



Jonathan Nicholas

One from the Heart

The story is a familiar one. The inner city: Boarded-up storefronts and vacant lots dot the landscape. Prominent local architectural features include prostitutes and abandoned cars. Day after day on the streets, crime and unemployment wrestle, locked in that familiar, fateful embrace.

And the schools? The schools sometimes operate as holding tanks — keeping an eye on the children until the time the detention system takes over the role of surrogate parent.

It doesn't always have to be that way. There is an alternative. The key that unlocks the spiral is people. A special kind of people. People armed with love, care, hope and dreams. Most of all, dreams.

From the moment I crossed the threshold of Immaculate Heart Community School, I got the feeling that something rather special goes on there. The halls were filled with a sense of purpose. Purpose is needed in this neighborhood.

Situated on the corner of Northeast Morris Street and Williams Avenue, the tiny school serves the Albina community. Coincidentally, it has 95 students, one for each year of its service to the Northeast Portland neighborhood.

The statistics speak for themselves:

- 96 percent of the students are black or mixed race.
- 67 percent of them come from single-parent families or families in which grandparents are heads of household.
- 74 percent of them live at or below the poverty level.

Sister Patricia McCrann, development coordinator at the school, makes no bones about the school's role. "Philosophically," she says, "we see ourselves as agents of social change. In a deprived area, where crime and delinquency are daily realities, we try to build a base for a healthier community in two ways: helping children and their families gain identity and self-respect and giving students needed skills for personal success."

The success rate is high. Children completing nine years at Immaculate Heart graduate at or above grade level. McCrann insists that something more than good teaching is involved. "At Immaculate Heart," she says, "we're able to develop a bond over students' tenure. Children through eighth grade from one family can be sent to one school, parents can devote their energies to that one place, and that one place is an extension of their community."

At Immaculate Heart, welfare-support thinking is left at the door. Parents who cannot afford the yearly \$600 tuition are required to give service equivalent to the amount they cannot pay.

The labors of the school are being recognized beyond the neighborhood. The Fred Meyer Foundation recently awarded a \$282,000 grant to Immaculate Heart, in conjunction with St. Andrew's School, to establish a computer and science program.

Charles Rooks, the foundation's executive director, said "We're here not just because we admire what Immaculate Heart is doing for this neighborhood. We're here because we think what's going on here provides a model for neighborhoods clear across the country."

The computers are in place. But the school is hardly resting on its laurels. The development committee has set its sights on a \$1.5 million endowment. The goal is clear: to break that lock of crime and unemployment, and give the community a new sense of purpose. So that neighbors can one day look around and see something other than vacant lots and abandoned cars. And when a proud, successful, employed neighborhood resident walks down the street, folks will look up and say, "There goes one from the Heart."

Judge commits slaying suspect to hospital

By CHERYL MARTINIS
Correspondent, The Oregonian

SALEM — The Salem man accused of clubbing to death a Salem psychiatrist was committed to Oregon State Hospital Thursday after a psychiatrist testified he suffered from "psychotic depression."

After a brief court hearing, Marion County District Judge William Barlow ruled that Kedron Ernie Ellis, 39, was unable to understand the nature of the legal proceedings against him in the slaying of Salem psychiatrist Brian E. Buss and should be hospitalized.

Oregon State Hospital psychiatrist Dr. George R. Suckow interviewed Ellis for about two hours after the slaying at 5 p.m. Wednesday in Salem Hospital Memorial Unit. Suckow testified Thursday that the suspect was "misinterpreting reality."

"He seemed to be delusional," Suckow said. He added that Ellis believed himself to be God and at times referred to himself as Christ.

The suspect also referred to Suckow as George Washington, asking what year he died. At another point, he told the doctor "You have to watch out for the Devil's Triangle," Suckow said.

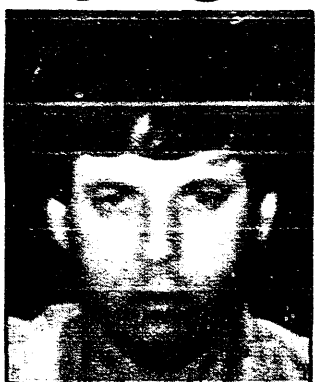
"He denied hearing voices, but I think he was hearing voices," Suckow added.

The doctor said he considered Ellis "suicidal or homicidal," but he said the illness was "treatable and reversible."

Ellis, who is being represented by Salem attorney Marion Embick, will undergo treatment in a security ward of the hospital until doctors believe he is competent to assist in his defense against a charge of murder.

The slaying occurred one day after Ellis, a hospital employee, was admitted as a patient to the hospital's sixth-floor psychiatric ward. He was said to be suffering from depression.

In 1975, records show, Ellis was committed briefly to Oregon State Hospital. The nature of the earlier illness is unknown.



KEDRON ERNIE ELLIS

The attack Wednesday apparently occurred shortly after Buss, 37, entered Ellis' room for a psychiatric interview, District Attorney Dale Penn said Thursday. Penn said Ellis was attacked

with a metal bar about 3 feet long that had been wrenched from Ellis' hospital bed.

Buss retreated from Ellis' room to a nurse's station, where people saw the slaying, Penn said. He said Buss had been struck five to 10 times in the head.

Penn declined to comment on the motive for the attack.

"This isn't the Ellis we know," said Salem Hospital Chaplain Louis Buckley. "He was warm, conversant, sensitive and trustworthy."

Buckley said he had talked with Ellis about 2 p.m. Wednesday, and he seemed depressed, but his mood switched to "happy" after Buckley talked about some of the pleasant times the two had shared. The chaplain said he had expected to see Ellis again the next morning.

Meanwhile, a Southeast Salem neighbor of Ellis said news of the slaying was "just a complete shock." The neighbor said, "It's made everybody

very, very sad. To me, he (Ellis) was always a very kind, gentle and helpful person."

"Obviously, he was not considered dangerous," hospital spokesman Ralph Wright said.

He said psychiatric patients considered dangerous were taken directly to the state hospital or are placed under security guard at the Memorial Unit until they could be transferred.

Ellis was hired by Salem Hospital General Unit as an orthopedic assistant in November 1967. He moved to the Memorial Unit in 1970 and in 1972 became a supervisor of five orthopedic assistants.

Ellis apparently left his job briefly in 1975, when he was committed to the state hospital.

Mental Health Division spokesman Don Hulbert said police officers had taken Ellis to the hospital Sept. 1, 1975, and he was formally committed to the hospital Sept. 5.

Operators assail ambulance rate study

By SURA RUBENSTEIN
of The Oregonian staff

Ambulance operators and staff employees condemned a study of Multnomah County ambulance rates as "seriously flawed" and several called for the firing of the man responsible for the study in a hearing on possible ambulance franchising Thursday.

However, the Multnomah County Emergency Medical Services Board short-circuited the protest when the three board members announced at the outset of the meeting in the Portland Building that they favored additional study before considering a franchising system.

Board members Dennis Buchanan, Multnomah County executive; Portland City Council member Mildred Schwab and Gresham City Councilman Dennis Scott tabled the staff proposal to take the first steps toward franchising and agreed instead to undertake a broad-based study of emergency services and ambulance costs in the county.

They also said they would seek authorization from each of the governing bodies they represent for the study as part of an effort to control ambulance costs.

Joe Acker, who has been director of emergency services for Multnomah County since November, defended his study, which showed that Multnomah County had the highest rates for ambulance service of any area in the country as well as one of the highest quality services.

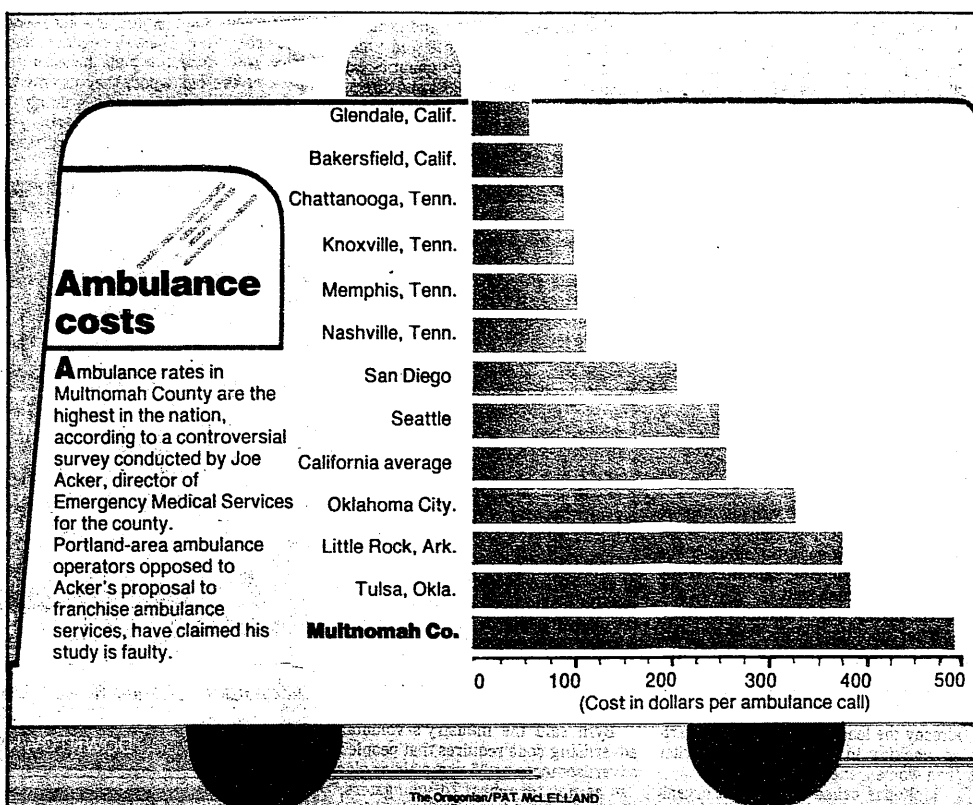
He said he had expected the criticisms of the study and the calls for his firing. "Anyone can argue the fine points of the study," Acker said. "But the rates are examples and are meant as a guideline for comparison."

He said he welcomed the new study requested by the board, which he said should provide more depth than the "limited" study he and his staff completed.

According to Acker's study, the average rate of an ambulance call in Multnomah County was \$490.72, which was determined by averaging the costs of three classes of calls: cardiac, trauma and medical emergency.

This average rate is 1½ to five times as expensive as any ambulance rate found in the national survey, Acker said.

He added that Portland ambulance operators attributed the difference in cost to several factors, including the county's requirement for paramedic staffing and emergency procedures, an eight-minute response time, a high number of calls in which no patients are transferred and the fact that the county budgets only \$100,000 for indi-



gent care.

Acker added that there was no clear-cut rate pattern among ambulance services, areas served or medical problem. Rates varied as much as 30 percent and as little as 6 percent for the same services provided by AA,

dized by the hospital, thus accounting for its apparently lower rate.

"The average cost for a scene call by Life Flight is \$2,000 — of which the hospital subsidizes \$1,280," he said.

Long, who was among about 80 people at the hearing, said that com-

would fall on 450 paying clients.

Long acknowledged that cost containment was a concern, but said franchising was an inappropriate, extreme method of dealing with it. "It's like using a sledgehammer to crack walnuts," he said.

Robert Denbo, operations manager for Buck Ambulance, said Acker's report was untrue and based on incomplete information.

Although he had been part of the committee that recommended hiring Acker, Denbo said that after seeing the report, he questioned his initial decision to hire the director.

"I think that people who are proposing this (franchising) have to resign or be fired," added Don Adler, owner of Care Ambulance. "It's quite apparent they don't understand what they are doing."

Adler said franchising would leave Multnomah County "at the mercy of a single source provider" and would lead to a decline in the quality of emergency care.

Life Flight services were heavily subsidized by the hospital, thus accounting for its lower rate.

Buck and Care ambulances, he said.

He said that ambulance charges for responding to a cardiac arrest were higher than those of two hospital emergency rooms and were higher than charges for Emanuel Life Flight helicopter in cardiac, trauma and medical emergencies.

However, David Long, director of Life Flight, who criticized the study as "seriously flawed," pointed out that Life Flight services were heavily subsidi-

parisons of Multnomah County ambulance rates with those in other communities were complex and that flaws in Acker's study "could lead to inaccurate conclusions by the public and the news media."

He said that of every 1,000 calls to ambulance companies, 400 would not result in transporting a patient to a hospital and that there would be no payment in another 150 cases — meaning that the cost of those 1,000 calls

Some cold sufferers spell relief: z-i-n-c

By LINDA GILPIN
of The Oregonian staff

Victims are being offered yet another weapon in the battle against the common cold.

Zinc gluconate lozenges, a non-prescription medication that purports to alleviate cold symptoms, are selling fast in Portland area pharmacies and health food stores. Merchants, in fact, can barely keep them in stock.

None of the many businesses that stock them sells brands that claim on the labeling or packaging to be a cure or remedy for a cold, according to the store managers.

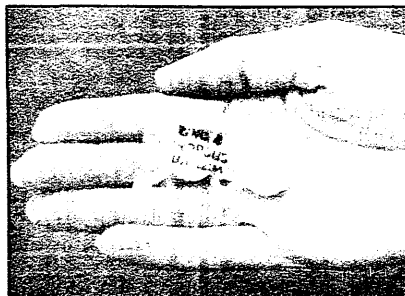
"Making claims about the common cold on the label separates the men from the boys as far as drugs vs. food supplements," said Ellen Miller, an investigator for the federal Food and Drug Administration in Seattle.

She said the zinc lozenges had not been approved as a drug product in the United States and were not in an over-the-counter review by the FDA.

"Frankly we haven't had a sponsor indicate any interest in researching the active ingredients in zinc gluconate," she said.

"We don't know what it does," Donald R. Davis, a researcher at the University of Texas in Austin, said Thursday. "We speculate that the zinc may function the way it is known to work in test tubes, which is to inhibit the replication of virus."

Davis, who holds a doctorate in microbiology, is one of three men who reported in a 1981 publication of the American Society for Microbiology that, on the basis of a freak observance in a hospital, a



The Oregonian/RANDY L. RASMUSSEN

DOWN THE HATCH — Zinc gluconate lozenges, offered by manufacturers as a means of alleviating symptoms of the common cold, are selling fast in many Portland area stores.

relief for cold symptoms had been found. The study was featured in a December 1984 issue of American Health.

The initial study was based on observations of a 3-year-old girl who was hospitalized in Austin because she was undergoing chemotherapy as treatment for leukemia.

She was given a zinc lozenge as a nutritional supplement and refused to swallow it. Instead, she kept it in her mouth and sucked on it. The girl had been coming down with a cold, and the next day her cold symptoms disappeared.

The other two person's names on the initial report were the girl's father and the girl's physician. The experiment on which the formal study was made involved 140 persons, half of whom were given zinc gluconate, the other half placebos, Davis said.

American Health article is accompanied by a photograph of the original patient, Karen Eby, now 8 years old and fully recovered from leukemia.

One Portland naturopath said he was ambivalent about the new medication.

"We use other things that have the same effect in stimulating the immune system but are more nutritionally balanced," Dr. Rick Loumbos said. "I don't think that the zinc gluconate is that great of a solution."

He said he objected to the zinc lozenges over a period longer than a week or two because it would "drive down the copper levels and in turn bring up cholesterol."

Four Portland area Great Earth health food stores are selling packages containing 30 lozenges at a rate of 75 to 100 a day, according to Teresa Schneider, co-owner of the Great Earth franchise, at Yamhill Marketplace.

Fred Meyer outlets are selling them at about the same rate as Great Earth stores, according to Ron Johnson, operation and merchandise manager for chain's Nutrition Center Division. Fred Meyer stores offer three different brands of the zinc compound and have been selling it since November.

Several other area businesses carry the lozenges, including McCann's Pharmacy at King City Plaza in Tigard and Healthway Food Centers.