

Boycott: Voting with your feet

By Claudia Fisher

The Portland School Board made a mighty attempt to reach consensus among its members and to put forth a desegregation plan that, overall, would provide policy which would be viewed as having merit by diverse segments of the community. The Board is to be commended for that effort.

Apparently, however, the Board failed to appreciate the degree to which the Black United Front and its supporters are committed to the realization of greater parental involvement in the board range of school decisions. It is not apparent that the Board seriously considered the BUF proposal for citizen involvement in staff assignment. Instead, it swallowed the educational institution's historical bureaucratically self-protectionist line that such involvement is unworkable and unprofessional.

The BUF proposed that the Board select four of a nine person staff Selection Committee with the other five persons to be school administrators assigned as directed by the Superintendent. This committee would submit recommendations on the hiring of newly assigned principles and teachers, and consider the transfer of principals and teachers.

At the neighborhood level, parents and residents would be members of a neighborhood review board which would work with the principal to review and recommend teachers and principals working or wishing to work at the school. Recommendations on teachers would go to the principal, and recommendations on principals would go to the District Staff Selection Committee.

BUF proposals cannot reasonably be construed to be an attempt to wrest control from "experts;" all that is being asked for is advisory involvement in decisions. The wonder is that the BUF asked for so little. Undoubtedly, an attempt was made by the BUF to be politically realistic. But its moderate proposals were brushed aside. It is not untried nor irresponsible to advocate for parent involvement in staff selection. In this city's current climate, it's vital.

Analysis

One question being considered here is that of competence and who has the ability and right to judge that competence. Another question is how a governance system can best be made accountable and responsive. But the questions go beyond these to one of trust and rapport. Rather than being technical or "professional" considerations, accountability, trust and rapport are essentially political questions, the answers to which will remain buried until meaningful parent involvement in school processes is born and grows to become mutual skilled and sensitive.

Parents cannot now assure skilled and sensitive teachers will guide their children. They do not have the minimal option of requesting that their child be (or not be) assigned to a particular teacher. Dissatisfaction with a teacher or other staff member must be borne by parent and child with hope for luck next year and minimal damage in the meantime.

Allowing parents this option of choice is not untried in the U.S., nor is it irresponsible. Having such an option for parents should be added to BUF proposals.

It is not irresponsible to advocate that, from Board members and the Superintendent on down to school staff, parents and students, each participant in school governance be given opportunity to take part in regular, periodic evaluation of the performance of other system participants. Such feedback is constructive and it identifies and leads to conflict resolution through built in institutional processes. The BUF could add such evaluation to its list.

To assume any of these attempts at accountability and responsiveness would result in a "popularity contest" (Oregonian, April 25th editorial) is to make the continuing paternal and in this instance probably racist assumption that parents are incapable of responsible evaluation of the quality of teaching their children are being provided. With an on-going nationwide crisis of confidence in the public educational system, evaluations will be made by those inside and outside of the system. Black resentment will continue at being asked to silently submit to a white controlled power structure dictating staff, curriculum and teaching method for children whose needs the educational institution is widely recognized to have been incapable of serving or even identifying.

As the boycott evidences, what was intolerable to the BUF remains intolerable, even though some demands were met. Where no trust or rapport has existed between Black parents and largely white school staff, none will automatically or magically appear in a new middle school. With a lack of such a position atmosphere for learning, children, parents, teachers and the system itself will continue to suffer.

Resolute bodies and sound ideas are the only powers the BUF has. The Oregonian says dissatisfied parents "ought to get in the trenches." That is precisely where these parents have been. They are not shrinking responsibility; they are demanding that it be given, by right, to them. Parents are unlikely to settle for superficial participation levels at which they can have no impact. Once in the trenches, one does not sit in meek acquiescence. It would be infinitely more constructive for the School Board, the administration, and the press to consider means to assist parents in exercising the right to help assure their children reach their potentials. With more inclusive school processes, children, parents and staff would grow in understanding and productivity.

A symbolic boycott action builds strength and resolve and can be a valuable learning experience for children and all concerned. Attempts, as by the Oregonian, to label those proposing such political action as "petulant" and to summarily dismiss BUF complaints with the present plan is irresponsible and counter productive. Regretably, it demonstrates continued ignorance of the hearts and minds of those whose actions are condemned.

Jordan visit

(Continued from page 1 col 2)
fluence policy and an active Washington bureau.

Jordan is a member of several boards of directors, including American Express Co., Atlanta University Center, Corp., Rockefeller Foundation and J.C. Penny, Inc.

The annual meeting will be the first under the local league's new executive director, Freddie Petett.

Jordan also will speak at a commerce and industry luncheon Friday, May 23, and meet with the staff of the local league during a family session Friday afternoon in the league's field office in North Portland.

H.J. Belton Hamilton, Jr., an administrative judge with the Social Security Administration, is president of the Urban League of Portland.

The meeting will be a fund raiser for the Urban League of Portland with a large portion of the \$25 per person dinner cost going to the local league.

Persons interested in attending the dinner and supporting the Portland league should notify the Urban League of Portland, 718 West Burnside Street, 97209, or call 224-0151.



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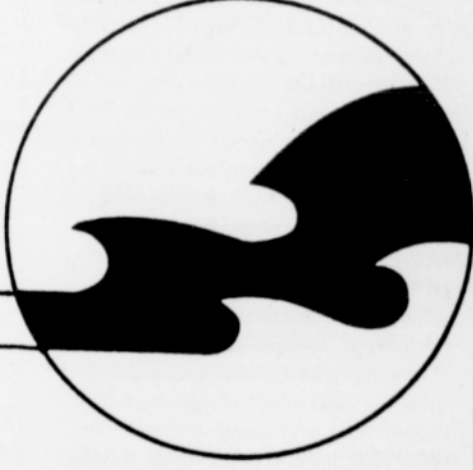
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North Portland for Chrest Committee,
9112 N. Kimball, Portland, Oregon 97203, Tom Fuller, Treasurer.

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The Albina Voter Registration and Education Committee (AVREC) URGES YOU TO VOTE

Tuesday, May 20, 1980.

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If you haven't registered yet, you can do so by going to the Multnomah County Elections Office located at 1040 SE Morrison, between 8:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M.

The following places for some of the North and Northeast precincts are as follows:

Precinct Number	Polling Place
2029	Kenton Firehouse 8105 N. Lombard
2034	Presbyterian Church 2115 N. Lombard
2034	Fire Station 7134 N. Maryland
2086	Residence 7023 N. Albina
2088	Lutheran Church 5658 N. Gantenbein
2091	PCC Cascade Center 705 N. Killingsworth
2096	Methodist Church 5023 N. Michigan
2099	Baptist Church 4735 N. Commercial
2110	Lutheran Church 5658 N. Denver
2115	Beach School 1710 N. Humboldt
2116	Applegate School 7650 N. Commercial
2118	Applegate School 7650 N. Commercial
2123	Peninsula Park Community Center 6400 N. Albina
2128	Humboldt School 4915 N. Gantenbein
2139	Child Service Center 220 N.E. Beech
3000	Applegate School 7650 N. Commercial
3004	Woodlawn School 7200 N.E. 11th
3006	Woodlawn School 7200 N.E. 11th
3024	Holy Redeemer School 127 N. Portland Blvd
3026	Bethel AME Church 5828 N.E. 8th
3039	Presbyterian Church 5760 N.E. Cleveland
3040	Christian Church 126 N.E. Alberta
3042	King Neighborhood Facility 4815 N.E. 7th
3048	Vernon School 2044 N.E. Killingsworth
3069	King Neighborhood Facility 4815 N.E. 7th
3071	Methodist Church 111 N.E. Failing
3073	Allen Temple CME Church 4236 N.E. 8th
3074	Mauanatha Church 1222 N.E. Skidmore

This ad is brought to you by AVREC, which is a non-profit organization based in the N.E. community and dedicated to increasing the participation of N.- NE residents in the political process.



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