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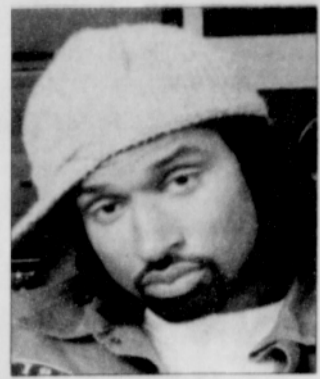
Special Edition

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Local Label Hits it Big

Bosko propels Just Family
Records beyond Portland

See story, Metro section inside



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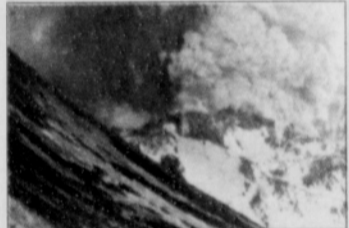
WorldCom Founder Guilty

Bernard Ebbers, who built WorldCom into a telecommunications titan, was convicted Tuesday of engineering the colossal accounting fraud that sank the company. He had guilty verdicts on all charges including one count of conspiracy, one count of securities fraud and seven counts of false regulatory filings - crimes carrying up to 85 years in prison.

Fireball in Sky Sighted

A fireball streaked through the night sky across the western half of the Pacific Northwest on Saturday night, startling people all the way from the southern Oregon coast to Canada. Scientists said the flaming object was probably a meteor, and that it likely disintegrated before any fragments fell into the Pacific Ocean.

Mount St. Helens Erupts



Mount St. Helens made its most significant emission in years on March 8, sending a gritty ash cloud drifting slowly to the northeast. Ash from the mountain reached higher than 30,000 feet and traveled as far as Montana.

Baseball Answers Subpoena

Major League Baseball handed over a box of subpoenaed documents Monday to the House panel investigating steroids in the sport. The Government Reform Committee had given baseball a Monday deadline for producing information about its drug-testing program, including test results with the names of players removed.

Accuser: Michael Jackson Did Nothing To Him

Depicting Michael Jackson's accuser as vengeful and angry over being evicted from the Neverland Ranch, the pop star's attorney suggested that the boy made up a story of abuse to get even. He was confronted with his own statements to a school official that Jackson "didn't do anything to me."

Thousands of Protesters Rally Against Syria

Hundreds of thousands of opposition demonstrators chanted "Freedom, sovereignty, independence" and unfurled a huge Lebanese flag in Beirut on Monday, the biggest protest yet in the opposition's duel of street rallies with supporters of the Damascus-backed government.

Construction is speeding toward completion at New Columbia, the former Columbia Villa housing site, scheduled to start accommodating its first residents in May.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



New Columbia: Fresh start for an old neighborhood

BY KATHERINE KOVACICH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Despite a stigma that haunted the area from the past, former residents of Columbia Villa in north Portland found not just public housing, but a home. With a diverse neighborhood where 17 different languages were spoken, everybody knew everybody. They felt safe, their children played together and they felt a sense of community.

Now the occupants of many of those homes are prepared to start moving back into a brand new community called New Columbia, all newly constructed homes for both low-income and middle-income wage earners, with new streets and sidewalks that are better connected to the surrounding Portsmouth neighborhood.

Originally, Columbia Villa was built in 1942 for World War II defense workers. Although the houses were "built to last," but things started to go downhill when electrical care, plumbing, fire safety and accessibility fell short with age. Lead paint and asbestos were present and had the potential to cause serious health problems for the residents. The underground infra-

structure was deteriorating more and more each year.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD WILHELM

Instead of pouring more and more money into constant repairs, the Housing Authority of Portland decided to start over from scratch.

In addition to the problems with the buildings themselves, the location of the streets surrounding them isolated the site

with only three points connecting to the grid system. Too much unclaimed space was put between the buildings, causing a lowered sense of community and poorly lit, unsupervised areas.

New Columbia is the largest urban revitalization project in Oregon's history. It meant that almost 1,300 residents who lived in 462 units scattered over 82 acres were moved

elsewhere until the project was finished.

Some residents won't return

Construction on the project began in December 2003 and is scheduled for completion this summer. New residents will start moving back as early as May.

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Neighborhood kids smile during a wall-raising event to celebrate the first new building being constructed at New Columbia.

► We're in the business of pulling dreams down into reality. ◀

— Phillip Dirks, director of Upward Bound at Portland State University

Upward Bound Fights Bounce Out

Minority education program faces Bush cut

BY KATHERINE KOVACICH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

For more than 40 years, urban students across the nation have been given the tools to make it to college despite low-income and minority status through programs such as Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search.

President Lyndon Johnson began these life-saving organizations under the War on Poverty to give people a chance to raise themselves higher than the generation before them.

But this could all be taken away under President Bush's "No Child Left Behind Act," with the idea that these programs are ineffective, even though locally, 90 percent of students enrolled in the program make it to college and 80 percent actually stay there. Rather than focus on mentoring and life skills, the idea is that standardized testing will offer a substitute with the \$460 million.

"It works. It's one of the most noble jobs I could ever keep," said Phillip Dirks, director of both Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search at Portland State University. "We're making an impact on the wealth disparity, the education disparity."

Educational Talent Search serves more than 600 students locally, with participants from Marshall, Grant, Franklin, Madison, Lincoln, Wilson, Jefferson and Benson High Schools. It guides students toward enrolling in college.



PHOTO BY KATHERINE KOVACICH/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Students involved in the Upward Bound's Educational Talent Search program go online to find out more about colleges they may attend.

Upward Bound is more intensive, with more than 100 local students in the program. It not only looks to get teens into college, but to keep them there. Through year-round tutoring, summer sessions, college preparation assistance and college visits and workshops surrounding technology and the SATs, the success rate has been high.

For Dirks, the idea of closing Upward Bound is in the same vein as President Ronald Reagan's proposal in the early '80s to rid the country of the Department of Education, an arm of government that delivers \$13 billion to states and school districts for elementary and secondary education.

"I don't think Bush understands it," Dirks said. "He doesn't get it. Access has opened up and now we're seeing it close down. Institutions of higher learning are becoming increasingly white and wealthy. He's taking it all away from the people that need it most. Over 400,000 students will be affected by the loss of this program. All institutions will lose diversity. It'll reinforce the haves and have-nots system."

Upward Bound officials say the program has earned support from both Democrats and Republicans in the past and has survived attempts to eliminate it before.

Citing the diversity of both members of Congress and celebrities that went through Upward Bound programs, Dirks said, "This

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