



Child's Play
Upscale children's play sets can now be built from kits
At Home, Page E1

Blazers bomb
Portland falls to visiting Mavericks
Sports, Page D1

Gift of BLAB
Clark County talk show hosts burn up the airwaves with comment and criticism
Life, Page C1



The Columbian

SERVING CLARK COUNTY, WASH.

SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1995

\$1.50



Old orchard trees stand guard outside Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

Photos by TROY MAYER/STAFF

Fort Vancouver: Who cares?

Largely empty and surrounded by turmoil, the fort struggles to gain some support

By SHERRI NEE

The Columbian
Like most visitors to Fort Vancouver, John Wulle walks in and asks, "Where is everything?"

Only seven of 24 buildings within the stockade have been reconstructed, so visitors to the 208-acre fort site must rely on their imaginations.

Once called the New York of the Pacific, Fort Vancouver was the West's commercial center for trappers, traders and American settlers between 1825 and 1845. Today, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is a fairly lifeless reconstruction run by federal administrators who hope big crowds won't come.

A COLUMBIAN SPECIAL REPORT

FORT NOWHERE A three-part series exploring the problems pushing Fort Vancouver into obscurity

TODAY: Nobody cares. Clark County's premier attraction, a reconstructed 19th-century trading center, has the potential to draw hundreds of thousands of people. Instead, attendance is dropping. It has lost its political allies and has limped through a land grab in which the community backed its opponent, Pearson Airpark.

MONDAY: Others succeeding, fort failing. As city officials seek to group many of Vancouver's historic sites into one big tourist attraction, the fort could become forgotten. Or it could be associated with community interest, fund-raising, promotion and hope for reconstruction.

TUESDAY: Finishing the fort.

PHIL LUONG/STAFF

Wulle, chief advocate of nearby Pearson Airpark, harbors no bitterness for the fort despite a decade of distrust between airfield promoters and the National Park Service, which administers the fort. Wulle's private plane might be called "Fort Duster," but he, like others, wants to see the fort finished, he says.

But no one is making an aggressive effort to do so — not fort officials, not city of Vancouver leaders, not Clark County citizens.



Dave Herrera, superintendent of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, believes a decade of bickering has overshadowed the site and stalled reconstruction efforts.

In a time when a Republican Congress is talking about trimming the park service budget, unpopular attractions such as the fort are more likely to be cut than completed.

In a time when visitors at historical attractions elsewhere are multiplying, attendance at the old fort site has dropped more than 30 percent since 1989.

And in a time when the city of Vancouver has leveraged millions in state aid for waterfront trails and historical renovations at Officers Row, finishing the fort apparently has become an insurmountable task left to someone else.

Shifting blame

Who cares? The community, the park service and city officials don't.

More reconstruction at the fort likely would attract more tourists to Vancouver and boost the local economy, but there has been no cooperative effort between the city and the fort.

Observers say such a move would be out of the question given the bitter relationship between the

Please see Fort, Page A8

Bill seeks to repeal health care reform law

Landmark 1993 state law appears to be beyond salvation after Senate vote

OLYMPIA (AP) — Pushed by the governor and the powerful insurance lobby, the Democratic Senate passed and sent to the Republican House a measure repealing most provisions of the state's landmark health care reform law.

In all likelihood, the 29-0 vote Friday night marks the end of the struggle to save the 1993 law, already crippled by congressional inaction. The House is expected to quickly pass the bill this week, and Gov. Mike Lowry is expected to sign it.

Senate passage came after repeal backers said citizens made it clear on the campaign trail last fall that they do not want state-managed health care. Foes argued in vain that without state intervention, the insurance industry will put profit above adequate health care for all.

The measure dismantling the nation's first "managed competition" health system was crafted privately last week by Republican House leaders and Democrat Lowry, who gave in to GOP demands for virtual repeal.

The Senate agreed to pass the legislation over the loud objections of Health Care committee chairman Kevin Quigley, D-Lake Stevens. However, Quigley wound up voting for passage Friday night, saying at least the measure would expand health coverage for the working poor.

The 1993 Health Services Act, once hailed by Lowry as a "model

Please see Health, Page A13

Senate OKs crackdown on welfare

OLYMPIA (AP) — The Senate has approved a welfare overhaul that includes time limits and a work requirement for recipients — and a "ziplock" penalty against men who get teen welfare mothers pregnant repeatedly.

The measure, SB6002, passed 41-7 Friday and headed to the House, where conservatives already have approved what they call one of America's toughest reform bills. Negotiators will have to iron out the differences.

Minority Senate Republicans, again using a Democratic senator's absence to amend Democratic legislation, forced through a partial "family cap" that stops the practice of giving welfare mothers an additional \$100 a month whenever they have a new child.

Instead, the family would get about \$50 a month for the first new child, but nothing additional for any succeeding children.

Democratic critics said that punishment is not the answer.

Please see Welfare, Page A13

Legislature: Senate Democrats help pass regulatory reform bill
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Pope celebrates Easter; no rapture for S. Koreans

The Associated Press
Pope John Paul II and worshipers transformed a darkened St. Peter's Basilica into a sea of light, passing flames from candle to candle to mark the beginning of Easter vigil Mass at Vatican City.

The pope walked up the main aisle with a single burning candle Saturday, then lit a 4-foot-tall candle as a deacon sang "Lumen Christi" — Latin for "Light of Christ."

The pope placed the candle on

the altar, which was ringed by yellow and red flowers.

"The light of Christ conquers the darkness," said the pope, dressed in white and gold robes.

The Easter week marks the central belief in Christianity that Jesus Christ died on the cross, then rose from the dead.

NO DOOMSDAY: Followers of at least two South Korean churches believed they would be carried to heaven before dawn today, signaling the beginning of seven years

of apocalypse and the second coming of Christ.

But daylight came and they were still in Korea. Disappointed churchgoers who had been praying for hours went home. They said doomsday may not have come today, but it would come soon.

In 1992, members of Christian sects with similar beliefs attacked preachers, threw hymn books and destroyed church furniture when a predicted apocalypse did not come. Four believers committed suicide.

DRIVE-THRU PASSION PLAY: A Springfield, Ore., church is dramatizing the Passion of Christ in five scenes this Easter weekend — and the program takes only 12 minutes and you don't even have to get out of your car.

The New Life Center church is offering a drive-thru Passion play for those who need religion in a hurry.

"The early church used drama," pastor Todd Wagoner said. "We've just taken it one step further."

The opening scene takes place in front of the wall of Jerusalem as a crowd of townspeople and Roman soldiers witness several miracles of Jesus.

Cars turn off their motors at each scene and, after time for viewing, are waved along by parking attendants.

"There is nothing wrong with responding to how a generation is going to hear a message," Wagoner said. "I wouldn't change the Gospel, but I would change the packaging."

Legislature: Senate Democrats help pass regulatory reform bill
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Today's weather:
High.....58 Low.....38
For more on local and national weather, see Page D8

Winning lottery numbers:

Washington Lotto Saturday 1-6-9-15-16-19
Washington Daily Game Friday 4-9-1. Saturday 3-0-6
Quinto Five of Spades, Ten of Hearts, Three of Hearts, Two of Diamonds, Seven of Clubs.
Keno Friday 9-12-19-22-32-35-37-42-44-48-49-52-54-55-61-62-64-67-70-78
Keno Saturday 3-8-18-23-24-25-36-42-44-46-48-50-53-55-56-56-64-74-79-80
Oregon Megabucks Saturday 11-12-16-19-34-38
Oregon Daily 4 Friday 5-1-6-7. Saturday 9-1-5-9
Powerball Saturday 7-19-21-22-31. Powerball 24.

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River Run
Hundreds turn out for annual jaunt along the Columbia.
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OFFICES ON TAP
The county may buy H&H Inn to use as office space. LOCAL A3

S. Africa still suffers
Few changes one year after Nelson Mandela's election.
REGION NATION WORLD B1

MBA's at WSU
Many juggle work and study in graduate business program. MONEY F1

FORT VANCOUVER/FROM PAGE A1

Fort misses opportunities to improve

The planning was complete, but the chance for trail and buildings drop by wayside

By BRETT OPEGAARD and SHERRI NEE
The Columbian

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site doesn't need a vision. The detailed plans have been made and paid for.

Picture a trail from a park on the Columbia River waterfront to the stables and gardens of Kanaka Village — where common workers lived and labored outside the 15-foot tall stockade. The path then meanders through a historic apple orchard to the front gate of the fort. Inside, people in period costume are acting out 19th-century life in a self-sufficient community. It's a live-

"It got delayed to the point that the funds were no longer available."

— Ted Brown, Parks and Recreation director

community that included the Pacific Northwest's first Catholic church, rowdy bachelors' quarters and a jail.

That was the idea, anyway. In the late 1970s, both the city of Vancouver and the National Park Service spent thousands on separate plans to turn Vancouver into a mecca for history-hungry tourists. The city plans call for a "layered-history approach," in which Officers Row, Pearson Airpark, Van-

couver Barracks and the fort receive equal billing. The fort plans focus solely on reconstruction and removal of modern-day distractions surrounding the site.

The city has made significant progress. It renovated Officers Row, helped raise \$3 million for a new aviation museum and, with help from Congress, intends to make the combined area of historical attractions a "National Historic Reserve." Fort Vancouver hasn't fared as well.

For a variety of reasons — including lack of federal funding and boundary battles over Pearson — the fort has missed some key opportunities.

Passing on Improvements
Last year, when state funding became available for the environmental walking bridge and trail that would pass over state Highway 14

and link the waterfront to historic reconstruction, the fort fumbled.

City and fort officials both have plans that call for a waterfront-fort link, but the fort backed out because it wanted to do more research and planning on the property site of the Kanaka Village the trail was to cross.

"They never brought up any questions before," said city Parks and Recreation Director Ted Brown.

He said the park service wanted to delay the project for a year. "It got delayed to the point that the funds were no longer available," Brown said.

Superintendent Dave Herrera insists the funding is still available and the park service wouldn't lose anything by tying into the trail system at a later date.

"We're not prepared to say today if there should be a trail or where

the trail should go," he said.

Herrera acknowledged that the fort didn't have the money then — nor does it now — to research the area, which was the site of the Kanaka Village.

Meanwhile, the city has redesigned its plans. Instead of crossing state Highway 14 at the Old Apple Tree Park and connecting with the fort, the trail will run parallel to Interstate 5 along its east right-of-way to Fifth Street.

It will not touch National Park Service property at any point. Walkers and joggers that might have been attracted to the fort effectively have been diverted.

"We were totally dismayed by their all of a sudden objection to a plan that had been in the works for 20 years," Brown said.

"This most recent falling out has cooled an already chilly relation-

ship. "Given our past experiences, we wouldn't be too excited about working with the fort in the future," Brown said.

Another chance to enhance the fort was a \$2.3 million federal grant that Herrera said could have been stretched to pay for at least the framework of all the missing buildings inside the stockade.

Instead, the park service chose to build a single fur store/archeological lab, which is almost complete.

When Brown talks about management at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, he cups his hands and places them on the side of each eye like blinders.

"They see their mission very narrowly," he said.

"If it doesn't fit into that mission — which is to interpret the history of their era — then it won't happen."

Fort ...

From Page A1

park service and the city, which owns the airpark that uses some fort property.

If the fort is overlooked, Wulle, a Vancouver attorney, said, it's something the park service has brought upon itself.

Fort volunteers and Dave Herrera, fort superintendent, insist that's not the case. They say the fort is ignored because city officials have no regard for its significance.

"The city's interest in the fort in the past 15 years has been, 'How do we keep our airpark,'" Herrera said.

Particularly in the past five years, city officials and local pilots fought the fort's plans to halt airplane takeoffs and landings on park service land.

Fort advocates had hoped to establish a more historical, peaceful atmosphere at the site by removing the distractions of airplanes and by restoring grain fields along the perimeter of the fort.

But last year, the fort lost.

In November, city and park service officials signed a memorandum of agreement. All hangars will be removed from park service land by 2002, but airplanes will fly indefinitely with some limitations on non-historic aircraft after 2002.

A decade of bickering has overshadowed the national historic site and stalled reconstruction efforts, Herrera said.

Worse, he added, it has polarized the community.

Ted Brown, city parks and recreation director, and Mayor Bruce Hagensen argue that the fort might not be gathering public support because the historical site fails to market itself and has shown no interest in the community.

Hagensen called fort officials "an isolated group" restricted by park service policies.

"They have a book. If it isn't in the book they don't do it," he said.

For example, fort superintendents refuse to allow weddings on the parade grounds or civilian hands in the picturesque bandstand near Officers Row.

A fire department request to have a group photographed inside the fort was denied. A popular playground along East Fifth Street was removed, and, following a public outcry, replaced with a smaller one tucked away by the fort's visitors center.

A proposed city gift of 100 cherry trees to provide a buffer from railroad tracks was rejected in 1989 as was a potential federal grant to build a pedestrian path from the waterfront to the fort.

In each case, fort officials argued such activities would intrude on the

historical nature of the site.

Even though the city of Vancouver symbol on trucks and letterhead depicts the fort, the city shows little interest in the site.

In 1986, city and county officials weren't thinking of preserving a historical ambience when they offered land next to the fort as a potential site for a new Trail Blazers arena.

In 1991, a city-produced color brochure on Vancouver's history displayed several local historical places, but there was no photo of the fort.

One fort supporter said the city promotes its own projects and fears a reconstructed fort would detract from the history of Officers Row.

"People know more about Vancouver's Farmers Market than they know about Fort Vancouver," said Robert Chase, president of Friends of Fort Vancouver.

Parks Director Brown said, "History doesn't stop at the fort." Vancouver is going to have plenty of attractions other than the fort, he said, mentioning plans for a new aviation museum at Pearson and pointing to the education center on wastewater treatment now under construction near the waterfront.

Few friends

Some 98,500 visitors passed through the tall stockade at Fort Vancouver in 1991. Last year, only 65,000 came.

Instead of aggressively pushing to build more of an attraction at the fort, the community seems to be yawning.

The non-profit Friends of Fort Vancouver is ineffective. The group of history buffs and retirees lacks political power. It has 58 dues-paying members — compared to Pearson Airpark Historical Society's 400 — and its regular monthly lecture series recently was canceled due to lack of interest.

In five years, fort friends have raised a total of \$33,000 toward construction, which came from one of its members and two anonymous donors.

By comparison, the Pearson Historical Society has raised \$3 million for a museum.

Even with free newspaper advertising, the fort Friends' fund-raising campaign earlier this year gathered only \$11.

The Friends group was formed in 1980 by fort volunteers who decided someone needed to counterbalance Pearson supporters who sought to extend the use of park service land.

Chase said the group really hasn't adapted to a fund-raising role now that the airpark-fort conflict is ending.

"I've been in this during the battle I'm tired. I've lost my spark," he said.

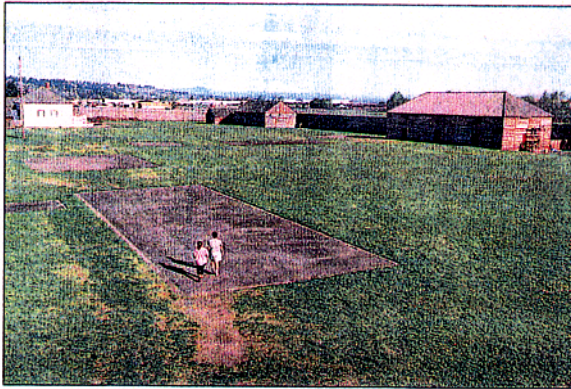
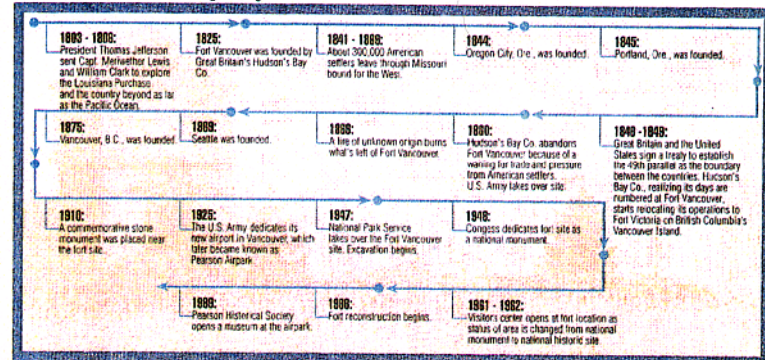
He said the Friends have no influential attorneys or high-profile business executives. It needs more "go getters," he said.

Karen Gioia, executive director of the Downtown Vancouver Vancouver Association, said fort advocates have failed to cultivate supporters on local boards and commissions.

In the past, Clark County residents and politicians have rallied around the fort, insisting that federal legislators push for reconstruction money.

The fort's federal-level supporters have included U.S. Rep. Russell V.

Fort Vancouver in perspective



Mari Kimura, left, and Nathan Medina take a lonely walk through the fort on a recent visit. Because agencies have not aggressively

pushed to build Fort Vancouver National Historic Site into a major attraction, a sense of emptiness pervades the grounds.

"I think the park service has never aggressively marketed itself because they assume that everybody knows about them."

— Stephanie Toothman, chief of cultural resources for the park service's regional office

Mack, who helped win its national monument designation in 1948, and U.S. Rep. Julia Butler Hansen, who fought to get federal funds for expansion, excavation and reconstruction between 1960 and 1974.

U.S. Rep. Donald Bonker saw Fort Vancouver as a "Williamsburg of the West" and in 1984 rejected the city's pleas to use the airpark beyond 2002.

Since then, federal interest in the fort has waned with U.S. Reps. Jolene Unsoeld and Linda Smith.

Unsoeld was instrumental in obtaining money for initial reconstruction of a fur store at the fort. But she sponsored legislation that favored the city's plans of extending airport land rights.

Smith said she supports the fort philosophically and favors the city proposal but will not help get any federal funds for its reconstruction.

Passive marketing

Fort Vancouver is ideally located at the gateway of Washington along Interstate 5. Yet, it remains

strangely invisible. The fort has only one sign in each direction on I-5 and a small sign posted below one for Pearson Airpark on state Highway 14.

Wardle's Restaurant on the Oregon side of the Columbia River and the Red Lion Inn at the Quay on the Washington side offer dozens of brochures on Portland's OMSI, the Seattle Space Needle and Vancouver, B.C., but nothing on Fort Vancouver.

In the Vancouver/Portland metro area, there are 1.7 million people within an easy drive of the fort. But with little promotion, few seek it out.

Superintendent Herrera said the fort's marketing strategy goes something like this: We don't need to promote ourselves; the public just needs to discover us.

Park service policies prohibit superintendents from fund-raising. Promotion is absent from the agency's mission and park service officials seem unfamiliar with the concept.

cleaned more often, trash would have to be dumped more frequently and heating bills would increase as doors are opened more often, he said.

The fort brochures cost less than 12 cents each and the city or Visitors Bureau easily could buy a couple thousand to distribute, Herrera said.

"The chamber, the Visitors and Convention Bureau and the city of Vancouver have to decide whether they'll promote the fort."

He said they haven't offered to help, and he hasn't asked.

"Who would presume to do that for a federal agency?" Hagensen asked. "We can't put our money into the fort. It's federal."

Far from completion

Further reconstruction of Fort Vancouver was recommended by a team of planners in a 1975 Regional Urban Design Assistance Team study.

But the new fur store is only the second building completed since that time.

A 1979 master plan for Central Park recommended a national festival based on the Fort Vancouver theme, such as "Fur Fest" or "Hudson's Bay Days." But groups that promote tourism didn't pick up on the idea.

"When asked if he would have the fort participate in such a festival, Herrera said, 'It depends on what we were asked to do. We could easily set up a booth.'"

With no federal or city support in sight, Herrera insists reconstruction is up to the community.

"There's no doubt there are some very wealthy people living in this area," he said.

"I can only hope that some day they will look kindly on the fort."

"History's a funny thing," he added, pointing to the renewed interest in the Civil War following Ken Burns's series on public television.

It could happen with Fort Vancouver, he said.

"Somebody may come along and write a book about it or do a TV series on Fort Vancouver, and we in the Northwest might wake up and realize how valuable it is."

"It's not so much the bickering between the city and the park service. It's not so much that we say no to community requests, Herrera said.

The fort isn't attracting visitors because it's far from completion, he said.

There's just not enough here yet to make it that big of an attraction."

— Brett Opegaard contributed to this story.

The fort: If you go ...

WHAT: Fort Vancouver National Historic Site commemorates what many historians have called "the cradle of civilization" in the Pacific Northwest. The self-sufficient fort employed up to 1,000 people in its heyday.

WHERE: Fort Vancouver is just east of downtown Vancouver on Fifth Street, and the visitors center is north of the site, 1501 E. Evergreen Blvd.

HOURS: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Seasonal entry fees are \$2 per person or \$4 per family/group.

WHO VISITS: Attendance at the reconstructed fort has dropped from 98,500 in 1991 to 65,000 last year. Of that number, 25,000 were school children and more than 5,000 came during the Fourth of July celebration and the candlelight tour.

BUDGET: The annual operating budget is about \$1 million, which doesn't include any money for reconstruction. The park employs 21 full-time equivalents and has more than 180 volunteers.

FUTURE: A fur store and archeology lab will open this year. The frame of the carpenter's shop, which was put together in 1983, might be moved inside the fort's stockade this fall.

— Brett Opegaard



All lit up

Camas could soon have unique neon sign museum

Local, Page A3



Clark County wants to buy Lucia Falls property

Local, Page A3

Ridin' high

Trucker gives boy a taste of the road

Money, Page A9



The Columbian

SERVING CLARK COUNTY, WASH.

MONDAY, APRIL 17, 1995

50 CENTS

High court enters fray on endangered species

WASHINGTON (AP) — In what may be the most important environmental case it has heard in nearly two decades, the Supreme Court debated today whether the Endangered Species Act bans destruction of wildlife habitats on private property.

During spirited arguments, Justice Antonin Scalia said that extending the law to bans on logging on private lands "seems to me just weird."

But Justice Stephen G. Breyer said he disagreed with a narrow interpretation of the law that would find private landowners in violation of the act only when they pur-

posely harmed a protected species.

Justice Clarence Thomas was the only court member who refrained from questioning the lawyers.

The justices must decide whether landowners violate the 1973 law if they change the natural homes of endangered or threatened species.

A federal appeals court ruled last year that the law bars only direct threats such as hunting, trapping or otherwise directly killing the species, but not indirect threats such as destruction of habitat.

That ruling, in an Oregon dispute over

protection of the Northern spotted owl, was hailed as one of the timber industry's greatest legal victories. Environmentalists called it a grave threat to the Endangered Species Act's continued effectiveness.

Scalia suggested the so-called "taking" of fish and wildlife prohibited by the law should not be extended to include logging or other habitat modification.

"To 'take' an animal refers to hunters. Historically, I've never heard it used in any other way," Scalia said.

"The whole spotted owl thing is based on that notion that people who harvest trees

are taking owls. To say this is taking an animal seems to me just weird."

Breyer said he didn't read the law to require intentional harm. He suggested it might apply as well when "the person knows it is going, as a consequence, to kill a few rare birds."

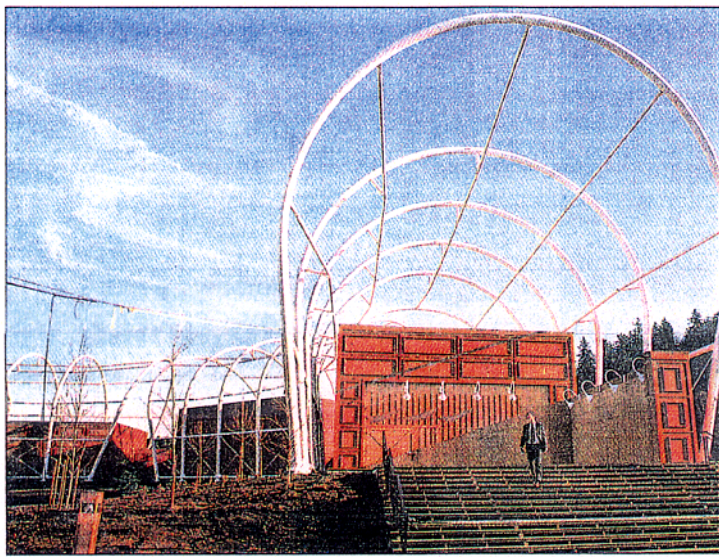
Breyer said a farmer who set up a battery of guns to kill crows eating the farmer's corn — and knew the guns also could kill rare birds in the vicinity — should be held responsible for deaths of the rare birds.

Potentially millions of acres in the Pacific Northwest could be affected by the

court's ruling. Endangered species battles also are being waged on hundreds of millions of acres of privately owned land in other parts of the country.

A congressional report said that 90 percent of the 781 endangered or threatened species listed by the government in 1993 have habitats on privately owned land.

Supporters and critics of the Endangered Species Act agree that the court's ruling, to be announced by late June, could eclipse in importance the 1978 decision that said Congress intended to protect endangered species "whatever the cost."



Amphitheater in Oregon City commemorates the end of the Oregon Trail.

TROY WAVRYNIEN/The Columbian

Trailing other sites A fort far afield

Marketing history pays off in other communities

By BRETT OPPEGAARD and SHERRI NEE
The Columbian

Many Clark County history buffs can't help but look at Fort Vancouver and dream of Colonial Williamsburg — the national icon of historical attractions.

The fully reconstructed 18th-century heritage site in Virginia employs 3,500 people, draws more than 2 million visitors per year and invests \$130 million annually in research, education, publications, maintenance and restaurant operation.

Also each year, tourists spend

\$315 million in the city of Williamsburg, Va.

Reaching that level of success might seem unrealistic for Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. But some struggling regional towns such as Stevenson in the Columbia River Gorge, as well as Oregon's Baker City and Oregon City, are betting millions that marketing history will pay off.

As interpretations of history become the fastest growing facet of the tourism industry and ripe opportunities speed by, Fort Vancouver has merged onto the tourist superhighway in a covered wagon.

In the past 11 years, only one new building has been reconstructed at the federally funded fort, and attendance has been dropping — more than 30 percent in the past few years.

Last year, Fort Vancouver cost

Please see Fort, Page A5

FORT NOWHERE

A COLUMBIAN SPECIAL REPORT

A three-part series exploring the problems pushing Fort Vancouver into obscurity

SUNDAY: Nobody cares

TODAY: Others succeeding; fort falling.

TUESDAY: Finishing the fort.

Clark County's premier attraction, a reconstructed 19th-century trading center, has the potential to draw hundreds of thousands of people. Instead, attendance is dropping. It has lost its political allies and has limped through a land grab in which the community backed its opponent, Pearson Airpark.

As city officials seek to group many of Vancouver's historic sites into one big tourist attraction, the fort could become forgotten. Or it could be resurrected with community interest, fund-raising, promotion and hope for reconstruction.

PHUET LUONG/The Columbian

Taxpayers, start your engines

WASHINGTON (AP) — Taxpayers jamming post offices to mail their returns before tonight's midnight deadline can ponder this: The typical American works almost until lunch time just to pay federal, state and local taxes.

According to the Tax Foundation, a nonpartisan research organization financed partly by corporations, the typical person devotes two hours and 46 minutes of every eight-hour work day to earn enough to pay taxes.

If that person starts work at 9

a.m., he or she would have earned enough to pay federal taxes at 10:49 a.m. and state and local taxes by 11:49 a.m.

In Washington, the time works out to two hours and 52 minutes of every eight-hour work day, in Oregon, it's 2 hours and 43 minutes. Tax Freedom Day — as the foundation calls it — comes to the Evergreen State on May 11. Oregonians are set free on May 4.

Tax Foundation economist

Please see Taxes, Page A5

Taxes at the last minute

Here's where you'll find last minute help to beat tonight's midnight tax-filing deadline:

TAX FORMS

● Vancouver Community Library, 1007 E. Mill Plain Blvd., stocks federal and Oregon tax forms. In addition, it has reference books that contain every tax form and their instructions, including past years. The library will be open tonight until midnight.

● Vancouver Internal Revenue Service, 500 W. 12th, Suite 200, has most, but not all, individual and business forms. Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

● Portland Internal Revenue Service, 1205 S.W. 3rd, stocks all forms, instructions, and offers window help. Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

● Vancouver's Main Post Office, 2700 Caples Ave., has basic federal and Oregon forms. Hours: 7:30 a.m. to midnight tonight.

● TaxFax, (800) 414-2114, for those willing to pay \$5 per form. Forms don't come with instructions. Get a directory of TaxFax forms faxed free to your machine from The Columbian's Info-Line, 699-6000, category 1759.

TAX HELP IN PERSON

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance is provided by the Internal Revenue Service and the Association of Retired Persons at the following locations:

● Vancouver Community Library, 1007 E. Mill Plain Blvd., 5:30 p.m. to midnight.

● Main Post Office, 2700 Caples Ave., 5 p.m. to midnight tonight.

AFTER HOURS MAIL SPOTS

● Main Post Office, 2700 Caples Ave., offers full window service until midnight tonight. A postal worker will collect tax returns from drive-up customers.

● Vancouver Community Library, 1007 E. Mill Plain Blvd., will have a drop box for tax returns that the post office will pick up at midnight tonight.

States lag in pushing welfare reform rules

WASHINGTON (AP) — Only a handful of states are moving the required number of unemployed welfare parents — mainly fathers — into jobs or training, according to federal statistics.

The lack of compliance raises questions about whether Republi-

cans would be able to make good on promises to push millions of welfare recipients from dependency to payrolls, in part, by turning the programs over to the states.

According to the Department of

Please see Parents, Page A5

Tuesday's weather:

High.....56 Low.....38

For more on local and national weather, see Page B14

Sunday's winning lottery numbers:

Washington Daily Game 1-0-9
Keno 1-6-12-14-18-22-25-27-28-29-30-54-57-61-62-65-69-73-75-80.

TV highlight:

Frances Fisher ("Unforgiven") gives a fine performance in "The Other Mother," the latest in the "Moment of Truth" series of fact-based dramas (10 p.m. on Channel 8).

WHAT'S INSIDE

"Coop"

Ex-Blazer center an integral cog in Sacramento's success.

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Eugene McCarthy Former Senator, revelations not surprising. REGION/NATION/WORLD A7

Chemotherapy deaths Two who receive treatment overdoses die in Boston. REGION/NATION/WORLD A7

Week 15 It's the Legislature's last week, but many think a special session will be necessary. WASHINGTON A2

FORT VANCOUVER/FROM PAGE A1

Fort ...
From Page A1

... taxpayers about \$1 million to operate it. It earned only \$28,000 in admission fees.

... With those numbers, a private corporation running the fort would file for bankruptcy.

... A non-profit agency armed with grants might make it work without a federal subsidy. And city investment in the project, similar to the 1989 Officers Row renovation, could make it thrive, some say. "I don't think it's too hard to imagine," said Vancouver Mayor Bruce Hagensen.

The mayor said he isn't advocating a city takeover but acknowledged the idea had been talked about from time to time.

National, local success

... While the federal fort makes no profit, many non-profit historical attractions are prospering.

... Building a popular attraction often begins with a substantial grant or a wealthy contributor whose generosity moves a community to action.

... In Williamsburg, millionaire John D. Rockefeller Jr. invested \$68 million in 1926 to preserve or rebuild more than 130 structures.

... The attraction now is home to nearly 200 buildings.

... In the isolated town of Baker City, a \$12 million investment in an Oregon Trail exhibit is bringing the community new life and jobs.

... Almost 250,000 tourists, double the expected turnout, came to the center at Plagstaff Hill in 1993.

... Before this project began, the town had the highest level of unemployment in Oregon. It is now a more reasonable 7 percent.

... Baker City residents invested another \$5 million to restore 30 downtown buildings to complement the tourist magnet. And the city is scheduled to restore another eight buildings next year.

... In Oregon City, residents have spent the past several years pooling \$3 million from federal, state, city and private sources. Their reward is an 8-acre campus with a multi-media center and an amphitheater that celebrates the end of the Oregon Trail.

... "After the first two years, it should pay for itself," said the foundation's executive director David Porter. The interpretive center



Photo courtesy of Williamsburg
Colonial Williamsburg, a fully reconstructed 18th-century heritage site in Virginia, employs 3,500 people and draws more than 2 million visitors per year.

"After the first two years, it should pay for itself."

— David Porter, executive director for Oregon Trail Foundation

alone is expected to attract 120,000 people when it opens this summer.

The non-profit Oregon Trail Foundation Inc. isn't finished. It intends to hold nightly outdoor theater and weekly festivals to generate enough revenue for a 112-acre expansion.

... Taking Baker City's lead, a handful of residents in Skamania County — the county with the highest level of unemployment in Washington — pushed their area legislators to capture a \$5.25 million matching grant to make up for declining employment there in what timber industry.

Next month, the \$10.5 million Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center will open near Skamania Lodge.

"We did a lot of begging for money," said former Skamania County Commissioner Ed Callahan. "Having doors closed in your face is kind of tough, but we persevered."

Oregon City's Porter added, "It takes a lot of people — with a vision of what could happen."

Historical attractions around U.S.

Here's how the federal government's Fort Vancouver compares to the non-profit historical attractions nationwide in order of attendance.

Site	Visitors in 1994	Admission revenue
Colonial Williamsburg Williamsburg, Va.: A 173-acre reconstructed 18th-century town of costumed interpreters and nearly 200 buildings as they appeared on the eve of the Revolution.	2 million	\$22.5 million
Greenfield Village Dearborn, Mich.: An 81-acre complex that celebrates innovative Americans from 1800 to 1930, includes Thomas Edison's lab, the Wright brothers cycle shop.	1.1 million	\$6 million
Mystic Seaport Museum Mystic, Conn.: A 17-acre maritime historic site displays the impact of maritime on economic, social and cultural life of the 19th century.	450,000	\$4.1 million
Old Sturbridge Village Sturbridge, Mass.: A 200-acre village that displays life in the 1830s with costumed interpreters, farmers and crafts people.	440,000	\$3.5 million
Plymouth Plantation Plymouth, Mass.: A 105-acre village that displays 17th-century pilgrim life with costumed interpreters and a full-scale reproduction of the Mayflower ship.	415,000	\$4.2 million
Jamestown Settlement Williamsburg, Va.: A 25-acre living-history museum of early American Indian life and 17th-century colonial Jamestown, America's first permanent English colony.	392,470	\$2 million
Conner Prairie Indianapolis, Ind.: A 240-acre 1836 settlement of the old northwest territory, includes a village of about 30 buildings, including the restored home of William Conner.	331,000	\$1.6 million
Old Salem Winston-Salem, N.C.: A restored German Moravian congregation town of 25 blocks where interpreters display household activities and trades of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.	124,600	\$894,400
Fort Vancouver Vancouver: A 208-acre site that includes a visitors center and a stockade that contains seven reconstructed buildings of the Hudson's Bay Co. trading post from 1825 to 1845.	65,000	\$28,000
Strawberry Bank Museum Portsmouth, N.H.: A 10-acre historic neighborhood displaying life from 1695 through 1955 with restored homes and costumed interpreters.	63,850	\$343,300
Vermilionville Lafayette, La.: A 23-acre living-history museum that displays the architecture, culture and crafts of a French Acadian community in the late 18th century.	61,000	\$340,000

— Sherri Nee

Taxes ...

From Page A1

Patrick Fleener said that taxes consume 34.4 percent of the typical person's gross income — 22.6 percent for federal taxes and 11.8 percent for state and local. That's a higher proportion of gross income than a typical American spends on food, clothing and shelter combined.

Looked at another way, the typical taxpayer this year must work 126 days to pay taxes, putting Tax Freedom Day on May 6, tied with last year for the latest ever.

The Tax Foundation, like many groups, uses today's IRS filing deadline — when Americans' minds are on taxes — to focus attention on their own views.

Its report, an annual tradition, is challenged by such groups as Citizens for Tax Justice, a labor-financed research organization, which points to the value received for tax dollars.

Tax Freedom Day occurs later in some states, earlier in others. Connecticut and New York residents have it the worst — May 24.

Parents ...

From Page A1

Health and Human Services, only 10 states met existing federal work participation requirements last year for two-parent families who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

A provision of the Family Support Act of 1988, the last welfare reform bill to pass Congress, required states, starting on Oct. 1, 1993, to find jobs or training for at least one parent of a certain number of two-parent families receiving AFDC.

Two-parent families accounted for only 363,063 of the roughly 5 million families on welfare last year. The rest are headed by single parents.

A total of 47,004 two-parent families met the work requirements in 1994, according to preliminary HHS numbers. States should have enrolled closer to 70,000 parents to meet the law.

States that met the work requirements in 1994 were Arizona, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah and Vermont.

Legislator's letter puts Clark Public Utility on notice

By GREGG HERRINGTON
The Columbian

Frustration, suspicion and anger flared late last week when state Sen. Al Bauer, D-Vancouver, put Clark Public Utilities Director Bruce Bosch on notice.

In a letter to Bosch, Bauer essentially said: Don't make a liar out of yourself or the Legislature in the controversy about the utility's proposed new power plant.

The bad feelings go back years. The power plant planned for the Vancouver Lake lowlands is only the latest manifestation.

On one side in what has become a years-old battle are the officials and elected commissioners of the utility. They say they are constantly on the prowl for cheaper power for Clark County residents while striving for an efficient operation.

On the other side are a small but politically active group of critics. They think the utility is digging itself into a financial hole, operating with too little public input and risking its future by looking beyond the Bonneville Power Administration for electricity.

The emnity boiled to the surface Thursday in response to the Bauer's letter.

Bauer said he was happy to have supported legislation this session that clarified how output is measured on new power-generating

plants. He put the onus on Bosch to speak up if there is any change in the local plant's publicized output.

The utility favors the bill, which presumably will remove any doubt that it may build a new 250-megawatt power-generating plant without a public vote or state board's approval.

Integrity on the line

Bauer wrote, "The general integrity of the state's utility industry" surfaced repeatedly during the debate on the bill. "Opponents claimed that Clark and other utilities will simply use the definition to site and finance projects that they later will operate at capacities greater than 250 megawatts."

If that happens, Bauer continued, "I expect to be notified. And if so, we should discuss the submittal of the project to the state board and voters for approval. Thank you for your efforts to secure a long-term and cost-effective power supply I support your efforts."

In a followup interview, Bauer said, "We got our credibility on the line up here, along with him (Bosch). We want to make sure the intent is carried out so we don't violate the trust of the people."

Critic responds

"I think perhaps Sen. Bauer is starting to squirm a little bit, to be very frank," said Bob Wachter of Vancouver when told of Bauer's letter. "I think Al's nervous."

Wachter and perhaps a half



Carol Curtis
"All this boils down to is a form of hatred."

Bob Wachter
"Why would you buy both transformers and generators as large as they are?"

dozen other vocal critics have argued the plant's output will exceed 250 megawatts and therefore the project should require approval by voters and a state sitting board.

Wachter says the proposed generator and transformers have a capability of handling at least 300 megawatts. "So the basic question is, why would you buy both transformers and generator as large as they are" if you don't intend to "exceed the 250-megawatt limit? You can't have a little bit of pregnancy."

Another commissioner, Carol

Curts, said, "They don't want us to do anything to ever, ever leave the fold of the Bonneville Power Administration. I have been in this job for 12 years and I have never seen the utility do anything he (Wachter) likes. He doesn't like our management and he doesn't like Bruce Bosch. All this boils down to a form of hatred."

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Road warriors

Hard-core bicyclists prepare for the Ride Around Clark County
Recreation, Page B1

Company sold

Officials at Camas-based Tidland say purchase won't affect employment
Money, Page D5

BLAZERS CLINCH PLAYOFF SPOT, BUT THEY CAN'T RELAX

Sports, Page D1

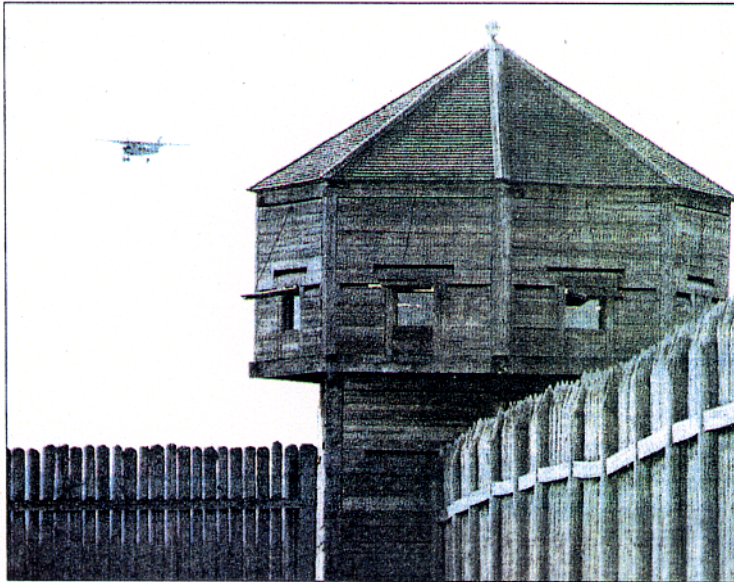


The Columbian

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A plane makes its approach for landing at Pearson Airpark. With Fort Vancouver National Historic Site so close, relations between the fort and the airpark have been strained over the years.

Fort Vancouver: History at stake

Changing the city's name and fort's programs are options to reviving the national site

By BRETT OPPEGAARD and SHERRI NEE
The Columbian

Before one stockade pole was erected, Northwest historian Bert Brown Barker urged Vancouver: "Never cease until you have Fort Vancouver restored."
He spoke these words to an inspired crowd more than 40

years ago. But the enthusiasm has faded. Federal money for the project is drying up, attendance is dropping and more than two-thirds of the fort structures still are missing.

Instead of a symbol for community pride, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site has become nothing more than an unsatisfying field trip.

Some suggest a takeover by the city of Vancouver. Others think smaller steps would help. Something needs to be done, say fort supporters.

John Marshall, a former assistant to the city manager, said the budget-slashing Congress should give the fort to the community — where it will get the attention it needs.

Please see Fort, Page AB

FORT NOWHERE

A COLUMBIAN SPECIAL REPORT

A three-part series exploring the problems pushing Fort Vancouver into obscurity

SUNDAY
Nobody cares

MONDAY
Others succeeding, fort failing

TODAY
Finishing the fort.

Clark County's premier attraction, a reconstructed 19th-century trading center, has the potential to draw hundreds of thousands of people. Instead, attendance is dropping. It has lost its political allies and has limped through a land grab in which the community backed its opponent, Pearson Airpark.

As city officials seek to group many of Vancouver's historic sites into one big tourist attraction, the fort could become forgotten. Or it could be resurrected with community interest, fund-raising, promotion and hope for reconstruction.

PHET LUONG/The Columbian

Disposal Group Inc. in default

☐ **Creditor wants to seize the garbage company's equipment to satisfy a \$4.5 million debt**

By BRUCE WESTFALL
The Columbian

A longtime local garbage company lost a court battle Monday that threatens to put it out of business.

Clark County Superior Court Judge Barbara Johnson ruled that the Disposal Group Inc. has defaulted on its contract with Columbia Resource Company.

Since last summer, the Disposal Group has fallen \$4.5 million behind in payments to Columbia Resource.

Monday's decision appears to

clear the way for Columbia Resource, an affiliate of Tidewater Barge Lines Inc., to seize Disposal Group assets including its garbage trucks.

Columbia Resource attorney Mark LeCoq told Judge Johnson Monday that's exactly what his client wants, but not before negotiations with city, county and health officials to find a substitute garbage firm.

If that effort is successful, Columbia Resource will seize Disposal Group equipment, including garbage trucks, to help satisfy the multi-million-dollar debt, LeCoq said.

Meanwhile, the attorney for the Disposal Group said the ruling is not a loss for his client, but a stand-

Please see Disposal, Page AB

Brando's daughter commits suicide

PAPEETE, French Polynesia (AP) — Cheyenne Brando, the troubled daughter of actor Marlon Brando, committed suicide after five years of depression and anguish over her boyfriend's death, family associates said. She was 25.

Cheyenne Brando hanged herself Sunday at her mother's home in Punaania, 8 miles west of Papeete, the French Polynesian capital on the island of Tahiti.

Family associates, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Cheyenne Brando had been distraught since the killing of her boyfriend, Dag Drollet, in 1990 by her half-brother, Christian Brando. Doctors said she had tried to kill herself twice previously.

"I no longer want to live," Cheyenne Brando is quoted as saying in a recent biography of her father by Peter Manso. "I want to die because it isn't possible that (Drollet) is no longer here. ... Never



Cheyenne Brando
Reportedly distraught about the killing of boyfriend 5 years ago

will I find another like him." Her body was moved to an aunt's home in the town of Paea. Only very close family members were able to view the body and pay their respects.

Cheyenne Brando's half-brother Mike Brando arrived in Papeete today, hours before local radio reports said a funeral was scheduled. Marlon Brando was not on the flight.

Cheyenne Brando was the
Please see Brando, Page AB

Activist, age 12, shot to death in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — A 12-year-old boy who won international acclaim for highlighting the horrors of child labor in Pakistan has been shot dead, and one activist said he believed the boy's death was linked to his crusade.

Iqbal Masih was gunned down Sunday as he and two friends rode their bicycles in their village of Murkhe, near the eastern city of Lahore, said Ehsan Ullah Khan, chairman of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front, which opposes child labor.

"We know his death was a conspiracy by the carpet mafia," Khan said today, referring to the owners of carpet-weaving factories that employ large numbers of children in Pakistan.

A laborer in Iqbal's village, about 144 miles southeast of Islamabad, has been arrested in connection with the shooting, Khan said.

Police could not be immediately reached for comment on the slaying or the arrest.

Iqbal had received several death threats from people in the carpet-weaving industry angered by his comments about child labor.

Iqbal, who worked as a carpet weaver under abysmal conditions from the age of 4 to 10, had attracted widespread attention.

At an international labor conference in Sweden in November, he spoke about the conditions that child workers face. In December, he went to Boston to receive the Reebok Youth in Action Award.

Governor's veto a setback for US West

OLYMPIA (AP) — Calling it bad for consumers, Gov. Mike Lowry has vetoed a measure that would have preserved for three years US West's

near-monopoly on Washington's in-state long-distance telephone market.

The bill, SB5156, passed the Legislature over fierce lobbying from AT&T and MCI, which argued that telephone consumers would lose if national carriers are not allowed the same access to the in-state market as US West.

"The governor vetoed the legisla-

tion because he was concerned about the lack of competition and the negative effect on the consumer," said press aide Jordan Dey. The governor vetoed the measure shortly before midnight Monday.

In addition, Lowry took the action because the state Utilities and Transportation Commission is the proper agency to decide whether to allow competition, Dey

said. "We are deeply disappointed a bill ensuring fair competition and avoidance of unnecessary local service price increases was vetoed last night by Gov. Mike Lowry," US West spokesman Vic Kucera said in a statement today.

Kucera said veto of the bill
Please see Veto, Page AB

Wednesday's weather:
High.....57 Low.....42
For more on local and national weather, see Page **C12**

Monday's Writing Lottery numbers:
Washington Daily Game 1-8-8
Keno 1-11-16-17-26-27-29-35-36-41-44-45-47-50-55-60-69-71-73-75.
Oregon Daily 7-1-6-0

TV highlight:
Richard Dean Anderson ("MacGyver") makes a welcome and winning return to series television in "Legend," an impressive new western (8 p.m., Channel 12).

WHAT'S INSIDE...

Book report
The Columbia, "America's 20th-century river," is subject of new book.
WASHINGTON NOTEBOOK C1

INDEX on PAGE A2

Cooking under pressure
Pressure cookers can be big timesavers. **FOOD**

PSU takes big step up
Portland State University has decided to go big time, joining the Division I Big Sky Conference. **SPORTS D1**

Setback for GM
Court rejects legal settlement over controversial pickups. **MONEY D5**

FORT VANCOUVER/FROM PAGE A1

Fort ...

From Page A1

"The National Park Service's resources are severely stretched," he said, and Fort Vancouver isn't recognized as one of the government's finest parks.

"It isn't even on the radar screen," he said.

The city could complete the fort in 10 years if it had control, Marshall added, basing his estimate on the Officers Row project.

When the city took over the federally owned strip of 21 dilapidated Victorians in 1984, it was able to find \$10 million and complete restoration within five years.

City-run fort?

Recent suggestions of purging some sites from the national park system have made a city-run fort a possibility, said Richard Winters, associate regional director of the park service.

"The first potential problem with a city takeover is that some archaeologists would question whether the city could maintain the historic site at National Park Service standards," he cautioned.

Ron Brentano, chief field representative for the Oregon Historical Society, said some historic sites have rushed to document and build an exhibit only to later spend millions undoing inaccuracies.

A second obstacle to a city-run fort is that the mayor doesn't like the idea.

City ownership of Fort Vancouver may have been talked about on and off for years, but Mayor Bruce Hagensen instead supports a "historic reserve" in Vancouver to celebrate the fort as part of a "One Place Across Time" exhibit that would include Officers Row, Pearson Airpark and Vancouver Barracks.

The first two goals of the joint effort have nothing to do with the



Jerry Peterson walks through the main gate of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in his role as Joseph Thiebaud, a mess steward.

fort. Building a \$3 million aviation museum and restoring the O.O. Howard House are the top priorities.

But Hagensen said the fort's chances of getting any reconstruction dollars are better if it's part of the partnership.

Another suggestion involves retaining the city Fort Vancouver. Proponents have said it would help avoid confusion with Vancouver, B.C.

Robert Chase, president of Friends of Fort Vancouver, said the name change would be an effective

If you want to help the fort:

Friends of Fort Vancouver:

To join or participate, call president Robert Chase, 695-7002.

Call or write:

- Mayor Bruce Hagensen and members of the City Council: 696-8211, City of Vancouver, P.O. Box 1995, Vancouver, WA 98668.
- U.S. Rep. Linda Smith: 695-6292 or (202) 225-3536, 1217 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.
- National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy: (202) 208-4621, National Park Service Main Interior Building, Room 3104, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

advertisement for the historic fort.

"That would be the biggest, single, easy thing we could do," he said.

Last year, Baker, Ore., did just that.

To be more historically correct, Baker became Baker City — its name during the westward migration of the 1840s and 1850s. Baker City is reaping revenue from the newly opened Oregon Trail exhibit at nearby Flagstaff Hill.

A name change for Vancouver has been discussed for more than 25 years, but voters have rejected the idea three times.

If the community got behind a name change for the fort's sake, or if crowds again rally for further reconstruction, city officials might have difficulty shuffling off Barker's plea to finish the fort.

Then, success could be as simple as putting together an aggressive promotional campaign with new signs, a billboard here and there and plenty of brochures to pass around.

Renewed interest in the fort could be a catalyst for fund-raising and perpetual construction.

Outreach vital

In some respects, it might be unfair to compare the government-owned fort with successful nonprofit

living history museums, Brentano said. But today, every historic attraction and arts foundation is in the same position of going to the public for financial support.

Every organization is surveying its visitors and refocusing programs to attract more, Brentano said. History has to be exciting and interactive.

People go to historic sites because they want to see what life was like, he said. "They want to see the real thing."

They want to be educated, he added, and whether they want to admit it or not, they want to be entertained.

Brentano said he's impressed with Fort Vancouver when he visits but acknowledges more buildings, demonstrations and interpretations there would dazzle tourists.

Karen Gioia, executive director of the Downtown Vancouver Association, suggests the fort build on its few popular activities.

More candlelight tours, brigade encampments and living-history exhibits could keep crowds captivated and coming back, she said.

In his speech, Barker said, "I don't expect to live long enough to see it, but I hope you people won't let go until you have completed the restoration of the fort and the Indian villages surrounding it."

Brando...

From Page A1

daughter of Marlon Brando and Tarita Teripiaia, a Polynesian actress who married Brando after appearing with him in the 1962 film "Mutiny on the Bounty."

"She was bright, fragile, independent, scared, the true jewel of the family," Manso told the New York Daily News of Cheyenne Brando.

Marlon Brando's agent, Ed Limato, said the actor would have no comment. Limato on Monday denied reports that Brando was hospitalized, and declined to say where he was.

Cheyenne Brando was charged in French Polynesia with complicity in the killing of Drollet, who was shot dead on May 16, 1990, at her father's Los Angeles home. The charges were later dropped.

Disposal...

From Page A1

off.

Attorney Tim Dack said Columbia Resource has no power to seize the Disposal Group's equipment because it already is pledged to U.S. National Bank, another creditor. Moreover, Dack said his client has exclusive state permits to collect county garbage. He said his clients are willing to settle the lawsuit by agreeing to pay off the debt "over time."

Most of Clark County's garbage is picked up by the Disposal Group then dumped at two huge Clark County transfer stations owned and operated by Columbia Resource. It is packed into steel containers and barged up the Columbia River to a landfill near Boardman, Ore.

The Disposal Group pays about \$72 per ton to drop the trash at the transfer stations. Their monthly bill can range from \$700,000 to nearly \$850,000.

The company says it fell behind in payments because of a quirk in the city of Vancouver's billing system. Johnson, however, was unconvinced. She noted in her decision that the Disposal Group's debt to Columbia Resource ballooned from \$675,000 last August to the \$4.5 million over the past six months. At one point in November, the company made a \$112,611 payment on a \$2.3 million bill.

If the court ruling signals the Disposal Group's demise, it would be the end of a county trash collection empire operated for 58 years by the Leichner family.

Since 1937, the Leichners have picked up curbside garbage through various subsidiaries and — until 1992 — ran the county's only landfill.

But over the past five years in particular the family business has fallen on hard times.

In 1991, the company lost a bid to Waste Management Inc., to operate a Vancouver area curbside recycling program.

The company was saddled with the costly 1991 closure of its Five Corners landfill.

Then last December, the Disposal Group lost its contract to pick up garbage inside the Vancouver city limits. City officials chose Waste Management instead for a new contract to begin next August. The Disposal Group said the move will cut its customer base by 20 percent. The company estimated it would have to lay off a third of its 125 employees.

Veto...

From Page A1

means US West will quickly lose marketshare, and the long distance revenue that keeps the prices of local service low.

"We estimate the impact of Gov. Lowry's veto will represent a \$2 to \$3 increase in monthly local residential rates," Kucera said.

The bill would have barred the

UTC from allowing national carriers to offer the simple "1-plus-area code" access numbers that US West customers use for in-state calling. The national carriers could continue to offer longer, more complicated access codes.

The law would have remained in effect for three years or until Congress allowed US West to compete in the national long-distance market. Backers of the measure cited US West's inability to compete

nationally as reason for the measure.

In his veto message, Lowry said "Washington state leads the nation in progressive communications policies. We are gaining recognition for authorizing and affirming competition at the local level. We have learned that such competition provides the best product at the best price. Such competition is not only healthy for strong cutting-edge business, but benefits the consumer."

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