



ALFRED L. HENDERSON
Editor/Publisher

EDITORIAL FOCUS

WE SEE THE WORLD
THROUGH BLACK EYES



McCrae indicts Black students

We demand the immediate removal of David McCrae, principal of Boise Elementary School. The charge -- racism.

In an article in the *Oregonian* on September 24, McCrae is quoted by staff writer Bill Keller as saying, "The idea of busing white kids in here is unthinkable. They'd be eaten alive." He relates that Boise students, 90 percent of whom are Black and 90 percent of whom are educationally disadvantaged, have a strong pecking order in which physical prowess and ability to socialize according to the rules of urban Black culture are the determinants of status.

Most white students, he concludes, even those strong enough to defend themselves physically, aren't used to the social rituals of a Black school -- the dancing, the clothing, the jive. Whites may be accepted, but they do not become leaders. "A white kid cannot excel here."

After an incident in which an eighth grade girl threw her cake-cutter comb and her shoes at a boy, incidentally shattering a cabinet window, the PE coach, Jerry Simmitt said, "The values here are a little different. Spontaneous emotion is part of the accepted order with these kids. You have to tolerate a little more than you would from other kids."

McCrae goes on to say, "We don't have the standards of other schools." Boise staff are accustomed to putting up with occasional outrageous behavior, frequent racy language, and activities which other schools call insubordination, the article goes on. Most teachers will tolerate obscene language, as long as it is not directed at them.

It seems the glorification of the seemier side of ghetto culture is promoted at Boise. Rather than teach children a standard of behavior which will enable them to continue in school, in work or the professions of their choice, the children are allowed to set their own acceptable standards. Those standards are in turn used as an excuse to isolate these children from the rest of the public school population.

How does this man propose to teach racial understanding when he promotes the idea that white children cannot be tolerated in their school. What kind of child is he creating?

We cannot accept the idea that the Black children that live in the Boise district are as anti-social as depicted by Mr. McCrae and some members of his staff. If they are, this is a further example of the effects of teacher attitude and racial isolation on young children.

Another ghetto school exists only a few blocks from Boise. Immaculate Heart is also over 90 percent Black. The Black students do not demonstrate uncontrollable behavior, the teachers expect and receive respect, and the students learn. The few white students are able to excel and to be leaders, according to their ability, and not only are accepted, but share in the "dancing, the clothing and the jive."

Black students from the Boise district who attend white schools are able to achieve and become leaders -- why is it so different?

We demand:

- 1) The immediate removal of David McCrae;
- 2) A halt to the clandestine plans to close Boise and other Albina schools;
- 3) Cross-busing to alleviate racial isolation in Boise and other majority-Black schools;
- 4) A statement of policy from the School Board and Dr. Blanchard on the conditions and policies of Boise and other schools in Albina.

Could it be that at Immaculate Heart and at the white schools children are expected to conform to the rules and to respect each other and their teachers? Could it be that they are expected to learn -- and therefore they do?

What is the school district policy? Is McCrae out of step or is he carrying out the mandate of the district -- to provide a holding facility for unruly Black children? Is that newspaper article designed to promote an outcry to close Boise? Or is it a case of an indiscreet discussion of an accepted policy by an insensitive white administrator.

The moral question of a school seizing homes, later to sell the property for a convention facility, is a serious one. But the destruction of young children is far more serious. Can the school board really afford to promote this type of "educational" environment?

House upholds veto

The United States House of Representatives has failed to override President Nixon's veto of the minimum wage bill. Under this law many millions of workers would have been covered for the first time by the Labor Standards Act. Their wage floor would have risen from \$0.00 an hour in states that have no minimum wage law to \$1.80, then to \$2.00 next July 1, and to \$2.20 on July 1, 1975. Nixon called the bill dangerously inflationary.

One group of workers that would have been affected by this law was the domestic workers. The median yearly earnings of year-around, full-time domestic workers is less than \$1800, and only one in six works full time. The typical domestic worker gets no fringe benefits. Almost no states have compulsory unemployment insurance or workman's compensation for domestic workers unable to find work or injured on the job. Only Maryland, Montana, New York and Wisconsin have effective minimum wage coverage for domestic workers.

Yet President Nixon says a wage increase to the lowest laborer on the pay scale would be so inflationary as to endanger the economy of the country.

But more puzzling than Nixon's veto was Edith Green's vote -- "Present". What is this supposed to mean? We would not have predicted a "Yes" vote from Mrs. Green, who has consistently voted against bills designed to aid the poor of the district and of the nation, but "Present" ...?

Mrs. Green is usually not afraid to express her views. She has been vocal in her opposition to busing and to the "War on Poverty". Surely she is not afraid to speak out against the minimum wage!

Maybe Mrs. Green remembers there is an election coming up. We hope she senses the growing awareness of her constituency -- the awareness that she is not the great "liberal" she was once believed to be; that her acclaimed activities in behalf of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party were a sell-out; that her interest in education does not include the Black child. We hope she feels the growing insight of her white constituents -- who now realize the OEO is not a "Black" program and that they too are being deprived of programs designed to assist them; who have learned of her rejection of supplementary Unemployment Compensation in a period of growing unemployment; who question her concern even for the elderly and the disabled.

It is too much to hope that Mrs. Green would begin to support programs for the poor and oppressed of her district. Maybe we should just be happy for a "Present" vote rather than a "no" vote. But this could hardly be called "leadership" on the part of one of the nation's most powerful women.

Brooke best bet

There is great speculation on who the next Vice President will be -- if Agnew resigns. If this should happen, President Nixon will appoint a new Vice President.

Many prominent Republicans are being discussed -- Gerald Ford, Nelson Rockefeller, John Connally, Melvin Laird. But the most obvious selection, if Nixon is wise, is being overlooked.

With a Black Vice President, Mr. Nixon would be secure. He would have no more worries about impeachment or a forced resignation. The Watergate scandal would soon be forgotten. Nixon's popularity would rise spectacularly.

Senator Edward Brooke is the obvious choice for the Vice Presidency. With Vice President Brooke only a heart beat away from the Presidency, the entire nation would be guarding the life and the reputation of the President.

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Talk, no action

Two months ago John Kenward and staff members of the Portland Development Commission met with the *Observer* to discuss residents' complaints on housing rehabilitation. An agreement was made that the *Observer* would not print any "horror" stories for two weeks to enable PDC staff members to contact complainants themselves and try to work out satisfactory methods of insuring that the people receive quality work and courteous treatment.

During that two weeks and the weeks following we have seen no improvement. The residents who called the PDC office were given no consideration or assistance. The harassment continues.

The week following the meeting with the *Observer*, Kenward and his staff met with the Albina Contractors Association, along with representatives of the Mayor's office, Commissioner Schwab's office, and Model Cities. Kenward agreed: that Ray Wilson would meet with ACA to work out a new system for allocating construction jobs; that Ray Wilson and staff would devise a new complaint procedure and present it to ACA for review; that PDC and Model Cities would notify ACA within one week whether they would transfer Model Cities' home repair project from PDC to ACA. ACA has heard nothing more about any of these three proposals.

It seems that Mr. Kenward and his staff are perfectly willing to meet and discuss -- but when it comes to action, they are nowhere to be found.

Enough time has passed for some constructive changes to have been made. Are we to believe that Mr. Kenward is incapable of controlling his program? Or does he think he is secure in his position and that he will not have to answer to the people?

Another Point of View

A Little More Candor

(Reprinted from the OREGONIAN)

The Portland School District could use a refresher course in honesty.

The district recently released to the press and its citizen advisory committees a "preliminary report" on how a year-round schedule would affect the city's schools. The report was dated August, 1973.

The report was an appropriate kickoff for the first formal discussion of 12-month schooling in Portland, but it was not written this summer. It was completed almost two years ago.

Though information in the report was publicly discussed in newspaper interviews at that time, the study itself was kept under wraps until this month, when it was issued under the phony date.

It seems logical to ask why. And we might also ask why, two years after its study, the best the district can come up with today is the same "preliminary" report.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Principal promotes tension

Dear Sir:

The September 24, 1973 article on Boise School by Bill Keller in the *Oregonian* warrants immediate administrative evaluation and parental attention. In my opinion, the statement "eaten

alive" reflects on the principal and the administration. Whether figuratively or literally, such a statement provokes and promotes racial tension. I feel that it is still the responsibility and func-

tion of education to achieve an atmosphere of understanding for all racial and ethnic groups!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Oslly J. Gates

Will community react to racism?

Dear Mr. Henderson:

I spent all of my childhood and young adult life in an inferior school. I know for a fact now that those schools were inferior because of the vindictive, prejudicial and racist attitudes of whites as aired in the Monday *Oregonian* by David McCrea. I'm not surprised to read what he had to say nor the fact that he was given the publicity and coverage. I'm sure his remarks were well-received by Portland's pre-

dominately conservative white population. And I doubt very seriously if he'll be reprimanded by his white peer group as suggested by Ellis Casson for saying what they all think. His actions to remedy many of the conditions that might exist would probably be sanctioned only if they continue to repress and retard the spirit and motivation of the Black innovative mind.

I've lived in Portland for a year now and I imagine that the Black parents of Boise, the board members, and the

one or two Black officials in positions to rectify or correct the situation or the attitudes and management of the Boise Elementary school will remain as dormant now as in the past, continuing to allow their children's education to remain in the control and destiny of bigots insensitive to culturally deprived and underdeveloped communities, it's inhabitants and their circumstances. Sincerely, from a Black who has been there,

Joseph W. Bostic
Special Consultant for PP&L

Boise teacher defends school

Dear Editor,

On two successive mornings this week, Boise School faculty members read their morning newspapers with dismay. The first article by Bill Keller about our school featured negative and sensational aspects of our situation, without adequately including the gains that have been made in academic achievement and learning achievement. The following day we read that Mr. Ellis Casson, representing the NAACP, had advocated the removal of the principal. Without waiting to read what the report of the *Observer* is going to be, I am writing to present one concerned teacher's point of view. There is much that could be said, but I will limit myself to three main points.

(1) Mr. Casson's protest was based on the news article by Bill Keller. He had a right and obligation to be concerned, but to my knowledge he did not come to school to talk to staff members and determine whether David McCrea is racist in policy or attitude. If he had, he would have received a different picture.

(2) Bill Keller did not report the statements of teachers with several years' experience at Boise, who did tell him of academic gains and general improvement of the learning situation. It seemed to us on the staff that Mr. Keller had preconceived ideas about what a majority-Black school was like, and he featured the items that reinforced those ideas. In this, he did a disservice not only to our school but also to the entire busing program.

(3) The principal's statements about the experience of white pupils at Boise need to be received in the context of the complexities of our racist society. The experience of white pupils at Boise is not the exact counterpart of the experience of our bused-out Black children at previously all-white schools, simply because the experience of Blacks in American society is not the same as that of whites in American society. It is naive to hold that children are children and a minority is a minority, and ignore the historical and social situation that the children come from. I would not depreciate any of the pain experienced by our Black

children who go into prejudiced situations, but I have observed that over the tragic years Black families have developed a magnificent inner strength that has enabled them to survive in a racist society. Few whites have had a comparable need to do so. Whites have had less experience at being in a minority situation, and they do not cope as well. Some white children at Boise appear intimidated, and their apparent weakness compounds their problems of relating in a group in which self defense is important.

In conclusion, I hope that we realize that there is no simple way to remedy an evil that has been compounding for several generations. It is not possible for one institution in our society to repair all the damage that has been caused by the behavior of the total society. The needs of Boise School and any other school require the cooperation of family, community, churches, as well as the school system.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Nance
Librarian/Teacher,
Boise School

Census cooperation needed

Dear Mr. Henderson,

I am writing this letter to emphasize the facts brought out in Mr. Vernon Jordan's article, "Census undercount loses dollars" (September 20, p. 2, col. 3).

In 1970 I was a Census Crew Leader. Mr. Jordan stated the values of being counted. My responsibilities included attempting to explain these values and federal revenue losses as a result of an undercount. Many people felt their rights would be infringed upon. They feared the federal government's record-keeping policies. How-

ever, similar questions have been asked and received by private and public groups. Therefore it was not necessary to deny the government the information they needed. Some of the problems resulting in not being counted were given by Mr. Jordan. Minority members and the college age group will suffer the most.

Census enumeration will always be inaccurate until the people fully support the count. The Department of Commerce has the responsibility of educating its citizens as to all the advantages of

participating. This includes informing the public of forms available in other languages.

Citizens have the responsibility of analyzing any governmental action. They must review a program and see if they or their community will benefit. Once they have considered the advantages and disadvantages of a program they are in a better position to accept or deny that program. In the case of census counting, in the future such action would merit support of census-taking.

Mrs. Berna D. Plummer
A concerned citizen

Weather wrong for all year school

To the Editor:

In our Oregon climate, summer is the time of sun, a time when children can and need to be outdoors. Even the most economically deprived child can enjoy summer days outside. No child should be imprisoned during the summer in an air-conditioned building. Please, let's not start year round schools here.

For the child of a low-income family, a winter vacation indoors in an impoverished home, without benefit of school breakfast or lunch, and perhaps without heat, could be very bleak.

Summer is for most children a time to unwind, to dig the earth, to ride bicycles, to pick berries, to swim and to participate in park physical

education programs. What would happen to our city's summer park programs under YRS? Is it reasonable to ask children to go to bed early on hot, sunny evenings?

The cost of air-conditioning schools is tremendous (an estimated \$15 million), and the drain on our already strained electrical resources is foolish.

Learning for living does not have to be efficiently packaged into segments paced so that there is little need for review of school work. It takes a lifetime of off and on learning experiences to educate a person.

Let's keep summer an extended period when children can be free to be themselves, to experiment with the uses

of freedom, and to really assimilate what living is all about.

Very sincerely yours,
Deanne S. Ater

Write on!

Dear Mr. Henderson:

Bravo your September 12 issue! Your editorials had clout and I couldn't agree with you more.

Most distressing to me is that some of the news stories such as the one about Clarence Harper hadn't even appeared in any of the local radio or TV broadcasts.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth L. Sale