# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Continue the fight for freedom

"We know through powerful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

These are the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a man who was revered throughout the world and despised at home. He was a man who, though he strived to obtain the rights guaranteed by the US Constitution through non-violent action, was the target of FBI and CIA surveillance and government-sponsored smear campaigns.

Though the early years of his campaign were dedicated to obtaining civil rights — the vote, an end to jim crow, jobs, education — for black people, he soon saw the oppression of black people, minorities and poor whites as the product of a corrupt system.

As early as 1965 King came to the conclusion that the war in Vietnam had a direct negative impact on the struggle for equality in this country. He soon began to speak out against that war and peace became one of his major themes.

At the same time he began to call for an end to the imperialism that oppresses the people of the Third World and shortly before his death called for a non-violent mass action to bring about a redistribution of wealth in this nation and in the world.

When he began to openly connect the poverty and suffering of the world with the multinational corporations and the government that supports them, his assassination was certain.

Martin Luther King gave his life for all of the people of the world who are deprived of justice and freedom. The best way to honor his memory is to continue his struggle.

## Jackson secession is elitist

We must agree with Dr. Matthew Prophet, Superintendent of the Portland Public Schools, that the Jackson High School community's fight to form their own school district is elitist.

The decision to close Jackson, which was made before Prophet came to Portland, was accomplished through an unfair process and perhaps for reasons more political than educational.

The fact remains, however, that the residents of Northeast Portland suffered far more dislocation from the closure of two of their schools, Adams and Washington. The sudden closure of these two schools forced the overcrowding and racial strife that occurred at Jefferson a year ago and caused the scattering of students from these two schools. The students from Jackson High School had an entire school year to adjust to the change and to plan with the Wilson community for the change. Those students were transferred in a group to Wilson, which is frequently called Portland's finest high school.

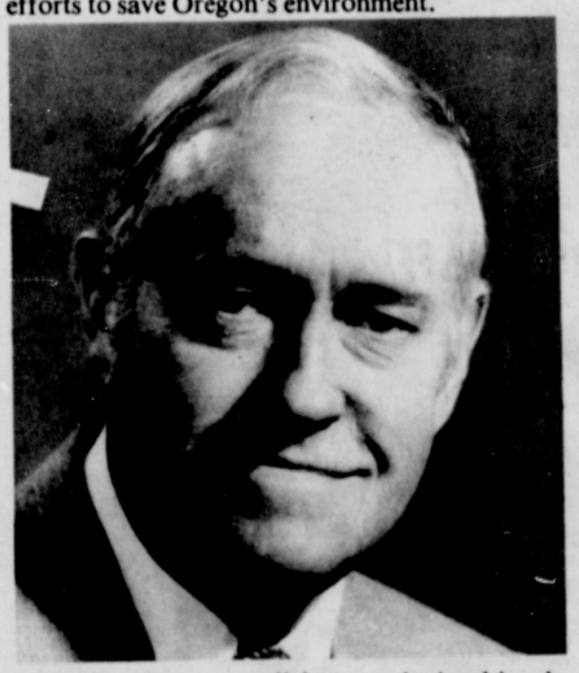
The Northeast community did not attempt to secede from the School District—it swallowed another bitter pill, although the children of Northeast Portland have suffered at the hands of the School District for years. The Northeast community and the inner Southeast community Washington High School served do not have the resources to engage in extended legal battles and whether they would have the property tax base to support adequate schools is debatable.

The fate of the children of North Portland is tied to that of the Portland School District. The fight is not to destroy the School District but to make it better for all children.

The Jackson High School area is another story. Ninety-seven percent white, middle and upper class, this area has an adequate tax base to provide an average per pupil expenditure at the Portland District level or above. It would not be burdened by low-income and refugee children who have special needs. If the Jackson community succeeds it will create a nearly all-white, homogeneous school district that cannot prepare its children to live in a multi-cultural world. Jackson secession would be a step-backward into elitism.

## Remember Tom McCall

Tom McCall, former Governor of Oregon, died Saturday following a long fight with cancer. Governor from 1967 through 1974, McCall gained a reputation for his independence and his efforts to save Oregon's environment.



Among the accomplishments during his administrations were the beach bill, the Willamette River cleanup, state land use planning, the bottle bill, and billboard removal—all of which were designed to protect the natural environment. Although he favored "clean" economic development, McCall recently warned that Oregon's environment should not be sacrificed for a few smokestacks. McCall received ridicule when he asked Americans to visit Oregon but not stay too long. Those who have witnessed the helter-skelter growth of California and the attempted encroachment of California corporations on Oregon's beaches and desert land understand what he meant.

Among McCall's failures were his inability to draw more income taxes from the corporations in order to lower property taxes and stabilize school financing.

McCall—who was elected with heavy support from Democrats—was not entirely happy with the Republican Party although he faithfully supported Nixon. He frequently toyed with the idea of a third party, which he called a "third force," and, after his attempt to regain the Governorship (after sitting out the mandatory four years after his second term) was stopped by the conservative wing of the Republican Party he reregistered as a Democrat.

McCall dimmed his image somewhat when he made paid political commercials for private utility companies, but more than regained his credibility when last fall, dying of cancer, he hit the campaign trail to save the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC).

All but forgotten is McCall's work with the Urban League of Portland in the early 1950s to obtain passage of Oregon's civil rights laws. Although there were no significant gains for black people during the McCall administration, McCall did appoint Chalmers Jones to the position of Ombsbudsman, the highest position in state government attained by a black person at that time, and later appointed Jones to the Parole Board.

Tom McCall was one of Oregon's better governors. He was strong and independent, humane, genuinely concerned. Even in death he provided an example of courage and determination. In many ways he exemplified what is good in Oregon; his weaknesses were typical of the weakness of our state and our society.

# Salem watch

Odd things are happening in Salem these days. Merchants, reportedly, are stockpiling band-aids, but it's not a rash of skinned knees they're anticipating. During the 1981 special session, legislators used every band-aid in town as they tried to devise a workable tax program. This created a run on drug stores, and panic in the streets. As shopkeepers prepare for 1983, rumor has it that House Revenue Committee chair Tom Throop (D-Bend) has formally requested Speaker Grattan Kerans (D-Eugene) to authorize additional monies for the purchase of these adhesive plastic strips.

Economic development specialists are looking at manufacture of this product as a source of new jobs for Oregonians. Advantages of manufacturing such bandages include the large numbers required each year, as well as the renewable demand for the product: by the time the last one is affixed in June, the first ones are already coming undone.

State legislators are not alone in their purchase of adhesive plastic strips. County Commissioners in Columbia and Tillamook Counties (both faced with a projected $2 million deficit) and Washington and Multnomah Counties, to mention only a few, are also placing unusually large orders. One economist has predicted that band-aids may prove to be a more stable industry than timber. The only problem is this: if the manufacture of adhesive bandages diversifies and stabilizes Oregon's economy, then demand for those little adhesive strips will fall off, and the Oregon economy will be back to where it was in 1983—depressed.

With or without a band-aid-induced recession, Oregon has plenty of other economic problems. One of the over-riding setbacks is the national depression that is draining revenues from income tax-dependent governments such as Oregon's. In addition, voter rejection of local tax bases, coupled with industrial flight and other private sector trends may mean revenue shortfalls and curtailed public services will become a permanent part of life in Oregon. If this occurs, our quality of life will flee south along with some of our larger corporations.

Voter anger is easy enough to understand: folks are being hit hardest just when they need state and local services the most, but are least able to pay. Assessed valuation, especially in rural areas, is increasing at a time when wages—for those lucky enough to be employed—are needed for basic necessities. In Curry County, assessed valuation increased by 44.1 percent during the past year, and in Lincoln County it grew by 20.5 percent, although both counties have tax rates considerably below the state's average. When elected officials cut state programs to compensate for revenue shortfalls, the quality of life for all Oregonians is adversely affected. Much of this voter frustration, however, is self-induced. Many, many Oregonians still believe their tax dollars are supporting programs which serve no one and which no one would miss.

The harsh reality is that one person's "waste" is another's livelihood. The residents of the Stayton/Silverton area know this: curtailed services at Detroit Lake and Silver Falls State Parks will mean fewer tourist dollars and fewer jobs this summer. Contrary to much public opinion, state and local programs serve the very real needs of quite a few interest groups—groups that can be expected to mobilize people and resources to protect their own livelihoods.

These various special interest groups are one reason legislators resort to the adhesive plastic strips. The "band-aid" approach seeks to reduce political conflict by either placing the additional tax burden on the smallest group possible, or by placing the smallest tax burden possible on the largest group. This incremental approach is reaching its limits for several reasons: 1) It tends to maximize frustration for all; and 2) given Oregon's dependence on personal income tax for revenues, a poorer population generally means a poorer state government.

Sadly enough, Oregon's problems are more the rule than the exception. Many states are similarly strapped as their traditional economic sectors decline in profitability, their new growing sectors tend to create only lower-paying jobs, and this trend receives encouragement through federal tax policy. Although high technology firms are producing a few relatively high wage jobs in Oregon (mostly located in growing urban areas and taken by more experienced immigrants), the majority of new jobs created in Oregon are low paying. Rapid expansion of the service, retail trade, and finance sectors, coupled with a gradual decline of good-paying jobs in heavy industry means that wage levels and state revenues will not grow. They may even decline.

The dilemma this creates is easy to diagnose but difficult to cure. Slower growing revenues are accompanied by increasing demand for state services. In addition to the existing unmet demand for adequate transportation, sewers, water, solid waste disposal, and a healthy and safe environment, new burdens are created by larger populations of poorer residents, increased urban density, and corporate demands for bail-outs. Apparently, the only major need being met at the moment is for more band-aids.

Recent responses by state and local elected officials have only exacerbated the problemss. By laying off over 7,200 public employees during the past year, the government has actually increased its long term burden and placed adidtional strains on community life. By increasing tuition at state-supported colleges and universities by 19 percent while cutting back on allocated revenues, Oregon is cutting into its own recuperative capabilities. By redefining the standards of poverty in Oregon, the governor has knocked 30,000 needy people from the public assistance rolls. In this economy, we can be certain that very few of these Oregonians have become productive taxpayers. In effect, Oregon governments have reached the point where actions taken to help themselves will only increase the risks for those they are supposed to serve.

Unfortunately, any effort to raise revenues will only anger significant groups of individuals. If the tax burden is increased for the well-to-do, be they individuals or corporations, cries of "bad business climate" or "disinvestment" will fill the air. If the burden is shifted to the dissolving "middle" class, as has been done by both Democrats and Republicans, a new skirmish in the tax "revolt" will be inevitable. If the burden is shifted to the unemployed and the bankrupt...well, they can't pay taxes, anyhow.

As the legislative session proceeds and more band-aids are applied, before you scream, ask yourself this question: "In whose interest is this new tax?" With some careful thought, you could recognize that it might be your own.

# *Letters to the Editor*

*To the editor:*

So, here we go again. Starting the discussion of the whys too late.

Why have we lost another beautiful black girl to death so young? To those who yell prostitute, how do you decide what a prostitute is? Is it a person coerced into doing what they do or a person who willingly becomes what the label implies. To those who say so what! funny how so many of you openly want prostitutes' bodies for sale on our streets, in the clubs, etc, because a woman has a right to do with their person what they see fit, especially if it benefits you! Just let a person decide they no longer want that style of life and there are not the screams of injustice when bodies are found and killers are free.

Color should not have mattered but it did. People were helping her for a long time. The police were informed of her plight many times. They were informed of the house in which she was held captive but they did not search the attic, which is where she was hidden. Malicious neglect and disrespect for human life is appalling.

Something has been taken from the human race that can never be gotten back. A life—will anybody ever give a damn?

*To the community:* Here was a girl on the campus of PCC. She was accosted and visibly beaten as she was taken from the PCC grounds. What kind of people saw what was happening to her and stood by to watch. Yes, watch! Folks get upset when a dog is kicked, when a cat uses one of its fictitious nine lives. But when a black girl is beaten by two to three men, strange how uninvolved, uninterested, unconcerned, unfeeling, uncaring, one can get. What made it alright, who made it O.K., why?

There are no words to help ease the pain of her mother, her aunt—who lost her eldest son in a fire less than a year ago—to sisters and brothers—to cousins who hurt and will for time to come. But there is something the community can do.

We can become closer and use our own methods to rid our community of those who would harm our children. We must watch over them one and all to ensure that a person cannot decide to take anyone's life or harass them into a lifestyle that only leads to drugs, prostitution, their deaths or the deaths of others. The people of the community should learn to communicate physically with those who would do the same with us. There would be less of what happened to Trina Hunter if we all decided to put ourselves on the line. Criminals would know they would not survive, if beatings, rapes, killings and the like were perpetrated upon us. It's time we used their weapons to put the fear of dying into them.

I understand $150 is about all it takes. Yes, it's horrible. Like I said the whys always come late, the pain lasts too long, the lost life of a beautiful black girl forever. The police care more about her arrest for prostitution than really exploring her death. They have said they must wait until the end of th ewek to know if she died accidentally or was killed. Strange how the community knows but the police don't. Or, as stated before—does anybody give a damn?

Sherrian E. Haggar-Warren

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**Portland Observer**

The *Portland Observer* (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

The *Portland Observer* was established in 1970 by A. Lee Henderson, founder and President.

Subscriptions: $10.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the *Portland Observer*, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

*Al McGilberry, Editor/Publisher*

*Al Williams, Advertising Manager*

National Newspaper Blue Ribbon Newspaper Foundation

283-2486

National Advertising Representative
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