

Newsflash:

As the *Observer* went to press we learned that a preliminary vote by the Portland City Council has made Corinto, Nicaragua, Portland's latest sister city. A final vote on the matter will take place next Wednesday.

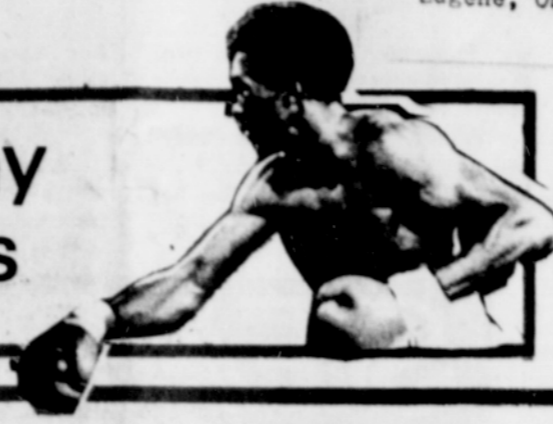
Mrs Frances Schoen—Newspaper Room
University of Oregon Library
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Street teen Census



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Two Sections



If it's Tuesday, this must be spring! Staff photographer, Richard J. Brown, tip-toed through the

tulips for a glimpse of glorious sun in Portland's park blocks this week.

Freebasing:

The cost of compulsion

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — Freebasing, the smoking of cocaine, totally captivates its users into a counter culture where there are no rules and into a mental and physical roller coaster leaving them "based-out."

Marrie Dawn Markegard, a psychiatric nurse for Comprehensive Options for Drug Abusers, Inc. (CODA), said "freebasers are the most difficult clients to treat. "Freebasers are into immediate gratification and they want therapy to be the same. The coke is magic. Not only do they feel better, they feel wonderful. And it stays magical as long as they can afford it. There is nothing we can give a client that will top that rush."

Freebasers spend a great deal of time and a tremendous amount of money in search of that first rush. "When I was based out, the first hit was like heaven opening in my mind. It was the best feel I had ever had. It lasts for a few minutes — then my mental state quickly went to hell in a handbasket," remembered a former user.

All current and former freebasers describe their cocaine intoxication as an ultimate high. "I'll compare freebasing to sex, except sex is cheaper. You go to a party now, the girls don't want to know if you have a car or a job. They want to know, do you have any coke."

The drug culture's magazine, "High Times" called the freebase high the "cerebral orgasm" and a local user added, "It's the best in the world and it's also the worst."

In the search for this rush, basers smoke up grams of cocaine and hundreds and even thousands of dollars. After they experience that first rush, the compulsion replaces reason and base "binges" are the result. "In one binge I smoked up my car and house note. If I hadn't given my wife money for food I would have based it up. Whenever I think about all the money I smoked up, I get a knot in my throat. I let the pipe take control."

Freebasing is a treacherous obsession. "You just got to have it. I got friends who pay the coke man before they pay the Visa card," one former baser said. "I really wasn't that into the high. It was what it did to my depression. I said to myself, "Forget the bills; let's hide your problems and buy some coke."

Markegard added, "When you're basing, your job doesn't matter. Going to work is not that important because you are missing days, because you are so wired-up, binged or depressed that you can't go in. Basers start dealing with a lot of criminal activity and change their peer group. Friendship and family are no longer important. Freebasing becomes the central focus in life. All you think about is where the next hit is coming from." She said after the initial high, basers hit low quickly. "Basers experience a loss of impulse control during this post-freebase depression. They do things without thinking. No one in this clinic has a worse case of the guilts than freebasers. They rob, lie and steal to get money to base up."

Among the myths associated with cocaine abuse is the qualitative and quantitative increase in sexual potency. "That's not true," interjected a former user. "You might think about it, but it's all in your mind. Besides those into basing aren't into sex. They're into basing!"

Basers are restless, experience anxiety, irritability, attention span changes,

paranoia and severe depression. Freebasing erodes your pocketbook, family and personality. So, why are Portlanders freebasing? Clarkie, a 19-year-old Black male, said, "Because it's cool."

"I've got friends basing and that's all they do. They aren't into music or girls or life. Their life is the pipe. When I started to see my friends change because of free base, I left it alone," he said.

There are horror stories involving basers who are "sprung" — a state of compulsion where the craving for the drug is so strong that obtaining one more hit becomes life's only mindset.

In base houses and at after-hour joints, basers reveal stories involving them or their friends as they do the impossible to purchase the drug. And

it's in the base houses where freebase hits are sold like alcohol in a nightclub.

"I knew one man who offered his wife to my man for a hit. Those types of things made me leave the pipe alone," a former baser recalled.

"What about that dude who sold his new car for \$700 to base-up?," another baser said.

At one time, only dealers could afford to freebase. But the increased availability of cocaine made it affordable to all who can pay the cost of compulsion.

"Not only do you base up your money, job and family, but a part of you is gone. When that happens, you wonder, 'Why did I base-up my soul?'"



(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

South African reforms debated

by Robert Lothian

A South Africa debate sponsored by the World Affairs Council covered all the bases Thursday night.

Calvin Van Pelt, former South African consul in Portland, painted the apartheid regime in a positive light. The government is moderating under President P. W. Botha, he said, and conditions for Blacks are better in South Africa than in other African countries.

Van Pelt decried "agitators out to destroy the country. . .to what purpose I don't know," and "the extremely well-financed, well-publicized campaign against South Africa in the U.S."

Reed College history professor David Groff, an African history expert, called for Black representation in South Africa's government as a solution to the current crisis.

"The root of the problem is power and whether it will be shared with the Black majority," said Groff.

But Black representation is not in the works because the South African white rulers do not want to give up their power, he said.

Van Pelt alleged that Blacks end up fighting each other in countries that have achieved Black majority rule.

In Zimbabwe, "it will end in the extermination of one or the other of the tribes," he said. He hinted that South Africa faced a similar situation under Black majority rule.

"If there were 80 million Blacks in this country, would you vote to change the laws?," he asked the audience.

Groff said that any moderation occurring in South Africa is not coming out of a change of heart in the white leadership, but from political pres-

sure from below.

"Power never yields without pressure," he said, quoting Frederick Douglass, Black American leader of the late 1800s.

"We shouldn't make more of a reformer out of Botha than he is," said Groff. South Africa remains a police state in spite of the reforms, he said. "It's very simple for the government to put away those it doesn't like."

Groff said that reforms and moderating tendencies are fine as far as they go, but they don't go far enough. The Sullivan Principles, for instance, which are supposed to guarantee equal employment and better wages for Black employees of U.S. firms in South Africa, are voluntary and only affect a tiny percentage of Black workers, he said.

Van Pelt alluded to the Sullivan Principles often as evidence of progress in South Africa. "They are very significant," he said.

But the Sullivan Principles and other minor reforms could actually end up having a harmful effect by becoming a smokescreen to hide the true nature of apartheid, according to Groff.

"By diverting our attention from the true power relations in South Africa," the Sullivan Principles "might harm the process of Black empowerment," he said.

Van Pelt referred to the South Africa divestment bill being considered by the Oregon legislature. "Investment is a fickle thing," he said. "If we destroy it, everybody loses. We've thrown out the baby with the bath water."

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Sid Lezak, David Groff, Calvin Van Pelt at World Affairs Council debate on South Africa. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

B.U.F. lauds victories

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — One hundred strong marched locally in unison with 13 other cities across the country in the fifth annual March Against Racist Violence, Saturday, April 6th.

Led by two human rights pioneers, Rev. John Jackson and Ronnie Herndon, marchers stepped in tune to "Forward, Together — Backward, Never."

Dedicating the march to the late Rev. Ira Mumford, Herndon told the crowd their presence made all the difference in the world. "Last year at this time we were saying, wouldn't it be nice if we got rid of Frank Ivancie. This year we're saying, we got rid of Frank Ivancie."

"Last year we were saying, wouldn't it be good if CUB passed. Now we're saying we got CUB passed."

NEA backs civil rights bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congress was recently urged by the National Education Association to approve bipartisan legislation designed to restore civil rights protections for minorities, women, the handicapped, and older Americans.

"Many of us had thought this nation had moved significantly away from the clutches of discrimination, but instead we are disturbed to find ourselves in the position of fighting old battles," declared NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell.

Futrell commented on the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1985 — legislation Congress is considering to restore anti-discrimination statutes that were weakened by a Supreme

Herndon told the crowd comprised of all races and ages: "We can make a change in this city. Politicians used to pass over Albina, but we have a higher vote turnout than other precincts. Now, everybody wants to come to you and me."

Special guest speaker was Lorenzo Carlisle, an anti-apartheid worker in the Bay area. Right now there's a boycott against South African ships. Bay area dockworkers refuse to unload South African cargo.

"South Africa will be free because people are demanding to be free," Carlisle said. He added the worst thing South Africa could have done was legalize trade unions, which they did in 1979 under pressure. "Trade unions will teach the people to organize, and once they are organized, then freedom will come."

Court decision (Grove City v Bell) in 1984.

Futrell noted that the 1985 civil rights legislation "does not broaden the laws in any way" but merely restores those civil rights statutes approved by Congress before Grove City. She testified before a joint hearing of the House Education and Labor Committee and the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Passage of the measure, said the NEA President, would ascertain that federal dollars are not used to encourage or subsidize discrimination barred by four major civil rights laws enacted in the last 20 years.