



*We see the world
through Black eyes*

Is City/School Commission a diversion?

The Portland School District and the Mayor of Portland have proposed the creation of a (Blue Ribbon) City-Schools Commission to coordinate planning efforts of the City of Portland and the Portland Public Schools.

Obviously joint planning is essential. In the past, proposals made by the school district for school closures -- and rumors of pending closures -- have been detrimental to the neighborhoods the City was attempting to upgrade. The Kerns-Buckman-Washington controversy is a good example.

Mayor Goldschmidt has for several years talked about better city-schools coordination as being essential to city planning.

We have every reason to believe that had the city been involved in the decision making for the Albina -- especially through Model Cities, neighborhood associations, and the City Planning Commission -- we would not have a series of elementary schools with no upper grades and no middle schools. We welcome the City into the school planning process.

But a lot of questions need to be asked about establishing an independent Commission. To whom would this Commission be responsible? According to the School District proposal it is advisory to the School Board and the City but is responsible to no one.

Since it is merely advisory, how much strength would its proposals have? Any proposal would have to be accepted by the body involved -- either the School District or the City. Would the other have veto power? The proposal says nothing to this feature.

What would happen to existing community participation? The City has made great strides in including citizens in its decision making process. Neighborhood associations, citizen Budget Task Forces and other advisory groups have a lot to say about city planning.

The School District also has taken some steps toward citizen participation. Each school has an advisory committee appointed by the principal and each of the three administrative areas has an advisory committee appointed by the School Board. Currently suggestions regarding reorganization of schools can come up from the bottom, and according to District policy community approval is to be obtained before middle schools are established.

One of the duties of the new Commission would be to establish plans for one high school area that would include comprehensive program reorganization, plant renovations and strengthening ties with outside educational and social service programs. How would existing school and area advisory committees fit into this picture?

Of crucial interest to our community is the work of the Community Coalition for School Integration. It might well be that when this citizen committee makes its recommendations to the school district in June that they will include school reorganization, replacing upper grade schools in Albina, cross-busing, etc. Will the existence of the new Commission be an excuse not to consider the Coalition's suggestions favorably for four more years?

It would be pretty hard for a City-Schools Commission to look into school closures and reorganization without considering desegregation wouldn't it? Will this Commission take over this responsibility?

City and school planning is essential. But we believe it could be better accomplished through coordination of the City Planning Commission staff and the School District staff. This might necessitate adding some staff members -- but we hope not \$350,000 worth. This proposal has not been examined by the Board of Education or the City Council. We recommend that they consider it carefully.

Stop the Krugerrand

Portland's City Attorney has given his opinion that a City Council resolution banning the sale of the South African Krugerrand would be an illegal interference with free trade.

The City Council will soon consider whether to discourage purchase of the Krugerrand, which provides financial support for the South African government.

Across the country pressure has been put on banks and private enterprise to encourage them to drop the sale. One of the most recent successes is the decision of the Milwaukee Bank (Wisconsin), the last bank in the City that sells the Krugerrand to drop the coin from its offerings.

Give some Cheer

As Christmas draws near it is a time to remember those who are less fortunate than we. There are many fine organizations that provide food, clothing and gifts to those in need -- and they all need contributions.

There are many others who will not have a very happy Christmas -- persons in hospitals, mental institutions, and prisons -- many of whom have no one to visit.

There are many ways to extend a little friendship on Christmas -- a phone call, a visit, a letter, a gift, a contribution.



Black in perspective

by Herb Cawthorne

And one Black person said to another, "Where could you get an idea like that? Are you sure you grew up in the Black community? You don't sound Black to me; you seem like you belong somewhere else. That idea could not have come from a Black person."

Undaunted, the other might reply, "I have the courage to think what I want to think, knowing that my Blackness is not to be made by the formulation of one single idea. Say what you will. But my Blackness is like a beautiful varnish, soaked deeply into the structure of my existence. I do not prove my Blackness by manipulating my thoughts so you will think I am Black. I am Black because I was born Black. Now, that's settled. So tell me what you think about my idea."

Probably you have never heard this dialogue quite in this manner, but I bet you've heard something similar to it. It is one more instance of the tendency among Blacks today to narrowly categorize other Blacks according to some artificial understanding of "Blackness."

Certain ideas are more Black than others. Therefore, individuals who have these ideas are more Black than those who do not. Certain styles are more Black than others. Those who put on the style in the "Blackest" manner are more Black than those who do not. In this light, Blackness can be the very quality which serves to separate people of African blood, when it actually is what should bring us together.

Blackness is a heritage and a spirit. We cannot escape it, nor can we manipulate it's outward characteristics to suit our own temporary purposes. Blackness is the foundation from which we all must draw, in varying degrees. It is the

accumulation of the struggles of a people to be free.

Blackness is a shade of color in the skin, but more: It is a history of achievement and sacrifice. The Black experience ties us all to a heritage of discrimination and mistreatment. Because of the common experience, Black heritage pulls us together in the common bonds of struggle, of achievement, of humiliation, of broken dreams, of progress -- all in the spirit of knowing that we have hurt together, advanced together, and become more together.

Who has the right to dismiss the heritage of Blackness simply because they fail to appreciate a certain idea from another Black man or woman? The wonderful spirit of the African experience in America can never be denied. What people would have done so well with so little? Ideas, symbols, and thoughts can be rejected; Blackness cannot.

The shield of the Black community is refuge for all. Behind the shield lies the drive and motivation from which every member of the community can draw. The shield of the common heritage of the Black community involves a collective movement into the future, a ground breaking thrust forward. It belongs to everyone. It is impossible, though often tried, to "put someone out of the race," because their ideas conflict with some other Black person's "Blacker than thou" attitude.

Certain ideas are Blacker than others! Certain people are Blacker than others! The dangers in this phony kind of thinking are demonstrated in light of the vicious actions of the FBI against the life of Fred Hampton, the murdered former

leader of the Illinois Black Panther Party.

Fred Hampton was killed in a raid at night. He was killed, in cold blood, by the agents of the FBI. And they had inside help. One of Hampton's closest associates was an operative for the FBI. This informant is now thought to have been responsible for drugging Hampton on the night of the raid. The infiltrator was one of the trusted insiders in the Illinois Black Panther Party.

Yes, he had all the right outward symbols and actions. He was no doubt Blacker than Black. But this twisted Black infiltrator, whose language and actions were "right on," was actually a filthy blemish on the souls of Black folk. He had falsely gained the confidence of those in the Illinois Black Panther Party; he displayed the symbols that were "most" Black at that time. Deep down, he was rotten. It was a dangerous way to measure the value of an individual's commitment. For Fred Hampton, it was fatal.

If we must categorize one another, let it be in the largest of human terms. "I am human, therefore, anything that concerns humankind is of interest to me." With this attitude, the many facets of the Black experience can be developed -- the religious, educational, political, artistic, spiritual, moral, legal, and historical. Black people are so much more than the narrow pronouncements of one who seeks a temporary advantage by claiming to be the Blackest among us. We are many things, and when we expand our respect for that magnificent diversity among us, it will be easier to encourage our children to take the risk, and follow the star that guides them.

Letters to the Editor

Says hospital 'treatment' not conducive to health

To the Editor:

I don't know what your prejudices or misconceptions are about "mental hospitals" or mental patients or why we are locked up in the "Glorified Prison." I can tell you this however, ninety percent of the people have badly distorted views of the "Oregon Hotel."

I'd like to introduce you to the "Great Oregon Hotel" at 2600 Center Street N.E. in Salem.

On December 11, 1977, at 3:00 a.m. in the early hours of a Sunday morning, I took severely sick. It was something I ate. The diet here at State Hospital consists of: sugar, starch, pork, and oil. Can you see why I would get sick? Before my arrest I was a vegetarian. It is impossible to be a vegetarian at State Hospital. I vomited and had the runs something fierce. I lost nine pounds during the night. I went from 167 to 158 pounds, which shows the severity of my condition. I have never been in more pain in my thirty years. Only about six or seven times in my life have I been in as much pain. My pain was basically in my stomach.

I called the guards from my 8 x 12 foot cell. They were only 50 feet away, they heard me. They ignored me. I called

them about 20 times very loud. They just ignored me. Finally I picked up a trash can and battered on the bars and walls with it. Finally a guard came. He did not even ask me what the problem was -- he just ordered me to shut up. I interjected that I was sick. He said, "I told you to shut up. One more outburst out of you and you will go into restraints. There is nothing I can do for your illness."

Now this is supposed to be a Hospital? On the streets I would have gotten Pepto-Bismol or Alka Seltzer. I could have gotten buttermilk or yogurt or an apple.

They would not give me anything at all for my misery except a threat of violence if I didn't shut up. Later in the morning as the day shift appeared, I reported the incident to the nurse in charge. They just shrugged their shoulders. At 9:30 a.m. after the worst of it was over, I did get a medication called compazine. At 1:00 p.m. they gave me two aspirins.

Dr. W. Weisser, my doctor, was on the ward that Sunday, but did not consider my misery as important enough to stop by to talk to me about it.

The story you have just read is true in detail. It is by no means an unusual story. It is an everyday occurrence here. You can check out this story and many other atrocities for yourself.

If you are a lawyer, a concerned citizen, and especially if you are a legislator, I feel your moral conscience should cause you to contact me.

Robert Robertson
2600 Center St. N.E. 84
Salem, OR. 97310

Likes Spencer

To the Editor:

Herb Cawthorne's article on Ruth Spencer was a long overdue tribute to a lady who has fought hard and well for the cause of integration here in Portland. I regret that many minority members who have benefited from her strenuous efforts in the behalf fail to recognize their debt to her.

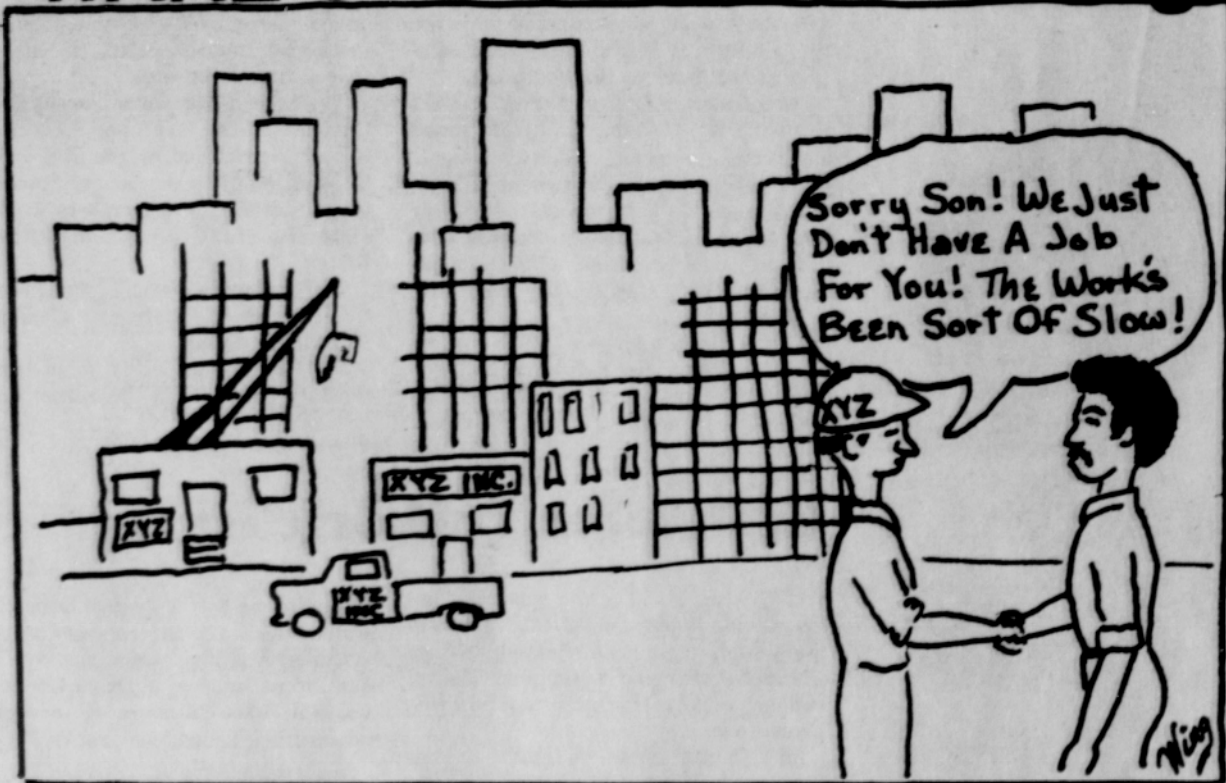
I speak with some knowledge of Ruth's history as she has been a contributing member to our organization for a number of years and has been of personal assistance to me in formulating policy and programs in regard to the desegregation issue.

Sincerely,
Caroline Miller
President,

Portland Federation of Teachers

WAKE UP

wing



Unemployment among Black youths is almost 50%...



ALFRED L. HENDERSON
Editor/Publisher

Portland Observer

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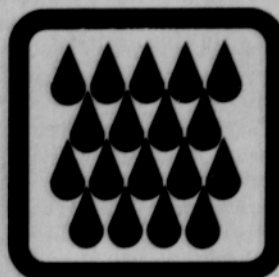
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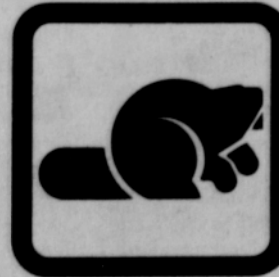
Color symbols identify Tri-Met routes



Northeast: Raindrop (Purple)



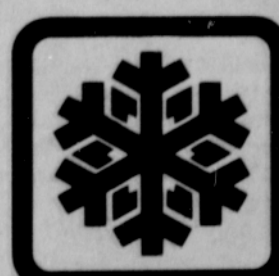
Northwest, North: Fish (Red)



Southeast, Gresham and Outlying Areas: Beaver (Brown)



Southeast (Oregon City and Milwaukie), Southwest (Lake Oswego and West Linn): Leaf (Green)



Northeast, East County: Snowflake (Blue)



Southwest: Rose (Yellow)



Southwest, Beaverton, Forest Grove and Hillsboro: Deer (Orange)

Service Area Symbols

A total of seven symbols will be used by Tri-Met to designate geographic areas of the three counties and identify bus stops on the Portland Mall beginning Dec. 11.

Tri-Met has divided bus routes into seven service areas by symbols. Riders can look for symbols identifying passenger shelters on the Portland Mall indicating where their buses stop. Colored symbols provide "at-a-glance" information for riders seeking a particular destination.