

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## ECEC: Memorial to segregation

Nearly ten years ago the Portland School District began a systematic effort to avoid court action by making an attempt to statistically "balance" elementary schools in the Black community.

Early Childhood Education Centers were developed—not because they were educationally advantageous—but to attempt to numerically desegregate these schools. To make room for the four- and five-year-olds who were bussed across town to attend the centers, the upper grades were removed. These children, and all of the younger children who could be enticed to join them, were scattered across town.

There has been no evidence that these ECECs have added any benefit to the neighborhood children. One would think that the pre-kindergarten and all-day kindergarten programs would enhance the educational experience of these children. But by the time they reach the third or fourth grade—now abandoned by their westside peers—they are now scoring at the bottom of the educational scale.

Yet for many years these pre-K and K programs have absorbed untold resources, time and energy. State disadvantaged money and various federal program money earmarked for the economically disadvantaged has been used to educate middle and upper class children—all for reaching the magical fifty per cent number, a goal that was never reached in most of these schools. At the same time older students in the same schools suffer neglect.

How long will the people of Oregon allow their money to be wasted in this way? Dr. Fenwick's proposal to move an area of the Humboldt district to Beach to alleviate overcrowding not only moves neighborhood children to protect the status of cross-town transfers, but it proposes a new ECEC at Beach to offset the influx of Black students with white pre-K and K students.

We have no objection to ECECs if they are

designed and operated to provide optimum educational programs for children living in economically depressed areas—or in any area for that matter. We do object to spending money on four- and five-year-olds—who are not even the responsibility of the school district—in the name of temporary desegregation. If there are vacancies at Humboldt ECEC after neighborhood children enroll, then surely there are children in nearby low-income areas who could attend. If Beach is to have an ECEC, then why not enroll children from Kenton, Applegate, Portsmouth or other nearby schools—children who will eventually attend middle school and high school together?

With the federal and state governments determined to cut funding to education we can no longer afford to provide child care for the rich. All available funds must be directed to providing equal and quality educational programs for all of the district's children.

## To Ali

He came across the earth like a meteorite, radiant and glowing for all to see. He was superman in the flesh, and we believed in him.

He stood up to all adversaries and won our hearts. He fought the powers of war, and made us proud. He climbed the highest mountains and we cheered his ascent all the way. He was our hero; our youth.

He promised us that he would know when to stop. He would not be like "Joe" and "Sugar Ray." We would never see him scratching for coins.

The meteorite has burned out! We must remember it as it was—so bright, so radiant and thrilling. "Cool out," great Ali, don't reignite the flame. Let us remember your shining light.

## Huntly Collins: Cheerleading Jefferson to Victory

by Ronnie Herndon, Co-chairman, Black United Front



Earlier this month *The Oregonian* newspaper devoted more than two pages of its space to a series of articles by Huntly Collins about Jefferson High School. All too often *The Oregonian's* coverage of the Black community is poor and its editorials concerning same are to the right of George Wallace. Given that *The Oregonian* has only hired two Black people as permanent employees in its news department in the last thirty years, Huntly's perspectives are not surprising.

The paper promotes her as an award winning education reporter, but if you look closely at what she writes, you find frequently she is little more than an apologist for the official line of the folks at the education service center (pardon me, the Robert Blanchard service center), their supporters in the West Hills and the downtown boardrooms. This was evident in her reporting on the Black United Front's battle with the school district to stop the abuse of our children in the name of integration.

Collins' paternalistic attitude shines through in her articles about Jefferson. In her determination to pat the school's predominantly white staff on the back, she misses important points about the school. "Jefferson's strongest drawing card is its faculty, widely regarded as among the most committed and competent in the state," she wrote. "Jefferson High School is a place where education is happening," she added.

Both statements seem to be contradicted by the charts Collins included in her article showing that Jefferson students have much lower test scores in reading and mathematics than the district average.

Collins' article suggests that most of the credit for the little progress the school has made should go to the staff. She gives little credit to the desires and work of students, particularly Black students.

She quotes the staff complaining that it inherits problem students from the feeder schools in the Jefferson area. We realize that Black students get a poor education from day one in Portland Public Schools, and the Jefferson staff's attitude is consistent with a pattern of shifting the blame for not providing our children with a good education. The

high school folks say its the elementary schools' fault and the elementary school folks say it's because the kids come from a "low socio-economic background." It is always Black folks' fault instead of the school system's; this is commonly called blaming the victim.

Collins devotes a lot of her space to a flattering portrait of Larry Ayers, the Jefferson principal who graduated from Bob Jones University in Columbia, S.C. This is a school that argues that its long-standing racially discriminatory policies are ordained by God. The school won't allow single Black men to attend because old Bob Jones is paranoid about them chasing after the precious young white co-eds. *Lawd have mercy.* Ayers, according to Collins' article, contends that he attended the school for the Christian "discipline" it provided. He says he does not agree with its racism, yet he counts himself among Bob Jones' friends and puts on an annual banquet for the school in Oregon. Collins glosses over the fact that a man who actively supports a racist institution has a critical influence over the daily lives of so many young Black people. Could this be one reason why Jefferson expels and suspends such a high percentage of Black students?

Collins also spends a lot of time talking about Jefferson's magnet programs that are designed to attract white students to the school. But nowhere in the series does she mention the fact that Black students can hardly get into those programs, especially the important computer and communications programs. That is a major issue for Black parents at Jefferson, yet Collins is silent on the subject.

What is happening at Jefferson is what has happened to many so-called magnet programs across the country. The best the school has to offer is reserved to attract white kids to a particular building so that white administrators can play the numbers game, trying to convince everyone that they have a serious commitment to integration.

We don't care about the numbers game. Our priority will always be getting the best education for Black students.

The first articles in Collins' series were bad enough, but her final ar-

ticle printed on *The Oregonian's* Forum page on December 7 was appalling even to us who are used to such drivel from *The Oregonian*. Again, white folks' stereotypical attitudes about Black folks shine through in Collins' writing. Although she never mentions Black students specifically, she does point out that they make up about half of the student population, and the article suggests that Black students care more about athletics than academics and that teachers have to play games with them to learn.

"Given what it has going for it, there's no reason why the School of Champions, a proud school with a long tradition, shouldn't be scoring as well academically as it does in competitive athletics," she writes. Among her suggestions for "positive measures" the school might take to deal with its problems is a "public relations campaign for academic excellence. It would be aimed at making the ability to read, write and compute as highly valued and rewarded as the ability to play basketball." Collins suggests banners, contests and pep rallies, "promoting Jefferson as a school for champion students, not just champion athletes." Of course, she also suggests that the school find a "creative and charismatic leader—perhaps a Black" to lead the program.

Derrick Bell's book, *Shades of Brown*, cites several predominantly Black public schools whose students do well academically. Strange, none of them mentioned using local versions of the Dallas Cowgirls to improve classroom performance. Our children don't need this "Get One for the Gipper" stupidity. However, given what has come out of the district office in the past, the folks down there probably think it's a brilliant idea.

The problem with Portland schools is that they've done too much public relating and not enough teaching. For decades Black educators, currently including Marva Collins in Chicago, have proved repeatedly that if you show respect for Black children and their abilities, show them you care what happens to them and have high expectations, then they will succeed. It is as simple as that. Huntly save the rah, rah, rah for the Portland State Vikings.

## From the Capitol

by Rep. Ron Wyden



With 1981 rapidly winding down, it seems appropriate to stop and take stock of where we are.

1981 has not been an easy year—particularly for Oregonians.

•While U.S. employment has inched upward since the first of 1980, Oregon has lost a staggering 70,000 salaried jobs.

•Manufacturing employment has dropped at a rate of some 7.9 per cent—while wages in this sector, traditionally higher than the national average, have lagged.

•The housing industry, the backbone of Oregon's economy, is staggering—and is expected to slump more before it gets better.

•The inflation rate in Portland is approaching an annual rate of 15.4 per cent.

•Nationwide, the week ending October 1, a total of 481 businesses went bankrupt. Since the beginning of the year, 12,600 businesses have gone under. At that rate, more businesses will fail in America than any time since 1932.

What this shakes down to is this: America is in a recession and some parts of the nation, particularly Oregon, may be headed for a depression.

I do not mean to suggest matters are hopeless. Quiet the opposite. I believe we can rebuild an economy we can live with—an economy we can be proud of. But that will require turning around current federal fiscal policy.

In 1981, we made some mistakes:

•We cut taxes twice as much as we cut federal spending, and;

•We refused to cut sacred cows such as the defense budget. The result was increased federal budget deficits and increased inflationary pressures. We wound up with a dried out economy, a transfer of wealth to huge corporations through the tax cut and a shortage of credit for small and medium-sized businesses.

If we continue along this road, we risk rising unemployment, growing bankruptcies, continued high interest rates and renewed inflation.

But we don't have to continue in this vein. We can do better—if we all work together.

Recriminations won't save us a dime. Neither will excessive partisanship. We need cooperation, good thinking and hard work. Winning should be more important than who wins.

The important thing is to commit to following an even-handed, fair course of action. We can't penalize one sector of the economy and reward another without dividing society and crippling our overall ability to solve our problems. We simply cannot afford to drive wedges between races, between age groups, between regions, between income groups.

In terms of specific programs to get our economy back on track, I believe we must:

1. *Cut federal spending*, with the cuts coming in areas which have

been spared from the budget knife so far—including military spending, tobacco subsidies and handouts to the synthetic fuel industry. Cuts in these areas will restore an element of equity in budget cuts—and they will realize significant cost savings.

2. *Retool the tax cut.* Save the portions that truly stimulate increased productivity and reward people who work and save. But let's delay, or shelve entirely, those sections that really amount to little more than corporate welfare and backdoor subsidies to huge failing industries.

3. *Conserve credit.* Between federal borrowing to finance exploding deficits and capital being swallowed up to pay for corporate mergers, there isn't much capital left for housing, for consumer purchases, for small business expansion. Encouragement—not bureaucracy—needs to be given to drive precious capital into those sectors of the economy that need it to survive.

I don't pretend that these proposals will solve all our economic problems. But they are based on sound 1 plus 1 equals 2 economics—and as such, should begin to move us along the road to economic recovery, both in Oregon and around the country.

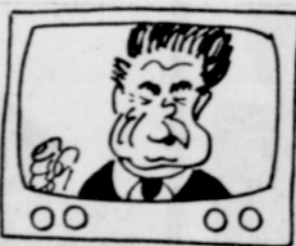
With this kind of a positive approach, we can look for a better year in 1982—and beyond. We can know that once again, our economy is headed up—not down the drain.



HI YA FOLKS, WELCOME TO OUR LITTLE RECESSION!



HEH, HEH. I'LL BET YOU THOUGHT MY STAFF DIDN'T BOTHER TO TELL ME ABOUT IT, DIDN'T YOU?



WELL, NOT SO! THEY WOKE ME UP AT 9:00 A.M. TO BREAK THE NEWS.



ANYWAY, I WANT TO ASSURE THOSE 8 OR 10 OR 12 MILLION OF YOU WHO ARE OUT OF WORK THAT THINGS WILL GET BETTER SOON.



WHEN 5 OR 10 MILLION MORE OF YOU LOSE YOUR JOBS, OUR ECONOMIC SITUATION WILL BE GREAT.



IN THE MEANTIME, HELP IS ON THE WAY. LOTS AND LOTS OF VOLUNTEERS ARE GEARING UP TO HELP THE TRULY NEEDY.



SO TRUST ME, HAVE FAITH AND YOUR TIN CUP WILL ALWAYS RATTLE WITH COINS AND A SACK OF GROCERIES WILL BE ON YOUR DOORSTEP WHEN YOU NEED IT.



WHICH (CHUCKLE) REMINDS ME OF THE WELFARE CADILLAC AND...

## Letters to the Editor

### Finds errors in Zionist statement

To the editor:

I have just finished reading your front page article of December 10, 1981, under the headline "Middle East: the next world war?" In it, I find the comments of Lanita Anderson, Editor of the *Portland Jewish Review*, to be as offensive as they are uninformed. I really hope that in the near future a more knowledgeable spokesperson from the Jewish Community will come forward to speak out on this important question.

1. It simply is not true that the Jewish Community supports the war-mongering coming out of Washington regarding the State of Libya and its leader Col. Moammar Kadafy. In Europe, even governments such as France and Germany have spoken out publicly against this sabre-rattling.

2. "The greatest danger to Israel

is" NOT "that the Arab world has gotten its media trip together and their propaganda war is not offensive to most people." The greatest danger to Israel is that a notorious terrorist named Menachim Begin is the Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

3. It is sad to have to say that Lanita Anderson is not correct when she states "that Israel is the only democratic state in the Middle East." Israel is a Theocracy, not a Democracy. This means that if you are not Jewish, you are denied full participation in Israeli economic and political affairs. This fact is the basis for the racist charge that is so often made against Israel.

4. Among other things, the fact that Israel is a Theocracy, means that if a family, with a Jewish husband but a non-Jewish wife (whether she and/or the children

have converted or not) wants to emigrate to Israel, the mother and their children cannot become citizens because Israeli Law states that you must be Jewish and Jewishness passes through the blood of the mother only. This Law is, of course, based upon utter nonsense. It apes Hitlerism.

5. Finally, many of us saw PLO leader Yassir Arafat deliver his speech on television before the United Nations some years ago. We remember what he said regarding the State of Israel. In that speech, Arafat stated that when the Jews and Arabs finally get together there will no longer be an Israel, because a new different Nation will be formed that will give recognition to the aspirations of all the people in that area, Jews and Arabs alike.

Elaine Alexander

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A. Lee Henderson, Editor/Publisher

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