



Vote early: Ballots
due before 8 p.m.
on Tuesday, May 20
For more information, call Multnomah
County Elections 503-988-3720

School Celebration
Community Transitional
School celebrates the opening
of a new permanent site for
teaching homeless kids



See Education & Careers special, inside

The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'
Volume XXXVIII, Number 20

Established in 1970
Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • May 14, 2008

Week in The Review

Obama Leads Oregon Poll



A new poll shows Barack Obama with a 55 percent to 35 percent lead over Hillary Clinton in Oregon as the state

heads into the final week before its primary election votes are counted. Both candidates will be in Oregon over the weekend.

Panel says Sheriff Lied

Multnomah County Sheriff Bernie Giusto should lose his badge for lying



nearly 20 years ago when he told his state police supervisor he wasn't having an affair with the wife of then-Gov. Neil Goldschmidt. A state police standards committee made the recommendation Monday.

Soaring Gas Prices

Gas prices shot to a new record over \$3.73 a gallon Tuesday with little sign of slowing before Memorial Day weekend, the traditional start of the summer driving season, less than 10 days away. Many analysts have predicted a surge past the \$4 level on a national basis within the next couple of months.

Stamp Price Increase

Be prepared to pay an extra penny for mail. The price of a stamp rose to 42 cents on Monday. The increase is part of what could be an annual hike by the U.S. Postal Service.

Campers Given Notice

The conflict between the mayor and about 100 homeless protesters of Portland's camping ban reached a climax on Tuesday as police prepared to clear tents from sidewalks in front of City Hall while the activists made a civil-rights issue out of circumstances that necessitate living outside.

Jefferson Voices Concerns

Mayor Tom Potter followed up on initiatives at Jefferson High School with a school visit on Monday, but proposed cuts in staffing and leadership adjustments have students wondering if their learning environment will ever stabilize. See story, page A2.

Massive Chinese Quake

The toll of the dead and missing soared past 12,000 as rescue workers in a remote southwestern province of China dug through flattened schools and homes on Tuesday in a desperate attempt to find thousands of buried survivors of 7.9-magnitude quake.

Violence Returns to India

Seven bombs went off in close succession on Tuesday evening near a Hindu temple and a crowded bazaar inside the walled enclave of the historic pink city of Jaipur, about 160 miles from New Delhi. Authorities described it as a terror attack that killed at least 45 people and injured 100.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Kimberly Howard (left) and Adrienne Flagg of the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center express hope for the multicultural facility's future even as the mayor's city budget proposal slashes 24 percent of its budget.

Budget Cuts Multicultural Center

Firehouse's diverse offerings in jeopardy

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center faces a critical situation for the diversity of its offerings as Mayor Tom Potter's proposed city budget excludes any help for north and northeast Portland's premiere institution for multicultural theatre, dance, community events and art education.

IFCC staff remained "very hopeful" that losing the 24 percent of budget currently provided by the city won't close the center. However, if the center couldn't replace the \$80,000 loss with private funding, it will become greatly limited in its ability to offer

inclusive programming.

"(Our programs) help nurture emerging artists from diverse and often underserved communities so that they can become fiscally sustainable and artistically ambitious," says Adrienne Flagg, IFCC creative director. "The budget deficit will force us to cut these programs and become a rental facility."

Disbelief spread through the community as Potter, against the advice of other city commissioners and the budget committee, cut the facility now celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Many neighbors see the center's mis-

sion to uplift as especially important given its location in a gentrifying community that just experienced the divisive attempt by a mayor-supported coalition to rename Interstate Avenue after Cesar Chavez.

"We need more cross-cultural dialogue to build understanding across a diverse population," said Kira Higgs, an IFCC volunteer of the nonprofit Northwest Business for the Culture and the Arts. "IFCC is one of the few places in town where this is fostered and can happen formally and informally as members and attendees come together with shared interests and concerns."

continued ▼ on page A3

Critical Moment for Voters

Presidential pick
rests on our state

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

So it all comes down to Oregon. Who would have thought that our state with one of the final primaries in the 2008 campaign would have such an impact in the Democratic Party's pick for president?

Such is the reality of politics this year. The last time the state had such a major role in the nominating blitz was in 1968 when Oregon Democrats nominated Eugene McCarthy over Robert Kennedy two weeks before Kennedy's assassination in California.

This year, voters will have until 8 p.m. on May 20 for their ballots to affect the vote-by-mail election. Because postmarks do not count, the ballots need to be mailed by this weekend or dropped by a county elections office or at a designated county-election drop box before the 8 p.m. deadline.

Sen. Barack Obama's campaign has indicted it hopes to declare victory not only in Oregon but across the country not long after the Oregon polls close. A victory here is expected to give him the majority of designated delegates in the extremely close Democratic contest no matter what happens in the few remaining primaries.

However, Sen. Hillary Clinton said she plans to dispute such a claim at least through the last June 3 primary and perhaps longer.

"This is just amazing," says Kelvin Hall, the African-American executive director of northeast Portland's Equal Advocacy Center who threw his support to Obama.

"From his virtually unknown status a

continued ▼ on page A2

Lasting Legacy of the Vanport Flood

60 years ago families lost more than possessions

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Marghree White began May 30, 1948, with a special day in mind, but not because she thought that breaching levees would destroy the largest housing project in the nation, leaving thousands of families like hers homeless.

The Housing Authority of Portland had slipped a note under each resident's door that morning saying "the dykes are safe at present," so the 14-year-old White continued to church like any other Sunday, except she wore new red high-heels in preparation for a coming-of-age ceremony.

The citizens of the second-largest city in Oregon, situated just north of Portland's Kenton neighborhood in the lowlands near the Columbia River and protected by levees, were reassured by good weather and a soon-approaching summer to help lower the river's unusually high water levels.

Now, sitting in her house on North Vancouver Avenue, White had tears in her eyes as she recalled how the government misled Vanport's population, a large proportion of which were African Americans, in a similar way to the residents of New Orleans at the brink of Hurricane Katrina.

Her family of six made it out with nothing but a sewing machine and some mementoes

hastily stuffed into the car, but at least 15 Vanport residents died amid the disaster's wake.

"I did not get baptized that day, not by the church, but I almost got baptized by the flood," she says.

With the car taken up by her parents and an elderly man in their care, White joined her brother and sister in traversing the steep



A Washington High School graduation photo circa 1951 shows Marghree White three years after the Vanport Flood dislocated her family.

slope toward North Denver Avenue.

"We ran up the embankment, and when I turned around and looked, the water had hit

continued ▼ on page A3



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Marghree White would like to see more done to honor the memory of Vanport 60 years after the flood, including renaming Delta Park, which now covers much of the former city.

PRESORT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND OR
PERMIT
NO. 1610