

Monologue

Idle Hands

By J. Dana Haynes

Back in 1976, the Board of Education in Island Trees, N. Y. decided to pull nine books off the shelves of that small community's schools. The books were referred to as "anti-American, anti-Christian, and anti-semitic," and it was decided that, for the good of the students, these books should not be available.

Better just to be rid of them, than have the town's children exposed to such things.

Unfortunately, the books were "Slaughterhouse Five" by Kurt Vonnegut Jr., "The Naked Ape" by Desmond Morris, "Down These Mean Streets" by Piri Thomas, "Best Short Stories by Negro Writers" (edited by Langston Hughes), "Go Ask Alice" (anonymous), "A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich" by Alice Childress, "Soul on Ice" by Eldridge Cleaver, "A Reader for Writers" (edited by Jerome Archer) and "The Fixer" by Bernard Malamud.

Notice please: How many of the above works would you label unfit? The books are, for the most part, exposes on the art of surviving in this culture of ours.

Yet the school board was worried that these books (some of which, at other times and places, have been called classics.) would corrupt the morals of the children.

So the books were banned.

This is not an isolated incident. All around the country, books have been banned or burned because parent groups, political action committees or concerned citizens have feared their content.

Such writers as Hemingway, Steinbeck, Joseph Heller and even William Shakespeare have had their works barred from libraries. In one community in Texas, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary was thrown from the shelves because the word "sex" was listed as a verb as well as a noun.

My father is a basketball coach/history teacher in a small town in Idaho. When he arrived at this school, about five years ago, the first person he befriended was the school's principal.

Some time later, the principal mentioned to Dad that the John Birch Society, an ultra-conservative and militant group, had been in to see him.

Apparently, the Society dropped by the principal's office nearly every year to go over the school's text books. Many of the history and sociology books were tagged as un-American, because they brought to light such disturbing things as Thomas Jefferson's slaves, U.S. Grant's affection for the bottle and general, over-all shafting of the various American Indian tribes.

The John Birch Society would then suggest "changes" in curriculum to cover these "problems."

Experience shows us that book banning is a bad thing. It springs from ignorance, fear and prejudice, and taints the quality of education in this country.

Just because we live in a state that sits comfortably in the middle of political road, we should not neglect the spectre of book banning. Not so much on the college level, true, but in the high schools and junior high setting.

When "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" is banned from the library of Mark Twain Elementary School for its racist content, which it was last summer, then it's time again to worry.

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Guest Columnist

'3' Consequences feared

(Charles Clemens is the Superintendent of Oregon City Public Schools.)

The biggest question before voters Nov. 2 is Ballot Measure 3: the so-called one and one-half percent property tax limitation. The logical first reaction for Oregonians is to say, "Sure, I'd like to cut my taxes—I am going to vote for Measure 3." But simply cutting taxes would not be the only result of the passage of Measure No. 3. Consider also its devastation of economic development with a resulting increase in unemployment,

What's worse, the so-called guarantee for essential services specifies only that those services will receive 100% of what they had in 1979. Remember that the measure would go into effect in 1983 and would ignore the more than 45% increase in the cost of doing business in the intervening four years. Consider also the massive unemployment that would result when schools, cities and counties are forced to layoff employees because they have lost up to one-third of their revenues beginning in 1983-84.

Ballot Measure 3 would strike an immediate and severe blow to Oregon education. Oregon's

"Come on to Oregon. We really want you—but, by the way, we can't afford to give you a sewer hook-up, a new road or necessary water services."

the derailing of our Veterans Farm and Home Loan Program, and the serious loss of local government services such as police and fire protection, schools, programs for the handicapped and elderly, not to mention streets, sewers, roads and other vital services.

First, let's consider the impact of Measure 3 on economic development. Once the 1½ percent limit were in place, nothing, not a vote of the people nor a vote of the Legislature—could exceed that lid. There would be no new bonding for sewers or roads or water lines to prepare industrially zoned land for development. There are thousands of acres of property in Oregon zoned for industrial and commercial development. We vitally need to bring clean, new businesses to Oregon to provide jobs for the hundreds of thousands of Oregonians who are now looking for work.

Eighty percent of the available land in Oregon is not now served by sewers, roads, water hookups, and other essential services necessary to economic development. Under Measure 3, these thousands of acres would stand idle because State and local government would have their hands tied. How is this so? Just like a family buying a house, cities or counties must borrow money at the lowest possible rate and repay that loan over time. They pay for the public services through the sale of bonds. Ballot Measure 3 would make Oregon's bonds much

investment in education has paid real dividends. Our illiteracy rate is half that of the national average. Half of Oregon's high school seniors further their education. Oregon students score at the top on national achievement tests. What would Ballot Measure 3 do?

Let's look at California which used to be a leader in education. Under their limitation measure schools have fallen from fourth to forty-eighth place nationally. California schools are highest in class size. A California senior graduating today would receive the equivalent of a student graduating at the beginning of the eleventh grade in Oregon.

Oregon's schools have already cut back because of economic hard times. Ballot Measure 3 is way more than mere belt tightening. It's a heavy slash at the very fiber of our educational system.

Consider also who wins and who loses under Ballot Measure 3. About 60 percent of Oregon property taxes are paid by commercial and business interests. Therefore, 60 percent of the relief goes to the business community which has neither sought nor particularly needs this sort of tax relief. Furthermore, three fourths of business property is owned by regional or national interests. This property tax relief goes outside the Oregon borders.

And finally, there are other important concerns: Oregon has had a long-standing tradition

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more expensive and much less attractive to the eastern lending institutions that have been making inexpensive loans.

Under Ballot Measure 3, Oregon would say to potential new business ventures, "Come on to Oregon. We really want you—but, by the way, we can't afford to give you a sewer hook-up, a new road or necessary water services." Attracting new business and industry to Oregon is tough enough now. Don't throw another roadblock into the process.

And what about Oregon's self supporting Veterans Farm and Home Loan Program? Ballot Measure 3 would STOP the issuing of new loans under that attractive program. Approximately 133,000 Oregonians are still eligible for Veterans Farm and Home Loans. If you are a Veteran and plan to use your eligibility to purchase a home or a farm, or to remodel your current place, forget it if Ballot Measure 3 passes.

And what about local government services? Backers of Ballot Measure 3 claim that their measure "guarantees" the protection of essential services. But the measure goes even further and defines for us what essential services are: police, sheriff, fire protection, ambulance, and paramedical services. Somehow the backers of the measure don't think that courts, roads, sewers, jails or schools are essential.

of local control. Recently, for example, Portlanders said "yes" to improving their stadium, to a new performing arts center and to a new tax base for their school system. Ballot Measure 3 would say that local voters don't have the sense to make such judgments for themselves and would move decision making authority from the local level to Salem where down-state and Eastern Oregon Legislators would be making important policy decisions for Portland people. And another thing: Ballot Measure 3 would cause Oregonians to ship more money to the federal government—about \$250 million in the 1983-85 biennium, and more money to the State Legislature to spend as well.

Ballot Measure 3 is much more than a simple property limitation measure. It is complicated. It requires great study and understanding. I would urge all Oregonians to know as much as possible about it so they can make the absolutely best informed choice possible on Nov. 2, balancing the property tax relief that can be expected against the loss of local control, the loss of local government services, and the shift of tax burden that would result.

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