

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Position #5—Buel

Steve Buel has most closely adhered to the recommendations and suggestions of the Black United Front for the education of black children than any other School Board member, and we say this knowing it could very well be used against him in some quarters. Buel's attention to the desires of the black community and the needs of black children has not been at the expense of white children. His overriding and ever-present interest is the education of children.

While buildings, supplies, renovations, and all the other things the School Board discusses and decides are important, they are all secondary to the decisions that directly affect the classroom—teacher selection and training; curriculum; libraries and support staff. These are Buel's concerns and he repeatedly attempts to have Board decisions based on their effect on children.

Buel has been roundly criticized by the press

and some of his fellow Board members because he wants to ask questions and explore decisions when others would like to close the meeting and go home. He is ridiculed because he is frequently the one dissenting vote. That he is often the butt of criticism and harassment by fellow board members is a reflection of their lack of integrity and good sense; that he is criticized by the press for his advocacy for open meetings and open discussion is a mystery.

Steve Buel is an outstanding School Board member. He has made hard decisions that are politically unpopular. He has put his reputation and his election on the line. The best way to reward him is a larger voter turnout on election day, March 29th.

The *Observer* endorses Steve Buel for Position 5.

Position #4—Shields

Those who support the community before they run for office are deserving of support. Frank Shields, a resident and pastor in inner Southeast Portland, did not have to get involved in the Tubman Middle School issue, but he did. He organized white support for the black organizations and parents who fought to hold the School Board to its commitment to place Tubman at the Eliot building.

Shields would support community involvement, working together with the citizens to explore ideas and reach solutions. His ability to help heal some of the wounds of past conflict is evident. Shields would represent inner Southeast Portland, an area with a high percentage of poor and working class residents, a needy area that is often overlooked.

Other contenders are Stephen Kafoury, former state Senator from Northeast Portland, a political liberal, Ross Dey, a Portland businessman who has been heavily involved in Northeast community and School District activities, and Sam Weiss, systems analyst, also involved in West Side school advisory boards.

Curt Martin, a black teacher, is running in this race. Martin should have potential for future efforts but his current understanding of the School District's relationship to the black community seems lacking. He said recently that he believes Tubman should be in the Jefferson building; that he did not support the BUF's efforts to have it placed at Eliot; that the Eliot decision was a mistake; that the School Board wilted under 1960s tactics; and that he doesn't like

people who fold under bad tactics.

The *Observer* endorses Frank Shields for Portland School Board Position 4.

No endorsement

Forrest "Joe" Rieke is seeking reelection to the Portland School Board.

Rieke favors long-range planning in finance and school closures and organization and has made efforts in that regard, but he also tenaciously clung to the old administration that so miserably failed in those areas. His interest in school finance and his lobbying ability have been valuable to the District.

Rieke has certainly held fast to his own ideas and ideals which is to be commended. On the other hand his ideals and goals frequently conflict with what the black community sees as the best educational strategy for its children.

Rieke's problems with the black community came early and continue: his rebuff of community spokespersons backing appointment of Darrell Millner; his involvements in total rejection of the Community Coalition for School Integration's recommendations; his votes for closing Adams and Washington; his advocacy for closing Jefferson are but a few. He opposed placement of Tubman M.S. at Eliot and refused to reconsider even after the opposition of the black community was well known. He preferred injunctions and court action to reconsideration.

The *Observer* makes no endorsement for this position.

Position #6—Standring

Bill Scott was elected with a sizeable black vote for two primary reasons: he was a member of the Community Coalition for School Integration and more or less favored its findings and recommendations; and he looked with favor on changing superintendents.

Scott has made contributions to the Board. He is largely responsible for establishing a budgeting process that involves the school community and he has attempted to make budgeting more understandable to the public and the Board.

One event in the life of Bill Scott, however, was enough to ensure that the *Observer* cannot endorse him. On the Saturday morning before the meeting at which the Board was expected to terminate Blanchard, Scott called a press conference to demand that Blanchard be retained. Present were many supporters but, strangely enough, some Board members were not notified. This attempt—timed to coincide with publication of an *Oregonian* article designed to cut the offending Board members to pieces—was an attempt to subvert the evaluation process Scott had helped design.

Another event that precludes our endorsing Scott was his handling of the Black United Front pickets of the School Board meetings. Using a bull horn to try to shout out the Front and mov-

ing the meeting to a closed room with armed guards were not the marks of leadership.

Scott favored the Eliot site for Tubman Middle School but was willing to go along with the majority to place the school at Boise.

Jim Standring is a businessman who lives in Southwest Portland, the father of four school children. In addition to his business activity and his concern about school budgeting and finance, Standring has studied toward a degree in family counseling.

Standring would be more attentive to community participation. Admitting that he is not an expert in all School District issues, he advocates full and open discussion—then keeping commitments once they are made. This, together with long-range planning, would eliminate crises like the Tubman and Jackson decisions.

Standring also advocates more attention to the classroom, including setting a teacher-student ratio to prevent having classrooms of 30 or more children in some schools.

Standring would be an independent vote; he would not be part of the Beeman/Gisvold/Scott/sometimes Rieke coalition. He also favors elective districts, which would break west side control.

Standring's emphasis on citizen participation and his openness give him the *Observer's* endorsement for Position 6.

Racism in the Capitol?

Who put the bug in Fadeley's ear—or did it come from his heart?

Three bills—calling for commissions on Black Affairs, Hispanic Affairs and women—have received such different treatment by the Senate President that it can only be credited to racism.

The bills would legislatively establish the three commissions, which were established by the Governor and exist at the Governor's discretion.

House Bill 2355, establishing a Commission on Black Affairs, and HB 2356, establishing a Commission on Hispanic Affairs, were voted out of the House Committee on Aging and Minority Affairs with a unanimous vote and were adopted by the House with a 49-5 vote.

HB 2354, establishing the commission on women, was adopted by the House with a 51-4 vote.

When the bills arrived at the Senate, Senator Fadeley assigned the women's commission bill to the Committee on Human Resources, chaired by Senator Bill McCoy, where it will receive an early hearing and be forwarded to the full Senate.

HB 2355 and 2356, the bills for Black and Hispanic Affairs, he assigned to a sub-commit-

tee of the Ways and Means Committee, where they will die.

Why the different treatment? Did this plot come out of the darker recesses of Senator Fadeley's mind? Or did Fadeley, usually a good guy, get the word from long-term foe of the commissions, Rep. Vera Katz? So the rumor goes.

Rep. Katz has opposed the commission for at least three sessions and still favors a "Human Rights Commission." It is an established fact that although all minority people have some things in common—racism and discrimination for example—their needs, problems, goals and priorities are different. A series of statewide hearings three years ago established the fact that blacks and Hispanics need and want separate commissions. The problems of women are even more distinct.

The time has come for those who hold out for "one commission or no commission" to get out of the way and let the legislative process work. It is obvious that a majority of the legislators favor establishment of the commissions and devious little games to prevent a vote on them will only delay the will of the people.

ESD—Cherry, Ashbaugh

The Multnomah County Education Service District is largely overlooked and hardly understood, but it has a powerful influence in the allocation of special funds among the school districts in Multnomah County and in funding special programs. Its power is now being felt in the Jackson secession movement—the pursuit of which was dependent on ESD approval.

For years this board has been inhabited by ultra-conservatives with less than adequate under-

standing to make such serious decisions. One example that comes to mind is a decision to fund certain bilingual education programs because "those people should learn English."

This year, again, several "also rans" are seeking election and unfortunately name familiarity can bring success.

For this important election we endorse: Dr. Howard Caerry, Zone 2; Jim Ashbaugh, Zone 7. (Zone 6, no endorsement).

Balancing the budget

by Greg Wasson

One thing sure about death and taxes—most everybody would like to avoid both. However, Ponce de Leon never found the Fountain of Youth and the 1983 Legislature will almost surely spend more money than existing taxes will generate. Where the additional cash will come from is one of two major issues in the current legislative session.

The other is concern over the near passage of Ballot Measure 3 last fall. That measure would have limited property taxes, which fund almost all local services, to a fixed percentage well below existing levels. Legislators are convinced that unless property taxes are dramatically reduced, the tax limitation will be resurrected in 1984.

The most talked about answer to this second problem is the sales tax. Late last month, a coalition of local governments proposed a plan of the type that Bend Democrat Tom Throop seems intent on seeing referred to the people. Throop heads the House Revenue Committee and explains why many local government officials are supporting a sales tax.

"They desperately want to reduce property taxes in the state. The only way to do that is pick up another source of revenue. The only other major source of revenue in the state of Oregon is a sales tax."

No so, say Eugene legislators Sen. Margie Hendriksen and Rep. Carl Hosticka. The two have sponsored a bill that, in effect, declares money Oregonians receive under the Reagan-sponsored federal tax cuts as "another source of revenue."

The Hendriksen/Hosticka plan captures for the state about a third of the federal cuts by readjusting state income tax rates. Gov. Victor Atiyeh says the state has no business reclaiming any of the federal tax cuts and that the Oregon Legislature ought to leave the Reagan tax breaks alone.

"I haven't seen the bill establishing the Hendriksen plan, but I've gotten some broad idea on where it's coming from. They're talking about this wonderful source of income that Oregonians are getting and they want to tax it. I consider it a moral problem in this regard—why look to a tax break to extract more taxes from Oregonians. I just don't think that's a fertile field for taxation."

For her part, Hendriksen says she has no problems, moral or otherwise, in lessening the effects of the

Reagan tax cut on Oregon. Hendriksen sees the Reagan tax cuts as part of the President's war on women and the poor.

"The Reagan tax program was initiated with the rationale that it would promote economic development. That hasn't worked. Even David Stockman admitted that the plan was really a way to give people in high income brackets big tax breaks under the guise of giving everyone a tax break."

Figures prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office show that Hendriksen is correct in her assessment of who gets the federal money. Those figures show that an Oregonian with an annual income of \$25,000 will pay \$672 less in federal income taxes this year than in 1980. Oregonians making 10 times that, \$250,000 a year, will enjoy a decrease almost fifty times as large, over \$30,000.

According to House Speaker Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene, the federal tax breaks involve a shifting of tax burdens from the rich to the middle class and working poor. Kerans says the Hendriksen/Hosticka Plan is "simply a mechanism to rebalance that load, to say that there has been an unfair shift onto the majority to the advantage of the minority. At the same time, the state would recapture some of the impressive, one would say almost breathtaking tax cut afforded to the upper two, three, five percent of Oregon taxpayers by the Reagan Administration."

As to reducing property taxes, Kerans proposes a homestead exemption where the state pays an initial part of a homeowner's local property taxes. The Speaker contends that the program should be funded, in part, through income tax

increases, putting some of the property tax burden on a system Kerans claims takes from those most able to pay.

Salem Democrat Peter Courtney responds that it's not that simple.

"Let's get it straight—we've ruined the income tax; we've destroyed it. Who's kidding who? The very rich can go out and hire lawyers and CPAs to find ways that they don't have to pay the income tax; the low-income people aren't paying it. So who's paying? The middle income people. It is no longer a progressive tax."

But Courtney hasn't convinced everyone that taking the income tax route is fruitless. A coalition of the AFL-CIO, the state Democratic Party, the Citizens Party, the Oregon Grange and others has formed to fight all sales tax measures. If that struggle is successful, and the legislature is serious about funding property tax relief, income tax increases are likely the only other choice.

Ray Phillips and the Oregon Taxpayers Union came to Salem early in the session threatening to resume their efforts to limit property taxes if the legislature doesn't cut spending drastically. Labelling most legislators "irresponsible buffoons," Phillips promised the return of a ballot measure that would limit property taxes to 1 or 1.5 percent of each thousand dollars of assessed valuation.

Had a 1.5 percent limitation been in effect this year, the owner of the average \$40,000 home in Multnomah County would have saved \$366 while the owner of the same home in Sherman County would have saved almost \$630 and a similar individual in Clatsop County nothing.

Who's irresponsible?

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