

Black kids can learn to read!

This headline should not be necessary in 1980, but in Portland, Oregon it is. For the past ten years the administration and teaching staff of the Portland School District have been told that poor Black children cannot learn because of their socio-economic condition.

In the last published listing of test scores by school, Martin Luther King Elementary School was significantly below the test scores of all other schools, and the other majority Black schools were grouped at the bottom. LeRoy Moore, principal at King for ten

years, told the *Observer* that the low scores were to be expected, based on the neighborhood environment.

For many years the school district's school achievement records were published with socio-economic data on the school area, relating test scores to "expectations" based on socio-economic status. An important tenet of Superintendent Robert Blanchard's educational philosophy as demonstrated in his "Blanchard plan" was that poor children can only be educated in proximity to middle class students. He recently told a

school board "watcher" that low achievement by poor Black students was to be expected.

This theory was blasted by Barbara Sizemore, former Superintendent of Schools in Washington, D.C., and currently with the University of Pittsburgh, at a Friday teacher workshop.

"There is nothing in being poor and Black that makes a child unable to learn. The teachers have got to take the responsibility to teach and stop laying the blame on the parents or on the children themselves," she told the *Observer*.

As for the theory that poor Black children cannot learn, Sizemore said, "I just considered that a bit of information that people made up who were inherently racists. It was meant to keep me from teaching these children who they obviously did not want to learn. I never had any problem teaching the children; it was the adults who always bothered me.

"This included my fellow teachers who didn't want to teach the children and didn't want me to teach the children for obviously if I were to teach, someone would look

at them and wonder what was wrong with them.

"My principals couldn't understand how I could teach these children how to learn in school when they had 42 other teachers who couldn't do it, and who obviously didn't want to take on the responsibility of making them do what they didn't want to do."

To prove that poor Black children could learn, she asked her Chicago school principal to give her the children not wanted by other teachers. She got 28 boys and one girl, of all different grades. This was

the first time most of them has been in a class where the teacher wanted them.

"You must set boundaries -- you must say what it is you want them to do and you must show them what you want. I'm talking about hard core cases. There are cases that the school system has convinced that they are bad. They didn't come like that, but over the years of our rejecting them, they've accepted it, and they say, 'O.K. I'm this kind of person. They have to have boundaries set for them and you have to (Please turn to Page 8 Col 1)

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Mrs. Mary O. Richardson shows her quilt at "An Exhibit of Quilts Made by Afro-American Women Residing in Portland, Oregon" at the U.S. National Bank Plaza. Quilts were also shown by: Mrs. Eddie Butler, Mrs. Gertrude Crow, Mrs. O.J. Gates, Mrs. Lucille Glass, Mrs. Carrie V. Nolan, Mrs. Isaac S.

Payne, III, Mrs. C.A. White and Mrs. Perry Whitlow. Exhibited were a quilt made by the late Mrs. Amandie Rae and quilts made by groups at the Senior Adult Service Center and LIFE Center. The event was coordinated by Mrs. O.J. Gates. (Photo: Richard Brown)

Take time to meet candidates

As the November 4th election draws near there are many opportunities to meet the candidates for public office and to debate the issues. Some of these are listed below:

A candidates' fair will be held on October 29th at King Neighborhood Facility, 4815 N.E. 7th Avenue, at

7:00 p.m. The Candidates' Fair is sponsored by the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Inc.; the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs; the NAACP; and the Albina Voter Registration and Education Committee (AVREC).

The Northwest Portland Grey Panthers will hold a candidates' fair

on October 18th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Northwest Service Center, 1819 N.W. Everett. There will be no speeches but candidates will be present to talk with voters. Beverages and "deserts" will be served.

Montavilla Methodist Church will (Please turn to page 2 col. 1)

'Minority voters' presidential election deciding factor

By Mary Ellen Leary

The evident concern in both the Republican and Democratic Presidential campaigns over the outcome of this year's Black and Hispanic vote is a telling reminder that Jimmy Carter's 1976 victory was incontestably a "minority" victory. The President's huge margin among Third World voters was the one clear factor that sent him to the White House.

This year it is equally incontestable that a wholesale minority turnout on election day could send the President packing back to Georgia. So could a significant minority shift to the Republican column, a possibility that cannot be ruled out, given the demonstrated appeal of Ronald Reagan's positions on such issues as family and economic revitalization among Black and

Hispanic voters.

But the growing clout of minority voters appears to have changed focus this year. More than ever before, say leaders in the minority communities, voters from those communities will be drawn to the poll booth on election day not by the presidential candidates, but by their own self-interest in local issues and local minority candidates.

"There are enough Blacks on the ballot to pull our community into the voting booths," said the popular San Francisco state legislator, Willie Brown. "They'll vote for us. And then they'll reach up and cast a vote at the top of the ticket. That's how the minority vote is going to go this year."

If Brown is right, then the dilemma for Carter and Reagan is not how to get minority voters to turn out on election day, but how to

position themselves on the coattails of Black and Hispanic city councilors, state legislators and school board candidates. It is an historic topsy-turvy in traditional voting patterns.

Though it is too early to project voter turnout, there are always some signs that the minorities will not sit out this election, as some experts have predicted. In heavily Hispanic Los Angeles, registrar Leonard Panish notes that a "normal" 100,000 new registrations have occurred since June, "not a big growth, but not a decline, either."

Since any growth normally tends to favor the Democratic Party, this fact alone could be crucially important to Jimmy Carter, who lost California, for instance, by a mere one percent in 1976.

In fact, 10 states with a total of 139 electoral votes were in

Minister charges police 'apathy'

Reverend Robert G. Walker, pastor of the Church of the Living God on Northeast Tenth Avenue, charged the Portland Police Bureau with apathy and indifference to the safety of children in the Woodlawn neighborhood. "When community members control the powers that are authorized to protect them and there is no response, the community begins to react," he explained. "We don't want that, but those with authority must act."

On September 27th, a Saturday, Sgt. Robert Dean, who is stationed at the Air National Guard Base, threw a hand grenade simulator into a group of children playing on an empty lot next to the church. The police were called to examine the pieces of the missile. They talked to the churches and adults who had gathered; they talked to Sgt. Dean. He admitted that he had thrown the grenade simulator and that he had previously exploded an explosive in front of his house a week earlier.

Sgt. Dean was not arrested; his house was not searched. The parents were advised they could file a complaint. They were also advised that a citation would be issued.

The following Monday, the parents attempted to file a complaint but the police report could

not be found, Reverend Walker said. It took approximately two weeks for the papers to be prepared so a complaint could be filed. As a result of the complaints, Sgt. Dean has been charged with "recklessly endangering."

Reverend Walker and neighborhood parents are not satisfied that they have received adequate protection or that a proper investigation was made. Reverend Walker said there have been several explosions in the neighborhood, including one during church services on the preceding Sunday, and that children have alleged that Sgt. Dean has called them "nigger" and threatened them.

Reverend Walker contacted the Air Force to attempt to cut off access to explosives, but called the response "less than apathetic. They said it was like rock throwing."

"The police failed to search the house for more explosives, and even after seeing evidence that a device had been exploded they failed to make an arrest. They did not feel they had probable cause to make an arrest."

"Although we were told a citation would be issued this was not done, and it was only because of our pressure that the papers were

prepared for us to file complaints.

Lack of police action is a class problem, Walker said. "This is a poor neighborhood, with lower to lower middle class people. The response and attitudes of the police to this kind of neighborhood are different. In turn, the community would respond better to the police if protection were given."

The hand grenade simulator is used during military maneuvers and training, to produce a battlefield effect. The simulator "is considered dangerous at distances up to 50 feet and the flash and burning cardboard fragments may ignite leaves and dry grass within a radius of 30 feet from the point of detonation" according to material supplied by the Air Force.

CETA meets

The Training and Employment Division of the City of Portland is sponsoring a Town Hall Meeting on "CETA: Portland Employment Strategy for 1981" on October 21st, 7:30 p.m., at 1819 N.W. Everett Street.

The meeting will be chaired by Joseph Gonzales, Manager of the department, and the floor will be open for comments, questions and answers.

Court upholds 'mental suffering' award

In a precedent setting decision, the Oregon Court of Appeals has affirmed Labor and Industries Commissioner Mary Wendy Robert's award of \$2500 for mental suffering in a civil rights case involving a racially mixed couple denied entrance to a Portland night club.

Vanessa Rogers Duncan filed a civil rights complaint against the Keyhole Supper Club (now known as the Great Gatsby). Ms. Duncan, a white woman, attempted to enter the club with her Black male friend, (now her husband) but was stopped by a security guard who said her four pieces of identification were inadequate proof of age.

The guard told Bureau investigators he had been instructed to carry out the proprietor's policy of limiting entry of mixed couples and Blacks.

In arguing the appeal, Gaudry's lawyer did not deny discrimination had occurred, but contended there

was insufficient evidence that Rogers was harmed by the incident. He further contended that no injury would have occurred had Duncan not protested the guard's decision.

The court stated the evidence was sufficient to support the Commissioner's findings, and that Duncan was entitled to protest and to persuade the management to let her enter.

Commissioner Roberts said the Court of Appeals decision sets precedent for future public accommodation cases in Oregon, since it upholds, for the first time, mental suffering damages in such a case.

"It demonstrates a recognition by the courts that although public accommodation discrimination often involves a brief contact, the anger, humiliation and frustration that follows can cause substantial harm," Commissioner Roberts said.

In a final order issued on the case, Commissioner Roberts said,

"Public accommodation law strikes at the very heart of discrimination: an effort to impair a person's basic right to move about freely in society and to be recognized thereby as a part of his or her community. Denial or abridgement of that right conveys in a particularly pervasive way the fragility of the victim's position as a functioning member of society."

The court also affirmed Commissioner Robert's requirement that Gaudry post in the club copies of state civil rights statutes along with a notice that persons who believe they may have been discriminated against by a place of public accommodation may complain to the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

The court rejected as not proven necessary the Commissioner's requirement that Gaudry put similar notices in his other business establishments.



Strengthening the stereotypes... The *Observer* has received numerous calls about the above cartoon, published on the front page of the October 14th *Oregon Journal*, expressing concern and anger that this stereotype is being perpetuated, particularly in light of the murder of Black youth in several cities in this nation, and of local harassment of Blacks.