



Thomas Chamberlain and Mike Porter, paramedics, with "Shirley Ann", emergency car purchased and maintained by St. Johns residents. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Shirley Ann: Is she ours?

by Bonnie Seal

Is it better to be a big fish in a little pond, or a little fish in a big pond? This is a question some residents of St. Johns have begun to consider over the last two months since the inception of the emergency dispatch number, 911.

The new dispatching system allows persons throughout Multnomah County to use the same emergency number, and was established as part of a state-wide effort.

With the county's efforts to establish a uniform system came the fear that St. Johns would lose access to the Shirley Ann—the emergency medical rescue unit that has been financially subsidized by the citizens of St. Johns through donations for over twenty years.

The controversy has its roots in the death of a St. Johns baby, Shirley Ann Howell, who choked on a grape and died in a fireman's arms en route to the hospital in the late 1950s. As a result of the infant's death, the citizens of St. Johns pooled their efforts and their pocketbooks to purchase the first emergency medical unit in North Portland—the original Shirley Ann, predecessor to the present car, Portland's Rescue Unit number three—with the idea that service would be free for all residents of St. Johns.

Since that time, financing for the original car's successors and equipment has been subsidized by a trust fund fed by donations, and chaired by Jewel Sundquist and Rita

Cocannour, citizens of St. Johns.

Sundquist claimed the fund paid \$7,000 toward the purchase of the present car, and that it is the best equipped of all three rescue units in Portland.

Because of their investments into the car, St. Johns residents became concerned about losing access to it, in the newly-established county-wide system.

Their complaints hinged on the premise that the Shirley Ann was cost-free, and an ambulance that might be sent by the dispatchers at Multnomah County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) would not be.

"Many of the residents of St. Johns are elderly, and can't afford that kind of service," said Sundquist. "I don't want people to be stuck with paying for an ambulance coming out which isn't needed."

The rescue car has not been replaced by private ambulances, according to Stephen Dean, director of Emergency Services for Multnomah County and the City of Portland. Rescue units do not transport the patient, he explained. For most medical emergencies, both a rescue unit and an ambulance must be sent.

"Studies have shown that the sooner you get treatment, the more likely you are to survive," emphasized Dean, and fire department vehicles including cars and trucks have an average response time of four minutes, two minutes faster than the average of six minutes that it takes for an ambulance.

In most cases a person must be transported to the hospital, and this requires an ambulance, according to Dean. "If the emergency sounds serious, and the ambulance is the closest vehicle, it will be dispatched."

Sundquist said she has received no complaints about the system during the last few months, nor has she heard of anyone in St. Johns not getting the Shirley Ann. She said a person could call the former fire alarm number, 232-2111, and ask specifically for the Shirley Ann, and that few cases in which the Shirley Ann was not available had come to her attention.

Both fire department and EMS spokesmen discouraged using the old number. Whether the Shirley Ann is the only vehicle dispatched depends upon the availability of the car and the seriousness of the emergency, according to Dean, who stated that, "In most emergencies the rescue unit will be followed by an ambulance. A person can ask for the Shirley Ann, but if it is out on call they will get another emergency unit."

Dean did not know if the rescue unit was located in St. Johns specifically because of the subsidy, or if another location would be more strategic for the county.

He pointed out that three of Portland's 23 ambulances are located along a half-mile stretch on North Lombard between Wabash and Cary. "This makes St. Johns one of the best equipped sections of the city for an emergency," he commented.

Commission presents report

Governor Vic Atiyeh has received the first annual report of the Governor's Commission on Black Affairs, which place priority for the coming year on fund raising and unemployment of Black youth in Portland.

Fund raising is essential, according to chairman Pearl Spears-Gray, since only one dollar was appropriated by the Legislature for the two-year period. During the past year the Commission received a \$500 donation from the Joint Council of Teamsters No. 37 and \$100 from Links, Inc. Fund raisers added to

the resources.

While no statistics are available on unemployment of Black youth in Oregon, the Commission estimates approximately 38 per cent based on national figures and a recent local poll.

The Commission plans to submit a proposal to a private foundation seeking funding to address Black youth unemployment.

The Commission was established by Governor Atiyeh on September 30, 1980, along with the Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs.

Its functions include monitoring existing laws and programs designed to meet the needs of the Black population; identifying and researching problem areas and issues and recommending action; serving as a liaison between the Black community and government entities.

Additional members are: Geraldine Christian, Thomas Kennedy, Bobbie Nunn, Barbara Patrick, Frank Wilson, of Portland; Bruce Broussard, Sandy; Patricia Creal, Springfield; and Mathette Williams, Salem.

Middle school controversy brews

(Continued from page 1 column 5) schools. The Board will be asking for a new tax base in May and we need these voters."

At the present time board members Herb Cawthorne and Steve Buel support the Eliot site, while Bill Scott favors Eliot unless a better site can be found within the community.

The School District staff has studied seven sites including Eliot. Their conclusions are:

- Adams High School: Facility is adequate but too large; no capital investment is needed; transportation would cost \$155,000 per year; outside of attendance area.

- Boise: occupied by K-8 school; relocation of K-5 to Eliot would not allow space for incoming transfer students; not adequate space; \$3,185,075 building cost; \$125,000 transportation cost.

- Eliot: Current program would have to relocate; not adequate space; \$3,650,000 building cost; \$125,000 transportation cost.

- Kennedy: Building depreciated,

insufficient space; \$6,381,600 building cost; \$140,000 transportation cost; out of attendance area.

- Monroe: inadequate space; \$1,750,000 building costs; \$171,000 transportation cost; out of attendance area.

- Washington/Monroe High School: land deficient, building too large; no capital investment required; \$171,000 transportation costs; out of attendance area.

The Area I and Area II Citizen Advisory Committees were asked for their input. These committees are appointed by the School Board. The Area I CAC recommended Adams High School. The Adams II CAC recommended the elimination of Kennedy, Adams and Jefferson from consideration, the selection of a site close to the attendance area, move of Columbia/Whitaker to the Adams building, sale of Columbia/Whitaker to fund Tubman site.

The Board's Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee went on record again as "strongly recom-

mending the Eliot site."

The Oregonian revealed on Friday that the School District and Portland Community College have entered into talks concerning a possible trade of the PCC Cascade Campus for Adams High School, with the possibility of using Cascade for Tubman Middle School. The Cascade property was acquired by Portland Community College with Model Cities funds and at the time made a long-term commitment to serve the model neighborhood—bounded on the east by approximately 21st Avenue. This possibility also has not been discussed with representatives of community organizations.

The Black United Front expressed its anger at the School Board's apparent intention to abandon earlier promises to locate Tubman at the Eliot building. Ronnie Herndon, Co-chairman, said that the desegregation plan has brought little if any improvement in education for Black children.

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