



Have a safe and happy New Year celebration



Nike co-founder Bowerman dies See inside

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the new millennia

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## Government waylays Y2K fears

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eat, drink and be merry on New Year's Eve, because the advent of the year 2000 should cause few, if any, problems, a bevy of federal officials said Sunday.

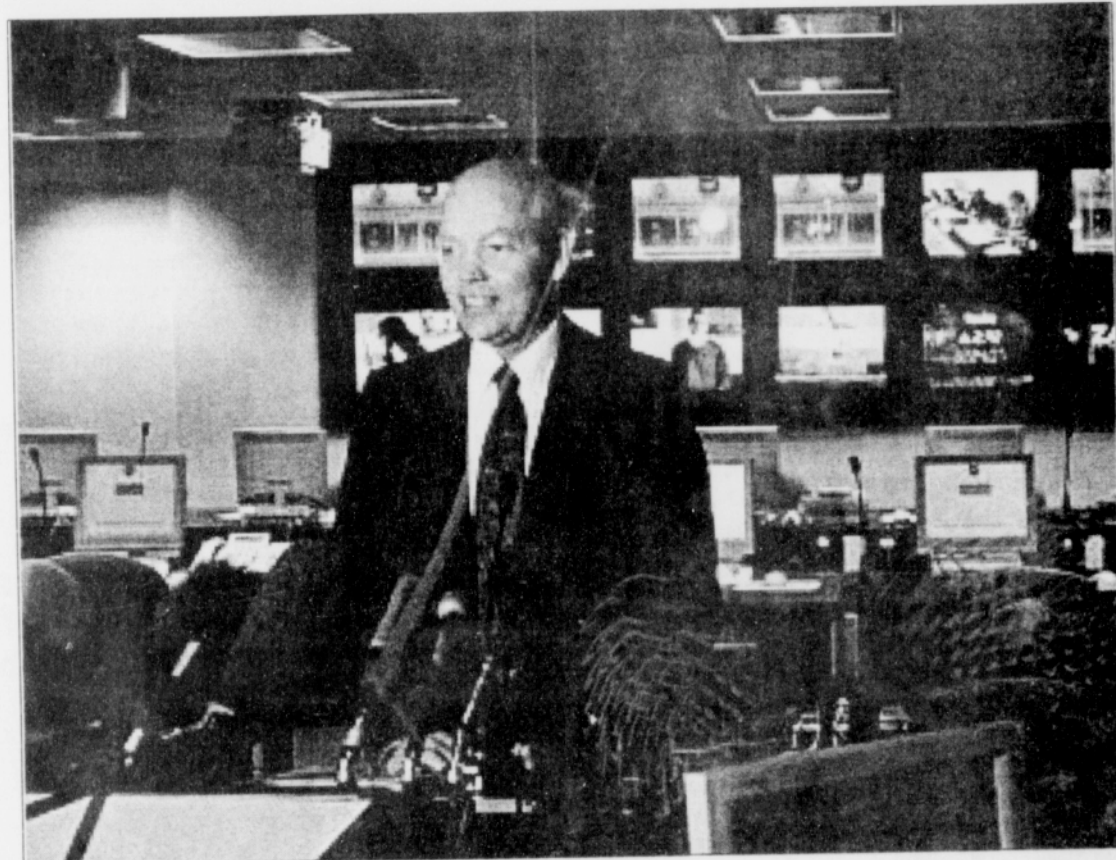
Hospitals, power plants, air traffic control systems and prisons are all Y2K ready, they said. The top aviation official will be in the air as the new year begins, and military personnel will be monitoring missiles with the Russians. Indeed, officials said Americans should make no more preparations for New Year's this year than they would do for any long winter weekend.

"Our goal has been to avoid overreaction," President Clinton's top Y2K adviser, John Koskinen, said on ABC's "This Week." "We would like people to be prepared for a long midwinter weekend but we think that's all that's necessary."

The Y2K problem arises out of the fear that older computers programmed to read just the last two digits of a year will read "00" as "1900" rather than "2000." Billions of dollars have been spent to correct the problem. An Associated Press poll taken earlier this month found only 5 percent of respondents expecting major Y2K problems, down from 11 percent in July. The poll's margin of error was plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Even if some of the Y2K scenarios of computer failures do come true, officials said they were prepared to handle any emergencies. "Hospitals are in the business of preparing for the unexpected," American Hospital Association chairman Fred Brown said on ABC. "I don't think there really will be an inconvenience. The American public can feel very confident if they have to go to hospitals."

John Koskinen, chairman, President's Council of Year 2000 Conversion, stands in the middle of the White House's Y2K crisis center in Washington Nov. 15. The government established the \$50 million center to monitor potential disruptions as computers worldwide have to deal with dates beyond 1999.



Koskinen said prisons and power plants had been tested and found to be Y2K compliant. "The power plants we think have done their Y2K work," Koskinen said. "We do not expect there is any risk." Most emergency 911 call centers also are prepared. A December survey from the National Emergency Number Association found 98.5 percent saying their equipment was Y2K ready, and others may have been fixed since then.

Federal Aviation Administrator Jane Garvey said she planned to be en route to San Francisco, to show her confidence that the aviation system is prepared for Y2K. She expects no problems on domestic flights, and if there are computer glitches, air controllers can respond and space out takeoffs and departures. "Air traffic will be safe," she said. "If it wasn't safe, we wouldn't allow the planes to fly. All systems are Y2K compliant. We've tested

them from end to end. We're ready." Garvey said that some airlines may cancel international flights to countries that are not prepared for Y2K, but most overseas destinations favored by Americans will not be among them. Still, experts caution that while the United States has made extensive preparations for Y2K, some other nations are not as well

(Please see Y2K' page 5)

### THE WEEK IN REVIEW

#### Seattle Cancels Y2K Countdown

SEATTLE - The mayor has scrubbed the city's planned New Year's Eve celebration below its trademark Space Needle, where an estimated 50,000 people had been expected to gather. The city's nerves have been strained in recent weeks by tumultuous, sometimes violent World Trade protests, news that a man arrested at the U.S.-Canadian border with alleged bomb-making materials had booked a hotel room near Seattle Center.

#### Jet Hijackers Want Guerrillas Released

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - Hijackers are demanding \$200 million ransom and the release of 35 guerrillas before hostages are freed from an Indian Airlines jetliner, an Indian news agency reported. The hijackers, who have held 155 passengers and crew members for five days, also demanded that the body of the rebel leader be exhumed from Indian-held Kashmir. Indian negotiators are communicating with the five hijackers by walkie-talkie. The hijackers had threatened to start killing the passengers and crew. Earlier, a masked hijacker left the plane as insurance when an Indian engineer boarded the jet for repairs. The engines shut down earlier, cutting power to the plane.

#### Rebels Counterattack in Chechnya

GROZNY, Russia - Rebel fighters counterattacked Russian troops in Chechnya's mountainous south in an effort to free up crucial supply lines blocked by federal forces, military officials said. In a new attempt to crush rebel forces, Russian jets dropped aerosol bombs on rebel bases in southern Chechnya, the Interfax news agency reported. The bombs release a large cloud of inflammable gas and cause massive explosions that can clear out bunkers. Meanwhile, Russian artillery and jets kept up their onslaught on Grozny with ground troops trading fire with rebels.

#### Existing Home Sales Rebound

WASHINGTON - Sales of existing homes surged in November, after four straight months of declines, as confident consumers scrambled to lock in deals before mortgage rates climbed higher. The National Association of Realtors said that sales of existing single-family homes rose 6 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.09 million units. The association expects existing-home sales to total a record 5.18 million units this year, which would be a 4.4 percent increase over last year's record of 4.97 million units.

#### 1999 Breaks Box-Office Records

LOS ANGELES - The movie industry is putting the wraps on its second straight record-breaking year. Ticket sales in the United States totaled \$7.5 billion, up from \$6.95 billion in 1998.

## Seattle's millennium countdown canceled by threats

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spooked by terrorism fears and still wounded by violent protests during the recent World Trade Organization meeting, Seattle is cancelling plans for a blowout millennium New Year's Eve bash beneath the Space Needle. "It is safer to be prudent," Mayor Paul Schell said after meeting Monday with police, fire and FBI officials, and members of the City Council.

"It's also a time, following WTO, for the city to take a breather from tension." The city had been scaling back its New Year's plans since an Algerian man was arrested Dec. 14 for bringing bomb-making materials into Washington state from Canada. Ahmed Ressam's arrest sparked nationwide concerns of a terrorist attack in the United States.

Last week, officials decided to postpone Seattle's Hopes and Dreams Fire Ceremony — the torching of a 17-piece wood-and-papier-mache sculpture. On Sunday, poor ticket sales forced cancellation of a New Year's Eve performance of Cirque Eos. Afternoon concerts will proceed as planned, and showers of fireworks will still erupt from the Space Needle at midnight. But the 75-acre center grounds will be cleared and the gates locked at 6 p.m., Schell said. Only a long-scheduled private party in the Needle's revolving restaurant will be allowed to proceed. "Adding another layer of anxiety at this time would not be a prudent thing to do," Schell said at a morning news conference. "Nobody will give the city credit if 12 people don't die at the Seattle Center," said Jim

Compton, one of several council members who attended the news conference. "This was too risky. I think the city has made a very wise decision." Folks who stay after they're told to clear the area "are going to be arrested and dealt with accordingly," Schell said in a Tuesday interview with KIRO Radio. "There will be no tolerance of lawbreaking." The decision to cancel was heavily influenced by an assistant police chief who had been overruled during the WTO protests, The Seattle Times reported Tuesday. John Pirak had wanted to declare a state of emergency as early as 11 a.m. during the first full day of WTO protests but his opinion was overruled and the emergency was not declared until five hours later, the Times reported. This time, his approach carried the day. Pirak

spoke first during the 90-minute meeting Monday afternoon. City Councilwoman Jan Drago, who was present, said Pirak argued that the event would be an opportunity for terrorists and said it would be difficult to defend against unknown terrorism. "He spoke very persuasively in favor of the option to close," Drago said. Several City Council members said his advice swung the tenor of a meeting that began with Schell's staff leaning toward holding the event, the Times said. Some applauded Schell's decision, but others scoffed, characterizing it as kowtowing to fear. "I think people are relieved and appreciative that the mayor is putting their safety first," Councilwoman Sue Donaldson said Tuesday. "It's another target that's not going to be there," said Dick Rogers, 60, of Monroe.

## Curtis Mayfield, R&B and soul musician, dies at 57

BY THE STAFF OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



Kevin Fuller decided that the music of legendary musician Curtis Mayfield would be the perfect backdrop for his organization's third annual Kwanzaa celebration rites of passage program. The theme of the Bridge Builders' Kwanzaa Gala and Gentlemen's Ball held Sunday was "People Get Ready," a title of a Mayfield hit. As Portland residents — young and old — swayed to Mayfield's music, Fuller announced that Curtis Mayfield had died that morning. After sounds of surprise filled the room, silence fell. Mayfield was 57. Mayfield's music was inspiration for the teens involved in the 4-year rites of passage program, Fuller said. "Curtis Mayfield wrote message music," Fuller said. "Each song talked about uplifting us as a people and that's the type of inspiration they needed." In addition, Fuller said that the father of one of the young men participating in the program was a member of the popular Portland-based Street Corner Singers and one of the last songs that Igwe Waters' father sang was

"People Get Ready." Fuller said it was ironic that Mayfield should die on the day of a tribute to him. Portland was not alone this week in mourning the loss of a legend. Music lovers and civil rights leaders on Monday mourned the death of Curtis Mayfield, a prolific composer and singer whose songs evoked the struggle of African Americans. "From the cotton-picking days to the civil rights movement we African Americans have found solace and encouragement from our music," said Rev. Fred Taylor of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. "Curtis Mayfield's music told us that despite all odds, we are here and we will continue to fight until we become equal partners in the social fabric of this country." Mayfield, a rhythm and blues legend whose music helped define the Chicago sound in the 1960s and whose funky style influenced artists from pop to hip hop, died on Sunday at North Fulton Regional Hospital in suburban Atlanta. His publicist, Karen Lee, said the cause of death had not been released but it was likely the musician died of complications related to his struggle with diabetes.