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Medicare, Social Security, cuts due July 1

GOOD YEAR



Back on the ground again are Boise 8th graders and their teacher, Mrs. Laura Glosson, winners of the Observer/Goodyear annual blimp ride. Winners were: Laelle and Lois Wyllie, Barbara Staples

and David Stigler. The student ride is provided annually through the courtesy of the Goodyear Company.

(Photo: Dan Long)

State aids union-busting efforts

by Robert Lothian

Larry Burnside thinks the State of Oregon went scab in awarding a \$27 million Banfield light rail freeway widening project to non-union R.A. Hatch Co. of Bend.

Burnside, business representative with the Oregon District Council of Carpenters, spoke for a dedicated group of protesters from the building trades unions. Since April 18, carpenters, operating engineers, cement masons and other union members have been out near the work area between NE 39th and 87th Avenues from 6 a.m. until 2 p.m. five days a week with placards and bullhorns trying to get Hatch employees to go union.

"Basically, what we are protesting, is letting out a contract to a non-union contractor," he said. The protesters are also concerned about the quality of work being performed by Hatch, and employment of out-of-state workers, he said.

What motivates the pickets to show up day after day, facing possible arrest? "The construction industry is depressed, there's nothing

out there," said Burnside. "We're looking at 75% unemployment."

"Our members are stuck between a rock and a hard spot. They're losing homes, cars, they're having family problems, a lot are leaving. They're also being abused at the unemployment office," he said. "They'll call 10 carpenters into a room and offer them a minimum wage job and they have to take it or lose their benefits." (Those receiving unemployment benefits are required to "look for and be willing to take any work the Employment Division may determine is suitable").

Burnside contends that such policies are part of an anti-union drive "right down from Reagan" to force down wages and benefits and bust unions.

"Unions made this town," said Burnside. "Unions have set the standards for wages and working conditions for all people."

But now, said Burnside, "every contract I deal with, they're just out to tear you apart. And our governor, he wouldn't even talk to the AFL-CIO," he said, referring to the cold

shoulder Atiyeh has given to Oregon labor leaders since they supported Ted Kulongoski in the last election. "I would assume that all the state bodies under the governor go along with him," said Burnside.

State inspectors are casting a blind eye on Hatch safety violations, according to Burnside. Oxygen tanks are allowed to lay on the ground while they are supposed to be chained upright, and Hatch employees wear aluminum hard hats, even though they were outlawed because they conduct electricity, he said.

According to Vicky Rocker, spokeswoman for the Oregon Dept. of Transportation, "we don't have any safety or work violations on file. We are required by law to accept the lowest bidder. Hatch is not new to us, we've had good results in the past. Personally, from a public relations standpoint, they are quite helpful. We haven't any complaints."

But, according to Burnside, inspectors take pictures of the pickets instead of doing their jobs. "They're there," he said, "but they're not inspecting. They're with Hatch."

Burnside also charges that Hatch's non-union employees are under-qualified and responsible for shoddy workmanship. A concrete wall near 60th avenue "looks like hell" and will have to be redone at considerable expense, he said. "That's us, that's our tax dollars. If you had qualified people there to start, it would have been right the first time."

Burnside thinks the state needs to look at contractor qualifications in addition to lowest bid in order to insure a quality job for taxpayers. "One of our goals is to inform the public, the taxpayers, that they're being ripped off," he said.

Burnside also contends that no blacks or women in the skilled trades are employed by Hatch.

Hatch has appeared on TV news several times vociferously arguing with protesters. What hasn't been publicized, according to Burnside, were the times Hatch passed out anti-union literature endorsed by a radical right wing group, and the two occasions he hit protesters with his pickup.

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If President Reagan's proposals for the 1984 budget go through, at least 40 percent of those on Medicare will not be able to afford it.

As of October 1, 1983, the Medicare charge for the first day in a hospital will be \$357 instead of the previous \$350. A two-week stay in the hospital will cost \$714; doctors' fees will be held at the 1982 level but will cost more for their Medicare patients.

Several bills now in Congress would continue hospital and physician charges. The 1983 Social Security Act, signed into law on April 20, provides that Medicare no longer pay hospitals on a cost-plus basis, but according to a fee schedule.

Senior organizations say the piecemeal approach will not halt the pressure on the medical, pharmaceutical and insurance industries to raise prices. The health care industry is among the most profitable of U.S. corporations. An AFL-CIO Council report said that health facilities in the U.S. continue to be taken over rapidly by profit-making cor-

porations. The Hospital Corp. of America operates 58 percent of the private profit hospitals in the U.S. and increased its profits by 55 percent last year. American Medical International increased its profits by 55 percent.

These corporations will also benefit from the income tax cut scheduled to go into effect on July 1st.

In addition to increasing cost of medical care to Medicare patients, Congress postponed the 1983 cost of living increase for Social Security recipients from July 1, 1983 to January 1, 1984.

This is, in effect, a cut since inflation decreases the spending power of the current payments.

The Bipartisan Budget Appeal — whose founding members include a former Secretary of Commerce and 5 former Secretaries of the Treasury (Democrat and Republican) — is calling for a one year freeze on cost of living increases for Social Security and other "entitlement programs."

City-wide coalition forms

A coalition of city-wide organizations met with an organizing group, the Committee for Restoration of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, Monday night at Sunnyside Methodist Church in Southeast Portland.

It was unanimously agreed that efforts should press forward for full restoration of MHRC staff and programming. The office's budget was cut more than half with staff reductions and program transfers during recent City Council budget hearings at the request of Commissioner Margaret Strachan, Council Liaison to MHRC.

The city-wide support committee organized following an *Observer* Community Forum on the issue May 21st. Its purpose is to coordi-

nate and facilitate the efforts of organizations and individuals wanting to show visible support for restoration of MHRC staff and programs and for maintenance of a centralized human rights office and commission. The committee is chaired by Fred Milton.

The coalition is asking organizations and individuals to write letters to the City Council or to the coalition, which will forward them, and to call City Commissioners' offices. To offer individual names or organization names in support of MHRC restoration, call 284-1816, write to the Committee for Restoration of the MHRC, 4431 N.E. Ainsworth, Portland 97218, or complete and mail the form below by June 25th.

Grenadan leader advocates peace in region

by Tim Wheeler

WASHINGTON, June 2 — In a speech to the Organization of American States (OAS) yesterday, Prime Minister Maurice R. Bishop of Grenada rebutted President Reagan's hostile attacks on the Caribbean nation and urged the U.S. to reestablish normal relations.

Bishop spoke in the ornate, chandeliered "Hall of the States" to an audience that included OAS Secretary General Alejandro Orfila and the ambassadors and representatives from the OAS' 30 member nations including Grenada's ambassador, Dessima Williams.

Bishop charged that persistent efforts by his government to estab-

lish and maintain "normal and mutually respectful relations" with the U.S. have been "ignored or rebuffed" by the Reagan administration.

He assailed President Reagan's recent televised attacks on Grenada in which he displayed aerial photos of a new airstrip under construction on the tiny island which Reagan claims poses a military threat to the U.S.

"I reaffirm what representatives of our government and people have said so many times before: that Grenada constitutes no threat to the United States," he said. "We repeat that the new International Airport is a civilian project vital to the economic development of our country."

Recognized as vital

He pointed out that successive governments over the past 25 years have discussed the urgent need for the new airport, adding, "it is also a project which past U.S. and Canadian administrations have recognized as vital to the development of our tourist industry. We have received assistance for the project from countries throughout the world and its importance to our economic development is unquestionable."

The youthful prime minister also condemned the Reagan administration for excluding aid to Grenada, Nicaragua and Suriname in its so-called "Caribbean Basin Initiative." "The unity of our people must not be compromised by attempts to di-

vide us," he said. "If assistance is to be given... then it must be given to all countries of the area without discrimination."

Bishop quoted Simon Bolivar, Jose Marti and the Grenadian patriot Theophilus Marrayshow in urging unity of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean against neo-colonial domination and outside military force. He cited the "heroic and unconquerable people of Central America", especially the people of Nicaragua.

While not mentioning Reagan's covert war against Nicaragua, Bishop said, "If we truly aim at peace in our region, at the individual development of each



Patricia Loving, daughter of Willie and Rosalie Loving, received the Portland Observer Journalism Award at her graduation ceremony Thursday. The award is presented each year to the Boise Elementary School 8th grade journalism student who best typifies the ethics of journalism, academic excellence and school or community service.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)