

ROOM SERVICE: Three Clark County hotel projects taking shape /E1

The Columbian



Life/Home & Garden, D1
East Vancouver couple reclaim their yard from invasive species

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■ High: 76 ■ Low: 58



Mostly sunny.

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Election08

"These times require more than a good soldier. They require a wise leader. A leader who can deliver change. The change that everybody knows we need."

Vice presidential candidate Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., on Barack Obama

Democrats make history



Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., right, and Democratic vice presidential candidate, Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., enjoy the celebration Wednesday at the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

Obama receives party's nomination via roaring acclamation

By DAVID ESPO
Associated Press writer

DENVER — Barack Obama stepped triumphantly into history Wednesday night, the first black American to win a major party presidential nomination, as thousands of Democrats transformed their convention hall into a joyful, shouting celebration.

"I think the convention's gone pretty well so far, what do you think?" called out the Democrats' man of the hour in a surprise late-night visit to the hall. The crowd thundered its approval, and he and running mate Joe Biden basked in the cheers.

Obama implored the delegates to help him "take back America" in the fall campaign against Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona.

Earlier, former rival Hillary Rodham Clinton asked the convention to interrupt its roll call of the states and make its verdict unanimous "in the spirit of unity, with the goal of victory." And they did, with a roar.

Inside

■ Local Hillary Clinton supporter in New York Times column. **Page C1**

■ Rudy Giuliani joins GOP attack squad in Denver. **Page A7**

Competing chants of "Obama" and "Yes we can" surged up from the convention floor as the outcome was announced.

Obama, the son of a black Kenyan father and a white American mother, is now one victory from becoming president of a nation where, just decades ago, many blacks were denied the vote.

But even as he won the nomination, there was open talk in the convention city that Obama's race remained a stumbling block to winning the White House.

"A lot of white workers ... and quite frankly a lot of union members believe he's the

CONVENTION, Page A7



Former President Bill Clinton addresses the audience at the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

"Everything I've learned in eight years as president and the work I've done since, in America and across the globe, has convinced me that Barack Obama is the man for this job."

Former President Bill Clinton

CALM BEFORE THE STORM



JAVIER GALEANO/The Associated Press
Residents fish in Havana Bay on Wednesday as Tropical Storm Gustav swirls toward Cuba on its way to the Gulf of Mexico. Forecasters warn the storm could become a Category 3 hurricane in the next few days.

STORY ON PAGE A3

Having viewed Duncan's evil, jury quickly agrees on death sentence

Outcome brings little relief to family

By REBECCA BOONE
Associated Press writer

BOISE, Idaho — A longtime sex offender was sentenced to death Wednesday for the 2005 kidnapping, torture and murder of a 9-year-old northern Idaho boy after federal jurors who watched video of some of the brutality deliberated just three hours.

The jurors' recommendation was binding on U.S. District Judge Edward Lodge, who thanked them, dismissed them and then sentenced Joseph Edward Duncan III.

Relatives of the victim, Dylan Groene, remained som-

ber as the jury's decision was announced. Duncan murdered Dylan's mother, older brother and his mother's fiancé to kidnap him and his younger sister, who was sexually abused along with her brother but survived.

Duncan showed no reaction other than smiling as the verdict was passed to the judge. "We're happy with the verdict, but it's a shame — this should have been limited to one death," said Steven Groene, the father of the children. "He should have had the courage and the guts to kill himself before killing anyone else."

Duncan took Dylan and the boy's then-8-year-old sister, Shasta, to a remote western Montana campsite where he

DUNCAN, Page A6

Update

■ **Previously:** Joseph Edward Duncan admitted kidnapping and killing 9-year-old Dylan Groene.

■ **What's new:** A federal jury sentences Duncan to death for the crime.

■ **What's next:** Duncan could be sent to California to face trial in the 1997 killing of a boy.

Out-of-state interests spend big on I-1000

Supporters, foes of right-to-die issue trade criticism

By KATHIE DURBIN
Columbian staff writer

Out-of-state money is pouring into the campaigns both for and against Washington Initiative 1000, the measure known by supporters as death with dignity and by opponents as physician-assisted suicide.

The campaign has turned bitter in recent weeks over the role that out-of-state interests, including the Roman Catholic Church, are playing in the debate over a physician "aid-in-dying" law in Washington.

The Washington measure is identical to Oregon's Death With Dignity Act, which was approved and later affirmed by Oregon voters and defended by the state of Oregon all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. It allows doctors to prescribe lethal doses of barbiturates, to be self-administered by the patient, for those who have six months or less to live. Oregon remains the only state that allows the practice.

A total of 341 Oregon residents used the law to end their lives between 1998 and 2007.

Supporters of Washington's measure have raised nearly \$1.7 million, almost six times as much as opponents. However, they spent most of that getting the measure on the Nov. 4 ballot.

As a result, the two sides enter the fall campaign closely matched. The Coalition Against Assisted Suicide has about \$303,000 on hand. Yes on I-1000 has about \$322,000. Compassion and Choices Washington, a political action committee advocating for the initiative's passage, has

I-1000, Page A6

County's general fund squeezed to bridge gap

Hiring freeze needed to make ends meet

By MICHAEL ANDERSEN
Columbian staff writer

Clark County is trying to close a budget gap by putting less money in its piggy bank.

For the two-year budget that begins in January, commissioners called last week for an across-the-board 4 percent cut to general-fund spending.

Departments will cover the shortage by scrimping money that would typically be set aside for future budgets, the county's top budget official said.

Meanwhile, a countywide hiring freeze ordered Aug. 6 is expected to help the government get through the end of its current budget, in December.

Shrinking retail sales and slow property tax growth are to blame, Deputy County Administrator Glenn Olson said Wednesday.

In 2007, the county's general-fund expenses were \$133 million, \$28 million of it funded by sales taxes. Outside the cities, construction usually accounts for

BUDGET, Page A7