Busy Obama starts building team

Rep. Rahm Emanuel accepts offer to run the White House

By PETER NICHOLAS and MICHAEL FINNEGAN
Los Angeles Times

CHICAGO — As the scale of his mandate widened Thursday, Barack Obama began preparing for a rare wartime transfer of power, getting his first classified national security briefing, accepting an invitation to meet with President Bush next week, and naming a White House chief of staff. Rahm Emanuel, a Chicago congressman who is widely considered one of the Democratic Party's sharpest strategists, accepted Obama's offer to run the White House.

Obama spent part of the day calling key world leaders and other White House appointees to congratulate him on his historic victory. In Washington, election results still seemed to be solidifying his gains. Conservative groups were readying legal challenges in state after state to test the legitimacy of his victory.

At the White House, the Bush administration was preparing a transition plan for the new president. The Justice Department has already given security clearances to the president-elect.

Bush told his staff Wednesday to see if the Obama team will work with the new administration. The two men are meeting at the White House on Monday. On the agenda:

Shades of Autumn

Ginger Toepfer of Vancouver enjoys an apple and the brilliant autumn display along Northwest Lake Shore Avenue in Forest Park. "I like when the colors change, it's beautiful," Toepfer said. "The display may not be around much longer, with the dry, windy weather forecast through Saturday."

"I've heard from a number of physicians very fearful right now."

Kevin Myers, Southwest Washington Medical Center

Local physicians grapple with aid-in-dying questions

Some wonder if they must participate after law's passage

By LAURA MATTICKER
Columbian staff writer

A Washington law giving terminally ill patients the option of ending their lives was met with opposition among Clark County physicians, who fear it will undermine their ethical responsibilities.

But the law passed Tuesday by a decisive margin, allowing terminally ill, competent adults to request and self-administer a lethal dose of medication prescribed by a physician.

Now local hospice workers are learning what the new law means for them, and some doctors are questioning whether they have to participate.

"I've heard from a number of physicians very fearful right now," said Kevin Myers, clinical manager of Southwest Washington Medical Center's home hospice care program. "They want to put themselves in that position. They feel like it will be seen as a white flag of surrender to the community."

The law, called death with dignity by proponents and assisted suicide by opponents, takes effect Jan. 1.

Clark's sign-ups for fall jump 6%

Enrollment growth around the state highest in decades

By TOM VOIGT
Columbian staff writer

Fall enrollment at Clark College is up more than 6 percent this year, part of the biggest increase in the state's two-year colleges system in decades.

"We haven't seen enrollment growth like this since the 1970s," said Sean Moore, marketing and communications director at Clark.

"And the growth is in all areas — current high school graduates, transfer students, workers retraining, basic skills, professional technical, working adults," Moore said.

In Vancouver, Clark College reported a fall enrollment that is 8.8 percent higher than last year. That's up from the fall 2007 full-time equivalent enrollment of 6,443.

Clark actually has a lot more students on campus than that, because many don't take a full load. The head count — the total number of students taking at least one class — is 13,092.

That's a 6.8 percent increase over the fall 2007 head count of 12,369, said Clark spokeswoman Barbara Kett.

Did you know?

- About 65 percent of the state's community and technical college students are in part-time programs.
- About 41 percent plan to transfer to a four-year college.
- About 14 percent are minority students (adult basic education, English as a second language).

Murray could end up chairing Veterans' Affairs Committee

By MATTHEW DAILY
Associated Press writer

WASHINGTON — Washington Sen. Patty Murray could be in line for a promotion following Tuesday's election.

Sen. Jim Murray is facing a tough campaign to retain his seat in a Republican-leaning state. If he loses, Murray could be the senior Democrat on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. Murray's seat would be filled by a Republican, who would then name a replacement for Murray's seat, likely setting the stage for a delayed election.

Murray, an independent who caucuses with Democrats, chairs the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Murray's status was in question after a meeting with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who said afterward that no decisions have been made. But an aide to the Nevada senator gave up the top job at Veterans' Affairs, Democrat Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia, who also serves as Intelligence Committee chairman, is expected to pass up the Veterans' post and let it go.
People, etc. from news services

DeGeneres laments passage of gay marriage ban in California

Ellen DeGeneres says she is “saddened beyond belief” by the passage of a constitutional amendment in California banning gay marriage.

“The talk show host said in a statement Wednesday to The Associated Press that she, “like millions of Americans, felt like we had taken a giant step toward equality” by electing Barack Obama as president.

DeGeneres says she is “saddened beyond belief” by the passage of a constitutional amendment in California banning gay marriage.

DeGeneres wed actress Portia de Rossi in August, following a May Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage in California.

She contributed $100,000 to fight the amendment on Tuesday’s ballot.

DeGeneres asserts she will “continue to speak out for equality for all of us.”

Madonna presses on: Madonna isn’t going to let lighting and technical issues keep her from performing at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles.

A statement from her publicist, Liz Rosenberg, says construction of the singer’s stage came to a halt Wednesday due to an equipment malfunction.

Although damage to the top of the stage created several lighting and technical issues, Madonna decided to go ahead with Thursday night’s show.

In an e-mail to The Associated Press, Madonna says: “Even though my stage roof was damaged and some lights and effects aren’t working, I want to do the show anyway because I don’t want to disappoint my fans.”

Hall and Oates sue: Daryl Hall and John Oates have filed a lawsuit saying their music publisher failed to notify them that their 1974 country hit “Knee Deep” was sampled in a track by Dr. Dre.

Enrollment:

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Across the state’s 34 community and technical colleges, the system is serving more than 335,000 full-time equivalents, up from 125,000 last fall.

On the head-count side, the state enrollment topped 200,000 this year — up from 190,000 a year ago.

Much of the growth has been attributed to the troubled economy. Historically, during economic downturns, college enrollments go up as students seek training and retraining to compete for limited job openings.

The two-year system relies on the state Legislature for much of its funding.

“Students need good jobs and bright futures and employers need skilled employees. Our colleges will turn out highly trained workers as we battle our way through this recession,” Charlie Earl, executive director of the system, said in the news release.

But as enrollments grow, “they won’t be able to keep this up without funding.”

I-1000:

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This spring, I-1000, the ballot initiative that would allow the state to end its death penalty, will be on Washington’s ballot.

If a patient comes in and wants to talk about it, there are steps that the patient needs to be taken through. We just want to make sure (doctors) know all the steps.”

Jennifer Hanscom
WASHINGTON STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Obama:

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will be the Iraq war and the reeling financial markets.

“We face economic challenges that will not pause to let a new president settle in,” Bush told Cabinet members and other White House staff gathered on the South Lawn. “This will also be America’s first wartime presidential transition in four decades. We’re in a struggle against violent extremists determined to attack us, and they would like nothing more than to exploit this period of change to harm the American people.”

In a statement released by his campaign, Obama said: “Michelle and I look forward to meeting with President Bush and the first lady on Monday to begin the process of a smooth, effective transition. I thank him for reaching out in the spirit of bipartisanship that will be required to meet the many challenges we face as a nation.”

Obama spent his second day since the election, like his first, largely side view of a man working a gym, his side-briefing FBI in Chicago, then several men at the building heads (agent Chance German Olmert Prime Minis). When the day started, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, his aides and several others gathered in the Oval Office to congratulate Obama on his victory.

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