

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Congratulations!

A standing ovation greeted the appointment of Herb Cawthorne to the School Board. That ovation was a vote of confidence from the public—Black and white—who have come to know and trust him.

For the Black community, Cawthorne is a man who, no matter how successful, has not forgotten his roots. His responsibility and active leadership are trusted. There is no doubt where his allegiance lies. He made his choice when he told the School Board that more important to him than the appointment, is his role in his community.

For whites, Cawthorne is known as one who will speak on the issue in a calm and intelligent manner—though not without emotion and concern. For those who agree or disagree with what he says, he can offer some understanding of the issues from a Black perspective.

Although he cannot perform miracles, Cawthorne will be diligent in his efforts to bring quality education to Portland's children.

We congratulate him and wish him well.

## Watch the politicians

One of the most important issues facing this community and the state in the next two years is reapportionment of the State Legislature, which is done every ten years, following the national census.

In 1971 the Legislature failed to reapportion itself and as Secretary of State, Clay Myers got the job. He satisfied political pressures by dividing the Albina area into four House Districts and four Senate Districts. This was the only community in the state that he could and did divide.

A legislative committee has been appointed by Senate President Jason Boe and House Speaker Hardy Myers, who will co-chair the committee. Senators are: Mike Ragsdale, Beaverton; Richard Bullock, Portland; Keith Burbidge, Salem; Fred Heard, Klamath Falls; Dell Isham, Lincoln City.

Representatives are: Bill Rogers, Vida; Bill Rutherford, McMinnville; Gary Wilhelms, Klamath Falls; Gratan Kerans, Eugene; Max Simpson, Sumpter; Glen Whallon, Milwaukie.

Many of these legislators will not only be attempting to protect their own territory and that of their strong supporters, but will attempt to strengthen the representation of their party.

The rural areas of the state (especially Klamath Falls) are well represented, as is the conservative viewpoint. Hardy Myers and Richard Bullock represent the Portland area. Who will protect the voters of Albina to insure that four persons, living in the four corners of the block, will not have to see four Senators and four Representatives about a problem in their intersection?

Unless this community is very active, vocal, and watches this committee carefully, it will find itself gerrymandered again in 1981.

## Boat people:

### The Blindness at Home

Much of what has appeared in the media for the past several months indicates a national administrative preoccupation with establishing a humane image of this government by propagandizing its pretense of concern for the "boat"

people of the Far East.

Yet, here in the western hemisphere the refugees from Haiti, the first Black republic in the world, are refused political asylum in the United States. The tyrannical government of Duvalier has been a nightmare for a large number of its Black citizens for a long time. While the United States was still nopalming Southeast Asia, Blacks were taking to the sea in small boats in their attempts to escape the brutalities and persecutions at the hands of Duvalier's SS type armed militia.

The Black refugees arrive often at southern Florida points. Most make their way to Miami where there is a semblance of a Haitian refugee center. They are able to report widespread incidents in Haiti of arrests, beatings, torture, property confiscated and executions of friends and relatives, including names, dates and places. The sufferings of these people are directly traceable to the human rights violations practiced by a ruthless, dictatorship that is provided considerable assistance and support by the United States. These human rights violations are outlined in the 1976 report of Amnesty International.

The United States is a signatory to the United Nations Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and has pledged not to deport persons who have "well-founded fears of being persecuted for religious or political reasons if returned to their native land." Needless to say, Haitians are rounded up and deported, and most of those who manage to assume new identities in order to remain, survive in the throes of poverty. They are faced with immediate deportation if and when they are discovered. It seems that Blacks under any type of relationship to the American government can expect double standard American type justice...

## McNamara's the one

Frank McNamara was the hero of the day—finally making his decision and casting the first vote for Herb Cawthorne for appointment to the School Board. McNamara showed that he can provide leadership to the new Board in a strong and decisive way once he makes up his mind which way to go.

Monday was an important day for Herb Cawthorne, who joined the Board, and for Jonathan Newman, who left the Board. But it was perhaps even more important to McNamara. McNamara had the choice of joining the progressive wing of the Board, by voting for Cawthorne, or of staying with a sinking ship. He chose the former.

McNamara's choice left him in the leadership role. He now has an opportunity to more nearly follow his own principals and beliefs. The old Blanchard-Ridgley-Newman coalition is gone and McNamara is free to express his own individuality. Perhaps he can afford to be more mellow and less given to sarcasm and nit-picking.

For Superintendent Blanchard, the picture is not so bright. His strongest supporters are gone. His role as decision-maker has ended. The new Board will more closely examine his record and his performance will not be judged with sentimentality.

The question that remains is: Can Dr. Blanchard adjust to a new definition of his role, provide the information the Board needs to make responsible decisions, and carry out those decisions in a responsive manner?

We predict a resignation before Thanksgiving.



## The Steve Biko legacy: conclusion

by N. Fungai Kumbula

Notsikelelo Biko, Steve's widow was recently awarded the equivalent of \$78,000 by the South African government as a result of her suit against the South African police in connection with her husband's death. Biko died in detention in September of 1977. He was the 20th Black to die under mysterious circumstances while awaiting trial. When the other 19 died, their files were just marked: "Closed." Biko's file, however, has not been so easy to so conveniently forget.

The original suit had asked for \$108,000. The fact that the government paid out anything at all, even though at the same time they were denying any admission of guilt, attests to the power and influence Biko wielded and continues to wield. Any time a Black prisoner dies in police custody, as mentioned above, that is usually the end of the case. In Biko's case, however, there was so much hue and cry that an inquest was held to determine the exact cause of death.

Initially, the chief of police, one Col. Goosens had summarily dismissed Biko's death as a suicide. He claimed Biko had refused food and so had starved himself to death. His family and friends, however, knew this was a blatant lie: Biko had talked so many times about prison and what he always said was that, if he were arrested, he would never ever commit suicide because he must live to fight another day.

His family and friends kept up the pressure: demonstrating, writing critical editorials in the papers, continually questioning the police and demanding a public inquiry. Caught by surprise, the untimely death and the protests had elicited angry responses from around the world—world leaders, Carter and Young, among others, sent letters of protest to the South African government, the police then began to fumble for an explanation. Goosens came up with four different explanations in the space of a week.

Finally, an inquest was ordered, as much to silence critics at home as to polish its image abroad; the very first time they had ever had to account for the death of a Black. The inquest in itself was a mockery of justice. Every time the police and government witnesses were caught in a lie, the judge, one Marthinus Prins, would interrupt, offer an out for the embarrassed liar, disallow the question or adjourn until the police and government lawyers could get their lies straight.

In the end, of course, the police were absolved of any wrongdoing. Even though Biko's family lawyers had picked enough holes to make a sieve out of the government lawyers' and police story, Biko's death was still ruled a suicide. The official version was that he had banged his head against a filing cabinet until he died. As a 1940's B movie plot, it could not have been more ludicrous.

This inquest was supposed to clear the air once and for all. After it was concluded, that was supposed to be the end of Steve Biko. The world was supposed to have been convinced that the South African authorities were civilized too, and worthy of inclusion in the species called homo sapiens. Somehow, it didn't quite work out that way. Criticism of South Africa may have become muted but, it never died out altogether. The brutal murder of one of the most popular leaders, the world over, has convinced even the diehards of the viciousness of apartheid.

It's been almost two years now since Biko was killed but, far from being forgotten, he is now much more well-known than he was even when alive. By killing him, South Africa had hoped to remove a thorn from her racist side; instead, the thorn has turned out to be a hook. The murder of Biko convinced any and all who had argued for peaceful change that they are barking up the wrong tree. Rigid as it is, apartheid leaves no room for compromise. That leaves only one option: apartheid has to be rooted out.

It has often been said that 'You can kill a revolutionary but, you can never kill the revolution.' The killing of Biko may be the biggest

mistake South Africa has made to date. The ideas he planted will remain with us for always. We cannot bring him back but, we can do the next best thing: bring about his dream of a South Africa for all people. This will necessitate the destruction of apartheid, Biko's arch enemy. It would indeed be a fitting memorial to one of Africa's greatest sons.

A few months back, John Vorster, former prime minister of South Africa was forced to resign his new post of president due to his involvement in the Muldergate scandal. This was an influence peddling scheme which involved buying newspapers around the world and getting to write more favorably about South Africa. The very same papers that had pressured the government for the Biko inquiry are the ones that kept after Vorster until he was forced out. Apparently, they have learned their lesson well.

The resignation of Vorster was significant in that it caused the first major split among white South Africans. It made a lot of them who had been following the policies of apartheid blindly suddenly look up and start to think. It made some of them even begin to question the logic and validity of apartheid. Vorster was the major architect of apartheid. It was during his thirty years in politics that most of the most vicious and oppressive laws were drawn up. That he was kicked out in disgrace rocked apartheid right down to its foundations. Now most of these people who followed him everywhere like sheep are beginning to be a little more receptive to those voices that he had worked so hard to quell and one of the voices they are paying heed to now is, that of Bantu Steven Biko.

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## Desegregation

(Continued from page 1 column 6) cluded in the Black/white ratios of those schools in an effort to bring them below 50 per cent minority. Most white children return to their neighborhood school for the elementary grades. For the coming school year, 270 new white students were recruited, but no report was given on how many are grade one or above.

Regarding the problem of Black neighborhood children not being allowed to attend ECE's because there is no space for them, Dr. Blanchard said those Black students who register before schools starts will be accommodated. This will be a problem in the future. The goal is for racial balance, he said, and if you get more white students to volunteer, that creates a situation where there is no room for neighborhood children. In response to questions, he said there has been no change in rules for accepting Black students but a series of ideas has been considered.

### Middle School

The Board directed that middle schools be found for students of Eliot, Boise, King (area I) and Humboldt. Dr. Blanchard reported that Area I King has been assigned to Hayhurst and Gray, both K-8 schools; Humboldt has been assigned to Aisworth and West Sylvan. Students can also be recruited to other schools.

He said staff had discussed the possibility of a middle school at Eliot or Boise with a committee from the Coalition and was making progress but the Coalition cut off talks. He noted that the Board has (Please turn to page 3 col. 1)



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