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See story, A&E section



The Portland Observer

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Week in The Review

Homeless, Mayor Showdown
Representatives for about 100 homeless people camping in front of City Hall came face-to-face with Mayor Tom Potter on Monday to lobby for a suspension of a sit-lie ordinance until provisions could be made for the more than 1,000 Portlanders forced to sleep outside each night.

Obama Shores Up Position

Sen. Barack Obama shored up his position as the front-runner with primary win in North Carolina Tuesday and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton sought to keep her candidacy competitive leading a contest in Indiana that was too close to call. Oregon and Kentucky are next in the primary sweepstakes when votes are tallied on May 20. See story page A2.



Finally an MVP for Kobe

Kobe Bryant, regarded as the NBA's best player for several years but never its most valuable, earned the league's MVP honor at last on Tuesday after leading the Los Angeles Lakers to the best record in the Western Conference.

Bleak Future for Gas Prices

Oil futures blasted to a new record over \$122 a barrel Tuesday, gaining momentum as investors bought on a forecast of much higher prices and on news hinting at supply shortages. Retail gas prices appear poised to rise to new records of their own in coming weeks.

Some Soldiers to Return

About 3,500 American soldiers are scheduled to leave Iraq in the coming weeks, as part of the Pentagon's overall reduction in troop strength following last year's "surge." Critics have called for a quicker withdrawal, but commanders insist the slow pace is needed to prevent a sharper increase in violence.

Deadly Pacific Cyclone

Myanmar's military government raised its death toll from Cyclone Nargis on Tuesday to nearly 22,500, with a further 41,000 missing. The United Nations' World Food Program began doling out more than \$10 million worth of foreign aid, but a lack of specialized equipment slowed distribution of rice.

Chilean Volcano Blast

The Chaiten volcano in Chile spewed lava and blasted ash more than 12 miles into the sky on Tuesday, prompting a total evacuation of a provincial capital and other settlements. Rains following the eruption have carpeted surrounding areas in ash and mud.

Youth Lose Jammin 95.5

Hip-hop gives way to sports talk

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Young Portlanders were left wondering what would fill the void as the city's only mainstream hip-hop and R&B station, Jammin 95.5, becomes reformatted into sports talk radio by next week.

In a move that some insiders blamed on the economy, "The Game" will take the place of hip-hop music, the Playhouse morning show and everything else included in the city's largest beats station.

"It's very unfortunate," David Leiken, president and owner of Double Tee Promotions and the Roseland Theater, told the Portland Observer on Tuesday. "We're going to miss the station."

Leiken suspects that the local radio market is hurting because of a downturn in advertising. He said other middle-of-the-road formats, with its older audiences, can still attract the advertisers selling big ticket items like a Lexus.

"Youth-oriented (formats) are



The days are numbered for the Jammin' 95.5 Street Team, the youth-oriented ambassadors of radio promotions and local hip-hop concerts. The photo was captured from the Street Team's MySpace website.

bearing the brunt of the bad economy," he says. "Big advertisers cut these stations first.

Community music activists who worked on the station are losing an

avenue for support with the changes. DJ OG One, also known as David Jackson, just collected more than a ton of clothes for low-income families, thanks in part

to his role on Sunday evening's four-hour Jammin 95.5 "Underground" show.

"In terms of being able to get a weekly launch for up-and-coming

artists, for good things getting started in the community, it's going to hurt, but folks like me are going to be OK because we've been established through various other corporations and neighborhood centers," Jackson said.

Since its inception in 1999 by Rose City Radio, Jammin 95.5 has represented a type of balance to conservative talk-show holdings owned by Paul Allen, the former Microsoft billionaire who also owns the Portland Trail Blazers.

"It will affect our culture greatly because there are no other stations representing just rap and hip hop," said Portland hip-hop fan Bryan Dunning. "Jammin also does promotional and club events, and they are really involved in the diversity of our community."

The station declined to comment saying, "Due to the contract situation we can't say anything, but we will have an announcement Wednesday at 7 a.m. Thank you."

A member of the Jammin 95.5 Street Team who wished to remain anonymous confirmed the station's final days for the Portland Observer at the Cinco de Mayo festival downtown, saying, "everything will just be gone; we're not

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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Trailblazers President Larry Miller looks forward to his second year with the NBA franchise and a team of young players well-positioned to improve in coming years.

Blazers Look to the Future Team president has high hopes

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Portland Trailblazers won only half their games this season, but optimism runs high for the young team.

"More important than winning games, one of the great things that we've accomplished this season is really reconnecting with the fans," Blazers President Larry Miller told the Portland Observer.

Miller is the African American business leader who last summer left a position as basketball executive at Nike for the city's only professional franchise. He has overseen the return of sell-out crowds at the Rose Garden, new community partnerships and a return to the enthusiasm for the Blazers after several years of decline.

The excitement will build this fall when fans see the return of Greg Oden, the team's No. 1 draft pick who is recovering from an injury, joining NBA All-Star and 2007 Rookie-of-the-Year Brandon Roy.

The Blazers, with the youngest average player age of any team in the league, consider themselves well-positioned to enhance their level of play as they mature athletically and become skilled at

working together.

Miller says, "The window of opportunity is growing for us as it closes on some other teams."

Commenting on last week's firing of Dallas Mavericks coach Avery Johnson following that team's loss in the playoffs, Miller emphasized long-term commitment with players and staff to develop the understanding and chemistry needed to win.

"The coach can be a scapegoat sometimes," he says. "It's easier to change the coach sometimes than it is to change a bunch of the players."

Rather than take the easy way out, Miller stressed the importance of reaching out to the community. He sees good business sense in the team supporting community events and scholarships that honor and increase the Blazers fan base, even when considering that Blazers owner Paul Allen has lost \$1 billion since purchasing the team in 1988.

"The reality of why I took this job is for me having the opportunity to be in this role of looking for ways to give back," Miller says. "Everything we do in the community we do under the theme of 'Make it Better.'"

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Second Chance Extends to Gresham Clean Slate draws on success

An award-winning program that has assisted thousands of local residents in getting a second chance for employment, housing and other opportunities headed to East County last Saturday.

Project Clean Slate, the civil and justice system rehabilitation effort that originated with Roy Jay and the African American Chamber of Commerce, was part of a community event called Compassion Rockwood, held at Portland Lutheran School, 740 S.E. 182nd Ave.

About 125 people took advantage of basic information on how to expunge certain convictions and judgments.

The efforts were part of a larger mission to ensure access to fairness for all neighborhoods, according to Jay.

He said the program's arrival in the Rockwood area realized an overall community plan that was unveiled two years ago with County District Attorney Michael Schunk when the effort was launched in north and northeast Portland.

"East County has their fair share of problems and people that really want to be productive," Jay said. "Hopefully, Project Clean

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Lines form around a school in Gresham to participate in Project Clean Slate, the program that gives people a chance to expunge civil and criminal records. Saturday's event attracted an estimated 125 people.