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Free phone

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Coach of the year

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Benson High School's Travis West (center) won his third straight state wrestling title Saturday at the U.S. National Bank OSAA Class AAA state tournament. See story on Page 8. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

School starts program to avoid drug pushers

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — Students at King Elementary School will be provided with transportation to avoid walking through and near open drug trafficking which recently migrated to the corner of Northeast Grand and Alberta.

Harriet Adair, principal of King, has identified 40 students in need of alternative transportation. "But every day we get more and more children who express a desire to sign up. Last week a couple of parents stood on the corner and monitored the students who walked home that way."

Adair added that the number of drug pushers on the corner varies. "We also are identifying times of the day when the dealers feel they can stand on that corner and sell drugs without fear of harassment," she continued.

Edna Robertson, coordinator of the Northeast Neighborhood office, initiated this solution because of the growing number of complaints from parents, other residents and business owners over visible drug transactions

a block away from the school. On February 1, a community meeting was called and an alternative transportation system was offered as a short-term solution.

Ed Green, Director of Transportation for the Portland Public Schools, said the transportation will be provided until the end of the school year. Mac Lockett, Chief of Police for PPs, said drug trafficking has slowed but not stopped.

"We are waiting to see if drug dealers plan to come out more when the weather improves," Lockett added.

Lockett said the presence of men in uniform and cars were stopping and slowing sales.

The migration of the drug traffic, which has been the kiss of death to tavern owners will not topple the Eldorado Restaurant.

"We started charging a cover and when they come into the parking lot, I ask them what their intentions are," said Arthur Cox, Jr., owner of the Eldorado. "If it is to sell drugs or to search for someone selling drugs, I

will call the police and press trespassing charges."

Robertson called the implementation of an alternative transportation system, "a good idea. Our children should not see drug dealing in their neighborhood."

Cox said, "I don't want to see this sort of thing because I don't want our kids to think that this is a role model." Two drug dealers calling themselves the Portland Weed Sellers Association said they would never approach children. "We got kids of our own, and that is what we are doing out here — taking care of our kids."

The dealers said until they get some decent paying jobs, "they can continue to take us to jail. We'll be back up here doing the same thing in three hours."

Robertson is calling another in a series of meetings with tavern owners, community residents and officials to develop a plan to keep drug dealers from congregating. The next meeting is March 12 at the King Neighborhood Facility.

Campbell boycott continues

by Robert Lothian

During his historic speech to the Democratic convention, Jesse Jackson acknowledged efforts by migrant farmworkers in the Midwest to achieve better wages and working conditions.

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee of Toledo, Ohio, worked closely with the Rainbow Coalition in organizing a boycott of Campbell's products. FLOC called for the boycott in support of Midwest tomato pickers.

Campbell's is the major manufacturer of tomato juice and other tomato products in the Midwest. Farmworkers, many of them Mexicans, say that huge processing companies like Campbell's, through their control of the industry, force them to work under conditions similar to those in the Third World.

Jackson met with FLOC president Baldemar Velasquez and then tried to bring Campbell's to the ne-

gotiating table, "but soon discovered that Campbell's Soup Company is not as easy to reason with as the Syrian government," said the FLOC newsletter. Campbell's has refused to negotiate.

The farmworkers are struggling for "justice, self-determination and a contract with Campbell's," said the newsletter. Companies like Campbell's, according to FLOC, are reaping huge profits by charging consumers exorbitant prices compared to what they pay farmers and farmworkers. The people who produce the tomatoes — farmworkers, farmers and cannery workers — receive 17 percent of the gross receipts, while processing companies take 83 percent of gross receipts, said FLOC.

Hard-pressed farmers, many of whom face bankruptcy and having their farms auctioned off to agribusiness conglomerates like Campbell's, can't afford decent wages and living conditions for their migrant

workers, according to FLOC.

Living conditions for the workers are predictable — "housing with no inside plumbing, water must be carried from a common building. Lighting in rooms is fashioned from festooned extension cords and bare bulbs. A hard rain transforms the camp's grassless grounds into a mud-bath."

"For bending, stooping and picking a hamperful of tomatoes (33 lbs.), a worker in northern Ohio gets anywhere from 19 - 25 cents, at least ten cents less per hamper than is received by workers in other states," according to FLOC.

The committee is now concerned about the return of sharecropping. Under this arrangement, which they call "Reaganism in the fields," farmworkers become "independent contractors." The companies avoid social security, unemployment and workers' compensation taxes, while workers (Please turn to Page 7, Column 1)

Rights activist decry U.S. aid

by Robert Lothian

Speaking with the moral force of a Nobel Peace Prize winner, Argentinean human rights activist Adolfo Perez Esquivel called for a withdrawal of the U.S. military presence in Latin America during talks in McMinnville and Portland last week.

Perez Esquivel was the keynote speaker at a peace conference at Linfield College in McMinnville. He also spoke at Portland State University.

For his work as head of Service for Peace and Justice, a human rights group which works on behalf of the oppressed throughout Latin America, Perez Esquivel won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980.

After a military dictatorship came to power in Argentina in 1976, the architect and artist was jailed and tortured for 14 months. He was also jailed in Ecuador and Brazil for his work. Like Martin Luther King, he is a follower of Gandhi.

Perez Esquivel expressed disappointment that the American people seem uninformed about what he described as the havoc caused by the U.S. government in Latin America. He was especially critical of the military aid given to dictatorships.

If that aid isn't stopped, he said, "Central America might end up worse than Viet Nam, and nobody wants another Viet Nam."

Perez Esquivel said he would travel to Washington after leaving Portland and ask the Reagan Administration for "a withdrawal of the U.S. military intervention in Central America." He will also ask the administration to reopen talks toward a normalization of relations with Nicaragua, to participate in the Contradora peace talks sponsored by Mexico, Venezuela and other countries, to cut off aid to the anti-Sandinista rebels known as "contras," and in general, to respect the right to self-determination of Central American countries.

The Soviet Union, from the standpoint of imperialism, "must be viewed in the same light," he said. He suggested that the two superpowers donate to the Third World a sum equal to the value of a nuclear missile, to

be used to build large hospitals.

Argentina is a country that could benefit from such aid, he said. It inherited a \$45 billion debt, 700 percent inflation, malnutrition for 40 percent of the population and 6.5 million people who cannot read or write from the military dictatorship, he said.

The dictatorship was responsible for a seven-year reign of terror in

which 30,000 Argentinians, alleged subversives, died or disappeared. Perez Esquivel described what happened as genocide.

The military was stripped of some of its power after the Falklands fiasco, and Argentina now has a democratic government. But death squads continue to operate; the situation is shaky and could deteriorate, he said.

Death penalty seen as drain

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—As the dust from election year '84 settles, voters not only selected political leaders but marked their ballots to re-establish the death penalty.

Ballot Measure 6 exempts the death penalty from the constitutional prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. Ballot Measure 7 imposes the death penalty as the sentence for aggravated murder.

Mark Kramer, an attorney at St. Andrews Legal Clinic and a constant opponent of the death penalty, said its use is not a deterrent and predicts it will be a tremendous drain on the criminal justice system.

Michael Schrunk, District Attorney for Multnomah County, said Kramer is right.

"It's a terrible expense for the courts, prosecutors and defense. It will be a drain on resources and draw away from other prosecutions," he said.

Schrunk opposes the death penalty: "It's a self-inflicted wound," and stated his office will prosecute all appropriate cases. He said he expects the death penalty to be applied to those "committing the most aggravated crimes."

Kramer added that voters reinstated the death penalty because of a perception that the criminal justice system was tilting to favor the criminal.

"That is inaccurate," said Kramer. "In Multnomah County 95 percent of persons charged are convicted through trial or plea. There is a maximum of five percent and a minimum of one percent thrown out for errors or illegal police procedures," he said.

"People are mad," Schrunk added. "Those in the system brought this on themselves by making mistakes. The public is reacting to those mistakes."

In election '84, both Kramer and Schrunk said the public was confused about the "Victim's Rights Bill," Ballot Measure 8 and voted it down. Schrunk said the Justice Service Levy failed because voters did not want to pay more money.

"They looked at the death penalty as a low-cost solution to all the problems. But it is not. The rapist, robbers and burglars are still with us," Schrunk said.

Kramer said he expects to see the prosecutor utilize the death penalty as an inducement to get guilty pleas."

It will be a bargaining chip in the hands of the prosecutor. People who are innocent or certainly not guilty of aggravated murder may be induced to plea to a charge of life imprisonment because they fear in the hands of the jury they may get the death penalty," Kramer said.

Kramer has documented the racial discrimination in the application of the death penalty. "Discrimination in the application is partly attributable to discrimination in the criminal justice system from the decision to arrest, to the decision to release," he added.

Whites are twice as likely to have a commutation decision and less likely to receive the death sentence for murdering a Black victim.

In 1981 Kramer wrote, "Given the court's recent stance and the public's overwhelming (if uninformed) endorsement of the death penalty, it is unlikely that a wholesale invalidation of the death penalty will occur in the foreseeable future. The court will continue to chip away at the unconstitutional sharp edges of the death penalty statutes while avoiding the central issues of discrimination and arbitrariness."



A happy Grace Collins and Clyde Hunter, maintenance worker at the community center, sit amidst office furniture donated by PNB. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Grace Collins receives grant

The Northeast (Portland) Community Relations Team from Pacific Northwest Bell helped the Grace Collins Memorial Community Center at 128 NE Russell solve a couple problems Monday, February 25. The team presented the center with a \$1,500 check for the center's scholarship fund, and delivered an assortment of much-needed office supplies and furniture.

The Collins Memorial Center has

been serving the community since 1954. Its day care facility serves principally the North and Northeast sections of Portland. However, because of its outstanding educational program, it also draws students from the Gresham and Beaverton areas.

The scholarship fund helps mothers with limited incomes continue to pursue their jobs, while allowing their children to benefit from the center's programs.