

# PORTLAND OBSERVER

## Community Organizes Against Crime

by Bob Lothian

Save Our Neighborhoods From Street Crime kicked off its spring anti-crime drive Thursday night with a rally at King Neighborhood Center.

Providing inspiration for the rally was the King School chorus, singing a moving rendition of "We Are the World."

Master of ceremonies Muhammed Najieb then took over the podium. "Do you think they will have a future?" he asked, gesturing toward the children.

The rally audience of 125 included neighborhood representatives from all areas of Portland affected by crime. Save Our Neighborhoods From Street Crime is a 30-member committee organizing a city-wide anti-crime coalition from those neighborhoods.

Committee representatives outlined a campaign including community patrols, anti-prostitution billboards, court watches, a petition drive, school posters and picketing of drug houses.

Neighborhood residents then had a chance to express their feelings about jail space, police attention to street crime and lack of initiative from City Hall.

Ron Herndon, co-chair of the Black United Front, urged the audience to look to their own resources and not depend on City Hall.

"Nobody will ride in and save us by sundown," Herndon said. "The only way the problem is going to be solved is if we do it ourselves."

Herndon suggested that residents start block watches as a minimum step. He called for a community escort service for elderly persons on their way to the store or bank, and he asked church deacons to come out a little early on Sunday mornings to protect churchgoers.

Herndon also called for community anti-crime patrols.



At the "Save Our Neighborhoods from Street Crime Rally" last Thursday the children of King School got things rolling with the song "We Are the World." Photo by Richard J. Brown

"You have individuals out there who have declared war on our community, there's no other way to do it," Herndon said. The patrols are already being organized and will likely appear in North-east Portland this spring, said a committee representative. Patrols have started

at Columbia Villa, a low-income housing project in North Portland plagued by crime. They appear to be helping, the representative said.

Eliot neighborhood resident George Mueller told of the successful efforts of the Eliot/King Crime Prevention Committee: a march against drug dealing at the corner of Alberta and Grand, installing two anti-prostitution billboards on Union Ave., and pressuring residents of a "rock house", selling cocaine, until the house was shut down.

"We're moving ahead, but we're not moving ahead fast enough," Mueller told the audience. Mueller received an award recently for his citizen work against crime.

During the segment for questions and comments from the audience, Vernon neighborhood resident Sherry Ross drew a laugh with her suggestion about how to deal with criminals turned out of jail for lack of space.

"Maybe we ought to just handcuff them to telephone poles," Ross said. She added, "I think this is a wonderful neighborhood and I think we can redeem it."

Vernon neighborhood leader Irene Tate reported on the picketing of a drug house carried out by Tate and eleven neighbors. Dirty needles were showing up daily in her yard, according to Tate, who said she counted as many as 50 customers an hour going into the house. "I sat in my kitchen and watched," she said.

The drug business declined after the Saturday morning picket, Tate said. "He's still doing it but he doesn't have the business that he used to."

If dealing out of the house picks up again, Tate said, "We've still got our picket signs."

## Students Enjoy Exchange

by Bob Lothian

High school students from Northeast Portland and Catlin Gabel School in Southwest Portland got together for a bar-b-que Saturday.

"We call it a cultural exchange," said Regina Warren, a counselor at the Northeast Youth Service Center.

Warren said that six students contacted through the youth service center and six from Catlin Gabel have been getting together informally this spring to get to know each other and share experiences.

In April, the students got together for a scavenger hunt downtown, where they teamed off and searched for clues at City Hall, the KOIN Tower and other landmarks.

Planned for later in May is a "rap session" at Catlin Gabel, where the teen-agers will have a chance to tell each other what's on their minds.

Saturday, they got together at the Lake Oswego home of Warren's brother, G. Ray Warren, Associate Dean of Admissions at Reed College.

They listened to the Gap Band, watched basketball on TV, played dominoes, and of course talked.

"We share a lot in common," said Wilson senior Tracey Moore, of Northeast Portland. Moore was "having fun getting to know each other better," she said.

Catlin Gabel senior Korean Backstrand said she had met other young people through the exchange that she probably wouldn't have met otherwise. Very few minority students attend Catlin Gabel, an expensive private school where the tuition is \$6,350 a year, she said.

But others' reasons for liking the exchange weren't so serious. "I can relax and I don't have to do any homework," said Grant sophomore Mychal Garrett.

Things turned serious again when the food appeared: bar-b-que'd hamburgers, ribs donated by Cason's Fine Meats, potato salad, baked beans, challah bread, peach cobbler and banana pudding.

One thing they soon had in common: "I'm too full," as one teen-ager put it.

Catlin Gabel teacher Sue Smith started the exchange with a phone call to Warren at the Northeast Youth Service Center. Smith thought the project was a good idea for Catlin students, she said, because the school has few minority students and no minority faculty.

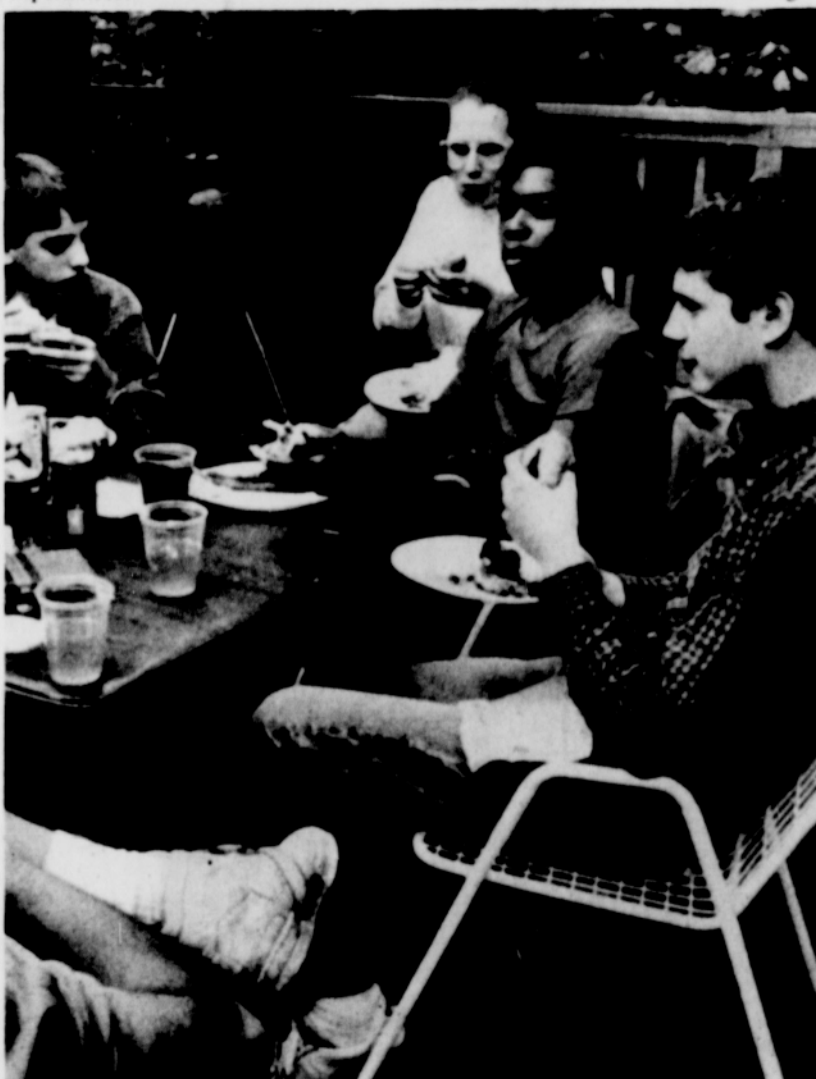
"You look around campus and all you see is white faces," Smith said. "It just looks one-sided, and the curriculum is very majority-oriented."

Backstrand said there were only three black students at Catlin. "Senior year they have a black history class," she said.

Smith said an outcome of the intercultural exchange could be more minority students and faculty at the school, although that was not her only purpose. She said the exchange fits in with Catlin's educational philosophy, which stresses experience.

The exchange will continue next fall, and possibly expand into the high schools, said Northeast Youth Service Center counselor John Frazier.

"The kids seem to be getting quite a bit out of it," Frazier said.



Catlin Gabel students and high school students living in North/Northeast Portland got together Saturday at a barbecue in Lake Oswego. Photo by Richard J. Brown



Mychal Garrett of Grant H.S. and Maura Sullivan of Catlin Gabel ponder if the Mary of St. Mary School is the Mary in the clue "See Mary where you park your car" across from the metal currency cinema. Wrong, Mary turned out to be the parking lot attendant across from the KOIN Center Cinemas. The two were participating in a scavenger hunt that was a joint effort by the Urban League and Catlin Gabel. Photo by Richard J. Brown

## Court Decision Major Victory for Blacks

by Jerry Garner

The recent U.S. Supreme Court Decision stating that prosecutors could not remove prospective jurors simply because they belonged to the same race as the defendant, was a major victory for both Black jurors and defendants.

Fundamental to a fair system of justice is the right to a trial by jury. Historically, Blacks have been excluded from jurors by prosecutors through the use of peremptory challenges. Peremptory challenges are used by prosecutors to exclude jurors for no reason if the prosecutor believed might be hostile to their case.

This practice has resulted in Blacks and other minorities not being judged by a jury of their peers. Which accounts for some of the disparity in the conviction rates between Blacks and Whites.

As of now prosecutors, if challenged, must meet a heavy burden of showing racially neutral reasons for excluding jurors of the same race as the defendant. The two cases which led to the court decision involved suits filed by two Black defendants who were found guilty by all-White juries.

In January of this year, the court ruled 6-3 that a Black man convicted in 1963 of murdering a 15 year-old girl in California, was entitled to a new trial because Blacks were systematically excluded from the grand jury that indicted him.

The case which led to last week's court decision involved the removal of four Black prospective jurors on peremptory challenges, from the trial of a Black burglary suspect in Jefferson County Kentucky.

The ruling by the court, overruled a prior court decision that has stood since 1965. Under the old ruling, the court held that a defendant challenging the exclusion of jurors must show a systematic pattern of discrimination.

The court's decision could remove some of this disparity. This is because trial outcomes are affected to some extent by whether the case is heard by a jury or a trial judge. Research indicates that juries tend to be more lenient than judges.