



Gooding Jr. Stars in 'Radio'

Dramatic film touches on football coach's mentoring relationship

See Focus, Page B3

Community Involvement Day

Kids are the beneficiaries as volunteers help out

See story, Metro section, inside



The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'

Established in 1970

www.portlandobserver.com

Volume XXXIII • Number 44

Committed to Cultural Diversity

Wednesday • October 29, 2003



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Umatilla Tribe Member Vincent Wannassay and PSU President Daniel Bernstine attend the grand opening ceremony for the Native American Students and Community Center.

Meek Finds New Purpose

Vocational Village high school plans move to Alberta Court

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The short drinking fountains and small desks at Meek Elementary will soon give

way to new, larger designs after the Portland School Board approved a \$1.7 million plan Monday to renovate the school at Northeast 40th and Alberta Court to serve Vocational Village, an alternative school for struggling students.

Meek has sat empty since budget cuts forced its doors closed last June.

The district's space allocation committee deemed Vocational Village, the former Glen Haven School at 82nd and Northeast Tillamook Street, as surplus property because of the high cost of retrofitting the building for earthquakes.

Money from the sale will be used to upgrade Meek with new auto and metal shops.

By next fall, Meek's halls will be abuzz

with an estimated 250 high schoolers enrolled in one of eight job training programs.

Superintendent Jim Scherzinger has directed Vocational Village staff to boost its enrollment from 159 to 250, to drive down the per-student cost



New shops and other upgrades will make Meek Elementary on Northeast Alberta Court a high school for Vocational Village.

of the program.

In the past, Vocational Village has attracted many of its students struggling or dropping out of Marshall High School. The move to Meek could draw dropouts from Jefferson and Roosevelt high schools, school officials speculate.

NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER WELCOME

Community jams PSU campus for grand opening

A crowd of 1,500 came out for Portland State University's grand opening of the Native American Student and Community Center on Friday.

Tribal leaders, students, elected officials and community members moved through the artistically constructed complex worth \$4.5 million.

Native American art is infused in both the architecture and landscape to provide the center with a unique look and feel. Several projects by Native American artists include a smoke hole prism, glass story wall, vertical totem marker and cast bronze figures.

"The center is such a beautiful expression of our culture," said Rose Hill, coordinator of Native American Student Services. "It is a wonderful testament to the urban Indian community, tribes, students and the PSU community working together to create the

vision and make it a reality."

The center, located on PSU's campus in downtown Portland, will serve as a cultural home for Native students, supporting their enrollment at PSU and enhancing their academic studies. It will provide a resource room equipped with computers for students, classrooms, meeting and conference spaces and an opportunity for all who visit the center to learn about Native traditions and contemporary issues of importance to indigenous people.

Sources: Wal-Mart Knew of Illegal Workers

Violations involved hundreds of immigrants

(AP)—Evidence including recordings indicates that Wal-Mart had direct knowledge of immigration violations involving its cleaning contractors at stores across the country, federal law enforcement sources said.

Federal agents raided Wal-Mart's headquarters and 60 of its stores across the nation Thursday, arresting more than 300 illegal workers in an immigration crack-



A shopper goes into a Wal-Mart in Old Bridge, N.J., after federal agents raided Wal-Mart's headquarters and 60 of its stores across the country, arresting more than 300 illegal workers. (AP Photo)

down at the world's biggest retailer.

The workers were members of cleaning crews hired by outside contractors, but federal law enforcement officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity said Wal-Mart knew of the violations. They cited recordings of meetings and conversations among Wal-Mart executives, managers and contractors.

"We have seen no evidence of this from the INS, and, if that turns out to be true, we will cooperate fully with law enforcement officials," Wal-Mart spokeswoman Mona Williams said.

The workers were arrested as they finished their night shifts at Wal-Mart stores in 21 states. Agents also hauled away several boxes of documents from an

executive's office at Wal-Mart headquarters in Bentonville.

An employer can face civil and criminal penalties for knowingly hiring illegal immigrants or failing to comply with certain employee recordkeeping regulations.

Wal-Mart Stores had sales last year of \$244.5 billion. The company has about 1.1 million employees in the United States, and it uses more than 100 third-party contractors to clean more than 700 stores nationwide, Williams said.

All the arrested workers were in the country illegally, said Garrison Courtney, a spokesman with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They were detained at local immigration offices. Those who had

continued ▼ on page A2

Working to Resolve Conflicts



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Resolutions Northwest mediation specialist Christopher Woo and intake specialist Tamara Moland use a prop to give publicity to their work resolving conflict in city neighborhoods.

Peaceful solutions keep disputes out of the courtroom

JAYMEE R. CUTI

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mediation, a conflict-resolution approach used by feuding neighbors, partners or anyone wishing to avoid the courtroom, is receiving high marks in Portland, and saving the city time and money.

Resolutions Northwest is a mediation organization contracted by the city to help resolve common neighborly disputes over property lines, pesty pets, harassment and noise problems. The agency recently published a quarterly report that documents who is using the service and evaluates the success of its resolution attempts.

Right now, 40 percent of its clients are from north or northeast Portland, and 41 percent are from southeast Portland. The

remaining 19 percent is balanced throughout the westside.

Of those participating in joint mediation, 97 percent were satisfied with the outcome and 97 percent said they would recommend the service to others. Of those who used the program's other services, including mediation by phone or instruction on conflict resolution, 93 percent were satisfied and 97 percent said they would recommend the program to others.

The mediators beat their own goal for speedy attention. The agency's goal is to make first contact for new cases between three and five days, but the actual response time is 2.8 day.

"And steadily declining," said Claire Bell, program director for Mediations Northwest.

The fast response rate can be largely accredited to the agency's 59 active volunteers, many of them recruited and trained last May.

The volunteers are composed of a

continued ▼ on page A2

PRESORTED
US POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT
NO. 1610

University of Oregon
Knight Library
1299 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1205