



Local Standout Eyes Harvard

Dyan Watson promotes teaching for people of color

See story, Metro section inside

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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

'L.A. Times' Building Evacuated After Bomb Threat

LOS ANGELES — The *Los Angeles Times* building was evacuated and surrounding streets were shut down for more than four hours before police captured a man they said had threatened to blow up the newspaper office.

Whales Stuck on Another Cape Cod Beach

EASTHAM, Mass. — About 40 pilot whales became stranded on a Cape Cod beach, just one day after volunteers pushed them back out to sea from another beach. The development is "pretty bad news" and may be a sign the whales are dying, an expert said.

Bush Puts More Bite Into Corporate Accountability

WASHINGTON — Hoping to restore investor confidence in American corporations and solidify voter confidence in Republican economic stewardship, President Bush signed corporate accountability legislation in a splashy White House ceremony.

Amtrak Train Drills Near D.C.

KENSINGTON, Md. — An Amtrak train carrying about 200 people derailed near Washington, injuring dozens. There were no immediate reports of fatalities. The train was the Capitol Limited en route from Chicago to Washington.

Rescued Miners Prepared for Death

SOMERSET, Pa. — Nine coal miners were in good shape after spending 77 hours in a flooded mine shaft that they thought would become their tomb. The miners, who watched as floodwater rose to their chins, tied themselves together so all of their bodies would be found if they drowned.

Bush: Welfare Reform is Working; Let's Do More

CHARLESTON, S.C. — President Bush urged the Senate to pass legislation to stiffen work requirements for welfare recipients and "free people from the clutches of our government." Bush asked senators not to drag out renewal of the 1996 welfare overhaul and criticized Senate proposals.

Stocks Surge

NEW YORK — Galvanized by hopes that the market's worst days are over, investors bought stocks enthusiastically, extending a rebound and sending the Dow industrials up more than 270 in afternoon trading.

Three Former Adelphia Execs Arrested

NEW YORK — Three former executives of bankrupt cable TV provider Adelphia Communications have been arrested on charges alleging they stole from their company. Company founder and former chairman and CEO John Rigas was arrested along with his sons Timothy and Michael.

Banks May Have Helped Enron

WASHINGTON — Multimillion-dollar loans to Enron by big investment banks helped the now-collapsed company conceal its true financial condition, and the banks were aware in some cases that Enron was using questionable accounting, a Senate investigator testified.

Self Enhancement, Inc. Turns 20

Mentoring program reaches thousands of kids each year

BY DAVID PLECHL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Two decades ago Tony Hopson had an idea that has brought big results. He wanted to reach out to overlooked inner city kids in danger of heading down the wrong path — a path that often leads to gangs, drugs and self destruction.

His idea for a weeklong basketball camp turned out to be much more than a lesson in "jumpers."

Though the kids came to play hoops, Hopson had his own agenda.

"We brought them there to talk about other issues," he said. "To show them how to transfer skills they learn in athletics to other areas of their lives. If you can handle the pressure at the foul line you can handle the pressure of a math test."

The organization Hopson now leads, Self Enhancement Inc., is the heir to that very first camp.

Spiritually speaking, Hopson has always known what he wanted to do. When he was only 13 years old, he was busy helping Portland youth through different after school programs.

"This is what I've known throughout my life," he said.

Hopson pursued degrees in psychology and sociology, got his teaching certificate and always kept his goal in mind to give back to the community.

Hopson's public outreach soon expanded to north and northeast Portland schools. It was a turning point that put SEI in contact with a broader cross section of at-risk kids.

Hopson says SEI tries to develop as many potential options for kids as possible.

"All kids have the potential to be successful in something. The question is, what can I put before them to give them the courage to go after (that success). The kids rise to whatever levels of expectations you set, as long as you are consistent with those levels," Hopson said.



Genia Adair tutors students in the well-stocked library at northeast Portland's Self Enhancement, Inc. "My goal is for the kids to enjoy reading," Adair said. PHOTO BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Although SEI was doing well reaching kids through the public schools, Hopson still felt something was missing.

About 10 years ago he had a conversation with a middle school boy who was becoming involved with gangs. Hopson set him down and addressed him squarely, "We're here for you. What is it you need?"

The boy told him flatly, "Yeah, you're there, but you're only there during the day. Where are you after school?"

Hopson then realized the importance of a center that the children could always

come to, a refuge kids could seek out not just during school, but all day long.

"We started envisioning our own facility," Hopson says, "where we had the key."

The idea came along at a time when US Bank was looking to make fewer yet substantially larger donations to local nonprofits. Bank representatives liked Hopson's idea for the center.

"Our timing was perfect," Hopson said.

US Bank put up the first million dollars. Bank President Ed Jensen liked the idea so much he even decided to chair the

capital campaign committee to help raise the additional \$9 million it would take to build the 62,000 square foot facility.

"That was the beginning of some major growth," says Hopson.

The SEI center at Unthank Park in northeast Portland is now completely paid for. A five-year financial campaign raised all the money. Sixty percent of the funding for SEI's programs now comes from government grants. The rest of the balance comes from fundraising and private do-

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Diversity on Parade

Badi Cross (from left with child) joins Diane Taefy, Zhalih Taefy-Cross and Nekicia Luckett at the Race Unity Festival Saturday. The celebration at the north Portland campus of Portland Community College was sponsored by the Baha'i faith to honor the city's diverse races and cultures. See additional photo on Page B6.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Parents Rally to Keep Kids at Jefferson

Citing statistics that show steady improvement and favorable trends at Jefferson High School, the Jefferson Parent-Teachers Association held a rally last week to encourage fellow parents to reject student transfers.

Portland school district officials recently notified Jefferson parents, along with parents at Roosevelt and Marshall High Schools, that they have the legal right to transfer their kids to higher-achieving schools in Portland with transportation paid.

However, the Jefferson PTA asked parents and students to stay put, thereby

supporting the north Portland school and helping Jefferson continue on its path of improvement.

"Jefferson has been on a steady course of improvement since 1999 — showing, just in the past year the second-highest gains in reading and math in the district," said PTA President Barb Lescher.

Referring to Jefferson's recent "unacceptable" rating on student behavior, Lescher said, "the rating was based on attendance and dropout rates...not on gang violence or drug dealing."

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A group of Jefferson High parents are encouraging other parents to embrace the school's steady course of improvement and reject student transfers.

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