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# The Portland Observer

## THE WEEK IN REVIEW

### Kosovo

White House officials had recently declared that Clinton has no intention of deploying ground troops in Kosovo. Meanwhile, Britain pressed NATO to consider a ground attack. NATO missiles continued their air raids which targeted the Yugoslavian President's key military sites.

### Peace for Israel

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel will be stepping down after being defeated by Ehud Barak in a statewide election. After nearly all of the votes were counted, results showed that Barak led with 55.9 percent to 43.9 for Netanyahu. The new leader promises to secure peace with the Palestinians, pull troops out of Lebanon in a year and heal the deep divisions among Israelis.

### Yeltsin Fires Prime Minister

President Boris Yeltsin fired Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov before Parliament was to begin impeachment hearings against Yeltsin. In order to impeach Yeltsin, the impeachment motion must also be approved by two-thirds majorities of the upper chamber of parliament and the supreme and the constitutional courts. Kremlin warned that any action to remove the president would be a declaration of war and plunge Russia into crisis.

### Gun Control

The Senate had recently voted 78-20 to require the sale of "secure gun storage or safety devices" with handguns. House Speaker Dennis Hastert suggested that the age of handgun possession be raised from 18 to 21. Senate Republicans are also cracking down on the sale of guns with a new proposal to establish a system of background checks for all buyers of firearms at gun shows.

### Michigan School Massacre

Four teenage boys in Michigan face adult charges of conspiracy to commit premeditated murder. Their plan was to buy and steal weapons for a massacre at the Holland Woods Middle School that would top the death toll at Columbine High School. Their other intent was to rape girls at their school. The arrest occurred one day before a pipe bomb was found near the school.

### Grants for Cops

President Clinton announced a new round of grants that would allow communities to hire cadets and urged Congress to support his anti-crime package. Clinton is working towards fulfilling his promise of paying for 100,000 new police officers. He has also called for a renewal of the community policing grants.

## US Indian Tribe Kills First Gray Whale in 70 Years

By VANESSA McGRADY

**M**akah Indians killed their first gray whale in more than 70 years on Monday, using hand-thrown harpoons and a .50-caliber rifle to successfully conclude a week-long hunt tribe members said was intended to reinvigorate cultural traditions.

Shortly after dawn, seven members of the Makah whaling team paddling a hand-carved cedar canoe approached a whale in the Pacific Ocean off the tip of the Olympic Peninsula and began the kill by throwing the first of two 11-foot (3.3 metre) harpoons.

Television footage showed a tribal motorboat circling the wounded whale as other members of the hunting party fired three .50-caliber rifle shots, and within about 10 minutes the animal was dead.

Nearly 12 hours later, a crowd of about 500 cheering people lined the beach near the small tribal town of Neah Bay, Washington, as a triumphant procession of five dugout canoes towed the carcass to shore.

"It went like clockwork—how we prayed, how we dreamed it would," said Eric Johnson, part of the support crew. "It was a nice, humane kill."

The whaling team was expected to butcher the whale and distribute meat and blubber to the tribe's 2,200 members.

The Makah, who claim U.S. treaty whaling rights dating to 1855, had not killed a whale since the 1920s when the practice was banned after gray whales had been hunted nearly to extinction by whalers.

But the species has grown to more than 20,000, and in 1994 gray whales were removed from the federal endangered species list. In 1997 the International Whaling Commission granted a quota permitting the Makah to harvest up to 20 whales over five years.

Environmental activists, who had tried hard to disrupt the hunt, said they were outraged by the kill.

"There is nothing traditional about what they're doing out there," said Paul Watson, president of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. "I think their ancestors would certainly be ashamed of what they're doing."



The Makah Indian tribe butchers the first gray whale they've caught in 70 years Monday, May 17, 1999, in Neah Bay, Wash. Hundreds of Indians from the Makah and other tribes gathered on the beach to celebrate the kill.

Tribal leaders were unapologetic. "We're going to do it all over again," tribal Chairman Ben Johnson said.

First, though, is the task of butchering the animal, variously estimated at between 25 feet long and 50 feet long (7 metres to 15 metres). Just dragging the heavy animal up onto

the beach proved too difficult for an army surplus truck drafted into service. After 20 minutes of failed attempts, about 50 people waded into the water and grabbed hold of the whale's barnacled gunmetal-gray skin and hoisted it past the high-tide mark.

The beaching culminated a day of festive

celebration in the town, where businesses were closed so tribal members in ceremonial head-dresses, shawls and jackets could wait under a steady downpour for the whaling team to return.

"I didn't think we had it in us, but the canoers proved us wrong," said Dan Cook. "They are carrying out the tradition of our heritage and our tribe."

The latest hunt began on May 10 as whales clustered off the coast in their spring migration north. Tribal members managed to harpoon a whale for the first time on Saturday but failed to wound it seriously. Local authorities arrested two activists who attempted to get between the hunters and the whales in order to prevent the kill.

The Sea Shepherd Society's 95-foot (29-metre) former Coast Guard cutter Sirenian was one of the few anti-whaling boats left on the water. Over the weekend, the U.S. Coast Guard confiscated four boats operated by environmental activists and cited their operators with various violations, Petty Officer Jay Bigelow said.

The Sirenian followed the whaling crew into the harbor and emitted a piercing siren throughout the welcoming ceremony.

In a statement, tribal Chairman Ben Johnson said he was thankful there were no injuries in the tense atmosphere of the hunt.

"We recognize that because of differences in cultural values and knowledge, many people do not understand our need to continue with the tradition of whale hunting, thus creating a conflict between them and the Makah," Johnson said.

The Canadian province of British Columbia vowed to block its tribes from conducting similar whale hunts. The Nuu chah nulth Tribal Council, which represents 13 Vancouver Island tribes, has expressed an interest in seeking permission to hunt whales in its ongoing land-rights treaty negotiations with the province and Canada.

"We will not sign any agreement nor entertain any discussion about going back to the past and allowing any whale hunt in British Columbia by aboriginal peoples," Premier Glen Clark said.

Clark said he felt "repulsed" by the whale killing.

## Star Wars' To Premier at Midnight

By MICHAEL FLEEMAN  
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Arriving in a meteor shower of hype and dodging reviews from the Dark Side, the new "Star Wars" movie was set to open, appropriately, when the stars are out, at midnight screenings around the country early Wednesday.

"This is the best place to be right now in the whole world," said Chris Chaplin, 30, who had a ticket to the midnight show at Mann's Chinese Theater but was waiting in line hours before the doors swung open to get a good seat.

It's a foregone conclusion that "Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace" will be one of the biggest films of all time. The only question is whether it will get enough repeat business to approach the \$600 million "Titanic" collected in North America.

"It's going to kill in that opening week and do just huge, unprecedented business," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box office tracker Exhibitor Relations Co. "But beyond that you're in a very competitive release period."

Best estimates are "The Phantom Menace" will reap more than \$100 million in its five-day opening frame of Wednesday through Sunday, putting it on a pace to beat "Lost World: Jurassic Park" for the film-opener crown. "Lost World" made a record \$90.2 million in a four-day Memorial Day weekend in 1997.

"The Phantom Menace" also will be com-



Die-hard fans get in line hours, almost a day, before the show starts. These Jedi Knights in training are Brian Inmon, Mike Valdez, Andrew McCorkindale and Ralph Hockel.

peting against its ancestors. The original "Star Wars" is the No. 2 movie of all time. Counting its various re-issues, it has sold \$461 million in tickets domestically. "Return of the Jedi" has grossed \$309 million, for No. 7 on the all-time list, and "The Empire Strikes Back" has made \$290 million, for ninth place.

Because of the intense adoration for the first three "Star Wars" movies, the new installment is considered critic-proof. Which is a good thing for "Star Wars" creator George

Lucas. The reviews mostly have been somewhere between negative and vicious.

The harshest had to be The New Yorker's Anthony Lane, who likened "The Phantom Menace" to excrement.

More typical was Kenneth Turan of the Los Angeles Times, who called it a "considerable letdown," a "ponderous and plodding" movie that is "noticeably lacking in warmth and humor."

Those who liked the movie focused on the

visual spectacle. Roger Ebert wrote in the Chicago Sun-Times that the movie was "an astonishing achievement in imaginative filmmaking."

Produced, directed and written by Lucas, who also bankrolled the entire \$115 million-plus budget, "The Phantom Menace" begins the back story of "Star Wars." It is set a generation earlier, when Darth Vader was still a cute blond kid named Anakin Skywalker, who would grow up to become Luke's absentee father.

The merchandising campaign for "The Phantom Menace" is so far-reaching that it includes not just the usual action figures and video games but special Pepsi cans that you can collect for reasons beyond recycling.

Even a Colonel Sanders lookalike was brought back from the dead for a "Star Wars" chicken tie-in commercial.

The first of the hard-core "Star Wars" fans started lining up weeks ago, and when advanced tickets became available last week, there was a buying frenzy, with the midnight shows selling out almost immediately.

At Mann's Chinese, where the original "Star Wars" premiered 22 years ago, more than 100 people were lined up at midmorning Tuesday. One was Analisa Siemsen, 21, an aspiring screenwriter.

"I never camped out for anything before," she said, "but there's no Woodstock, so you have to come to the 'Star Wars' line."