

THE MEDIUM

a message from the people...to the people

VOLUME XII NUMBER 35

Wednesday, September 1, 1982

16 PAGES 15 cents

"We don't need your kind..."

Demonstrators Picket South Seattle Merchants



Protestor Luke Ellis marches south of \$1.10 lowered gas sign on sidewalk at Chuck's Exxon at Martin Luther King Way and Orcas.



An apparent unconscious Omara Tahir is receiving medical attention from Seattle Paramedic after Tahir ran into the 'lowered gas sign' on the sidewalk at the Exxon Station on the corner of Martin Luther King Way and Orcas.

"I want this street changed to Martin Luther King, Jr. Way like everyone else," said Luke Ellis, an elderly Black protestor, in giving his reason for picketing.

Esther Hearde said she was a veteran protestor and had helped to boycott stores 20 years ago. "They are protesting this name-change and that's why I am here!"

A young Black female protestor, said, "I think it's racist. They didn't sue the city when it changed other street names."



Protestors explaining their position to a customer at a Holly Park Second Hand Store.

Text and Photos By CHRIS BENNETT

"I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have A Dream," August 28, 1963.

It was 19 years ago last Saturday, that Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech at the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. to over 300,000 people. Nineteen years later, the City of Seat-

tle embraced that dream by naming an eight-mile stretch of a major street in his honor. But the change does not go without protest, both from a group of South Seattle merchants who flat-out oppose it, and from demonstrators who are boycotting what they call "a handful of merchants" who apparently have no R-E-S-P-E-C-T for what has become the law, or for the reality of Dr. King's dream.

Last Saturday was an eventful day for the protestors and the merchants along Seattle's Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Unlike the Saturday before, a racially mixed group of protestors this time showed up in substantially increased numbers. They were represented by various economic backgrounds. Some arrived at the march in Porsches, Mercedes, Volkswagens, trucks, buses, bicycles. Some even walked. And many decided it was time to shed their three-piece suits and other fashionable work garments for the traditional casual dress of the civil rights movement of jeans and other comfortable "boycott" clothes.

The protestors were well-organized as leader, Eddie Rye, Jr. and his picket captains, who wore arm bands, moved about the group. "Don't go on the property. Don't block the aisles," Rye yelled occasionally.

Protestors, both young and old, passed out literature explaining the Coalition For RESPECT's reason for boycotting the businesses. Many had ongoing conversations to uninformed people. "Say little brother, save your money. Don't buy here, respect yourself, all they want is your money. They don't respect you," pleaded one protesting father as he and his three young children carried signs with a picture of Dr. King with "I Have A Dream . . ." printed at the top.



Eddie Rye, Jr., protest leader, along with picket captains, giving final instructions to demonstrators in front of the Rent-It-Shop at Martin Luther King Way and Orcas.

Free And Reduced Meals

The Seattle School District will again provide free and reduced price meals for students from families meeting income eligibility requirements.

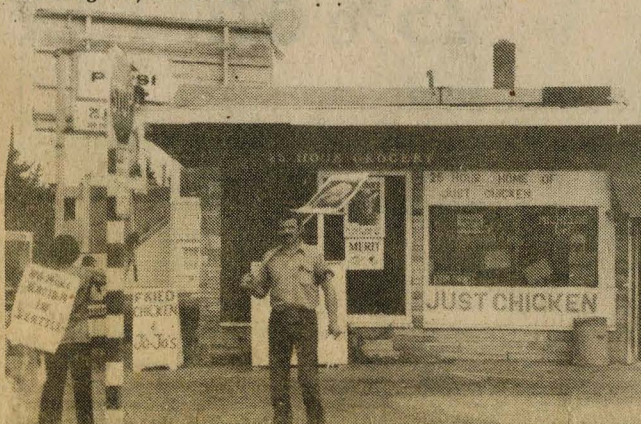
Applications for the program will be sent home with students and also are available at each school. The free and reduced price meals are served under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs.

The program and application process are con-

fidential and the District makes every effort to protect the identity of youngsters involved.

Under the program, meals are served free to qualifying children. The reduced price meals are forty cents for lunch and thirty cents for breakfast (where available).

During the past school year, Seattle's schools served about 12,000 free and reduced price lunches per day, along with 5,000 student-paid lunches.



Protestors at 25 Hour Grocery Store.

"Nobody in their right mind will buy gas from you with that many protestors around here. You can't give it away," said a White South End resident dressed in western attire.

"I sold 450 gallons more last week," the owner, half-grinning shouted back. "We don't need your kind of horse sh-t in our neighborhood."

"You know it's not right, what you're trying to do here. It won't work," the protestor answered.

Another White female protestor talking to the owner as she marched, said, "I will be back to do business with you again if you act right."

The owner seemed nervous, but went about his business. In an apparent countermove, the management at Chuck's Exxon on Orcas and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, lowered the price of their gas to \$1.10 per gallon for the "north isle" pumps.



Veteran civil rights activists Oscar and Ether Hearde with others picketing at the Empire Way Seed and Garden Shop south of Martin Luther King Way and Orcas.

The sign with the lower gas price was rolled out onto a sidewalk next to a utility pole shortly after the protestors showed up. Protestors complained to a Seattle Police Department sergeant about the sign blocking the sidewalk. The sign was left intact as the officer gave the protestors some invalid reason.

"It's strange that police officers always come up with catch-all phrases like obstruction of justice, hindering and other enforceable violations when Blacks are the alleged violators," stated one angry protestor.

The sign controversy continued and got tense when one of the protestors, Omara Tahir, ran into the lowered gas sign and was apparently knocked unconscious. He was taken to a local hospital.

At that time, John Mathis of the U.S. Justice Department's Community Relations Team, asked the owner to remove the sign. He did.

Cool heads prevailed as protest captains pleaded with demonstrators to let the legal system handle the incident.

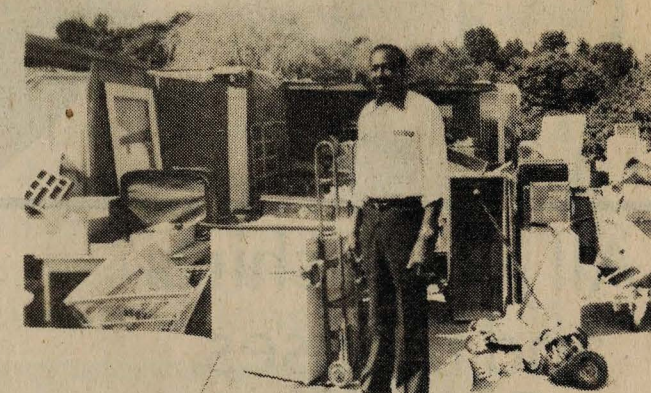
According to Bill Smith of the Engineering Department's Street Use Division, a Seattle ordinance says public areas cannot be used without a permit.

Smith continued, "I know it's illegal and he (service station owner) didn't have a permit. Signs like that we won't even issue a permit for, and a permit is required."

Jesse Ross, Jr., the Black owner of Holly Park Second Hand Store, reacted to protestors who showed up last Saturday at his store. "They have a right. I am not against Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or the street being changed. I am against the cost to me personally."

A White man wearing an Exxon shirt came into Mr. Ross' business. "Hi there TV star," he said to Mr. Ross. He said he was from the Exxon station across the street at Graham and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. When asked if he was against the name-change, he said, "Yes." He said he was a member of the Merchant's Association, and that he would like to see the people vote on it on a city-wide basis. He didn't feel it was an administrative decision.

When asked if he was interested in rescinding all street names recently passed or just the one named after a Black man, he left hurriedly without answering and before his name could be obtained, in the direction of Steve's Exxon on Graham and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. That station has been added to the updated boycott flier being circulated throughout the community.



Holly Park Second Hand Store owner, Jesse Ross, Jr., stands to side of his business.

Jesse Ross, Jr. has been in business about 12 years, and in Seattle since 1935. Although he has become somewhat of a media spokesman for the merchants, he indicated he would possibly "cooperate" if the community would help him offset some of his costs, which several Black businesses have offered to do since he was not part of the lawsuit.

As a media spokesperson, Mr. Ross debated Eddie Rye, Jr. on KIRO Newsline with former Seattle City Council President John Miller as host. Mr. Ross again stated that his only opposition was his personal cost.

According to KIRO, other merchants refused to debate Rye. However, the unidentified man in the Exxon shirt said the merchants agreed that Ross should debate Mr. Rye so it wouldn't appear as a "race issue."

A demonstrator said, "You know it's too bad that no other street change has caused this much controversy. And it's too bad that we still have to boycott businesses just to remind our Black brothers and sisters that their money is welcome, but they're not. In 1982, that shouldn't have to be."

Eddie Rye, Jr., says the boycotts will resume on Wednesday, September 1. He indicated there's growing concern about the lack of Blacks and other minorities employed in many of the businesses along Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. "We plan to address that issue."

Rye said the Coalition For RESPECT can be reached by writing P.O. Box 22094, Seattle, WA 98122, or by calling 722-0726.

Those named in the lawsuit against the name-change are Donald Heider, owner of Four Star Building Supply, 9132 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way; Anthony (Sonny) Sternod, owner of Chuck's Exxon, 5620 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way; Sandra Martin, owner, 25-Hour Grocery, 5418 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way; and Virgil Fox, owner, Fox Plumbing and Heating, 5907 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, and Virgil Fox Rent-It Shop, 6056 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way.

See related articles and Letters To The Editor on page 8.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

RED CROSS COURSE FOR YOUNG BABYSITTERS

A Red Cross Babysitting course for upper elementary and junior high school students is scheduled August 30 and September 1 at Montlake Community Center, 1618 E. Calhoun St. Hours both days will be 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Certificates will be awarded students who complete the course. To register or for further information, students should call Red Cross Nursing and Health Services, 323-2345.

SEATTLE RAPE RELIEF SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

Seattle Rape Relief is holding a volunteer advocate/counselor training starting September 28. Counselors offer emotional support to victims of sexual assault, their families, friends and others. Counselors also provide medical and legal advocacy. Seattle Rape Relief needs women from all backgrounds—especially women of color, older women and disabled women to get involved in the organization. Deadline for application is September 14. Call 325-5531.

WINTER HOURS AT THE SEATTLE AQUARIUM

Starting September 6, the ticket booth of the Seattle Aquarium will close daily to the public at 5 p.m. Anyone who has purchased tickets before this time will be able to view the exhibits until 6 p.m. The Seattle Aquarium opens daily at 10 a.m.

WORKSHOP FOR PROSPECTIVE BUSINESS OWNERS

A free one-day workshop for people interested in starting or operating a successful business of their own will be conducted on Wednesday, September 15, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the downtown Public Library, 1000-4th Avenue. The workshop will be conducted by the Small Business Administration in cooperation with the Seattle Public Library. Registration will be handled at the Library's third floor auditorium starting at 9 a.m. No pre-registration required. There is no fee.

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The East Cherry YWCA has begun enrollment for the Before/After School Program which will start on September 8. The hours are 7-9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Breakfast and a snack will be served. Arts and crafts, games, structured and unstructured activities are provided. Call 322-0186 for registration information.

DANCE CONCERT CANCELED

The Urban Renewal dance concert featuring Kabby Mitchell has been canceled. The event was scheduled for September 4 at Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center. The Sphinx Dance Theatre issued the cancellation notice.

ALPHAS SPONSORING PRE-LABOR DAY PARTY

The Zeta Phi Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity is sponsoring a Pre-Labor Day Party at the B.O.A. Yacht Club on 10th and E. Allison, Sunday, September 5 from 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Admission is \$6. Call 228-3516 for more information.

FREE RIDE TO SENIOR CITIZENS PICNIC

The Royal Esquire Club is offering free transportation to and from the Annual Senior Citizens Picnic at Gas Works Park. Call the club at 322-0557 between 10 a.m. and noon on Saturday, September 4, the day of the picnic. Transportation will be provided between 5-7 p.m. for the trip back home.

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