



Have a safe Fourth of July!

Mrs. Frances Schoen-Newspaper Room University of Oregon Library Eugene, Oregon 97403



PORTLAND OBSERVER

25¢

Volume XX, Number 25

"The Eyes and Ears of The Community"

July 4, 1990

House of UMOJA: "Portland Is Not Philadelphia"

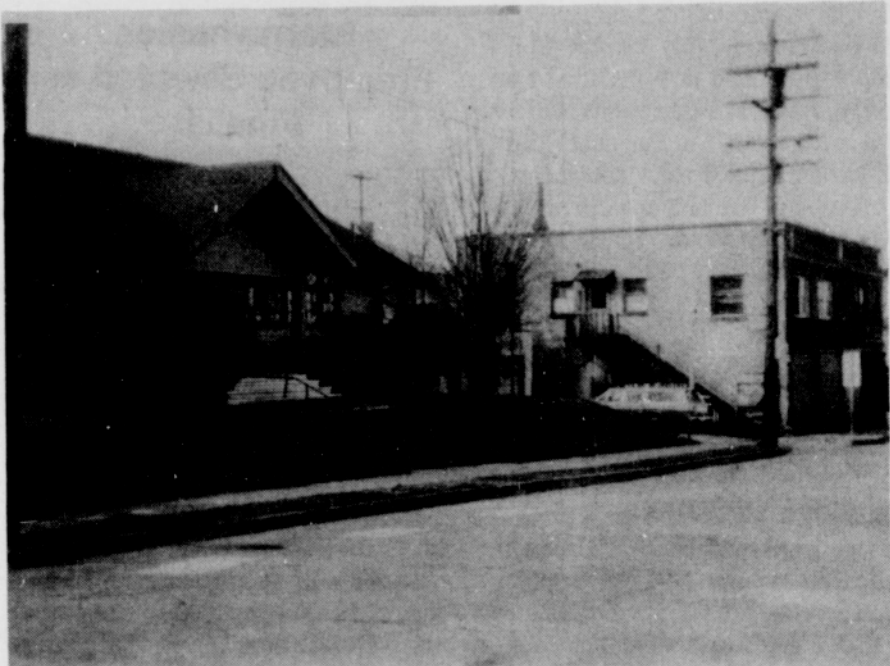
The Portland Observer is a community newspaper that is willing and committed to fully examine any issue seen to affect the northeast sector and its residents. The much heralded advent of the UMOJA gang intervention project has become just such an issue, albeit controversial.

It has been brought to our attention by businessmen and other property owners that the plan to locate a residential facility for "gang prone" youth in the heart of the community (S.W. corner of N.E. 17th and Alberta St.) is not without some "very serious defects." Two of the area's most substantial businessmen and investors have voiced their extreme displeasure -- not only with the choice of a location in this area which they have spent large sums to upgrade, but with what they describe as the "dishonest" approach of the sponsors in order to gain neighborhood (and city) approval.

Mr. Jeff Parks, manager of the Royal Esquire Club, and Mr. Joseph Benjamin, operator of Joe's Place have taken the lead in articulating the concerns of those less than enthralled with having the "UMOJA social adventure" on their doorstep (The respective businesses and additional residential properties developed are all within a block of the contemplated gang facility). As Mr. Parks put it to us, "surely the city wouldn't have granted a conditional use permit for the project had it been competently advised of, or was sufficiently interested in the neighborhood impact considerations as required by law -- the fallout has already begun."

In his recitation of the event leading to a tentative neighborhood approval of the project, Mr. Parks says he and others were initially assured that only six youths were to be processed at a time, and that on the basis of this statement he advanced their project by assuring them of four parking spaces for their supervisory personnel. But, he says, subsequent descriptions of the operation to prospective grantors, the state and the media have greatly exceeded the original ante in terms of bodies and properties to be involved -- exceeded to such an extent that the contemplated level of activity is incompletely incompatible with a comfortable and safe environment for the neighborhood. This is the "dishonest" approach I spoke of, Mr. Parks said. "A house next door to the original site has been added to the project -- its hooked to a septic tank, not on city sewers."

Both Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Parks cited a substantial loss of business since the UMOJA-inspired "media circus" began with almost daily and ever-ex-



House of UMOJA site (corner) and adjacent Black Education Center

panding descriptions of activities slated for the project. "There has been increased gang presence and vandalism in the neighborhood since the reporting began" the men said, "Just the other night rampaging gang youths began tearing down signs off the front of our premises, I'm facing several hundred dollars in repairs -- a business owner across the street drove off the half-naked brats with gun-fire," continued Mr. Benjamin. All of this was reported to the police.

Both men made an interesting observation. "At the height of the Rotary Convention there was a gang shooting at the corner of N.E. 16th and Alberta in broad daylight. Many police, ambulances and fire departments were all involved in the resolution of the affair, a substantial bill for the taxpayers." The shotgun shooting was only a block away from the contemplated Umoja site and it the impression of the residents in the neighborhood that nothing was reported in the print media and the usual spectacular television coverage was conspicuous by its absence! "Was this because of a joint agreement between the city and the media to 'protect' the peace of mind of the conventioners, or to avoid any unfavorable light upon UMOJA's conditional use permit application." Residents on this area still have this question in their minds.

Both Mr. Parks and Mr. Benjamin expressed the opinion that they "deserved better." They stated that they have worked very hard to upgrade the area, supporting the neighborhood associations and its projects, and financing positive youth activities. Mr. Parks drew attention to the fact that he has purchased or gained control of a num-

ber of properties in the area including an apartment complex a hundred yards from the UMOJA site -- and has evicted the drug dealers and other undesirables. At the same time he points out he has installed additional street lighting and parking lot illumination, creating an atmosphere where citizens felt safe and comfortable in walking their street at night -- "Until now!" Mr. Benjamin expressed concern about the experience level and qualifications of the "supervisory personnel" to be hired.

Neighborhood fears have been raised by what is seen as an "increased traffic of 'hard-looking' youngsters who cruise the area, inspecting the site -- undoubtedly attracted by all the publicity." Our interview of affected residents found a pervasive theme: "This project would not have been approved by either city officials or by the private and state sponsors making the support grants HAD THE PROJECT BEEN LOCATED A FEW YARDS FROM 'THEIR' HOMES AND INVESTMENTS." The same opinion was voiced in respect to the African American members of the Black Education Center which is leasing or selling the property to UMOJA... "We wonder what their cut of the pie is? We feel betrayed."

Those who are quoted here have announced that they have engaged legal counsel to intervene in "a process which has already adversely affected our economic interests including the depreciation of property values." Apparently, an interesting confrontation is shaping up, and this newspaper welcomes any further commentary from those involved. We believe that in this way the public interest can be best served.

Democratic National Chairman Claims Bush's Tax Proposal Will Hurt Minorities and Seniors Most

Ron Brown, Chairman of the National Democratic Party, claims the new tax proposal recently announced by the Bush Administration is tantamount to treachery and deceit.

Speaking in Portland on June 29-30 before a gathering of State Chairs of the Democratic Party at the Hilton Hotel in Downtown Portland, Brown said Bush's campaign pledge of "Read my lips. No new taxes," was no more than a bunch of mistruths, uttered solely for the purpose of getting elected. "This comes at a time when the nation is being asked to bail out the savings and loan crisis, the amount of which will run into billions of dollars and will cost American taxpayers approximately \$2000.00 each.

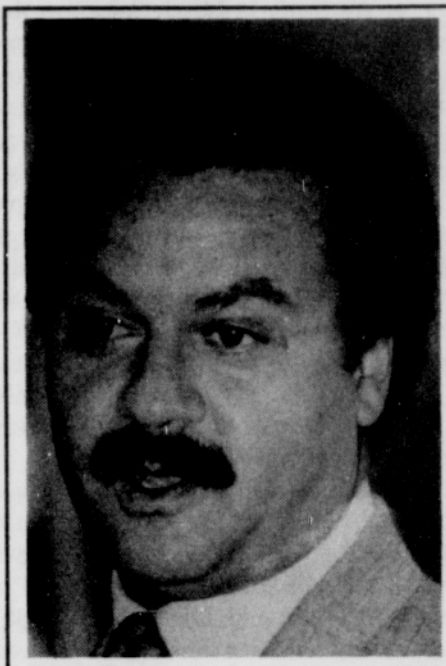
Of the proposed new taxes, the real tragedy will be the effect on seniors and minorities, as there is most certainly going to be a battle over cuts in social security and other social programs. Brown said some unscrupulous savings and loan executives took advantage of loose regulations to put into effect by

the Republican Administration under Former President Reagan to "steal millions." At his urging, the party's executive committee unanimously adopted a resolution challenging the president to tell the American taxpayers just exactly how much the S&L bailout will cost and to ensure that the Justice Department will persecute the S&L thieves.

Also blasting the Republican Administration during the Convention was Harry Lonsdale, who is challenging Republican Senator Mark O. Hatfield, for his senate seat and Mike Kopetski, who seeks to unseat U.S. Rep. Denny Smith.

The two challenges said the Republican Administration is squandering the "peace dividend from the end of the cold war."

Ohio Gov. Dick Celest, said his state avoided an unfair and costly bailout by closing 70 S&L's in 1985 and recovering 134 million dollars that had been embezzled during the Repub-



Ron Brown

licans lax management. The two-day event was well attended and concluded with a reception at the rose garden in Washington Park.

Les Femmes

Debutante Ball 1990



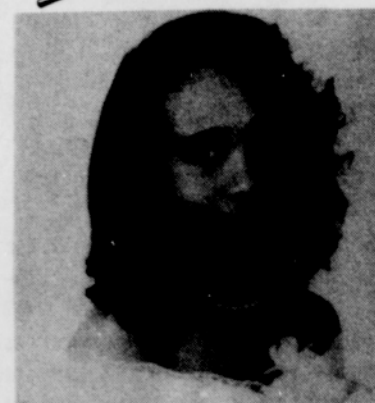
Alena NeChelle Vance



LaShanda Evon Hurst



Danielle Simone Crawford



LaKeyShua Washington



Ronnetta LaJoyce Calhoun



Marlette Marie Hurst



Melissa Kanita Coxeff



Diedra Lynette Richardson



Precious Leslie Houston



Sheina Karia Pool



Lorraine Denise Brown



Dana Lynn Thomas



LaRisha Renee' Baker



Angela Yolanda Jefferson

Les Femmes Club, after 39 years of sponsoring youth groups in the "City of Roses," presented 14 young ladies and six young men to an overflow audience at the Red Lion Jantzen Beach Ballroom on Sunday evening.

The young men and women are this year's local high school graduates, with their goals set on becoming future leaders. After a welcome by President Delores Jeffries and introduction of members by 1981 debutante Lolliita Foster, the ball began. Using the theme

"Soaring...with Roots and Wings," Marcus Whit - 1983 Cavalier and Amanda McCall - 1981 Debutante introduced the following Cavaliers and Debutantes. Ms. Canaan Chatman, Mr. Larry Dejuan Chesterfield, Mr. Michael J. Cross, Mr. Anthony Ray Jeffries, Mr.

LeRoy Warren, Jr., Miss LaRisha Renee Baker, Miss Lorraine Denise Brown, Miss Ronnetta LaJoyce Calhoun, Miss Melissa Kanita Coxeff, Miss Danielle Simone Crawford, Miss Precious Leslie

Houston, Miss Lashonda Evon Hurst, Miss Morletta Marie Hurst, Miss Angela Yolanda Jefferson, Miss Sheina Karin Pool, Miss Diedra Lynette Richardson, Miss Dana Lynn Thomas, Miss Alena NeChelle Vance, and Miss Lakeyshua

Washington. The young men and women danced with their escorts and then with their parents.

After a musical tribute to ball and parents, dancing resumed to the music of "Velvet."