

**New Home-Based Business Opportunities**

Joyce Purvy helps move Portland towards better future.



See Metro, inside.



Look for Martin Luther King, Jr. Special Edition Next Week!

**Portland loses 4 game winning streak.**

Bucks snap a six game losing streak with a 98-92 victory over Portland.



See Sports, page 17

University of Oregon Knight Library, Newspaper Section, Eugene, Or 97403

# The Portland Observer 25¢

## THE WEEK IN REVIEW

**Sonny Bono Is Mourned**

Prominent politicians are among those mourning Rep. Sonny Bono, who died at age 62 after skiing into a tree. Bono moved on to city hall and then Capitol Hill after a long career as a pop star. "His joyful entertainment of millions earned him celebrity, but in Washington he earned respect by being a witty and wise participant in policymaking processes that often seem ponderous to the American people," President Clinton said. House Speaker Newt Gingrich said he and his colleagues "lost a very, very dear friend." Bono appeared to have died of head and neck injuries and there was no immediate evidence of drugs or alcohol, the local sheriff said.

**Clinton Offers Medicare Changes**

President Clinton proposed today to let early retirees and laid-off workers buy into Medicare as early as age 55. His proposal is similar to an option offered by Social Security, in which people can spread their pension benefits over a longer period, starting at age 62 instead of 65. The president's plan would let some Americans between 62 and 65 pay a monthly premium of about \$300 to get government health insurance through Medicare.

**Algerian Death Toll Reported at 392**

Algeria's Islamic insurgency has killed at least 392 more men, women and children - including 200 in one remote village - news reports and survivors said recently. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks. Bombings and massacres mostly are blamed on Islamic militants who want to overthrow the secular government and create a state based on strict Koranic law. European Union nations were studying a German proposal to help the Algerian government combat terrorism and send aid to victims of the wave of massacres.

**Nichols Jurors Deliberate Sentence**

For a second day, jurors in Denver are talking about life or death for Terry Nichols. After prosecutors pressed for a death sentence and the defense pleaded for jurors to put vengeance aside, the jury deliberated five hours yesterday without reaching a verdict. The jurors convicted Nichols of conspiracy and involuntary manslaughter Dec. 23 but acquitted him of first-degree murder.

**Kaczynski Trial Stops**

Theodore Kaczynski's trial abruptly halted today after the Unabomber suspect met privately with the judge. Kaczynski complained again about his lawyers and protested his brother's presence at the trial. Jurors were sent home after Kaczynski, his lawyers and U.S. District Judge Garland Burrell Jr. met for nearly four hours in the judge's chambers. Opening statements had been scheduled for this morning. Later, Burrell said talks with Kaczynski and his lawyers were continuing. He said the jury would not be called back until Thursday.

**Diana Grave Tickets in Demand**

Nearly 10,000 calls a minute poured in from around the world today, overwhelming the 220 phone lines set up on the first day to buy tickets to view Princess Diana's childhood home and burial site. The princess's brother, Earl Spencer, had announced in October that he would open the Althorp Park family estate to the public this summer, prompted by the massive outpouring of grief over her death. Proceeds from the ticket sales will benefit the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

## 1997 Tax Year Brings Changes

It's time to begin thinking about filing your 1997 Oregon income tax return and there are a few changes that may affect your Oregon Taxes.

New for 1997 are two tax credits targeted toward low-income individuals. The Working Family Credit is allowed for families with child care expenses. To qualify for the credit, the taxpayer must earn at least \$6,000 per year, but may earn no more than 200% of the federal poverty level.

The other new credit is the Earned Income credit which is 5 percent of the taxpayer's federal earned income credit.

Another notable change is an increase in the exemption credit. "For 1997 the exemption credit amount is \$128 -- a \$4 increase from 1996," said Larry Gasperini, program manager at the Oregon Department of Revenue. "For example, if you file jointly and have three children, your exemption credit will be \$640 (5 x \$128). This means your taxes will be reduced by \$640."

The tax rates, the rates that are applied to your taxable income to determine the tax you owe, also underwent some changes. "Taxpayers will notice that the rates have been indexed to counter the effects of inflation,"

explained Gasperini. "Quite simply it means you would pay less tax if you had the same amount of income as last year."

The new federal capital gains laws will apply equally in Oregon. This means that Oregonians who sold their homes in 1997 will receive the same capital gains exclusion on their state returns as they received on their federal returns. However, the new federal capital gains tax RATES will not apply in Oregon.

For additional information, taxpayers may contact Revenue Tax Help representatives at (503) 378-4988. From

January through April the toll-free number within Oregon is 1-800-356-4222. Spanish speakers may call (503) 945-8618. For TTY (hearing or speech impaired only), the year-round toll-free number within Oregon is 1-800-886-7204. In Salem the number is (503) 945-8617. These numbers are answered by machine only and are not for voice use.

Taxpayers also can access the department's Web site to find and download forms for filing, and to locate other helpful information. The address is: www.dor.state.or.us.

## WestSide Light Rail Moving Toward Opening Day



Like the other 19 Westside MAX stations, the Hillsboro Central Station building - on Washington Street near Third Avenue - is substantially complete. Electrical crews are hard at work in Washington County, stringing the overhead wire that powers the light rail trains, and installing signals and communication systems. They are scheduled to complete this work in April. At the same time, other crews are doing similar work in the three-mile, twin-tube tunnel under Portland's West Hills. The Grand Opening of the 18-mile-long Westside MAX extension is Sept. 12 and 13, 1998. (Photo by Mark Going).

## The Future Of Public Hospitals

By BAILUS WALKER & DEITRA HAZELWOOD LEE

Public hospitals nationwide are struggling to provide medical care to those Americans who need it most: The poor, the underinsured and the uninsured. Because of the growth of Medicaid managed care, reductions in federal and state government funding, and the rise in the number of people without insurance, some public hospitals no longer have the financial stabil-

ity to stay afloat. Many are merging, converting to private institutions, or closing their doors.

In the past, most cities had at least one public hospital, and cities like New York and Los Angeles had entire public hospital systems. But between 1981 and 1993 the number of public hospitals fell by 25 percent, a trend that is accelerating. Now Congress plans to cut Medicaid funding given specifically to public hospitals that serve a large

number of Medicaid, low-income Medicare, and uninsured patients. The pending budget cuts are also going to shrink public hospitals' revenues far below what is necessary to meet the many health care needs of those who rely on this system for treatment.

Given the popularity of privatizing services, and the apparent growth of so many forms of health care, why is it worth preserving public hospitals at all? Can't the rest of our health system pick up the slack? It would

be nice if that were possible, but the facts prove otherwise. Indeed, already the tears in the public hospital safety net are creating a new health care crisis in its own right. If we continue to lose these hospitals, many minorities, especially in urban communities, stand to lose their last certain access to medical care.

CONTINUE TO PAGE B4

## Portsmouth Middle School Toy Drive Collects Over 800 Toys

By NADIA GARDNER  
YOUTH VOLUNTEER CORPS-AMERICORPS MEMBER

Portsmouth Middle School, North Portland - The students of Portsmouth Middle School pulled together over 800 new and used toys this December. The toy drive was organized by the Youth Volunteer Corps- Portsmouth members, Travis Werbin, Kim Alley, and Loren Whitcomb. Their duties included toy drive initiation, planning and organization, public relations, collection and distribution of the toys. Loren Whitcomb explains: "It's cool because it is helping out people who can't afford presents for the holidays. That's what I like doing, helping out."

The week-long toy drive culminated with a celebration pizza party for Youth



Students of Portsmouth Middle School stand proud from their accomplishment.

Volunteer Corps- Portsmouth members and the class which contributed the most toys. The winning class, Ms. Humphrey's Reading Class collected 330 toys. Several other classes followed closely behind that phenomenal number. The toys were distributed to various agencies in North Portland and citywide. Agencies benefiting include, Columbia Villa/Tamaracks Community Youth Advancement Consortium and Insights Teen Parent Program.

The Youth Volunteer Corps has AmeriCorps members in 18 high and middle schools around Portland. Also, two members work with homeschool students. Its mission is to address community needs through creating and increasing volunteer opportunities.