



African Traditions
Ghanaian drummer Obo Addy
founded Portland's Homowo
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Beaming with Victory
Riverside Peninsula Little
League will go to state
championship
See Sports page A5



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Week in The Review

Push For Head Start Reform

President Bush called Monday for improvements in the Head Start program, declaring it vital to the country's future that 1 million 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families have the learning skills necessary for school. Supporting proposals that are drawing some controversy, Bush and House Republicans want to give a handful of states the option of taking over Head Start programs now directed by the federal Department of Health and Human Services. Critics fear a declining federal role will result in a lowering of standards. Almost 70 percent of children enrolled in Head Start are minorities, including about a third who are black.

Bush African Tour Skips Suffering Countries

President Bush departed on an African tour with planned visits to nations that have made progress in democratic and economic development. Four of the five countries the president intends to visit - Senegal, South Africa, Botswana and Nigeria - are led by elected governments. Uganda has made progress in reducing the AIDS infection rate. Bush's trip comes at a time of severe humanitarian crises in Liberia and Congo. But he won't be stopping in those nations.

Kobe May Face Charges

Prosecutors met with sheriff's officials Monday to discuss whether to file charges against Kobe Bryant, who is accused of sexually assaulting a woman at a hotel near Vail. The 24-year-old Los Angeles Lakers' star surrendered to authorities and was released after posting a \$25,000 bond, the Eagle County sheriff's office said. Bryant's lawyer says her client is innocent.

Military Experts in Liberia

A team of U.S. military experts arrived in Liberia to assess whether to deploy troops as part of a peacekeeping force that would restore order to a nation torn by civil war. Helicopters brought the experts, wearing armor and some carrying assault weapons, to the U.S. Embassy compound in Liberia - a west African nation founded in the 19th century by freed American slaves. Liberian President Charles Taylor, beset by rebels and indicted by a U.N.-backed war crimes court in Sierra Leone, said he would step down and take exile in Nigeria, but urged the United States to send peacekeepers to ensure an orderly transition. Nearly one third of Liberia's 3 million people have been forced from their homes by fighting since rebels took up arms against Taylor in 1999.

LAYOFF LEAVES 88 BLAZERS EMPLOYEES JOBLESS



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Trail Blazers President Steve Patterson and Executive Vice President Erin Hubert discuss the 30 percent reduction of Blazers and Oregon Arena staff.

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Trail Blazers President Steve Patterson said laying off 30 percent of the Blazers' front office and Oregon Arena Corp. work force was "not unlike what's going on all over corporate America."

Patterson and Executive Vice President Erin Hubert announced layoffs of 88 em-

ployees. At a press conference Tuesday, Patterson said, "There could have been more," and confirmed that a change in player personnel was not out of the question.

"We're not going to have a \$105 million roster," Patterson said, referring to the Blazers' payroll.

Hubert said all employees were offered job placement support and "generous" sev-

erance and benefits packages. She said employees were warned months ago that job and wage freezes had not done enough to correct a business she described as "over-staffed."

Sources say employees were informed of the meetings announcing layoff via a company-wide e-mail and several employees were told to clean out their desks by lunch-

time.

"No department was immune," said Mike Hanson, spokesman for the Blazers.

He cited "efficiency" and "streamlining" as reasons for the corporate slaughter.

"Based on our entire business model, we're looking strategically to do business better in the future," he said.

Health Care for All



Caption: Health Care for All organized a rally supporting universal health care last Thursday. Participants marched from Pioneer Courthouse Square to hear speakers at Terry Shrunken Park and finally to Sen. Gordon Smith's office, delivering a petition supporting their cause.

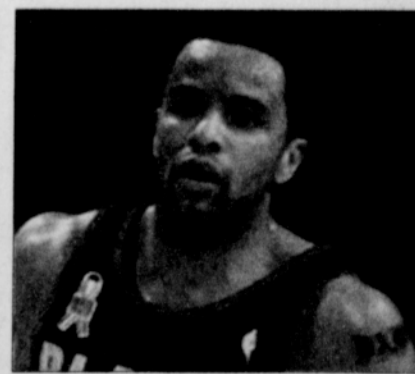
No Suspect for North Portland Shooting

by Jaymee R. Cuti/The Portland Observer
Two African-American men were found with gunshot wounds on North Lombard Street, near North Stanford Avenue at 2 a.m. Saturday.

Twenty-five-year-old James Curtis West, Jr. and Aaron Deon Donald, 27, did not appear to have shot each other, according to police arriving at the scene.

The Police Department has no suspects,

but say the shooting was possibly gang-related. West and Donald were taken to Legacy Emanuel Hospital. West, whose injuries are more dire than Donald's, remains in critical condition.



Damon Stoudamire

Stoudamire Busted

Blazer's President comes down hard on Stoudamire with fines, suspension, rehab and rumors of a trade

(AP) — Damon Stoudamire was arrested on marijuana charges at a Tucson airport last week after allegedly trying to pass through an airport metal detector with almost 1 1/2 ounces of the drug wrapped in aluminum foil.

The team immediately suspended Stoudamire and fined him \$250,000. He was charged with possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, both misdemeanors.

Stoudamire was released on his own recognizance and is to appear in court July 25. He could face a sentence of up to \$2,500 in fines and unsupervised probation on each charge.

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