

SERVICE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE— WHAT DOES IT MEAN

The Northwest Dispatch is a weekly publication designed to service its readers by reporting the current issues that affect everyone economically, mentally and physically in the home as well as the street and workplace. Why? So that all may be more knowledgeable about what is going on around them. The Northwest Dispatch gives the news that may never be printed. We are a community paper and all issues that effect the majority community somehow affects the minority community.

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Jackson Testing Winds in South

Increasing Black political influence and highlighting lack of enforcement of the 1965 Voting Rights Act are the major thrusts behind an Operation PUSH campaign to register 2 million new Black voters before the 1984 national elections.

During a visit to Portland Friday, May 6, Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder of Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity), said the level of success of the campaign will also be used to determine the viability of a presidential bid by him next year.

Jackson said there are about 3 million unregistered Black voters in a Southern belt stretching from Virginia to Louisiana.

Called the "Southern Crusade," the drive kicked off on Sunday, May 15, in North Carolina, a state where PUSH spokespersons estimate some 505,000 unregistered Blacks reside.

The primary reason behind this lack of voter registration, according to Jackson, is oppression.

While only 40 out of the 100 counties in North Carolina are covered under the Voting Rights Act provision requiring federal approval of any changes in state or local election procedures, Jackson contends that the other 60 counties simply do not have the funds to file complaints about discriminatory voting practices.

Among these practices, Jackson said, are gerrymandering; annexation of adjoining white areas to Black majority areas in order to maintain white political power; and at-large elections.

In a statement issued recently by PUSH, the latter maneuver was called "the most devastating form of voter denial and dilution used across the South."

Since such circumstances make running for office more expensive and less likely to be successful, PUSH said Blacks are less likely to try to participate in the political system.

"Voting in a vacuum is not inspiring," Jackson said. "We must, as a strategy, flood the courts and the Justice Department with suits and complaints. We must let the world know that we are dissatisfied."

Meanwhile, registering new Black voters will help to put pressure on political party organizations which, PUSH said, accept "integrated voting" but practice "segregated slate-making." In addition, the new voters can play an important role in putting more Blacks in Congress and in changing the political course of the nation.

"If the urban Black mayors in the North are going to get money to rebuild their cities, we must change the make-up of Congress," Jackson said. "We must get rid of the boll weevils in the House, and the Southern aristocracy, the military hawks, the anti-Black, anti-poor, anti-worker and anti-women Southern legislators in the Senate."

He pointed out that every vote counts in such an effort and noted that Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) won his last election in 1978 by 102,000 votes and President Reagan beat former President Jimmy Carter by only 39,000 votes to win all of North Carolina's electoral college votes.

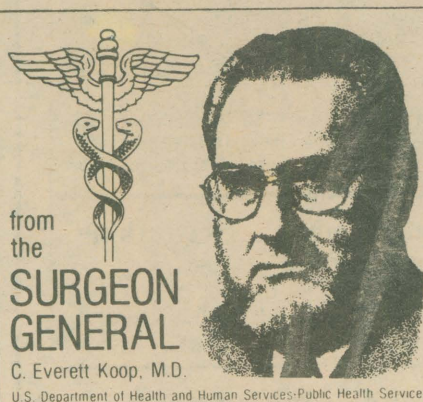
"If our leadership will provide hope, show people a way out and provide a plan, we can extend the spirit of Chicago and Philadelphia throughout the nation," Jackson said, referring to the respective mayoral victories of Harold Washington and Wilson Goode.

Jackson has said he will decide in early August whether to become a candidate for the presidency.



One of Tacoma's Finest, Ms. Beverly Johnson, a promising young attorney. One of Beverly's special interests is helping young people on career goals. She gives something back to the community. Thanks !

Photo courtesy Bob Pickens



Prom Night

Each year, as high school prom time approaches, my thoughts turn to the carnage that occurs on our highways when young people drink and drive. How many youngsters, I wonder, kids who even now are preparing eagerly for the festivities of the graduation season, will be cut down in smoking tangles of steel and shattered glass in the days and weeks ahead?

The imagery isn't pretty, but it's real. And no one can say, "It won't happen to my child." In fact, it does happen, with depressing regularity. It happens to some 10,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 each year. Alcohol-related traffic fatalities are, far and away, the leading cause of death for this, otherwise, extraordinarily healthy age group.

As I noted in this column a few months ago, preventing teenage alcohol abuse is a challenge that faces our entire Nation. I applaud state and local governments across the country for the actions that they are taking to deal with the drinking-and-driving problem. States and communities are enforce-

ing their drunk driving laws more strictly; many state legislatures have raised the legal drinking age to 21.

I also applaud the many student and parent groups who, today, are giving meaningful expression to their concern about drinking and driving. In Wayland, Massachusetts, for example, a group called Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) started a program to prevent that kind of destructive behavior by their peers. This program model now has spread across Massachusetts, and into many other areas of the country. Parent groups, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Remove Intoxicated Drivers (RID), also are spreading.

Still, a recent survey of high school seniors found that they do a good deal of their drinking in cars. Fifty percent said they drink in cars at least some of the time, and 24 percent indicated that most of their drinking is

done in cars. The opportunities for tragedy in this combination of alcohol and automobiles are great. The risks multiply on special occasions, such as prom night. Meant to be the happiest of evenings, prom nights too often turn into nightmares, for youngsters, their parents and the community.

Last month, at the national Conference for Youth on Drinking and Driving, sponsored by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, we learned about "Project Graduation," a most impressive effort by people in the state of Maine to keep graduation week fatality-free. For years, Maine's school and law-enforcement officials had approached prom time with foreboding. Then, in 1979, just two weeks before graduation, seven alcohol-related fatalities occurred in just one area of the state. Saddened and outraged, state and local leaders decided to put an end to this needless carnage.

The Drug and Alcohol Team of Oxford

Hill, Maine, got things started by conducting a number of community awareness activities, culminating in a popular alcohol- and drug-free party for the seniors in 1980. Commenting on the success of that first party, one law-enforcement official observed that "graduation night was quieter than an ordinary night on patrol in the community."

By 1982, the entire state of Maine was involved. School districts across Maine reported successful "chemical-free" graduation parties, some held on cruise boats, some in dance halls with live bands, some at state parks and camp grounds. "Project Graduation" received crucial media support from Maine's four television and 30 radio stations, too, beginning in April and running until after commencement.

The philosophy behind "Project Graduation" is that students can enjoy graduation without alcohol or drugs if they have alternative activities that are stimulating and pleasurable. More than just a good party, however, this unique success story also required strong citizen motivation, public awareness and firm community supervision.

There may still be time for your community to organize a "Project Graduation" for this spring. I hope there is, if you don't have one already. And while you're at it, look ahead and begin to plan an even better alcohol- and drug-free event for the 1984 graduating class. The grim statistics of alcohol-related traffic fatalities leave no room for complacency. Let's, each of us, take a personal interest in the well-being of our youngsters at prom and graduation time. Let's make every graduation season, from prom night through graduation, a period of joy and celebration, not mourning and regret.