

Dissed

Black athletes, presidents face racial hurdles

May you live long enough for those who revile and disrespect you to honor you.

Once upon a time, a young black girl ran in a dress at an all-comers meet at Hayward Field. She caught the attention of a Canadian white woman sports psychologist who was married to a black collegiate track star. The track star's coach didn't really approve of interracial marriages, and he particularly didn't like young black high school girls with the ability to beat every male athlete on his track team except for the black male track star, even when they had a head start. You see, Margaret Johnson Bailes was so fast, no girls could give her any competition for training.



Harry Jerome was the only real competition Margaret had in the state. So when Wendy Jerome, Margaret's coach, bade her race Bill Bowerman's track team, freshmen to varsity, and gave them all a head start, Margaret beat all of them except for Harry Jerome. In the interest of fair play and in respect for her athleticism, Bowerman could have welcomed Bailes to train for the Olympics at Hayward. But "uppity" black girls coached by uppity white women in interracial relationships were not welcome in Track City then. Later, she was all but forgotten except by those in the Black community who knew, loved and remembered her.

Yea, verily, when the Olympic Trials came to Eugene, the only Olympic gold medalist from Eugene was initially left off the VIP invitation list. I was told, "Well, it's a male dominated distance running town; it's easy to forget women sprinters." I get it. Pre-this, Pre-that – black female gold medal Olympians running in Adidas must be easily forgotten amidst the Nike hype. Even Harry Jerome just gets a weight room named after him in soon to be demolished Mac Court, though he was among the first to wear the nascent Nikes.

So there were multiple ironies present when Bailes, bedecked in Nike sweats, had a track financed in part by Nike dedicated to her, amid pomp and dignitaries.

Savor this moment, I told her; you have lived long enough for those who dissed you to honor you.

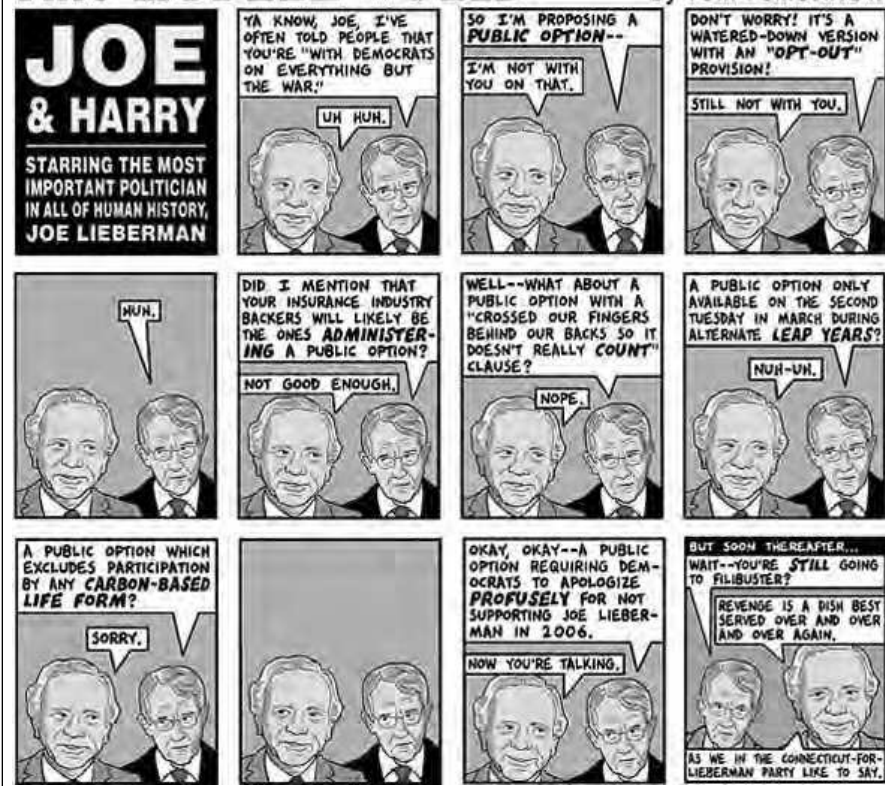
And then Obama got the Nobel Peace prize. A prize only eight black men have ever received – three of them African-American, one of those a fellow Harvard graduate. Like Olympic gold medals, an international honor, this prize was bestowed more for potential than actual achievement – though to be sure, only a brilliant mulatto raised by his white relatives, a Harvard-trained constitutional scholar, could actually inspire enough support to become the first African-American president of traditionally racist America.

Many Americans revile Obama as they reviled Martin Luther King Jr., but the world respects him. Perhaps, like Ralph Bunche who negotiated the armistice between the Arab states and Israel in 1949 and was awarded the Peace Prize in 1950, Obama will use his prize as a standard for even greater accomplishments. Certainly, like Margaret Johnson Bailes, he has lots of obstacles and hurdles placed before him. Consider them as Olympic training, Barack.

Mark Harris is an instructor and substance abuse prevention coordinator at LCC.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PEACEHEALTH DOGMA

In October, my medical office was told by PeaceHealth Laboratories that it would no longer perform any laboratory testing for our patients. In my 40 years of practice in a variety of settings, I have never had a laboratory refuse me or my patients service so, needless to say, my curiosity was piqued.

Ran Whitehead, the CEO of PeaceHealth Laboratories, explained that one of the protestors in front of my office had seen a PeaceHealth courier visit and had complained to PeaceHealth. Whitehead had then researched my practice on my website, www.dr.bours.com. He learned that I offer abortions and vasectomies, practices at odds with the mission of PeaceHealth.

I told Whitehead that I had a seven-year relationship with his lab, primarily to diagnose tubal pregnancies, a life-threatening condition of early pregnancy. I questioned whether he would be adopting a similar policy toward other physicians in the community performing abortions and vasectomies. While I did not receive a direct answer to that question, Whitehead did seem particularly perturbed that I would openly discuss my practice on my website. Perhaps he favors a "don't ask,

don't tell" policy.

PeaceHealth may be so blinded by its mission that it fails to recognize the well-established public health fact that the legalization and improvement of abortion care has had a greater positive benefit on the health of women in our country than any other advancement in health care in the past 50 years. I am proud of the role that I have played in this process.

This sorry episode demonstrates the danger of allowing religious institutions to control a significant portion of the health care market when they prioritize dogma over patient care.

*W. A. Peter Bours, M.D.
Eugene*

THAT KEVIN SMILE

The Oregon Country Fair mourns the loss of our dear family member, friend and colleague, Kevin Dougherty (story, 10/29). Kevin was our advertising coordinator, resident graphic artist and former Bus Crew coordinator. We will miss his utter devotion to the Fair. His willingness to share his enormous artistic talent and creativity was a treasured gift for us.

Kevin had many, many friends among OCF Family. Our hearts are aching. We

STUNNING HYPOCRISY

We on the City Council say we want an independent police auditor, then we diminish the auditor's authority by a hundred little cuts in the ordinance amendments and surrender parts of that authority to the police chief, the city manager and the municipal court judge.

We say we will support the auditor, but we question and demean the professional and personal integrity and competence of our first two auditors.

We say we want capable, experienced people to serve on the Civilian Review Board, ones who will do rigorous, thorough analysis, broaden the discussion, make us think and tell us inconvenient truths; and when we're lucky enough to get what we say we want, we discard them.

We say we want a strong, nonpartisan auditor/civilian oversight system, and we do our best to diminish its credibility and ensure its failure.

Our hypocrisy is subliminal, unspoken, subconscious.

Our hypocrisy is stunning.

*George Brown
Eugene City Councilor Ward 1*



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