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Two Sections



Sen Cha, 7 years old, operates one of the classroom computers with instructions from computer coordinator Allan Grinnell while Dameka Williams, 5 years old, looks on during Open House at Vernon School. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Arson-set fires plague Tubman School

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — Disaster struck Harriet Tubman Middle School in three earlier this week as a two-alarm arson fire Sunday afternoon devastated a new wing of the renovated building still under construction at 2231 N. Flint.

At 12:50 the next day, a rumor started that a bomb was placed on campus at Tubman's current site and the school was promptly evacuated. At 2:50 an arsonist struck again and a curtain in the school's auditorium was ablaze, and the school's stereo system was destroyed. Damage is estimated at \$1,400. Currently, a 14-year-old student has been arrested for setting the curtain fire.

Herman Washington, Tubman's principal, said things are now beginning to settle. "We will still open our new site in time for the new school year. Instead of construction being completed in the first week of June, it will be completed in the first week of July."

Ironically, a sprinkler system was scheduled for installation this week. "A sprinkler system would have stopped Sunday's fire," said Donald Mayer, Fire Bureau's Public Information Officer.

Mayer estimated the damage at \$200,000. "We can tell who it was started, but we cannot say who or whom. Sometimes investigations can drag on for years or a couple of weeks."

Washington said the site had been vandalized before and prior to the fire on Sunday paint cans had been overturned and fiberboard broken. "I can't see any reason for it," added Washington.

Matt Lockett, Chief of Police for the Portland Public School, said a student rumor mill created the bomb scare on Monday. "Kids told their teacher that a 'guy' outside had placed

a bomb in the school and it was to go off at 1:00. But our officers investigated and found it was a situation of he said/she said."

Harriet Tubman Middle School is the inner city's only middle school due to the unbalance created by the school district's previous administration who systematically eliminated upper grades from grade schools located in the Black community.



The new wing of Tubman Middle School suffered severe damage in Sunday's arson-set fire. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

18 arrested in Swan Island dispute

by Robert Lothian

Eighteen persons were arrested on Swan Island Feb. 28th and 29th as they protested the non-union practices of two out-of-state contractors.

As about 100 demonstrators looked on, some of those present parked cars across N. Lagoon Ave., blocking early morning access to the job site and tying up traffic back to Interstate 5. Their cars were towed.

Unemployed members of local unions who organized themselves into the Fair Jobs Committee sponsored the protests. They targeted Brown and Root, Inc., of Houston, Texas, and Daniel International Corp., of Greenville, South Carolina. Both companies have contracted with Atlantic Richfield Company to build Alaska oil drilling site modules and other equipment. The contracts are worth between \$30 and \$40 million. Brown and Root has hired between 300 and 400 workers and Daniel International plans to hire 700.

The Fair Jobs Committee contends that the two companies are taking

advantage of Portland's poor economic situation to pay wages that are about 40 percent below union scale, coupled with drastically reduced benefits.

Committee members allege that many of the cars in the companies' parking lots have out-of-state plates. Workers from other states are taking jobs and tax money away from Oregon, they say.

"It's our livelihood, they're taking our jobs," said Richard Crabtree, an unemployed steamfitter and chairperson of the committee.

Crabtree said the unionists' work is seasonal. "If we work nine months, then we've got to make enough to last all year," he said. "If they cut us 40 percent, then we can't live."

42 lawsuits filed to reach top

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — A commitment to one's culture and the strength acquired when standing up for fairness is the foundation for success, according to four women in a political forum at the sixth annual International Women's Day Festival.

Penny Harrington, Chief of Police; Patricia Ray, Federal Labor Contract Specialist; Iris Bell, Forest Service Program Manager, and Lina Seabold, MBE Specialist for Tri-Met, shared with a 50-person audience their insight and experiences relating to their career climbs.

Harrington, the first woman Police Chief in a major metropolitan area, said she chose police work as a career because of the challenge of the profession. But she found it equally challenging breaking down promotional barriers which discriminated against women.

"When I started at the police force, a woman had to have a college degree

while a man had to have a G.E.D. Women were allowed to work in only one department and we could not take the promotional exam," she said.

Her biggest barrier was the constraints incorporated in the civil service system. At one time the weight and height requirement excluded all women. "When I finally took a promotional exam, the civil service board asked me very personal questions and inquired what my husband thought of my job and promotion. That is when I became angry," she added.

Harrington said she filed 42 complaints of sexual discrimination against the Portland Police. The stress from this challenge caused her to take a leave of absence. "But I never regretted any of it. I have a hell of a lot of respect and empathy for minorities now. I understand how they feel and I plan to bring this understanding to the department," Harrington concluded.

families to economic hard times," he said.

The situation could end with Oregon becoming a right to work state, like southern states and now Idaho, said Crabtree. "Why else would they come in here and do all this work non-union when they do it union elsewhere up and down the coast?" he added.

Both companies and the Oregon chapter of the Associated General Contractors have defended the companies' right to conduct their business as open shop contractors. The companies say also that they are hiring 90 percent of their employees from the local area.

Crabtree said the Fair Jobs Committee has picketed ARCO stations around Portland. They wanted to have a parade with cars, he said, but their permit was turned down. He said individuals would continue to picket on Swan Island.

"We wanted to get their attention and we did," he said. "We'll follow it up with something or other, maybe not so spectacular."

As an MBE specialist for Tri-Met, Seabold said her position afforded her the power and influence to increase the number of women and people of color in non-traditional careers. Bell said her pace for success was set from her experiences as a student in the civil rights movement. "I learned to maintain my integrity. When I go out and fight I know what I'm talking about, because I'm prepared."

Ray's responsibility is to enforce federal Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action statutes. "When I go out and visit companies, I understand all too clearly that we need these laws," Ray added.

All participants agreed that the existing civil rights laws were adequate to mount an offensive against any type of discrimination — sex, race or sexual preference. "It's not easy, but it's worth it. There will never be another season of silence," Harrington noted.

2-parent welfare rule opposed

"Oregon's public assistance laws currently force unemployed families to split up in order to meet life's necessities," says Rev. Gary Vaughan. Rev. Vaughan is the director of the Burnside area's Operation Night-watch ministry and the Sunnyside United Methodist Church's emergency family shelter in Portland. "Every week I see husbands and wives who are living on the streets or in emergency shelters with their children rather than separate as a family to allow one parent to obtain aid for the children," states Vaughan.

On Tuesday, March 12, the Oregon Senate Human Resources Committee held a hearing on SB 350 which provides for reinstatement of public assistance for 2-parent unemployed families. Rev. Vaughan and other representatives of the Coalition to Keep Oregon Families Together testified at the proceeding in support of SB 350.

Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) is a joint federal-state welfare program which provides living expenses and medical care for very poor families on the basis of needs. States may

provide public assistance for single-parent households only, or for 2-parent unemployed families (ADC-UN) and single parent households. Before 1979 Oregon participated in both programs, but in that year Oregon discontinued funding for public assistance for 2-parent unemployed families. Despite cuts in federal programs, the federal government has maintained matching funds for public assistance for 2-parent unemployed families as part of the federal safety net.

Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia now receive federal matching funds to participate in the ADC-UN program. After terminating its program in 1981 and experiencing the devastating results on families, the state of Washington reinstated its

program in 1983.

"With the federal government paying an increased 61.54 percent of the program costs (previously 58%), we estimate Oregon's costs to be \$18.75 million for the biennium in general funds with a federal match of \$28.5 million," reports Doug Rogers, Director of Snow-CAP emergency services in Portland and chairperson of the Coalition to Keep Oregon Families Together. Rogers notes that applying a conservative economic multiplier of 2, the federal infusion would represent an additional \$57 million to the state's economy. "Behind the positive economic impact, the restoration of Oregon's ADC-UN program will lighten the tremendous burden on families experiencing extreme financial difficulties," says Rogers.

League of Women Voters sponsors school board forum

The League of Women Voters will sponsor a candidates forum for the upcoming School Board election on Tuesday, March 19, 1985, 7:00 p.m., at Cleveland High School.

There are 17 candidates for the Nos. 1, 2 and 3 positions. All 17 candidates have been asked to take part in the forum. Each candidate will be given an opportunity for a brief opening statement. Once all the statements are presented, a question and answer period will follow.

Further information may be had by calling the League office, 228-1675.



Anti-sales tax forces held a pancake breakfast fundraiser on Sunday. Addressing the crowd are (l-r) John Fisher, Senator Ed Fadley, Russ Farrell, Senator Jan Wyers, Representative Dave McTeague, Senator Dick Springer and Bart Dehner. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)