

METROPOLITAN



Boise students Lisa Channel, Ronald Hale, Roy McCrea, were winners of the 1979 Observer-Goodyear Blimp essay contest. (Photo: Dan Long)

Students vie for blimp trip

The *Observer* will sponsor its third annual Goodyear blimp ride for students next week.

Students will be selected from Applegate Elementary School and Boise Elementary School through their essays on "If I were the

Goodyear Blimp..."

Judges will be City Commissioner Charles Jordan; Sharon McCormack, Director, Northwest Neighborhoods Against Crime; Steve Buel, School Board member and

teacher; County Commissioner Caroline Miller; James Loving, Director, King Neighborhood Facility; and Ruth Spencer, Director of the Oregon Minority Educators Organization.

Prostitution: Questions, answers

by Harris Levon McRae

For the past several weeks the *Observer* has attempted to look at prostitution in Portland and to see what all the concern involving it is about.

Prostitution in Portland and in the United States as a whole is a phenomenon that takes a variety of forms based on the activities of the prostitutes and the relationships they have with their customers.

An attempt was made to address this complex issue with a multi-faceted approach including interviews with the prostitutes themselves as well as customers, the police, the business community and other concerned citizens.

Prostitution deals with the selling of sex. Sexuality is learned mainly through social interaction with others and derives its meaning from those relations and their cultural context. Because of this, human sexuality is highly variable.

"Actually prostitution comes in several ways. You have to be a prostitute to get and keep some of those so-called 'straight' jobs," one woman commented.

Since prostitution is influenced by the prevailing notions of sexuality in the society, its meaning can vary from time to time.

Many people believe that only poor and minority women are prostitutes despite the fact that many white women are visible "hooking" on the streets, and despite the fact that pimps many times recruit girls who are runaways from middle class homes. Also, traditionally, prostitution has been defined in terms of females, but there are a large number of male prostitutes on the streets as well.

A lot of people involved in prostitution today were victims of sexual and physical abuse. They had been victimized as children. Because they didn't have a family support system many of them had to find other ways to survive.

"I ran away from home and I needed some money. I met this guy who was a pimp and I hung out for a little while. After about a week he threatened to jump on me. He never did though. I got into prostitution because I couldn't just lay around the streets like some bum," one fifteen-year-old girl related.

A pimp will usually try to convince a person whom he wants to sell sex for him that he is in love with them, and that they are the most important thing in his life. He (or she) acts as the person's family and best friend for a while. The pimp provides shelter and food—setting the person up for sexual exploitation.

"All I worry about is getting that mind. Once I get the mind, the body can't be too far behind. When you turn a chick out you have to put in her mind what you want to be there—otherwise her morals, or whatever, can complicate things," one pimp said.

Some prostitutes get involved as a means to support themselves and their families. Some married women sell sex to men other than their husbands—with the husband's encouragement. Those dollars that the wife brings in may be the difference between paying the rent or not. Other women work daytime jobs and sell sex at night for fun and excitement.

Citizens ask why prostitutes can't be taken off the streets. Where are the police?

"Prostitutes are a good source of information for a police officer. The prostitute on the street sees and

hears a lot. Many of the bad guys talk to prostitutes all of the time. There isn't an awful lot a uniformed officer can do about prostitution. He can watch a person for a while and then make a loitering arrest if a person is engaged in conduct sufficient to show that they are loitering for prostitution," said Captain Bob Tobin of the Portland Police Department.

"Hard time in my opinion is not the answer, but the police or the criminal justice system has to provide an alternative. Maybe a work release program. I know that in Portland we need to be able to take the prostitute off the street and put them into some type of government custody," Captain Tobin added.

Since men usually seek out women for sex in exchange for money, and it is the women who agree and submit, any view of prostitution has to come to terms with the role and place of women in our society.

There is no doubt that economic exploitation is an important factor in the oppression of women. In an already air-tight job market more women will turn to prostitution in order to earn a living.

There are several ways that women can be helped and supported as far as leaving prostitution or never getting involved in it.

We—our society—need to have a large-scale program of support and services which realizes how severe the situation of a woman trying to stay out of prostitution is. The support should include food and a place to sleep, counseling, aid help in developing other economic alternatives such as a job or educational program.

As much as prostitution is in the news these days, it is not unique to our time. Prostitution existed in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. The selling of sex has shown a remarkable persistence in different times and cultures.

We have looked at many factors that relate to prostitution including cultural, sociological and economic ones, and it has been shown that there is no one answer to the social questions posed by prostitution.

One businessman seems to have summed it up pretty well: It's the oldest game in the world—they ain't gonna stop it now.

Street Beat

This week we took the question, "How did you feel about the results of the last election—were you satisfied?", to the streets.



Ron Person, Agricultural worker—"I don't know. It could have worked out better. A couple of measures I'm not too satisfied with—especially the one dealing with more taxes on trucks traveling on the roads."



Phyllis Houston, student—"I'm not really satisfied. I think Harold Williams should have won. We need a black leader in District 18."



Ellen, carpenter—"No. I think in District 18 it is silly that there isn't a black representative. Out of all the good candidates that there—a white male won."



Fred Hayes, foundry worker—"Yes, your vote is always worth something every time you cast it. Your vote is gonna count for something one way or another."



Willis Turner, retired—"Well, I guess so. Everybody voted the way they wanted. That's the way America is, the majority get their way so I have to be satisfied."



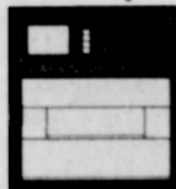
Dina Popp, nurse aid—"No, I just don't think that politicians live up to their promises. They are making cuts where the money situation is tight. I would like to see people—especially the elderly be reimbursed for money they lost in the cuts."

by Harris Levon McRae and Richard Brown

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