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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

N. Ireland Regains Some Governing Authority

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — Northern Ireland regained a measure of self-rule, giving the province's Protestant and Catholic leaders another chance to achieve a lasting peace. Britain handed back powers to the four-party Cabinet and the Assembly created as part of a landmark 1998 peace agreement that envisioned a Catholic-Protestant administration.

Putin Wants to Rein in Regions

KAZAN, Russia — Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, many of Russia's 89 regions have turned into mini-kingdoms with their own laws, a repressive attitude toward the media and disdain for fair elections. But in his first major policy initiative as president, Vladimir Putin announced measures to reinstate federal control from Moscow. One-fifth of regional legislation conflicts with federal law, Putin noted. He called upon Russia's State Duma to consider three bills that, among other things, would give him the power to dismiss regional leaders.

Hijacker Suspect's Body Found

MANILA, Philippines — A crying man tried to hijack a Philippine Airlines jet carrying 291 people, then robbed everyone and jumped out of the plane wearing a homemade parachute. He died in the jump and his body was found later in the day in the town of Real, Quezon province, about 40 miles east of Manila, radio reports said. Armed with a grenade and a pistol, the man — who had donned a ski mask and swimming goggles — ordered the pilot of PAL Flight PR812 to return to Davao City in the southern Philippines.

Amnesty of 120,000 Inmates Approved

MOSCOW — Russian legislators approved an amnesty for about 120,000 inmates in an effort to improve conditions in an overcrowded, disease-ridden prison system. The State Duma unanimously approved the measure, which applies to people who committed minor offenses. Among those to be released will be inmates with tuberculosis — about one-tenth of the prison population — as well as war veterans, invalids, elderly people and pregnant women. Inmates are to be released after prison administrators decide who fits the requirements and process the paperwork.

E. coli Outbreak in Canada Kills Four

WALKERTON, Ontario — E. coli bacteria in a southern Ontario town's water supply has killed three elderly adults and an infant and sickened hundreds more. Seven people were in critical condition and dozens of other victims were hospitalized and officials warned that more infections were likely in coming days. It was unclear how the bacteria, often spread by fecal matter, got into the water supply in Walkerton, 80 miles northwest of Toronto.

Israel Withdraws from Lebanon

METULLA, Israel — The last Israeli troops and tanks rolled out of Lebanon at dawn, completing a swift and dramatic pullout from the southern zone Israel occupied for nearly two decades and closing one of the most bitterly divisive chapters in the nation's history. In Israel, relief over the safe completion of the hasty and hazardous withdrawal was tempered by sadness over the long conflict, which had cost the lives of more than 950 Israeli soldiers since 1982.

O'Connor rejects last appeal to block adoption law



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor rejected an emergency request to delay Oregon's 1998 adoption records law from going into effect, clearing the way for thousands of adoptees to find out the identities of their birth parents. The law took effect at 5:01 p.m. Tuesday. O'Connor's decision not to intervene was welcomed by Oregon adoptees who have

spent years trying to track down their birth parents but have been thwarted because their birth records have been kept sealed under state law. "I was so frustrated by the judicial system and what I perceived as the unfairness of the law," said 56-year-old Barry Price of Albany. But Frank Hunsaker, attorney for a group of six anonymous birth mothers who had fought the law in court over the past two years, was not pleased.

"My clients are extremely disappointed and scared and even angry that their rights have been ignored by Oregon's voters and Oregon's courts," Hunsaker said in an interview on KXL-AM radio in Portland. The anonymous birth mothers had argued the 1998 law violates their privacy, and is a breach of what they had assumed were guarantees of confidentiality when they gave their children up for adoption. "I think it's a sad day that this measure is

going into effect," said Hunsaker. But many adoptees are elated. Geena Stonum, 41, of Portland has searched for her birth parents on and off for 20 years. "It's a really difficult thing to do, especially with the limited information — which is pretty much no information — that I had," Stonum said. "I'm a single mom, so I don't have thousands of dollars to throw away with no guarantees I'd get anything back." She wants to know her history. "I have a wonderful family, but there's still that piece that's missing. When you see people who maybe look like you, you wonder if they're maybe related to you," Stonum said. In 1998, Oregon voters passed a new law that would allow Oregonians age 21 and older access to their original birth certificates. But the law was challenged by attorneys for six birth mothers who claimed the law violates the privacy of people who give their children up for adoption. The Oregon Court of Appeals in December rejected their constitutional challenges to the adoption records law, and the Oregon Supreme Court has twice refused to review that ruling. The Oregon Court of Appeals refused to extend a stay blocking the law from taking effect, leaving the U.S. Supreme Court as the only option for the group of six birth mothers, who filed their challenge anonymously. O'Connor, who fields emergency matters from Oregon for the nation's highest court, rejected their emergency request to stay the law. In 1997, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review a similar open adoption records law from Tennessee. Tennessee and just three other states — Alaska, Delaware and Kansas — allow adult adoptees access to original birth certificates. An adoption records bill in Alabama has been signed by that state's governor, and it takes

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Unveiling of Vanport Interpretive Signage



The unveiling of the final stage of interpretive signage commemorating Vanport, Oregon's second-largest city in 1944, which was destroyed by the Memorial Day flood of 1948 was held on May 30, 2000 at Heron Lakes Golf Course Clubhouse. This project was a collaborative effort by Portland Parks & Recreation, Portland State University, and Kaiser-Permanente. The four signs which were unveiled trace the history of Vanport City and mark two specific sites: where the dike broke and the location of the infirmary. Presentations were made by PP&R Director Charles Jordan, Commissioner Jim Francesconi, Barbe West, Regional President of Kaiser-Permanente, Meg Merrick, Portland State University, and two of the PSU students who worked on the project.

Left: Kathy Schneider, Vanport Cartographer

Sabin CDC Housing Our Families to move

Two non-profit housing development agencies, Housing Our Families and the Sabin Community Development Corporation, plan to enter into an active partnership. The new "collaborative venture" will be called the Community Housing Partnership, the two organizations said in an executive summary released to the Observer. According to the release, Housing Our Families will provide property management services to Sabin CDC, while that agency will assist HOF in property development. The governing body of the new agency will consist

of the combined boards of its parent bodies, plus additional recruits, meeting quarterly. "CHP links the two CDCs together in a substantial business alliance," the release said. "It is cemented through a web of collaborative contracts of three years duration to provide specific services." The two organizations plus two others, Franciscan Enterprises and the Northeast Community Development Corporation, had been in discussions for several months exploring ways to more efficiently use their joint resources. The discussions were brought

on in part by the increasing scarcity of available affordable land in north and northeast Portland, and the loss of funding sources such as the Nehemiah program. Housing Our Families was created by a group of professional women seeking to aid low income single women and families in the inner city. They now manage more than 400 units in north and northeast Portland. Sabin CDC was created by the Sabin Community Association to help retain a supply of affordable housing in Sabin and other inner northeast neighborhoods. They

began with rental housing restoration and development, but later launched into a "land lease" program. Under this arrangement houses are sold at low cost, but the agency has the right at time of resale to repurchase the house at a price based upon an agreed-upon formula. In their discussions the two agencies identified "similar core components," the release said. They will henceforth "share infrastructure costs, specifically office space and staffing alignment, rather than continuing to maintain separate organizational infrastructure."