

EDITORIAL/OPINION

City run by white males

The City of Portland needs to be taken to task for its pitifully poor Affirmative Action record. The populace within the city limits are as cosmopolitan in ethnic background and racial identification as Oregon will ever be.

However, this multi-cultural and racial composition is not reflected in how the City spends our tax dollars for employment. The most glaring insult to the goal of equal opportunity in employment is the fact that when a person of color or a woman scored among the top three on the Civil Service test, they were still not hired.

The Metropolitan Human Relations Commission's affirmative action evaluation of the City of Portland has been met by self-righteous excuses from those indicted by their poor performance—the City Commissioners.

They insult our intelligence by refusing to accept responsibility for their bureau managers who tend to hire someone like themselves—a white male—as a representative of the labor force. In light of the MHRC report, which shows promises and commitments made to secure

maybe we ought to change Portland's theme from, "The City of Roses," to "The City Run by White Males."

Also, let's remind those liberal commissioners, fresh from the sweat of the 1984 election, that it was the rainbow coalition that gave them their margin of victory. It is after the election that the rubber hits the road and promises and commitments made to secure votes ought to be implemented instead of just discussed.

The flurry of activity from the commissioners as they rebound and react to the MHRC report should be monitored by local organizations who demand more accountability and less excuses. We should challenge our new mayor to hire a staff that reflects the rainbow of colors who voted for him.

The metropolitan area demands a commitment based on action rather than words. We applaud the City Commissioners for their willingness to crack down, but just sending memos to bureau heads is too little, too late.

Initiatives deserve support

Oregonians are extremely fortunate to live in one of the twelve states where citizens are guaranteed the right to use an initiative process to directly make laws which govern them. Any non-constitutional matter can be placed on the statewide ballot after submission of 62,000 valid signatures of registered voters, and no fewer than 52 groups sought to do so this year. Nearly all of these efforts will fail, with perhaps as few as five actually appearing on the November 6 ballot.

Initiatives often generate the controversy lacking in most election years and do much to increase voter turnout. This is particularly important this year when, many observers agree, a high turnout is needed to defeat Reagan.

The initiative sponsored by the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) calls for creation of a Citizens Utility Board (CUB) as a means of controlling utility rates. CUB would be funded by voluntary ratepayer donations and it will truly represent consumers' interests rather than that of the telephone, gas, and electric companies. It is sure to be subject to a negative mass media campaign.

If a majority of the voters approve the

Oregon Marijuana Initiative (OMI), possession and cultivation of marijuana for personal use will become legal. It would still be a crime to sell marijuana. Currently, under Oregon law, it is a worse crime to grow one marijuana plant than to commit manslaughter. OMI organizers say thousands of young people have registered to vote because of the measure, and most will surely vote against Reagan in November.

Oregon presently has tons of improperly stored radioactive wastes and the Radioactive Waste Disposal initiative seeks to restrict disposal of such wastes only to suitable locations. "Suitable" is defined by the measure as being removed from ocean, river or creek erosion plains, away from geologic faults and landslides, and not in areas experiencing volcanic activity within the last two million years (60 percent of Oregon's land mass).

Each of these three measures are now in initiative petition form because the legislature has continually failed to address the issues they reflect. The November election is sure to be more exciting and Reagan's re-election effort more difficult because of them.



New levels of democracy needed

by Dr. Manning Marable
"From The Grassroots"

The Rainbow Coalition, the slogan of the Jesse Jackson campaign, has reshaped presidential politics in 1984. Now the challenge is to redefine American politics by building a permanent, national Rainbow Coalition: a union of Blacks, Latinos, women, labor, the unemployed and others who comprise the real American majority.

What should the Rainbow Coalition become after the 1984 elections? Foremost, the Rainbow Coalition must be a Coalition for Democracy of a new, more advanced type. Democracy has always assumed different institutional forms throughout history. The Greeks had a "democracy": a tiny handful of citizens ruled and voted, while the majority were either non-citizens, or slaves. When the United States was founded two thousand years later, a similar elitism prevailed: three out of four white males, all women, and of course, all Blacks were unable to vote. In the past two decades, with the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, Black people and others have achieved a measure of social and political equality. Yet, like earlier forms of democracy, the rules of the game have remained essentially the same. A new level of democracy would expand and deepen the political process to give power to those who have been too long denied it: it would tilt the scales of social justice away from the corporations and Pentagon, back toward the people.

What steps are needed to create a more democratic, nonracist America? Some constructive suggestions are found in an essay entitled, "Voting Is Not Enough" by political scientist Benjamin R. Barber in this June's issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. Barber argues that "The real choice we face in the coming years is not between Republicans and Democrats, or between the supply-side and the welfare state

...It is between an ever more meaningless and weak form of democracy in which we periodically rubber-stamp the bureaucrats and politicians who govern for us and over us and in our stead, and a strong democracy in which we reassume the responsibilities of self-government."

Barber gives some interesting ways to create a "strong democracy," including "a national system of neighborhood assemblies, initially limited to discussion and deliberation" and a "national initiative and referendum process permitting popular initiatives and referenda on congressional legislation, with a multi-choice voting format and a two-stage voting procedure." Barber's list also includes reforming the criminal justice system wherein minor disputes, such as "petty misdemeanors, family quarrels (and) moving traffic violations" would be settled by citizens on surrogate civic juries. There are major omissions in Barber's agenda—certainly the Electoral College, the most antiquated and elitist structure in American politics ought to be abolished. And Barber doesn't deal effectively with the central political question: what groups of Americans will comprise the political force necessary to obtain institutional changes? Some powerful vested interests, especially the corporations and the banks, want to keep the system's inequalities exactly as they are.

The Rainbow Coalition comprises the foundation for the creation of a more democratic American society. It's immediate constituency are those women and men who cast votes for Jesse Jackson. Jackson didn't win the nomination, but he demonstrated that there are literally millions of

progressive-minded voters who are ready to use the ballot in the battle for equality and social justice. The figures alone tell it all: Jackson won over 42 percent of the total vote in Louisiana, 16 percent in Ohio, 25 percent in North Carolina, Maryland and New York State, and 20 percent of all Democrats' primary ballots this spring. The Jackson campaign placed the most sensible and progressive platform before the electorate in modern history: full employment, major reductions in war spending, increased housing and health-care programs, and an expansion of civil rights and opportunity for all. A formal membership coalition of these voters, combined with the powerful support of the Black Church, Black labor leaders and Black social organizations, would elect thousands of Blacks, women, Latinos and other liberals into public office. The Rainbow Coalition, working with the NAACP and other civil rights, environmental, peace, and women's groups, would be a powerful lobby on Capital Hill and in state houses across America. Neither the Democratic nor Republican Parties could dictate the terms of the political agenda: we would be a national power in the fight for democracy, jobs, peace and freedom.

No matter who is elected in 1984, it should be clear to all that the American political system needs to be fundamentally challenged to include all of those who have been victimized by racism, sexism, poverty, and unemployment. Basic institutional reforms must be part of our agenda. But the Jackson campaign is unfinished, if we fail to move to the next logical step. Democracy "for the few" must become "democracy for all."

Support our advertisers

Say You Saw It in The

PORTLAND OBSERVER

Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

With all the activity centered around the possibility of a woman vice-presidential running mate on the Democratic ticket, the Street Beat team asked, "What are your feelings about a woman as vice-president?"



Molly Davis
Seamstress

"It might give another woman the opportunity to go out there and become president."



Christine Poole
Librarian

"It is about time with the number of women voters and qualified candidates that are available."



L. Smith
Retired

"I'm not against the ladies, but it is not going to help them. I'm a Republican and Reagan is going to get in there."



Johnny Johnson
Roadie

"They should let women run. They might be more forceful and powerful for the Blacks."



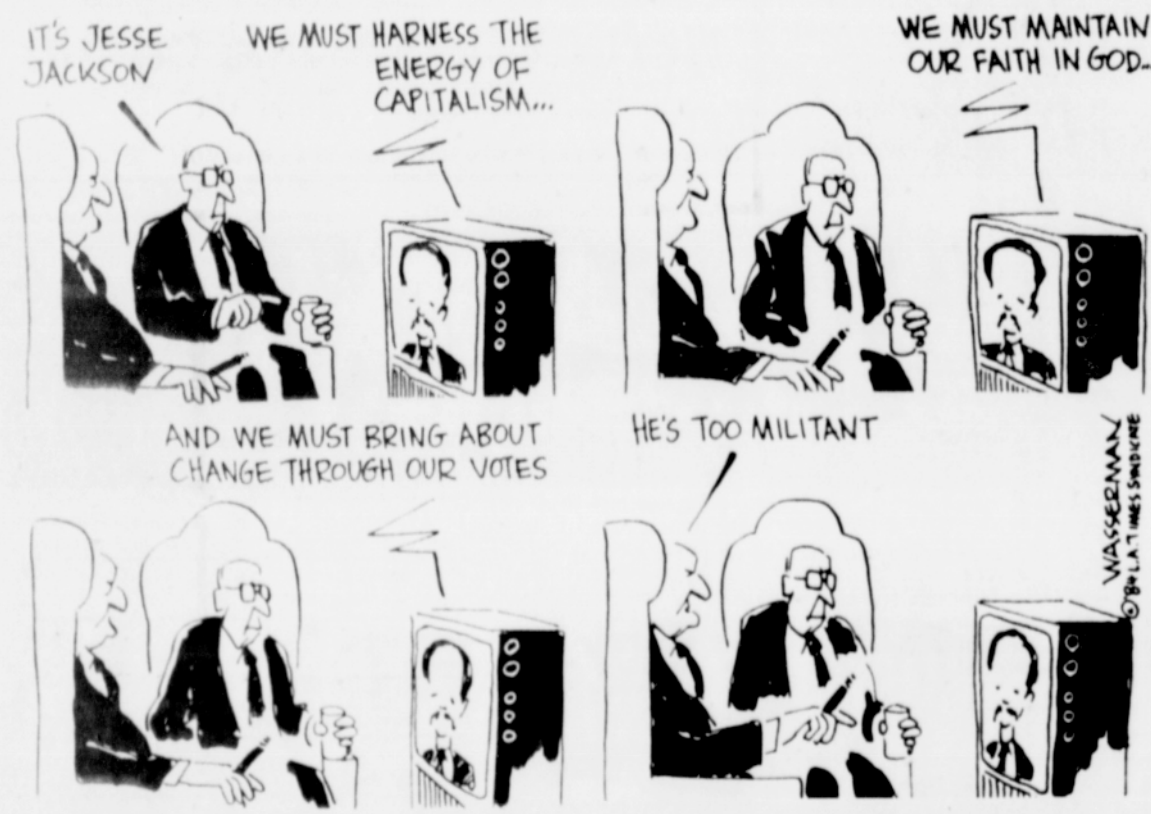
Lee Ella Jackson
Telephone Service

"A woman has just as much privilege as a man. We might do even better."



Gary Hartman
Student

"I think it's great. We need someone new and someone to look up to. It's a start."



Portland Observer



The *Portland Observer* (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217. Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

The *Portland Observer* was established in 1970. Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the *Portland Observer*, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.



283-2486

MEMBER
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
Association - Founded 1885

Alfred L. Henderson, Editor/Publisher
Al Williams, General Manager

National Advertising Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
New York

PORTLAND OBSERVER

\$15 for one year
 \$25 for two years

CLIP IT
TO START THE PORTLAND OBSERVER COMING EVERY WEEK

Mr. _____
Ms. _____
Miss _____
Street _____ Apt. _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____