



Black Panthers 1968

Exhibit captures pride, strength
See story, Metro section B

Stage Manager Goes World Class

Former PCC student hired by Chicago's Joffrey Ballet
See story, Metro section B



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Week in The Review

WMD Search Over

The White House acknowledged that its hunt for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction - a two-year search costing millions of dollars - has closed down without finding the stockpiles that President Bush cited as a justification for overthrowing Saddam Hussein.

US Won't Withdraw Until Iraq is Secure

Secretary of State nominee Condoleezza Rice told senators that a U.S. exit strategy from Iraq depends on that country's ability to defend itself against terrorists after this month's elections.

Abu Ghraib Abuser Gets 10 Years



Spc. Charles Graner Jr., the Army reservist shown in smiling photos beside naked Iraqi prisoners, was sentenced to 10 years in military prison after telling jurors

he was ordered to abuse detainees and "didn't enjoy what I did there." See story, page A2.

Abbas Meets with Militants

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas traveled to Gaza for meetings with militants, saying he is hopeful he can persuade them to halt attacks on Israel, but a bombing attack shortly after his arrival cast a shadow over the prospects.

Muslims Converge for Hajj

Chanting, "Oh Allah I'm here," hundreds of thousands of pilgrims draped in white garments began to take part in rituals symbolizing the life of their 7th century prophet and streaming into the mammoth tent city of Mina.

U.N. Deploys Peacekeepers in Sudan

The top United Nations envoy to Sudan was flying to the country's southern rebel stronghold to negotiate the deployment of a peacekeeping force to back an accord that officially ended 21 years of civil war in the region, U.N. officials said.

Aid Workers Travel Ban Lifted

The United Nations lifted a travel ban on aid workers in Indonesia's tsunami-battered Aceh province, the scene of a decades-long conflict between rebels and government forces that has raised concerns about the safety of relief efforts.

For Every Girl Girl Scouts comes of age

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A multicultural group of dedicated women are helping Girl Scouts serve every girl, everywhere.

La Shanda Hurst, marketing specialist for Girl Scouts, is using her experience as a Housing and Urban Development specialist to help stabilize and secure volunteers for the troops serving low-income and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

In line with the philosophy of bringing Girl Scouts to every girl, troops have organized in public housing in St. Johns Woods in north Portland and Rockwood and Fairview complexes.

Hurst has also led girls in activities to learn about etiquette, babysitting training and hair care. Because many of the girls are African American, Hurst, also African American, said the girls connect well with her.

Girl Scouts is currently in need of volunteers, especially women



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Girl Scouts Marketing Specialist La Shanda Hurst and Whitney Lemes, 11, a Girl Scout cadet from Gresham.

of color between the ages of 18 and 29.

Cross-cultural and same-culture mentoring provides learning and cultural exchanges for both the girls and the volunteers. However, Girl Scouts sometimes has challenges just reaching future Girls Scouts and their parents because of language barriers.

The organization is looking for volunteers with a variety of experiences and skill sets to help mentor a diverse group of girls.

"We need volunteers to help us

The troops I'm trying to form need volunteers of all different ages, with all different skills, who are ethnically diverse and of different socioeconomic status.

— Samantha Keeley, the Girl Scouts HUD initiative manager

break down those cultural barriers," Girl Scouts Marketing Director Shannon Evers said.

Samantha Keeley, the Girl Scouts HUD initiative manager, said like the scouts themselves, volunteers are not who one might expect: suburban housewives with minivans. Many are college students who expose girls to opportunities and goals they may have seen as out of reach.

"The troops I'm trying to form need volunteers of all different ages,

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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Spelling Out Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Third graders at Humboldt Elementary and their teachers Ms. Patrisha Porter (left) and Ms. Renee Banks line up for the spelling of "Dr. Martin Luther King" during a special ceremony that recognized the civil rights leader and celebrated the addition of a new playground at the north Portland school.

See story on page A5.

Bearing Witness to the Sudan Devastation

Refugee returns to raise aid, awareness

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A Sudanese refugee living in northeast Portland has returned from his exploratory mission to Sudan only to confirm his worst suspicions.

"The war has devastated everything," said Mayak Bilkuei, a refugee from Ruweng County in southern Sudan who has lived in Portland for the last nine years.

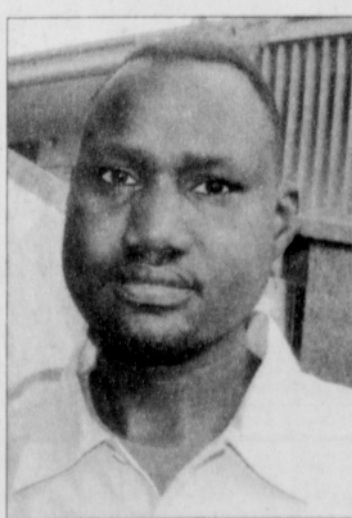
Bilkuei walked 20 to 40 miles from town to town in scorching temperatures exceeding 100 degrees to witness living conditions of people who once lived in homes, owned livestock and at-

tended schools. Today, he says, the same families have been driven from their homes by government militias, forced to live in huts or grass along river banks, starving and picking worms from their water with no sanitation or medical system to speak of.

"You can see people that have been scattered around; not in their permanent places they used to be," Bilkuei said. "Some people have been driven away by the government so they move to the forest by the riverbank. They are living in the grass, suffering from mosquito bites, with no nets, no blankets, no cooking supplies."

Bilkuei says he found his family in similar condition.

"I saw my family. They were in the same condition. I wish I could help them but I didn't have the ability to help them out," Bilkuei



Mayak Bilkuei

said. According to Bilkuei, the Sudanese government would not allow him to bring his family to the United States.

Bilkuei's purpose in Sudan was

to collect data and interviews to bring to local aid organizations, in hopes of bringing assistance to regions destroyed by decades of civil war. He is currently meeting with Mercy Corps of Portland.

"We need them to go there on the ground and do their own assessment. I have seen it but they need to see it themselves so they can bring some kind of assistance to the people," he said.

To date, no aid has reached Ruweng County.

Bilkuei saw a historic peace agreement signed on television while he was in Sudan between the Sudanese government, which is Arab and Muslim and the Sudan People Liberation Movement, which is African and Christian.

He says people hiding in the forest are hesitant to return home,

in disbelief that peace has reached their towns.

"I've seen some people come back and others not because they still don't believe that peace has come," said Bilkuei.

With his data, he also plans to confront the Canadian Talisman Corp., which drills oil from Sudan. That oil is then sold on the open market to Russia, China and Malaysia. Some have raised suspicion that oil-rich land in Ruweng County is the unspoken reason for the devastating invasion by the government.

Bilkuei has no plans to return to Sudan, but he hopes humanitarian relief agencies will follow his lead and see the suffering for themselves.

For more information about Bilkuei's effort, visit www.ruwengpeople.org.

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