

# METROPOLITAN



Marilyn James — American people protest inequities in South Africa and Central America, but will not be able to change anything until they do something about the problems of Indian peoples in the United States. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

## Native American forum

by Robert Lothian

In 1977, the United Nations designated Oct. 12th, also known as Columbus Day, as the International Day of Solidarity With the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.

In recognition of this day, the Northwest Big Mountain and Butler Support Groups presented a forum on Native American issues at the First Congregational Church downtown on Sunday.

Speakers covered the relocation of Navajo and Hopi people from their traditional homeland in the Big Mountain area of Arizona, the trial of Dino and Gary Butler, who are accused of killing a robber of Indian graves, graverobbing and the law, Columbia River treaty and fishing rights, and urban Indian problems.

According to Ishbel Butler of the Butler Support Group, the government continues its prosecution of Dino Butler and her husband, Gary Butler, without evidence. One of the defendants, Robert Van Pelt, has already been released for lack of evidence. She said the group now has information that the prosecution and the FBI are working together, substantiating their charge that the case is part of an FBI vendetta against Indian activists.

According to the Butlers' attorney, Bruce Ellison, who was described as an expert on government harassment of Indian activists, the FBI has been waging a systematic campaign to harass, "and in some cases to kill" members and friends of the American Indian Movement. Since the Wounded Knee occupation in 1973, he said, nearly 200 native people have died violently and mysteriously on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

He described the Butlers as "prisoners of war." "Dino and Gary Butler pled not guilty and they will stand by that until the jury reaches a verdict and this case is over," he said.

John Sullivan, a volunteer with the Big Mountain Defense Committee in Flagstaff, Arizona, said that about 800 native families have been relo-

cated under the provisions of a 1974 federal law. The law was allegedly passed to settle a land dispute between the Navajo and Hopi. It calls for 14,000 Navajo and over 100 Hopi to move from a 1.8 million acre Joint Use Area by July, 1986.

The tribal councils support the relocation, but many other native people on the reservations see it as a thinly veiled plan to allow mining of uranium and other minerals by corporations like Peabody Coal Co.

"Several hundred have said they just aren't going to go," Sullivan said. The families already displaced are suffering, he continued. "They lived probably the most traditional lives of any native people in the United States. A lot of them don't even speak English." Under the provisions of the relocation act, he said, they aren't allowed to make improvements to their homes and they had to sell their sheep. "The sheep are their way of life. It's their wool, it feeds them," he said.

"Psychologically, they are all dying" in the new urban culture they have been moved to. "They're out on the street, now they're welfare cases." Many are the victims of housing swindles, real estate fraud, loan sharks, and they have suffered from alcoholism, poverty and inability to cope with bills, deeds and taxes, he said.

Sullivan said Indian police under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the tribal councils are preparing a military solution for those who elect to stay. "That's what we are trying to avert," he said.

Marilyn James, a spokeswoman for Big Mountain Support Northwest from the Colville Reservation in Eastern Washington, said a nationwide network is being organized to provide support for the Big Mountain people. A massive influx of "witnesses" for July, 1986 may be organized, she added.

James said a similar struggle for minerals is happening on the Colville Reservation. "You shouldn't sit in front of the White Train unless you are also prepared to sit in front of the bulldozers," she said.

## New Irvington starts new year

by Robert Lothian

Gloria Gostnell avoids public attention, preferring instead to do good work quietly behind the scenes. But as the new principal at Irvington School, publicity goes with the job.

Parents, school administrators and the entire community are watching Irvington to see how it responds to the challenge of transition from last year's problems.

Gostnell replaced former principal John Chadwick, who left after receiving heavy criticism from a vocal group of minority parents. They charged Chadwick with administering discipline in a way that had racial overtones, and they were upset with lack of minority representation on the staff and shortcomings in Irvington's multicultural curriculum. The parents became active in the Irvington Citizens Advisory Committee, which continues to make recommendations as the "new Irvington" begins a new year.

Gostnell knew her job at Irvington would not be an easy one, but as former principal at Glencoe School, and as curriculum specialist at Woodlawn School, she has helped solve complicated school problems before. Helping Irvington through its difficulties is the kind of challenge she thrives on, said Gostnell.

Changes characterize the school as it begins another year, changes that attempt to deal with last year's problems and start the school back on an up-cycle, she said.

For example, Gostnell and the revamped staff worked through the summer on the new discipline plan, which was mailed to parents two weeks ago, and on additions to the multi-cultural curriculum.

As part of the fallout from last year's problems, she said, seven white teachers left the school and were replaced by four Black and three white teachers, bringing to seven the number

of Black teachers now out of a total of 22. Of the support staff, 13 out of 18 are minority, she added.

According to Gostnell, fourth-grade teacher Priscilla Lenhart originally suggested the new discipline plan which replaces Chadwick's controversial "time out room" with mediation. "I was real impressed and we decided to go ahead with it," Gostnell said.

All students and staff discussed what is expected of them and how to resolve conflicts before they escalate, she said. In addition, the students are now selecting a group of children to act as conflict managers who will mediate disputes and attempt to get students to talk out their problems.

"These are kids who are really respected by their peers who are stepping in and saying, 'We'll be a neutral party,'" Gostnell said. "Basically, it's just another small way that we are trying to give the kids tools to resolve their own conflicts."

Gostnell said that, in general, the new discipline approach stresses logical consequences for unruly behavior that will be meted out fairly and equitably. She added that parents will be notified early in the process, and their advice and support sought. "We want them to know what goes on in their child's day," Gostnell said.

A new position at Irvington this year is the community agent, filled by Esther Greenridge, who will work with parents and teachers on discipline and "whatever people in the community feel they want to talk to her about," said Gostnell.

Another major change is the school district's mandated multicultural curriculum being implemented at Irvington this year. Gostnell reported that teachers are attending training sessions on teaching Afro-American history, art, music and science. They are reading baseline essays in each subject area so they can become better informed, and they are putting to-



Gloria Gostnell, principal at Irvington School: Looking forward to helping Irvington through its difficulties. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

gether lesson plans and reading lists so they can transmit the information immediately to students in the classroom.

In addition, Gostnell said, a multi-cultural arts program will emphasize studying objects like masks, for example, that are common to Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American and European cultures. With the curriculum changes, said Gostnell, "We are trying to address the concerns that some parents had last year."

Irvington has had its ups and downs over the years, and Gostnell feels the school is starting back on an upswing. "I think it feels really good," she said.

She described a committed staff willing to put in extra hours to make it work. "They are here because they

choose to be and that feels very positive to me," she said.

"No one was asked to leave," she said, referring once again to the staff changes. "I don't think it was a very easy place to teach in last spring. There was a real sense of crisis for many months. I think it would be naive to say that it didn't have anything to do with them leaving, but I think there were personal and professional reasons also that made people feel it was time to move on."

"But I don't want to comment on that anymore. I feel that it's been whipped to death. We're real busy addressing how to build and I feel that it takes time away from that if we spend a lot of time on the past."

## NAACP to hold public meeting

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Portland Branch, announces a public meeting on Monday, Oct. 21, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Martin Luther King School located at 4815 N.E. 7th.

Recently, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) circulated a written survey only in the North/Northeast Portland area liquor stores requesting customers' input whether liquor stores should be open on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, a newly-designated state holiday. An informal survey is being circulated in other areas of Portland.

State Representative Margaret L. Carter (D-Dist. 18) chief sponsor of the Martin Luther King holiday, commented, "Such action by the OLCC

will dismantle and wreck progress thus far made toward the importance of recognizing Black leaders in our community."

The NAACP Executive Committee, along with Representative Carter, offers other sponsors and supporters of this commemorative holiday the opportunity to oppose the OLCC from proceeding with action that could demean the importance of what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. represented. The press and public are invited.

"Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Wally "Famous" Amos was in Portland Friday getting to know Portlanders and introducing them to his famous cookies. Amos spent time at each of Portland's two Famous Amos Cookie stores, donating the money made during those

times to Oregon Literacy, Inc. Amos is an advocate for Literacy Volunteers of America.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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