

Opinion

Martin Luther King Day a good choice for full observance

By Dave Holmes
Editor-in-Chief

In an age when most 'heros' consist of fatigue-clad one-man armies, it's important to set the wheat apart from the chaff in the field of those to admire. And one hero our government has chosen as 'wheat' is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The choice is a good one as King was a remarkable man who strove to make all men remarkable, regardless of their skin color.

Superintendent of Schools Vern Duncan proclaimed in a Jan. 6 press release that Oregon schools and community colleges would observe 'Martin Luther King Day' on Jan. 15 as a tribute to the late human rights advocate. But is this well-meant tribute enough?

If the State of Oregon was serious about honoring such a great man it would have made provisions for its employees and students to have the day off. Federal employees honor the memory of King by turning an 'observance' into a full-fledged, day off holiday. For once, Washington D.C. has it's act together. Oregon could do well to follow their example.

While non-union state employees will get time for a breather from work, union affiliated employees will not. And the notion of having the day off from work or school is important.

Work and school are suspended for Memorial Day. Little children, when asking why they aren't going to school today, can be told of the great sacrifice so many men made for an intangible called freedom. Christmas calls attention to another great humanitarian, Jesus. And if we as a nation can take off New Year's Day, the national excuse to watch six football games through the haze of a hangover, then King, without question, should receive a holiday that honors him fully.

Perhaps a few letters of support to a local state representative or senator would be in order to remind those who stand for us in Salem that King deserves more than an observance, that a true hero deserves a true holiday.

Feedback

Tri-Met needs elected board

To the Editor,

Any metropolitan area worth its salt needs a good mass transit system. Business leaders have pointed to this as a factor in some business location decisions.

That's all the more reason why we need to get the Tri-Met mess straightened out.

Governor Do-Nothing thinks that sacking the old board of directors and appointing no less than three of his big private utility buddies will solve this problem, but he is wrong.

The Governor himself is the problem. We addressed this issue in the last legislative session by voting on a compromise bill that would have given our local area a voice in the selection of Tri-Met board members.

That plan received substantial support, but was defeated by Republican House members who did not want to take power away from a Republican governor. So much for good government.

My old political science professor used to say "the cure

for democracy is more democracy." That's what we need now. We need an elected Tri-Met board so we can all have a say.

An Interim Legislative Committee will be taking testimony soon. Let them hear from you. It takes more than public frustration to make a change, it takes a positive push in the right direction.

That direction has to be direct accountability to the voters.

Rep. Dave McTeague
(D)-District 25

Fear of AIDS unfounded

To the Editor,

In your Nov. 5 commentary "The place for kids with AIDS is in the home" you state that until there is no doubt that a child can not get AIDS they should be isolated from the rest of society.

You fail to mention what you think should be done to accommodate the AIDS victims education. Perhaps you agree that if isolated, they should be given alternative instruction. This raises the question of who should teach them. Is it volunteers? If the danger is as great as you make it out to be, who would volunteer for such a "risky, bend-over-backwards" job? Do you assign someone to do it? Why not draw a name out of a hat to see who the unlucky teacher is. Better yet, let's just wait until there is an AIDS-infected teacher who can teach the AIDS-infected children.

The mass communicators (television, radio, and the print media) have overemphasized the topic of AIDS to the point that we are fearful. What we fear is not the disease itself, but what we do not know about the disease. America suffers not from a "disease" epidemic, but from a "fear of disease" epidemic. It can be compared to the polio scare of the late '40's and early '50's when parents did not allow their children to go swimming or eat watermelon for fear of them

being contaminated with the virus. It was later found to be an unwarranted fear.

A report from the Department of Health and Human Services released on Nov. 14 states that there is no medical evidence that AIDS is transmitted by casual contact. Of all the risks we take - driving in a car, crossing the street,

etc. - transmitting the AIDS virus is a miniscule risk. Not great enough to take the AIDS child's right to a free education away or take away the right for the AIDS victim to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

David Warner
Editor, MHCC Advocate

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