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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

AIDS Approaches Grim Anniversary

Few people took note when, on June 5, 1981, doctors reported that a strange and deadly new disease had turned up in five gay men in Los Angeles. Doctors, too, were perplexed by the illness, which turned its victims into prey for exotic microbes. Today, 20 years later, the disease now known as AIDS has stricken roughly 60 million people worldwide. Twenty-two million are dead; the rest are desperately trying to delay the inevitable.

Bush Sticks to Energy Stance

LOS ANGELES — President Bush traveled across the country to deliver news Gov. Gray Davis doesn't want to hear: He won't force down soaring electricity prices that have cost California nearly \$8 billion since January. Bush and Davis will meet about energy crisis today, but there was no indication they would break their stalemate.

Canada Closer to

Decriminalizing Marijuana

Canada's slow but clear shift toward decriminalizing marijuana continues to gain momentum. Justice Minister Anne McLellan says the issue should be studied, and a new Parliament committee on drug matters will look at decriminalization. Conservative Party leader Joe Clark is urging the elimination of criminal penalties for possessing a small amount of pot. The government has proposed expanding medicinal use of marijuana, and the Canadian Medical Association Journal recently supported full decriminalization. Canada's Supreme Court will consider a case this year that contends criminal charges for the personal use of marijuana violate constitutional rights.

U.S. spy Plane Coming Home

BEIJING — China said it has agreed to a U.S. proposal to cut a stranded U.S. Navy spy plane into pieces and ship it back to the United States. The U.S. Embassy in Beijing said it couldn't confirm such an agreement. The EP-3E Aries II has sat on a runway at a Chinese air base on Hainan island since a collision April 1 with a Chinese fighter jet.

Red Cross to Charge More

WASHINGTON — The Red Cross, which supplies about half of the nation's blood supply, is telling hospitals of its plans to raise the cost of a pint of blood by up to 35% to help pay off its debts. National officials say the prices are being determined by local blood centers. The typical pint of red blood cell product now costs \$130 to \$150. A Red Cross official does not expect the price increase to affect hospitals' ability to provide blood to patients this summer.

74th Annual National Spelling Bee Begins

WASHINGTON — It was "coreopsis" in the sixth round that nailed him in 1999. In 2000, Sean Conley flubbed "apoptotic." Sean and 247 other brainy competitors from 49 states and several U.S. territories are set to start the 74th National Spelling Bee contest. To the winner goes bragging rights, of course, and \$10,000.

Taliban: Hindus Must Wear ID Labels

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan's conservative Taliban rulers, announced plans to make Hindus wear an identity label on their clothing to distinguish them from Muslims. The law would also make it mandatory for Hindu women to veil themselves.

Al Sharpton Given 90 Days in Jail

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — A federal judge sentenced the Rev. Al Sharpton to 90 days in jail for trespassing on U.S. Navy land as part of a protest against military exercises on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. Sharpton was taken into custody for transportation to the federal prison in suburban Guaynabo.

Morris Dees vs. Hate Groups

Famed Civil Rights Attorney to Speak on Justice in Portland

By Joy Ramos
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Morris Dees, chief trial counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center, will be the speaker at the annual Daniel J. & Elizabeth O. Cohn/Rose White lecture at northwest Portland's Congregational Beth Israel on Friday, June 8 at 8 p.m.

The title of Dees' speech is "A Time for Justice." Dees has made headlines by successfully litigating against racist groups, and persuading juries to find the groups' leaders accountable for hate crimes committed by their followers.

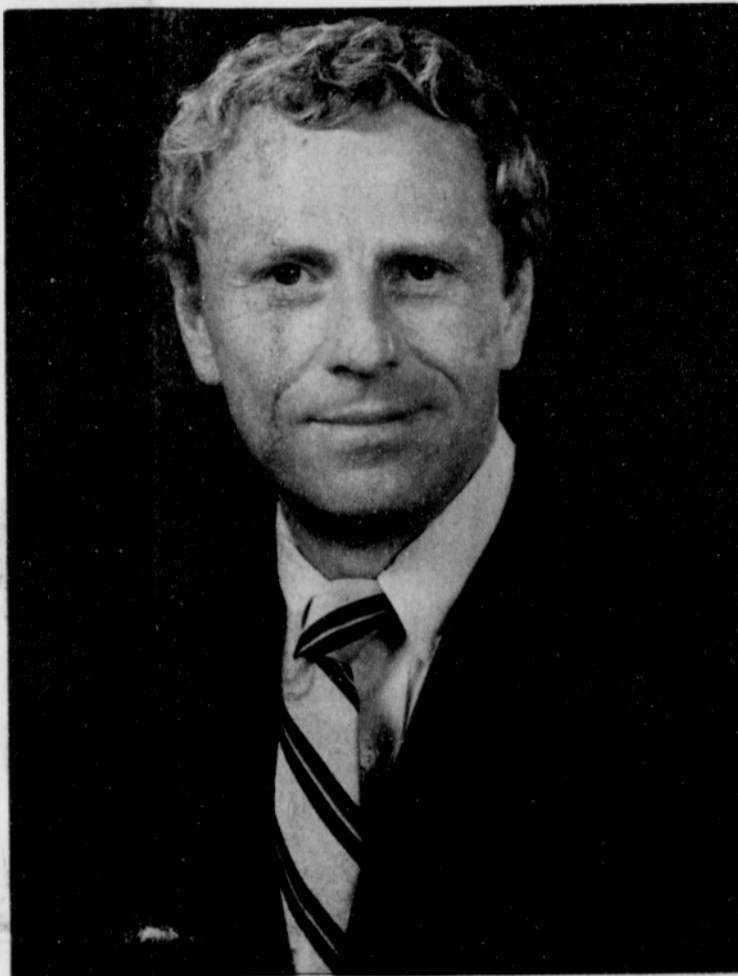
Many Oregonians became aware of Dees in 1990 when he won a \$12.5 million verdict against the White Aryan Resistance and its leader Tom Metzger.

The case hinged on Dees' ability to prove a link between Metzger and his organization and a group of skinheads convicted in the clubbing death of Ethiopian immigrant Mulugeta Seraw in southeast Portland.

Dees first became active aiding minorities in court during the civil rights movement.

In 1967, he filed suit to stop construction of a white university in an Alabama city that already had a predominately black state college. In 1968, he filed suit to integrate the all-white Montgomery YMCA. Along with Joseph J. Levin Jr., he founded the Southern Poverty Law Center in 1971.

The center handles civil rights cases and lawsuits against extremist groups that promote hate vio-



Morris Dees wins praise for his court victories against some of the most dangerous racist groups, from the Ku Klux Klan to Neo-Nazis.

lence. It does not typically get involved in criminal cases, commercial litigation, or individual grievances unless they raise novel legal questions or affect the rights of persons beyond the parties to the dispute.

During his career, Dees has worked over 50 complex civil rights cases, many involving appeals to federal circuit courts and the U. S. Supreme Court.

The lawsuits ranged from the integration of the Alabama State Troopers; free speech; student and teacher rights; equal rights for women; and appeals in death sentence cases.

To help young people learn about the civil rights movement, Dees developed the idea for The Civil Rights Memorial. Designed by Maya Lin, the memorial bears the names of 40 men, women and children who lost their lives during the civil rights movement. Ten thousand people attended the dedication of the memorial in Montgomery in 1989.

Dees' autobiography, "A Season for Justice," was published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1991.

"Hate on Trial: The Case Against America's Most Dangerous Neo-Nazi," was published by Villard Books in 1993. "Hate on Trial" chronicles the Portland trial.

His latest book, "Gathering Storm: America's Militia Threat," exposes the danger posed by today's domestic terrorist groups. It is published by HarperCollins Publishers.

A made-for-television movie about Morris Dees' life, "Line of Fire," aired on NBC in 1991. Actor Corbin Benson portrayed Dees in the film.

In "Ghosts of the Mississippi," a feature film released in 1996 about the life of slain civil rights worker, Medgar Evers, he was portrayed by actor Wayne Rogers.

Dees' upcoming speech is free and open to the public, but advance reservations are required. To reserve a seat, call 503-222-1069.

High Court Upholds Disability-Bias Law

Oregon Golfer Has Right to Ride Golf Cart Between Shots

(AP) — Disabled golfer Casey Martin has a legal right to ride in a golf cart between shots at PGA Tour events, the Supreme Court said Tuesday.

In a 7-2 ruling with implications for other pro sports, the justices ruled that a federal disability-bias law requires the pro golf tour to waive its requirement that players walk the course during tournaments. That rule is not fundamental to the game of golf, the court said.

In the majority opinion, Justice John Paul Stevens said Congress intended for an organization like the PGA — the professional golf organization — to give consideration to disabled golfers.

Lawmakers intended that such organizations "carefully weigh the purpose, as well as the letter" of its rules before rejecting requests of disabled golfers out of hand.

Justice Antonin Scalia wrote the dissent, joined by fellow conservative Justice Clarence Thomas.

"In my view today's opinion exercises a benevolent compassion that the law does not place it within our power to impose," he said.

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act bans discrimination against the disabled in public accommodations, including golf courses and entertainment sites. The

law requires "reasonable modifications" for disabled people unless such changes would fundamentally alter the place or event.

That law applies to professional sports events when they are held at places of

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Casey Martin on the footsteps of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Radon Problem Blankets Local Community



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Students at Whitaker Middle School started their Memorial Day vacation two days early after tests revealed an unhealthy level of radon gas. The school took steps to circulate fresh air through the building and seal cracks in underground walls. By Monday, a new test showed a radon level of less than 1 picocurie per liter, a safe level according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

With a radon problem detected in three area schools, many parents are concerned about the safety of their children. Whitaker and Gregory Heights middle schools and Kelly Elementary School were closed last week in response to reports of radon gas at Whitaker. What some parents do not realize is that radon is a contaminant that is a problem for more buildings in the area than just the schools. For example, many residents living along 39th Avenue in the northeast section of the city said this is the first they heard about the age-old radon problem.

Radon is a naturally occurring gas produced by the breakdown of uranium in the soil. It moves up into buildings through holes in the foundation. Most buildings trap radon inside, where it can build up.

The gas is one of 17 byproducts made by uranium as it breaks down. Uranium is found mostly in granite bedrock scattered through large parts of Washington, Idaho and Montana. Fifteen million years ago, a phenomenon referred to as the "Missoula Floods" washed through the Northwest, leaving large amounts of granite-laden sediment on to Oregon's soils. As the uranium in the granite decayed, radon released into the environment. Tests from 1994 showed the Alameda Ridge

in Northeast Portland to the St. Johns area was a high-risk area for radon, and high radon readings stretched as far south as Salem. Officials say people living or working in high-risk areas should

Senator Calls for Investigation

Oregon Senate President Gene Derfler Tuesday appointed a special committee to investigate radon in Portland public schools. School district officials were ordered to appear before a committee public hearing to "explain their failure to address the radon gas issue affecting three schools in north/northeast Portland." The date of the hearing was not immediately determined.

take immediate action. Simply opening windows and doors can help filter out the radon gas. Keeping a constant flow of fresh air blowing through buildings for ventilation can reduce the health risks associated with radon exposure.

Home-testing kits are also available. They range in cost from \$25 to \$35 and may take a week to three months to produce an accurate reading. Experts predict as many as 80 percent of the homes in the north/northeast neighborhoods harbor dangerously high radon levels.