



*We see the world
through Black eyes*

A suitable task

The problem as to whether Blacks should participate in the observance of the nation's 200th birthday is still a nagging one in many areas. Opponents say Blacks would be celebrating 200 years of slavery, segregation and racism, inequality, poverty, injustice and oppression.

That argument was renewed last week by Lerone Bennett, historian and Senior Editor of *Ebony* magazine. Bennett asserted that whites should not celebrate the Bicentennial either. But despite the questions and reluctance, Blacks are rejecting a non-celebration position in favor of one that varies from "gung ho" to indifference.

We could withdraw from the Bicentennial celebration and remain in the shadow of history, or we can use this time of interest in the nation's history to point out that we, too, have played a part and to claim our just share.

In Portland, one aspect of the Bicentennial will be the endeavor of the Oregon Black History Project to write a history of Black people in Oregon. This is to be a community project, with emphasis on the recollection of our older citizens. Many have lived through periods of trial and oppression, yet have survived and have contributed. Let's not let this history be lost forever.

The contribution of Blacks to Oregon have never been compiled or written. It is impossible for a person to go to one place, a book or file, to learn how Blacks have lived in Oregon. Teachers who have the responsibility of teaching history, have no where to turn when designing their courses in Oregon History. Young people who would like to read about the old days in Oregon do not find Blacks in their school books.

This Bicentennial year it is appropriate that material on Black contributions to Oregon be collected. This can be our celebration of the nation's 200th birthday.

Register to vote

The primary election is just six weeks away and many Blacks are still not registered to vote. It is too easy to sit back and not participate, then blame others for the candidates they chose.

Many Blacks have died to insure the right to vote. They must have thought this a valuable right. Perhaps when it comes easy, we lose interest.

Across the country, voter participation has been light and there is an atmosphere of apathy. This is unfortunate since many vital decisions are to be made. We saw during the Nixon Administration the damage that can come from choosing the wrong man. Although Nixon was finally deposed, his appointees will remain in government -- making decisions that affect our lives -- for many years to come. All of those who failed to vote helped put Nixon in the White House.

Local races also are of extreme importance to our community. Elected this year will be state senators and representatives who will represent our community. A State Attorney General -- the man who enforces the laws -- will be elected, as well as other state officials. A Mayor, city and county commissioners, and school board positions will be filled.

We can register and vote, work to elect those we think will best serve our interest, or we can sit back and let others decide.

The Committee for Albina Voter Registration will conduct a campaign to register and mobilize Portland's Black community. This is the first time in recent years that an all-out campaign will be conducted to get out the Black vote. A rally will be held on April 20th at 7:30 p.m. in the Student Union Building on Cascade Campus. A good turn-out is in order.

Young Black too 'aware' to study

by Herb L. Cawthorne

There is an unfortunate climate influencing the thought of Black people today. It is a climate that causes a lazy approach to study and inquiry. It is a climate that throws a dark shadow on the people's will to work hard to learn about and explore the unique aspects of their history.

There is evidence to suggest that the more we gain a so-called "awareness" the more we neglect to dig deep into our history. The general unstated assumption is that because we appear to be gaining such a deep awareness, there is no pressing need to pursue our history through reading, writing and active communication.

Because of images created in part by the mass media and also by the exploitation of the Black identity movement by self-service individuals, we have gained the impression that Black people are more aware of the events and historical development which affect the Black condition today. I say the impression is false.

We are not as aware as many are led to believe. We are not as aware as we should be, and we are not in a position to understand the struggles of the people who came before us as well as we should be. Especially is this true of many, many young people who are not willing to pay the price of the difficult work required to master the knowledge of our past.

The impression that we have gained an unprecedented level of awareness has led many of us to think that this awareness is sufficient to meet the needs of the latter half of the twentieth century. The impression is false.

The life of many Black leaders, who have sacrificed everything to advance the cause of equality in America, are obscured behind the fog created by this unfortunate climate. Malcolm X is a prime example.

We think we know Malcolm X. We think we understand his development and we think we appreciate his sacrifice. We think we know he rose to become one of the outstanding Black leaders of this century. We speak of him as though we knew him personally, and as though his thoughts were our own thoughts.

I say we think wrong. As with Martin Luther King, Angela Davis and Jesse Jackson, Malcolm X suffers from the idea that we in the Black community are so

aware of our plight. Because we think we are so aware, we seldom encourage our own children to think deeply about the life and meaning of Malcolm X and other great Black people. We freely use his name as a badge to mark our relation to the Black community, but behind the badge there is an emptiness in understanding and appreciation.

We must begin to strongly encourage our children to look deep into their past. We must encourage them to dig and dig deeply into the lives of those who have given great sacrifices to move the cause

of Black Americans forward.

And in order for them to accept our encouragement, we in the Black community must do more than simply speak -- we must act. If our children see our concern for understanding the people who have made important contributions to the struggles of our race, they too will more likely develop a similar concern.

Then the unfortunate climate will be eliminated and our children can stand on the solid foundation of yesterday as they try to build a better world for their children tomorrow.

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New York City's Crisis Revisited

by Vernon Jordan

New York City's last-ditch struggle against bankruptcy got a lot of national attention a few months ago, culminating with a hardline stand by the Administration that finally led to a three-year plan to get the city back on the road to solvency.

That plan didn't end New York's problem -- it just was a step on the way toward correcting its fiscal emergency. In fact, the imposed cuts in City spending have worsened conditions for its poorer citizens and may, in the long run, prevent the City from regaining its economic viability.

One basic remaining problem on the fiscal scene is the dollar straitjacket the City has been placed in by its three-year plan that forces it to cut a deficit that took ten years to accumulate, and builds into the City's budget over \$2 billion just in interest charges.

Those are tough terms; private corporations and foreign countries have all been able to get easier terms than that. So the very terms of rescue impede full recovery and make the long-term outlook bleak.

With so much of its revenues going to creditors, the City has fewer dollars left for essential services. That means lay-offs of City workers.

Because the lay-offs have been on the seniority principle, Black and minority

workers have been the ones chopped from the payroll in disproportionate numbers. New York's Human Rights Commissioner, Eleanor Holmes Norton, reports that in the past year-and-a-half the City has lost half of its Spanish-surnamed workers, forty percent of its Black males and almost a third of its women employees.

So equal employment opportunities have been a big victim of the fiscal belt-tightening.

Another target of budget cuts is the City University, which has a free tuition policy and recently instituted a successful open admissions policy that has enabled more youngsters to get a college education.

Open admissions is one of those programs popularly labelled as being for Blacks while actually benefiting greater numbers of white ethnics who never before went to college in such numbers.

Now, both whites and Black students have their futures endangered since the City is trying to get the state to take over the colleges, and that means tuition payments beyond their means. Even if limited scholarship money becomes available, white middle class families that won't qualify for such aid will have less reason to stay in the City, leading to increased white migration to suburbia and greater segregation.

It's as if each step leads to a second one, and then a third, each with unfor-

tunate results for the City and for its residents.

Attracting more job-producing businesses to the City is one goal of the City's planners and a good one. But several key officials are now talking about bulldozing slum areas to build industrial parks to attract factories.

When it is pointed out that it's cruel to uproot families in this manner and that the City has plenty of empty land zoned for industrial use, they say yes, but we need to give industry a symbolic gesture to show we want them. So the solution seems to be to kick the poorest and least able out of their homes and neighborhoods not for concrete results, but for "a symbolic gesture."

All of these real and impending hardships, including some that border on the cruel, are taking place in the name of fiscal austerity and lack of City tax revenue. But at the same time, City residents pay some \$7 billion in federal taxes earmarked for the Pentagon.

In other words, the City shuts down hospitals and firehouses for lack of money while it sends billions to Washington for redistribution to other parts of the country in military contracts.

It all adds up to an anti-city, anti-minority set of priorities imposed upon our largest city. Solution of the fiscal crisis was bought at the cost of increased misery for the poor and by undermining the City's future.

OMSI

(Continued from p. 1 col. 3)
efforts and is working very hard to see his plans become a reality. Persons interested in his activities can call him at 248-5900. He would be more than happy to discuss the OMSI program in greater depth and would be more than happy to speak with interested groups.

OMSI is more than "just a museum". Besides just being a facility, where one can go and see the exhibits, OMSI also offers classes for all age groups, beginning with pre-schoolers, at very minimal prices. The classes are fun and exciting and can range from micro-wave cooking to mountain climbing. Applications for the Summer Outdoor Education Classes are now being accepted. The doors to OMSI are constantly being opened wide and wider to pass new avenues of exciting education for all.



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