

Earning high praise

Area students complete year of high achievement and meet with the governor.



See Metro, inside.

Robert Cray

As on his previous nine recordings, Robert Cray brings a real love and passion to creating music.



See Art & Entertainment, page B3.

Mothers Day spotlight

Reading and determination are key for raising a mom out of poverty.



See Metro, inside.

The Portland Observer 25¢

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Base closings proposed

Defense Secretary William Cohen will seek the closing of additional military bases in the United States in a major defense strategy review to be sent to Congress this month, the Pentagon said Tuesday.

Sergeant gets 25 years

Army Staff Sgt. Delmar Simpson, the key figure in one of the worst U.S. military sex scandals, was sentenced to 25 years in prison today for raping six female trainees at Maryland's Aberdeen Proving Ground.

McVeigh sister testifies

The sister of accused Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh testified Tuesday her brother wrote her before the bombing that "something big is going to happen" and she burned the letter on his instructions.

Separatist search scaled

Police scaled back the search for a fugitive militiaman Tuesday who fled into the Texas mountains as the separatist group prepared to surrender. A fixed-wing airplane made a final sweep with heat-sensing equipment but bloodhounds and troopers on horseback were kept out of the rugged Davis Mountains because of safety concerns.

CIA nominee testifies

President Clinton's choice to lead the CIA into the 21st century voiced concern that the United States may have shifted too much of its espionage effort away from Russia. Testifying during his U.S. Senate confirmation hearing, George Tenet did not immediately spell out why he thought that Russia might bear closer watching.

Murder suspect charged

A man suspected of murdering a tourist and raping two women near the Universal Studios theme park in Orlando, Fla., was in custody today after a high-speed chase through Daytona Beach. "I don't know why I do the things I do," James Sears Hartsock told reporters after his arrest last night.

EDITORIAL.....A2
HEALTH.....A4
HOUSING.....A5
EDUCATION.....A6
FAMILY.....A7
METRO.....B1
ARTS & ENT.....B3
MOTHERS DAY.....B5
CLASSIFIEDS.....B6

Schools fail too many kids

Community leaders call for improvements under boycott threat

BY GREGORY BENTON

Why hasn't Portland public schools been able to consistently educate children of color and poor whites as well as they educate the children of the affluent?

A group of inner-city community leaders says it reflects the dismal record of the Portland School District its superintendent Jack Bierwirth.

"This will no longer be tolerated," the community representatives said.

At issue is the district's failure to provide all children with the academic tools they need for success in today's world.

For example, recent reading scores show that 56 percent of third graders and 75 percent of fifth graders at Boise Eliot Elementary in inner-north Portland do not meet standard reading levels.

The results are even worse at inner-north Portland's Humboldt Elementary, where 80 percent of third graders and 82 percent of fifth graders do not meet reading standards.

A plan and schedule to boycott schools if learning doesn't improve was released by the group, called the Community Monitoring and Advisory Committee, was scheduled to be released during a news conference Wednesday at the King Facility in northeast Portland.

The demands were written up and endorsed by the Coalition of Black Men, Education Committee of the NAACP, the Parent Student Alliance, Native American Parents, American Indian Association of Portland, Vietnamese Parents Association of Oregon and the Black United Front.

Earlier, Lew Freddrick, public information officer for Portland's public schools, pointed to some success within the district, when asked about the poor performance levels.

For example, at inner-northeast Portland's Woodlawn Elementary, 82 percent of fifth



Putting the pressure on Portland schools to improve the education of inner-city kids is Ron Herndon (above from left) of the Black United Front and A. Halim Rahsaan of the Coalition of Black Men. Richard Luccetti (right) of Hispanic Parents for Portland Public Schools cites the school district for failing to provide children with the academic tools they need for success.

graders meet or exceed math score standards.

Freddrick explained how Woodlawn could obtain such high scores and other inner-city schools fail so pitifully.

Freddrick says it takes a team approach to teaching that includes everybody from teachers, to parents, to community groups like Self Enhancement, Inc.

A critical pillar to the coalition's demands is that pay raises be tied to performance; from Superintendent Bierwirth's \$132,000 a year salary, to building principals and front-line teachers.

"Those who teach will be rewarded, and those who don't, will find other employment," said A. Halim Rahsaan, co-chairman of the Coalition of Black Men.

"We have lost several generations to drugs and gangs," Rahsaan said. "And we're not going to tolerate it any longer."



Albina Bank Historical Clock



A contribution to architectural heritage is added to northeast Portland with a clock tower once again high above Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard. The clock completes the new Albina Community Bank corner project. Bank president Leon Smith said the clock tower is reminiscent to a building that was on the property in the 1920s. (Photo by Mark Washington)

Delegates carry message



Lawrence Dark

Urban League Of Portland President Lawrence Dark was one of three African Americans from Portland who attended the President's Summit for America's Future last week in Philadelphia.

Other delegates from Portland included Tony Hopson of Self Enhancement, Inc., and Lorenzo Poe.

The summit's goals echo several national Urban League objectives, which include the



Tony Hopson

education and development of children in the inner city.

Priorities are set to enable families to become economically self-sufficient and achieve racial inclusion in the mainstream economy.

For example, since 1995, the national Urban League has been involved in the Our Children, Our Destiny effort, a series of programs designed to educate, counsel and prepare urban youth for the future.



Lorenzo Poe

In Portland, the Urban League has developed a number of programs including the Male/Female Responsibility Program designed to discourage teenage pregnancy and promote positive alternatives for personal development.

Through its Youth Employment Program, the Portland Urban League office offers job training and placement for young people, including forestry programs with the U.S. Forest Service.

Neil Kelly memorial carried

One of north and northeast Portland's great civic leaders and business owners is being honored in a memorial by the Oregon Legislature.

State Rep. Margaret Carter, D-Portland, will carry House Joint Memorial 5 on the floor of the House of Representatives on Wednesday, the date Gov. John Kitzhaber has declared Neil Kelly Day.

"Neil Kelly was a shining example of a man who cared enough to make his

community a better place in which to live," Carter said. "We mourn his passing but we celebrate the lifetime of sharing and compassion that he brought to Portland."

Kelly died June 22, 1996 in Portland at the age of 80. The memorial praises him for "his generosity and the spirit of sharing and compassion he left us."

Some excerpts from the memorial:

"He left behind a vivid legacy that continues to shape Portland as a great city and as

the father of one of Portland's most civic-minded families, he established organizations and funds to help families in need and instilled his untiring optimism in his family and friends.

"The story of Neil Kelly unfolded like the American dream when, in the early 1950s, he bought a home remodeling business for \$100 and over the next several years built the business into one of the largest remodeling companies in the United States."