

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Busy week for Keystone Cops

With reckless disregard for the life of a hostage or a relative afraid to leave her home, the police bureau by its actions, Chief Penny Harrington by her defensive posture and the arrogance of Bud Clark's aide dismissed the death of an 85-year-old woman as an example of police restraint.

The Black community is horrified, shocked and righteously indignant that a so-called metropolitan police force did as little as it could to save an elderly woman during an incident where Tommy Graves, a mentally impaired adult, snapped. The police never bothered to ask, so they did not know, that Graves lived with Mrs. Alberta Tate for 14 years in a group home for adults. Mrs. Tate's recently deceased daughter-in-law ran the group home. During this seige, Graves thought he was protecting Mrs. Tate. The tragic outcome is an example of an inadequate police policy to deal with violent, mentally impaired adults.

There is plenty of blame to go around and Chief Harrington's assertion that there is none is ignorant and insensitive. Among the questions to ask is, "Why did the police wait until Graves escalated the situation to its tragic boiling point?" The police containment procedure failed miserably because it resulted in the death of an innocent victim.

During the seige, the police shot out all the street lights, put inexperienced cops in a situation that required special training, and shot Graves in the front door and Mrs. Tate as she was running out the back door. Mrs. Tate was a casualty of impromptu police procedure.

Families in that area were subjected to tear gas fall-out which led to a variety of irritants. Why didn't the police warn residents of possible

effects? Like Keystone Cops, the Portland police deployed their tactical response unit after both the suspect and the victim were dead.

You can bet your bottom dollar that had Graves or Mrs. Tate been white and in a different neighborhood, the police would still be out there trying to negotiate a solution. But they have proven time after time again that they do not care about Black people or the Black community. It's alright to throw dead opossum in front of a Black-owned restaurant. It's alright to incorrectly administer a sleeper (choke) hold on an off-duty security officer, and then stand around and watch him die because CPR was not administered in time.

In this seige, Mrs. Tate was safer with Graves. At least she was alive.

As taxpayers we should not accept the official version or conclusion. As in the Stevenson tragedy, incompetence, racism and indifference will start to come out. A public informational session on the scale of a public inquest is in order.

The officials will let Mr. Cover-up — District Attorney Michael Schruink — investigate. But that is like letting the fox guard the chicken coop. The blood of Tony Stevenson is still wet on his hands.

This new City Administration is not yet six months old and there have been three Black people dead at the hands of the police. The thorns in the City of Roses have pricked two innocent victims: Tony Stevenson who was trying to calm a confrontation, and Mrs. Tate.

How many more innocent Portlanders will have to die before a major or national evaluation of the police bureau is conducted? It does not seem that the rank and file of the police bureau respects its new chief.

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.

Rev. Coleman speaks in hushed and pious tones

The Clothes Closet operation in St. Andrews School during school hours is dangerous. Up to 150 persons enter the school of about 80 children, "no questions asked," each Thursday morning during the school year. One crazy person among 150 is not a statistical improbability. The sheer volume of bodies in the school insures noise and a drain on the bathroom facilities.

Teachers have worried about this situation since 1975, years before the '84-'85 staff arrived. The Pastor/School Board's solution to a problem brought up by parents was to get rid of an excellent and dedicated staff. This did indeed punish the parents for bringing up the subject, but it does not solve the problem. If the new staff is professional, they will also discover that working conditions are difficult in the school on Thursday, and new parents and children will discover the same thing.

The Rev. Coleman speaks in hushed and pious tones of his concern for the "poor." Many of the parents

have been confused by his use of that term. While it may be true that a majority of the families at the school are struggling economically, poor children do not deserve a lesser standard of safety than other children. No child is expendable, and the school should be closed if the Clothes Closet is more important than a safe and orderly learning environment for children.

Short-term aid is admirable, but it does not change the dynamics which produce need in the first place. Short-term aid, "no questions asked," can indeed trap the needy on a treadmill going nowhere.

Education, on the other hand, is long-term service. The highest and best use of education is to help those served become servers in their own right, a process which requires growth from everyone involved. The '84-'85 St. Andrews School staff aimed for this, and they will be sorely missed.

The Rev. Coleman convened two "mediations" this year in which he or one of his appointees chose all the

participants, including the "mediators." Even if the mediators were professions, I hardly see how they could do a good job without a representative sample of the parents who brought the concern.

James Harrison was hurt by this year's events, but he was not the only one hurt. A secretary and a number of excellent teachers remain unemployed because they chose conscience over continued employment. In addition, children suffered with their teachers, and tears were common during the last months of the school year.

I urge any parent who plans to send a child to the school next year to question the Rev. Coleman, the new principal, and new staff members carefully, especially concerning the Clothes Closet operation in the school. The parents who have removed their children from the school did so for good reasons.

MARY S. PEARCE
Parent of Fred Pearce, 6



Healthwatch

by Steven Bailey, N.D. and Adam Ladd, N.D.

Last week my article on the misleading statistics of lung cancer survival was unfortunately cut off mid-sentence. I was in the process of writing that I hoped the attendees of the aforementioned conference on "medical quackery" would soon open their eyes to the vast literature that exists linking dietary habits with such conditions as cancer and heart disease. I hope that the groups who sponsored this conference eventually come to the realization that prevention, alternative health care and the rights of individual choice are essential to the future of American Medicine. Maybe at this point these groups will begin to look into their own self-regulation with the zealotry they put into the regulation of others. After all, it is "their" system that accounts for thousands of deaths and tens of thousands of injuries each year as a result of their treatment programs.

How can I say such a thing as this? For one, studies that have looked into iatrogenesis (doctor caused illness) have placed the figure of around one-third of hospital emergency admissions to be the result of doctor-caused conditions. Studies such as the recent article on lung cancer have shown areas of care where no benefit exists yet certainly much injury occurs. Drug horror stories such as D.E.S., benedictine acetane, etc., reveal an over-zealousness within the drug industries to patent and market their products with inadequate studies to predict their new products' safety. And as a final comment, the fact that the death rate has dropped in cities such as San Francisco and London when hospital strikes occurred emphasizes the dangers of surgical and drug treatments.

Modern medicine is neither all bad nor all good, but has, within its confines, areas of miracles and tragedy. This grayness is precisely why the A.M.A. and other organizations need

to spend more of their efforts into objective self-regulation, and less into (as the F.T.C. would it in their cease and desist order to the A.M.A.) harassment and obstruction of the growth of alternative medicines. The A.M.A.'s parity with the American Rifle Assn. as the single biggest lobbyist at capital hill gives some idea to the size the A.M.A. and its children such as the Oregon Medical Assn. chosen to spend much of their time harassing others rather than concentrating on public safety and improving the areas of their health delivery that cause so many thousands of deaths and injuries each year? Probably the single most important reason is money and the power/esteem that accompanies it. While our economy has staggered over the last decade, the increases in health care dollars have consistently exceeded inflation and now represent 11% of our countries G.N.P. Does this mean that with the increases more people are receiving health care? No, the increases in costs represent a multitude of factors including higher costs for supplies and materials, but primarily are due to the extremely high costs of high tech medicine (bi-pass surgery, dialysis, cancer treatments, etc.). While U.S. House hearings Tuesday (July 9, 1985) featured many doctors stating that recent Reagan cuts in Medicare/Medicaid have devastated the care programs for the elderly, the fact remains that close to two-thirds of Medicare dollars are spent in the last six months of life, and thus don't represent "health care" but crisis medicine, much of which serves to sustain life after the body has deteriorated beyond the state of self-sufficiency. The ability of modern medicine to sustain life through support systems has led many to make out a "living will," so that their life savings will not be totally usurped while sustaining a non-functioning body for a few addition

moments (days to months).

Why does our system in America focus so exclusively on drug "cures" and surgical techniques? There are a multitude of reasons for this approach, yet the theme of money and power again appear as central reasons behind this reality. As in the American Cancer Society where most of their research returns to the vested interests of the predominant white male, non-labor, board members who dictate ACS policy, industry (pharmaceutical, insurance, banking) has taken an aggressive role in most of the policy matters of American health. There is a self-sustaining interest in the continued development of new patents for drugs with all the ancillary industries involved. And there is very little money to support care that realizes the individual nature of disease and the need to broaden our approach to attempt to prevent many of the current maladies. Surgery is an extremely expensive alternative to prevention and provides much esteem and power to the individuals who perform them.

Doctors do not want to give up their role as "miracle worker" and certainly there is more glamor in performing a "life saving" surgery than in counseling patients on life style and diet. For these reasons, and for many others, I seriously doubt whether medical colleges will incorporate nutrition (less than one hour average in national M.D. programs) or other individual oriented approaches into their curriculums in the near future. For this reason alone it is important that current level of harassment of my profession (Naturopathic Medicine) as well as others be allowed to grow without harassment in order to fill this important void in American care.

Next week: Conclusion on the medical quackery conference and lung cancer.

Peters received \$16,281 from City of Portland



STAN PETERS

by Jerry Garner

Recently it was revealed that Stan Peters, Portland Police Union President, was paid \$32,563 a year of which half (\$16,281) came from the City of Portland. However, he did not perform any duties for the City.

This agreement started in September 1981 when former Police Chief Ron Still ordered Peters relieved of all police duties.

New Police Chief Penny Harrington has ordered Peters to begin earning his salary by working for the City again. Chief Harrington should be

commended for having the political courage in ordering Peters to work for his City paycheck.

Citizens of the City should be outraged that Peters has been conducting Union business on City time with pay. It is not surprising that former Police Chief Ron Still relieved Peters of police duties in order for him to work full time for the union. Both former Chief Still and Peters believe that the public has no business questioning the actions of the police department. Both men opposed Ballot Measure 51, which was approved by voters to form a 12-person Audit Committee designed to review police handling of public complaints. Peters has used his position as Union president repeatedly to attack Ballot Measure 51. Citizens of Portland shouldn't be asked to pay half of Peters' salary as a lobbyist for the Police Union, especially when the majority of the lobbying is in the defense of officers involved in criminal activities or acts of racism.

The \$16,281 that the City was paying Peters should be used to fund the Police Internal Investigations Auditing Committee. The Committee is grossly inadequate to hear appeals for the citizens who have complaints against the Portland Police Bureau.

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