

Zoo, libraries seek voter approval

by Chuck Goodmacher

Along with all of the candidates for public office, voters will also be asked, May 15th, to approve or disapprove several ballot measures. This week we look at some Multnomah County, metro, and Port of Portland measures.

County Measure #3

This measure authorizes Multnomah County to raise \$3,000,000 a year for three years to be used for County Library operations. Property taxes would be raised 17 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. Funds would be used for: (1) expanding hours of public access at branch locations and the Central Library; (2) enhance existing services; and (3) bring staff salaries up to competitive levels.

Supporters claim: (1) New funds are needed to restore cuts made over the last ten years; (2) salaries in line with national averages are needed to retain quality staff; and, (3) the private sector is unwilling to contribute sufficient funds to restore basic services and user fees would raise only limited funds while denying access to low-income people.

Opponents claim: (1) General user fees should be instituted; (2) property taxes are already too high; and, (3) services are not equally located around the county and it is unfair to tax uniformly for unevenly distributed services.

County Measure #4

A Multnomah County Library Commission would be created to replace the existing private Library Association of Portland as the agency responsible for running the county library system. The commission would be an independent agency appointed by the County Executive and approved by the County Board of Commissioners. No money would be raised by this measure.

Supporters claim: (1) An appointed commission would be more accountable to the public than the present private Library Association, especially because meetings, budgets and records will be open; (2) the new commission will seek innovative ways to solve library problems; and, (3) all parts of the county will be represented because officials who represent the entire county will select commission members.

Opponents claim: (1) The current Library Association manages the library responsibly but is hampered by insufficient funds; (2) the

training and experience of the current Library Association is valuable and is more efficient than a publicly appointed commission can be; and, (3) organizations such as the public library need to move away from dependence on the county.

County Measure #5

Multnomah County will tax residents \$5,150,399 a year for three years to pay for (1) corrections facilities and programs (\$4.6 million per year); (2) diversion and prevention services for juveniles (\$1.6 million per year); (3) youth sobering program (\$1.9 million per year); and (4) District attorney (\$1.6 million per year). The bulk of the money will be spent on: new jail beds by re-opening Claire Argow Center for Women; the County Courthouse jail; and, establishing facilities for alcoholism treatment, work release/restitution, and a small mental health facility. The measure would raise taxes 28 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Supporters claim: (1) Overcrowding would be relieved and judges will have new sentencing options; (2) the District Attorney's office could expedite prosecution; and, (3) funds would also be provided for services intended to reduce the crime problem by addressing criminals' behavior problems.

Opponents claim: (1) The measure provides only short-range solutions to the space shortage and there is a tendency to fill "new beds" as quickly as they are created; (2) property taxes are already too high; and, (3) the priorities are wrong: alternatives designed to rehabilitate criminals should be given higher priority.

Port of Portland Measure #26-3

This measure allows the Port of Portland to sell \$40 million in bonds to rebuild Marine Terminal 2 with taxpayer's money repaying the private bondholders. Proceeds from the bond sale will be used for buildings, equipment and two new ship berths. Taxes would be raised 13 cents per \$1,000 if this measure passes.

Supporters claim: (1) Upgrading Terminal 2 is an investment in the economic future of all Portland; (2) the size and cost of the project is not attractive to private investment and raising marine fees could result in lost business; and, (3) the Port of Portland needs improvements to compete with other west coast ports

for international trade.

Opponents claim: (1) Port improvements should be paid for by user charges rather than burdening taxpayers with 20 years of debt at current high interest rates; (2) property taxes are already too high; and, (3) port improvements paid for with taxpayer's dollars will return limited public benefits.

Metropolitan Service District Measure #26-4

This measure allows the current levy of \$5 million per year to continue for three years for the Washington Park Zoo. Most of the money is spent maintaining the zoo and the remainder is used for capital improvements such as a proposed Africa Bush exhibit. The levy

amounts to 14-17 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Supporters claim: (1) Many improvements have been made at the zoo and others are needed to contribute to Portland's "livability"; (2) the levy allows for continuing operation at the zoo with minimal admission rates so all can enjoy it; and, (3) the zoo offers educational programs to schools and community groups.

Opponents claim: (1) Property taxes are already too high; (2) the "visionary" zoo master plan is on too large a scale for this area to support; and, (3) admission fees and other non-public revenue should provide a greater part of the operating budget than they now provide.

Portlanders join Nicaraguan cotton pickers for harvest

by Robert Lothian

In February, eleven Portlanders traveled to Nicaragua to help with the cotton harvest. This is the first in a series of articles about their experiences. First part: We spend a day in El Salvador.

Fear turns to terror as departure time draws near. We are the only gringos waiting to board the 11 p.m. flight out of Los Angeles International Airport to San Salvador.

We try to look inconspicuous in this crowd of Spanish-speaking Latin Americans. There are macho young men, children running and squealing, families and distinguished looking seniores and senoras with carry-on bags. Are any of these people assassins and torturers, I wonder? I try to avoid what in my fear seem like sinister stares. Will killers be waiting for us at the San Salvador Airport as they were for the four American nuns?

The three of us from Portland are on our way to Nicaragua to join 150 other North Americans in an international cotton picking brigade. We have decided to fly TACA, the El Salvadoran airline, because it offers the least expensive fare to Managua from the west coast. But it requires a one-day stopover in San Salvador, and with fear and fascination, we anticipate this chance to experience first hand this poverty stricken, war-torn land.

Our fears mount when we learn that a photographer getting hassled by airport security is taking pictures of deportees being loaded on the plane. This is a "death flight" he tells us: the deportees face possible death and torture upon their arrival. We quickly huddle. Should we boycott? People are boarding now, and in the final seconds before departure, we decide to go through with it, rationalizing that we will be able to tell people about the experience upon our return.

Entering the plane, I notice about eight rows of young men sitting silent and subdued toward the rear. We hold hands as the plane takes off. One of us fluent in Spanish overhears a conversation about death. The atmosphere is tense.

After flying for several hours, and with a complimentary glass of wine and some food under our belts, we begin to convince ourselves that death squads would only laugh at us.

Still, when the plane touches down the next morning, and we are really there, wandering around the terminal asking directions from a guard with a pistol in his belt, we are petrified. Our legs somehow know what to do, and we end up in the waiting area. Tough looking men in plain clothes stand at strategic locations and seem to stare at us. An army truck loaded with soldiers sits parked across the street. But some of the soldiers lounge on the grass, and others buy popicles from street vendors. Families bustle about. We

begin to realize that the feeling around the airport is routine, and we relax a little.

Leaving the airport on the airline bus for the half-hour ride into the mountains to San Salvador, I notice one of the U.S. supplied A-37 bombers of the Salvadoran Air Force coming in for a landing. Could it be returning from an attack? How many civilians died, I wonder?

As the bus continues on, our thoughts turn to the four American nuns who lost their lives somewhere along this desolate highway on one unspeakable night.

Palm trees give way to mountains and volcanoes. Deep blue lakes stretch out below. El Salvador is a beautiful country. Entering the city of San Salvador, we notice a lot of soldiers and people being searched. We wind through the poor barrios up to the San Salvador Hilton in a wealthy neighborhood on a hill, where we spend our stopover time courtesy of the airline. In 1980, two American union representatives and a Salvadoran agricultural reform expert were assassinated at the Sheraton. We stroll on the edge of the largest swimming pool in Central America. Nearby is a separate dormitory-like structure. It is the "V.I.P." section of the hotel which houses the 55 American advisors to the Salvadoran military.

While eating lunch, we overhear some sinister-looking men talking about death. Afterwards, a kaki-clad American, with a crew cut, follows us as we browse through the gift shops which feature anti-communist T-shirts. We finally board the overcrowded van for the ride back to the airport, and cruise down through the barrios with the radio blasting old Rolling Stones tapes ("Under My Thumb", "Girl"...). Red white and blue signs proclaim ARENA (the ultra right-wing party of death squad leader D'Abusson) on every telephone pole.

Almost to our surprise, without having been hassled in El Salvador, we are back on the plane flying through the tropical night to Managua. It still amazes us that these two countries, so opposite, could have normal relations, including international air connections.

In Managua, we feel as if a heavy weight has been lifted as we walk from the plane to the terminal at Augusto Sandino International Airport. The feeling is relaxed. Revolutionary slogans and posters greet us. We are now in Nicaragua Libre, free Nicaragua.

When the customs workers learn that we have come to help with the harvest, they warm to us. The woman who inspects our bags smiles openly when she learns that we have brought a large suitcase full of toys and clothes for a present.

Next: We pick cotton at the largest cotton plantation in Nicaragua.

Piedmont resources fair set

The Piedmont Neighborhood Association will sponsor a Community Resources Fair, Saturday, May 5th, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Applegate School, 7650 N.

Commercial Ave. Admission is free. The fair will focus on programs available to the general public. Representatives of various agencies, including Loaves and Fishes, Harry's Mother, the City Energy Saving Center, the S.E. Asian Refugee Federation, The Salvation Army, and Legal Aid, to name a few, will be present to answer questions.

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The most commonly used word in English conversation is I.

The first formal rules for baseball required the winning team to score twenty-one runs.

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