

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Coalition the key

The Portland School Board's decision to consider seven sites for Tubman Middle School is not only an affront to the Black community but a waste of taxpayer's money at a time when the district faces an economic crisis.

Two years ago the Board promised to rectify years of discrimination against Black students by establishing a middle school in the community. This is the only community in the district that did not open 6th, 7th and 8th grade classes—and in some cases 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classes—in the neighborhood. In other parts of the district, three elementary districts were combined to create two elementary and one middle school. But in Albina, no middle schools were created and children were bussed throughout the district in a hit and miss, uncoordinated manner that was destructive to the children and to their community.

After threats of a boycott the Board relented and established a middle school for the students of the King, Eliot and Humboldt areas. This school—Harriet Tubman—was housed on the old Monroe High School—far from the community—while building renovation of Eliot was to proceed.

The building renovation did not proceed—but stalling tactics did. Now the administration and several Board members would like to take a popularity poll—asking not only the parents of King, Eliot and Humboldt, but parents who do or might send their students from other areas of the city. They also have consulted the area advisory committees that are appointed by the board.

In the meantime all of the Black and civil rights organizations remain firm in their choice of Eliot.

Little has changed since the district's "comprehensive desegregation plan" was passed except rhetoric. And the rhetoric continues.

There is no way the Board can close Jefferson or Boise to use their buildings for a middle school; the only building within the Eliot, Humboldt area that is available without great displacement of neighborhood children is Eliot. If the school is not placed at Eliot the district will continue to be guilty of discriminating against these children by making them travel outside their school boundaries to attend school, unlike other Portland students.

Tubman will eventually open at Eliot. It is up to the School Board to decide if this will happen only after they lose more money through hokey polls, procrastination and ever-increasing building costs. It is up to the School Board to decide whether this will happen only after boycotts, civil disobedience, law suits and all other means the Black community has to express its anger and disgust over once again being lied to by the people elected to serve.

And why should Black parents fight this battle alone?

We call on all of the organizations that were a part of the Community Coalition for School Integration to come forth and support the Black community in this struggle. After all, establishment of one or more middle schools in the area was one of the prime recommendations of the Coalition.

Well-meaning whites, and persons of other races, must now come forward, join in a coalition with the Black community, and tell the School Board in no uncertain terms that its commitments must be kept. The establishment of a middle school in the Black community is not only important to those children who live in the community and their families, it is essential to educational excellence in this city.

A divided city cannot prosper, and this is an issue that will create deep divisions if it is not settled quickly and equitably.



## The challenges of 1982

by Rep. Ron Wyden

In last week's column, I wrote about my first year in Congress—what I learned and how I felt about it.

This week, I want to share some of my thoughts about the challenges 1982 promises to offer.

**The Budget:** Once again, the budget promises to be the major battleground. The Administration has already tipped its hand as to its priorities for the year: it wants to increase defense spending by 15 per cent, once again leaving social programs to bear the brunt of budget cuts.

That is a situation we must not tolerate. There is room for economies in the defense budget—and in other "sacred cow" programs that have as yet been left untouched. We must push for these economies to be enacted.

**The Tax Cut:** We learned last year that cutting taxes does not necessarily ensure economic recovery—unless those cuts are carefully tooled. A variety of proposals to restructure the tax cut are likely to surface this year. Personally, I favor retooling the tax cut to save the portions that truly stimulate increased productivity and reward people who work and save, but delay or shelve entirely those sections that really amount to little more than corporate welfare and backdoor subsidies to huge failing industries.

**New Taxes:** There are those in Washington pushing for what they call "revenue enhancements." Beware. Read that "higher taxes."

The latest estimate is that Administration officials will push for between \$30 to \$40 billion in new taxes in 1983-84.

One of the new taxes being pushed is waterway user fees. These "fees" would be disastrous for Oregon, and could rob our state of as many as 15,000 jobs and the potential for badly needed economic growth in our region. I strongly op-

pose waterway user fees.

In fact, I oppose any new major tax increase.

**Health Care Costs:** Health care costs promise to be an increasingly important topic of conversation.

Just this week, the Administration proposed radical changes in Medicare and Medicaid which would shift the costs of health care to elderly and needy patients, as well as to hospitals, private employers and state governments.

This approach is neither sensible, nor fair.

That's why I have introduced legislation to reduce Medicare costs—not by squeezing the quality of care or shifting the burden, but by giving health care providers more latitude—and less red tape—in meeting the health care needs of patients.

**Social Security:** Expect concerted attempts to bury the issue of Social Security reform—at least until after the 1982 elections.

I do not believe such an approach is responsible—and will do everything in my power to keep the issue on the front burner. There is simply no excuse for the battering senior citizens absorbed after the President announced May 12—in direct conflict with his campaign pledges—that there would be drastic and immediate cuts in Social Security benefits.

To refuse to address the need for drastic reform now will only perpetuate further confusion and anguish—and as such, is unacceptable.

**Jobs:** Too many people in Oregon (and throughout the nation) don't have jobs. And far too many don't even have prospects of getting a job.

The Administration and the Congress have made beginnings, through tax policy, to stimulate new investment and savings, with an eye toward creating more jobs.

But we must do better. That's why I made my first bill in

Congress a measure designed to generate jobs through construction of a new modern lock at Bonneville Dam. And that's why I also intend to push for a fair timber industry relief package and sensible housing legislation that will lift these troubled industries from the ash-heap.

For example, Congress should enact a first-time homeowners bill that will allow young families to buy their first house.

And it must avoid Administration-backed legislation that aims to prevent existing homeowners from selling their homes with assumable mortgages. Those assumption clauses (permitting the new owner to assume the existing mortgage at the existing interest rate) were part of the original contract. Denying homeowners the option of exercising that option is the same as breaking that contract.

We also need to push for removal of restrictions on U.S. exports, especially in high technology fields where American manufacturers have an advantage. Foreign competition for U.S. goods and services is tough enough without the government making it tougher with excessive regulations.

Increased U.S. exports will mean our companies will be selling more goods and, therefore, will need more workers to make those goods.

**Moving Forward:** The above list of issues only scratches the surface of the many critical matters that will come before the Congress this year.

Our responsibility is to meet these challenges—and produce results all of us can be proud of.

Because—and I didn't have to learn this in Washington—people everywhere want to be proud of their government.

And they think it is about time something happens so they can be proud.

## Letters to the Editor

### Oxfam appreciates assistance

To the editor:

We at Oxfam America would like to thank the people of Portland for their tremendous effort in support of Oxfam America's eighth annual Fast for a World Harvest. The fight for an end to world hunger and for equitable development is a long one, and we deeply appreciate your support.

The money the city of Portland raised will be used to support such community development programs as a women's silk spinning cooperative in India; a fertilizer plant in Kampuchea (Cambodia); and solar-

powered water pumps that provide safe drinking water in Somalia, where years of drought and political conflict have created the largest group of refugees in the world today.

Oxfam America is a small non-sectarian, non-profit agency that helps people to help themselves. Our projects emphasize a grass roots approach to development, providing essential technical and material inputs to village level groups in Third World countries working toward constructive social and economic change.

Oxfam America emphasizes a

similar grass roots principle in its fundraising efforts. We accept no government funds and rely on the support of individuals and groups across the country in communities and cities like Portland. The hard work and the fine efforts of the people of Portland—many of whom fasted and sent Oxfam America the money they would have spent on food that day—helped make this year's Fast so successful.

All of us at Oxfam America thank you for your support.

Joseph Short  
Executive Director,  
Oxfam America

### Don't cut programs, raise taxes

To the editor:

The Progressive Alliance of Social Workers, a statewide organization of human service workers, strongly protests Governor Atiyeh's recent proposals to solve the state fiscal crisis through massive cuts in public agency budgets. We believe these proposed cuts to be unjustified and capricious in nature, and urge him to carefully study the implications of his position.

The objective result of this proposal for across-the-board cuts is one of balancing the state budget on the backs of the poor. Those most dependent on public services—the poor, children, the handicapped,

the elderly, the physically and mentally ill—will be most adversely affected. As the Governor is aware, current levels of service are already insufficient. Further reductions in budgets which agency directors indicate are currently cut to the bone would be irresponsible and inhumane.

There are numerous options available to solve Oregon's fiscal crisis in ways that will not place citizens in conditions endangering their health and safety. These options include:

- An increase in corporate tax rates;
- Reduction or elimination of the property tax relief programs;

• A restructuring of the individual income tax system which would be truly progressive, placing the highest tax burdens on those with high incomes; and

• A tax on purchase of luxury items.

The Alliance urges the Governor to withdraw his proposals and avert the devastating effects they would have on the people of Oregon. We believe this is a time that calls for courageous and innovative thinking, not cynical and politically motivated "solutions" which come at the expense of the poor and powerless.

For the Alliance,  
Pamela Smith

## Street Beat

Our question this week is, "Do you feel that children are receiving quality education from the Portland Public Schools?"



**Jim Coombes, Plastics Worker**—"I don't have any currently in the Public Schools but the reactions that I get from people who have children in school is negative. They aren't learning anything. They don't bring homework home, they can't do math or read. I know this girl who's 15 and she reads at a third-grade level. And they just keep passing her."



**Dolly Foster, housewife**—"Well, I'm involved in the host program where they tutor a child for an hour in reading. If you know how to read the kids can be educated."



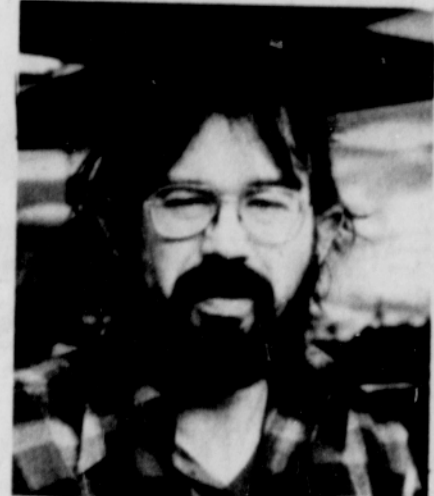
**Len Woods, savings-and-loan employee**—"I don't think the kids are getting enough attention. There are too many kids in class. Some teachers really don't care."



**David Duke, security officer**—"I think if the kids want it, it's there for them. I don't believe that some care. There aren't any good programs to bring out a desire to learn."



**Liz Wierfse, child care worker**—"Not that well but Portland is not as bad as any of the other cities. Most kids nowadays are getting short-changed. The classrooms are crowded and I think sometimes the teachers don't care. What I see around me is that Black children are not receiving what they should."



**Jake B., illustrator**—"Yes, I do. I'm from the Bay Area and the only way to receive quality education is by living in the suburbs. Compared to that Portland is doing all right."

**Dwight Jackson, security officer**—"Whatever they're receiving the kids aren't showing much interest in it. I see more kids in Fred Myers than at school. I don't think the teachers are neglecting the kids but it has something to do with this thing called caring."

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown



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