

PORTLAND OBSERVER

MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR FULL AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT.

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A Black Owned Publication

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The Editor's Desk

ALFRED LEE HENDERSON

Black political unity: A priority for Oregon

There are many ways to attack oppression and one of them is politics. Politics does not consist of merely putting names on the ballot or casting a vote on election day. Politics is a power game and we are operating from a position of powerlessness.

This is a political land we live in, and it is foolish to think we can accomplish anything without using the political system that has been built - regardless of our philosophical view of that system. We cannot dismiss any means to further our course, whether that means is our own or someone else's. When we are truly involved in the political process and build a strong base of political power, then we can change that process.

As a unified group with common goals and expectations and a plan of implementation, we could begin to build a base of power. Politicians who are elected to represent us directly, as those from our legislative districts, would be made to understand that they are responsible to us. They would know that they can no longer be exploiters of naive black people. Those politicians who are not directly responsible for putting into office would realize that we are potentially a power with which they must reckon.

A small group of citizens reacting from a position of weakness, fragmented and apathetic, cannot yield influence on the political and economic forces that are now in control. But a small group of citizens who are united, who are involved at all levels of the political spectrum, and who understand the political process, can become a powerful force.

The Oregon Black Caucus can be the vehicle to build this unity. There is a place in the Caucus for every black person - regardless of political theory, economic status, age or education. Only through an organization of this type can the black community get together, draw up priorities, plan a course of action and present a united front to our oppressors.

Buy Black!

It amazes many to see black people, year after year, spending their money in business establishments that have a negative attitude toward us and our community.

Within the heart of Albina there are businesses that will not hire blacks and that do not contribute anything to the organizations and agencies of the community. They are in Albina to make money -- and that is their only concern.

And even more sad is the fact that black businesses are failing because of lack of trade. We spend our money with the racist white businessman and let our own black businesses starve. It is difficult to start a business. Expenses are high, especially in the beginning. Those among us who are brave enough to take this step need our encouragement and support. It is easy enough to point with pride as a successful black business or to mourn when one fails, but where were we when trade was scarce, when we might have had to pay a little more than at the supermarket next door?

A little pride and a little discretion can go a long way. Why spend your money where you can't work? Why support someone who has no respect for you?

Why not spend another nickel and trade with the black business or with the white business that hires blacks and is part of the community? Unless we support these businesses they cannot exist and we will continue to see our resources drained away by uncaring white business establishments.

It is easy to see if there are blacks employed in a store; to check your black papers and see who pays to advertise for your trade; to see who supports youth activities; to learn who contributes to community services.

Only when these businesses learn that black people will no longer buy from racists will there be a change.

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.



The Observation POST

Schomburg Library saved

The Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and Art has been awarded \$200,000 by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Schomburg Collection, which is owned by the New York Public Library, has been housed in a tenement on 135th Street in Harlem, where lack of storage facilities and dampness and weather change have contributed to the deterioration of its precious manuscripts. Black scholars have long implored the City of New York and foundations to save the collection.

The Schomburg Collection contains the heritage of black people and has long been one of the most important centers in the world for the study of blacks. It includes works by authors of African descent, books, manuscripts, recordings, periodicals, sheet music, and art objects by and about black people.

The collection was begun by Arthur A. Schomburg, a Puerto Rican of African descent, who through the years amassed one of the largest and most important libraries devoted to blacks. During the early 1920's, when the 135th Street Library found it impossible to keep enough books on blacks on its shelves, a committee of black scholars including Schomburg, James Weldon Johnson, H. H. Harrison and John Nail, decided to preserve books that were difficult to replace. The community responded with gifts from private libraries and the reference room of the 135th Street Library became a center for students of black history and culture. The collection was purchased in 1925 by the Carnegie Corporation and given to the New York Public Library. Many original manuscripts of early black writers - Gustavus Vassa, Benjamin Banneker, Jupiter Harmon, Lemuel Hynes, Ira Aldridge, Crummel, Blyden - are a part of the Collection.

Black scholars have been concerned about the condition of the Collection and afraid much of it would be lost. Now the Collection will be saved. The gift will enable cataloging and storage so that it can be used for research.

Now the battle to save the Schomburg Collection may be over. Thanks are in order for the dedicated staff that protected the Collection during its worst days.

Letters to the Editor

Put people programs first

To the Editor:

A great deal of public discussion regarding the County's fiscal crisis and the resulting service cuts has taken place. While there has been some misinformation and some oversimplification this examination is, I believe, of real benefit.

It has not been commonly understood what services are provided by the County. Many continue to think of county government as rural government, although most of the real action is in the area of urban human services. Demands for more "law and order," health and environmental protection, and responsiveness from government are ever increasing. These increasing demands, coupled with a crippling inflationary spiral, a familiar factor to family budgets, equals a need for more resources. The inflationary impact on family budgets and the dependence of local government on the property tax does little to motivate the citizenry to pass revenue measures. The closeness of local government allows it to become the most convenient place for people to vent their frustration.

It has been said that the Federal Government has the resources, the state governments have the authority, and

the local governments have the problems. If the national defense budget could be halved and the saving be sent to local governments, Oregon's share would be enough to totally eliminate the property tax.

The tax system in America stinks. Many Americans are not paying their fair share. The wage earner who files a W-2 form has no access to tax loopholes to "take advantage" to reduce his taxes to little or nothing. Some Americans are super rich, yet avoid paying taxes. Twenty per cent of our people are in an upper income strata and are "making it" at anywhere from a level formerly reserved for royalty to one of living fairly comfortably. Sixty per cent are just making it and are able to pay their bills. But twenty per cent are not making it at all. Yes, I agree, we are in need of great and sweeping tax reform. It must start at the Federal level and work down.

My own position during the budget slashing sessions (a minority of one) was one of putting people programs first by taking a large sum from the gas tax fund and transferring it to the general fund. My fellow Board members disagreed. Such an action might well have found Multnomah

Alcohol greater killer

To the Editor:

Advocates of gun control have attracted a fair amount of attention for their concern in behalf of about 20,000 U.S. civilians killed each year by guns. That's about 55 per day. A better case for all gun control might exist, though, when combat deaths are considered too. If all wars and military engagements this country ever has participated in were going on today, the total daily U.S. combat deaths, together with current civilian gun deaths, would amount to 467 killed per day. One might think the end had come.

However, when this figure is compared with the greatest killer of all - alcoholism - one wonders why there isn't any concern about the 400,000 Americans that die annually from this sickness. That's more than 1,100 per day.

Why? Probably because the "powers that be" don't want information put out that might disturb the "system". And

when you question a tremendous source of revenue for government and business you'll find many deaf ears in Congress. Alcohol consumption likely will not be outlawed but a substantial amount can be replaced by something less harmful than smoking cigarettes. Tobacco is addictive; marijuana is not.

If we're concerned about youth, look in any bar on Saturday night and it probably will be packed with young men and women - future alcoholics if they aren't already. If public awareness of the damage by alcohol, by far the greatest killer of all, causes the subsequent legalization of marijuana as a substitute, then this country will have done more for the people on a scale that this or any other country ever has done before.

The Oregon Legislature will consider changes in the law on marijuana in the next session. The question is - will they deal

As I See It White Businesses in the Black Community - Part 1

By Lenwood G. Davis



Lenwood Davis

Most residents in the Black community in Portland are unaware that we are paying relatively more than whites for our housing, durable goods, and food, in the Black community and getting a much lower quality of food than whites in other parts of the city. Perhaps, one of the reasons why we do not realize that we are paying these higher prices is that we do not shop outside of the Black community. One needs only to go to other areas of the city to see the difference in quality. Surveys have been conducted nationwide to show that \$3,000

in "Black money" buy only the equivalent of \$2,500 in "white money." Blacks have known for a long time that we pay a "color tax" in higher prices for food and other consumer products, as well as, in installment credit charges. The increasing unrest toward these practices could have serious repercussions in the Black community to higher prices for SUBSTANDARD goods and services could result in far more "selective buying" by Blacks than what we have been doing in the past. The Black community should

no longer patronize those white stores that refuse to supply it with the same quality of services and products that they give their white customers in other parts of the city.

If white businesses in the Black community do not change their attitudes toward Black customers it may become necessary for the Black community to boycott, picket, and demonstrate against them. This time, however, unlike the past, the picketing and demonstrations will be more massive and more intensified.

"Nationwide," according to D. Parke Gibson, in "The \$30 Billion Negro," "the Black community spends up to 33 per cent on food as compared to 23 per cent of all Americans." Moreover, members of congressional subcommittee investigated consumer complaints in major cities and found that supermarkets in the Black community mis-marked package goods, frozen foods were half thawed, and the managers admitted that after two days on the shelf, packaged meat was taken back to the butcher's block, repackaged, relabeled, and a new date placed on the package. Similar practices are alleged to be occurring in the greater Model Cities area here in Portland. A number of Blacks have informed this writer that they have purchased a number of frozen meats and later found that when they thawed them,

the meats were spoiled.

Very little has been done by the government to inform and educate Black shoppers. Hence, this is one area that our local civic community organizations can establish meaningful consumer educational programs. Even though meaningful consumer protection laws, no doubt, will have to come from national, state, and local government, consumer protection to combat sharp selling practices, excessive charges, poor quality merchandise, abuse of credit regulations, and improvement of garnishment laws would contribute substantially to an improved climate among Black consumers toward white businesses.

Blacks are, and rightfully so, in revolt against fraudulent selling practices, hidden garnishment practices, etc. While legitimate businesses have an interest in curtailing their rivals' sharp practices, THE MAJOR SOURCE OF CONSUMER INFORMATION FOR BLACKS COULD WELL BE KNOWLEDGEABLE MEMBERS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY ITSELF!

Note: Part II of White Business in the Black Community will appear next week.

Congress and courts on busing

By Dr. Benjamin E. Mays

Anti-busing sentiments have united the North and South. Both Houses of Congress have passed the mammoth education bill with an anti-busing article attached to it. No one clothed in his right mind would fight the education bill, a bill that would provide approximately 19 billion dollars for colleges and universities in the next three years.

This bill would aid all colleges, especially Black colleges for a student may get as much as \$1400 a year on his school expenses. The opponents of busing knew that if they could make anti-busing a part of a 19-billion-dollar package, it would get through Congress.

Now a moratorium has been declared on any new busing and on busing that has been acted favorably upon by a Federal Court but which is under appeal. This will continue until January, 1974, or until all cases under appeal have been adjudicated. The next result is and will be to slow down desegregation in the North and in the South.

The Richmond Case consolidating Richmond, Chesterfield and Henrico Counties school systems has been denied by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal. It will no doubt be appealed to the United States Supreme Court. The education bill and its busing moratorium will in all probability be signed into law before this article is written.

Two things have happened here in Atlanta. The District Court has denied a proposal by the NAACP which would require that a majority of each school in Atlanta be black, ranging from 55 per cent to 87 per cent. This plan would have required massive busing. The NAACP plan requiring this was a plan worked out by Dr. Stolee of Miami University in Florida.

The court said in summary that the Stolee Plan would hasten the day when Atlanta would become an all-black school system and that since 1967 segregation in the Atlanta Public Schools has been due to de facto forces. It is the opinion of this writer that the Stolee Plan would do what the courts say since the Atlanta Public School System has been becoming blacker and blacker since 1953.

In 1953 the black-white ratio was approximately 70 per cent white and 30 per cent black. In 1972 the white enrollment is 27 per cent and the black enrollment is 73 per cent. Atlanta is an independent school system with five adjacent counties having a majority of whites. To institute the Stolee Plan would make it easy for whites to flee into either one of the counties adjacent to Atlanta.

What is the solution to this white flight from the Central City? If the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the Richmond Case, it might well be that this would be the next step for other school systems in the United States to follow.

The ACLU has just filed a suit requesting the consolidation of nine school systems in Metropolitan Atlanta. This would include Metropolitan Atlanta, five adjacent counties and three city systems. Such a plan would certainly make the white flight more difficult.

County in the courts defending this "raid" on dedicated funds. The majority position may well be sounder and without question a safer interpretation of the Oregon Constitution relating to gas tax funds.

I was prepared to run the risk of a court test because I feel a community that does not provide for libraries which promote ideas and intellectual activity, health protection, help for kids in trouble, and a justice system with justice has no business spending money for roads and public works. This is not to say that storm drains, road maintenance, safety devices, and the like are unimportant, for they are also needed. In my set of views, however, they are of lower priority in maintaining a healthy society.

These are indeed complex matters of the first order, and we should not engage in the fruitless luxury of oversimplification or scapegoating. In these times of massive and pell-mell change when all of our institutions are strained to their foundations, we must seek real answers and solutions. The discussion should continue to that end.

Sincerely,
Donald E. Clark
County Commissioner

with it in light of the needs of people, or the needs of the "system"?

Wayne L. Johnson
4366 N.E. 41st Ave.
Albany, Oregon

Scientology

Dear Editor:

I recently found that your paper carried our press release regarding the Church of Scientology's 22nd Anniversary, (Thursday, May 18th). I certainly hope that the article was of interest to your readers.

Thank you for helping make known our church's plans for helping the community.

Sincerely,
Rev. Steven R. Heard
The Church of Scientology of Washington State
910 Elliott Avenue W.
Seattle, Washington 98119

WASHINGTON BRIEFS

The U. S. Justice Department will attack racial discrimination in fire departments in Los Angeles, Chicago and Birmingham. All face action under the 1964 Civil Rights Act which last March was extended to cover state and local employees.

Of the anti-busing legislation passed by Congress, Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D-Calif) said the measure "suspends the constitutional rights of black children. It not only affects busing of children but even those who walk to school."

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