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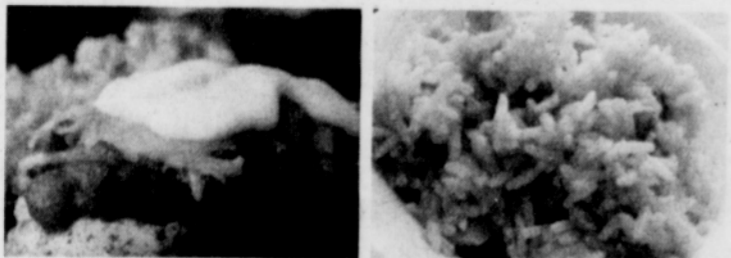
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What's on your list today?.

LOCAL NEWS

Change Agent

Issues of race and disability move into the spotlight

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Issues of race and disability have moved into the spotlight at City Hall thanks to Portland's first ever Office of Equity and Human Rights.

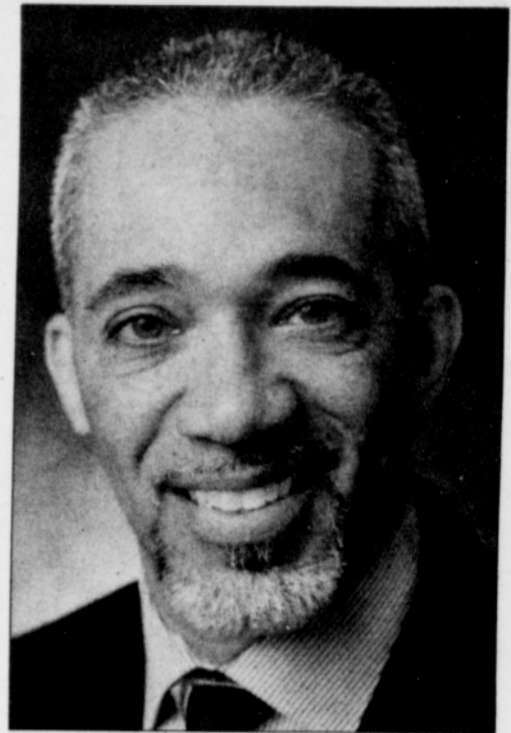
Dante J. James, the office's first bureau director, presented an annual report on the work accomplished by the department to the

full City Council last month and recently met with the Portland Observer to help build public support for the mission.

"What's important is to tell what has been done," James says. "The community wants to know."

Since its creation two years ago, the office has helped improve contracting and employment opportunities for people of color and people with disabilities; made equity part of the city budget process; conducted equity training for 600 employees at over half of the city's 26 bureaus; and created a citywide equity committee; among other things.

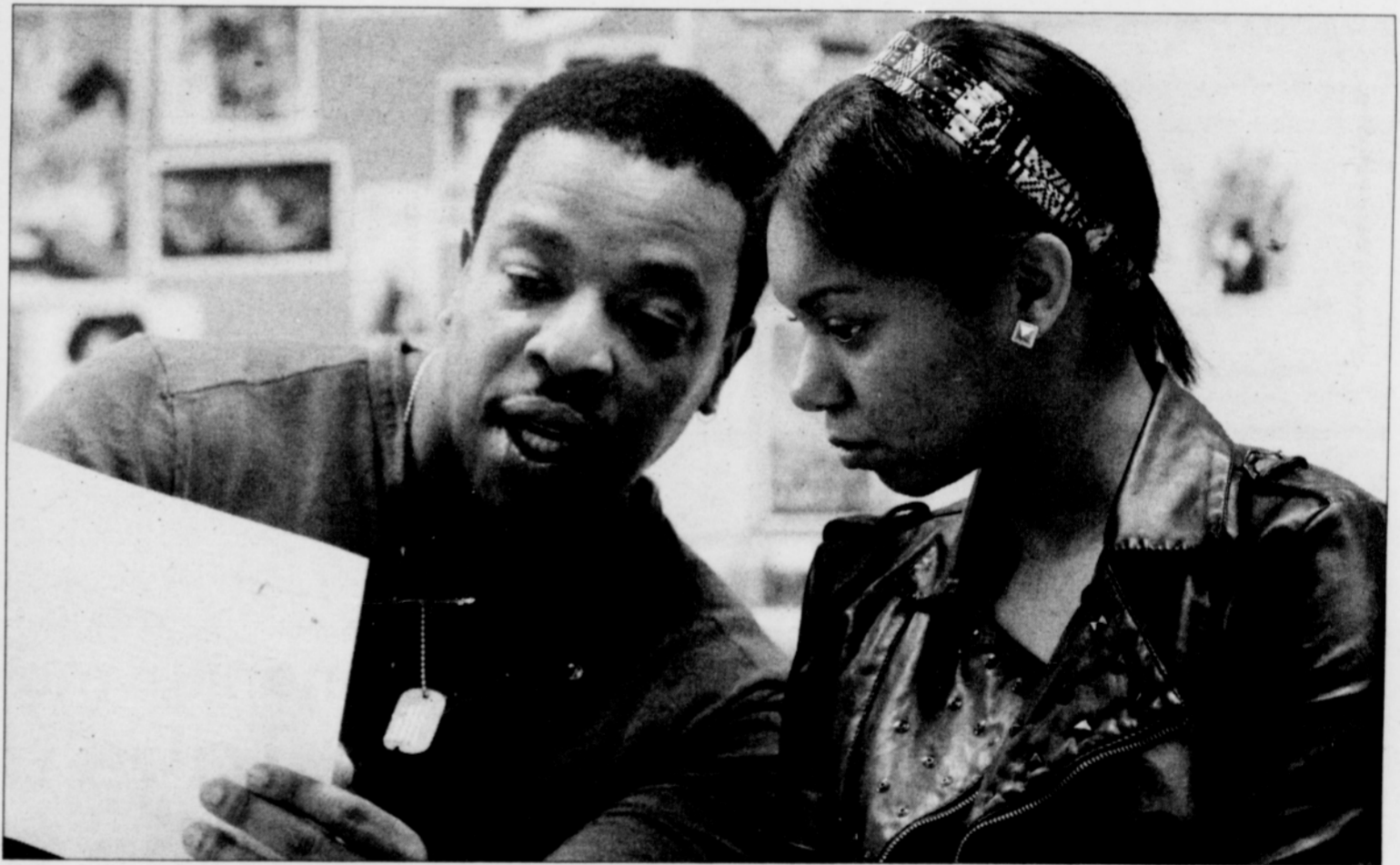
The Office of Equity and Hu-



Dante J. James

man Rights was created two years ago to resolve issues rooted in bias and discrimination. The of-

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Grimm star Russell Hornsby leads August Wilson Monologue Competition regional finalists through acting exercises.

Budding Actors Hone Skills

Celebrating a playwright of color along with performers of all colors

Portland area students are getting exposed to the work of the late Pulitzer Prize winning and African American playwright August Wilson in a real theater experience.

Sixteen high school students are finalists for parts in a local acting competition's final round. The Portland August Wilson Monologue Competition Regional Finals are produced and presented by the Red Door Project, and co-hosted by Portland Center Stage.

"From theatres to educators, we're involving ev-

eryone in a small way," said Red Door Project co-founder Kevin Jones, a black actor from Portland. "By giving these young people the opportunity to meet, engage, and support each other, the competition directly affects our racial ecology. It's introducing them to the movers and shakers in our community who can help them change their lives."

Designed to build more than acting skills for its participants, the students develop the confidence, discipline, and drive necessary to thrive as adults in a rapidly changing world, by learning how to take feedback and improve their performances in real time.

"Competition is important, not because we're trying to create winners, but because it's how the sword gets

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