

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Don't prostitute community

The exclusion and bureaucratic alienation of an inner city, person of color from the Council for Prostitution Alternatives (CPA) is giving people of color who are selling their bodies another pimp.

CPA prostituted the concerns of the North and Northeast communities whose outrage over street prostitution led to demonstrations demanding a solution to prostitution and all its derivatives. With the closure of massage parlors and the spread of street prostitution into white middle-class neighborhoods and businesses, finding a solution became a "safe" political priority.

A practical solution to consolidate the options that service providers offered to those living the fast life was supported by the public testimony of Northeast neighborhood organizations and an inner city, person of color service provider, Lisa Clay, director of Friends of Sisters of the Streets (S.O.S.).

As soon as public funds were allocated to create a service fund for client access Lisa Clay and S.O.S. became a casualty of bureaucratic racism.

CPA exploited the community and Lisa Clay in the very same manner a pimp exploits his stable. The operations of CPA manipulated the community's concern over street prostitution to acquire funding that will reinforce service providers who do not service the area or concerns where the problem of street prostitution is most pervasive, visible and where the residual problems created by street prostitution are concentrated.

The actions by the coordinator and the council violates their own provision for providing services where no other resources exist. By refusing to reopen the coordinator's position because of questionable Affirmative Action outreach, CPA is taking the input from people of color lightly. They are highlighting the City's Affirmative Action hypocrisy.

CPA may move into the King Neighborhood Facility, thereby promoting an illusion of being geographically sensitive. But the actions and attitudes of CPA, which left no service provider

of color or in the Inner Northeast, is distant to the community and the prostitutes who need the services the most.

CPA is operating as if they have no understanding of the Portland Prostitution problem.

There are two types of prostitutes who work the street for two separate reasons. One group is made up of prostitutes who are working in a circuit. Many of these participate in the street life because they want to. The other group encompasses neighborhood females and males who work the streets because individuals or circumstances force their day-to-day participation.

Already the morgue has the bodies of six Black females who also show up on the police roster of unsolved murders. Certainly, many of these young women would fall in the category of being "lost and turned out." CPA is ignoring this group.

Many of the architects of CPA abandoned the council to pursue political careers and run political campaigns. The only difference between the actions of a "john" and those on the council who left the program in midstream is at least a john will pay for the services of a prostitute.

The CPA politicians gave the prostitutes of color and those in Northeast empty promises and broken dreams.

Instead of widening the diversity of treatments and alternatives CPA has closed them. The paternalism from bureaucrats fosters nepotism among service providers. Their negligence, narrowness and racism is wasting taxpayers' dollars and CPA's impact on prostitution will be negotiable.

We can no longer allow the community to be exploited as an excuse to raise funds, which in turn, offers us no real benefits or participation in the decision making policies of the agency. Call the office of City Commissioner Margaret Strachan, 248-4151, and demand CPA to mediate with Lisa Clay and S.O.S. Remind politicians of the insanity of their decisions that exclude services from the community and clients that need assistance the most. Prostitutes do not need another pimp and our community does not need another exploiter.



Vote for Herb Cawthorne

Since November 7th, the two run-off candidates for City Council have made joint appearances/debated on several occasions. Who won the debates will be determined at the polls on December 18. Debating consisted of two combatants coming with strong arguments for their respective positions, then pulling the opponent's hair out of his rebuttal and arguments. A case could be made that Cawthorne's hair was not even windblown by Bogle. Maybe Mr. Bogle didn't understand the question? Quizzical looks on his part could be considered cute if you like him or bewilderment by the rest of the city.

As we go to the polls, we should consider the answer to this question: Which candidate will be a voice for the Black community? We need balance at City Hall, someone who will advocate

our concerns. Beyond the rights aspect of voting, Black interests depends on a large turnout at the polls. Part of the reason Black neighborhoods have been neglected and Black interests ignored is because the Black voter turnout is often lower than the white turnout.

The *Portland Observer* strongly encourages voters to support Herb Cawthorne.

Cawthorne, through his campaign efforts, along with the Rainbow Coalition, represents a new political force in this community. Let's move into this season that celebrates hope with a renewed vision of what we must do for a positive future in our community. Vote for Herb Cawthorne on December 18 — **The Clear Choice.**



Education gap hurts Blacks

Along the Color Line by Dr. Manning Marable

Education has long been viewed by Afro-Americans as one of the most essential elements of group socioeconomic advancement. In recent years, however, the status of Black colleges and more generally, the actual position of Black administrators, faculty, and students within American higher education has become extremely problematic.

For example, on July 20 this year U.S. District Judge Thomas Wiseman in a hearing on a 15-year-old desegregation case, declared in Nashville that Tennessee State University (TSU) cannot be permitted to maintain its "Black identity." The only Black public university in Tennessee, TSU was merged with the majority-white University of Tennessee-Nashville under a federal court order in 1979. Although over one third of TSU's administrators and nearly half of its faculty are white, the current freshman class is 97 percent Black. Judge Wiseman noted that TSU's retention of a "predominantly Black faculty and a Black president" was a "situation which has got to change. . . . There will be no Black identification at TSU or any other state college." In Wiseman's opinion, TSU had to have a majority white student population within a decade, in order to ensure "quality education." Wiseman also equated the existence of historically Black state institutions with newer, all-white private schools formed in response to desegregation. Blacks "who want that sort of thing"

— an all-Black educational environment—"can go to Fisk or Meharry (Medical School)," he explained. "And on the white side, they can go to Bob Jones or whatever." Three days after Judge Wiseman's statement, Wayne Brown, the director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, declared that TSU's "preservation of (its) historical racial and academic image inhibits attendance of many white students." Brown stated that TSU should be "made racially indistinguishable from the other Tennessee public universities." Toward that end, he urged the discontinuation of the university's "high school remediation program."

Even the gradual "deracialization" of TSU would have devastating consequences for Blacks, since virtually no public pressure has been applied to promote the rapid hiring of Black faculty and administrators, and the recruitment and retention of Afro-American students, at Tennessee's majority white state institutions. The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, the premier state supported school, currently has a student body which is less than 6 percent Black. Its administration is only 5.6 percent Black, and it has a faculty comprised of 3.3 percent Blacks. TSU currently retains 195 Black faculty on its payroll; the total number of Black faculty at all other state supported universities and colleges in Tennessee is 44. The net result of desegregation would not only destroy the historic character of

a major academic institution in Black America, but would in all probability reduce the overall number of Black students, faculty, and staff in Tennessee's state supported universities.

Combined with the reduction in National Direct Student Loans to many Black colleges in 1982 by the fiat of Reagan's Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell, the trend toward desegregation within the climate of economic austerity has helped to reduce Black college enrollments. In 1977 for example, 50 percent of all Afro-American high school graduates subsequently attended colleges, compared to 51 percent among whites. In 1981, the figure for Black high school students had declined to 43 percent. By October, 1982, the percentage of white high school graduates enrolled in colleges was 52 percent, but only 36 percent for Black youth. As educator Marian Wright Edelman notes, "cuts in college student aid (and) Social Security have contributed to the erosion of higher education opportunities for Blacks. Today, over 56,000 Black males aged 20 to 24 are inmates of correctional institutions, while only 44,000 in the same age group are living in college dormitories." Desegregation and Reaganomics have combined to destroy educational opportunity for Black youth.

Dr. Manning Marable teaches political sociology at Colgate University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

Letters to the Editor

The *Observer* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be typed or neatly printed and signed with the author's name and address (addresses are not published). We reserve the right to edit for length. Mail to: *Portland Observer*, P. O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Accountable banking

To the Editor,

Yesterday I moved my accounts from a bank loaning money to companies dealing with South Africa to a bank which has no such connection.

South Africa's minority whites seriously mistreat its massive black majority. Cutting financial support is a non-violent and educational method to help correct this crime.

HOWARD D. WILLITS

Herbal solution

To the Editor,

The race for City Council between Herb Cawthorne and Dick Bogle is an important one. Some of us feel since the presidential election is over and Ronald Reagan was reelected, we have nothing to vote for.

Portland is still in a recession, and there are many problems that need to be solved. That is why Tuesday, Dec. 18, is important. It is essential that we vote to fill the vacant seat of Charles Jordan.

If you are pondering, and can't make up your mind which candidate to vote for, my choice is Herb Cawthorne for these reasons:

1. When I approached the school board seven years ago about their unfair practice and policies of discrimination against Black children, it was Herb Cawthorne who first spoke up in my behalf, not our leaders who laughed at me, for questioning this most influential hierarchy. I didn't know Herb, then.

2. With the help of Herb, the community coalition was formed. And for 18 months I worked with Herb and others on plans to solve the problem.

3. Herb's leadership on the board has been an asset to all children and the city.

4. Herb made difficult decisions when it counted.

5. Herb has shown sensitivity in dealing with problems, trying to come up with solutions best for everyone.

6. Herb has shown that he is qualified in many ways to deal with problems, large and small. I think this position will give him even more opportunities to show potential for greater leadership.

7. Herb has not been an easy chair quarterback watching from the sideline, but has been out there carrying the ball for you, you and you. Now you can reward that hard work which he has done by voting for him December 18, 1984.

VESIA D. LOVING

Council racism

To the Editor,

After a year of participation and hard work on my part, as of December 5, 1984, I resigned from the Council for Prostitution Alternatives.

Several issues have led to this final decision. The first was the refusal of the Council to reopen acceptance of resumes after only one minority and no African Americans applied for the position of coordinator. Several of us felt that our outreach into the community had very obviously been inadequate, and that there was an obligation to reopen. Because this was a sensitive position, we were also concerned about the experience of the applicants in dealing with various minorities and their ability to relate to those of us who are addressing the problem of prostitution in the N.E. Neighborhood.

It seems this issue had lingering after-effects. After a person was hired, several persons (some Council members) in conjunction with the new

coordinator, began an attack on the credibility of S.O.S. as an organization and on my personal integrity. Erroneous statements slandering S.O.S. were made and spread to various service agencies, a judge, and others in related fields. The coordinator then proposed that S.O.S. be considered a "non-functioning" program and that its "operations be suspended." She proposed a letter be sent to all the judges to this effect.

The resulting damage has been devastating to our program. I no longer am able to be a safe home provider for the Crisis Line, or to allow women needing housing to live in my home due to an invasion of my privacy during this assault. Potential funding has been affected by the damage to the reputation of myself and S.O.S.

Several of us at S.O.S. have been treated disrespectfully on the telephone by the coordinator and a service provider (out of whose office she is presently working). We were cut off when we tried to express our concerns at a following Council meeting. One member did offer to "say it for me" in the "interest of time." This was a direct attempt to suppress certain points and manipulate facts, but worse than that, the fact that this woman would attempt to speak for me or any other Black woman shows her naivete in relating to people of color and confirms our conviction that both unconscious and conscious racism are running rampant on the Council.

It is not to our benefit to be exposed to these patronizing (and insulting) attitudes. It is not to my personal benefit that I continue to be put on the defensive. Finally, it is not to the benefits of the women on the street that we spend our energy in an attempt to work within the Council.

Although since funding has been granted attempts have been made to minimize our input, we did manage to offer concrete and constructive criticism to the Criteria Committee, which we hope was noted. Tya Anderson pointed out the lack of participants' rights in the agreement. I pointed out several specific criticisms

which I will submit in writing. I did not get a chance to mention that the poster submitted for approval should represent more than one ethnic group. We are concerned about confidentiality and hope the "mental health screening" will be entirely eliminated. We suggest that the Criteria Committee reevaluate the criteria so that not only a privileged few women will receive the help they need.

At S.O.S. we have assisted the women who have the most difficult problems, not just women who yield the best success statistics. We hope the C.P.A. program does not end up being another program whose criteria reject those who need help the most. Meanwhile, S.O.S. will con-

tinue to be there for the women who "fall through" the "holes in the system."

ELISA G. GRAY
Founder, Friends of
Sisters on the Street

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