

Jonesboro! Who Forgot To Pay The Piper: Conclusion

By Prof. MCKINLEY BURT

As was to be expected, the Arkansas school violence has been reflected across the country, though the incidents were far less traumatic. While difficult to identify a chain of causality, the sheer number reported would indicate more than increased media attention to the problem.

There have been hostages held for cigarettes, pizza, pop and chips, firearms used in suicides and a sudden peak in the 'normal' data furnished President Clinton: the Education Department estimates that schools nationwide experienced 11,000 fights in which weapons were used, 4,000 rapes and other sexual assaults, and 7,000 robberies.

Again, the President is prompted to promise some rather grandiose reforms in those parts of the education process he sees to be at fault. Absolutely certain that 'the Piper has not been paid', Clinton has 'urged' Congress to pass a budget that would far exceed an appropriation for a squadron of B1 Bombers - the system is in need of urgent repair. "How about an additional 100,000

teaches, tens of billions to modernize older school buildings, funding to keep schools open for youth activities after - hours on school days, and many millions for school safety projects". It sounded oh so good, and the media took hold with a vengeance and ran with it. Perhaps the Piper would return our children.

But it all went up in a puff of smoke, didn't it? It seems that the entire scheme to rescue America's educational system was predicated upon the receipt of that gigantic windfall from the national tobacco settlement expected to close momentarily. So much for the best laid plans of mice, men and true-believers.

It may not come as a surprise that many educators felt that the sheer monetary shock of that large, a shot-in-the-arm might well have been more than an education system on life support could handle in an orderly and efficient manner. No doubt some were recalling what happened when there was that sudden infusion of funds, first with the "new Math", and later with "the Metric System." did 'you' buy in?

Sufficient to say that the light of education in these United States is not amenable to a po-

litical quick fix. It did not get in this shape overnight, but there always seemed to be other priorities for the public monies - no matter who held the purse strings, Congress, state legislatures, counties or urban jurisdictions.

As suggested here last week, instead of more "Urban Renewal" and the 'removal' of even more housing until neither the poor nor most middle class can afford rents - why not utilize those billions planned for more inner city highways and subsidized rail line to restore a collapsing education structure. Both administrators and politicians are well aware that our school systems are no where near meeting those highly-touted "Year 2000" standards. And continuing to plan the state's academic future around the less-than predictable income from a state lottery does not meet the test for reasonable expectations.

Some of my former PSU students who are out there in the district teaching under unbelievable handicaps of both resource and organization point out that the frenzied media blitz about such programs as Saturday Academy, TAG, Etc. are about a process instituted twenty years late; "You told us

early on from your experience that if industry were not brought into the education system to promote science and mathematics, we would once again be turning to Europe for the skilled technicians needed. And it has come to pass".

But right now, there is another recurring concern being voiced by minority parents and teachers across the country. In last Saturday's Oregonian we find an Associated Press dispatch with the headline, "Experiments On Boys Under Investigation". "A government funded study in which poor African and Latino boys were given a now recalled diet drug to test for violent tendencies is being criticized as risky and racial".

Those concerned had already expressed fears that with all the media saturation on 'school violence', the 'establishment drug dealers' would renew their assault on minority children supposedly "genetically inclined to violence".

All should read the frightening revelations in "the War Against Children", Peter Breggin, M.D. St. Martin's press, 1994. Pay the Piper!

City Soliciting New Downtown Parking Proposals

The Portland Development Commission (PDC) and the Bureau of General Services are renewing their efforts to find a site for an additional Smart Park garage in the downtown retail core. Negotiations with Tom Moyer for a 430-space Smart Park garage in the new Fox Tower ended last week when Moyer elected to move his upper floor parking to the basement, displacing the Smart Park. The new upper floors will include more office space and a movie theater.

"We're still very committed to meeting the growing demand

for parking downtown and are now actively soliciting parties interested in selling property or co-developing parking projects in the retail core," said Les Prentice, PDC Development Manager.

PDC will consider mixed use, high density proposals and is still pursuing automated parking options.

"Automated parking is cheaper and safer and we're convinced it is technologically reliable," said Prentice. "It's like valet parking with out a tip." Another benefit of automated parking is that the

footprint for the site can be much smaller.

PDC is interested in hearing from property owners and developers of property in the downtown retail core--the area from Park to First and Salmon to Washington Streets.

The Commission will also revisit prior proposals including the Greyhound block and a surface lot at 3rd and Washington Streets as well as consider buying or leasing existing garages for conversion to Smart Parks.

The goal is to have a new parking garage available in 2000 soon

after the new Pioneer Place opens.

This goal was established as a result of the 1996 Central City Public Parking Facilities Plan which identified substantial existing and future demand.

While light rail, the transit mall and the pedestrian nature of downtown reduce the reliance on cars, short term parking options are a key aspect of downtown's vitality. Restaurants, retail stores, hotels and entertainment venues as well as downtown businesses depend on parking options for customers.

Help Find Photos of Three Missing Former Mayors

The City of Portland has decided to go public in their search for three previous mayors of the city. "We have exhausted all of our sources and have been unable to locate them. Our last hope is the citizens," a city insider reported.

What the city is searching for are photos of three elusive Mayors to join their colleagues in Portland's newly renovated City Hall, set to open in just one week. A wall in Mayor Katz's

office will hold pictures of all the former mayors of Portland—almost.

The Mayor's Office has managed to gather all but three of their photos. Still missing are Simon B. Marye, W.H. Farrar and Hamilton Boyd, all mayors during the mid-1800's. In those days, mayors only served one year terms, which makes the photos even more difficult to find.

The Mayor's Office has already searched the Multnomah County Library,

the Oregon Historical Society, and the city archives. Mayor Katz is hoping that relatives, historians, photo collectors or other residents will be able to help complete the search. Photos of the three mayors can be sent to the Mayor's Office to the attention of Carol Winkel, 1220 SW Fifth Ave., Rm 303, Portland, Oregon 97204. If you have any leads to share with Carol by phone, you can reach her at 823-4120.

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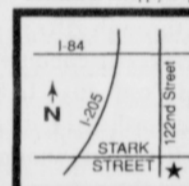
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