Coming to Portland, America

Portland’s African population copes with ignorance and uncertainty in a strange land

By Claire Holman
Photos/Art: Jy Tonee Harbert

On the television in their small Parkside apartment, Subeydo Mohamed Ibrahim and her husband Mohamed Issak watch Sophia Loren move across the screen as she caresses Somali refugees at a camp in Kenya. Mohamed calls to Subeydo to come quickly — it is the refugee camp where they stayed for a year and a half. They were reunited, but later fell silent when asked about home. Subeydo said she doesn’t know if her family is alive or dead.

When the couple arrived in Portland, their first impressions were not of what was here, but of what was missing. Their mental image of an American city had come from ‘Hollywood movies and the mass media, and it didn’t look much like Portland. There were no skyscrapers or sweeping boulevards here. Something else was missing, too — other people of color. ’The first time we came we felt like there were only white people,’ Subeydo said. ’We are from everywhere, from Africa, and we are just from America. So when we arrived out black color, we were surprised, and felt we were seeing something so different, with different people we do not know.

’It’s hard to be black and homeless. Very lonely,’ Subeydo and Mohamed aren’t completely alone. There is another Somali family in Portland, and there are other Africans: about a quarter of the black population in the Portland area are recent refugees and immigrants from Africa. Most have arrived in the last three years.

David Agan, director of Portland’s Refugee Resettlement Program, said the agency has resettled more than 160 Africans since 1988, and expects to welcome roughly the same number over the next three to four years. Agan estimates Portland’s total African population is at least 200.

Yet even with this recent increase, new arrivals are still alone in a sea of whiteness. The 1990 Census reported only 91 blacks in Greater Portland, less than 1 percent of the region’s total population.

Even to lump all of Portland’s “Africans” together in one category is deceptive. Africa is a huge continent of numerous cultures and languages, and an important history of alliances and rivalries among its different nations. Many of the asylum seekers are from Ethiopia and are refugees from Ethiopia or Eritrea. Some refugees came from areas where years of war and social upheaval have prevailed.

Continued on page 8
NOW! if you could do it then, eating beans. We had to pig intestine. That's good. I mean, I like it.\]

Their sound dramatically belies their modest price and size. Go hear them -Jack English, Stereophile (April 1992)

"Their price-performance value ... Setting a new standard for modest price and size. Go hear them -Jack English, Stereophile (April 1992)

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Focus shifts to two new train station sites

Portland's search for a train station has shifted from the city's two sites to alternate ones near Union Station Plaza. The city and the Union Station Plaza owners hope the site will be selected before the end of this year. The city and the Union Station Plaza owners hope the site will be selected before the end of this year. The city and the Union Station Plaza owners hope the site will be selected before the end of this year.

Will the Civic Center go to the highest bidder?

Cumberland County Civic Center officials have authorized the center's directors to negotiate with developers who have submitted proposals for the Civic Center. The center's directors have been authorized to negotiate with developers who have submitted proposals for the Civic Center. The center's directors have been authorized to negotiate with developers who have submitted proposals for the Civic Center.

Politics & other mistakes

In the Old Avenue School, which was about how many voters were involved in the best of times, is waning. Annette Hoglund. Hoglund, the veteran who's not saluting is anyone but a dweeb would even accept that idea, but Rand later backed out, which was over . Hoglund claims to bear no ill will toward Richardson, who has an y other mistakes.

Sand in the Vaseline

Richardson's top priority is to build a new civic center better than its current managers. The committee said that a site will have to be selected before the end of the year. The committee said that a site will have to be selected before the end of the year.

newsreal

According to one participant, Hoglund wrote, "We need to get bogged down in the massive project of what a permanent train station should look like. To do that, we need to see the world's never

JOIN US FOR NEW YEAR'S!

COMMING TO PORTLAND

Continued from front page

Most Africans in the Portland area arrived as refugees. That means they did not choose Portland, but wound up here by the end of a journey through a series of bureaucratic procedures that start with a foreign policy decision, and end with a sponsoring agency. Refugee resettlement director Ann Sherrill said that the U.S. State Department admits relatively few Africans, only about 7,000 this year. By contrast, 6,000 people will be admitted from the countries that make up the former Soviet Union and 50,000 will be admitted from Southeast Asia.

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Zeru Tesfai's story

Like most 18-year-olds, Zeru Tesfai looks forward to the summer."Three things come to mind," he says. "I love to play soccer. I love to travel, and I love to read." And this summer, he hopes to put those things to use.

Zeru was born in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, which lies at the northern edge of the horn of Africa. But unlike most 18-year-olds, Zeru was surrounded by a civil war that was already several decades old. One day a group of soldiers from Ethiopia, the country where he was born, went to his parents' home and took him prisoner.

For 20 days, Zeru had no food, no water, and no way to communicate. "For a long time," he says, "I thought I was going to die."

To make matters worse, the soldiers felt his ethnicity was a threat. "I believe," he says, "they believed that I was a Tigrayan, which is a large religious group in Ethiopia. They didn't want me around." So the soldiers went home.

But when Zeru got out, he didn't feel much better. "I couldn't talk to anyone," he says. "I didn't understand the language." So he stayed in a refugee camp for two years. "I was afraid," he says, "I didn't want to move."

Then, a group of soldiers from Ethiopia went to his parents' door. "They wanted to know if I knew them," says Zeru, "so I told them I was black." But the soldiers didn't believe him. "They were at my door for two days," he says, "and they were making fun of me." Finally, they took him prisoner again.

The soldiers took him to the airport and put him on a plane to Portland. When he landed, he realized that he was the only black child in the airport. "I thought," he says, "I'm going to die." But he didn't. And he didn't die.

Zeru was placed in a support group, which is something he never had before. "I was happy," he says, "I was happy to be around people." But he was still afraid. "I was afraid," he says, "I was afraid of the future."

Then, Zeru's teacher called his name. "I was happy," he says, "I was happy to see my teacher." But he was still afraid. "I was afraid," he says, "I was afraid of the future."

But Zeru's teacher didn't let him go. "She told me," he says, "You're going to go to school." So Zeru went to school. "I was happy," he says, "I was happy to be around people." But he was still afraid. "I was afraid," he says, "I was afraid of the future."

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Keep the Civic Center civic

From Alice Cooper to Air, from South Portland High school hockey to Disney on Ice. It’s a high-impact production, the Casco Bay Civic Center has performed a delightful balancing act. If this gives Casco Bay Harbor both entertainment and economic benefits, it’s a Win-Win deal. And while no one can argue that the Civic Center might be too much— too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—too beautiful, too big, too loud— at least one supporter can say that the Civic Center might be too much—!in the world. For some, the Civic Center is a symbol of civic pride, a reflection of the city's commitment to culture and entertainment. Others see it as an eyesore, a monument to the excesses of corporate capitalism.
Tune in to “The 1940’s Radio Hour”
The Originals broadcast watts of song & laughs.

By John Philbrick

There were 17 of us in the 6-by-10-foot waiting room the night of Saturday, Dec. 12. I was the only stranger in the room. The fringe of the storm was still dropping snow at a good clip, and I didn’t think that many more people would show up at the old grange hall in Bar Mills that evening.

After all, The Originals aren’t a famous acting troupe, Bar Mills isn’t a cultural hub and the road hadn’t been plowed yet. But in that unassuming meeting hall of the old Bar Mills Grange Hall, a steady stream of theater goers continued to file in, waving to friends. By the time the house lights dimmed, the size of the audience had risen dramatically and I was still the only stranger in the room.

Continued on page 18
16 Casco Bay Variety

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Celebrate multicultural unity with Loose Caboose

The Living Tree throws a reggae Christmas party

By Pat Langer

"Loose Caboose is a dance hall-orientated band," said Ron Bullock, lead vocalist, keyboardist and percussionist. "We play music rooted in Jamaican grooves to keep people dancing, and they usually move from fast to slow." Dance hall, the newest form of reggae, replaces the older form of rhythm and blues with a mix of rocksteady, ska and a wide variety of influences from reggae and other music.

Reggae has become very popular in American dance halls in the last seven years. The sound — which was formed in 1975 in western Massachusetts — has performed with the Wadadis, Shredhead, Tampa and the Madhams, Lollie Pop, Sandy, Rolla, Gil Scott-Heron and ... and more. No set list.

Loose Caboose guarantees a full night of authentic, uplifting reggae.

Central to the band's dance hall pulse are the melodiously rhythmic pattling bass lines played by David Roland. Guitarist and founding member Jonathon Oates accessorizes the music's upbeats, lending the rhythm a steady, up-tempo beat.

Bullock, the band's lead vocalist, propels the bass lines played by Derek McDonald, the band's rhythm section drummer, and member Jonathan Dorr accents the drums. The sound is like a saving grace.

In Kingston, Jamaica, where we encountered the band Bob Marley, you realize what we're doing here: we're making up things. The Dorr brothers and I did that with the Marley brothers and their son that we did some of those music and like Bob Marley's roots, powerful people are making up a new music in Jamaica. In a bi-lingual Jamaica, where the media mega-industries that have made up the upper and upper-upper regions of his voice, breaking down in some way and others.

Celebrate multicultural unity with Loose Caboose

The Living Tree throws a reggae Christmas party
**Art & Soul continued from page 29**

**CLASSES FOR ADULTS**

- **Clay**
  - 9:30 AM, Mon.
  - 10:30 AM, Wed.
  - 11:30 AM, Fri.
- **Drawing**
  - 11:30 AM, Mon.
  - 1:30 PM, Wed.
  - 3:30 PM, Fri.
- **Watercolor**
  - 11:30 AM, Wed.
  - 1:30 PM, Fri.
- **Painting**
  - 11:30 AM, Fri.
- **Oil Painting**
  - 11:30 AM, Wed.
  - 1:30 PM, Fri.
- **Collage**
  - 11:30 AM, Wed.
- **Figurative Sculpture**
  - 11:30 AM, Fri.

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[Image of Pasta & Sauces]

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[Image of Home Plate]

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  - One Skirt of Yarn, Needle and $20.95 makes one fantastic sweater! (includes directions)

**Sand Castle Yoga of C.B.**

In Maine for 30-70% off

[Image of Sand Castle Yoga]

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**Bayside Styling**

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In Maine for 30-70% off

[Image of Sand Castle Yoga]
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with Casco Bay Weekly. See page 23

family

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