



We see the world
through Black eyes

Voters' voice heard

Wally Priestley has overcome! He chalks up three victories -- House District #16, the Portland School Board and the Multnomah County Intermediate Education Board.

Priestley was the object of an all out campaign by the "power structure." Bill Wyatt moved into Priestley's district and ran a well headed campaign for Priestley's House seat. Wyatt was also supported by the media, which have long described Priestley as incompetent and ineffectual.

Although Priestley's philosophy may be too radical for the "Power structure" and the white press, he seems to be in tune with the voters. Not only did he retain his House position representing North-Northeast Portland, but knocked incumbent Paul Howe, an official of the Northwest Natural Gas Company off the school board. In the IED race he defeated top contender Forrest Rieke, a prominent Portland Attorney.

During his several terms in office, Priestley has refused to put on the trappings of government. He lives simply and pursues his ideals. Although his pursuit of rights for all -- minorities, farm workers, peaceniks, union workers -- has caused much concern in some quarters, he goes in with his crusaders -- to the picket line, to the streets, to jail.

The Observer congratulates Wally on his victory! We supported him in his campaign and we know he will represent our community well, as he has done in the past.

Thank you, Governor

Governor Bob Straub has appointed Ellis Casson to the State Board of Education, making him the first Black to serve on this important Board. The Board sets policy, regulations and standards for all the public schools in Oregon.

This is a crucial appointment in this time of declining educational achievement, shortage of funds for education, and always the threat of disorder over the educational opportunities of Black children.

We appreciate the fact that the Governor appointed a Black. Too often Blacks have been left out of the committees and Boards where the real decisions are made. Governor Straub has demonstrated once again that he intends to be a Governor for all people.

Ford: Politics before principles

In asking for a judicial termination of the court ordered school busing, President Gerald Ford is bowing to the right wing conservation of Ronald Reagan. Does Ford want the presidency so much that he will sell out the nations' Black children?

This move -- at this time -- can be nothing else than politics, and dirty politics at that.

We realize that Ford has always been opposed to busing. He has always been against those programs that would insure Blacks equal justice. But he has, since he has held the presidency, at least gone through the motions of being a president for all people. Now he has given up this masquerade -- all for a few votes.

Bringing an end to court ordered busing will not bring an end to conflict. The very act of considering such a thing will only bring about new violence on the part of those who oppose "the law of the land." And the president can certainly not expect Black people to allow what little has been gained in the last twenty years to be snatched away by an ambitious politician.

President Ford is asking for votes -- but he will bring about the greatest conflict and violence that the nation has seen.

Get home fixed free

The CREP program, sponsored by the Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee, is in one of their most unusual and needed projects to hit this area. The project, funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce, has as its primary goal the training and employment of unemployed persons in the construction field.

A by-product is the free "winterization" of homes of low-income persons. Winterizing includes furnace repairs, roof repair, replacing windows, repairs to walls and ceilings, and outside paint. There are many low-income families and elderly persons who are in great need of these repairs, but who do not have the money with which to buy them.

CREP offers these services free, with no strings attached. Homes must be occupied by low-income owners and must be located within the city limits of Portland.

CREP is seeking homes right now and the time to apply is now, not next winter when the house gets cold and damp. All persons who think they might be eligible for the CREP winterization program are urged to call 288-8391 for information.



The Bicentennial and Blacks

by Yvonne Brathwaite Burke

On the eve of the United States' Bicentennial celebration, one question is continually asked of the nation's Black public officials: Are America's Bicentennial festivities indeed cause for Black celebration? The implications of the query penetrate the very heart of the ideals and precepts upon which American democracy is built.

Can Black Americans endorse wholeheartedly the commemoration of an event -- the American Revolution -- which freed white Americans from Colonial restraints while leaving Blacks still fettered to oppressive American ones?

Can Black Americans participate in the celebration of a freedom which has to a substantial extent yet eluded and excluded them?

Can Black Americans join in fellowship with some of the same forces that have stridently opposed racial progress alternating a variety of means -- many malicious and all misguided -- to toast the conclusion of 200 years of American history?

Or, to rephrase the questions, should Black Americans be willing to do so?

Obviously, no rational American can fondly recall the lynching of people who were simply attempting to attain the voting privileges that accrued to others through birthright.

No sensitive American can nostalgically reminisce about the unleashing of police dogs on people quietly protesting their exclusion from schools, restaurants, bathrooms, water fountains, and the front of buses.

No thinking American can take pride in the past enslavement and degradation of a people whose sole "crime" was being born Black. No person who appreciates all that is innately great and beautiful in man can applaud such acts of utter inhumanity.

But despite the tremendous injustices suffered by Black Americans, there still remains cause for optimism. We, as Black Americans, should applaud our perseverance.

We should utilize the Bicentennial celebration to commemorate the Crispus Attuckses, the Harriet Tubmans, the Frederick Douglasses, the Martin Luther Kings and countless other Afro-Americans who did more than just survive -- those, who despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles, transcended these apparent limitations to contribute mightily to our American heritage. In fact, not only must we remember, but we must continue in the spirited tradition of these indomitable Black men and women.

Somehow, we must reaffirm our faith in the actualization of American ideals. We must reaffirm our national and global commitment to the eradication of human ills. The Bicentennial is not a time for mere reflection, but an occasion to chart -- through the replacement of idealistic rhetoric with pragmatic action -- future progress.

The real importance of the Bicentennial lies in its presence, not in its reiteration of the past. In that, all Americans can find common ground.

The Black American contribution to the nation's culture has been immense and integral. Every aspect of American life -- the scientific, the social, the political -- has been enhanced by Afro-American achievement. The Afro-American legacy is all pervasive. There is much to take pride in.

During the nation's 200 years of existence, there has been both glory and infamy. Much has been accomplished, but much more lies ahead to be done.

If America's 200th birthday celebration is viewed, however, as a reassertion of the primacy and enduring truth of the originally envisioned American ideals and as a pledge to ensuring the fulfillment of every American's potential, the Bicentennial will indeed be cause for celebration by all.

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