

News Briefs From Office Of The Mayor

Mayor Opposes SB 656/PERS Mandate - The Oregon State Legislature is considering amending Senate Bill 656 to provide for an increase in retirement benefits to both retired and active PERS-covered employees. [This increase would offset personal income taxes now required to be paid by PERS recipients]. It would further provide for extension of those same benefits to non-PERS covered police officers and firefighters. The State is proposing that the City, along with other local governments and school districts pay for the increase. The State would then reap (and keep to fund state programs) approx. \$50 million of net revenues from taxing the increased pensions.

In a May 16 letter to Senator Bob Shoemaker signed by all City Council members, the Council said: "Considering all of the provisions of the amendments before you, we believe that Portland taxpayers would be required to pay an additional \$2.5 million immediately for non-PERS retired police and fire, \$2 million for non-PERS actives, and at least \$1.5 million in increased employer contributions to PERS."

Mayor Clark, who has been a strong supporter of legislation this session to limit state mandated costs, criticized the legislative action as being the larg-

est mandated cost to the city in many years. He stated, "It's hard to understand how the legislature can tell us we're on our own, threaten legislation that pre-empts our ability to raise local revenues to cope with Ballot Measure #5 [Property Tax Limitation Measure] cuts, and then turn around and hand us an annual bill of \$6 million dollars! This mandate would have been unacceptable before Ballot Measure #5; it is nothing less than insulting after Ballot Measure #5. This is a tax increase that the legislature has indirectly and selectively placed on local government taxpayers!"

A Celebration of Color To Begin - The 83rd Annual Portland Rose Festival, "A Celebration of Color" begins on Friday, May 31, with the Lloyd Center Queen's Coronation, and runs through Sunday, June 23. This year's celebration boasts more than 65 events, including new additions to the list of traditions.

The Delta Air Lines Grand Floral Parade will take place Saturday, June 8, winding its way from Memorial Coliseum to Downtown Portland. The Grand Marshals for the parade this year will be Pacific Northwest residents who are representatives of each branch of the military and who served in the

Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Storm.

Another popular event, the Maxwell House Rose Festival Airshow (presented by Safeway) will take place Saturday and Sunday, June 15-June 16 at the Hillsboro Airport. The Airshow is dedicated this year to the Oregon Air National Guard in commemoration of its 50th Anniversary.

Sports Arena Task Force Appointed - On May 6 the Portland Trail Blazers organization announced the proposed site for a new sports arena located in the vicinity of the present Memorial Coliseum. Following that announcement, City Council adopted a resolution on Wednesday, May 22, establishing a Sports Arena Task Force that will "evaluate and recommend a fair and judicious public investment in a possible public/private partnership for a new arena which maximizes benefits to the citizens of the region while minimizing public costs". The Metropolitan Service District (METRO) Council is expected to adopt the same resolution this week, in what Pat La-Crosse, Director, Portland Development Commission (PDC), stated was a "remarkable cooperative effort between the two governmental agencies".

Coming Up On "Jesse Jackson"

Saturday, June 1 and Sunday, June 2
The New Morality: A Four Letter World Show #35

Profanity and nudity on television, pornography and gore in movie theatres, lying and deception the norm in business and personal relations: Is this the America we want? Are there any limits to behavior today? And is anything sacred in 1991? Guests panelists include Rev. Jerry Falwell, founder, Moral Majority; Eleanor Clift, columnist, Newsweek magazine; Richard Cohen, Washington Post columnist; and Gary Bauer, Reagan Administration policy advisor.

Saturday, June 8 and Sunday, June 9
Why Isn't Politics Working? Show #36

Many Americans are frustrated by the conventional political scene, with its attack ads, negative campaigns, posturing instead of positions of substance, and few satisfied voters. Is the political system responding to the real needs of the country? If not, why not? Should there be a third party? Guests include Ann Lewis, Democratic political consultant, Eleanor Smeal, National Organization for Women, Richard Trumka, president, United Mine Workers.

Packwood Introduces Bill To Improve Health Care

Oregon Senator Bob Packwood has introduced legislation that attempts to solve a problem facing many Oregon communities—a shortage of health practitioners practicing in rural areas.

"Multnomah County has one physician for every 203 people, while rural Grant county has only one physician for every 2,633 people. More than half of the small towns of Oregon don't have any physicians living there. For that matter, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties don't have any physicians living there," Packwood said.

Packwood's bill would help rural communities attract and keep physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants by:

- * Providing tax credits to those practicing in medically underserved areas;
- * Exempting from tax repayments of education loans under the National Health Services Corps Loan Repayment Program for health professionals practicing in rural areas;
- * Allowing a tax deduction for up to \$25,000 or basic medical equipment purchased by rural physicians annually; and

* Providing grants to area health centers, rural county health departments, and a newly created State Health Service Corps.

Last year Packwood introduced legislation, called "The Rural Health Care Improvement Act", aimed at helping rural hospitals survive. Several provisions of that legislation were signed into law. Today's bill is the second part of Packwood's effort to improve the availability of health care for rural Oregonians.

"More than 20 percent of the physicians practicing in Oregon's rural areas are older than 60 and are fast approaching retirement," Packwood said. "Unless we can attract young physicians to these areas, many more Oregonians will find themselves without access to health care," he said.

Packwood introduced the bill today, also on behalf of Arkansas Senator David Pryor, who is recuperating from a heart attack. Pryor is Chairman of the Special Committee on Aging.

Packwood is the senior Republican on the Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over health issues.



Perspectives

By Professor McKinley Burt

Parents Must Bridge The Gap

When I wrote last week of the 'Aluminum Plant Experience' that utilized every facet of a rich, but nonuniversity, science background, I should have mentioned that on alternate weeks we instrument technicians worked as POWER HOUSE GRID OPERATORS. You will recall those fascinating scenes from movies like "The China Syndrome" or televised reports from the Trojan Nuclear Plant.

The workers stand before huge arena-size displays of meters, graphs and instruments, regulating the production and/or transmission of immense loads of electrical power (In the particular case, here in the Dalles, controlling the input of hundreds of thousands of Kilowatts of power flowing daily from the Bonneville Dam). An aluminum smelter consumes as much electricity as a good-size city and it is charged at the rate of many thousands of dollars per hour. Hence, accuracy in performance as well as the maintenance of instruments is of the highest priority. Note, the correct name of this now employee-owned company is the "Northwest Aluminum Company".

What I have been developing here is an inside view of jobs in technology that are and will continue to be available to the high school graduate who has had a good background in science and math. And I am especially emphasizing how important it is that minority students and PARENTS understand this. And, certainly, you can better understand why I deplore any "tracking", especially those contemplated systems that will put so many youth "off-the-train" at the tenth grade. Let me cite an experience of two decades ago, gained while teaching at Portland State University. I spent a lot of time developing summer and part time jobs for my students, but I soon ran into some startling revelations in respect to my minority students. The following comments are absolutely critical to a parents understanding of the problem (and to teachers).

Typically, these student's background and perception of industry and worksite activities-technology were so much less than those of MY GENERATION at the same age that it was absolutely frightening. I had developed contracts with industry and public agencies to fill slots for work/study positions and internships (as I am doing now). The U.S. Forest Service experience is a prime example. I developed a questionnaire to be administered to all my students, white, black, whatever. In answering the question, "Name some typical jobs you would expect to find at the U.S. Forest Service?", usually the Black students' answers seldom exceeded three or four positions: "Logger, secretary, firefighter and truck driver". (They 'do not' hire loggers)

The white students would list many, many more of the personnel slots. Here are just a 'few' in that job spectrum: Computeroperator, architect, mapmaker, surveyor, entomologist, anthropologist, sociologist, nurse, personnel analyst, compensation specialist, pilot, accountant, artist, writer, public relations officer, equipment operator, recreation specialist, welder, plumber, timber cruiser, attorney, printer, auditor, clerk typist, word processor, etc. We are dealing with a 'poverty of orientation' lack of that old-fashioned 'supper table' input. And with a lack of motivation to read.

My point here is that the parent (and student) has to realize that there is a vast gulf-gap between 'our' knowledge of the world around us and the realities of the workplace and infrastructure. If one does not know that certain jobs and opportunities exist, they will not be applied for. And if the PARENTS do not have this knowledge-or there is none-the situation is exacerbated. You will understand, then, my insistence that our community parents have to receive structured and comprehensive assistance in preparing their children for survival in this world of technology. Obviously, we cannot

depend upon the school system to provide the specialized information systems and orientation a race must have for survival. That is silly. We will be lucky if we are just able to get them to do an adequate job of teaching 'reading, writing and arithmetic.'

Having said all of that, I feel that you can now appreciate the gravity of the problem; especially if you project my experience with that agency to the job sites throughout the Portland Metropolitan Statistical area. As I increase my activities in this respect, I am encountering some of the same problems I found in the 1970's. "OUR" organizations who employ people in 'Job Development' capacities, inevitably hire people who have the same 'technical orientation disabilities' as the students I just wrote about. Even if they move beyond calling up the phone company, Tektronix, Nike and the public sector, hundreds of opportunities are missed simply because they do not recognize the correlation between the jobs published and the corollary or supporting positions that must also be related.

In my Urban Economics Class I designed and taught at P.S.U., I had students read the daily newspaper and report on NEW BUSINESS ACTIVITIES. Then, they were taught to relate that to the jobs which would be necessary for the implementation of these projects; just as a contractor would study building plans and 'take off the specs' for the materials needed - lumber, bricks, nails, etc, I would send them to the library to use the "DICTIONARY OF OCCUPATIONAL TITLES" which lists and defines the thousands of jobs that exist in the American industry and public sector (I bought the latest edition last week).

If we are sincere about surviving, these are the things that will have to be done. If our organizations can't do the job, then we must do it ourselves - if it means 'new' organizations. More next week.

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The PORTLAND OBSERVER is published weekly by Exie Publishing Company, Inc.
4747 N.E. M.L.K., Jr. Blvd.
Portland, Oregon 97211
P.O. Box 3137
Portland, Oregon 97208
(503) 288-0033 (Office)
FAX#: (503) 288-0015

Deadlines for all submitted materials:
Articles: Monday, 5 p.m. -- Ads: Tuesday, 5 p.m.

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208. Second-class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.
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Let's Play School, Sesame Street Style

Attention class! It's time to enter the wonderful world of pretend, and to play school with the Sesame Street characters in the all-new SESAME STREET LIVE production of "Let's Play School," coming to the MEMORIAL COLISEUM, in Portland, Thursday, June 13 through Sunday, June 16 for seven performances.

"Let's Play School" is a can't-sit-still show filled with audience participation and familiar Sesame Street songs. Professor Grover will take you singing and dancing through an imaginary day of school on Sesame Street. Big Bird, Bert and Ernie, Cookie Monster, Professor Grover and all of your favorite Sesame Street friends will be in school as you rock through roll call, dance through spelling class, jam through music class and sing through story time.

"Let's Play School" was produced by Vee Corporation in conjunction with the Children's Television Workshop (CTW). This all-new production was produced by Bob Shipstad, choreographer and directed by Marilyn Magness, lyrics written and produced by Decker Velie and Peter Johnson, with art direction by Jim Waters and lighting direction by David Agress. "Let's Play School" was written by Nancy Sans, one of CTW's writers for "Sesame Street."

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What You Should Know About Why Canada's Health System Wouldn't Work Here

America's health care system has been in the news a lot lately. You may have read articles or heard people talking about the idea of national health insurance that's funded and managed by the federal government, similar to the system used in Canada, where there are no private insurance companies. One study even contends that the U.S. could save enough money on administrative costs to be able to provide care to everyone, rich, poor, young, old and homeless—simply by adopting a Canadian-style system.

If this sounds too good to be true, it probably is, according to Joseph F. Boyle, MD, executive vice president of the American Society of Internal Medicine (ASIM). "The reason is simple: Americans are not Canadians. There are many reasons why a Canadian system would not be acceptable to the vast majority of us in this country," said Dr. Boyle.

How is America different?
First, there are major social and demographic differences between the U.S. and Canada. Canada is fairly homogeneous with only small, scattered ethnic populations. In contrast, America has large Hispanic, Asian and Middle Eastern communities in most cities, in addition to immigrant and native American populations that live

in rural, sometimes remote areas.

Social variances also account for higher health care costs. Teenage pregnancy, poverty and violence—as well as illness and injury related to alcoholism, drug abuse and cigarette smoking—soak up many more health care dollars here than in Canada. Obviously it costs more to care for a more diverse, more populous society with wide differences in income, social and ethnic characteristics, languages, expectations and problems.

Second, the United States holds physicians and other health care personnel to a higher standard of accountability than most other countries. This means continual checking and reviewing to make sure that all of us who provide health care are qualified to do so. And it's important that our laboratories and equipment meet certain standards. Our country has also begun a major undertaking to define what constitutes appropriate care in a variety of situations. The result will be formal "practice guidelines" to assist physicians in making decisions about appropriate patient care. Obviously, all this is good news for you and your family—but it does cost money that Canada is not spending.

Third, our litigious society breeds higher costs. As long as Americans sue

at the drop of a hat, huge amounts will continue to be spent on documentation, legal fees and malpractice insurance premiums. We will continue to practice "defensive medicine," ordering extra tests only as a defense against lawsuits, not because we need the answers. Practice guidelines will help in this area, too, giving the judicial system and our courts an understanding of what constitutes appropriate care.

Finally, Americans may find spending somewhat more money to be an acceptable price to pay for a system that emphasizes choice and innovation.

Our System is Far From Perfect
The fact is, we do have some major problems in our health care system, according to Dr. Boyle. Heading the list is having more than 31 million people without adequate health insurance. He also added that the U.S. spends too much money on needless paper work and regulations in an inefficient, out-of-control bureaucracy.

Toward a Uniquely American Solution

Abandoning our current system in favor of an untested, foreign one is a big risk with no guarantees. In fact, our experience with Medicare suggests that the costs of red tape could increase under a totally government-sponsored, national health insurance plan.

"Reinvestments in the Community" is a weekly column appearing in API publications throughout the USA.