

OF LOSING HIS LATE-NIGHT GOLD MINE

have been genius, if it worked. But once it didn't, everything went to hell."

Yes, indeed. The latest from Tinseltown is that NBC and Conan have reached an agreement for the Brookline homey to exit with lots and lots of dough and a waiting period of around a year before O'Brien is allowed to launch a show on another network. (Fox is said to be interested in retaining the services of the red-headed Harvard grad.)

But Conan's exit plan reportedly comes with strings attached. A clause in the contract would require O'Brien to pay an undetermined amount of money to NBC whenever he siums the network, **TMZ.com** said.

Too bad, because Conan's nonstop trash-talking last week actually propelled him into first place in the late-night war with **David Letterman** for the first time since he took over Jay's slot.

"In the press this week, NBC has been calling me every name in the book," O'Brien said Friday. "In fact, they think I'm such an idiot they now want me to run the network."

Now that's entertainment!



Jay Leno, right, interviews Conan O'Brien on the final taping of his 'The Tonight Show' before O'Brien took it over last year.

A good cause

The **Dana Farber Bone Marrow Clinic** will register potential donors at today's **Martin Luther King Day Luncheon and Tennis Tournament at the Sportsmen's Tennis Club**.

The clinic is seeking a donor for an 11-year-old black girl named **Tatyana** who is desperately in need of a bone-marrow transplant and the donor must come from the black community.

Mayor **Tom Menino** is co-chairing the event with tennis guru **Bud Collins** and they will present an award to **State Street** executive veep **George Russell**.

Reebok gal **Dianno Hayes** also will be on hand to donate uniforms and gear, and car czar **Dennis Rodman** has donated a van to drive **Boston Public School** kids to the tennis club.

EX-New England Patriots linebacker **Joe Andruzzi** and his wife, **Jen**, who set up the bone marrow clinic, also will be on hand.

Do the Right Thing!

WE HEAR:

■ That Oscar-winning filmmaker **Robert Altman** and **Elliot Gould** are headed to **Boston University** on Friday to celebrate the 40th anniversary of "M*A*S*H" at their alma mater's annual **Winterfest**.

■ That "Ace of Cakes" guy **Duff Goldman** is headed to Boston on Jan. 29 with his instrumental band, **Soihadto**. The **Food Network's** baking bassist's band will play **Cafe**

like competition. Both were named this year's "Best New Chefs" in the Hub by **Food & Wine** maggie. The event is part of **Super Hunger Month**, a monthlong series of fundraising events to help end hunger in eastern Massachusetts.

■ That international hair artist **Naz Kupelian**, whose eponymous salon is located in Lexington, will be tending to the tresses of A-list starlets at this year's **Sundance Film Festival**. Kupelian, on behalf of the **RUSK** creative design team and **Conair**, will be styling celebs' hair before they hit the many posh events in Park City, Utah.

was in the first row of the mezzanine seated with local drummer extraordinaire **Sib Hashian**... **Boston College** senior and senatorial daughter wannabe **Ayla Brown**, wearing a "Brown for Senate" T-shirt, singing the national anthem before the **Boston College-Maryland** game and being shaken afterward when the crowd started chanting, "Let's Go Martha!"... Boston-based crafter **Sharon Fischer** embroidering tote bags with **Martha Stewart** on "The Martha Stewart Show," this morning... **Boston Celtics** for **Brian Scalabrino** hosting an open house in Winchester as a special guest **RE/MAX Real Estate** agent... "Eat Pray Love," writer **Elizabeth Gilbert** signing books at the **Harvard Book Store**...

TRACKED DOWN:

Boston Celtics point guard **Rajon Rondo** gracing the cover of the **Improper Bostonian's** "The Wine Issue," which hit the streets yesterday... Comedian **Richard Lewis** giving his Boston bud **Jeff Myerow** a shout-out during his sold-out show at the **Wilbur Theater** (Myerow

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PHOTO BY KERRY BRETT/IMPROPER BOSTONIAN
Boston Celtics point guard Rajon Rondo doesn't do any whining in the Improper Bostonian's Wine Issue this week.

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