

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily  
Reflect Or Represent The Views Of  
The Portland Observer

# EDITORIAL

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## The Portland Observer

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

### Letter to Editor

It is my pleasure to write and let you know about my strong support for Karla Wenzel, an exceptional candidate for the Portland Public School Board. Karla, in my view, is a highly intelligent, competent and energetic person who understands education and cares about the well being of all children. She also has the ability to bring about change and make a difference.

Portland is fortunate to have one of the best urban districts in the country. However, the District is faced with some very unique challenges that could have an astounding impact on the quality of education, student access, and student achievement. We need a strong School Board that represents our community and that will continue to raise expectations, respect diversity, improve academic achievement and be accountable.

Karla is a bright leader who is honest, articulates, a careful listener, and is clear in her opinions and ideas. She cares about education and is committed to helping all kids have a meaningful and successful education. As citizens we will be well served by having Karla on the board tackling the tough issues, listening to our concerns, and involving us in the solutions.

I strongly urge you to consider joining me on March 9 and voting for Karla Wenzel for Portland School Board, Zone 1.

Sincerely,

George E. Richardson, Jr.

### Condolences from Lucy Vazquez to the Burt Family

To the Portland Observer I would like to say thank you for such a wonderful person such as Professor Burt. I was dumb to our history until I spoke with Mr. Burt and read his articles. He will be missed by me. I grew up dumb to our History and I now try to educate my family more about our slave experiences. Growing up in LA, my parents didn't allow us to be around them when they talked of our history, but I saw the pain in my father's face and now I know why.

Thank you,

Lucy Vazquez

## National Poll Of People's Fears

### National Poll of People's Fears, Phobias

Spurred by Growing Popularity of Horror Films, Novels

Afraid of the number 13? Of cats or bats? Does being alone—riding in elevators—or picking up ordinary pins and needles—make you a little uneasy?

And what about sounds in the night—or simply the unknown?

In a nationwide poll of 1,500 respondents—including several writers skilled in making people afraid of the dark—the syndicated cable TV show, Dateline: USA, found that approximately 30 percent were frightened most by what they de-

scribed simply as "the unknown": unseen things that go bump in the night, or the discovery that "something" that seemed normal, somehow, isn't.

The Dateline: USA survey—inspired by the phenomenal, ongoing popularity of suspense and horror films ("Psycho") and novels ("Fear," "Bag of Bones," "Seize the Night")—uncovered another 20 percent who cited accidental death or injury by fire, drowning or falling from high places—such as the tops of stairs or trees—as their primary fear. Loss of lack of control or fear of just going

crazy, was listed by another 20 percent.

World Fantasy Award winner Tim Powers ("Earthquake Weather" and "Last Call"), who listed the unknown as one of his personal bugaboos, told the Dateline: USA survey that fear of the unknown—"of the heard but unseen"—can be intensified for him by reading a "truly scary story."

He said that nearly any Stephen King novel can turn the prosaic into a nightmare, and that a horror classic like "Fear" by L. Ron Hubbard can "scare the daylight out of you with a hat, or a stairway."

Mystery Scene magazine editor Ed Gorman said his own, occasional fear of being alone in a house at night isn't helped much by reading novels like King's "Misery," "Fear" by Hubbard, or Robert Bloch's "Psycho." All of these stories, he noted, involved frightening things that happen to ordinary people in ordinary settings.

As for fear of the number 13, the Dateline: USA poll found that virtually everyone surveyed has experienced some feeling of unease about it. But no one could say exactly why.

## Cheer Up Conservatives!

By CLIFFORD F. THIES

(Winchester, Va., February 25, 1999) — It is certainly awful that the person holding the office of President is, in the words of his fellow Democrats, "reprehensible." It is disappointing that he was allowed to get away with breaking the law because the U.S. Senate could not convincingly threaten to remove him from office to force him to make a meaningful plea bargain. It is frustrating that the opinion polls seem to indicate that, with every revelation of wrongdoing by the President, his job approval rating goes up. Still, these are not sufficient reasons to be despondent as is Paul Weyrich of the Congress Foundation.

First, our democratic form of government is not based on the premise that the majority is right, for what is right transcends any majority. It is based on the premise that majorities change. As long as our elections are open, as long as we have free speech and freedom of the press, majority opinion will change in response to the actual results of public policies. If, for example, the Great Society pro-

grams actually worked in alleviating poverty, an increasingly large majority would have embraced them. Instead of alleviating poverty, they trapped people into unfulfilling lives, and eventually we took the first steps to end the entitlement system.

Second, the majority at this time, as indicated by the only poll that counts, is conservative. Bill Clinton was elected in 1992 with 43 percent of the vote. That election was a fluke! He was re-elected in 1996 with 49 percent of the vote. Another fluke!

In 1998, for the third time in a row, the Republicans won control of both houses of the Congress—the first time this has happened since the 1920's! In 1998, when you add up the votes received by Republican candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives all across the country and the votes received by the Democratic candidates, you find that the Republicans received more than the Democrats. Yes, I know the liberal media declared the Democrats the winners of the election. This so-called victory was because the Democrats beat the point spread, not because they

won.

Our small margin of victory in 1998 was due to the attempt by the Republicans to hold Bill Clinton responsible for his lying under oath and obstruction of justice. It would have been to our political advantage if we avoided it. Yet looking the other way when there is evidence of criminal wrongdoing is not what it means to be Republicans. I am sorry our Congressional leadership did not rally our side around a positive agenda such as ending the marriage penalty tax. It was, therefore, appropriate that we needed a shake-up in leadership for failing to achieve substantive policy successes. But I am mightily proud that our Congress impeached the President, and that fifty Senators voted to remove him from office. Abraham could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah if he had been able to find only ten just men. We found a lot more than that.

Mabey Paul Weyrich, who believes in term limits, should take a sabbatical from his duties in Washington. Maybe he should get outside the Beltway and return to America. Other, things are going well. The economy is in good shape, employment is up, and the rate of crime,

divorce, and abortion are falling. We have ended the welfare system and the revolving-door criminal justice system. We have deregulated the banking transportation, and communication industries, and we are in the process of deregulating electricity. Advances in science and technology, in medicine and in business are blessing us with greater longevity, higher standards of living and more personal freedom.

We will survive the next two years, and then pass Bill Clinton like a gallstone from our system. For liberals, Bill Clinton is a Buffon who confirms their prejudice against white men in power and their agenda of using the government to end what they call "the patriarchy." For conservatives, he should be a reminder that government attracts egomaniacs, megalomaniacs, and liars, and this should caution us against allowing those in government to accumulate power. It is good to feel sick thinking of Bill Clinton, but the proper response is not to give up on the country. It is rededicate ourselves to the ideals for which this country stands—both of which falls short—those high ideals "of liberty and justice for all!"

Dear Editor:

The Portland School District faces huge issues both in terms of funding and educational achievement. The new team the district has assembled is top notch and needs a top notch Board. We are enthusiastically supporting Karla Wenzel for the Portland School Board. Karla will be the strong, focused, and practical addition the Board needs. She will work as part of an effective team with other Board members, teachers, parents and other community members.

Karla has the broad support of teachers and business leaders. She has budget experience and proven problem solving skills. Karla also has two preschool children and will work for a quality education for all Portland's children. What impresses us the most is that she cares and is deeply committed to education.

Please vote for Karla Wenzel for School Board.

## No high school attendance no driver's license bill = problems

Students who drop out of school will lose their driving privileges under a bill discussed this week by the Senate Education Committee.

SB 487, sponsored by Sen. Peter Courtney (D-Salem), requires school districts to inform the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) when a student drops out of school. The bill then gives DMV authority to suspend the student's driver's license or to prohibit the student from applying for a driver's license.

"Twenty other states have similar laws on their books. West Virginia passed this leg-

islation in 1988 and its drop-out rate has decreased by almost one-third," Sen. Courtney told the committee.

"A driver's license is a right-of-passage for a teenager. It we can tell our students that you have to go to school and attend class to get you licenses, I believe we will see our drop-out rate drop."

While OSBA supports remedies to prevent dropouts, SB 487 causes a set of problems for school districts. According to OSB Senior Legislative Advocate Jim Green, the bill will "mandate a paperwork burden on staff that they may not be able to handle." He

added status of every student between age 15 and 18 to the DMV is an impossible task.

"Instead of mandating this on all school districts, we suggest making it an option available to those who want to implement it," Green said. "Districts believing this will address their drop-out problem should have it available; districts that either cannot implement it or believe it will not affect their drop-out rate should not be required to do it."

No further action on SB 487 by the Senate Education Committee is currently scheduled.

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