

**Exclusive** — Continued from Page 1  
"L.A.-influenced".

"This is Portland, not L.A. We don't want to be identified with L.A. We are not into drugs. We are not into drug houses. And no one has asked us to do drugs for them. We are not into violence, but we are not going to let someone like the Crips come into our neighborhoods and take over. And, we definitely are not going to let them tell us what we can wear. If we buy some clothes that are red, we are going to wear them," said the group member.

Many of the group members who were interviewed said they believe Portland Police are afraid of the Crips because of their violent and aggressive behaviors. "The police know who the Crips are. They know which Crips are running drug houses. You see, the Crips can slide in here by night, drop off their dope, commit some violence and leave in the same night," said another younger member. "We can't. We have to live here. If we were into drugs and all that, everyone would know it. We're not going to bring ourselves down to that level. If the Crips want to sell dope, let them do it in L.A. We are tired of seeing our buddies, partners, moms and little children strung out on dope; dope we know the Crips brought in here. That's what the fight is all about. The police should be helping us instead of threatening us like criminals."

Group members noted that most of the positive activities which were geared for Portland Black youth have all but diminished. "We can no longer hang out at the parks without being confronted by Crips. They come into the parks blasting their loud car music, brandishing guns, making threats and scaring little kids. The same thing happens at basketball games and house parties. Most of the clubs have closed down. Ain't nothin left to do. We have to hang together just to protect ourselves."

The Homeboys said they are disappointed with the efforts of The Office of Neighborhood Associations and some members of

the Portland Police. "We met with a representative from the Office of Neighborhood Association in good faith. He asked us what did we want him to do and we told him. In turn, he promised that he would do all he could. He took our names, and we went away from the meeting feeling pretty good. We thought we were finally going to get some positive understanding. When we saw him again, he had rap sheets on all of us. He even showed up on television saying negative things about us. He was a totally different person than when we first met him. We would never trust him again."

"When we got into the fight with the Crips out at the Chiles Center during the Grant/Jeff game, we went there because the police told us it was alright to come. We just wanted to see our homeboys play hoop, and the police said they would provide us protection. But that ain't the way it went down. Although there were 30 or 40 Crips sitting together in the gym, the police chose to guard us like we were the criminals. Then during the intermission, a fight broke out. A policeman got hit, and we were the ones who got slammed. On the news all you saw was red. No Crips. Why? It made us look like the bad guys."

Members of the Homeboys say they feel abandoned by the community, the city and the police. "Although we are wearing red and the police are wearing blue, we are out here doing their job. We are trying to keep the Crips out of our neighborhoods, yet the police are treating us like we are the ones bringing in the dope and opening up the dope houses. Wherever we go, we get harassed. We can't even be safe in our own community. If the police really wanted to help us, they know how to find us. They know we aren't into drugs and guns."

When asked to cite the difference between the L.A. Bloods and the Portland Bloods, the following information was shared: "We wear both red and blue and whatever color we feel like wearing. A L.A. Blood wears all red,

from head to toe. In L.A. the Crips claim territory that is "Blue" and the L.A. Bloods claim territory that is "Red". Neither allow the other to come into those territories. In Portland there is no red or blue territory, except where the Crips have set up shop (a drug house). Another thing, we are just homeboys who are trying to set a good example for the young people here. We want our homies to know they don't have to be scared or intimidated or pressured into selling or doing drugs."

The Homeboys said things are getting tight and that there is the potential for a real hot summer, if something isn't done to curb the Crips recruitment of young African-Americans. Recruitment, they say, is being done at most Portland schools. The lure is money, clothes, jewelry, cars, parties, and drugs.

House parties, once the pride of many young African-American Portlanders, are now seen as dangerous to life and limb. Stories were told about how young African-American females are used to lure Homeboys to parties where they find themselves trapped inside by Crips. "You go to a party nowadays; you don't know if it's a Crip party or not. A girl might tell you it's cool to go, and you get there and here are the Crips hanging on the wall. They close the door and whatcha gon do?"

"They recruit homeboys and girls, and then get our addresses and come shooting into our houses. This scares the little kids; so, whenever they are approached by a Crip to sell dope, what other choice to they have? Then a lotta little kids look up to the Crips. They think they bad. They think they will protect them. But, see, we're trying to tell them they shouldn't be doing that. We see homeboys we grew up with carrying beepers and selling dope. We see some of our homeboys' moms begging for a dollar to buy dope. How you think that make us feel? These are our people," one member said angrily.

Continued next week.

**PORTLAND OBSERVER**  
"The Eyes and Ears of the Community"  
288-0033

by I.R. Macrae

When students graduate from high school without having mastered even the fundamentals of math and English, teachers and school administrators have tended to shift the blame to unmotivated students, dysfunctional families or society at-large. On Friday, Feb. 25, Portland School Board members faced several citizens who questioned the myth that good schools can produce illiterate students. Halim Rahsaan, chairman of the Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee, asked, "As long as we have (mediocre) standards and staff . . . why should we still continue to be surprised when we produce students who are mediocre?"

Rahsaan asked the question in the course of delivering the mid-year report of the citizen watchdog group, a report that included lengthy quotations from Black educators whose schools have won national recognition for academic excellence. Rahsaan read sections of a letter he received from Dr. Jerome Harris, Superintendent of a Brooklyn, New York, school. "Some people and groups have a vested interest in portraying ethnic and poor students as ill-mannered and uncontrollable . . ." the letter read. "These nay-sayers would not be pleased to see (such) students . . . well-behaved and achieving above the national average . . . for then the myth that family background is the principal cause of . . . lack of discipline and low academic achievement is dispelled," Harris said.

After reading these comments, Rahsaan suggested that upholding high academic standards is the way to produce well-educated students. "The basic difference between Dr. Harris' school district and Portland Public Schools is one of expectations . . ." he stressed, adding, "Portland Public Schools' ethnic students will continue to play catch-up as long as a large body of district staff continue to feed the fires of incompetence and inferiority."

Rahsaan also criticized the

**Critics Hit Portland Schools for Low Standards, Mediocrity**



Two-thirds of business people surveyed expressed dissatisfaction at the way the public schools are teaching basic skills. — Tony Bates

Photo by Richard J. Brown

Portland School Board's recalcitrance in implementing the Baseline Essays, documents designed to form the basis of the district's Multi-cultural Curriculum. Noting that the district still has no firm time-line for implementing that program, which has been seven years in the making, he asked why it has yet to introduce "truthful, relevant information about African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics and Asians" into the mainstream curriculum.

Rahsaan summarized his concerns bluntly, saying, "African American and American Indian students . . . are truly at risk . . . It is difficult to close the achievement gap or to produce ethnic students who will achieve in higher educational institutions when they are lacking in their basic academic fundamentals and (a knowledge of their own) cultural history."

Among the DMAC report's many specific recommendations: the district should pay more attention to the academic problems of American Indian students. Noting that statistical data shows those students performing worse than any other ethnic group, Rahsaan urged the board to make completion of the American Indian Baseline Essay

a top priority. Alex Stone, Vice Chairman of DMAC, underscored that concern, saying, "I was shocked to see that the drop-out rate for our students has been twice that of the district average for the past 9 years." The American Indian speaker appealed to the board for "attention and support to turn these terrible statistics around."

Perhaps the most disturbing report of the evening came from Tony Bates, President of the Portlandia Club and member of the Educational Committee of the Portland Chamber of Commerce. Bates revealed the results of a survey of metro-area businesses which found local business people expressing dismay and outrage over the poor abilities of job seekers who are products of the Portland School system. Included in the survey were statements by business people complaining of an abysmal lack of skills in the basic areas of arithmetic, spelling and geography; lack of real knowledge of how business operates; inability to follow instructions; and more importantly, inability to think. Two-thirds of business people surveyed expressed dissatisfaction at the way the public schools are teaching basic skills, Bates said.

Pointing to the difficulty of getting rid of poor teachers, Bates suggested that a way to deal with mediocrity in the teaching profession would be to allow parents and students to evaluate teachers at the end of the academic year, and dismiss those who were found incompetent.

Bates appeared to confirm the view expressed by Rahsaan earlier when she said that many parents and students surveyed felt learning expectations were "very low" in many classes. Multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank tests are the rule, she noted, lamenting that students are taught to "pass quizzes, not to think."

In a statement which seems sure to provoke controversy, Bates quoted one teacher who had been surveyed as saying that poor teachers were being "counseled out to schools on the North side (of Portland)"

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