

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## No school closures now

The School Board is not ready to close high schools - it has no plan. Only with a comprehensive, long range plan in hand should any community have to undergo the destruction and devastation that occurs when a neighborhood high school is closed.

There has been much criticism in recent years that the district has no plan - that school closures, reorganization, renovation, have all been done on a hit and miss basis with no consideration of the effects on neighboring schools. Communities have been forced to accept middle schools only to find them too small when they opened - Sellwood and Mt. Tabor for example. Millions were spent on the merger of Washington and Monroe, and developing magnet programs at Cleveland and Lincoln, only to talk about closing them now. Yet, the school board still has no long range plan. The school board spent over a year designing a new desegregation plan and plans to throw out many aspects of that plan. It makes no sense.

Much more planning needs to take place -- cooperative planning with the City, Tri-Met, Portland Community College, etc. The effects of closure in City planning, housing, economic development, transportation need to be assessed.

Much more research needs to be done on the educational programs. Can schools with under 1000 students offer comprehensive programs? How do schools in other cities do it? What about sharing specialty teachers between two or more schools? Can advanced classes be scheduled so a few students can go to a neighboring school for an advanced class last period? What is the potential for career and vocational training, for skills centers, for shared use of buildings for educational and related programs?

Is it wise to close schools like Jefferson and Adams that are in the neighborhoods with the largest number of students? With the high cost of energy why not leave the schools where the students are? Why not a ten year commitment to Adams to allow it to build its programs and its student body? What about

middle school reorganization on the west side - is that forgotten or should it be part of the closure consideration?

The school board has a lot of work to do before it closes even one high school. If a long range plan is not developed first - the board will remain in a constant turmoil as neighborhood after neighborhood goes through the last ditch fight to save its schools. A long range plan would allow for the advanced planning, the forming of relationships that are needed. It is much easier to adapt to change if that change can be foreseen. The board doesn't need to add any more crisis situations to those it already must face.

## Profits first

Another example of the Reagan Administration's preference for profits over lives is the effort to delay regulations on worker exposure to lead poisoning. The Department of Labor plans to delay implementation of the 1978 lead exposure standards to do a cost-benefit analysis and re-examine more provisions of the regulation.

The regulations were issued in 1978 and went into effect in February of 1979, with a ten year phase-in to bring the allowed exposure from 200 microgram to 50. micrograms of lead per cubic meter of an averaged over an eight hour day. The review of the regulation will be made under Reagan's presidential order to assess the costs and benefits of all major regulations.

Medical studies show that lead poisoning, resulting from high levels of exposures to lead, can result in anemia, kidney failure, nervous system disorders, brain damage and death. More than 800,000 US workers in approximately 40 industries and exposed to lead in the job.

The failure to require employers to protect the health and the lives of the employees is another example of Reagan's promise to "get government off the backs of the American people."



## Portland Observer

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The *Portland Observer* was founded in October of 1970 by Alfred Lee Henderson.

The *Portland Observer* is a champion of justice, equality and liberation; an alert guard against social evils; a thorough analyst and critic of discriminatory practices and policies; a sentinel to warn of impending and existing racist trends and practices; and a defender against persecution and oppression.

The real problems of the minority population will be viewed and presented from the perspective of their causality: unrestrained and chronically entrenched racism. National and international arrangements that prolong and increase the oppression of Third World peoples shall be considered in the context of their exploitation and manipulation by the colonial nations, including the United States, and their relationship to this nation's historical treatment of its Black population.

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## Spotlight on Africa

By Fungai Kumbula

May is usually the month when our thoughts turn to Africa because of African Liberation Day, for one; the day in the year when the Black community and our friends in this country observe, acknowledge and commemorate the contributions Africa has made to the world. Events planned for this May are going to exceed anything Portland has yet seen.

To begin with, John Makathini, a representative of the ANC (African National Council), the organization fighting for the liberation of Azania (South Africa) will be at Portland State University on the 12th. He is coming at the invitation of the Association of African Students in collaboration with the Black Cultural Affairs Board. Mr. Makathini will be able to inform Portland of the current state of the struggle in Azania in light of the liberation of Zimbabwe.

Progress in liberating the African continent has been slow but steady. In 1957, it was: "one down, forty-six to go." By 1967 it was: it was 31 down, 15 to go; 1977, 46 down, 4 to go." It is not yet 1987 and already it is 48 down and 2 to go. The way things are going, it could very well be: 49 down and one to go if not actually 50 down and 0 to go.

The plight of the African refugees in the Horn of Africa has recently and belatedly caught world attention. On the 15th of this month, the AAS (Association of African Students) will be presenting "Refugee Awareness Week" not only to inform Portland of the plight of the refugees but also to let you know what you can do to help. There will be speakers from the afflicted regions of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Uganda who have worked with the refugees.

On or about the 24th, Dr. Herbert Ushewokunze, Zimbabwe's Minister of Health will be in town speaking about the changes that have taken place in Zimbabwe since the people's government came to power. A physician by profession, Dr. Ushewokunze is a particularly interesting person because he was the physician in charge of treating the wounded and the sick in the guerrilla camps during Zimbabwe's War of Independence. He gave up a very lucrative practice in the then "Rhodesia" to provide his badly needed services to the freedom fighters. In the twelve months that he has been Zimbabwe's Minister of Health, he has also introduced some equally "radical" changes in the nation's health system by combining traditional medicine and western medicine so as to arrive at a more adequate health system for the fledgling nation.

Last year, the African students presented African Cultural Night, an event that attracted an overflow crowd at Portland State University's Smith Memorial Center Ballroom. It was a highly successful event featuring dishes from all over the continent, plays depicting various aspects of modern and ancient Africa, speakers, dances and an impromptu fashion show. The response from the community was such that we had no choice but to do it again. So mark your calendar; prepare your ears; tune up your taste buds; focus the eyes and prepare the shake a leg for another dazzling African Cultural Night is coming your way the night of the 29th.

This year, though the format will be pretty much the same: food dances, plays, speakers, etc., the theme will be very somber: "The African Refugee: He/She Is Count-

in on You!" The proceeds from the sale of the tickets will be forwarded to the refugees as our contribution to this continuing human tragedy. One would be hard pressed to come up with a worthier cause.

Professor Abdul Raham Mohamed Babu, formerly the Minister of Planning and Development in the Republic of Tanzania is currently a visiting lecturer in the Humanities Department at San Francisco State University. He also teaches in the Afro-American Studies Department at UC Berkeley and writes a monthly column for the African magazine, *The New African*. He was one of the brains behind the Arusha Declaration of 1964 that set Tanzania on her political track and has written several books on economic and development themes. Professor Babu, truly one of the keenest minds around today will be the keynote speaker on African Cultural Night and his topic will be "Africa In The World Today."

Then there is African Liberation Day, the planning for which is now swinging into high gear. As always, on this day, we look at Africa both on the continent and abroad. With "possums", police mis-conduct, police-community relations, school closures, unemployment, budget cuts, Namibia, Azania refugees and the celebration of the coming of age of Zimbabwe, this year's ALD should be even bigger and better than ever. Also there is greater cooperation and communication between PSU's African Students Association and the community, as well as with the Black Studies Department.

May 1981: the start of the beginning of a greater awareness of the African wherever he or she may be.

## Letters to the Editor

### Opposes comprehensive plan

To the Editor:

Who owns Portland?  
Raise your hand if you know the long-range impact of the Portland Comprehensive Plan.

Despite years of planning, countless citizen input hearings, etc., many Portlanders still don't comprehend the plan. It is a massive rezoning plan written to comply with the goals and guidelines (laws) of the appointed state agency called LDCD - Land Conservation and Development Commission.

Our grassroots all volunteer group is hoping to place the issue before the voters and are currently involved in a tedious petition drive.

Some reasons why people should oppose the plan are: 1) Urban crowding; the plan calls for higher density in the inner city. We believe that everyone needs elbow room. Forcing people to live in smaller, closer quarters is not going to increase the City population. In fact, people will not choose to live in Portland if they can afford to live elsewhere.

2) Destroying existing single family neighborhoods - Politicians got elected on a platform of single family neighborhoods, rehabilitation of existing low-income single housing, neighborhood schools. Now the game is changed again! The "add-a-rental" to single family houses violates the quality of neighborhoods, neighborhood schools are being closed, taxes are up - how can we attract people to live in Portland?

3) Finally - We oppose the LCDC deciding what we should do, especially everything we should do. Once this plan is approved by LCDC, forget about complaining at the local level. Power is transferred to the non-elected LCDC.

We hope to be effective in asking the LCDC board not to approve the Portland Plan so it will go back to City Council and a more objective form of citizen input will be

### Appreciates Herb Cawthorne

To the Editor:

I am a ninth grade student at Wilson High School. I also belong to Allen Temple CME Church. (my home church). I would like to thank Herb Cawthorne for helping all the Black children of the community. He has done so much for us. He has always put the children first.

Herb has been trying to improve our schools for years, and right now he has worked so hard, that we the Black children can go to the schools we wish. He has always spoken up for the needs and interests of the Black community.  
On Sunday, March 29th, Herb Cawthorne held a "Vote for Victory" community-tea. Before the tea, myself and many young people worked on the campaign, and the tea to make it a success. We had a talent parade for the community and 550 people came to support the

possible. Meanwhile we will continue our petition drive. Of all the illustrious goals of LCDC not one thing is mentioned for the protection, conservation, and enhancement of Oregon's Urban environment. City dwellers are not second class citizens.

Fran Ariniello  
Coordinator Neighbors  
For Neighborhoods

Black children and Herb. Herb Cawthorne has won the election and I know he will continue to make a difference!

Once again, thank you Herb Cawthorne. You really helped us (the Black children) to see the light!

Sincerely yours,  
Kimberly Martin

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Bruce Broussard  
Editor/Publisher

