



Governor Vic Atiyeh visits St. Vincent de Paul Rehabilitation Center with Doug White, president of the Union Avenue Business Boosters. For the Governor's response to his visit to Albina this week, see next week's *Observer*. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)



Cell Talk

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Maybe I could have titled this synopsis "Growing up in The Ghetto," and you would have more readily recognized that the subject to be dealt with concerned Black life—growing up in the Black neighborhood, typically the slums. But Portland, Oregon, has no ghetto or slums that Blacks have traditionally been confined to (at least not physically), and that's one of the virtues that makes Portland, OR, Number One in livability in the nation (they say), conferring great recognition on Oregon's largest and one of its few cities. The so-called "correctional systems" of Oregon and Washington also share the dubious distinction of having the greatest number of minorities incarcerated per capita of any states in the nation. They have traditionally buried Blacks, Chicanos and Indians deeper here in this Northwest corner than the three ruffians in mystic lore buried Hiram Ab'iff—and that was deep.

What was it like growing up here? Over all, it really wasn't too bad until I started to have contact with the law enforcement authorities at the age of eleven. This was two years before my mother had the last of eight children; mostly without the aid of a man in the home. I always thought my mother was a rather attractive brown-skinned Black woman, and heard men make comments to that effect during my child-

hood, so I really thought that she must have been too smart or strong-willed to submit to any of the men who tried to "catch" her. Looking back, I'm not so sure. According to *Ebony* magazine, fifty-one per cent of the homes in the Black neighborhood are headed by women. I know that in the first stages of my adolescence, I was very shy, particularly around girls and women, and I'm sure that it was due to the lack of a strong male image to pattern myself upon in the home. Yes, I had grown uncles and cousins, but the traditional Black extended family has nearly died as a reality in the Bilalian community. One of the ways that youth like me compensated for the lack of family direction was to become part of gangs or cliques. I hung around with a notorious group of ghetto boys who called themselves "The Cousins." I think it's normal for young adolescent boys to engage in the so-called "macho" behavior to "prove" manhood, but the ghetto youth from a one-parent home and living below the poverty level takes "macho" a step further. He sees the middle and upper-middle-class white boys and girls on T.V. shows and commercials eating what they want when they want, while he's having hunger pains. He sees them riding their bicycles and go-carts and has enough sense to realize that his family's likely response to a request for a non-essential item can only be negative based

on simple economics. But the streets and street life offer a solution, where the rules of the game are not set by the society of your parents. Street life beckons early to youth in the Albina neighborhood, as in most all Bilalian (Black) neighborhoods and ghettos. Commingling with others of your male and female peers at parties and neighborhood "hang-outs," any atmosphere not controlled by parents or societal authorities, you discover a common perception of non-acceptance of societal limits—not morals, but limits—arbitrarily imposed on someone who had no say-so or stake in the status quo. This type thinking is not contradicted by any acceptable concepts or ideas imparted at school. Yes, they say that George could not tell a lie; he chopped down the cherry tree, but we know that George and his brother had slaves. They say, "Freedom, Justice, and Equality," but we know it doesn't include us. So our standards are related to results, however attained. Though it might entail censure and even worse, life is a gamble anyway, so we accept it. We obtain our manhood, our human worth in spite of the limits, or we go to jail, juvenile homes, or the graveyard, in some cases. At that age many of us didn't think death could overtake us. We took our bicycles; we obtained grown-up status by stealing cars, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. Images that we wrongly at-

tached to adulthood and maturity. Our juvenile and young adult incarcerations, for truancy, theft, disorderly conduct, or curfew violations, contrary to abating our errant behavior, these lock-ups served to broaden our repertoire of mischief and crime. I challenge anyone to assert that as far as juveniles are concerned this situation has changed to the present time.

It wasn't a big step for me in progressing from this type of selfish behavior to the view that I and all my people had been done an unpardonable injustice and that a blow struck against the enemy in any fashion was only payback for the wrong committed against my people. This society even boasted about what they had done to my people and the Indians and other minorities. Now in my mind, I could justify whatever I did as long as it was directed against members of the majority community, particularly the business community. I am just now growing out of this type of thinking, largely as a result of my religious beliefs, and a concurrent growth in social consciousness, largely through my own efforts. The youth today could benefit from ethical and moral teachings, taught in a way they can relate to, as opposed to the highly allegorical and "fairy tale" manner in which it is presently taught by the church. The educational system doesn't teach morals or ethics in any way.

Speaking of Schools

(Continued from page 1 column 6)

can ask yourself, why aren't those people involved? They are generally not involved because for the most part they really have some distrust for the system and when they come some of them, who by virtue of their lack of having dealt with this impossible bureaucracy that we have structured in America, are somehow overwhelmed by legal process and parliamentary procedures.

If you really talk about racial fairness there are many people who have formed the impression that once you begin to talk about people from minority groups you begin to talk about people who are from low socio-economic classes and somehow that translated into talking about minority people and that is not at all true. We will find just as many people in minority groups who are capable of performing as "gifted and talented" as anyone else. I think I have an obligation to see that the excellence that is in the Black community, the excellence that is in Southeast Asians and others, that the potentiality for full development of these particular youngsters, across the board, is given proper attention.

I feel that racial balance plays no role in assuring quality education, but when you define education you need to elaborate on that. I think education is the totality of efforts made both in the cognitive and the affective domain. I don't think it makes any difference whatsoever if you state you want your kid to learn to read, write, speak, listen, to reason. Those five things can take place in any environment whether it is all Black, all white, all Vietnamese, all anything, or any mixture of 99 to 1.

But to me education consists more of things than simply basic cognitive skills. If a person, in my opinion, is fully educated there has to be an affective component to his education which to me necessitates an experience of dealing with and knowing that other people are out there. We as a school system have to make some decisions as to when is it more appropriate that the students of the district be exposed to the fact that there are other kinds of people with whom we may agree, disagree, like, dislike, appreciate or not appreciate. It is my opinion that that should occur as early in life as possible.

I think the citizens of this district need to come to grips with the basic policy issue. I don't think you really ever have. When you talk about education, are you talking about the cognitive skills? If that is what you are talking about there is no need for any desegregation.

If, in fact, you're talking about

exposing young people to the realities of life... I would question how you're going to do that.

Student achievement: Research has shown that the five factors that most affect achievement in schools are: The building principals—if you do not have a person there who has the confidence of the community, the students, or the teachers, and some idea of the learning process, you're going to get nowhere. In each building there should be a very clearly defined, delineated set of objectives that are very easily explained to parents and that parents need to understand. You need ways to measure this. You need effective teachers—and this is, beyond a doubt, the most important. They are the most important cog in the link of educational effectiveness. Parental interest, parental involvement, participation in the process. You've got to believe that every student can learn. A lot of us don't believe that, you know, when you really check out our values.

Educating ethnic children: First you've got to determine where you stand on the issue. If you feel education is cognitive only, no problem. You go about their education doing a needs assessment to find out where they are, find out individual needs, get an appropriate staff, get them properly qualified and certified, and you carry it out. If you feel, however, that the needs are beyond the cognitive and you want to get into the affective domain that calls on a different set of dimensions. So the first thing, I'll say, is for the Portland Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools to declare a position as to what they consider education to be. And if they do define it, to say this is how we intend to do it.

Fiscal accountability: The Board of Education has to sit down and ask itself what are the principle priorities we are going to address this year. And this particular budget plan ought not to be a one year plan. I think a budget plan, very minimally, ought to be a three-year budget plan.

You ask yourself, that whatever we do to spend a single dollar in this school system shows that the expenditure of that dollar relates to a goal that the board has set for itself. You do not plan in isolation.

Curriculum and program evaluation: There need to be meaningful program guides in the school system to cover all the major program areas: math, English, language, art,

science, social studies, music, physical education, health, plus now, sex education. There also need to be proper instruments for evaluation.

Two kinds of tests should be given: One to evaluate how the system is doing with respect to attaining those goals it establishes for itself. The system also should measure itself on the basis of some nationally known test.

Personnel: One should attempt to have present in a given school system representation of people from across the national structure, or certainly the community structure. You do need people who are positive peer examples.

The selection of teachers should be given great care that it be adequately representative of populations.

Evaluation of the teacher ought to consist minimally of five components: self-evaluation, peer evaluation, supervisor evaluation, student evaluation and parent evaluation.

Fall rain brings drain problem

Drainage problems around the home can be greatly aggravated by the arrival of fall rains, especially in western Oregon.

"Most landscape drainage problems can be solved through the use of small diversion ditches or subsurface drains," says Ray McNeilan, Oregon State University Extension home gardening agent.

Subsurface drains at least four inches in diameter and surrounded with six to 12 inches of gravel can be placed along the outside of house foundations to divert water that may accumulate there.

Small diversion ditches will channel excess surface water off the lawn or driveway.

Yards should be graded so surface water drains away from the house. A minimum grade of one foot in 100 feet is usually sufficient, said McNeilan.

The installation of downspouts to control roof water will help prevent water from ponding in low areas of the yard. Downspouts can empty into subsurface drains or drywells that will carry the water away from the house.

Some homesites may have dense layers of clay soil that restrict the flow of water and create puddles or ponds. If this dense layer is near the soil surface, a small trench can be dug through the layer and filled with sand, gravel or other coarse material. This will improve drainage in low-lying wet spots.

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The reason for an evaluation system is to improve performance. It should be done in a highly constructive way and every opportunity ought to be given. You use it to try to prescribe a certain set of behavior or standards or goals that that individual is going to aspire to over a certain period of time and grow in that process.

I think parents can be involved in recruiting, in giving advice and opinion. The superintendent of schools must hold the principal responsible. The principal has got to listen to parents, but the principal must be the person making that decision.

Planning: Planning should involve program improvement, fiscal integrity and survival, equal education opportunities; staff development, general management.

Planning is the cornerstone on which you can really see where you are going. One of the problems I see here is that people seem to be won-

dering what's going to happen tomorrow, next week. Any school system has to do its best to say here is a five-year plan, here's precisely what will happen.

Suspensions, expulsions, dropouts: In all districts minority students are suspended at higher rates. We have attempted to deal with the issue by utilizing the services of the University of Michigan Equal Opportunity Program with a staff of attorneys to help us go into our buildings and work with that issue.

Why do some students get suspended for something that other students do not. Why do some teachers perceive some kids differently than others?

One of the things I will never do in any process... is to embarrass a staff member or have them be fearful of the kind of treatment they'll get when they participate in a process of

that kind. There will be total confidentiality. And we have brought about a marked improvement.

Dropout needs to be handled before it happens. It is very difficult to try to get kids back in once they are out.

It can be dealt with through alternative programs. It can be dealt with through the development of comprehensive guidance and counselling programs; you deal with trying to get away from the desk and talking to parents and going to the people of the system who really know what's going on. Just get yourself out there and learn by talking to people.

Parent involvement: There is nothing citizens should not be involved in. This is your school district.

Next week: Dr. James P. Skammon and Dr. Manfred Byrd.

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