



We see the world
through Black eyes

Portland needs NAACP

All is not well in Portland. The public school system is still segregated although much is said of Portland's "voluntary" desegregation program. The Albina elementary schools have been taken over by "Early Childhood Centers" where a fine education is offered to bused in middle class white pre-school students while the elementary grades remain nearly all Black. The upper grade (sixth, seventh, eighth) children are bused out all over the city and it is called "voluntary." Because the children are not treated equitably by the receiving schools, they tend to drop out and we have a low percentage of Black students graduating from high school.

A greater percentage of arrested Blacks are booked and jailed as opposed to the percentage of arrested whites. This imbalance continues through the courts so that over sixteen percent of the inmates at the state penitentiary are Black — in a state with less than a one percent Black population.

Where is justice when a Black man is sentenced to twenty years for the alleged rape of a white woman but a white man convicted of the "sexual abuse" of a Black woman is not sentenced.

Numerous complaints have been filed charging the City's CETA program with discriminating against Blacks. The county has been found in non-compliance; the state has only two Black administrators; and private industry, with few exceptions, continues to ignore affirmative action/equal opportunity requirements.

There are few viable Black businesses in Oregon — support from both the Black and the white communities being almost nil. The unions still discriminate in Oregon.

A recent city livability study demonstrated that the poorer areas of the Black community do not receive the necessary city services — that rats, litter, traffic, noise and pollution are serious problems.

Not long ago a cross was burned on the lawn of a Black family.

Next week several thousand NAACP delegates will be in Portland for the 69th Annual NAACP Convention. This organization, which for years has been in the forefront of the struggle for liberation, will discuss these issues and others on a national scale.

When all the excitement is over and the dust clears away, we would hope that the Portland Branch would begin to address some of the serious problems found by the Black community in Oregon.

Return kids' playground

The tenants of Dekum Court have a legitimate complaint against the Housing Authority of Portland. The Housing Authority, when it sold surplus property next to the housing project, sold the area that had been used for play by the children living in the court.

HAP decided that there is sufficient recreation area, so it left only a narrow strip of steep bank and a space next to the recreation building. The recreation building itself will be surrounded on three sides by the private housing that will be built.

HAP might have some theoretical basis in determining how much space is enough, but however that decision was made it is simple to see that there is no suitable place for children from forty families to play.

This sale demonstrates no concern for the tenants of the project or their children. It smacks of retaliation against the Concordia Community Association which has had nearly a continuous battle with HAP over conditions at Dekum Court and has opposed the sale of the property.

Common sense would dictate that HAP buy back enough property to provide adequate play space.

One good thing that has come about is a closer relationship between the neighborhood association and the Dekum Court tenants. This is enhanced by the recent increase in communication between the tenants and their neighbors. Closing off the avenue of communication by the physical structure would be detrimental.

HAP should reconsider this decision.

Insults Black citizens

It is an affront to the Black community and all the sensitive, thinking citizens that the Portland Chamber of Commerce and the World Affairs Council would invite the Ambassador of South Africa to Portland as an official guest.

When a man representing a government as evil as South Africa is welcomed as an honored guest, what does this dictate about those who are subjected and killed by his government. What does it indicate about the attitude of the organization to the Blacks of this nation.

As a new member of the Chamber we strongly object to the invitation and wonder if our decision to join the august "community" organization was wise.

NAACP Convention Highlights

<p>Monday, July 3rd</p> <p>Mass Meeting, Keynote address by Margaret Bush Wilson, chairman of the NAACP National Board, 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Thursday, July 6th</p> <p>Negro Film Festival, 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Youth Freedom Awards Banquet — Benson Hotel — Speaker, Clevon Little.</p>
<p>Tuesday, July 4th</p> <p>Plenary session. Speaker — Benjamin L. Hooks, Executive Director, NAACP.</p> <p>International Affairs — Paul Warnecke, International Disarmament Commission, 2:30 p.m.</p> <p>Mass Meeting — The Honorable Patricia Harris, Secretary of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Friday, July 7th</p> <p>Plenary session — Arthur S. Fleming, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 10:00 a.m. Veterans and Military Affairs Luncheon — General Brooks.</p> <p>Freedom Awards Banquet — Donald Woods, former editor of South African newspaper "East London Dispatch," who fled South Africa in 1977, 7:00 p.m. Hilton Hotel. Mr. and Mrs. NAACP Coronation Ball — Benson Hotel — 9:00 p.m.</p>
<p>Wednesday, July 5th</p> <p>Negro History Film Festival, 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Mass Meeting — Youth Night. Governor Bob Straub brings greetings.</p>	<p>Wednesday and Thursday — concurrent workshops: Education, Voter Education, Membership and Fund Raising, Economic Development, Legal Life Membership, Veterans and Military, Labor, Public Relations, Housing, Leadership Development.</p> <p>The Public may attend all sessions as space permits. Only delegates are permitted to vote and enter floor discussions. Tickets for luncheon and dinner meetings are available. All meetings unless otherwise indicated will be held at the Memorial Coliseum.</p>
<p>Thursday, July 6th</p> <p>Lawyers Breakfast — Portland Hilton — Tom Adkins, President, Boston Branch — expert on school legislation, 8:00 a.m.</p>	

W.E.B. DuBois: In spite of all odds

by Herb L. Cawthorne



With a vague sensation of sadness inside, I listened the other day to a Black teacher soaked to the core with pessimism and discouragement. It sounded as though the outright destruction of American prejudice had been allowed to invade his very soul. I could not help but reflect on the disability in thought and action that comes with a broken will. There is no stronger antidote against the motivation to fight than the sense that our condition is too bad to improve. Beware of the one who harbors the hopeless vision! Watch out for the blatant concession: "What I do does not matter."

Hearing the tireless moans of others, one could, if one didn't know better, think that Black Americans today have it so very hard; that we live under the worse circumstances our people have suffered in the long 400 years of productive struggle in America. The sound we hear today are often the desperate sounds of mourning.

Undoubtedly, the struggle is big and the days till victory are long. But we have no right to weaken ourselves with aimless weeping and stifle our souls with weighted groans. The spirit of our history forbids it. Those of us with the education to forge a good tomorrow out of an unhappy today must allow no element of our psychology to hinder the thrust ahead.

If the great ones before us stood tall, and gave genius to an indifferent world in spite of odds that make child's play out of obstacles today, then there is no reason for this generation, or any hereafter, to weaken its charge against prejudice by bemoaning the inevitable uphill journey. Facing obstructions strong enough to bruise and batter the toughest soul, there were those who nevertheless met the winds of resistance head on. Dr. William E. Burghardt DuBois is a magnificent case in point.

The odds against W.E.B. DuBois were monumental. Yet the contribution of his prolific Black genius "should occupy the most conspicuous place" in the history of the ideas of Afro-America, according to his biographer, Arnold Rampersad.

During his long life, spanning from 1868 to 1963, DuBois fought against the pervasive, irrational hatred of white citizens; a hatred that was intensified by the irritating "agitation" of an educated Negro. He achieved, in spite of it all. Arnold Rampersad writes that "If the full history of the impact of Blacks on the American mind is ever charted, his education of the whole nation will be seen as significant indeed."

As the dominant theme in his ground-breaking challenge, *The Souls of Black Folk*, the persistent and unavoidable conflict of Black life in America was expressed best of all by DuBois. The clash of two opposing forces — a Western crust and an African core — is ever present in the Black reality. Like the rest of the Black population, DuBois lived this duality, and admirably put to words the natural conflict of Black humanity in America: "One ever feels his twoness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from

being torn assunder." The relentless confusion of this inescapable "twoness" was, in DuBois' prime, enough to drive the psyche of most darker people toward the refuge of nothingness. But not DuBois. With a fearless spirit and a near flawless education, he fought endlessly.

He fought with valor to recreate the Black past. His extensive writings demonstrated an unshakable belief in the importance of history. He knew that with careful calculation



W.E.B. DuBois

the slave society took unmerciful measures to destroy the memory of its Black laborers. A people unaware of the past flounders aimlessly in the present. There is little hope for the revivification of a new day. Long before Malcolm X rekindled the Afro-American's awareness of Black history, W.E.B. DuBois had labored to reconstruct the glorious journey of a people determined to survive in a strange and senseless land. He asked in *The World and Africa*, "Don't you understand that the past is the present; that without what was, nothing is?"

Surely with a clarity seldom found today, DuBois understood the demands of his awesome challenge. In *Black Folk, Then and Now*, the world was made privy to the burden he knew he had to carry: "I do not for a moment doubt that my Negro decent and narrow group culture have in many cases predisposed me to interpret my facts too favorably for my race; but there is little danger of misleading here for the champions of white folk are legion. The Negro has long been the clown of history; the football of anthropology; and the slave of industry. I am trying to show here why these attitudes can no longer be maintained."

Though a political crusader, editor and writer, DuBois was above all one of America's great educators. His feet firmly rooted in understanding, his arms sternly folded in grim determination, W.E.B. DuBois would not relent in his demand for Black self-development. "We daily hear that an education that encourages aspiration, that sets the loftiest of ideals and seeks as an end culture and character rather than bread-winning, is the privilege of white men and the danger and delusion of Black." On the right of the Afro-American to have the opportunity to achieve the widest development, DuBois would not compromise.

Characteristically, then, DuBois would have no part in the concession

of Booker T. Washington, who at the turn of the century advocated a program of industrial training and commerce, combined with a strict, self-imposed complacency as to the agitation for social and civil rights.

In opposition to Washington's theory, DuBois brought forth the unasked question, "Was there ever a nation on God's fair earth civilized from the bottom upward?" he didn't hesitate to answer: "Never; it ever was and ever will be from the top downward that culture filters. The Talented Tenth rises and pulls all that are worth the saving up to their vantage ground. This is the history of human progress; and the two historic mistakes which have hindered that progress were thinking first that no more could ever rise save the few already risen; or second, that it would better the unrisen pull the risen down."

Today the theory is as sound as ever. If the percentage cause you to cringe because of its apparent elitism, disregard the notion of a "tenth," and focus instead on the idea of the "talented." Concentrate on the principle which reminds us that as a race of struggling Black people it is the highest duty to encourage all Black youth in "self-expression and experiment; to test their wings, to find ability and strengthen character, and to learn self-control," as DuBois once said.

If more of those in education would pause long enough to digest the yet timely knowledge in his collection of essays entitled *The Education of Black People*, there would be fewer confused today as to that which can be expected from young Afro-Americans in the classroom. Once their historical handicaps have been acknowledged, once the sorrowful excuses made, many more teachers should be encouraged to stand firmly and repeat DuBois' truthful words: "There may often be excuse for doing things poorly in this world, but there is never any excuse for calling a poorly done thing, well done."

DuBois knew that no oppressed race could manage its destiny without a will to face the senseless monster of oppression "breast forward," with no whimper of regret or fear of foe." And he wanted all to understand that his constant call for Black higher education and for Black leadership was grounded in the unavoidable fact that "Before the Temple of Knowledge swing the Gates of Toil."

Those fighting today are stronger thanks to the work and teaching of Dr. DuBois. We have no time to moan and cry and shed our tears over the struggles of today. We must hear and live out his admonition: "If the great battle of human rights against poverty, against disease, against color prejudice is to be won, it must be won not in our day, but in the day of our children's children. Ours is the blood and dust of battle, their's the reward of victory."

Let us cultivate a believing vision and bring the genius of our generation forward against all the odds. Let us be honored by the challenge our proud history has left us. Proudly, we should Lift Every Voice and Sing:

*Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.*

Dekum Court playground

(Continued from Page 1 Column 3) between the buildings would make the noise unbearable."

Although adequate play space was frequently mentioned during the discussions and hearings on the property disposed, no firm requirements were set. "We have people buy houses that close to the project, they will build a wall between them and us and we will be isolated again." A wall and high fence separate the project from private apartment buildings on the north. Residents fear that the new owners, finding their back yards a few feet from the project, would build a wall or other features to separate them. An open space, used for a play area, would provide a meeting place and help integrate the project into the neighborhood.

All but three families (two were not available) signed a petition asking HAP to buy back the portion of the property that lies north of Saratoga Street.

J.W. Brayson has agreed to sell

the property to HAP or any other public agency and will not develop it until after June of 1979 in order that these decisions might be made.

The Concordia Neighborhood Association's meeting Tuesday night with the Dekum Tenants Organization, voted to provide the city with four options: 1) that the City of Portland purchase the property and either maintain the property or contract for its maintenance with HAP or CCA; 2) that CCA apply for community development funds to purchase the property; 3) that HAP purchase and maintain the property; or, 4) that HAP purchase the property and hold it until CCA or the City can purchase it from them.

Nolan of the City Park Bureau said it is highly unlikely that the Park Bureau would become involved since the current policy, in light of shortage of funds, is to develop large parks or to develop school property into parks.

Vern Lentz of the City Planning Bureau favored the third option, having HAP purchase the property.

Bill Hunter, assistant director of HAP, explained Lyndon Musoffs' statement as expressed to the Tenants Association last Monday night. He said that in HAP's opinion, when the property line was redrawn and the property sold, was that "we have provided adequate recreation space." Although HAP is not opposed to any deal between Brayson and any other party to obtain the property for public use HAP "at present has no intention of negotiating to buy the property." HAP, he said, has "no stake in the land at all."

Mrs. Palmer stated that the tenants feel they have not been kept informed — they were not told about city hearings about the property; requests for information were unanswered — they did not know the property was sold until informed by the purchaser's surveyor; they were not told where the property line would be; they were not involved in any of the decision making. Hunter assured her that the tenants will be involved in the decision of when to move the swing sets.



ALFRED L. HENDERSON
Editor/Publisher

Portland Observer

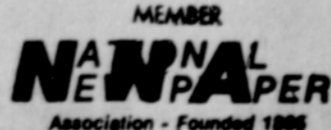
Published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217. Mailing address: P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Telephone: 283-2486.

Subscriptions: \$7.50 per year in the Tri-County area, \$8.00 per year outside Portland.

Second Class Postage Paid at Portland, Oregon

The *Portland Observer's* official position is expressed only in its Publisher's column (We See the World Through Black Eyes). Any other material throughout the paper is the opinion of the individual writer or submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the *Portland Observer*.

National Advertising Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
New York



\$7.50 in Tri-County Area \$8.00 Other

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Observer
Box 3137