

Beginning next week, Grassroot News, N.W., will publish a series of articles on "MOVE's Confrontation in Philadelphia."

"Zululand"
delights

Page 3

Rights
denied

Page 2



1985
NBA
PLAYOFFS

Page 7



PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volume XV, Number 32
June 5, 1985
25¢ Copy

Two Sections

USPS 960-060
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Attorney Mark Kramer has last minute words with Ron Herndon before the hearing on Herndon and others charged with attempted trespassing while attempting to talk with the Honorary South African Consul Calvin Van Pelt. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Herndon discusses Black issues

by Nathaniel Scott

Lloyd D. "Tony" Stevenson's death was a tragic, senseless incident. It reminded the Black community that while things changed at the command level of the police department, nothing much, if anything, has changed among the rank and file since the infamous opossium incident. Yet in the wake of that heart-wrenching ordeal, Ron Herndon, co-chairman of Portland's chapter of the national Black United Front, is looking for ways to heal wounds and make Portland truly, one city.

The trauma of "Tony" Stevenson's death is etched in Herndon's fact. The remembrance is there, and so is the pain. The tired lines of negotiation can be seen when he forces a

smile. But Herndon is a forgiving, if not a forgetting man. And while the senseless killing of any Portland citizen — Black, white, Hispanic, Asian or Native American — stains the credibility of those paid to serve us, Herndon wants the city to move on and become what it should be: a city of the people; a city that provides subsistence for the people; a city that learns by its mistakes, and a city that vows not to let history repeat itself.

In the midst of a very busy schedule, Herndon took the time to speak candidly about what he perceives to be some crucial factors involving Portland and the Black community.

Presently, he began, Portland's police force totals some 700 officers and of that figure, only 17 are Black.

Herndon believes we need more Black police officers who understand the community. But what we don't need are Black officers who think they have to be cruel," he said.

Herndon said there is a problem with existing policies within the police department. He maintains that it goes beyond dialogue because the question is: "Are they (the police) going to follow their policies?"

Still in all, Herndon feels that Chief Penny Harrington is the best possible choice for the job and he hopes that she will reach out to the community for the help needed to implement her cultural awareness training.

Jobs are another thing that are on Herndon's mind. He said everyone is talking about jobs for youth because that's an explosive situation, seething with the possibility of riot. However, he maintains that "jobs are not just needed for the kids, but their fathers and mothers need jobs, too. We need to concentrate on making industry more responsible to Black adults," he said.

On the other hand, Herndon sees one possible solution to the job problem for youth.

He said, "I think they (the city of Portland) should do like the Mayor of Washington, D.C. (Under the Mayor's working plan) every kid over 14 years old is guaranteed a job."

While praising Portland's Black leadership, especially during the potentially explosive Stevenson incident, Herndon criticized one of the community's political figures.

Herndon doesn't understand how or why State Senator Bill McCoy voted down Senate Bills 624 and 625.

He doesn't understand why the Senator didn't (and quite possibly doesn't) understand the importance of those pieces of legislation to the Black community. And lastly Herndon doesn't understand why the Senator seems bent upon division when cohesiveness is needed.

Recently Rep. Margaret Carter sponsored a bill that would make Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a legal holiday in Oregon. But through committee and the politics of politics, the Senator replaced her bill with one he had orchestrated.

Herndon said, "He certainly didn't have any community support and I hope he will go to (Rep. Carter) and get his bill to reflect what she had worked so hard to put together."

Furthermore, Herndon said, "We hope he will work to get the divesture bill, (the one sponsored by Rep. Carter), through the Senate."

Witness in Nicaragua

by Robert Lothian

The main thing Doug Spence has to say after living in Nicaragua for 14 months is that if Congress votes to continue funding for CIA-backed contras, many innocent people, including children, will be killed.

"That the human result of 'putting pressure on the Sandinistas,'" he said during a recent visit to Portland.

Spence just returned from Nicaragua after 14 months as a Witness for Peace, an inter-denominational religious group, sends volunteers into war-torn parts of Nicaragua to witness attacks and in some cases put themselves between civilians and attacking contras.

Room and board for the volunteers is provided, along with a \$35 a month stipend, said Spence.

A beekeeper from Skagit County, Washington, Spence said he would rather teach beekeeping than be so involved in defense against the war.

"But it will be quite a while before Nicaraguans have time for beekeeping," he said.

Spence said he traveled to most parts of the country and talked to many Nicaraguans, gathering testimony about the war.

During a visit to the Atlantic coast town of Siuna, he and townspeople were awakened one night by gunshots announcing a contra attack. "They were shooting into the town," he said.

A guard was mounted — Spence said the entire town was armed. Luckily, two contra groups merging on the town failed to link up and the attack failed. "It was a very tense night," said Spence.



Bill Collins and Doug Spence (left) discuss Spence's 14 months in Nicaragua. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Later, during the "mig crisis" after President Reagan's reelection, Spence was in Corinto, Portland's new sister city. Townspeople feared a U.S. attack was imminent, he said, especially since a U.S. warship stood just three miles off the coast, within easy shelling distance of the city.

Witness for Peace organized an 11-day peace vigil near the oil tanks that had been destroyed in a previous attack, and a group of volunteers went out in an unarmed fishing boat and stayed between the warship and Corinto until the ship left, according to Spence. "The people of Corinto really appreciated that effort," he said.

The volunteers were provided shel-

ter at the First Baptist Church of Corinto, Spence said. That church has a sister church in Portland, Lincoln Street United Methodist.

Corinto is Nicaragua's main port, and therefore a major target. "The people of Corinto are under a lot of stress," said Spence. "They just don't know from one day to the next whether their children are going to be blown to bits by U.S. warplanes or ships."

Spence likened the daily lives and work of Nicaraguans to rebuilding the walls of Jericho. "As the people of Nicaragua are putting their work into rebuilding a new society by day, by night they have to stand guard against attack," he said.

Interracial children lack identity

by Robert Lothian

Interracial children live with complex problems that society often ignores.

Prejudice against mixed marriages comes to bear on the children, who face a double racism.

The stigma of interracial rape going back to slavery is also carried by some children.

They find it hard to identify with the racial background of either parent, and don't feel accepted by any racial group.

These issues were discussed Saturday at a conference on interracial families held at Mallory Avenue Christian Church.

Over 80 adults and 35 children from throughout the Portland area and from as far away as Seattle attended what is believed to be the first such conference in Oregon.

Interracial parents from Northeast Portland were given the rare opportunity to share their feelings, said William Lane, acting pastor at Mallory. "The conference was beautiful," said Lane.

Few support groups exist that can help interracial families overcome lack of communication and isolation, said Kate Shackford, director of the Council on Interracial Books for Children, sponsor of the conference. Participants signed a mailing list with the hope that a support group may grow out of the conference.

Dr. Amanda Houston-Hamilton, a psychotherapist and author of an upcoming book on interracial children, said that interracial families tend to pull within themselves and become cut off. "That's the way we take care of ourselves and our pain — is to pull away," she said.

"I want people to own the inter-



Dr. Amanda Houston-Hamilton talks to group during the conference on "Children of Interracial Families." (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

racialness of themselves," said Houston-Hamilton. That means for families to talk about it, which too often isn't done, she said, and for the greater society to realize that most people are of mixed racial background. "Anybody who says they are only black or white doesn't know their own history," she said.

Jena Wooley, who spoke on a panel of interracial adults, said she had never dealt with the issue in public. "I'm not racially identified as Black. . . I often feel caught betwixt and between. People would ask me about my family background and I wouldn't want to talk about it."

Elisa Grillo Clay, of Afro-Cuban background, felt that interracial children learn self-hate by denying their minority backgrounds. "What ever a person says they are, just figure that they know better than you do," she said.

Richard Johnson said that, "People want to know where you're coming from if you're not all white. I try to get it out of the way because I know they're coming with more questions."

"I don't deal with it as a positive question in most instances," said Wooley. "It's always been to try and put me in a box."

"It's really hard for multi-racial children who cannot disown themselves because the rest of the world is ill," said Elizabeth Asahi Sato, of Asian-Native American-white ancestry. "Racism is really destructive whether it comes from a white perspective, a Black perspective or a Hispanic perspective."

"I'm proud of being a person first off, and proud of being two people. I'm just proud of being what I am," said Johnson.



The third annual Black Women's Gathering held Saturday was entertaining and informative for all those who attended. Sisters from over 80 years old "and looking good" to three-month-old Tasnim Safiya Dunham, held by her mother Adrienne Crue, attended. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)