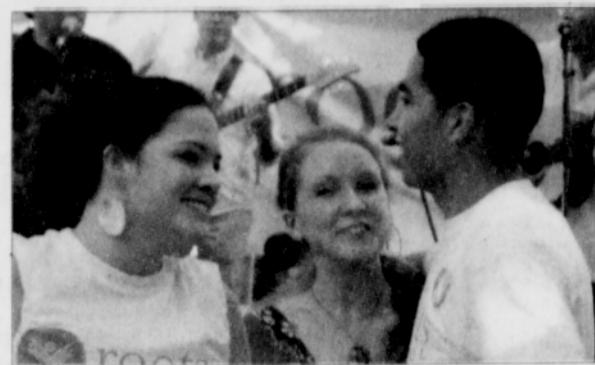
'City of Roses'

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Shakespeare Festival Spotlights Diversity

Theater company
expands audienceBY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When I first arrived in Ashland for a weekend at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, I had little time to pause and take in the scenery before seeing my first play, a matinee of August Wilson's "Gem of the Ocean."

It's fortunate that Wilson, the late, Pulitzer Prize-winning African American playwright, served as an introduction to my theater experience: Set at the turn of the century in Pittsburgh's Hill District, he tells the story of African Americans struggling to make it in a free society where equality is still an sought-after illusion.

Leaving the packed theater, I thought about the impact such a powerful play had on me during my visit to this southern Oregon community.

As a Portland resident this though brought some questions to mind: How has the Oregon Shakespeare Festival faced the challenge of embracing cultural diversity in a remote, primarily white area?

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PHOTOS BY SARAH BLOUNT/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Bridget B. Sullivan of Portland reads up on outreach programs within the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, a job she will oversee starting next month. As the festival's new Artistic Director she will work to attract greater diversity and enrich cultural and educational programs.

Long History of Black Contributions Recognized

Wells Fargo
to celebrate
JuneteenthBY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A frontier bank that was one of the few corporations to provide employment for African Americans in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and which currently recognizes the black financial power from its \$486 billion in assets, continues its progressive traditions by sponsoring

a Juneteenth celebration.

Wells Fargo banking management will host the June 19 fair and parade at its branch on 5730 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Free food, entertainment, prizes and booths will be set up by local businesses. Juneteenth commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States.

The celebration culminates the efforts of a company-sanctioned group of black employees headed by Tisha Stigler, manager of the St. John's branch. The African-American employee activists, collectively called CheckPoint, represent one of the bank's 75 different "team



Tisha Stigler pauses at Wells Fargo bank on N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The bank is a major sponsor for Juneteenth.

member resource groups" that include organizations called PRIDE, Amigos and Asian Connection.

Stigler loves being part of a company whose minority organizations have received national recognition for creating welcoming workplaces.

"When I was with another company, there was nothing special for African Americans," she says, "but Wells Fargo respects team members by creating an inclusive environment for all cultural backgrounds."

It's not all about atmosphere, since Stigler's boss sees increased financial gain by reaching out to minority interests and checkbooks.

Checkpoint is part of the bank's "competitive advantage," according to Alan Johnson, regional president of Wells Fargo in Oregon and southwest Washington.

Not much has changed since the 1888 Wells Fargo employee handbook stated, "Proper respect must be shown to all—let them be men, women, children, rich or poor, white or black—it must not be forgotten that the company is dependent on these same people for its business."

Community outreach is big business for Portland's 32-member CheckPoint, which claims to have

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BY NICOLE RONAL HOOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

One hundred years of Rose Festival and only four black Portlanders can say they were Queen of Rosaria. The Portland Observer caught up with these honored women to find out how their selection helped them become who they are today.

Four Black Queens – Then and Now



Queen Robin Marks 1980



Queen Raina Beavers 1985



Queen Alisha Moreland 1998



Queen Amber Starks 1999

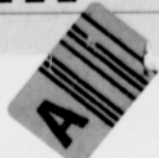
ROBINMARKS

In 1980, Senior Robin Marks was urged by her friends to try out for the Rose Festival Court at Lincoln High School. Little did she know that she would make history as the first ever African-American Queen of Rosaria.

Being "the first" wasn't always on her mind but it was for others.

"The African-American community always reminded me that I was first," Marks said.

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Barack Obama Statement

Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama said Tuesday that with black people from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast still displaced 20 months after Hurricane Katrina, frustration and resentments are building explosively as they did before the 1992 Los Angeles riots. See story, page A2.



Rep. Maintains Innocence

Rep. William Jefferson, D-La., will temporarily step down from his post on the House Small Business Committee after he was indicted on 16 corruption-related charges stemming from a two-year investigation. Jefferson's lawyer said even after prosecutors turned over "every rock," they did not allege in this indictment that he promised anybody any legislation. See story, page A2.



Jury Denies Hate Crime

A Clackamas County grand jury

has declined to label an attack in Oregon City by teenagers on two Hispanic men a "hate crime." Law enforcement officials said alcohol, stupidity, immaturity and a pack mentality all fueled the May 24 attack on 28-year-old Edwin Gonzales and 26-year-old Alex Guzman, both of Salem.

Libby Sentenced

Former White House aide I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby was sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison Tuesday after his conviction in March of lying and obstructing an investigation



into the 2003 leak of CIA operative Valerie Plame's identity. The judge did not set a date for Libby to report to prison.

Kevorkian Vows to Quit

Euthanasia proponent Dr. Jack Kevorkian, dubbed "Dr. Death" for assisting in some 130 suicides, vowed he will no longer help people end their lives, even if they come to him in desperation. Kevorkian was released from prison on Friday after serving eight years for a second-degree murder conviction.

Akon in Trouble Again

Rapper Akon ordered security to fetch a fan out of the audience after the young man allegedly threw an object at him. Akon, 25, manhandled the fan and threw him back into the

audience violently. Verizon recently halted its partnership with the rapper after a video showed him simulating sex with an underage girl during a concert.

Paris in Jail

Hotel heiress Paris Hilton started her 23-day sentence for probation violation on Monday. Hilton, 26, opted out of having a cell in an area reserved for celebrities and decided to stay in a single cell amongst the regular jail population. Her original sentence of 45 days was cut due to cooperation.

