

Disney Magic



PHOTO BY TONY WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A surprise snowfall coats a life-size ice sculpture of Cinderella hours before last Wednesday's opening of Disney's Princess Classics at Memorial Coliseum. Acclaimed ice carver Christopher Huessy created the royal display.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Table of Giving

Erinn Kelley-Siel (from left), Sen. Avel Gordly and Jackie Strong enjoy conversation after a hearty Thanksgiving dinner at the Cascadia Northeast Mental Health Center.

The Cascadia Northeast Mental Health Center became a Table of Giving last week as supporters of the non-profit provider of services for the severely mentally ill of

north and northeast Portland gathered for a Thanksgiving dinner for 200 people. Staff and volunteers donated most of the food to cover the feast.

The center is still looking for donations for a holiday gift giveaway. To volunteer or for more information, call 503-283-3753.



The former offices for West Coast Bank, a brand new office complex in downtown Vancouver, will become the new home of the University of Phoenix, a college specializing in adult education.

University of Phoenix Expands

School for adults noted for flexible degree programs

The University of Phoenix, a multi-state college specializing in adult education with campuses in Beaverton and Tigard, is expanding locally with approval from the state of Washington to offer classes in Vancouver.

The college will soon occupy the West Coast Bank Building on East Broadway, in the heart of downtown. Students are currently enrolled in classes at a temporary site at the Red Lion at the Quay in Vancouver.

The decision to open a Vancouver campus has been in the works since shortly after the doors opened for a University of Phoenix in Oregon in 1997, according to college enrollment director Flint Holland.

"For years we have been fielding inquiries from students wondering

whether there would be a campus in the Vancouver area," said Holland. "Now when new students ask, we can finally say, yes."

Faculty members will be part of the local community as well as the Portland Metro area.

"Many of our existing faculty already live or work in Vancouver," said David Tucker, director of academic affairs. "Our hope is that having a local campus will attract even more professionals who reside in Vancouver and the surrounding area."

The university began offering a bachelor of science degree in business management and a master's degree in business administration last month, with more programs to be added in 2004.

The teaching, called FlexNet, is geared to meet the needs of working adults who are better served by flexible class times to meet demanding work and travel schedules. Students attend the first and last night of class in a traditional classroom and then

complete the intervening weeks in an online environment.

"The FlexNet experience works because students have the best of both worlds," said Mary Jones, the university's FlexNet coordinator. "On one hand they get the face-to-face time with their fellow students, and a personal relationship with the faculty, and then they also have the flexibility of 'going to class' when it is convenient for them, from their home or on the road."

In many ways, Jones said, FlexNet mimics the way businesses operate these days with an increasing emphasis on electronic communications.

The University of Phoenix is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

For program information call the school's admissions office at 360-693-2525 or 503-670-0590 or visit the school Web site at <http://phoenix.edu>

Victory for Black Studies at PSU

A more than 30-year-long battle to bring a black studies major to Portland State University has ended in victory.

Support for a black studies undergraduate degree began in the civil rights era of the late 1960s, but gained little support through the decades. Of the nation's 27 highest-ranking universities,

only six offer the degrees specializing in the history and culture of Africans and African Americans.

Students majoring in black studies at other universities have laid the groundwork for graduate studies in the subject, international relations, social work and teaching.

This time around, black studies

at PSU drew little controversy. The university asked for no money to add the major and no one opposed at a public comment forum.

A black studies minor was added to PSU in the 1980s and students recently collected signatures to show support and help persuade administrators that a major was desired at the school.

Cable TV Rates Rise Again

(AP)—Portland cable TV viewers will see rates go up next year by an average of 5.3 percent.

Comcast, with 550,000 customers in Oregon and southwest Washington, said the increase is needed to provide reliable service and options such as high-definition television. Last January, its rates rose by an average of 8.5 percent.

Regulators and consumer advocates question the need

for steep increases, noting that the Philadelphia-based Comcast does not have a cable competitor in Portland.

"We do get very concerned when we get this kind of frequent, large increase, particularly when it's so much greater than the cost of living," said Sarah Hackett of the Metropolitan Area Communications Commission.

The monthly price for Comcast's standard cable package, which offers be-

tween 68 and 71 channels and is its most popular, will increase 6.4 percent from \$39.04 to \$41.55. Comcast also will increase the prices of many higher-priced cable services. Some add-on channels also will cost more.

Comcast said it has invested more than \$85 million this year to improve, expand and maintain its cable network in the region, so it needs to increase rates to recover costs.

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