



We see the world
through Black eyes

If you're Black, stand back. . .

There still is much controversy over the officiating at the Jefferson-Parkrose AAA tournament game, in which an unusual number of fouls were called on Jefferson, as compared to those called against Parkrose. The sports writers are praising the officials and discounting any racism in the disparity, but Jefferson coach Bobbie Harris called the officiating "one-sided" and we have to go along with Harris.

It does seem unbelievable, even in a state where Blacks are systematically denied employment and other basic rights, that racism would enter a high school basketball tournament -- that adults would unfairly deny young people the rewards they deserve.

But it is easy to believe when we repeatedly see injustice done, even to Little League teams -- where Black children not only have to face the racial slurs of the opposing players, coaches, and their fans -- but have to endure having their game stolen by obviously unfair referees.

Now it is not hard to believe that a referee would give a white boy the benefit of the doubt or that the entire sports establishment would watch and refuse to see.

Support miner's strike

Most westerners have little idea of the conditions under which eastern coal miners must work. The current strike, now passing the 100 day mark, is not so much the result of low wages as it is dangerous working conditions. The miners, who have refused to obey the Presidents Taft-Hartley injunction ordering them back to work for a "cooling-off" period, are holding out for better safety standards, health benefits and pensions.

What is not known to most of those who would criticize the miners is that they work deep in the earth in caverns no more than three feet high. This means that they reach their place of work by riding flat on their stomachs on rail cars as far as five miles into the ground, then work for eight hours on their hands and knees. Not only is this back-breaking work at its best, but the tunnels in which they work are often not safe because the mine owners chose not to cut into their profits by providing proper safety assurances. Of course once a cave-in or explosion occurs escape is nearly impossible.

Aside from the ever present danger of cave-ins, explosion, or injury in the process of work, the men breathe coal dust all day, causing a high percentage of death and disability from "black lung." The

miners want their health insurance paid for by the company and they want better pensions for those who are already disabled or retired. That does not seem too much to ask and is no more than many employees with much less hazardous jobs already get.

The miners also want the right to leave an unsafe mine without being subject to punishment by their employees.

Before you criticize the striking miners, think about spending every day working in a small, hot hole miles under the ground and consider what kind of pay you would ask.

Another Point of View

Inside classrooms

taken from *The Oregonian*

It's a rare occasion when a parent can spend some time inside a classroom to observe how Portland's children are learning and being taught. It's not that the schools don't offer the opportunity -- in fact, they encourage it -- but parents and other taxpayers don't have or won't take the time.

The *Oregonian's* education writer, Huntly Collins, a seasoned reporter who also holds teaching credentials, did take the time and came up with a seven-part series that shared with readers the pride and problems the cares and concerns of teachers, administrators and the students. It was a deep, fair and accurate look that should not have been missed.

Reporter Collins looked at Creston School particularly, its handling of discipline, the handicapped, foreign students, slow learners and high achievers, through the eyes of the faculty, the administration, the children and through her own experiences. She took the reader deep into the learning experience of one Portland elementary school, but what she reported tells much of all Portland schools.

There have been reports of some middle-management "hassling" of some persons who gave frank appraisals and comments about the programs and who were quoted in the articles. But there should not be such hassling. The School Board and highest level of school district administration is well aware of the value of an honest appraisal of schools and their problems. Stifling criticism only hides problems that might be resolved if discussed openly.

The public would not swallow a puffed-up report on schools. Administrators, teachers, students, parents and taxpayers in general can only benefit from a deep and honest look inside the classrooms, such as Collins has taken and described.

Civil Rights-National Policy

by Vernon Jordan

Recently questions have been raised about the propriety of civil rights leaders taking positions on such issues as energy, tax policy, housing policy, and many others. Some people think Blacks should stick to "pure" civil rights issues and leave the others to those supposedly more capable of dealing with them.

That view not only smacks of racism in its patronizing attitude toward Blacks, but it also neglects the disproportionate Black stake in many national issues. And it neglects the fact the civil rights movement of the 60s was just as concerned about issues like jobs -- the 1963 March on Washington was for 'Jobs and Freedom,' though many people prefer to forget that.

Once many overtly discriminatory barriers were lowered, thanks to Black protest that led to civil rights laws, judicial decisions, and executive orders, we could concentrate on the basic goal of achieving Black equality in the realities of American life.

And that is why civil rights leaders in the 1970s are so concerned with jobs and urban policies. Some people think that makes Blacks no different from other interest groups. But they're wrong. We are different because we bring a specifically Black viewpoint to the issues, a viewpoint all the more needed because

conventional general answers to national problems would just perpetuate Black disadvantage.

The issue of unemployment is a good example of this. Officials and economists are talking as if unemployment is no longer a major problem any more. The official overall rate is down to 6.3 percent, a big improvement over the double-digit joblessness of a couple of years ago.

But the Black rate isn't getting better at all. In fact, while white unemployment declined in the past year, Black joblessness actually rose! So while white Americans talk about economic recovery, who but Black leadership should maintain concern about what is a Depression for Black people?

Urban policy is another issue that needs a Black perspective. Most Blacks live in cities. But many urban experts are coming up with plans for revitalizing cities by attracting the white middle class back. And they say not a word about the Black urban poor who would be bulldozed out of their homes. Who but Black leadership talks about revitalizing the cities by revitalizing their economies to help the poor?

Taxes are yet another example. There's plenty of support for the proposed tax cut but no one, other than Blacks and their allies, seem concerned about the investment tax credit proposal for new plants. There's one item that by

itself could wipe out the benefits of any urban policy that's developed because it would give companies a financial incentive to move out of older plants in older cities.

In effect, that tax credit proposal would result in a federal subsidy to increase Black unemployment. If Black leadership didn't get involved in such issues traditionally reserved for business and political leaders, we'd be failing our constituents, whose livelihood depends on federal economic policies to a greater extent than do most whites.

Civil rights doesn't take place in a vacuum. That's why Black civil rights agencies and leaders are coming forward to take positions on a multitude of issues that have a disproportionate impact on Black people.

And those current efforts are a logical outcome of the struggles of the 1960s for basic rights. When a hotel or a restaurant has a "No Blacks" sign, that's discrimination. And when far more Blacks than whites can't afford to stay in the hotel or eat in the restaurant that's also the result of past and present discriminatory policies.

So long as Blacks suffer disproportionate disadvantages due, in part, to policies that affect them negatively, it will be necessary for civil rights groups to make those policies and issues their major concern.

A waring on tuition tax credit

by Representative Shirley Chisholm

In the past ten years, the cost of higher education has accelerated at an alarming rate. According to the College Entrance Examination Board, the average annual cost of a public university education increased more than 40 percent in the past five years, from \$1,782 to \$2,906.

The cost of attending a private university went up more than 35 percent from \$2,793 to \$4,811. Today, middle class families find the cost of sending their children to college almost overwhelming.

In other words, the middle class is realizing for the first time what has been a fact of life for many poor and minority group's families for generations: Higher education may become the exclusive privilege of the wealthy unless the federal and state governments can provide financial assistance for those costs.

In the 60s Congress began providing direct grants for higher education for those families who cannot afford the cost of their children's college education. That program, called Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, has been tremendously successful in increasing access to higher education.

Now, we find that the middle class is pressuring for their own form of higher education financial aid -- they have instituted a massive campaign for a tax credit based on higher education.

I believe that this tax credit is an ill-advised way to address the admittedly spiraling cost of higher education. Furthermore, I oppose it as an inappropriate shift of federal attention away from the neediest segments of our society and towards those who are by any measure we can devise, better able to survive and prosper without this kind of federal support.

Not only are middle and upper income families by definition more financially secure than the poor, but the Congressional Budget Office reported last summer that family income has been keeping up with rising school costs. According to the CBO, median family income rose 72.9 percent between 1976 and 1975, compared to an increase in college costs during that period of only 65 percent.

The tuition tax credit proposal would shift to the taxpayers at large, a major expense for higher education assistance of the middle and upper classes.

We have more effective and more appropriate means of responding to the financial pressures middle class families experience due to the cost of higher education. For example, we need a national cooperative effort among colleges and universities, governmental entities and financial institutions to improve the effective operation of federal student loan programs.

As part of the Education Amendments

of 1976, Congress enacted many improvements in the Guaranteed Student Loan Program, improvements that were lobbied for heavily by the governmental and private agencies that deal with student loans.

In addition, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare has announced a policy of vigorous enforcement against student loan defaulters. Therefore, the time is clearly right for a national effort to improve and expand these programs.

We must develop partnerships between the government, bankers and higher education so that more private loans are made available and families can defer payment of education expenses until the student is graduated and is earning sufficient income to repay.

HEW has stated that it will propose a massive infusion of new funds into the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG) program so that more middle income families will be able to participate in that program.

While I understand the rationale for such an approach, I cannot endorse any proposal that will shift the focus of the BEOG program from the very needy students it was designed to assist.

The federal government's grants program should remain targeted on those who, without such assistance, cannot even hope to enroll in any institution of higher education.

Letters to the Editor

Parent defends Woodlawn school

To the Editor:

As a Woodlawn resident for 23 years and the parent of a Woodlawn student for the last eighteen years, I feel a need to speak up regarding articles and letters in the *Observer* about our school.

We have some "neat" kids of all races going to Woodlawn. Your articles have been most unfair to all of us. Those I read were written with little or no knowledge of our staff attempts to provide a rewarding experience to all students who might attend our school. You imply our children are freaks and we are crazy. It's a shame you jumped to such a conclusion without even visiting us or hearing first hand about our multi-cultural plan.

Frustration! I know the feeling well. When a few Woodlawn residents learned of reorganization plans for the Columbia, King, Vernon and Woodlawn areas, we formed a Concerned Citizen's group. We paid for and distributed notices to all the Woodlawn area. When attendance was poor at the first meeting, we insisted on a notice telling of several meetings at different times. Notices were posted in eight neighborhood churches; we contacted our Neighborhood Association; wrote letters to the *Press and Observer*, and conducted a random survey. We felt our community should be aware of the facts and have an opportunity to express their

desires.

Our school feeds into both the Jeff and Adams areas. One area had a middle school for us, the other didn't. Due to racial balances many of our minorities were required to bus elsewhere. We tried desperately to get people to speak up before it was too late. Where were they? Certainly not in large numbers at the meetings. The Area II representatives were there to answer all questions. And we asked them quite pointedly to make sure it was all in the open.

Their absence created the situation they now live with. Therefore, they too must shoulder the blame.

I walked from one end of our school's boundary to the other many times, day and night. Why did I knock myself out? My middle school would be Columbia-Whitaker, with the program they raved about. My concern for all our children kept me going. And they couldn't even attend a meeting!

Sincerely,
Noreen Hepp

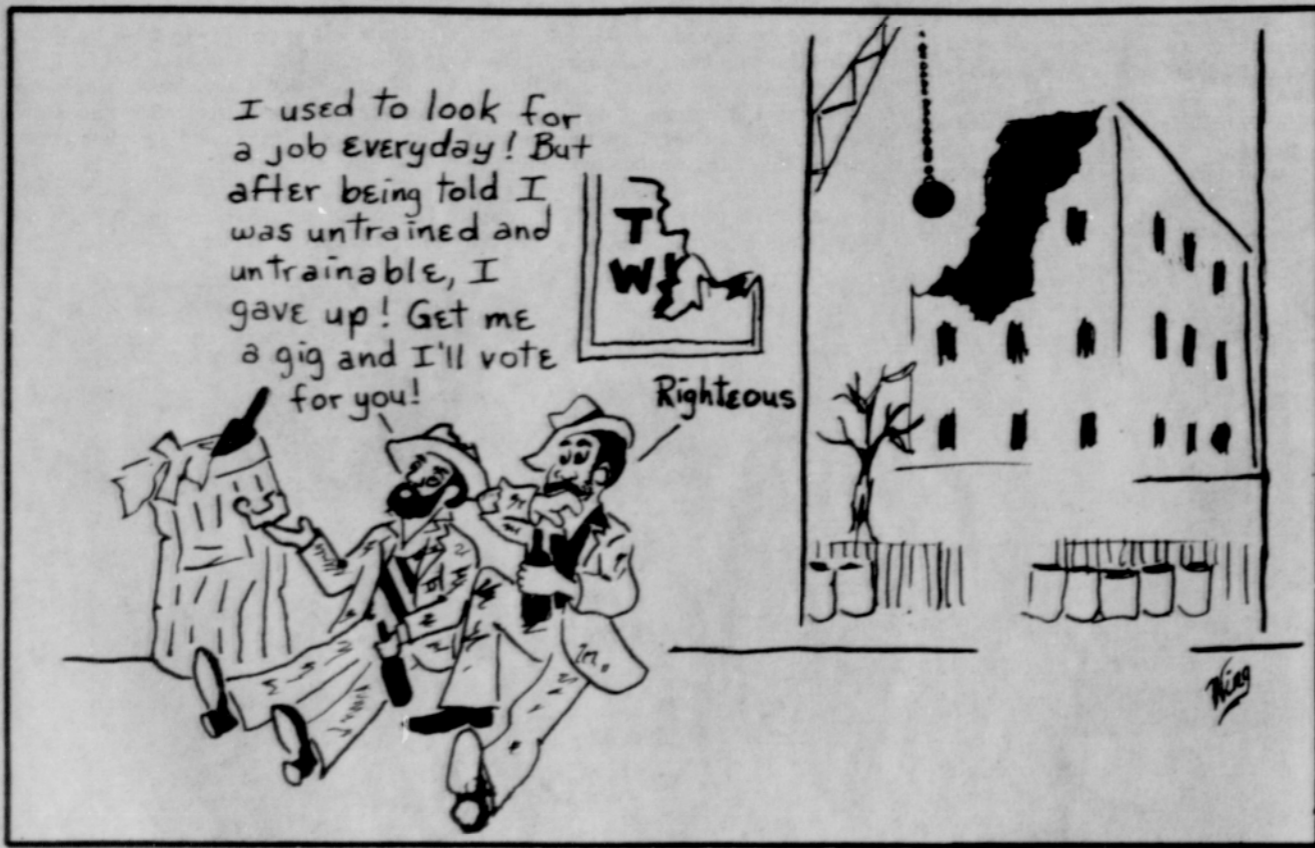
[Editor's Note: Our position against the Woodlawn proposal in no way implies that the school's children or staff are freaks or crazy. We simply believe the proposal to be racist and detrimental.]

Different view

To the Editor:

I believe that you are doing an extraordinarily good job in covering the crucial developments in Portland and the State. The editorials, the "Sports Talk" by Ron Sykes, and the comments in the "Behind the Wall" column help to see Black developments in Oregon in a different light.

Francis H. Shaw
Corvallis, Oregon



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