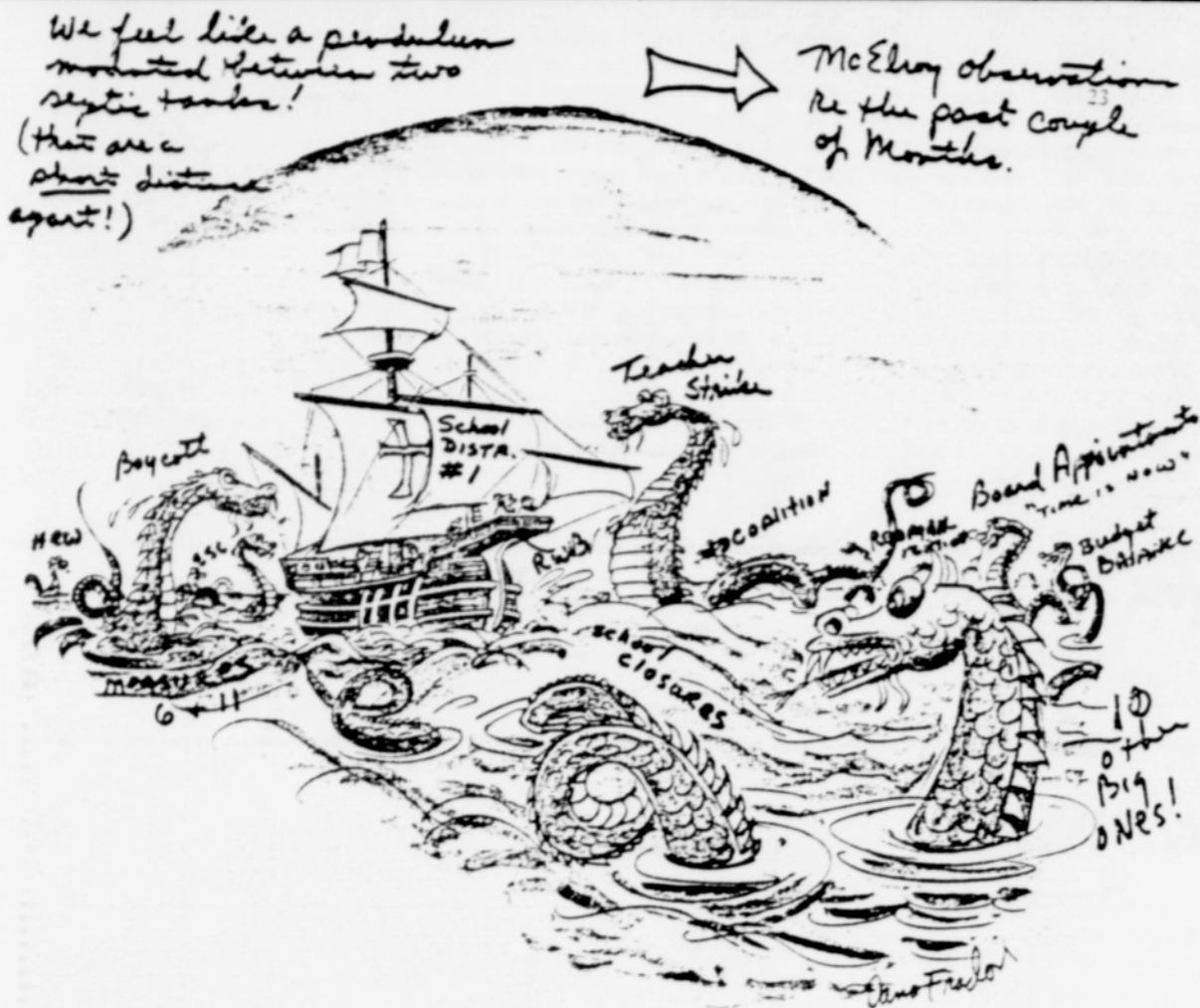


EDITORIAL/OPINION



"According to the charts, it should be all clear sailing after this."

Blanchard at the helm

Late Tuesday night, in a last minute effort after three months of waiting for information and philosophies to jell the Desegregation/Integration Committee of the Portland School Board brought forth options and alternatives for a new desegregation plan.

Meant to fulfill their promise of a "comprehensive school desegregation plan", the adequacy

of the plan is yet to be seen. Is it an equitable plan that will meet the needs of Black students, or is it another band-aid approach?

Leaving analysis and criticism until later, we will just present a "cartoon" that was distributed to School District administrators by one of its highest administrators this fall. It remains to be seen whether the sender's comment: "We feel like a pendulum mounted between two septic tanks" will come to pass and whether resistance to genuine "equity" will sink the ship.



Two ideas for middle schools

By Herb L. Cawthorne

The long-standing criticism of the Portland Public School's desegregation program has been centered around the fact that no middle schools were located in the Black community. While upper grades were removed to create Early Childhood Centers, no middle grades were created except on the edges of Albina. This led to Black children being required to stay at schools outside the neighborhood.

The work of the Coalition for School Integration discovered the problem and documented it; the movement managed by the Black United Front drove the message home. Now the Board of Education, in response to the resolutions passed in August, is considering preliminary plans for a middle school in Albina. The desegregation committee will present the "preliminary" plan to the Board; the Board will then present its version to the community for discussion.

The possibilities are Eliot, Boise and Adams, with Columbia/Whitaker involved. Each would make an adequate middle school facility; the advantages of one over the other depends on what else takes place in the desegregation program.

No matter what school is selected, the kind of program is very important. We will have to get behind that program, and insure by our consistent effort that it is a success. Whether white students are assigned into the middle school or whether it is a magnet, it must be superior. We can make it exceptional. This is the opportunity.

Knowing that the kind of ideas that feed our discussion will have a direct influence on the quality of the middle school established, I would like to discuss two ideas on the focus of a middle school program. First, **The Academy Middle School** and second, **The Fine Arts Middle School**.

THE ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Academy Middle School would be an exceptional program for achievement in both mental and physical activities. The general concept is "the strong mind in the strong body." Active learning and active sport competition would go hand-in-hand. The atmosphere would be strict and academic achievement would be highly stressed. Material

would still be presented in unique ways, but there would be high standards for skill development.

- The Academy would emphasize math and science.
- The Academy would teach international studies and foreign languages.
- The Academy would promote all forms of communication necessary for academic success.
- The Academy would emphasize social sciences, with particular attention to government, social leadership, economics, and citizenship.
- The Academy would have strong requirements on physical fitness and strong sports programs, based on a spirit of cooperation and rapport.

The sound fundamental program at the Academy would be enlivened by an exciting multiracial, multicultural core woven into the curriculum. The learning would be enhanced by perspectives from "All the Peoples of the Earth." It would also take pains to insure that Black history and culture was intricately included in the subjects children learn and read and write about.

In summary, the Academy Middle School will set high goals for learning, and would help us say to our young people, "We want you to achieve and we expect you to do it!"

THE FINE ARTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Fine Arts Middle School's basic aim would be to teach the integral relationship between the arts and all other vital disciplines—before students are engrained with the notion that arts are an elitist, separate subject matter. I realize some people will automatically dismiss this idea, saying, narrowly-mindedly, that we don't need anymore dancing and singing and performing—we need science and math, technology and communication.

The Fine Arts Middle School would be constructed so that the basic instruction in basic skills would not suffer. Those of us who presume to know the interests of today's children ought to at least give the young people the benefit of an open mind on this option.

The Fine Arts Middle School will be academically oriented with strong standards of discipline. Discipline and the practice of art must go

together. Subjects would be related to reading and writing, speaking and listening; the basic skills can be imparted as a child learns to write poetry, perform in a play, outline short stories, and develop public orations.

- The Fine Arts program would offer art classes such as painting, sculpting, woodworking, etc.
- The Fine Arts program would offer courses on all aspects of the performing arts, including dramatics, dance, music, speech, and interpretation.
- The Fine Arts program would offer less traditional subjects such as filmmaking, photography, metal sculpture, etc.
- The Fine Arts program would offer the special involvement of volunteers to organize, plan, and help youngsters prepare for simple recitals and presentations in class and in the community.
- The Fine Arts program would place heavy emphasis on selection of faculty, design of curriculum, and coordination of resources to develop a multicultural, multiracial perspective of the arts and the world.
- The Fine Arts program would reinforce basic skills; some classes, for example, might teach the mathematical and scientific principles of painting—while the child learn the skill of painting.

The Fine Arts Middle School would be a powerful magnet program which, importantly, could keep the school's population racially balanced while serving our children very well. I submit to those who reject this idea out of hand: simply because we have reached a level of world recognition in performing arts is no reason to resist an opportunity to cultivate the natural skill even further. Art is political. Good art can do a great deal to advance political causes. We should look at this option very seriously. It has many advantages.

These two ideas may stimulate discussion. I hope they will lead, ultimately, to the creation of the best middle school program in this city. To achieve this goal, Black people must get involved and stay involved in the conception, development and growth of the school. Let's take advantage of the opportunity!



African arts in Portland

by N. Fungai Kumbula

The Portland Art Museum this past weekend featured art from the West African country of Cameroon. Since African art is so rare in this part of the world, this was indeed a rare and exceptional occasion. Nearly all the papers carried glowing accounts of the "wonderful" art from Africa.

For most people who saw the pictures and other objects d'art, it was the closest they ever get to Africa. As a result, what they see when they do see it should at least be representative, should convey as close to the real thing as one can get. The pictures at the Art Museum were taken in the early '20's and '30's.

If these pictures were accurate in their portrayal of Africa, one would not object too much to their age. When one considers the change Africa has undergone and also the fact that the photographer who took these pictures seemed to go looking for a specific kind of Africa, one then fully understands the enormity of the insult and harm this art exhibit has done.

The pictures were taken by a Mr. Paul Gerberer, a white missionary who went to the Cameroon in the early '20's. What his opinion of Africans was, one cannot hazard a guess but it is a well known fact that he was coming from the society that gave the world the infamous tarzan

movies. It is a fairly safe gamble to say that every American at some point or other has watched one of these movies: the great white man coming to save the hapless "savages." The "savages" almost always seem to go around naked, dance at the drop of a hat and are generally helpless children, really, who could not have survived but for the benevolence, good heart and the wisdom of the white man. Considering Africa is the original home of the human race, how they managed to survive until then is a question the tarzan moviemakers dare not even address (because it would kill their whole movie).

The pictures at the Art Museum would have done justice to the most convoluted tarzan movie. They show naked Africans, some dancing, some carrying enormous burdens on their heads, a loin clothed man running in the rain with a leaf frond on his head for a parasol. Not one of these people looks half way decent; not one looks half way intelligent. These pictures are being shown in Portland in 1979 to Americans who have never seen what Africa looks like. Result: they reinforce the same old stereotypes, distortions and misconceptions about Africa.

If Africa were like that, one would have no objections at all to this exhibit or if the American public

were better informed about the real Africa the damage would not be so great. It has always puzzled a lot of the Africans why it is that when foreigners, American and otherwise, come to Africa, they hate to see Africans in jeans, business suits and other Western attire. To them it seems Africans driving cars, running computers, flying planes, using telephones and living in "ordinary" houses are not really Africans. So they have to go out to the back of beyond to find the "real" Africans.

The exhibit has attracted a lot of attention. One wonders though what the response would have been if Geuberer had just taken pictures of ordinary everyday Africans. Normally, it would seem that one who was going to present a particular people's culture would take the trouble to present a balanced perspective. Not so with this Geuberer collection. The real African is not shown at all. What is shown is the African of his fantasies. It is still a very sad world when in this day and age, instead of fostering understanding among people, some people still expend so much energy doing so much harm. The African community should be aware of this and should take steps to challenge it.

The klan rides again. So it's only natural that tarzan should be raised from the grave. What's next? Jim Crow?

Desegregation

(Continued from page 1 col. 6)

Alameda. This would be the first time that white children would be mandatorily assigned to a school in Albina.

The Boise or Eliot magnet school envisions an "academy" where superior educational offerings would draw white students.

The committee has not addressed the question of drawing white students into the upper grade classes in the Albina early childhood education centers. Currently those programs are overwhelmingly white at the pre-K and kindergarten level displacing Black children, but the 3rd to 5th grades are virtually all Black.

The Board will consider the plans on Monday at 7:30 p.m. and will submit them for public discussion.

Letter

To the editor:

Reference CODA analysis of Ed Leek (Nov. 15th issue) that Mr. Leek is able to confirm my story of Nov. 8th. I'm also happy to know that the staff of CODA can identify their best interests even when they're in conflict with community desire for detail and substance in a treatment program.

Donald M. Fuller

PORTLAND OBSERVER

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