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Spring is here! And Chelsea Stowers, 2, takes advantage of a sunny day to go for a ride.
(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Front pickets Turner

by Lanita Duke

Grassroot News, N.W.—Tuesday night, March 15, the Portland Chapter of the Black United Front (BUF) sponsored a march protesting Tina Turner, who has performed in apartheid South Africa. Over 35 blacks and whites took part in this demonstration in front of the Starry Night nightclub at NW 6th and Burnside, where Ms. Turner was performing.

Ronnie Herndon, co-chair of the BUF, explained the Front's position: "Tina Turner is unfortunately one of the few black entertainers who have performed in South Africa, in spite of the fact that brothers and sisters who are suffering there have requested entertainers to stay out of South Africa. The government uses the presence of entertainers to legitimize the oppression of black people. The United Nations has passed three or four resolutions asking artists not to go to South Africa. Black leadership in this country has also made that request. However, Tina Turner and a few others have accepted this blood money from South Africa."

The bottom line regarding any performer is money. I asked Herndon whether if he were offered \$50,000, wouldn't he perform. "No, I wouldn't. It's just like asking Jews to accept money for performing in front of Hitler. At some point in time you have values which cannot be bought or sold. This is one of those situations."

Herndon says his concerns are that performers get the message that, "If you go to South Africa and take part in the oppression of our people, we are going to do everything in our power to draw attention to that fact and encourage people not to support you artistically or culturally."

However, the manager of Starry Night, Larry Hurwitz, sees it differently. "I don't think this march will do anything for anybody in South Africa. It will not raise the consciousness of people in Portland to the issues of South Africa. People in Portland already have their minds made up about South Africa and this march will not decide anything."

Hurwitz was concerned about the peacefulness of the demonstration. But the night proved he had more

trouble from an intoxicated patron than from the marchers outside.

The marchers' chants ranged from "You sold your soul for South African gold," to "Tina Turner, stay out of South Africa." This was enough to turn away a few couples and one man stood outside trying to sell his tickets. "I didn't know she had performed in South Africa. I'm here to enjoy myself and I can't enjoy myself knowing the person on the stage has performed in South Africa."

Many patrons who were stopped going in either didn't care about Turner performing in South Africa or wouldn't have come if they knew about the demonstration earlier. One marcher stated, "Black people got Tina Turner where she is today. If she was to go live in South Africa she couldn't walk down the street, let alone perform on stage. What she did is a blow to the brothers and sisters who are struggling over there, black people internationally, and brothers and sisters in the States."

Tina Turner did not make herself available for comment. At least she knows that some of her people aren't too concerned about her "Rolling in the River."

Fentress seeks new murder trial

This Thursday Robert Warren Fentress will be sentenced for a murder he claims he did not commit. Fentress, black, was convicted on February 4, 1983 of the murder of Carolyn Frances Williams, white.

The conviction, which took the all-white jury 2½ days to determine, was based on little evidence—the testimony of a witness who did not see the murder and the conflicting testimony of his "common-law wife," Gilda Moffett.

Fentress' attorney, Wendell R. Binkland, will ask for a retrial based on new evidence—a witness who corroborates another who was never called to testify.

The investigation that led from the report of an injured woman at 6:45 a.m. on June 26, 1982, to Fentress' trial on January 24th, 1983, reveals many constitutional questions.

Police officers arriving at the scene, NE Sacramento and Union, were told by the ambulance crew that they had found Ms. Williams dead, face down, with both arms under her, clutching her purse. Several persons reportedly had been at the scene: a white man driving a small dark car who said he had tele-

phoned the report; a black woman 30 to 40 years of age wearing a winter coat; a black bus driver; a tall, thin black man driving a van; a young white man driving a Honda; a black man driving a gold Pontiac wearing a gold-colored shirt.

The ambulance people and the police assumed Ms. Williams died of natural causes; the fact that she had been killed by a bullet to the head was discovered later by the coroner's office.

On June 30th Robert Fentress learned that the police were seeking a person who was at the scene, driving a blue van. He called the Police Bureau and was interviewed in his home.

Fentress told the police that he had been to Cleo's and to an after-hours place with his girlfriend, Gilda Moffett, and they had driven down Union Avenue heading for breakfast at Lions. When he saw Ms. Williams on the sidewalk he parked on Sacramento. He spoke to the man who had called the police and remained on the scene until the body was removed. He said Ms. Moffett remained in the car. They agreed that he was wearing black pants and a blue shirt; he provided

polaroid photographs of himself to aid the investigation.

On July 7th, Fentress kept an appointment for another interview at the police station. He was informed that he was not under arrest and there was no intention of arresting him that day, only of obtaining information on what he saw at the scene of the murder.

Two days later the police detectives discovered that Fentress was wanted on a 1977 fugitive warrant from Cook County, Ill., involving a murder investigation. At this point the police put a stakeout on Fentress' home on 7th Avenue and also discovered that Gilda Moffett had an appointment with her parole officer on that date. As Fentress drove Ms. Moffett to her appointment, police arrested him and took him to the booking facility.

While the arrest and events that followed were taking place, police searched Fentress' home and car and placed a wire tap in the house. A gold Pontiac GTO was towed to the police garage and searched.

Gilda Moffett was arrested and held for five hours. She states that she was threatened with parole vio-

Corporations reconsider S. Africa

by Carole Collins,
Pacific News Service

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Long relegated to the idealistic margins, the campaign for "divestment" in South Africa is gaining ground today in the real world of U.S. high finance—for reasons which include sound business sense, as well as moral principles.

For better than a decade, American critics of apartheid have been working to end U.S. corporate and investment links to South Africa, often to little effect. In the last 12 months more headway has been made than in the previous 12 years.

The turnabout has come primarily because church and labor groups, community and anti-apartheid organizations, have united

their somewhat disparate objectives around a common new strategy: using the tremendous weight of public money to bring pressure on U.S. banks and corporations active in South Africa. The results have been impressive:

•On January 4, the Massachusetts legislature easily overrode outgoing governor Edward J. King's veto to pass the strongest state pension fund divestment bill in the nation. Some \$120 million invested in firms doing business in South Africa is at stake.

•One week before, outgoing Michigan governor William Milliken signed into law a bill banning investment by state educational institutions in companies operating in South Africa.

•In late October, conservative Grand Rapids, Michigan—home-

town to Gerald Ford and to many Dutch-Americans with church and ethnic ties to Afrikaansers—adopted a policy prohibiting the deposit of idle municipal funds in banks lending to South Africa, or to U.S. companies doing business there.

•Last June, Philadelphia became the first major U.S. city to pass, with strong bipartisan support, a pension fund divestment bill. Soon after, Wilmington, Del., passed a similar bill, and on January 4, Councilman John Ray introduced another in the nation's capital.

Increasingly, these developments dovetail with the concerns of some in the business world itself. A First National Bank of Chicago stockholder, during the Bank's 1980 annual meeting, noted that some (Please turn to page 4 column 1)

Three School Board members seek reelection

by Bob Lothian

During their tenure on the Portland School Board, Steve Buel, Bill Scott and Forrest Rieke were at the center of the stormy political battles—closure of Adams and Jackson High Schools, firing of superintendent Blanchard, several boycotts organized by the Black United Front and the Tubman Middle School siting controversy—which shook Portland's sleepy school district to its foundations and sparked community interest in education as never before.

Buel is one of the four board members—Buel, Herb Cawthorne, Wally Priestley and Sarah Newhall—who for the most part supported the Black United Front's efforts to redefine school desegregation and other educational issues important to the black community. Rieke and Scott were often on the opposite

"west side" of the voting, representing the viewpoint of solid business pragmatism and cost efficiency.

All three are up for reelection March 29, and the outcome will influence whether the board continues its current trend away from activism toward moderation.

Buel, a sixth-grade teacher and Southeast Portland resident, has been a consistent supporter of the Black United Front in that organization's quest to have the school system accommodate the needs of black students. A characteristic stand was his dramatic walkout two years ago in protest of the board's attempt to appoint a non-board member as chairman of a desegregation committee.

Buel and Herb Cawthorne later wrote the desegregation plan which came out of this effort.

An obvious major question for the Board, Buel feels, is what to do about Jackson High. "It was closed totally unfairly," and should be reopened, he said.

"Unemployment is bad enough; Portland doesn't need any more closures," he said, "and you're not going to hear me talking about cutting back on special programs."

Buel feels the system could save money and maintain a quality program through attrition—not filling vacated positions, and by shifting resources away from inefficient management back into the classroom. "There's way too much money in the middle management area, those people should be out teaching," he said.

Other priority issues, according to Buel, are working toward equity in allocating resources to elementary schools, drug and alcohol abuse,

and school financing which spreads the tax burden more equitably.

Another concern is the mix of technical and liberal arts education. "Do we teach literature or computer technology?" he asked.

Buel feels that his strongest opponent, Bill Panaretos, is running against his record of support for black community issues. "He came after me six months ago, and that makes a real statement as far as the black community," he said.

"We're like night and day; we're absolutely different," said Panaretos, comparing himself to Buel. A banker who lives in the West Sylvan area, Panaretos said his race against Buel boils down to one word—"competence," but stopped short of calling Buel incompetent.

A competent board member, according to Panaretos, is prepared for meetings, makes "decisive, ob-

jective decisions," and is articulate. "They should be talking about the goodness in the schools, not the badness," he said.

The board's shift toward moderation is a "positive change," according to Panaretos, who said, "I would like to see that trend continue." Administration is the business of the board, he said, not social activism. "I feel that the board of education should be like the board of a corporation."

Regarding the confrontation between the board and the Black United Front, Panaretos said, "I don't think creating tension helped solve the problem." If a demonstration during a board meeting seemed likely, "I wouldn't tolerate it... I am for peace and law and order, and firm negotiation," he said.

"I think Tubman should be at Boise," he said, because from a

"strictly dollars and cents" standpoint, it would be too expensive to remodel Eliot.

Keeping the budget in control is high on his list, and it would involve "selected cuts" and "possibly more closure of schools." Panaretos felt that the decision to close Jackson was made unfairly, but he is not in favor of reopening now. "I don't think the west side can support three high schools," he said.

Panaretos' experience includes membership on the School Closure Committee, the Citizens' Advisory Committee selection panel for Area 1 and 2 schools and the Citizens' Budget Review Committee.

He favors the closure of Jackson High because he contends there aren't enough students in the area to warrant keeping it open. Portland's declining student population (Please turn to page 13 column 1)