

# Democrat 18 Viewpoint

## Washington Hot Line

by Congressman Ron Wyden



Oregonians today face the most revolutionary changes in telephone service since Alexander Graham Bell invented the incredible gadget in 1876.

The phone company as we've known it in the past has been broken up. Long distance charges and local rates are being calculated in a different manner — with potentially far-reaching economic implications.

Phone rates, according to some experts, may rise as much as 400 percent, devastating residential and small business users. Others predict that big industrial users may consider setting up their own private phone networks, leaving fewer subscribers to share the costs of the public network.

The Northwest is going to be hit particularly hard by the deregulation scheme because local rates in the region historically have been subsidized by long distance rates.

To avoid possible disaster, we must act now — before phone rates shoot up out of sight, and a crisis occurs.

To begin the discussion process, last week in Portland I announced the formation of a broad-based citizens committee to study phone issues in Oregon and to make recommendations on how to keep rates under control.

Members of the committee will include representatives of the major Oregon phone companies, the Portland Chamber of Commerce, consumer groups, the Oregon Legislature and the Communications Workers Union.

Oregon Public Utility Commissioner John Lobdell and U.S. House of Representatives Telecommunications Subcommittee Chairman Tim Wirth (D-Colo.) have also pledged to cooperate with the group.

In fact, Chairman Wirth told me he is eager to see the committee's

finished product, particularly any proposals for providing rate relief for seniors that could be implemented nationally.

Congressman Wirth shares my concern about what the deregulated environment may mean for senior citizens and other vulnerable Americans, and he wants to make sure their needs are met.

I did not organize this committee because I believe there are easy solutions to our phone rate and access problems. We're not going to be able to pull a rabbit out of our hats and say "a hah, now we have lower phone rates."

I organized the committee because I believe we must tackle this issue now before it gets out of hand — before senior citizens and shut-ins find themselves with no link to the outside world and our small business users and others find themselves caught in the pinch.

The City Council made a serious error in last week's actions concerning the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (MHRC). The decisions of the City Council substantially revise the City's approach to human rights by diminishing budgetary support and transferring previously independent MHRC functions to administration by city bureau chiefs.

This major policy shift was taken as if it were a mere budgetary matter, with insufficient supporting data, analysis, or public discussion. This action suggests that the proponents of the changes, whatever their merit, failed to understand the importance of the very policy area being addressed. This failure is devious in times which increasingly call for unified commitment to human relations goals.

While arguments for restructuring MHRC deserve (indeed REQUIRE) ample hearing and study, an impartial observer would in the meanwhile remain impressed by the wisdom of previous City and County governments which saw fit to support the evolution of MHRC's role as a relatively independent human relations body.

Given the striking history of MHRC's accomplishments, it would not be surprising if project development by MHRC sometimes led to the transfer of substantive operations into the bureau structure of city administration. But even such ostensibly straightforward matters should now be placed on hold until the overall policy deliberations have returned to firmer ground.

Fortunately, there is yet time for the Council to realize and reverse its error. A reversal of last week's action would be a credit to the council — raising the level of the City's attention to its human rights commitments. But failure to correct last week's error will be ironically viewed as a colossal blunder in human relations — and nothing will speak louder to prove the need for MHRC as an independent voice of research, advocacy, and program development in human rights.

When signed the opinions are those of the author. When unsigned, this column represents the viewpoint of the officers of District 18 Democrats. Address comments to Ross Danielson, District 18 Democratic Leader, c/o the Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland OR 97208.

## Nationwide strike threatens GM

Not long ago, General Motors and Toyota announced that G.M.'s Fremont, California plant, which once employed 6,200 persons, would reopen under joint operation of the two companies and would produce a new subcompact car. The greatly heralded news soon turned sour when former employees learned the reopening would not necessarily return their jobs.

The company has said it will not guarantee that the United Auto Workers' union people will be rehired and that it will not honor seniority in hiring. G.M. and Toyota are waiting until April, 1985, to reopen because by then the U.A.W. contract will have expired. Toyota estimates that only 3,000 persons will be hired.

Of the 6,200 persons who worked at the Fremont plant, 4,000 have exhausted their unemployment bene-

fits. Eight suicides have been reported.

Local union leaders expect Toyota-G.M. to open the plant with non-union workers from off the street. Rumors are circulating that when the plant reopens in 1985, wages will be \$3 per hour less than union scale. With no union contract, no seniority, no voice in setting production standards, no grievance procedure, no pensions, all benefits for over the years will be gone.

Toyota will design and engineer the car, a front-wheel drive version of the Toyota Corolla. Much of the car will be made in Japan — the mechanical parts, motors, pumps, carburetors and brakes. Made in the U.S. will be the bulky parts that are more expensive to ship — springs, seats, glass, batteries, body panels and trim.

Assembly will be done in Fremont,

highly utilizing robots to decrease man-hours.

Nissan Motor Car Co. has set a precedent, planning to open a new plant in Tennessee in June to assemble trucks. The company has informed the U.A.W. that it will not sign a union agreement.

A dramatic appeal by Fremont's U.A.W. workers, who say they will place their bodies in front of the plant gates to fight for their jobs, has brought response. The Alameda County Central Labor Council, with 160,000 members, voted its support and is urging similar action by all AFL-CIO locals.

With building support for the former G.M. workers, G.M.'s efforts to increase projects through the joint venture with Toyota is expected to set off an extended confrontation and lead to unity in the union movement.

## Daughtry: Critical times ahead

(Continued from page 1 column 6) because the nation always goes to the movies when it is in trouble. We have a president who can never remember there being any racism at all. If Ronald Reagan believes there was a time when this country didn't have any racism, he's hopeless, incorrigible and beyond any redemption at all. How can a president talk about a holocaust and at the same time support a regime that is reeking holocaust upon our people everyday in South Africa."

The second factor, according to Daughtry, is the economic depression of the '80s. "You remember Ronald Reagan was supposed to balance the budget and lead America to new heights. Well, what we have experienced is a budget that gives meat to the rich and bones to the poor. David Stockman, Reagan's own man, admitted that the rich takes all. What we have seen is a shift in the budget away from social pro-

gram to the military machine. What is important to note is that everyone is hurt by the budget, except a few here and there. And if the majority does not promote the interest of the minority, they will eventually be in the same boat. Surely, these are not good days for anybody. In addition to the economic and social shock waves, there are assaults on legal rights and human rights. This economic crisis brings out the worst in human beings. As the have-a-little experience a threat to their security they turn on the have-nots. But if only the have-a-little re-direct their attention to a have-a-plenty and demand economic justice for all, perhaps we could resolve this crisis."

The third development which makes these times critical for people of African descent is conservative religion. "Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell and other electronic holy superstars have never taken a stand against racism, sexism or supported

any causes against economic exploitation. They major in minor sin. Where were they during the civil rights days? They were where they are now. One the side of the rich and powerful."

Yet, in spite of all these discouraging signs, Reverend Daughtry and NBUF see hope. "I see hope in the eyes of my people. I believe there is a dimension to our struggle. I believe there is a God who will put a wrinkle in history. I'm reminded of Marcus Garvey who came to this country in the 1920s and found conditions pretty much the same as they are today. He knew our history beyond slavery. Knowing this, Marcus Garvey uttered these words, 'Up you mighty race. Up out of despair, up out of the gutter, and up out of dependency. No one can turn you around or turn you aside. Up you mighty race. You can accomplish what you will!'"

In an interview following his address Daughtry was asked by *Grassroot News* if there was a correlation between the Reagan administration's paranoia about Grenada and the interest in the counter-revolutionaries fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. "We should remember when Somoza was in Nicaragua exploiting the people; Nicaragua enjoyed a most positive relationship with the United States government. When Grenada was being used as an American puppet, it also enjoyed a friendly relationship with the U.S. The same is true for Cuba. When Cuba was a playpen for American gangsters, Cuba was alright with the American government. But since the Sandinistas drove Somoza out and set up a system so its people can have a better life; since Maurice Bishop came to power and put in place some kind of system so his people can enjoy a better life; and since Castro cleaned up Cuba, all of a sudden these countries have become enemies of the United States."

Daughtry believes the United States is concerned about the threat posed by these countries because they are presenting a new economic order. "The people of Grenada, Cuba and Nicaragua are not enemies of the American people. They just present a different economic system which the American economic interest does not like. Thus, this creates the tension we are experiencing."

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## Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

The death penalty once again made headlines and the Street Beat team wondered, "How do you feel about the death penalty?"



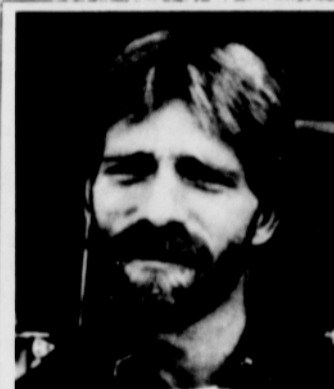
Anthony Tyler Cook

"I don't feel it should be done. I'm a religious person. Only God should judge and not man."



Regina Jackson Unemployed

"I don't agree with the death penalty. It's an eye for an eye sort of thing. A person serving time is like a death sentence."



Jerry Gill Unemployed

"I'm not sure. It depends on the crime. Maybe first degree murder and rape is real debatable. The person to be killed ought to decide the way (shooting, electric chair, injection) they want to go."



E. Tillman Clerk

"I'm against it. It is not right. If they killed the wrong person it would be hard to change the mistake after they killed him."



Sondra Smith Cook

"I think it is necessary. If people had that much to lose they might think twice."



Simon Vatima Accountant

"The trouble with the death penalty is that only the poor who cannot afford the best lawyers receive the death penalty. If you are poor, you are going to the chair. If you are rich, you will get probation."

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