

Portland  
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**Opinion**

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The Portland Observer

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## 'Budget Holes' Revealed

As Gov. John Kitzhaber tours Oregon explaining the state's fiscal crisis, Oregonians with access to the world wide web can see the extent of the problem on two government websites. The Oregon Departments of Administrative Services and Human Services have posted on their websites lists of budget reduction options under consideration.

"State officials at the Departments of Administrative Services and Human Resources have done Oregonians a tremendous service by showing us—and the rest of the world—the full extent of the cuts that the governor and legislators will be considering in the coming weeks," said Charles Sheketoff, executive director of the Oregon Center

for Public Policy. "In many states, these sort of decisions are made behind closed doors and out of the public view. In Oregon, our sunshine laws cast light on the tough matters facing our elected leaders."

On Nov. 30th, state economists forecast that Oregon's general fund revenues for this biennium will be \$720 million less than the Legislature thought when they developed the budget earlier last year. With increased demands for health care, cash assistance, prison health care, and to allow for some additional cash reserves as a cushion for continued revenue decline, the Governor is in the final stages of piecing together a budget proposal that will be \$900 million less than the budget approved last year.

"Those who doubt the Gov-

ernor and others who are saying we have a serious budget problem ought to go online and look for themselves," said Sheketoff. "These lists show that the Governor and legislators are facing some very difficult and painful choices unless they begin to address the revenue problem with revenue solutions."

Most of the budget reduction options under consideration can be viewed at <http://www.bam.das.state.or.us/budget&policy.htm>. The human services agency, lists its lists of possible budget reductions at <http://www.hr.state.or.us/progreduc01.pdf> and <http://www.hr.state.or.us/admreduc01.pdf> (both require the free Adobe Acrobat Reader).

## Mediation Needed to Avert New War

University of Oregon international studies professor Anita Weiss will leave for Pakistan on Jan. 12 to deliver a prestigious lecture in Islamabad, as war-like tensions build between the Pakistani and Indian governments.

Weiss, who has studied Pakistan and Muslim societies for more than 20 years, is scheduled to give the Distinguished Lecture at the Pakistan Society of Development Economists' annual meeting.

Weiss says she hopes that the two nuclear powers will agree to outside mediation in their dispute over Kashmir, and that the harsh rhetoric between the two nations will give way to diplomacy.

"If this situation is not diffused and tensions escalate further between India and Pakistan, it will play into the hands of extremist and sectarian groups in Pakistan," says Weiss, co-editor of "Power and Civil Society in Pakistan" (Oxford University Press, 2001).

Although Pakistan has taken action against the militant groups believed responsible for the deadly attack on India's parliament last month, Indian officials believe that the U.S.-led coalition against terrorism also should target those groups in Pakistan. This is a sensitive issue for the United States, as its alliance with Pakistan is vital to

its efforts in Afghanistan—yet it doesn't want to damage relations with India.

"Many people in Pakistan feel they have been good allies to the U.S., but I doubt the U.S. will come to Pakistan's assistance, militarily, against India," says Weiss.

Should hostilities break out and the United States withdraw its support for Pakistan, Weiss says "the ensuing social unrest will further exacerbate an already tense situation and the result may well be politically and economically worse than what occurred after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the U.S. abandoned Pakistan in the early 1990s."

## Education Failings Must be Reversed

Civic groups sponsor student competition to boost achievement

A major reason why African Americans remain behind in our nation is because of our snail-pace progress in education achievement. Research consistently shows that education is one of the most important factors to social economic success

Thousands of our young people graduate from high school unprepared for college, or the workforce, and end up on street corners. It is critical that we reverse this trend.

Approximately 40 percent of minority youth are illiterate, according to studies completed. These same young people fill our jails and prisons. Reports show that 50 percent of adults in state and federal prisons can not read or write. One out of 14 black males

are incarcerated, and 1 out of 3 black males, ages 20-29, are under some sort of criminal justice supervision.

The Billy Webb Elks Lodge #1040, Dahlia Temple #202, and Shining Star Of Unity Temple #1379 are sponsoring their local Oratorical Competition to help boost student achievement.

This competition is reflective of the Elks commitment to ensure that our children have a fighting chance to realize their educational dreams. We believe that once you learn to read, you should continue to read, and later write the books that we read. Through these scholarship competitions, the Elks reaffirm its historic commitment to the pursuit of educational opportunity.

The Elks Grand Department of Education was pleased and thankful of your support, in a monumental effort to increase the amount of our scholarship award for the year 2002. There are four levels to compete: (1) Local, (2) Northwest Pacific States, (3) Regional, and (4) National.

The total scholarship award at the national level is \$10,000. Any high school junior or senior is eligible for the competition.

For information and application materials, contact Mrs. Melva L. Holmes at 503-618-1891 or 503-745-7289. Or you can send a letter to 1819 S.E. Orient Dr. #14, Gresham, OR 97080. Completed submissions must be received no later than Feb. 20, 2002.

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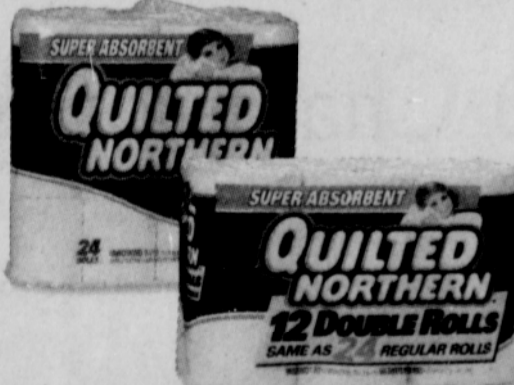
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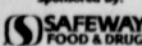
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