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Behind the wall

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"How far will our grievances go?" asked one Black inmate who stated he has been incarcerated for eighteen years.

"Will they be watered down to the point to where they will have no effect at all?" asked another.

These were the questions placed before Robert Hughes, Conciliation Specialist, Community Relation Services, a branch of the U.S. Department of Justice and Paul Aronson, Corrections Ombudsman for the State of Oregon.

Representatives from the Black, Indian, and Mexican American inmate culture groups, along with other inmates, met for the fourth time to discuss ways and means to handle charges of discrimination problems within the walls of O.S.P.

Many of the inmates believed such an important meeting and subject should be brought to the general population so that all inmates would become aware of what was being stated each time this group of individuals came together. They felt that passing 'word of mouth' was very dangerous.

These minorities' discrimination grievance meetings were the result of charges being made against this institution when Benjamin Hooks, national director of the NAACP visited O.S.P. last July 1st, along with local NAACP members.

John Jackson, Portland Branch NAACP President, in mid July called on the U.S. Justice Department to intervene in order to help solve some of the issues brought forth by the minority inmates.

Some of the issues presented were as follows:

1. Over-crowded conditions.
2. More minority employees in decision-making positions.
3. Minority sensitivity training sessions for all personnel in Oregon Correctional System.
4. Employee willingness to escort minority inmates on community

speaking engagements, community projects and bedside visits when family members are ill or in hospitals.

5. Religious diets placed on mainline chow.

6. Equal worship services for Muslim faith.

7. All material adherent to rules and regulations distributed and posted in Spanish.

8. Equal choice in selection of 'outside' entertainment sponsored inside the prison.

9. Greater access to legal envelopes and to a Notary Public; inmates in isolation and segregation receiving legal books and material.

10. Visiting conditions.

11. Medical conditions.

12. Legal mail being withheld.

13. More minorities allowed in transitional and drug programs.

There were other grievances, but these were the main concerns that Aronson and Hughes sat down with the Superintendent and his staff to iron out at this time.

H.C. Cupp related to the Ombudsman and Conciliation Specialist that he welcomes this type of communication about problems and that all channels are open to the Superintendent's office for such problems to be discussed.

Cupp is known throughout the prison population for making himself available to listen to individual problems in the mess hall, on the yard, walking through the shops, etc. (a rarity many other prisons do not have) — this Correspondent would like to offer this bit of information which might surprise many of the inmates and 'Behind the Wall' readers.

When the O.S.P. Law Class, which hosted Hooks' visit to this institution, sent out letters for support, Paul Aronson and the Correction Ombudsman Office were the first to come forward to offer



PAUL ARONSON

support.

Many times solving issues takes time, but Aronson assured the group that each and every grievance will receive his office's full attention. He stated, "that's why I am here, because it's my job to do exactly this."

Aronson continued to say "Many times the Correction Ombudsman likes to play 'low key' in handling issues. We work better that way, but I am asking each minority club to invite me to their meeting so we may get to the heart of every problem."

The minority club representatives stated they would offer the invitations.

Hughes said he will meet again with the group in the near future as soon as Aronson has written his report on the grievances.

This Correspondent must applaud the inmates and these two gentlemen in the manner in which they discussed and presented issues that need to be aired out all over this nation.

FLASH FLOOD

Rain
sunshine and clouds,
lightening, then thunder.
Rivers of rain,
wind,
and later . . .
flowers fragrance,
sunshine,
drying riverbed;
life returns.

by Robert F. Reeves

Blind Ignorance

I
The sense of
non-
sense
is harder
to penetrate
than the darkness
of pride

II
And woman
is
man's yes
that vibrates
the cosmic harmonies

III
While the dark is,
it only last,
and last . . .
and last . . .
until you -
i
g
h
t . . .
a candle.

by Julius D. Snowden

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Carter urges vigorous affirmative action

WASHINGTON — President Carter has urged all executive departments and agencies in the federal government to make certain that they follow through on the recent Bakke decision and "develop, implement and enforce vigorously affirmative action programs."

"I also want to make certain that the Administration's strong commitment to equal opportunity and affirmative action is recognized and understood by all Americans," President Carter said in a memorandum.

The President said that the recent

Bakke decision by the U.S. Supreme Court enables the federal government and his Administration to continue affirmative action efforts at increasing minority employment "without interruption."

"With your help," the President told department and agency heads, "this Administration has been able to develop and implement meaningful affirmative action programs throughout the federal government, and as a result minority employment has increased to its highest level in history."

"Since my Administration began,

I have been strongly committed to a policy of affirmative action. It is through such programs that we can expect to remove the effects of discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all Americans," the President said.

The President said the Bakke decision "indicates that properly tailored affirmative action plans, which provide minorities with increased access to federal programs and jobs and which are fair to all Americans, are consistent with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with the Constitution."

Contractors barred from government work

WASHINGTON — A construction firm from Pennsylvania and one from Michigan are no longer eligible for government business because of equal employment opportunity violations, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment Standards Donald Elisburg has announced.

Debarred from contract work are American Sanitary Sales and Service, Inc., a plumbing and steamfitting firm based in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, and Painting Corporation of Detroit, a Warren, Michigan, company specializing in paint and wall covering work.

The companies violated equal employment opportunity

requirements under Executive Order 11246. This presidential order forbids federal contractors and subcontractors from job discrimination based on race, sex, religion, color or national origin. It also requires such firms to take affirmative action — positive steps — to hire and promote minorities and women.

Executive Order 11246 is administered by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in the Labor Department's Employment Standards Administration.

Specifically, the two contractors failed to meet hiring goals for

minority workers in several construction crafts. They also neglected or refused to make "good faith" efforts to reach these goals.

"If federal contractors want to continue their government business, they cannot remain lax in their job obligations to minorities," said Elisburg.

"Failure to comply is a breach of contract, and, when necessary, we will not hesitate to bar those companies from further government work."

Both companies will be barred from obtaining future government contracts unless they can satisfy the director of OFCCP of their compliance with the executive order.

Taxation forums offer information for voters

Portland Community College will offer a series of eight evening forums on taxation this fall to help people in the metropolitan area consider the taxation issue carefully before voting on the property tax initiative November 7th.

Entitled "Taxation, Myths and Realities," the forum series will begin Thursday, September 28th, and run 7:00-9:00 p.m. each Thursday through November 16th. Admission will be free.

The forums will be offered at three PCC centers — Sylvania, Rock Creek and Cascade.

"Our plan is to have each forum serve a particular area of the metropolitan community," Jim Magmer, project coordinator, said.

"Sylvania, for instance, will serve the southwest; Rock Creek the northwest; and Cascade will serve north Portland.

"Two forums were scheduled for following the election so the people, depending on whether the initiative passes or is defeated, can develop personal stands for future reform," Magmer said.

The forums will be coordinated with a series of articles prepared by Courses by Newspaper, with the same overall title as the forums' "Taxation, Myths and Realities."

The articles will begin early in September in the *Community Press*, the *Lake Oswego Review* and the *Hillsboro Argus*.

While admission to the forums is

free, anyone who wishes may take the forum series for college credit in the humanities by registering for the forums as a course, Magmer said. "But registration is not required to attend the forums."

A PCC instructor will moderate each of the forums. Community leaders are being invited to take part as speakers and panelists. The audience will take part with questions and comments.

Persons in the community who would like to take part in the forum as panelists and speakers should write Jim Magmer at Portland Community College, 12000 S.W. 49th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97219.

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Facts of Importance

VOLUME III

AUGUST 1978

SERIES I

Exodus completed its first certificate training course for its counselors on July 21, 1978. This training provides additional counseling skills to its staff, in order to serve its clientele more consistently.

A similar course will be scheduled for the community at large during the month of October. The course will center around communication linkages between substance abusers, spouse of substance abusers, children who are substance abusers, and parents of children who are substance abusers. This course will be taught at the grass-roots level.

Registration for this course will be published in our September column of the *Portland Observer*.

Our clients thank you for your continued support.