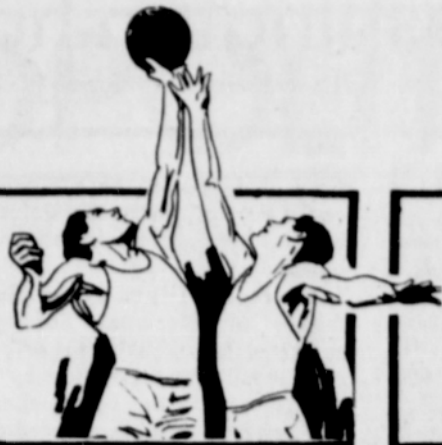


Jeff's pride

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A sport of concentration: Erik Kastner, Jon Gassaway and Jason Ambers, OMSI/Oregon Chess Federation champions from Robert Gray School. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

6th grader new chess champ

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOTS NEWS N.W. - Jason Ambers, an eleven-year-old student at Robert Gray Middle School, has checkmated all opponents at his grade level in the OMSI/Oregon Chess Federation Individual Championships.

Jason, a sixth grader, took first place and was followed by schoolmates Brian Enne King, Jon Peter Gassaway and Erik Kastner, each winning at his grade level.

This year marks the first time that four of the six top awards went to students from the same school. The awards included a trophy, membership in OMSI and the Oregon Chess Federation, and a cash prize.

Jason outmaneuvered 49 students

and is the first Robert Gray student to win a clear victory. Chess is a game of skill played on a chessboard by two players. Each player has 16 pieces limited in movement. Players make alternate moves until one wins by checkmating his opponent's King or until a stalemate (tie).

Jon said, "It's like a war. The players are generals and we command the pieces which are our army. The object of the game is to protect the king."

As top members of Robert Gray's team, all stated the concentration developed and defined by chess overlaps into other subject areas. Jason said, "Chess makes you slow down and think longer. It has helped my reading and math."

Erik added, "It improves my decision making abilities. I check

over all my school work carefully."

Jason started playing chess in the first grade and was taught by his mother, Floreid Ambers. "Now she is too easy. I play with my dad or Chess Challenger—a computer game."

Mrs. Ambers learned to play chess as a youngster in Roxbury, Massachusetts. "In the summertime there was nothing to do. The city bought chess and checker sets and we would play in the playgrounds." Currently she is the parent advisor for the Robert Gray team.

The future Bobby Fishers plan to attend Wilson High School and become members of Wilson's Chess Team. But until then, they will make their moves protecting their kings while representing Robert Gray Middle School.

Complaints hit King principal

by Lanita Duke

Grassroot News, N.W. — Some teachers and parents of Martin Luther King Early Childhood Education Center have accused Dr. Samuel Cameron, Principal of King School, of being uncaring, insensitive and lowering the morale of staff and students. Others said the complaints stemmed from communication and leadership style.

Seven teachers and four parents wrote Grassroot News in confidence about what they perceived to be a deteriorating respect for parents, students and staff members. Complaints said Cameron drove a child to tears because he disapproved of the way the child was dressed: That he made callous remarks about a child's uncombed hair and, in front of a group of students, said he could not stand these kids anymore.

Cameron said this was the first time he had heard these complaints and called them "unfounded and untrue." "People misinterpret when you are firm, Firm does not mean you don't love them."

Both Cameron and Dr. William Gerald, Director of Instruction for Portland Public Schools, said leadership style was causing these complaints. Gerald said, "Complaints were a carry over from last year. It has to do with what their

(staff and parents) involvement ought to be in making decisions."

Cameron, 52, said King's staff is young and many teachers have taught only at King School. "People don't react to change in a positive way. I am a strong Black male figure and they resent it." He said those making these charges are parents who are not from this community, whose values are different.

But Ronnie Herndon, Co-chair of the Black United Front, said he had heard parents and staff, both Black and white, echoing these complaints during the past two years. "It is more serious than leadership style. There is a lack of substance. There is no effective direction in improving academic performance or any steps made to involve that parents and community in improving their grades. Year after year, children are below grade level. I have not seen a change, and test scores speak for themselves."

In spring of 1983, the Portland Public Schools released the academic standings of all schools in the district and King, along with other schools in low-income Black and white communities, scored three grades below the district's average in reading, math and language arts.

Parents and teachers said they had complained during the last

school year. They said they gave Cameron a chance to work problems out but felt they were "getting nowhere." They said they overheard him say, "I could care less about parent involvement." One teacher called this remark "a typical expression of his attitude toward parent involvement."

Another teacher said Cameron was overheard calling for a teacher to escort Native Americans who were visiting. "There are some cowboys waiting to see her."

In a February 29th letter to the *Portland Observer*, President Jeanne Resendez wrote, "He believes in teachers and parents working together enhancing a child's capacity to learn. Whenever possible, he has consulted with parents regarding school policy and procedures. His firm but loving ways have caused our children to look up to him as a positive role model."

Gerald said the complaints sounded like "charges and counter charges. I need to hear directly from the people involved and they will be received in a professional manner."

Another item of concern was the results of a survey conducted by the Portland Association of Teachers Assistance Team which concluded, "As a principal, the staff feels he is (Please turn to page 5, column 3)

Refugees find new jobs

by Chuck Goodmacher

Creating jobs isn't easy—members of the community and various levels of government alike have struggled for years to bring jobs to distressed areas such as inner-Northeast Portland. Countless studies, programs and projects have been tried. Some successes have been reached too. Still, the unemployment rate for North/Northeast Portland is about twice that for the entire city, and the Black teenage unemployment rate is widely recognized as the highest there is at about 50 percent. Clearly, new approaches and/or new levels of funding for existing programs are needed.

Southeast Asian refugees living in Portland have found at least one new way to bring jobs to their community—vocational training for jobs known to be existing rather than for theoretical opportunities or low-skill minimum wage positions requiring little or no training in the first place. And, says the project initiator, Bud Morrison, the community-at-large is better off creating new jobs for the unemployed rather than simply placing "trainees" in positions formerly held by others.

Morrison has brought into being both an organization which helps refugee-owned businesses and two profit-making cooperatives.

The U.S. Office of Refugee Relief (ORR) and the State of Oregon approved the Southeast Asian Refugee Foundation (SEARF) Economic Development Project on January 13, 1983. A \$125,000 grant came along with the official government stamp of approval, and SEARF was off and running in Portland. The SEARF project is the only one of its kind in the nation and is considered a "pilot project" on which to possibly model other programs in the future, said Morrison.

It has three major components: technical assistance for refugee-owned businesses (in addition to Southeast Asians SEARF also assists other refugee groups including Ethiopians, Russians, Poles and Afghans) a vocational training program, and a cottage industry assistance program. After a promising start, however, SEARF soon found itself forced by circumstances to abandon all three original programs and create new ways of carrying them out, states SEARF's annual report.

An immediate influx of technical

Assistance (TA) requests overwhelmed SEARF's small staff (originally only a full-time director and half-time secretary). Providing TA for refugees is also complicated by language and cultural differences. Before long, the technical assistance component was subcontracted to a private management consulting firm, Impact, Inc.

Still, the difficulties of serving the refugee businesses' needs were great, and after the sub contract expired on September 23, 1983, more than \$22,000 of the original \$35,000 set aside for TA had been spent, and a great deal of work had yet to be done. SEARF hired two staff members to provide in-house technical assistance, including marketing and cooperative development.

SEARF served approximately 100 businesses in its first year. Among the types of technical assistance SEARF provided was: access to start-up and working capital, general planning, lease and purchase negotiations, feasibility studies, government regulations compliance, and bonding and insurance needs. In addition to paid staff, volunteers contributed 571 hours of TA during SEARF's first (Please turn to page 4, column 1)



Oregon National Guard unit hits the beach in practice session for amphibious assault.

Oregon Guard storms beach

CORONADO, CA.—For the first time, a reserve component battalion stormed the Coronado Beach in an amphibious assault.

The First Battalion, 162nd Infantry, Portland, Oregon, comprised of 586 members, received two weeks of intensive training at Camp Pendleton and Coronado Naval Amphibious Base.

Training activities included live-firing weapons and combat tactics at Camp Pendleton, February 26th to 29th. Since March 1, the Oregon Guard members have received instruction in handling small inflatable boats, climbing rope net ladders, waterproofing vehicles and equipment and hand-to-hand combat.

About 100 members of the battalion graduated from the Amphibious Assault Staff Planning School. The one week school provided classes in proper com-

munications procedures, naval gunfire support, and how to properly plan, coordinate and carry out an amphibious assault.

The 41st Infantry Brigade, of which the battalion is a member, is the "Round-out" brigade for the 7th Infantry Division at Fort Ord. In event of a national emergency, the Oregon Guard units would join the two active Army brigades at Fort Ord for deployment overseas.

The final phase of the BLOC is the actual amphibious assault on a beach head.

The Guard members boarded Mike 8 boats and ATVP "am-tracks" for the two mile journey to the U.S.S. Racine, LST-1191. The troops boarded the Racine by climbing 25 feet up the side of the ship, four at a time, on cargo nets. Several hours later, deep inside the ship, the Oregon Guard members loaded onto amphibious personnel carriers for the 15 minute ride to

Coronado Beach.

Just as in a real life combat scenario, 11 ATVP's, 10 seconds apart, rushed through the waves and came to rest on the soft sand. Soldiers, running, two at a time off either side of the ramp, turned at 45 degree angles at the rear of the vehicles to take up their positions. Rifles and machine guns crackled with blanks firing at the mythical enemy. Squad leaders barked commands, waving their arms for advancement to their next position up the beach.

Within one-half hour the first assault was completed. "We are very pleased with the training we have received here at Coronado and Camp Pendleton," Capt. Robert Tomasovic, Battalion Training Officer said. "These two weeks have done more to make this battalion into an efficient team than anything we have done in some time."