

SHOWTIME honors Black History

Academy Award winners Sidney Poitier (left) and Michael Caine (right) star in *Mandela and De Klerk*.



See Arts & Entertainment, page B2.

February is
Black History Month

Moore at The History Channel

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See Black History, page B3.

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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Oregon economy slows

After several years of pedal-to-the-metal growth, Oregon's economy is showing signs of easing up to the gas. Economists and business executives unanimously agree that the warp-speed past few years has reached a plateau.

Stolen car of choice

The Honda Accord is hot--with thieves. It was no contest last year, according to an annual list of the nation's most-stolen cars and trucks. Honda models held the top three spots.

AIDS still alludes cure

At the fourth annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, there were plenty of troubling reminders that, despite a string of therapeutic successes, a cure for AIDS is still out of reach.

Peace in Liberia?

Outstripping expectations, thousands of fighters from rival militias have turned in their weapons in compliance with a disarmament program intended to dissolve Liberia's armed factions by the end of January.

CIA in Honduras

A CIA training manual describes torture methods used on dissidents in Honduras during the 1980s. The Sun of Baltimore reports. The methods include stripping suspects naked and keeping them blindfolded.

Protection for children

Faced with a record number of child deaths because of abuse and neglect, the Oregon Legislature is moving toward fundamental changes in laws and policies that place a high priority on reuniting families.

Germany criticized

The U.S. State Department's annual survey of human rights conditions around the world will continue expanded, toughened language criticizing Germany for restrictions on the Church of Scientology and its members, administration officials say.

Gingrich breaks silence

Breaking his silence on the unprecedented punishment his colleagues ordered last week, House Speaker Newt Gingrich defiantly told his Georgia constituents that he was singled out for an ethics investigation because he is a conservative.

Super Bowl

The Green Bay Packers deliver a 12th title to Tittletown with a rousing 35-21 victory over the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XXXI at the Superdome in New Orleans.

EDITORIAL.....A2
EDUCATION.....A4
FAMILY.....A5
METRO.....B1
ARTS & ENT.....B2
BLACK HISTORY.....B3
RELIGION.....B4
CLASSIFIEDS.....B5

Maya Angelou inspires teachers

BY NEIL HEILPERN

Clouds hovered over Portland Saturday, but poet Maya Angelou used the weather to remind several hundred visiting educators that they can be "rainbows for someone's cloud."

Angelou spoke at a National High School Association Conference at the Red Lion, Lloyd Center.

She recited a poem inspired by the rainbow of Genesis and recalled the words of an African lyricist who talked about rainbows in the clouds.

"In the worst times we need to see hope." "Rainbows are just who you are as teachers, counselors and educators," she said, "rainbows in someone's clouds."

Angelou told of a crippled uncle Willie who gave the poet and her younger brother little jobs in the family's store in Arkansas.

"My grandmother taught me to read and my Uncle Willie taught me the times tables," she said. "He stood me near the pot bellied stove and had me say my fivesies and my tensies."

Years later, when he died and numerous people showed up for the funeral, the mayor of Little Rock walked up to tell her how uncle Willie had given him his first job as a boy and "taught me my times tables near the pot bellied stove."

Another man, with a similar story, had become a state legislator.

"I had no idea the range of his light," said Angelou.

Angelou is an educator, historian, actress, civil-rights activist, producer, director, poet, bestselling author and playwright. She has often been described as "a Renaissance woman who has the unique ability to shatter the opaque prisms of race and class with her written and spoken words."

"You have a mission -- to shine on someone's life," Angelou told the teachers. "I look at my life and the people who shared with me, then realize I have a responsibility to shine for someone."

"So, I find myself smiling a lot," she noted, "in different languages -- English, Spanish, French and Arabic."

Angelou said she had not always been a glib speaker, full of colorful phrases and imagery that gave life meaning to those who heard her.

At age seven, she recalled, she was raped by her mother's boy friend. At her younger brother's encouragement she named the rapist, who only spent one day in jail, then died at the hands of local people a few days later.



Maya Angelou, January 25, 1997 at National High School Association Conference, Red Lion, Lloyd Center.

Photo by Neil Heilpern

"My seven year old logic prevailed and I was sure that my voice killed him," said Angelou, who reacted from the trauma by becoming a mute for several years.

"My family did their best to woo me away from my muteness," she said. "I had left my voice, not that my voice left me."

Another lady "shined on my cloud," said the poet, describing a teacher who she said resembled the "Miss culture Lady of every group and race."

The woman talked in a falsetto voice, said Angelou, shifting her normally gritty tones to a higher imitation: "Hello dawlings, now little master so-and-so will recite..."

It was a recital and the children would often get stage fright and have to be prompted by the teacher.

Recalling how her grandmother encouraged her to read -- "every book in the little black school I attended" -- Angelou said the teacher, Mrs. Flowers, said, "You don't really like poetry and you'll never like it," pointing a finger at the child.

Angelou paused from her story and looked at the audience, which was mostly Caucasian. "For those of you who don't yet know, Black people don't like having people pointing fingers at them. It was rude."

"You will never like poetry," she continued quoting the teacher, "until it comes from your own tongue and your own lips."

"I would often sit in church and wonder, 'If only I could speak,'" said Angelou. "Then I would watch the other little kids at the recital messing up their lines."

Rahsaan awarded for reaching out to youth

A native Oregonian, A. Halim Rahsaan worked 17 years for Portland Community College in administrative and faculty positions and has worked in the social services field for 30 years. He is currently Program Director for the Youth Gangs Outreach Program in Portland. He also works part time for Multnomah County Juvenile Justice Division in the areas of detention, close supervision and intake counseling.

While locally educated, he holds a graduate certificate in rehabilitation from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. He is on the Executive Council of the Coalition of Black Men as Prison Outreach Coordinator and a member of the Oregon Chapter of the National Association of Blacks in the Criminal Justice System. For a seven year period Halim chaired the Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee which monitored progress of ethnic students, teacher recruitment, and hiring of administrators for Portland Public Schools. As chair of DMAC, Halim helped to create the African American Baseline Essays Curriculum for use in Portland Public Schools. The curriculum focuses on contributions of African And African-American in math, science, social studies, music and art. Called the "Portland Model", it is used in school districts nationwide. Although it was developed in Portland, it is not mandatory and has limited use in Portland Public Schools.

September, 1995, Halim was one of eight scholarship recipients to receive an award



A. Halim Rahsaan

through Portland General Electric to attend Lewis & Clark College Public Administrative non profit Institution. The scholarship's intent is to develop community leadership at the local level for people of color. Halim maintained an "A" average during the first year at Lewis & Clark College. He will complete a graduate certificate in Non Profit Management winter term 1996.

Currently, Halim chairs educational committees for the Black United Front, Coalition of Black Men and the NAACP. He is one of the founders of the recent Citizens Advisory

Monitoring Coalition (C-MAC) which consist of African American, Hispanic, Asian and native American citizen and Parents. The Coalition will monitor the progress of ethnic students during each eleven week period; specifically reading and math. In addition, Halim is one of several C-MAC members who is responsible for reporting their findings to the Portland Public School Board each quarter during the school year.

One of the most recent civic award was presented March 27, 1996, by the Oregon Home Economics Association where he received the Distinguished Service award which recognizes a person or organization making significant contributions to the community.

The Garlington 15th Annual Board and Employee Banquet, celebrated "Service Excellence" on November 27, 1996. Halim received the Marge Lee Anderson Award as Program Director for the Youth Gangs program. The award is given to an individual working to improve the quality of life for citizens throughout the city, county and state of Oregon.

On January 23, 1997 Halim received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award at the Red Lion Inn - Lloyd Center for business. The Business Award is for: A business, organization or agency that is responding to the needs of the community in the area of economic development; education, issues concerning African Americans, i.e., employment, health, youth, ect.

"When I finally spoke, it was a rendition of Portia's speech in Shakespeare's merchant of Venice," she noted, recalling the kindness her grandmother and others had in encouraging her to regain her voice.

She arose from her seat and began. "The quality of mercy is not strained..." "It knocked them out!" she exclaimed.

The teacher asked if Maya knew who wrote those lines, and when the young girl said it was Shakespeare, the teacher said, "But he's white."

Feeling guilty that she hadn't quoted a black poet, Angelou said, "Yes, he's white...but he's dead."

"Shakespeare was a rainbow in a cloudy sky for me," she said. "I learned a lot from him."

Recalling all the help and encouragement she received, Angelou urged the teachers to continue in their efforts to help youngsters advance in life.

"No one can make it all alone," she said. In her closing poem, she looked forward to the day when children's "faces sooted with scorn are scrubbed clean... when we let rifles fall from our children's hands... when our children can dress their dolls in flags of truce."

Earlier in the day Portland Mayor Vera Katz told the teachers of the strong community involvement in a three pronged effort to improve education: "commitment, focus and strategy."

"We are focused on high standards," she said, noting that "by the year 2000 at least 80 percent of the jobs will require higher standards."

"We realized we are not just competing on football fields," said Katz. "We are competing in a global community."

"And it is not just for the bright students, but all the students," she added.

Roosevelt High School Principal Paul Coakley was presented a plaque in appreciation for inviting approximately 40 visiting teachers to tour his school.

His was one of eight schools in the metro area available for the visitors to meet with teachers involved in the school-to-work transition project, "Roosevelt Renaissance 2000."

Later in the day Angelou visited Fellowship Bible Church for the dedication of the new Maya Angelou Center.

Several times while she recited her poem, "and still I rise," the approximately 400 people joined in when she reached that line and said it with her, according to Stephen McPherson, a long-time friend of the poet, who met her more than 20 years ago at Columbia University in New York City.

OJ Simpson update

O.J. Simpson's lawyer asked the jurors to withstand public pressure, and reject corrupt cops and use their verdict to give Simpson his old life back. The plaintiffs on rebuttal said the defense efforts had been built on lies.

The jurors listened to four days of closing arguments, at the Portland Observers press time on Tuesday January 28, 1996 they were scheduled to begin deliberations after one last speech from the plaintiffs. The jurors must decide whether Simpson is responsible for the June 12, 1994, murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Lyle Goldman.

Cosby confesses

Cosby admitted his relationship with Autumn Johnson's mother, but denies being her father.

Bill Cosby denied to Dan Rather on "The CBS Evening News" that he is the father of the young woman, Autumn Jackson who claims to be his illegitimate daughter. But coming up on 60 minutes Sunday, February 2, 1997, Rather asked if there was a possibility he could be.

"There is a possibility," Cosby said in a transcript. "If you said, 'did you make love to the woman?' the answer is yes. 'Are you the father?' No."

"On the birth certificate, it's not my name," Cosby explained in part of the interview aired Monday night.