

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Opening communication

The mentality of the Portland teachers organization can readily be seen in a memo sent by Portland Association of Teachers spokesman Randy Ventgin, Roger Gray and Glenn Hill to Superintendent Jim Fenwick and Board Chairman Herb Cawthorne.

The memo refers to a series of meetings which Cawthorne held for teachers, which provided an opportunity to discuss the new desegregation plan and other district activities, and clarify misunderstandings and to exchange ideas. These meetings have been considered valuable and enlightening by teachers, administrators and other Board members who attended.

Communication between the teachers, the administration and the Board has been stifled in the past, both by the sheer size of the district and by practices of the prior administration that alienated much of the teaching staff. Cawthorne's meetings were a much needed effort to bridge that credibility gap and to begin to gain a mutual understanding.

The PAT memo warned that face to face meetings between the Board Chairman (or the administration) and teachers when subjects such as the proposed parent participation policy are discussed could be illegal. "We view the meetings as direct communication to employees during bargaining, as act prohibited by Oregon law." (Bargaining on the new teachers' contract does not begin until January).

The memo also accuses Cawthorne of criticizing PAT, accusing PAT of not representing teachers' views adequately. "We advise you that you are walking a very thin line when you make such comments. Intimidation or coercion of employees exercising their rights of representation is likewise prohibited by

Oregon law."

PAT is opposed to plans to include parents in an advisory capacity in assigning teachers. They opposed the termination of Superintendent Blanchard. They oppose many aspects of the new desegregation plan especially those that relate to teacher hiring and training.

Now they oppose the right of teachers to meet with their employers to discuss educational issues. Could they be afraid that if teachers understand the issues they will not agree with their leadership? PAT chose to overlook a direct violation of the law by the Blanchard administration and "the old Board" by communicating in writing with teachers regarding their contract issues during bargaining.

The fact that the decision was made in a 7:30 a.m. Board meeting called without proper notification, to avoid the press, apparently did not bother PAT. Yet now they attempt to cut off communication with the "New Board" and Superintendent.

PAT has never had the guts to call a strike over legitimate teacher concerns - salaries, benefits, working conditions - yet it is willing to nit pick over whether teachers have the right to meet with their employers.

We applaud Cawthorne's attempt to open the channels of communication through public meetings and discussions with teachers. His meetings with teachers, parents, businessmen elected officials and other groups are a vital step in gaining the understanding and credibility that are essential if the community is to provide the support it needs in dealing with the difficult issues ahead (including funds for teachers raises). We would hope that PAT would join in this endeavor.

## Choosing minority representatives

On September 24th (7:30 p.m. at Washington/Monroe High School) a public meeting will be held to select two minority members to the City's Economic Development Advisory Committee, as required by federal regulations. EDAC oversees the City's federal economic development funds and, among other things, should insure that the minority communities share in the benefits.

Thus far, the only significant minority undertaking has been a suit filed by several Black organizations charging that minorities were not included in planning for use of the money. Although the case has not yet gone to court, the City has made some small concessions including appointing minorities to EDAC, establishing a loan that still has not granted a loan to minorities, installing an Inner Northeast Development Committee that has not yet

assisted a minority business.

Now the City is ready to take another step (some say under federal pressure). The minority communities will be allowed to select two representatives to EDAC rather than the usual Council and/or Mayor appointments.

The only way to insure that City Hall's hand-picked candidates are not selected is broad community participation in the selection. The meeting is open to everyone - not just potential candidates or those who desire personal benefits from the economic development program. Community activists, organizations, churches, social agencies, clubs, neighborhood organizations should all be present with their candidates and their votes.

The way to stop City control of community decisions is for the community to come out and be heard.

## Governor asked for two commissions

(Continued from page 1 col. 6)

**Education:** There is concern about lack of Hispanic and Black teachers and administrators; lack of ethnic education; lack of teacher training. Hispanics are concerned about lack of bilingual education.

**Housing:** Housing is the third highest rated concern of both groups and is the predominant issue of Hispanics in rural areas. There is no decent housing available to the poor, especially those with large families, and discrimination prevails throughout the state.

**Health:** Poor and inadequate health care and health facilities, especially for elderly migrants and those outside the Portland area were of concern. There is not adequate research in health problems unique to Blacks and Hispanics.

**Economic Development and Minority Business Enterprise:** There are not enough minority businesses; MBEs do not get their share of public contracts, especially from the State; loans are not available or are unattainable; the State is not implementing its set-aside program.

There is insufficient governmental commitment to economic development within the minority communities by minorities.

**Criminal Justice:** Concerns ranged from the need for better legal services to police harassment. There is concern about the length and types of sentences given minorities. There is a feeling that the criminal justice system in general, and judges in particular, are insen-

sitive to the needs of minorities. Hispanics are concerned about unfair and discriminatory immigration laws and their enforcement.

**Youth:** The school dropout rate and the perceived insensitivity of school personnel to the problems and needs of minority youth topped the list of concerns for Blacks and Hispanics. Of concern is the high rate of youth unemployment and the fact that this often leads to crime.

**Elderly:** Inadequate nutritional programs, transportation, and not enough money are the primary concerns. Lack of bilingual personnel in social service agencies and health facilities is especially difficult for

the elderly.

**General:** Most of the general concerns expressed fell into three categories:

1) Lack of political representation at all levels of government and the need for more appointments to boards and commissions.

2) The continued misuse of public funds specifically designated to aid minority communities. Although brought into the state because of large minority populations, these monies never reach the people they are supposed to serve.

3) The lack of and need for greater leadership, organization and unity within both the Hispanic and Black communities.

## Mugabe interview

(Continued from Page 1 Col 6)

**Mugabe:** I see it as the sort of society we fought to build all these years. In five years we hope to have put into practice a lot of the programs we have outlined over the past decade.

I see also Zimbabwe, evolving from Rhodesia, becoming a nation governed by just laws; where justice is dispensed equally to all her citizens. I see Zimbabwe becoming a model of democracy and its racial harmony and stability becoming the envy of the world.

We do not in any way underestimate the obstacles we will need to overcome in order to realize this ideal but I am confident we have the men and women with the

necessary commitment. Zimbabweans are a wonderful people. Once we have eliminated the fear and distrust sown by previous regimes, they can and will work together to build this ideal nation.

**Observer:** Those are some very lofty ideals which will no doubt require a lot of work but so far you have shown the world that you are capable of doing the "impossible." We wish you all the best in performing more such miracles in the days ahead. Your Excellency, once again, thank you so much for your time and extend our greetings to the wonderful people of Zimbabwe.

**Mugabe:** Pass on my greetings to Portland.

## Economic Development: Opportunities for citizen participation

By Claudia Fisher

(Note: This article is the third of a series focusing on economic and community development through community-based corporations)

In community economic development corporations nationwide members decide on questions of scope and balance in funds for business development corporations can offer investment funds, loan funds, technical assistance, management assistance or services, financing guarantees, etc.

Some CDCs believe that community development will come out of successful business development. Others believe that long-term community development should have priority. Most follow a middle path which offers both business and community development.

The federal CED (Comprehensive Economic Development) program is stressing profitability in granting funds. This follows the initial federal approach, after a lapse in which more emphasis was allowed to be placed on community development activities.

Each community must determine needs and resources available and strategies to address needs using available and obtainable resources. Certainly, part of these efforts have already been undertaken locally by some community members and groups in cooperation with local government planning efforts. However, resources targeted in the inner northeast generally and to minorities specifically are still noticeably late in arrival. A CDC may be one vehicle by which to address this inequity.

A CDC board of directors would choose its own mix of activities in light of past and current planner and community knowledge. As needs and resources changed, the mix of activities could be adjusted. But, in most communities of low-income both business and community development activities must take place for the success of either to be feasible. For example, housing may need to be rehabilitated before a commercial development becomes attractive or an industrial park may need to be developed before a community development attempt to attract labor intensive industry.

CDCs serve diverse communities battling equally diverse problems. The examples cited here are limited to urban CDCs, though CDCs operate in rural areas as well. A later article will detail current community self-help efforts underway in southeast Portland's Buckman neighborhood.

One CDC, Harlem Commonwealth Council in New York City, is focusing on developing a cluster of profitable business ventures which are owned by HCC's holding company (which "holds" the stock of a for-profit subsidiary of the non-profit HCC). Plans call for later turning over ownership of successful business ventures to community residents through the sale of stock in the holding company.

In 1974 HCC had eight business ventures operating and a nonprofit subsidiary offering technical assistance to local businesses. Results include land development,

jobs and manufacturing. Successful ventures include the purchase of Harlem's largest manufacturing plant, employing 100-150 people in production of specialized display and counter facilities for supermarket chains. Another success involves the building of a City Office Building. This was a joint venture with a major white-owned firm. Chase Manhattan Bank provided the loan. The building's five upper floors are rented by city agencies on a 21-year renewable leases and the street floor is leased by small businesses and franchise firms. HCC's offices are also in the building.

HCC is run by a 30 member board of directors with original community leaders and founders representing over one-third of the board. Another eight are elected by a neighborhood-based coalition of Harlem residents. The remaining ten directors represent Harlem community organizations, such as the local branch of the NAACP, Urban League and church groups.

A Los Angeles CDC, the Skid Row Development Corporation, was born from a four-year effort to develop and implement an alternative to leveling Los Angeles' skid row. Beginning with a Catholic skid row kitchen worker learning of a plan to displace area residents with a downtown development project, a community-based development corporation has been formed which has funds of over \$3 million to provide housing, social services and economic development in skid row. In 1980 the organization received \$200,000 in Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, which go for identified needs and which support grant seeking and fund raising efforts.

Two major projects are a transitional housing development and a commercial/light industrial center. With \$1.5 million in HUD innovative grant funds a warehouse was acquired and will be converted into dormitory rooms, kitchen and laundry facilities for homeless area residents. For the commercial/light industrial center, a 40,000 sq. ft. building will be acquired with \$1.5 million in CDBG and Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds. The building will house both nonprofit and for-profit businesses agreeing to hire local residents and provide job training and decent wages. Businesses planned are mostly to produce items for sale to residents outside the community or to provide goods and services for community residents. A bakery, light manufacturing of garments and ceramics, furniture refinishing, and a day-labor office are among the planned activities.

The most talked of CDC example is TELACU, the East Los Angeles Community Union, formed in 1968. It is a community-controlled conglomerate defying odds in an East Los Angeles barrio. Its staff of 300 full-time employees carves out successful businesses by trapping federal capital in the community.

TELACU is now turning an abandoned 50-acre Goodrich Tire plant into a minority-owned industrial park, arranging purchase of a UHF television station which will

broadcast bilingual, bicultural programming, and planning a hotel-convention center complex. TELACU industries include a trucking company, a weatherization business, a maintenance and security company, and various financial and investment centers. Its for-profit companies hire workers from the nonprofit agencies, including several CETA offices that TELACU operates as a prime sponsor for both the city and county of Los Angeles.

In 1974 TELACU's second director began planning for one major economic development each year, beginning with a Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Corporation and followed by a Community Thrift and Loan. The example seems to suggest, "Think big if you like, but start small and go slowly."

To operate TELACU uses \$7.1 million in city, county, state and federal manpower grants to pay for some of the labor in its for-profit wages with profit-making business operations. Hands-on work experience in training programs is emphasized, using journeymen crafts workers in carpentry and plumbing and a special school for security guards.

Stock for all TELACU's industries (now worth over \$60 million) is held by a nonprofit holding company. A board of 15 elected community members control the for-profit businesses. Membership in TELACU (a federation of organizations) is open only to organizations that either have their principal office in the target area or serve residents in the area. Individuals cannot become members as such and eligible organizations are required to have a substantial membership of low-income residents of the area served by TELACU. Each group appoints a representative to sit on TELACU's board of directors. Thus, community control is through indirect representation.

Community economic development by low-income people will not solve all the problems caused by the economic system of our society. The aim is not an immediate end to poverty; new firms, banks, etc., could never create enough jobs for everyone. CDCs can have the more limited objective of increasing the degree of local influence by building local institutions, increasingly demanding and receiving a more suitable share of this country's productivity and wealth. That share will come not primarily from businesses, jobs and profits created by the CDC, but indirectly through the social, political and economic strength of the communities and neighborhoods invigorated by CDC projects. A CDC is a tool which creates more tools to revitalize an area. With such tools capitalism's game can be played and won by those at whose expense the games have thus far been played.

Next week's article addresses the issue of community control, the reasons it advocates consider it essential and how it is brought about through direct and indirect representation in CDC organizational control structures.

## Letters to the Editor

### Welcome new publisher

To the Editor:

We would like to salute and applaud an acquaintance of long-standing, **Bruce Broussard**, on his latest business venture. Bruce has always been one to seek and accept challenges that would tend to improve the working of the system.

We feel assured that with your editorship and ownership of the *Portland Observer* that the cause of social justice will continue to have a strong advocate.

Jim Gates

Bill McCoy



Bruce Broussard  
Editor/Publisher

Alfred Lee Henderson  
Founder



## PORTLAND OBSERVER

The *Portland Observer* is a defender against racist assaults, persecutions, insults, harassments, discriminations and related evils; a vigilant champion for justice, equality and liberation; an alert guard against social atrocities; a thorough analyst and severe critic of discriminatory practices; a sentinel to warn of all existing and impending detrimental racist trends and practices.

The real problems of the Black population will be viewed and presented from the perspective of their causality: unrestrained and chronically entrenched white racism. National and international arrangements that prolong and increase the oppression of Third World peoples shall be considered in relation to the continued abuse, exploitation, political manipulation and contrivances implicit in the relationships that have characterized America's historical treatment of its Black population.

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## Biko

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held on September 24th to 28th at Portland State University's Lincoln Hall Auditorium at 8:00 p.m. The Portland Public Schools and the Urban League of Portland will co-sponsor morning performances for selected high school students. Tickets for the evening performances are available at Mier & Frank, Stevens & Sons and the PSU Box Office.

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