

p e r s p e c t i v e s

A Wider View Of The Education Shortfall

It is often said about problems that seem to have no solution, that "one cannot see the forest for the trees." Certainly, this adage can be applied to the education woes of the Portland School District. So, let us pull back a bit for now and take a statewide view.

Last winter I wrote several articles on the merits of "The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century (HB3565)" At a February 25 news conference on the Oregon Education Association, of which I am a member, found itself in agreement with seven of ten components of that act recommended by the State Board of Education Task Force. These were, "The Certificate Of Initial Mas-

tery (CIM) the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM), and Extension of the School Year". I would have added, "Nongraded Primary Education"; How will the kids be integrated into other school systems should they leave the state?

Implementation of the "mastery" programs are opposed because "they are unreliable due to their subjectivity and discrimination against certain student populations; urban concepts being mandated into rural Oregon; implementation would be very costly at a time when the state has no money". The latter reasoning certainly rules against any "Extension of the School Year." Where would the state obtain the re-

quired extra \$400 million? We know who is meant by "certain student populations."

In the Sunday Oregonian for February 14, writer Bill Graves has several articles which address Oregon's hopeful and visionary plans "meant to put Oregon's students at the top of the national heap by the year 2000 and in the international lead by 2010". And further on we have, "We're not only in step with the nation, we're leading the parade," says Norma Paulus, state superintendent of public instruction. Place all this in context: "Oregon's School Improvement Plan will eliminate the high school diploma in about four years". Now, that is really hedging your bet! (in case you made some serious mistakes).

Now, let's look at the leads for two of Mr. Graves' articles: "Europe

Leads Way In Building Future For Forgotten Half an Oregon Schools Try To Produce Better Workers" (Oregon Educators Hope To Model Training After European Blueprint). I can't control my curiosity--What happened to all those "Japanese" and other Asian role model education systems that were to be the pattern for the "New Order"? Did we run out of travel vouchers--was that just another "Metric or New Math" type gambit?

Now, I know a little about German educational philosophy. Mr. Graves tells us that Ramon Franke, a 16 year-old German teenager and electronic apprentice, "has learned as much or more than Oregon students who go on to college. He speaks a second language. He has studied algebra, chemistry, physics, history, music and art." That sounds

exactly like my high school in St. Louis, and education system set up by third-generation German disciplinarians.

For the past five years I've been telling readers, parents and teachers about the curriculum at my "Jim Crow" high school in St. Louis--loud and clear now: "Algebra I and II, Geometry I and II, General Science I and II, Biology I and II, History, Civics, Geography, Music, Art, Gymnastics--then a choice of latin or French and finally, physics and chemistry, all mandatory." This, is of course, was fifty years ago.

I dropped out at the end of the eleventh grade (to eat) but had no problem with accounting classes or passing the law school entrance exam in the company of college graduates here in Oregon. In 1946 when I set up my accounting practice in the Albina

area (later certified for federal tax court), half the population and my clients were of German descent. And many were already mourning the loss of educational standards and discipline--"not like it was in the old country".

Before we allow our educational gurus and activists to take us on a new expedition in search of a "Shangtila-to Tibet, perhaps--maybe we should demand that they be the ones to return to basics, maybe have teacher colleges return to old fashioned texts like Longman's Educational Goals" (21st printing, 1977). As I look now at the chapters dealing with "the best organization of knowledge to facilitate learning" I compare that structure with contemporary currents--like "mastering the information structure". No wonder my mother and aunt were such good teachers. More next week.



by Professor McKinley Burt

U.S. Military Spying On African Americans

Truth always eventually comes into the light. This is a true saying and in particular in regard to the facts now veins exposed concerning the disgraceful, immoral and illegal spying on the African American community by elite spy units of the U.S. military. Notwithstanding the historic fact that African Americans have disproportionately fought and died as loyal soldiers in the U.S. military since the American revolutionary War, it has now been revealed that the U.S. military has spied on the African American community for more than seventy five years.

The public outcry in response to the disclosures outlined in a report issued by The Commercial Appeal newspaper in Memphis, Tennessee has been tremendous. The Commercial Appeal report was the

result of a 16-month investigation by the newspaper. Thus, another sad and tragic chapter in the history of American racism has been revealed.

There are some who are arguing that the past should be left to the past, and the nation should avoid looking into its past on issues that may cause racial polarization. We take exception to that view. It is important to tell the truth about the past in order to avoid repeating past misdeeds in the future.

Martin Luther King, Jr. and his family were targets of U.S. military action and spying. The Commercial Appeal investigation confirmed that

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

the illegal spying was directed in general at African American minister and African American congregations in the South that were involved in challenging racial injustice.

As one reads this new investigative report on U.S. military spying, there is a sense of being reminded of how dangerous it is for any nation or society not to have effective control over the military apparatus. Yet, the U.S. Army's Intelligence Divisions did not act to spy on the African American community without first having received "orders" to do the

illegal assignment.

In other words, along with the military system, the political system and high government officials over a long period of time actually ordered and sanctioned domestic military, covert action against law abiding citizens of the United States who were of African descent. All Americans should be outraged.

African American members of the Congress of the United States should demand an immediate Congressional investigation into the details that have been brought to light in

the report released by The Commercial Appeal.

Did the U.S. Army participate in the assassination of Dr. King? Why were

Army agents from the 11th Military Intelligence Group in Memphis at the time of Dr. King's assassination? If these agents had Dr. King under constant surveillance, then why did they not attempt to prevent Dr. King's assassination? Why did it take until 1993 for these facts to be revealed?

If the Army went to such an extent to collect intelligence by using highly sophisticated electronic surveillance and other methods of secret spying including the use of U2 super-sonic spy planes, to collect information on African American leaders and

no evidence of wrong doing was found, why did these illegal acts continue for decades?

Racism does cause a type of unjustified paranoia. The problem is that when agents of racial paranoia have the unchecked access to military power the dangers to social stability are increased immeasurably. The Civil Rights Movement should not have been viewed by military authorities as a threat to national security.

The truth is that the sacrifices of Martin Luther King, Jr. and thousands of others in the Civil Rights and Freedom Movements have done more to ensure democracy and equal justice in the United States than any military operation in the nation or throughout the world. Let us all work together to prevent a repeat of this type of miscarriage of justice.

Do Oregonians Need Earthquake Insurance?

On March 25, 1993 at approximately 5:35am, Pacific Time Zone, a Richter Scale 5.4 magnitude earthquake with an epicenter 30 miles south of Portland in Woodburn, OR, rocked the Pacific Northwest from just South of Seattle, WA, down through Eugene, OR.

This supports what officials of the United States, Geological Survey have been saying--a major fault line exists from Vancouver, British Columbia, through Seattle, Portland and Salem to Eugene, Oregon. Seismologists have said that this fault poses a greater danger of a major quake in the not too distant future than some have previously thought. And then there's the threat of damaging earth movement due to activity bubbling under

Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens not to mention the other famous Cascade peaks.

All this and yet only three to four percent of the homeowners in Oregon and five percent in Washington purchase the optional earth movement insurance coverage versus five percent of all U.S. citizens and 25 percent of Californians.

"Most people have, in the past, said they just don't believe it'll happen here, others don't realize it isn't covered under their homeowners insurance and still others think the coverage would be too expensive," says Marianne Macina, CPCU, regional manager for Western Insurance Information Service (WIIS).

According to Macina, standard

homeowners policies do not cover structural damage caused by earth movement as a result of an earthquake or volcanic eruption.

"Homeowners need to decide if they should purchase the optional earth movement endorsement coverage which will protect them against this type of catastrophic loss," she says. "This coverage is relatively inexpensive and readily available in the Pacific Northwest.

However," Macina warns, "after the quake, most insurance companies will place a moratorium on issuing new earthquake insurance of anywhere from two to ninety days. The time before you can purchase earthquake insurance will vary from company to company." Macina also reminds Oregonians that earthquake insurance is

an endorsement to their homeowners insurance and must be purchased from the same company they have their homeowner's policy with.

"That's not to say you can't change the company that you have homeowner's coverage with. It always pays for the consumer to shop around," says Macina.

In Oregon, the average annual cost for earth movement coverage on a frame home will range between 53 and 80 cents per \$1,000 coverage, says Macina. "For example, coverage on a \$100,000 home will cost between \$53 and \$80 per year.

Because masonry homes are more susceptible to earth movement damage, the average annual cost for this coverage is higher--ranging between \$2.45 and \$2.80 per \$1,000 coverage.

Most residential earth movement coverage in Oregon is sold with a standard deductible of 5 percent (Some companies now require a 10 percent deductible). This deductible applies separately to the building and its contents.

"For example, a 5 percent deductible on a home with \$100,000 structural coverage and \$60,000 contents coverage would mean the homeowner would be responsible for the first \$5,000 of structural damage and the first \$3,000 of personal property damage to the contents in the home," says Macina.

"That's why when deciding if this coverage is for them, homeowners need to understand that earth movement insurance is designed to protect them against major economic losses," explains Macina. "They need to decide if they can bear the financial burden should their home be destroyed or suffer major damage. If the home is owned outright, that's a major financial loss. And, if not, the homeowner will still be required to make mortgage payments," she adds.

According to Macina, renters may also want to think about an earth movement endorsement for their personal property (contents) as an addition to their renters' insurance.

"When deciding to purchase any type of insurance, your insurance companies through WIIS recommend that you do some comparison shopping," says Macina. "Contact three or four insurance companies through company representatives or agents and compare prices, level of service and

coverage." Macina says consumers should not hesitate to ask agents exactly what the insurance policies will and will not cover. Most standard homeowners' policies will cover fire, explosion and theft losses following a quake.

For more consumer information and questions on insurance or to find out about the organization's free speakers' bureau, consumers also may call the WIIS Beaverton, OR, office at (503) 643-6355.

WIIS is a nonprofit, nonlobbying, consumer education organization affiliated nationally with the Insurance Information Institute. WIIS serves consumers and insurers in ten western states.

How Earthquake Proof Is Your Home?

A Homeowner's Checklist: Are there ways you can make your home safer in the event of an earthquake or volcanic eruption? Can you be better prepared for such a catastrophe?

The answer to all the above is "yes." On behalf of your insurance companies, Western Insurance Information Service (WIIS) suggests you consider the following homeowners' checklist:

- 1) Check to see if the home is bolted to its foundations.
- 2) Check to see if the tile or shake roof needs bracing.
- 3) Brace or replace high brick chimneys.
- 4) Bolt water heaters to wall studs.
- 5) Fasten shelves to walls.
- 6) Brace or anchor high-standing or top-heavy objects.
- 7) Secure heavy mirrors or picture frames over beds.
- 8) Secure lights, plants and other hanging objects that could swing free of hooks.
- 9) Place breakables or heavy objects on lower shelves.
- 10) Install flexible connectors where gas lines meet appliances.
- 11) Know how to turn off gas, water and electricity.
- 12) Remove nearby trees that are leaning or weakened due to rot. The same goes for limbs that are dead or diseased.
- 13) Check on your financial need for earth movement insurance. According to WIIS, many of these measures will also help to reduce and prevent losses from windstorms. For

more consumer information and questions on insurance or to find out about the organization's free speakers' bureau, consumers may call the WIIS Beaverton, OR, office at (503) 643-6355.

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Taking Flight

He watched from his seat as the plane began to accelerate down the runway amid thought about closing his tired eyes this time.

But he always watched, so he peered out the small window as if looking was part of the believing.

It always seemed so unreal--a plane taking off into the night. It didn't seem possible for a thing so big to be able to fly, a massive metal cylinder with wings which lingers so on the ground. But then Great Blue Herons don't seem to be built for flight either, they look rather clumsy until airborne.

He looked out at the runway as puffs of snowflakes danced in the night lights of the airport. Snow was piled in some places three feet high between lanes. As the plane continued to accelerate, he wondered dimly now it could get traction on the snowy pavement. But another look revealed snow only on the sides.

The runway was wet, but clear. He could feel the power of the engines now. And in that feeling was the comfort of faith that the plane would indeed lift itself skyward. For to disbelieve was to give into fear.

He continued to watch as the plane gained momentum and the engines roared. The plane's nose began to climb pulling the craft smoothly into the night. The old saying used against pioneer aviators came to mind: "If man was meant to fly, God would have given him wings."

It occurred to him suddenly as the plane continued to slash upwards, that man was indeed meant to fly. And God had given him wings of silver.

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