

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Salem watch

Build alternatives for youth

Oregon has the third highest commitment rate of juveniles in the country and a disproportionate number of those young people are minorities.

According to Children's Services Division officials, the training schools have been "residential child care" programs filled with young people who could be better served elsewhere.

Among the girls incarcerated, 48 percent are guilty of misdemeanors. More than 71 percent of the girls are diagnosed as having learning handicaps and 24.4 percent are being mentally limited or emotionally disturbed.

Thirty-nine percent of the young men were convicted of Class C felonies; 52.5 percent are diagnosed as having learning handicaps. Parole violations make up 40 percent of all admissions.

Drugs and alcohol are a serious cause of commitment, with 40-60 percent of the youngsters having a serious problem. Many of the young people committed to training schools are there because no other facilities or programs exist for them. Thirty-five percent of parole violations are either technical violations of parole agreements or lack of placement resources outside the institution.

The Children's Services Division proposes to reduce the training school population by 25 percent and to develop additional community resources based on the care and treatment the youngsters need.

Oregon has never adequately provided the preventive and treatment programs its children need. Although child care workers, teachers and often parents can be aware of a child's problems at an early age these problems are usually ignored until the child is in serious trouble. Diagnostic and treatment programs—even for the more seriously disturbed—are in short supply, especially for minority youth. Programs and professionals that understand the cultural background and the day to day experiences of minority youth are almost non-existent.

The Children's Services Division is seeking recommendations for community alternatives. Any programs designed specifically to deal with the disproportionate incarceration of black youth and black adults will have to come from the black community.

A public meeting to discuss alternatives will be held at King Neighborhood Facility, February 10th, at 7:30 p.m.

Reagan's bullets replace bread

The Reagan Administration is charging full speed ahead with its military budget—buying missiles, bombers, fighter planes and ships by the thousands. The Reagan budget—though trimmed down some because of Congressional opposition—gives the military a larger share of the nation's gross national product than any time since 1970, a high point in the Vietnam war.

This military hardware is a complete waste of resources because it can never be used. The greatest increase in the buildup is in nuclear weapons which, if used, will mean the end of life on earth. The conventional hardware will end up

in places like El Salvador, Guatemala, Lebanon or Angola where it will be used against helpless, unarmed people.

The manufacture of military hardware increases unemployment. Far fewer hands are needed for their manufacture and they use material, funds, and research that could otherwise go into the private sector.

Reagan has shown that he has a one-track mind—military dominance. If the nation is to survive, Congress must deny this huge military buildup.

Write, wire, call your Senators and Representatives in Washington today. You may be living in the streets tomorrow.

Letters to the Editor

Newspapers ignore neighborhood pleas

To the editor:

The following statement was adopted at the January 18, 1983, meeting of the board of the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods:

We are concerned about the lack of public enlightenment of the recent news conference called by the Black United Front regarding the circumstances, the reporting and the actions of the police in the death of Trina Hunter. Certainly the community had legitimate questions about the affair.

With the exception of the *Skanner* and the *Observer*, the news conference and the concerns of the community were ignored by the media. If this were an isolated instance, it

could perhaps be explained away. However, it seems to be the general attitude of those whose responsibility it is to inform the public and who have the power to influence, if not set, the attitudes of the large majority of the people in the greater Portland area.

It seems the media, generally, is pleased to report anything negative about our community. Any happening that might shed a favorable light on the area is either ignored, distorted or ridiculed. All this reinforces and justifies in the minds of many, the put-down of those who are the minority.

It is unfair, shows a lack of ethical behavior, and lessens the chance

for people of differing backgrounds and cultures to ever live in the true democratic spirit.

When we raise a problem, we also like to suggest an answer. The answer is a better understanding not of those who are different, but of ourselves, individually and corporately, on how we relate to those who are different.

We would like to develop a study of what causes the problem, how it becomes institutionalized, and what is needed to start the healing process. The logical start would be with media people. Let's talk about it.

Bob Nelson, Chairman
Northeast Coalition of
Neighborhoods

School District honors King

To the editor:

The Metropolitan Human Relations Commission would like to commend the Portland Public School Board for their leadership in the commemoration of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Three years ago, in recognition of Dr. King's principles of peace, equality and justice, School Board members voted to make January 15 a legal holiday for Portland Public Schools. On that day, students and teachers have the opportunity to honor peace and human progress.

The Metropolitan Human Relations Commission supports the leadership of Portland Public Schools, and we encourage others to follow their lead in providing an opportunity for people in this community to reflect on and discuss Dr. King's principles for peace, equality, and justice.

We support a national or state holiday in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday to honor peace, non-violence, and multiethnic understanding.

—Armando R. Laguardia
Chairman,
Metropolitan Human
Relations Commission

Tribute

To the editor:

The tribute to Martin Luther King is a treasure and everyone who has a copy should be sure to save it, especially those who can't or perhaps won't take the time to read all that was written by King and about him.

We should not wait for Congress to declare a "national holiday" for this great man. What must be done is that all of us make a personal commitment to carry on his endeavors and have each and every day be a remembrance.

Fran Ariniello

Power—it is an ongoing concern of the political process: personal power, partisan power, public power. Elected officials, however, find it difficult to acknowledge their power and to accept responsibility for their political choices. In part, this is responsible for Oregon's "clean" political image. Politics in Oregon cannot be characterized by smoke-filled rooms and other accoutrements of power-mongering.

A different way to view this cleanliness is that elected officials faced with diminishing public resources cannot exercise political choice without offending some significant special interest group. Instead, political survival dictates that the power to decide be passed on to others, usually specialists and technicians, who are removed from the daily pressures of public scrutiny.

While many of our public policy choices are complex and technical, they still require political choices to be made. One consequence of shifting political choice to technicians is that many critical social decisions are now made by the public utility commissioner, state land-use planners, and economists. What we seem to forget is that regardless of who makes a choice be it civil servant or political appointee, the choice is still political, one where some groups gain at the expense of others.

Some political choices are difficult or distasteful to make. One example this session is the sales tax. Every official in Salem has been forced to think about the State's need for additional revenue, yet few want to take the responsibility for initiating such an unpopular tax. So, the measure will, in all likelihood, be referred to the people. In this case, our representatives are sharing the onus of political power with us as voters. But no matter who decides the sales tax issue, the decision itself will be an exercise in political choice.

Oregon's energy decision-making is another example of the abrogation of public choice, and hence, public political power. Our energy generation and allocation decisions are difficult and complex. Technical data contribute information useful in making political decisions which will allocate economic resources, but the technologies themselves do

not determine the decisions. In order to avoid the unadorned recognition that such energy choices are ultimately political, we tend to believe that "objective" facts and "technical" feasibility are the key factors behind every energy decision.

Public agencies who have relied on "scientific objectivity" to justify the making of political choices include the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE), the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) planners, and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) bureaucrats. ODOE annually estimates energy demands, the resources available to meet the demands, the impact of conservation and new technology, and the increased efficiency of present energy facilities. WPPSS and BPA compile similar forecasts. The importance we place on these "objective" studies has vast political impact. Energy forecasts play a major role in non-energy related state and local decision-making. Local land use plans, urban growth boundaries, capital construction projects, state and regional decisions on hydro, thermal and nuclear energy construction are all decisions which rely heavily on energy forecasts.

By delegating the decisions of Oregon's energy future to technicians and forecasters, the state legislature has created a strong force for maintaining the status-quo. Forecasts design and predict the future by projecting past trends into the present. Thus, when political decisions are used to project future trends, the political power relationships of the present are frozen.

Past power relationships are frozen by removing them from the political arena; in essence, the issues are de-politicized. De-politicizing past energy choices was achieved by redefining "reality" to be limited to a future based on existing energy generation methods. This provides investors with stability since the "neutral" energy forecast guarantees that our energy future will be built on our energy past. The codifying of such power relationships here in the Northwest has resulted in a very different kind of nuclear "freeze."

Solar energy provides an historical example. In 1981 the technology for present solar energy systems was

patented; by 1910 over 4,000 solar water heating systems had been installed in the U.S.; and by 1941 over 60,000 solar water heaters had been installed in the state of Florida alone. Decentralized energy systems such as these came under attack during the post-war era as large utility corporations sought to protect their profitability by concentrating control of the source of supply. While centralizing the sources of energy supply, these corporate giants were able to down-grade those sources of supply they could not control by labeling solar, geothermal, and wind power as "exotic" technologies. The highly expensive forms of energy production that could be centrally controlled—hydro, thermal, and nuclear—were given respectability as "traditional" power sources, and energy generation became big business.

What we have here is not the predominance of the energy technology best suited to American life, but a political decision based on the self-interest of the decision-maker. At no time did this decision making process constitute a technological feasibility question.

This reliance on the myth of "technology" continues. Senate Bill 211 would enable Oregon's small scale energy loan program to fund feasibility studies and would delete the word "small" from the definition of eligible businesses under the program. These bills always look innocuous on the surface, but underneath the "neutral" language of the bill lurks the image of another political choice. Years from now, someone may write that in 1983 the political decision-makers attempted to correct a frozen power relationship, but that such a correction was found to be "infeasible."

It might be easier to comprehend these political machinations if we view energy and power in a more physical sense. As every high school physics student learns, energy abhors a vacuum and is neither created nor destroyed; power merely shifts to fill a void. The price of Oregon's "clean" political image may mean that political power is simply shifted to those more willing to accept the responsibility of their actions while being less accountable to the voters.

by Northwest Legislative Services



Washington Hot Line

by Congressman Ron Wyden

Question: During his State of the Union message last week, President Reagan talked about the need for a new bipartisan effort to get Americans back to work and the economy moving forward. Yesterday, he presented his 1984 budget to Congress. Did that budget live up to the promises of the State of the Union address?

Ron Wyden answers: Unfortunately, it did not. Instead of offering something new, this budget sings out "stay the course." Once again, the burdens of cuts are placed on the poor, the elderly and the disadvantaged. Once again, the Defense Department is allowed to go on its merry spending way. And once again, millions of unemployed Americans are left to fend for themselves—with little prospect of help from the federal government.

The breakdown of the President's 1984 budget proposal has an all-too-familiar ring.

Despite Reagan's avowed intent to "freeze" domestic spending, programs for the poor would actually be cut by more than 14 percent before inflation, 19 percent if inflation

is factored in. Education spending would drop from \$14.4 billion to \$13.5 billion. Low-income energy assistance would be reduced by nearly one-third, down from \$2 billion to \$1.4 billion. And Legal Services would be eliminated all together.

By contrast, the "sacred cow" programs of the past two years are still slated to receive special treatment. Defense spending is scheduled to increase by \$30.5 billion. Spending for the White House and related activities would go up to \$112 million.

And that's not all. Though he made much in the State of the Union address of his compassion for the millions of unemployed Americans, the President's budget proposal would do little to help them. And Congressional leaders who met with him this week to discuss the jobs issue report little success in pursuing their case.

The government has to put its fiscal house in order—but fairly. The President's 1984 budget proposal is not fair, and Congress cannot accept it without significant changes.

Among those changes are increased accountability for the Defense Department, and consideration of responsible jobs programs that will put Americans back to work on projects that will shore up our sagging infrastructure and contribute to solid economic growth.

CSD hearing

Representatives from the Children's Services Division (CSD) will be present at a Community Speak-Out concerning proposed changes in Oregon's Juvenile Justice System. The Speak-Out will take place on Thursday, February 10th, at 7:30 p.m. at the King Neighborhood Facility, N.E. 7th and Alberta.

The CSD representatives will be there to talk about and take public testimony on what CSD should be addressing in the New Directions Plan for CSD.

Co-sponsors of the event are the Albina Ministerial Alliance, the Black United Front, and the Urban League Northeast Youth Service Center.



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.

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283-2486

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