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local news

Katz stickers first bumper

*Local human rights commission begins
a civil rights education campaign*

by Jann Gilbert

At a June 21 news conference, the Metropolitan Human Rights Commission officially embarked upon a new campaign to educate Portland about civil rights. Pins and bumper stickers reading "Civil Rights Is the Issue" and packets of information were given to the crowd of about 50 and passersby.

MHRC's mission is to "foster mutual understanding and respect, and to protect the human rights of all persons in the city of Portland and Multnomah County, regardless of socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, race, national origin, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation."

From a podium placed before City Hall's Fifth Avenue doors, David Farber, MHRC chairman, began the news conference by inviting those who were there representing organizations to join him on the City Hall steps. In a brief statement he said, "The Metropolitan Human Rights Commission condemns discrimination against and intolerance of members of the gay, lesbian and bisexual community, as it condemns discrimination against members of any group, and affirms the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings." He ended by encouraging those present to "Use your liberty—there is enough for all of us."

Mayor Vera Katz also spoke, insisting, "We need to stand, if not for our own civil rights, then

for the rights of others!"

Other speakers were Johnnie Bell of the American Civil Liberties Union; Laurie Wimmer of the Oregon State Commission for Women; Mark Jolen, representing the Homeless People Legal Issues Task Force; and Imam Shabazz of the Muslim Center. Shabazz mentioned a recent article in *Willamette Week* which named Portland "the whitest city in the USA." He stated, "We have an opportunity to change that to the 'rightest' city in the USA."

"Civil Rights Is the Issue" will be a multifaceted campaign: MHRC commissioners with special training will be speaking on the issue of civil rights, handouts will explain the terms used in the debate on civil rights, and an information packet will include a list of available resources. The pins and bumper stickers are an important and visible part of the campaign as well.



Multnomah County Chairwoman Beverly Stein's car received the first campaign bumper sticker, affixed by Katz, to general applause. Next up was a carload of students, with a sign on the hood reading "Fernwood Middle School." Also stickered were the harness of a seeing-eye dog, the back of a child's wagon, the back of a wheelchair, and a Tri-Met bus.

For information call the MHRC 823-5136 (voice, TTY).

March for Peltier urges clemency

Supporters of clemency for political prisoner Leonard Peltier marched from the Burnside Bridge to the Federal Building in downtown Portland on June 25.

Peltier is a Native American activist who is serving two life sentences after being convicted of killing two FBI agents during the 1975 struggle at Wounded Knee. Two other men were acquitted of the FBI killings at the time. Peltier and his support-

ers maintain his innocence.

The march was part of the Leonard Peltier Freedom Weekend being held concurrently in Washington, D.C.

Petitions urging President Clinton to grant Peltier executive clemency are being distributed throughout the United States.

"He's there for the wrong reasons," Jim LaPointe, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and chairman of the Portland chapter of the American Indian Movement, told *The Oregonian*. "People don't profit from his time in prison."

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