



Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

California Executes Crips Gang Co-Founder

Case stirs capital punishment debate

(AP)—Stanley Tookie Williams maintained his innocence right up until his death, even when an admission of guilt may have spared him execution. Even after the courts and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger rejected a flurry of Williams' last-

ditch appeals before his execution early Tuesday, his supporters vowed to prove his innocence. Williams, the Crips gang co-founder whose case stirred a national debate about capital punishment versus the possibility of redemption, was executed Tuesday morning for killing four people in 1979. Williams, 51, died at 12:35 a.m. Officials at San Quentin State Prison seemed to have trouble injecting the lethal mixture into his muscular arm. As they struggled to find a vein, Williams looked up repeat-

edly and appeared frustrated, shaking his head at supporters and other witnesses. "You doing that right?" it sounded as if he asked one of the men with a needle. After he was declared dead, his supporters shouted in unison: "The state of California just killed an innocent man," as they walked out of the chamber.

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Stanley Tookie Williams

The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'
Volume XXXV, Number 50

50¢

Established in 1970
Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • December 14, 2005

Week in The Review

E. coli Sickens Children

Six children have been hospitalized with E. coli after drinking unpasteurized milk. Clark County Health officials said the source of infections was raw milk from the Dee Creek Dairy in Woodland, Wash.

Red Cross President Resigns

American Red Cross President Marsha J. Evans, who oversaw the charity's vast and sometimes criticized response to Hurricane Katrina, is resigning effective at the end of this month because of friction with her board of governors.

Shaq Joins Police Force

Shaquille O'Neal was sworn in as a reserve police officer in Miami Thursday. The NBA star skipped a public event in favor of a quiet, no-frills ceremony.

Judge Nomination Opposed

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus appeared at a news conference on Capitol Hill Thursday to oppose Judge Samuel Alito's nomination to the Supreme Court, citing his record against minorities in court cases.

President Ford Hospitalized

92-year-old former President Ford suffering from "a horrible cold," was in the hospital Tuesday for what his chief of staff called routine medical tests.

Computer Attack Warning

Security experts say the next Internet attack will most likely happen Jan. 5. That's when a variant of the "sober" worm is expected to unleash a wave of e-mails supposedly sent by the FBI or CIA and asking you to fill out questions on the attachment.

Black Areas Polluted

An Associated Press analysis of a little-known government research project shows that black Americans are 79 percent more likely than whites to live in neighborhoods where industrial pollution is suspected of posing the greatest health danger.

Pregnant Skydiver Survives

Shayna Richardson was making her first solo skydiving jump when she had trouble with her parachutes and, while falling at about 50 mph, hit face first in a parking lot. Although badly hurt, she survived and doctors treating her injuries discovered she was pregnant.

Clinic Director Rejects Ouster

Mariah Taylor battles to save nursing mission

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mariah Taylor, Portland's Mother Teresa of healthcare, is rejecting her forced ouster as executive director of the North Portland Nurse Practitioner Clinic.

The African American nurse practitioner, revered for her 25 years of serving underinsured and poor children, said she will not accept a forced leave of absence by her non-profit, 10-member board of directors.

Taylor was notified Dec. 6 that her services as executive director were being terminated and that she would be required to take three months off work.

The directive in a board letter to Taylor, less than a week before she was scheduled for a right hip replacement surgery, was shocking to a community that has an outpouring of affection for this highly skilled nurse who provides healthcare to children regardless of their ability to pay.

Taylor wins praise for her work by both colleagues in the medical profession, including Oregon Health Sciences University President Peter Kohler, and social service providers. A few years ago, she was a recipient of Oprah Winfrey's "Use Your Life Award."

Tuesday, Taylor was recovering from the surgery that was performed Monday at Meridian Park Hospital. It was her second hip replacement. Four years ago, her left hip was repaired.

Now it seems that her professional future and the future of the clinic at 5311 N. Vancouver Ave. is in jeopardy, although the board denies it.

For Taylor's part, she said she was willing to relinquish some of her responsibilities as executive director but refused to follow mandates that negatively impact patient care.

She said the board is trying to place limits on what patients she helps and what medicines the clinic can offer at little or no cost.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Nurse Practitioner Mariah Taylor comforts Charlecia, 2, held by her mother Carolyn Young, during an exam last Thursday at her north Portland clinic.

"I love my babies, they're my children," she said. "When the board comes between me and my children, that's when we disagree. Anything that challenges the highest level of service, I will challenge that."

Taylor said she was born a fighter at "four pounds, two ounces" and won't retreat from her clinic's historic mission of serving the poor by loving and honoring children for their ethnic and cultural differences.

The clinic also serves as a food bank with weekly

deliveries of bread, a free clothes closet and wall of children's books. She also blames the board for interfering with those activities.

Taylor said she has had two other recent conflicts with the board.

One was when she refused to hire a Certified Nursing Assistant last October because the money was not raised

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Pryor Brought Audiences Together

Courageous performer remembered

(AP) — It is one of those indelible images from the late 1960s that remains locked in the minds of those who were there.

It's a comedy album photograph of a nearly naked Richard Pryor, dressed in a loincloth, with bones through his nose and beads around his neck like a stereotypical African bushman from an old "Tarzan movie."

But there is a glare on the comedian's face on 1968's "Richard Pryor" album that seems to say, "I'm here and I'm going to change your thinking about race relations in every way possible."

That's what Pryor, who died Saturday of a heart attack at age 65, did for people all across America in the 1970s, his breakthrough decade and a time when the country was hotly divided not only by the Vietnam War but by the civil rights battles of the 1950s and '60s that preceded it.

He did it by bringing black and white audiences together to laugh as one, at least for the length of a concert

or a comedy album, at the madness all around them.

"He was a brilliant and incredibly courageous performer," recalled humorist Paul Krassner, whose magazine "The Realist" once published an essay by the comedian commenting on the disproportionate number of black soldiers that seemed to be fighting the Vietnam War. Pryor headlined it, "Uncle Sam Wants You, Nigger."

It was a word he would use frequently in the 1970s, even using it in the name of his second album as he tried to take the sting out of the epithet by repeating it over and over.

After a visit to Africa in 1980, however, he would renounce it and say he no longer wanted to hear the word, either from his "hip white friends" or his fellow blacks. A subsequent recording was titled "That African-American is Still Crazy," with the offending word crossed out.

Such upfront, no-holds-barred, socially conscious commentary won Pryor the admiration of seemingly every black comic who followed him, an admiration



Richard Pryor

perhaps best summed up by Keenen Ivory Wayans, who once said Pryor demonstrated "you can be black and have a black voice and be successful."

Pryor's comedy also drew equally warm reactions from white comedians, including Bob Newhart, who on Saturday called Pryor "the single most seminal comedic influence in the last 50 years."

Although he was not the first comedian to liberally use the N-word or the F-word or any number of other once-unspoken-in-public words, Pryor

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Prospects for Jobs Finally Improve

Even with influx of new residents

BY SARAH BLOUT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Anyone who has weathered Portland's economy for the past few years knows that no amount of statistics, employment rates or economic forecasts change what has been a grim reality: jobs haven't been reasonably easy to find and keep.

Job seekers have grown discouraged and have quit looking. Others find only low-paying jobs that do not offer benefits.

But lately, the promises of an improving economy are being borne out in new employment figures. The governor was eager to deliver the good news in a press conference last month and again Monday. The latest figures show November's unemployment rate fell by a tenth of a percent to 5.8 percent, marking an unprecedented fall two months in a row.

Numbers and press releases, however, do not deliver a paycheck, and many local residents require more proof that our economy is out of the gutter. So have we really arrived?

The Oregon Department of Employment says yes, and career resource centers agree. With an estimated 12,700 more people in the Portland metro-area holding jobs compared to one year ago, we're nearly at the pre-recession level of the late 1990s.

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