

# The murder of Black Children

by Ron Herndon



Portland Public Schools may feel the Black United Front is blaming it for all the problems resulting from centuries of racism. We do not. But we do see public education being one institution capable of providing Black children with skills that would at least give them a chance to achieve some victories in their life-long battle against all forms of racism.

Portland schools fail this task miserably. Instead of being a vehicle of hope they join every other institution that stifles, maims and destroys Black children. A *Black Enterprise* September editorial describes this as "A Case of Murder By Neglect." "Murder is not too strong a word. Not unless you believe there is no connection between the failure of our schools and the failure of so many of our young people to enter the economic mainstream. The fact that violence (murder and suicide) is the major cause of death among Black youth has much to do with the fate to which they are consigned as victims of racial and economic injustice. Our unavoidable premise is that decent schools are the exception

for Black children. For every Black child fortunate enough to obtain access to a quality education, dozens of other are condemned to attend educational institutions that are horrifying to observe.... These words were not written in an anarchist manual but in a sober, moderate, responsible business publication read primarily by middle- and upper-income Black people.

The latest achievement scores reveal again that Portland Public Schools continue to perpetuate "Murder By Neglect." Schools in the Black community once again have scored lowest on the test: nothing changes except the faces of the young victims. The latest statistics on suspensions and expulsions again show Black children receiving these forms of punishment in far higher percentages than white children. Last year Jefferson High School expelled nine students, eight of them Black; it suspended one hundred and one students, seventy-four of whom were Black; it began this school year expelling eight students—one white, one Chicano, five Black students. This school is barely

50 per cent Black and its statistics were not the worst in the district—check out Grant and Washington-Monroe.

White apologists and misled Negroes are quick to say Black children do poorly in school because they come from "low socio-economic families and communities." Sweet trick, blame the victim for being a victim. This is a bunch of do-do. Education has always been prized in the Black community; during slavery we tried to learn reading and writing even with the painful knowledge that discovery by white people would cause us to receive the most painful forms of torture and murder. Our shackled ancestors were so hungry for education that all slaveholding states passed laws that made it illegal to teach Black people reading and writing. After slavery we rushed to schools that were established during reconstruction and did well. This is utterly amazing—people who were brutalized in the worst ways to drive out the desire for education, held tight to this notion and when given a chance literally ran to schools. What "socio-economic"

background is lower than chattel slavery?

Black children today who can't read and write come from homes where their grandparents read, write and do math better than they. The grandparents for the most part are products of the so-called inferior, all-Black schools in the South. We learned at those schools because we had Black staff that *believed* we could learn, *insisted* we learn and taught us what it meant to be Black in a white racist society. Black people never have accepted the proposition that being poor equals being dumb; this theory is racism with a little polish on it.

Black parents and community members, if this horror will be changed we have to do it. We must become more concerned and involved with our children's education. We send our children to these schools knowing how poor the schools are and we do very little to change the schools. If we take our clothes to the cleaners and the cleaners messes them up we will raise hell and make sure that doesn't happen again. Don't we owe at least that much concern to our children?



## DICK BOGLE

Some strange inconsistencies are coming to light from the country of South Africa. There's even a faint glimmer of hope... very faint... in the areas of sports and education. Racially mixed sporting events are gradually creeping onto some of the playing fields.

Until only recently, mixed play in south Africa usually meant an all-Black team playing against an all white team, but there are a few teams which include whites, Blacks and Coloreds (people of mixed race).

This mixing is going on despite the official government line against mixing.

Some golf clubs allow Blacks to play regularly as visitors but deny them full membership.

One group of Colored golfers has been playing regularly at the exclusive Royal Cape Golf Club in Cape-town for a long time. They challenged government policy, demanding full membership.

They got a quick reply from the club's captain. It said, "I regret to inform you that in view of prevailing circumstances beyond our control, the committee and I are at present unable to contemplate opening membership of this club to all races."

That rebuke came at a most inopportune time for the administrators of South African sports, who had been announcing to the world that racial discrimination in sport in South Africa had disappeared.

You'll recall this was the message of the Springboks rugby team which recently toured several parts of the world including parts of the United States.

Even in South Africa there is room for controversy and the difference between what was being said and what was actually happening caused government critics to state that the racially mixed sport which does exist is simply window dressing. Some similar clubs agreed with

the Royal Cape club saying if Blacks were allowed as members, the clubs would be breaking the law.

However, the chairman of another golf club in Cape Town, Raymond Ackerman, charged Royal Cape was hiding behind the law to keep the club all white. His club has had Blacks as full members for three years and he says there never has been any problem with the law.

Then Dr. Gerrit Viljeon, minister of national education who is also responsible for sporting matters said there was no reason for clubs not to accept Black members. He indicated that the clubs should regard themselves as exempt from the race laws that prevent race mixing. What's more, he promised that these laws would be changed anyway.

South Africa also has a policy of separation of the races in higher education. There are separate colleges for Blacks, Whites, Indians and Coloreds. But university offi-

cial have increasingly urged less government-forced segregation at the college level.

The numbers of Blacks attending non-Black universities doubled between 1977 and 1980. But the practice remains subject to government discretion. The official criteria for allowing a Black into a white university is the inability of the student to find classes necessary for a particular field of study at the university catering to his or her own racial group.

The Department of Education and Training is opening a new university for Black urban youth called Vista.

Critics of Vista say Blacks need greatly expanded educational opportunities, but they say those needs could be effectively met at a much lower cost by existing institutions if racial barriers were removed.

So, who knows, maybe budgetary considerations may lead to college integration. Strange country, South Africa.

## From the Capitol

by Rep. Ron Wyden



Q. There has been a lot in the news recently about delegates to the White House Conference on Aging being polled about their political

views. Do you think this will have a negative impact on the conference? A. I sincerely hope not. I think it's nothing short of a tragedy that this

traditionally bipartisan effort has become a political football.

The White House Conference on Aging only comes around once every 10 years. It's intended to serve as a forum in which participants from all over the country can come up with cost-effective and innovative solutions to the problems of the aged. It has always been conducted in the best spirit of bipartisanship—and mutual concern for the problems and needs of the aged.

With programs for the aged still reeling from the severe blows dealt them during the budget cutting process, the need for this kind of a non-political brainstorming session is greater than ever before. I think it's critical that we do all in our power to put this shameful affair behind us and get on with the business of putting together a bipartisan forum that will come up with innovative solutions that will stand us in good stead for the next decade.

Q. This week you introduced a bill which you said would reduce costs and cut paperwork for cities and other recipients of federal grants. How does this bill work?

A. In essence what it does is limit the number of audits state and local governments and other federal grant recipients are subjected to each year. It also streamlines the process for those audits.

Currently, local entities are subjected to audits annually from each agency from which they get federal assistance. For example, the City of Portland expects to undergo 25 separate audits during the upcoming

fiscal year.

The impact in terms of cost and staff time is astonishing. Since last January, Portland has expended 361 man days, or about 2,888 hours, working on audits for various federal grants. The city expects to spend some \$120,000 this year on federal audits.

I think this is an idea whose time has come; in fact, I'm dumbfounded that no one has pushed it sooner. At a time when we're having a hard time making ends meet, we just can't tolerate regulations which result in such blatant waste.

Q. You also announced the results of a three-year study in Oregon which you said shows it is possible to improve health care delivery for the elderly and still save money. Can you explain?

A. This study, conducted by Blue Cross of Oregon, looked into the implications of removing the current requirement that Medicare beneficiaries spend three days in the hospital before becoming eligible for skilled nursing facility benefits.

I introduced a bill earlier this year to eliminate that requirement, and I'm delighted to announce that the study's results supported that move. The study showed a savings of \$182,000.

But beyond that, removing the requirement may literally save lives. It is a well-known fact that unnecessary moves may lead to transfer trauma and death among weak, elderly patients. With the elimination of this requirement, at least some of these unnecessary moves may be eliminated.



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*Citizen of the Week*



Mrs. Ann Woods is manager of the housekeeping department at the Newberg Community Hospital in Newberg, heading a staff of ten.

Mrs. Woods is a former pre-school teacher and served as community coordinator for Santa Rosa City Schools, where she was liaison between parents and the school system.

Her hobbies include sewing and working with pre-school education, as well as church work. She attends Marnatha Church.

Mrs. Woods is the mother of six children. A native of Milan, Tennessee, she moved to the West 19 years ago. She also is a licensed beautician.

The Observer welcomes Mrs. Woods to the community.

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### Public Notice

#### HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/(HCD) NEIGHBORHOOD NEED WORKSHOPS

The Bureau of Community Development will host a series of workshops which will be held in low and moderate income (HCD) neighborhoods to discuss neighborhood needs and priorities, and the potential use of federal Community Development Block Grant funds to meet some of those needs.

City Bureau representatives will be at these workshops to discuss your improvement needs in more detail. You will have an opportunity to express your ideas and concerns. If you live in a neighborhood listed below, you are encouraged to attend your HCD neighborhood workshop.

- NORTHEAST:** (King, Vernon, Sabin, Boise, Eliot, Humboldt, Concordia) Tuesday, November 3, King Facility, 4815 NE 7th Avenue, 7:30 p.m.
- NORTH:** (NPCC, St. Johns, Portsmouth, Kenton) Thursday, November 5, Kenton Firehouse, 8105 N. Brandon, 7:30 p.m.
- SOUTHEAST:** (Buckman, Kerns, Brooklyn, Richmond, Sunnyside, Hosford-Abernathy, Sellwood-Moreland, Creston-Kenilworth, Foster-Powell, Lents) Tuesday, November 17, St. Ignatius Church Cafeteria, 3400 SE 43rd, 7:30 p.m.
- WEST:** (Downtown, Burnside, Northwest, Goose Hollow, Lair Hill) Thursday, November 19, First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park Avenue, 7:30 p.m.

For more information call Connie Lively-Trudeau at 248-5353.

Charles E. Olson  
HCD Program Manager