

Blanchard vs Board of Education showdown near

What is considered by many to be a brilliant political move was made by Portland School Superintendent Robert Blanchard last Saturday. With a lengthy *Oregonian* article charging the School Board with causing widespread loss of staff morale scheduled for Saturday afternoon publication, with the Board's desegregation planning progressing at a snail's pace, with Blanchard's termination only a matter of when and how, the Superintendent forced the issue and brought public (or at least press) condemnation down on the heads of the School Board.

A majority of the Board now holds the opinion that Dr. Blanchard can no longer work with the

Board and some of those members also believe much of their inability to complete desegregation planning in a timely way is due to the Superintendent's lack of cooperation. Yet the Board's failure to act decisively on the issue of Dr. Blanchard's employment has allowed the conflict between him and the Board to be turned against the five new and "liberal" members of the Board.

The tension between the Superintendent and some members of the Board increased last week when they discovered that funds for the desegregation plans they have been discussing for the past eight months were not included in the Superintendent's recommended budget.

The Board will have to include funds for the plan in the budget by removing other items during this week's budget hearings.

On March 24th, after advising the Board that there might not be funds available to establish the proposed new middle school at Eliot, Dr. Blanchard advised the Board of his opposition to the Eliot site. He advised that desegregation at the new school would not be successful because it would open with a majority Black enrollment and would not draw white transfer students. Board members Wally Priestley and Herb Cawthorne responded immediately, Priestley

charging the Superintendent with making a political statement and Cawthorne saying the statement perpetuates a racist notion that majority Black schools are inherently inferior.

During the Saturday morning Board meeting, Cawthorne reported to the Board the negative reaction of the Black community to Blanchard's statement.

Blanchard asked for an executive session, a closed meeting that can be held legally to discuss personnel matters. Holding an executive session prevents the participants and the *Journal* reporter who attended from discussing the substance of the meeting publicly.

That the Superintendent had planned to request the closed meeting was demonstrated by his reading a three page typewritten statement charging the Board with criticizing him publicly and thereby adversely affecting staff morale and his ability to administer.

Blanchard said criticism from some Board members is not only damaging his reputation and undermining his ability to administer, but "throughout this organization there is a sense of anxiety that is real. This includes not just administrators, but also teachers, secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, and maintenance workers - in other words, a large and important

organization in the community is experiencing a leadership crisis."

Stating he would not resign, Blanchard said he is being treated unfairly and he's been made the scapegoat. He challenged the Board to either quit criticizing him publicly or to begin discussion on termination of his contract.

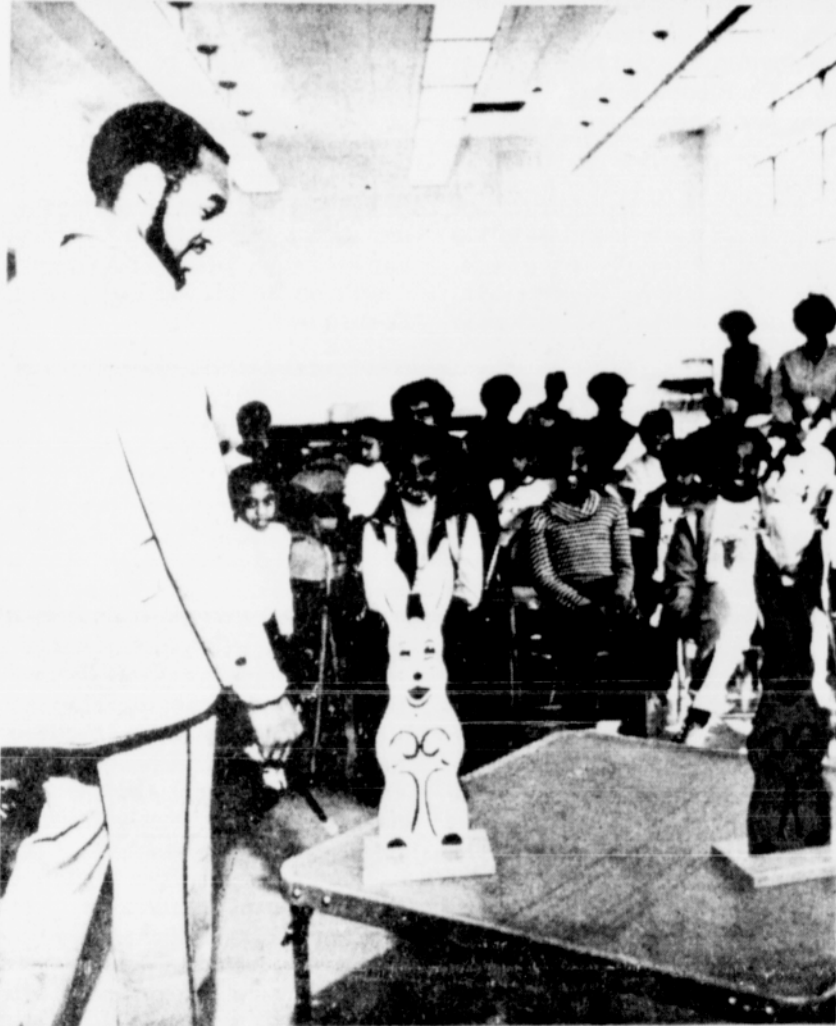
The purpose of the closed executive session is to protect the confidentiality of the discussions pertaining to criticism or discipline of employees. However, when an *Oregonian* reporter arrived at the opportune time he was provided with a copy of Blanchard's (Please turn to page 10 col. 4)

PORTLAND OBSERVER

USPS 959 680



Volume 10 Number 13
April 3, 1980
10¢ per copy



Youngsters of the local chapter of Jack-n-Jill were dazzled by the magic of Anthony Gilmore Saturday at the Matt Dishman Center. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

St. Andrew opposes registration

St. Andrew Catholic Church's Parish Council has adopted a resolution that registration for the draft be rejected and that "continuing education and discussion in the search for alternative methods of maintaining world peace be promoted."

The St. Andrew Parish Council conducted a special parish meeting on the issue, inviting general comment. There was unanimous opinion in support of a program of education and of continuing discussion of the matter. Alternatives to compulsory registration that were suggested include: gas rationing, development of alternative energy resources, multinational negotiations, and greater use of the United Nations.

Believing the Church has a duty to speak on moral issues, the St. Andrew Parish Council has spoken on such issues as the JP Stevens Boycott, the death penalty, and the Black United Front's effort to desegregate the Portland Public Schools.



Obo Oody teaches a class at Gregory Heights School in Artists in Schools program. (Please see story on page 7) (Photo: Susan Hamada)

NAACP head speaks on energy



MARGARET BUSH WILSON

Margaret Bush Wilson, Chairman of the National Board of NAACP, will visit Portland as a guest of "Oregon Voice of Energy." While in Portland on April 21st and 22nd, she will speak at a luncheon sponsored by the Portland Branch NAACP and at a public forum at Portland State University.

Mrs. Wilson is a senior partner in the law firm of Wilson, Smith and Smith in St. Louis. Her legal experience includes service with the Justice Department and the Department of Agriculture; she was assistant Attorney General of Missouri. She was acting director of the St. Louis Model Cities Agency and a legal services specialist for the War on Poverty.

Mrs. Wilson was elected chairman of the NAACP Board of Directors in 1975 and is serving her fifth term in that office.

She is a member of the board of the Monsanto Company, United Way of America, Mutual Real Estate Investment Trust, the Police Foundation and several universities. The luncheon will be held at

Bourbon Street, 1530 NE Grand Avenue, at 11:45 a.m. For reservations contact the NAACP office.

The Energy Symposium will be sponsored by:

Edition Electric Institute (EEI), Portland General Electric Company, Association of Oregon Industries and Western Environmental Trade Association (WETA).

Scientist Committee on Energy, Americans for Energy Independence, National and Oregon Chapter, Oregon Voice of Energy, and Oregon Women's League.

Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), Portland Chamber of Commerce, Beaverton Chamber of Commerce, Sandy Chamber of Commerce and St. Helene's Kiwanis.

Oregon State University, Departments of International Studies and Nuclear Engineering; Portland State University, School of Economics and Environmental Education Center; Reed College, Department of Physics and Economics and More Power to Ya', University of Oregon.

Prisoners challenge grand jury

Twenty-eight prisoners at Oregon State Penitentiary have filed a class action suit in Federal District Court charging that unconstitutional actions by the state denied them their civil rights and led to their incarceration.

The suit charges that the exclusion of Blacks from grand juries which indicted them and led to their convictions denied them equal protection of the law. "Substantial under representation, as a result of purposeful discrimination, is as much a constitutional violation as total exclusion."

The suit maintains that the constitutional requirements are not met merely by showing that there are occasional Blacks on grand juries if over a significant period of time there is a disparity between the proportion of Blacks in the general population and the proportion called to serve as grand jurors, and if the selection process either

provides a way to discriminate or if it is racially neutral. Grand jurors are chosen by lot from the registered voters of the county.

The suit asks that the state comply with federal requirements that an individual be tried by a jury of "peers", that the plaintiffs be awarded a sum of \$150,000 million divided among them and their class, and that they be granted new trials.

The men filing the suit are: Vincent Johnson, Ozzie Bachelor,

Robert Barrett, William Bates, Roy Branch, Isaac Boyd, Ricky Brothers, Leonard Carter, Reginald Cox, Walter Dart, Richard Davis, Skillful Davis, Michael Dee, Thomas Green, David Jones, James Lamberth, Robert Mines, Terry Mines, James North, Robert Motton, Leon Phillips, Julius Snowden, Arnold Turner, Anson Wesson, Charles Williams, Kenneth Williams, Marcus Jackson, George McCline.

Conyers speaks in Seattle

Representative John Conyers will be the keynote speaker for the Northwest Conference of Black Public Officials Spring Conference in Seattle. The conference will be held April 19th and 20th, in the Olympic Hotel.

Representative Conyers (D-Michigan) will speak on "The Politics of the Eighties."

Ambassador-at-large W. Beverly Carter of the U.S. State Department will be the luncheon speaker, talking on foreign policy as it relates to the Third World and the Black citizen.

An afternoon workshop will explore the role of the Black church. For further information call (206) 625-2455.

Murder in the Cathedral ignites Christian inspired revolution

By Blase Bonpane

(PNS) To many North Americans, the assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero appears to be only the martyrdom of a brave priest witnessing for social justice and against violence. Politically, it marks the loss of a moderate voice in the revolution rising all over Central America.

But to the people of El Salvador -- and all over Central and South America -- it means much more. For despite the efforts to portray Romero as a moderate between left and right, in recent months the Archbishop's tentative support for the patchwork middle-of-the-road regime had given way to nearly unqualified endorsement of popular

revolution -- even if it meant bloodshed.

The Archbishop was shot shortly after he had finished saying Mass on March 24. By this act, the killer or killers may have struck a spark which will ignite revolution in the entire region. Like the medieval assassination of Thomas Becket, which Romero's murder eerily resembles, the bullet fired in San Salvador hit a symbolic target.

Romero had become a bridge: between the moral authority of the Church and the moral argument for revolt between the increasingly radicalized priests of Latin America and its increasingly politicized Indian masses between the Indians and the urban working class poor.

That -- and not his abandoned

support for moderation -- may also explain why Oscar Romero was killed.

As late as October, Romero was asking his followers to respect government-sponsored initiatives for peaceful land reform. But by the new year, those initiatives had either proven empty, or were offering a pretext to send military units into the countryside. Subsequently, many reports reached the American press of widespread slaughter of peasants by troops.

On February 5, Romero declared that the government "lacks any popular backing and can count only on the support of a few foreign powers." An insurrection, he continued, "could be less costly in terms of damage and human lives

than the crystallization of a chaotic process like the one we are experiencing."

"We are now in the middle of a current that cannot be stopped, even if one dies," he said on March 1. Three weeks later, he was dead.

Romero's dedication to a better future for his oppressed flock was not an isolated phenomenon. In Guatemala, the Jesuit order has taken a leading role in protests against a repression so harsh that it has resulted in an estimated 20,000 deaths over the past decade. The Bishops of neighboring Honduras have issued a statement declaring that "the people are tired and distrustful of the dirty demagogic games of politics of former times." Central America, the statement con-

tinues, is going through "a process of change which seemingly is very radical and irreversible."

And Romero himself was responsible for the fact that unrestrained capitalism and police state government were condemned by the general Conference of Latin American Bishops at Puebla, Mexico, in January, 1979.

The endorsement of popular liberation movements by the Catholic hierarchy is a relatively new development, but it follows almost twenty years of grass-roots political and social organization by Catholic priests among the Indians, peasants and workers of Latin America. In Central America, a great deal of this activism was focused in programs called Cursillos

de Capacitacion Social -- intensive crash courses in social justice established in 1962, which attracted thousands of young people.

With time, the Cursillos became dangerous; they helped politicized the Indians and organize workers. My center was eventually bombed and a number of my students, some of them Jesuits or Maryknoll priests and nuns, others university students, joined rebel groups.

I was an advisor to the Cursillo in Guatemala until my expulsion in 1967. For seven days, our students studied capitalism, socialism, Marxism, Papal encyclicals, and sociological data -- in short, anything that might offer some way out of the misery that darkens the (Please turn to P 2 Col 5)