

EDITORIAL/

What is multi-cultural study?

Several schools exhibited their multi-cultural activities at the school district administration building Monday night as a part of the competition for the McPhearson Award in human relations understanding.

Many of the exhibits were interesting and colorful, demonstrating hard work by staff, students and parents and, hopefully, some evidence of growth in understanding the history and culture of various ethnic groups.

One exhibit - that of West Sylvan - was particularly interesting. Seventh graders had prepared notebooks on a "journey" around the world, describing a variety of nations they had visited - Germany, England, India, etc.

The thing that was unusual about this exhibit was that the class (or the teacher) chose to select South Africa to visit as a representative of the African continent. Why choose the most blatantly racist nation in the world? Why not choose a Black ruled nation

that would demonstrate some attributes of Black African culture?

Of the notebooks displayed only one mentioned "coloured people" at all and we were told by this student that "in religion as in other areas coloured people have accepted white traditions" and that coloured people eat the same foods as whites but have a somewhat lower cost diet.

These children did learn about the geography, the republican form of government, the products, the animals etc.

No where was there a mention of either the contributions of Blacks to the history and culture of South Africa, their contribution to the economy, apartheid, the terrible oppression of Black people.

We certainly hope that this is not a model for multi-cultural curriculum in the Portland District.



Dumping nuclear wastes in Africa

By N. Fungai Kumbula

Of all forms of energy, nuclear energy is the most controversial. Ever since its introduction several years ago, it has been the subject of more, often heated debate than just about anything else in recent years. In an increasingly energy hungry world, any new form of energy would normally be welcomed with open enthusiasm. The objection to nuclear energy however, are well founded.

The Three Mile Island near disaster of a few short months ago did a lot to rekindle the nuclear controversy and to educate others who probably had never given the problem a moment's thought. Had there been a meltdown at TMI, the resulting radiation would have contaminated the air and the water for several hundred miles around Three Mile Island and forced the evacuation of thousands of people. Some scientists even say that had a meltdown occurred, the radiation effects could have been felt over half of the United States.

It is this kind of controversy that has made the nuclear industry so sinistinely secretive. The demonstrations at TMI Seabrook, New Hampshire, Washington D.C., Trojan and Mt. Ranier, Wash. have all demonstrated the public's anxiety over nuclear power. Meltdowns and nuclear accidents aside, the most perplexing problem is what to do with the spent nuclear fuel, the wastes.

Plutonium which is the material used in nuclear plants is very radioactive. That means, unlike other forms of fuel such as wood, coal, petroleum products and solar as well as wind energy, the products (wastes) are not readily biodegradable. Radioactive substances can linger around for thousands of years; therein lies the problem of disposal.

Recently, it has come to the attention of a number of Portland area African students that one American company involved with the nuclear industry has paid the leader of one

West African country to dump nuclear wastes in his country. The nerve, the callousness, the gross disregard for the consequences of such an agreement are just unnerveing. The fear prevalent among us all now is that, with all the super-secrecy surrounding the nuclear industry outlined above, how many "deals" went through without any of us being any the wiser?

State after state in this country has refused the "dishonor" of being used as a nuclear waste dump and with good reason. These radioactive wastes can cause miscarriages in women and all kinds of birth defects, and not just for a few years but for thousands of years. Radiation can also cause all kinds of human mutations. Remember Hiroshima? Thirty years after dropping of that nuclear bomb, the survivors of the blast are still suffering from the effects of radiation: miscarriages, birth defects and various kinds of cancer.

With such stark evidence as to the undesirability of nuclear ill effects, was it mere greed, sheer avarice, gross disregard, abysmal ignorance or lingering "uncle tom-ism" that prompted one Siaka Stevens, President of Sierra Leone, to agree to Sierra Leone's being used as a nuclear dump?

A Godfrey Harris, Los Angeles consultant to the Nedlog Technology Group says he offered Siaka Stevens \$25 million to dump toxic wastes in Sierra Leone. Harris, a former state department employee, went on to say that Nedlog planned "to ship all kinds of hazardous wastes" to Sierra Leone. The plot to ship nuclear wastes to some foreign country was hatched to circumvent stringent tough regulations against dumping in this country. Apparently, companies are now required to post bonds running into several million dollars in case of an accident later on.

The Association of African Students at Portland State University is up in arms over this issue and, un-

derstandably so. As one student put it, "Nuclear radiation respects no boundaries. It's not just Sierra Leone that will be affected but all of West Africa and even the rest of the continent." Curiously enough, it is the U.S. State Dept. that seems more concerned about this whole issue than the government of Sierra Leone. The State Dept. is afraid if word of this leaks out, Africans could condemn the United States for "dumping its wastes in the Black man's backyard."

This is one issue the Africans have promised to fight with everything they've got because this threatens the very survival of the continent as a whole. Though Liberia and other West African countries that had initially been contacted by Nedlog had opposed Nedlog's dumping plan, Harris describes Sierra Leone's Stevens' response as "one of great interest." Is this old fool totally ignorant of the hazards of nuclear wastes? Another sad facet of the whole episode too involves the gross disregard for Africa's welfare by these foreign corporations so bent on pursuing the dollar at all costs. The Sierra Leone incident is only the tip of the iceberg; it should also be the kind of lever used to tip over the likes of Stevens. Africa has no place for such money-hungry, gullible, naive, callously indifferent Uncle Toms any more. Can you imagine what would happen if Sierra Leone suddenly had to deal with a whole new rash of cancers, deformities, mutations and other such horrors? The future of the African is at stake.

Over the next few weeks Siaka Stevens and all stooges of his kind will feel the full fury of the wrath of the African. This should serve as a warning to one and all who were contemplating such folly that the real Africans and all their allies will not stand idly by while the continent and all its future generations of unborn children are put on the block for a few million miserable dollars.

Letters to the Editor

Appoint ex-con to parole board

Dear Editor:

Recently on page 16A, the Oregon Statesman, between the cartoon strips of "Peanuts" and "Blondie" and a homeowners tip on letting hot bath water sit and cool rather than drain it, (thereby warming the air in the house), there was a small article entitled, "Brown appoints ex-convicts to State Board of Corrections." Everyday convicts are released from prisons somewhere, every day convicts who commit new crimes are in the news somewhere, everyday ex-cons walk city streets somewhere, but only once in a blue moon an ex-convict who succeeds in turning his life around in problems in their own lives, let

alone withstand all the added problems they have piled on top of them by the prison experience, but at the same time there are hundreds who do not succeed. Successful ex-cons, it seems to me, would be good role models for people in prison trying to relate to a society the convict could not make it in is a hard concept. Trying to relate to a society that allows the things it does behind walls is a hard, if not impossible, concept. But relating to an ex-con who made it in spite of all the added spite of the prison experience, is noted briefly between the cartoons and homeowner tips.

There are thousands of ex-cons who cannot straighten out all the

problems the state weighed him down with is not only a realistic concept but also an ideal.

Few prisoners know of successful ex-convicts. Ex-cons are not allowed to associate with ex-cons, the rationale being that it will lead to trouble. But it could be time for the experts to reconsider their modus operandi.

Community involvement with convicts might be an idea whose time has come. Every member of the community is involved (by higher and higher taxes at the very least), or will become involved, with convicts and ex-convicts.

Sincerely,
Donald Danford

School Board wants citizen's comments

To the Editor:

As you know from news media reports and neighborhood meetings, the Portland Board of Education will try to decide on a comprehensive school desegregation plan by the end of this month. Currently the school board has reduced the

various plans under consideration to two. The plans are supposed to serve these objectives: reduce racial isolation in an equitable manner and raise the quality of education received by students in the school district.

Here are some of the ways to

Jury supports employee suit

To The Editor:

Concordia Community Association's Dekum Court Task Force is heartened by the just outcome of Mr. Ron Swan's suit against the director of Operations and the executive director of the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP). Mr. Swan, a former service coordinator for HAP, claimed, among other things, denial of his civil and property rights through unfair discipline and denial of his right to a hearing.

Mr. Swan did his job, a job which did and should involve service to HAP residents as well as rent collection for HAP. He was willing to risk his own secure future for his belief that a means to allow tenants to be heard and to have input into decisions should, by right, be provided by HAP, and for his belief that HAP's action to deny, by sale of all usable undeveloped property, the children of Dekum Court's forty families their backyard play space was unjustifiable. Part of providing adequate housing, which HAP

repeatedly and correctly describes as it's "primary function," is to provide usable space for children to play.

We are heartened also because this jury's decision shows that just challenges to a large and often insensitive bureaucratic institution from the small voices of those affected by that institution's policies and decisions -- be they tenants, clients, employees or general community members -- can reach successful conclusion, if the persistent effort and patience required can be sustained.

Our most optimistic hope is that this federal court decision will encourage HAP's Board of Commissioners and Administrators to evaluate carefully their past performance and present policies as a constructive step leading to much needed change in HAP policy and procedures relating to tenants, employees and neighborhoods.

Claudia Fisher, Chairperson
CCA Dekum Court Task Force

reduce racial isolation and raise the quality of education being considered by the school board:

1. Student assignments
2. School managet programs
3. Staff training
4. Strengthening early childhood education centers

What the Board of Education needs right now is your input and concerns about the two plans it is considering. It does not want to select any plan without sufficient citizen input, involvement, concern or approval.

One of the ways for the school board to learn what you think is through public meetings.

This Friday, February 15 at 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., there will be a public meeting at Bethel AME Church, 5828 N.E. 8th Avenue.

The Rev. L. Fisher Hines, pastor at Bethel, has agreed to allow his church to host a public forum so that members of the community and parents and children of Woodlawn, Vernon, Adams and Columbia/Whitaker schools can meet with school board members.

Talk to those who affect your children's education.

C. Eddie Edmondson
Communications Specialist

Sonja Grove
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PORTLAND OBSERVER

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In defense of Black life

(Continued from page 1 col 3)

There is determination now to make it possible for Black children to reduce learning impediments, and provide more emotional comfort through exposure to non-racist education. In the struggle to reach these objectives supporters and opponents should understand some Black perspectives as they relate to segregation and integration.

Segregation and integration in America are interlocked with white racism. They are inseparable. Their assorted functions collectively frustrate the Black population (all non-dominant ethnic populations) from having any success in liberating themselves from the horrendous circumstances created by the barriers and constraints which are the social constructs for racist rejection.

Percentage formula capricious

Segregation sets the stage for its targets to be vulnerable to any negative social excesses, abuses and proscriptions which the segregationists wish to impose. It provides the social climate for the segregationists to feel a collective obligation and duty to preserve the *status quo*. To accomplish this, laws, public policy, attitudes and custom are utilized in some of the most appalling ways. Consequently, racial discriminations are stimulated and maintained that seriously interfere with interpopulation communication and understanding. This assures that any percentage of Black students in any school operating under the racist mandates of the dominant population will be segregated with impunity. This does not become altered if the Black student population is 1%; 50%; 99%. In a word the theory of correcting the educational problems facing Black children through racial balance is a joke.

The racial attitudes among many school officials are acquired and remain stable with few exceptions throughout a lifetime. There are very strong correlates to these attitudes in evidence throughout the dominant population and for many they have been in existence for several generations. This brings us to face the long-held adage that all education up to this point for Black people in America, no matter where it is offered or acquired, is alternative education. There is no valid challenge to this because America as a system and its educational structures always deals with Blacks as outsiders. American education, as much or more so than any other institutional area, is a colossal bureaucracy and bastion of exclusivity, selectivity and *status quo* maintenance. It has been very effective in providing and sustaining the most damaging negative definitions of Black people, their culture and history. When arbitrary and capricious determinations are announced by this school administration as to the percentages of Blacks that will be admitted to certain public schools, these are not expressions of interest in the educational and intellectual development of Black students but are dominant population contrivances to erect new structures of paralyzing selective segregation under the pretense of fostering integration.

White manipulations for segregation and for integration are never conducted in the spirit of a social contract. They are never covenants entered into with the Black population having equal input, influence and authority. Consequently agreements are never reached that make possible the even and balanced functioning of society.

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