

Black community presents legislative concerns

The House Committee on Aging and Minority Affairs met at King Neighborhood Facility Tuesday night to hear concerns of Black people.

Chairman Wally Priestley explained that the purpose of the meeting was to set the agenda for the committee's work this session.

Those present at the meeting identified and discussed a number of concerns. Those endorsed for potential legislation were:

Black Commission - Those present supported the establishment of a Black Commission and its fun-

ding by the legislature but there were concerns about the membership of the commission, how it is chosen, and whether it represents the "grass roots". There were suggestions that a majority of the members reside in Albina.

Racial harassment - The Governor's bill making racial intimidation a Class C felony, punishable by one year in jail and a \$2500 fine, was endorsed. The bill defines "intimidation" as to cause "fear of imminent physical harm". Suggestions were made that the definition should include

psychological harm and that there should be a minimum penalty.

Reapportionment - The group endorsed the creation of a legislative district including the Black community.

Martin Luther King birthday - Making Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a state holiday was

Washington D.C. Amendment - Approval of the Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to give DC residents a vote in Congress was endorsed unanimously.

South Africa - Proposed

legislation that would preclude the State from investing in corporations that do business in South Africa was endorsed.

Death Penalty - Oregon's death penalty law was declared unconstitutional by the Oregon Supreme Court. Those present opposed any move to reinstate a death penalty.

Juries - Legislation that would insure a just proportion of Blacks on juries was endorsed.

Set-asides - The group supported requiring the State to set aside a percentage of the personnel service contracts for minorities as is now done

with building contracts.

Economic Development - The Economic Development Commission will be asked to include Black business and businesses in the Black community in its program.

Those present supported reduction of property tax relief. Currently persons with homes valued at \$150,000 to \$250,000 can receive up to \$800 in tax relief from the state general fund. The group endorsed lowering the maximum refund to \$500 and using the money saved for social programs including welfare and school support.

Dr. Darrell Millner recommended that school districts be required to offer stipulated multi-ethnic education and teacher training to receive basic school support. Ruth Spencer asked the committee to look into the use of state disadvantaged funds by the Portland School District. Raising the mandatory school age from 16 to 18 was recommended.

The Civil Rights Division and its history of neglect of racial discrimination complaints were discussed.

Legislators present were Priestley, Vice-chairman John Schoon, and Max Rijken.

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Farmer John's: Dream realized

By Pam Smith

Farmer Johns is a Black-owned fast food restaurant located on the corner of Vancouver and Killingsworth streets. It's a young store, only two years old. However, Farmer John and his wife pursued their restaurant interests more than twenty years ago. This interview captures the philosophies that lead to their success.

Observer: Farmer John, how did you and your wife get started in the restaurant business?

Farmer: I started work early in life as a kid, and I've always been active. I just can't sit still. I got married and we were low on finances. I was still in the Air Force at the time and incidentally, I was a cook. This was a far cry from what I had planned or wanted to do at the time.

So we started out about 20 years ago in a little building. It was called "Dragnet Drive-in." It was a small place and you couldn't even come in and we had to hand food out of the window. This was long before the Drive-in and Reach-in windows came to Portland. We started selling foot long hotdogs and hamburgers. These became our specialty. We made our own chili too. Then we went from there to a place on Williams Avenue and had a forty-four flavor ice parlor and restaurant combination. These were about five years apart. After that we went out of the restaurant business for awhile because I was doing so many other things. I was a longshoreman and I had a farm.

But there's something about being in the restaurant business...it kinda grows on you, and you say that you're going to give it up, but then you find yourself right back in. So all the time I was out of the business, we were still looking for a good location, a good prospect to go into. This particular place had been closed for five years.

Observer: What type of monetary assistance were you able to get, and do you feel that even today, Blacks are given a tougher time starting a business than whites?

Farmer: Before we built the restaurant, we had to get a small (Please turn to page 5 col. 1)



Phillips joins Governor's office



Robert Phillips, Portland, has been named deputy director of Affirmative Action by Governor Vic Atiyeh's office.

Phillips, 30, was appointed by Affirmative Action Director Kay Toran, to replace Bill McClendon, Portland, who retired December 31, 1980.

"I am interested in getting into affirmative action we need to demonstrate that affirmative action programs are creditable and needed in this state," Phillips told the Observer. "Some of the things I will be doing is looking at the recent report on affirmative action that shows deficiencies in some agencies, to determine how department heads are addressing the issues and to provide technical assistance for them."

"I am interested in appraising upward mobility programs and working on recommendations to improve skills. This is one of the areas in which the state is lacking."

"It is also important to have contact with the metropolitan area and to maintain the outreach program established by Bill McClendon."

"It's hard to leave Adult and Family Services in terms of developing programs and keeping up with the issues of the elderly and welfare clients in relation to services provided by the State. I'll continue to watch how the State and communities address these issues."

The new deputy director, a member of the state board of Clinical Social Workers, will begin his work February 1. His duties will include outreach activities and acting as a liaison with state agencies. He will also be responsible for research. His salary will be \$19,176 a year.

Affirmative Action recruits women and minorities into state government jobs and issues a statewide plan to state agencies directing them in this effort.

Employed as social worker 2/ (Please turn to page 10 col. 1)

Education, action for rights

The mandate of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission - established and funded by the City of Portland and Multnomah County - is community education and resolution of racial, ethnic, religious and socio-economic conflicts and tension. Or as Chairman Armando Laguardia puts it, "To be a catalyst for things to happen."

The Commission has four working committees: Education, Housing, Equal Justice, and Employment. The Housing Committee has a checking service that investigates discrimination complaints, and has evaluated and made recommendations for the housing and land use policies of the City, the County and the Metropolitan Service District.

The Education Committee is looking at schools in Multnomah County, other than the Portland district, regarding the education and treatment of minority children.

The Justice Committee is looking into pre-trial release practices and criminal record expungement.

Laguardia is moving the Commission beyond its traditional areas of involvement and is emphasizing its role of defining and researching issues, exposing problem areas,

coordinating the efforts of agencies and organizations with similar interests, providing information to public officials and institutions, and alerting the public when they find a violation of human rights. "Basically we are the City's and the County's commitment to protect the rights of people."

One of the new projects is the Minority Youth Employment Task Force, which brings together representatives of government, business, education, community and minority groups to study the employment problems of minority youth.

"We are working with the Chamber of Commerce and the small businesses to identify jobs and then to link them to the organizations - COSPO, the Urban League, POIC, and others - that serve minority communities. We also want to encourage young people into the types of jobs that can be permanent - not just summer jobs."

"Most important though is to study the causes of the high rate of unemployment among minority young people. We need to point out that this is an institutional and social problem, while we tend to blame the unemployed youth him-

self. If there are structural changes that need to be made in the economic system we need to point this out. We need to make a realistic projection of the job market of the future. The picture is bad now and it might get worse. If it will be worse, we need to say this and at least let minority people know what they are facing."

Laguardia is enthusiastic about the project. "I am sure we will get some jobs, and if we do then it will be worthwhile. There are employers who would hire young persons if they could see the benefits, if it won't hurt business. There are tax incentives and federal programs that many businessmen don't know about. We can help them find ways to hire more young people."

Another role of MHRC is coordinating the many groups that have similar concerns. "There is no real coalition of groups - they don't meet regularly and set out an agenda and priorities. They get together at times of crisis - in 'ad hoc' groups - to work on specific problems. I hope the Commission will take a position of coordinating these groups. An example is the response to the increasing racial harassment. (Please turn to page 4 col. 1)

NAACP challenges ruling

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People case opposing white medical school professor Dr. Dante G. Scarpelli was heard on appeal by the Kansas Supreme Court in Topeka, Kansas on January 13th.

The libel case involving four Black physicians, popularly known as *Scarpelli vs. Rempson*, stems from a \$1.4 million suit brought against the former students by Scarpelli. The appeal is based on a chancery court judgement that found the four former students guilty of libelous action and resulted in the awarding of \$10,000 in punitive and \$1,000 in compensatory damages to Scarpelli.

Attorney James Meyerson, Assistant General Counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and chief counsel for the case said, "The Scarpelli case brings together issues affecting freedom of speech, affir-

mative action and academic freedom for students. Above all, this case represents a significant effort to preserve the rights of Black Americans to seek redress for wrongs which they believe and perceive to have been committed against them solely because of their race. The ramifications go well beyond the rights of Black Americans, however touching upon the basic rights of all Americans."

The suit, based on a complaint the students filed against Scarpelli charging that his conduct undermined the university's affirmative action program and violated laws such as the Kansas Act Against Discrimination and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, was filed five years ago and included the university's affirmative action officer, Chester J. Rempson. The circuit court ruled last year in favor of Scarpelli, former chairman of the University of Kansas Medical School's

Pathology and Oncology department, who is now chairman of the pathology department at Northwestern University Memorial Hospital.

The defendants, Dr. Ernest Turner, Dr. Charles Lee, Dr. Charles Floyd, and Dr. Noland Jones, in their former capacity as members of the Student National Medical Association, filed their original complaint back in 1973 with the university's vice chancellor accusing Scarpelli of discriminating against Black students for the purpose of "systematically eliminating them from the school." The university called a hearing the following year but the four students walked out of the meeting when it was discovered that Scarpelli was represented by the university's legal counsel. The school subsequently dismissed the charges against Scarpelli.

Dr. Ernest Turner, former lecturer and instructor at the University (Please turn to page 4 col. 1)



MARTIN LUTHER KING'S BIRTHDAY was celebrated at Oregon State Penitentiary with poetry, music and an appearance by Taj Mahal.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)