

# EDITORIAL

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## The Portland Observer

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

## Celebrate Earth Day 1999 Join The Procession

Be a star-or a fish or a tree-in Portland's first Procession of the Species on Saturday, April 24. This fun and slightly wacky celebration of the natural world will start at 1 pm from the North Park blocks and make its jolly way to Pioneer Courthouse Square for a millennial event at 2 pm.

Now until April 24, local artists, dancers and musicians are holding free workshops to create the giant puppets, masks, costumes, hand-made instruments, rhythms and dances needed for the Procession. Everyone, regardless of age, background or beliefs, is encouraged to help create this Earth Day Marti Gras celebration.

The Procession workshops take place at a Community Art Studio at a former Nature's Fresh Northwest store at 5909 SW Corbett. Workshop artists and musicians are using scavenged, donated and recycled materials to make the drums, head-dresses, animal masks, and other props. The Procession rules are no written words, no live pets, and no motorized vehicles. Otherwise, the limit is your imagination!

To participate in the workshops, call 452-4483, ext. 1. Procession registration sites include Powell's Travel Bookstore at Pioneer Square and Nature's Northwest stores. Procession registration fee is two cans of food for the Oregon Food Bank.

For procrastinators, last-minute registration, face painting, mask making and drum construction starts at 11 am the day of the Pro-

cession, Saturday, April 24, at the North Park blocks.

A similar event in Olympia, Washington is now that city's largest civic event, drawing some 2,000 participants and over 16,000 observers.

So far several hundred people and dozens of organizations, including Earth and Spirit Council, the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, Audubon Society of Portland, Portland Parks and Recreation, Nature's Northwest, Pioneer Courthouse Square, U.S. Bank, Tri-Met, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Center for Design of an Aging Society, National College of Naturopathic Medicine and Starbucks have already come forward to help put on the Procession of the species.

In a related event, the creatures and other Earth elements created for the Procession will be "blessed" at a multicultural, inter-faith ceremony on April 22 (Earth Day) at 7 pm at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, NW 19th and Everett in Portland. During this 7th annual Earth Day ceremony, different religious and cultural traditions come together to express in prayer, song and dance what their faith teaches about human responsibility to the earth. Elias Amidon, co-author of Earth Prayers and a leader of the Sufi tradition, will give a spiritual call to action. The renowned Oregon Children's Choir will also be featured. For more details on both events, visit the Earth and Spirit website: [www.earthandspirit.org](http://www.earthandspirit.org) or call (503) 452-4483.

## In My Opinion

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN R. LUNDQUIST

On Thursday, March 25, 1999, the House leadership removed me as Chairman of the Education Funding Committee in this Legislative Session because I, along with nine of the twelve members of the committee, would not "rubber stamp" a budget number of education that we believed was insufficient for the children of Oregon. That, my friends, is politics. I don't like it. I consider this action an abuse of power, a dishonor to the public committee process, and an affront to the integrity of the Senators and Representatives who labored diligently on this committee to come to a thoughtful and responsible conclusion on the issue of the K-12 education budget.

But there is no time to worry about the politics. In the end, petty politics pales in the face of worthy principles. What is most important now is that those principles are held harmless and unchanged by this action. It is to those precious principles - not the politics - I wish to address my comments.

There is first and foremost, the principle of stewardship. The gover-

nor and every legislator in Salem is both blessed and burdened with a significant, even sacred, stewardship: To make laws and establish good public policy that will improve the quality of life for all Oregonians. No facet of that stewardship is more critical than the education of our children. In the words of Dr. Boyd Applegarth, a former Oregon Superintendent of the Year and one of the members of the Council who developed The Oregon Quality Education Model: "If we do not place the education of our children first, it will, in the end, make little difference what we have done instead."

The Education Funding Committee, consistent with this principle, is prepared to vote out an education funding bill of \$4.96 billion for K-12 education. This will keep most of our schools whole and enable many to begin to achieve the high standards established by the Oregon Education Act for the 21st Century. This amount is possible, with minimal impact to other state programs and without new taxes.

Other members of the House are also committed to this number, and some, such as Representative Vic Backlund, have already demonstrated their willingness to take major political

risks on behalf of the children. In addition, I look to the reasoned and principled leadership of Senate President Brady Adams who, along with the governor, has examined The Oregon Quality Education Model, and is willing to listen to other Senate education advocates such as Senator Tom Hartung and Senator Randy Miller. I ask Oregonians to support these individuals in their efforts.

Secondly, there is the principle of democracy itself. The government of this state, right down to the marble on the Capitol steps, belongs to the people. You are the process. And one very significant way in which you participate in that process is through testimony in committee hearings. The Education Funding Committee heard honest and intelligent testimony for nearly thirty hours on the matter of the education budget. And yet this Committee was ordered to ignore your testimony in favor of a funding decision determined by House leadership and ratified behind closed doors in a private caucus meeting. Do not allow this. Let your voices be heard. Remember, it is your government, your process.

Finally, there is the principle of integrity. I consider myself a "team player", someone who is willing to

compromise when necessary and who seeks to build consensus. But every elected official must ultimately answer not to his or her party, but to his own soul. I can compromise the politics, but not the principles. I have been in classrooms all over the state, I have examined the budget, I have studied The Oregon Quality Education Model and the need is undeniably clear: Our children need \$4.96 billion for their schools. On this, there can be no compromise. Others agree. Yet, in the House, in this session, we are not free to vote our conscience with immunity. To my colleagues in the Legislature, I say, do not allow this. Let your voices be heard. Because you respect the process. Because, if we allow each other to be punished for supporting our principles, we have lost something much more important than a committee chairmanship.

The future of Oregon's educational system will be determined by the actions of the governor and the Legislature over the next thirty to sixty days. It is a clear battle between the power of politics and the power of principles. If politics wins, the children lose. And if the children lose, so do we all. Please, let us work together to prevent such a crucial defeat.

## Stand For Children Day

Probably a great many of you reading this column already know about Stand For Children Day. In 1996, the Children's Defense Fund sponsored the first Stand For Children Day, which drew more than 250,000 people to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. for the largest demonstration in commitment to children in the history of the United States. Stand For Children grew out this demonstration into a separate nonprofit, nonpartisan national membership organization focused on providing a powerful citizen voice to give all children the opportunity to grow up healthy, educated and safe.

Since 1996, every year on June 1 we ask people across the country to Stand For Children in their community. Currently there are more than 100 Stand For Children chapters, which have completed or are undertaking hundreds of initiatives for children. In 1997, our 700 Stand for Healthy Children events helped win congressional passage of a bipartisan health bill that enables 5 million uninsured children in America to get health insurance. Last year, Stand For Children Day 1998 included more than 1,200 events nationwide calling attention to the importance of quality, affordable child care.

Now planning for Stand For Children Day 1999 is underway. This year, the theme will be "Ready to Learn, Ready to Succeed." We expect several hundred thousand parents, grandparents, teachers, child advocates, and people who care about children to take part in over 1,500 events on and around June 1 in grassroots-based movement to improve children's education in and out of the classroom. I am asking you to join us in calling for immediate action to solve the education crisis in America, which threatens to leave millions of children unprepared for the demands of the 21st century.

The "Ready to Learn, Ready to Succeed" platform means that, in addition to caring and supportive parents, every child must have:

#### Health coverage.

Children who can't see the blackboard, can't hear the teacher, or are distracted by pain can't learn to the best of their ability. Stand Day events will help children succeed by signing children up for health insurance the new Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Substantial new investments for affordable, quality child care. Young children need proper care and nurturing, stimulation, and early education to enter school ready to read and succeed.

Safe, productive after-school activities. Enriching after-school programs can help the nearly five million young people who are home alone in the afternoon each week to stay out of trouble and give them extra boost they need to succeed in school and in life.

Schools that challenge all children. With small classes, skilled teachers, high standards, and involved parents, every child can perform at high levels. Necessary supporters and high expectations, both in and out of school, can help all children succeed.

Until every child goes to school ready to learn and ready to succeed. America's promise will never be real-

ized. Each of us must make a commitment now to work in our community to put the needs of children first.

Stand For Children Day 1999 events will raise awareness about the urgent need for a holistic national plan to get every child ready to learn and succeed. We are calling for the expansion of the 21st Century School Fund, new funding for after-school programs and school construction, and significant new investments in the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). In local communities, events will make direct improvements in the lives through renovation and construction of play-

grounds, book drives, rallies, and children's resources fairs. We will also join people from all over the world in a "Cyber-Stand For Children" on the World Wide Web. We hope to welcome more than 200,000 visitors to the Stand For Children Website - [www.stand.org](http://www.stand.org) - where they can learn about how to help ensure that all children are ready to learn in the classroom and ready to succeed in life. Last year's Cyber-Stand attracted more than 150,000 people, many of whom sent email to their members of Congress.

If you would like to learn more about participating in or planning an

event this year, please call 1-800-663-4032 or contact Stand For Children via email at [tellstand@stand.org](mailto:tellstand@stand.org). You will be provided with technical support and assistance, and a link to organizers and their events nationwide.

Please join us this year as we Stand For Children.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund and a working committee member of the Black Community Crusade for Children (BCCC). In 1998, CDF celebrated 25 years of advocacy, service, and leadership to build a movement to Leave No Child Behind.

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