

PORTLAND OBSERVER

MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR FULL AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT.

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**The Northwest's Best Weekly
A Black Owned Publication**

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Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of person, firm or corporation, which may appear in the Portland Observer will be cheerfully corrected upon being brought to the attention of the Editor.



The Editor's Desk

Black Press celebrates 145th year

This week is Black Press week, celebrating the 145 year history of the black press. Black newspapers and journals came into being first as a protest against slavery, and then to continue to voice protest against racism in this country.

Some might assume that with the gaining of legal rights, the need for a protest press would end. This is far from the truth. Although civil rights laws and constitutional amendments have been passed, racism still runs deep in this country. Black people still need papers that are owned and operated by blacks, that report the news that is important to the black community and do not reflect the white-bias of the daily press.

This is a factor that is not understood by most whites - including the advertising industry. The assumption that the black population is reached by the white press is false. The credibility gap between the white press and the black community is too great. Long years of biased reporting, slights, and racist editorials prevent black people from having confidence in the white press.

Only when he sees an advertisement, a meeting notice, a solicitation for his vote in his own newspaper, does a black individual know that he is truly being sought.

So the black press will live to communicate the culture and the heritage of a people, to unite and bring strength, and to provide a voice for justice and equality.

Social Security numbers for kids

The Senate Finance Committee voted to give every child a Social Security number when he leaves the first grade.

The plan is designed to block "swindlers, wethacks and welfare cheaters from fraudulently obtaining multiple Social Security cards and using them to bilk others, overt deportation, or collect multiple welfare benefits."

With the passage of this bill, the federal numbering system, which is used to file and cross reference a computerized accounting of the details of a person's life, will be extended to age six. With the misuse of such information by a government which is already deeply involved in spying on its private citizens, our lives would be an open book to any private or public group to which the government saw fit to reveal its files and, of greater danger, to the bureaus and departments of the government itself.

Letters To The Editor

Cheryl James: still no justice

Alfred Lee Henderson
Portland Observer
2201 N. Killingsworth
Portland, Oregon 97217

Dear Friend and Brother:

Congratulations for putting Cheryl James' picture on the front page of your March 9 issue. Your readers might be interested to know that Cheryl, after being admitted to bail and brought from Terminal Island, Calif., to Portland, was held incommunicado at Rocky Butte from 3:30 p.m. Saturday, March 4, to about 10:00 a.m. Monday, March 6, AT WHICH TIME SHE WAS FINALLY PERMITTED TO CALL HER FAMILY.

This piece of cruel and inhuman treatment gives special relevance to another article in your March 9 issue, the column, AS I SEE IT, by Lenwood G. Davis, "Oregon's Black Inmates, the Forgotten Men." It was a great article.

By the way, Cheryl was imprisoned, not on McNeill Island, which is in Puget Sound, but on Terminal Island, near San Diego; and Charles James at Englewood, Little-

ton, Colorado, not Englewood, Calif., as you have it. But these are minor errors, because a prison is a prison, is a prison, under any name, and no matter where it's located.

Sincerely,
Julia Ruuttilla
6830 N. Michigan
Portland, Oregon 97217

Dear Editor,

The March 2 issue of the Observer carried the story by Mrs. Julia G. Ruuttilla about the bail release of Cheryl D. James, 18, a Portland girl who was imprisoned at Terminal Island Correctional Institute, San Pedro, Calif. Miss James' appeal hearing was held on March 7 before the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco.

Members of the Cheryl James Defense Committee would like to inform readers that the March 1 issue of "The Christian Century," an ecumenical weekly published in Chicago since 1909, carries a story about Cheryl and her brother, Charles T. James, Jr., USN, who still is imprisoned at Littleton, Colorado. The story is in the spe-

cial reports section of the magazine along with a tribute to Mahalia Jackson. The editorial comment states the story as being a view of the "problem of civil liberties and federal authorities, experienced by a black family of Portland, Oregon." Entitled, "What Happened to the Jameses?" the report is written by Stephen G. Gilbert, artist and illustrator of Albany, Oregon. The Cheryl James Committee has received replies and contributions from all over the nation since the story ran. One message came with a donation from an American Jesuit seminarian now at Oxford University in England.

Arthur C. Spencer III
P.O. Box 1186
Portland, Oregon 97208

Good job

Letter to Editor:

It looks like you are doing a good job -- and getting out a good paper. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Neil Kelly



Register to vote

Blacks in Portland have been extremely negligent in registering and voting. Perhaps it has been because of a feeling that it did not really matter who was elected - we had a choice between the bad and the worse. But this year it is more important than ever that black people make their voices heard. There are important races and issues in the local level as well as the presidential election.

You can't vote if you don't register. And you must register by April 22.

Not making headlines

The nation's 20 million handicapped persons represent one of America's largest minority groups and, perhaps, its most silent.

Though they have unique problems and needs, they possess useful capabilities that can be developed, and their disabilities should not be a permanent barrier to employment, nor to a chance for a fuller life.

That statement summarizes the 53-year-old credo of the Easter Seal Society, which has launched its 1972 fund-raising campaign this week.

Although there probably will never be enough money available to meet all the needs of the handicapped, the Easter Seal Society believes that a prime target for action must be an attack on the causes of crippling, as well as rehabilitation of those disabled.

What do Easter Seal dollars do? They provide important services to the crippled that include educational programs for better health, vocational training, the operation of rehabilitation center campaigns against crippling accidents, cooperation with government agencies in the promotion of major health programs, and the organization of volunteers to serve the cause of the crippled.

These and other programs are conducted by Easter Seal Societies throughout the country, one of which serves crippled children and adults in this city. Their combined rehabilitation activities are aimed at making the handicapped a smaller minority.

You can help achieve this worthwhile goal by giving to Easter Seals now. You help more by giving more.

The Observer's official position is expressed only in its Publisher's Column (The Observation Post) and the Editor's Desk. Any other material throughout the paper is the opinion of the individual writer or submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Observer.

WASHINGTON BRIEFS

Congress should be urged to act this year on an important proposal that would help eliminate barriers to voting. The National Voter Registration Act (S 2574) currently is before the Senate, awaiting continuation of debate that began in December.

The bill will make registering to vote a much easier process in federal elections. It directs the postal service to deliver postcard application forms to all households and to make large quantities of the forms available at post offices. A prospective voter will fill out the card, mail it back to local election officials and become entered on the registration records if he or she meets normal voting requirements, such as age.



To Be Equal

by Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

I was part of a panel of about a dozen black representatives of national organizations and community groups on a special edition of "Black Journal", a public television broadcast aired throughout much of the nation on February 8 and repeated on many stations since then. "Black Journal" made a valiant effort, but the panel failed "Black Journal", black people, and the nation.

Unfortunately, the program was an exercise in futility. Instead of developing sound responses to the real issues, it got bogged down in ideological discussions that have no real relationship to the daily needs of people who suffer discrimination, poverty and hunger. The spectacle of a panel of black leaders stuck in the mire of dissonance and debate was disheartening evidence of disunity and fragmentation.

It is my feeling that ideology has to take a back seat when people are hungry, jobless, and in pain. Black-led agencies have to deal with the people, they have to mobilize the community around solid programs that deal with the community's needs. Hours of argument about whether separation or integration is better do not fill those needs, nor do they deal with black people's problems.

They may turn on some ideologies but they stay far, far away from the daily concerns of black people. The average black family, for example, is concerned about quality education for their kids. They want to know what their leaders and their agencies can do to improve the education of black youth. Issues like busing and community control

are a part of the answer to their burning question. But it's depressing to find a panel such as the one assembled the other night ignore the basic question and try to turn the busing issue into a test of one's presumed "blackness".

Black people know something many of their spokesmen don't seem to know: that they are living here today, in a society with a certain kind of economic and political structure. They know that their problems have to be solved by using that structure to work for them and then making whatever changes are necessary.

Black people know that they're hurting today. They know that if their leaders hope to gain their respect, the leaders have to deal with the real problems - today. And above all, they know that fantasy and high-sounding ideological dreams do not deal with their problems.

Take all the major issues facing blacks - jobs, welfare reform, hunger, federal health insurance, education, housing. None of them were discussed. What could have been a stimulating broadcast dealing with issues became instead a platform of division and confrontation, a return to the old game of entertaining the white man by exhibiting division and name-calling in public.

Black people deserve more. They deserve more than public confrontations between ideologues and headline-seekers. They deserve a leadership that is not perpetually hung up on issues like integration and separation, but leaders who deal constructively with the hunger for food and hunger for justice that are the primary concerns of black Americans, whatever their personal philosophies.

As I See It

Judge Diez: A woman of compassion

By Lenwood G. Davis

The citizens of Oregon should welcome the election of Mercedes F. Diez to the Judgeship of the Circuit Court in the Department of Domestic Relations for the Fourth Judicial District. If she is elected she will bring new dimensions to that position. Unlike other courts, this one will be hearing cases of a very delicate and sensitive nature--adoptions, divorces, child custody, juvenile matters, etc. Therefore, the presiding judge needs to be sensitive and sympathetic to those persons that come before her (or him). As I see it, none of the other candidates, except possible Gevurtz, have specialized knowledge, attitudes or background necessary for presiding over such cases.



Lenwood G. Davis

In matters that involve domestic relations, the judge needs to know more than the law. She (or he) needs to have an understanding of society and know people. Judge Diez has had several years experience as an Attorney who specialized in family and juvenile matters. She served as Pro Tem Judge of the Circuit Court in Marion County's court of Domestic Relations during the summer of 1971 and has recently served in the same court in Multnomah county. None of the other candidates can claim such distinctions.

When one examines the attorneys who are running for the same position--Simmons, Smith, Gevurtz, Deffy, Knapp, Hart, Vershum--one has to question the sincerity of their motives. I, for one, question most of their intentions and several queries must be alluded to. Are they really serious about the election? Are they running for the office for prestige? Are they seeking political advancement? I wonder. And ALL thinking citizens should too.

Mercedes F. Diez will have to overcome many obstacles if she is to succeed. First, she will have to put together a campaign that will appeal to all segments of the population. Second, she will have to have financial backing. Third, she will have to let the public know in no uncertain terms that she is BEST qualified for the position. Fourth, she will no doubt be competing for the same constituents as Gevurtz (since he has a reputation of being a "liberal" and a man of compassion). Fifth, she will also be appealing to some of the same voters as Vershum, since both are women. Sixth, since she is Black many whites will not vote for her because of her color, even though she should be rated on her ability and not her race.

Judge Diez also has a number of assets that can be most helpful in her campaign. First, she has the needed experience and expertise necessary for such a delicate position. Second, she is a better known candidate than most of the attorneys who are running against her. Third, she is already a judge that presides over both criminal and civil cases. Fourth, she is a Democrat and the majority of the registered voters are Democrats. Fifth, Judge Diez is running at a time when the 18 year old vote could play a major role in her election. (This will be the first time they will be allowed to vote in this kind of election.) Sixth, she is capable, articulate, sympathetic, brilliant, and perceptive. Seventh, the candidate is a woman of human nature; and has a sincere desire to see reforms come about in the judicial system.

"As I see it," Mercedes F. Diez will be elected as a Judge of the Circuit Court in the Department of Domestic Relations for the Fourth Judicial District. If she is not elected, it will not be because she is not the BEST qualified candidate; it will not be because she did not have the support of the general population; it will not be because she did not launch a serious and vigorous campaign; it will not be because she was not properly financed. It will be because the people of Oregon are judging Mercedes F. Diez on the color of her skin, her sex and not on her proven ability, sincerity of motives, character, and compassion for her fellow human beings.

"... President Nixon is perhaps the only man with still an opportunity to turn Peking away from politics that can spell disorder and even nuclear war."

Jean Pierre Brule in the
San Diego Union,
San Diego, California

No black journalists on China trip

Dear Editor:

I find it necessary to say that:

1. The Congressional Black Caucus expressed concern regarding "the gross deficiency" of the list of persons accompanying President Nixon to China (according to the February 17, 1972 New York Times).

2. Miss Ethel Payne's column in the February 26, 1972 Pittsburgh Courier stated:

a. "The White House Press Secretary authorized space for a black representative, but no one came up with the \$6500 it is costing to send each media person."

b. "The only black on the trip is the President's military aide, Lt. Col. Vernon Coffey, U.S.A."

3. Mr. Louis Downing's column of the March 4, 1972 Pittsburgh Courier stated "Political observers across the country are quietly contemplating the recent Administration's action on excluding black reporters from that historic trip to Peking, China . . . Concerned black leaders felt that with so many well qualified black brothers and sisters who made a name for themselves in the field of journalism and reporting they could have recommended several who could have given the Blacks' View of the News."

4. Miss Ethel Payne's column in the March 4, 1972 Pittsburgh Courier shows a long interest in Asia with her historic report of her observations at the 1955 Asian-African Conference at Bandung, Indonesia.

5. The March 6, 1972 Oregon Journal reports that about twenty Black Panthers are apparently "headed for China". I therefore am curious as to what extent invitations were issued to Afro-American news personnel for President Nixon's trip to China.

If the Portland Observer has an itemized list of invitations issued and declined, I hope it will publish same. If no official invitations were issued, I think that also should be known. I feel that the list of news personnel published in the February 8, 1972 New York Times was not representative. I believe that broad-based representation is fundamental to a free press.

Sincerely,
Mrs. O.J. Gates

(Editor's note):

We have been informed by the National Newspaper Publishers Association, an organization of black-owned papers, and by Stanley Scott, Assistant Director of Communications for the White House (black), the method of selecting reporters to go on state visits is as follows:

- (1) The newspaper publishers request permission to send a representative;
- (2) The newspaper guarantees to pay the cost (in this case over \$6,000);
- (3) From among those who applied, invitations are issued by the White House. Therefore, no one was invited who had not requested an invitation.

Out of 2,000 who applied, 87 journalists went to China. Forty-five represented publications; 43 were with television. We have a list of those who applied and were accepted.

NNPA was assured that if a black publication applied, an invitation would be issued. As Miss Payne states in her column of February 26, "no one came up with the \$6500 it is costing to send each media person." It is unfortunate that some of the larger black publications were not able to combine their resources and send a representative, but apparently they feel there were better uses for their money.

Black inmates forgotten

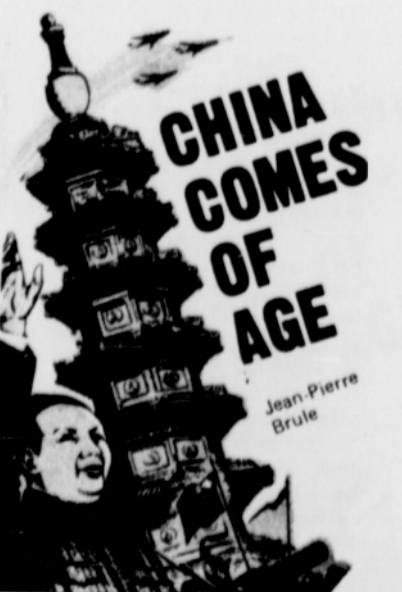
Dear Editor:

I read with great interest last week's article entitled "Oregon's Black Inmates: The Forgotten Men," by Lenwood Davis. Being in the field of Social Work, I can appreciate the many points that he was trying to impress on the general public.

I concur that the Black inmates are truly the forgotten men in our society and that we must become sensitive, sympathetic, and aware of the plight of the inmates.

Of all the articles that Mr. Davis has written thus far, I like this one best. I am glad that Mr. Davis is writing for the "Portland Observer."

C. A. Thomas



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