

Jive alive!!!

By Nyewusi Askari
(aka Kelly Norman)

"The essence of what we need is not purple lipstick beneath green eye shadow on clairol-bleached souls (Sista)."
(From the poem "Poem for Miss Black America" by Askia M. Toure, 1978).

It's amazing that some of us feel inclined to have our Black sisters compete among themselves for the incomprehensible "Miss Black Portland" title. It's even more amazing when we flash on the attitude of the state of Oregon toward our Black women.

Oregon has never expressed pride in our Black women; has never really honored our Black women; has never expressed even a slight hint that it understands what a Black woman is!

Let it be known now: "Black women of the state of Oregon, you are beautiful without the presence of a pageant."

Take a look around. We see Black women of all shades, standing tall, proud, beautiful, giving and sustaining the life of this Black community. We see them high, see them low, see them in-between, see them in all dimensions.

And there are too many times when we are forced to see our sisters in very terrible positions...positions of disrespect, pain, can't see tomorrow because of today positions. Check. Sister forced to walk the street cause she ain't got no meat to feed sisterbaby and brotherbaby; been knocked down, dispised and brutalized by some of us nonenses niguhs who think beauty is the beast and Black women are the feast of vultures wearing cowboy hats and riding a white hoss named fleetwood who would surely destroy sista/lady if it could. Check it out.

Still, the Black woman retains her beauty. In her beauty lies a strength we Black men will never understand. In this beauty is light; a light that shines day and night in the community, in the souls of Black men of solid spirits, and in the slowing heartbeat of our elders.

But there are those of us, who see thru rose colored glasses. We feel negated by the standards of beauty in this country. So we deny our own and pursue that of the artifical. A Miss Black Portland Pageant is the artifical.

It does not speak for or to the sentiments of the majority of Black women in Oregon, and it's not representative of the true spirit of Black women here in Portland.

An example: In the April 9, 1980 issue of the *Skanner* newspaper, sister Toni Hunter, was quoted as saying, "I see a lot of young people with no goals. A lot of girls were turned down for the pageant because they were high school dropouts, or have children, or are married." (not end of comment). To sister Toni I say, "THAT IS JIVE!"

Lets break it all the way down. The pageant should be about the very sisters turned down. It should be about the strong Black women of our communities; Black women who have given life, so that our life may continue. It should be about giving honor to Black women in regard to wifehood, and the ability to survive the torments of this wicked system! It should be about the giving of directions to those sisters who have had to drop out of school for whatever reasons. It should be about the love sisters feel for one another, or the strength we can gather from a gathering of that particular human spirit.

To tell a Black woman "you can't participate in this pageant because you are married or have children," is to put yourself in a dangerous position with the community, and the community recognizes jive when it sees it.

I am sure the intentions of the pageant makers are good, its just that their purpose is hard to grasp. We no longer have to prove anything to anyone about ourselves. However, we must prove to each other, that we are not afraid to be ourselves according to our own standards. And we have standards.

We have great Black teachers who teach the wisdom of our ancestors; ancestors who told them that one day, our standards of beauty would be attacked! smeared by Avon! rubbed out by cold cream! and buried beneath strange imaginations

and suggestions of how we really should look.

Yes...we have teachers who know the secret of the ages and they are here among us. Our elders, ourselves...and if we cannot bring about positive situations for Black people in our communities, without seeking the approval of people who care less of how we look, who we are and where we are trying to go, then we should do as brother James Brown suggested, "Give it up or turn it loose!"

Everyday must become a pageant with us. As Black men we must move from a wisper to a loud scream! We must scream to the sisters that we recognize their beauty. We must let them know they are beautiful to us/for us/and with us! Sisters must come to believe in their natural beauty; must come to believe they are beautiful in all dimensions; from big lips to the thin-est/short body to the tall/long hair to the short/IN HARD TIMES AND IN NO TIMES AT ALL, YOU MUST BELIEVE. If not, the essence of what we are will die, and we will become fools among mad-

men.

I suggest that we consider a gathering; a Black woman/Black man/Black children/Black community gathering, not sponsored by Nordstrom's, or some industry down the street, but a gathering sponsored by us/for us/dedicated to our spirit, love and ability to survive these times. African Liberation Day, is a positive starting point. For those of us who are hung up on cameras, bright light and the yell of "roll'em" rent out the Civic Auditorium, bring in the cameras, come get us and we'll shake the roof off the mutha! Like a love shake mutha! I'm happy to see you brother/sister mutha! Let the cameras catch that! A positive gathering of Black people for the purpose of strengthening their community ties with each other, will never make ABC Prime Time Special.

And to those brothers and sisters who are working to make the pageant a reality, I'll say as brother Joe Tex once said in a very remembered song, "I'll take the sister with the skinny legs!" The game must end!

Police sponsor self defense class

By Stephanie L. Michael

Women in the North and North-east areas of the city will be provided an opportunity to attend self-defense courses next month.

Persons attending the courses have to be at least 14-years of age. The sessions are being sponsored by Neighborhoods Against Crime and the Rape Prevention Program of the Portland Police Crime Prevention Division. The 9-hour classes will be held at the North Precinct, 7214 N. Philadelphia. Self-defense classes will begin at various times of the day to help facilitate homemakers and working women. Courses are scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, 13 and 20th, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Wednesday, May 14, 21 and 28th, from 9 a.m. til noon.

All sessions will deal with asser-tive training, preventive law and what to do if you are attacked, raped or physically abused. Basic street fighting techniques will be taught with an emphasis on getting away from the "traditional" lady like way of fighting, (such as scratching, biting, etc.). A more realistic view of how to protect yourself by attacking back and how to escape from an attacker will be explained.

Women attending the courses will be guided to realize the full potential



and natural strength of their bodies. All self-defense moves will be centered around a woman's best natural weapons, which includes the voice, feet and fists. Lessons will also focus upon a man's most vulnerable targets which aren't readily thought about.

Statistics from last year show a 17-percent increase in the number of rapes reported in the city as opposed to 1978 figures. National statistics indicate that one out of every four women are sexually abused in some

form before they reach age 18. Also national figures show over one-million battered wife cases are reported annually.

For more information about "womenstrength," the self-defense course for women, contact Lynn Landau at 248-4126. Registration for the free class is required.

"Only the artist, or the free scholar, carries his happiness within him." Beethoven

YOUR COMMUNITY IS COUNTING ON YOU



During the month of April Census takers will contact persons who have not mailed in their forms. They will have red, white and blue identification badges and will carry red, white and blue Census Bureau brief cases.

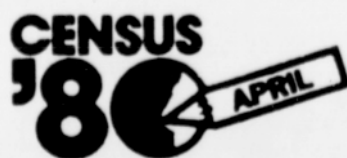
Do not let anyone into your home unless they positively identify themselves.

Do you know what can happen if you fail to complete and return your Census Questionnaire? You and your community could suffer. Here's how:

- Your community's share of Federal Funds could be reduced—\$200 per person per year for ten years. Programs such as School Lunches, Federal Housing, Manpower Development, Adult Education and other vital programs could be affected.
- Your representation in Washington could also be affected. Apportionment of House of Representatives seats is based on Census information.
- Your community could miss opportunities for new industry. Many companies looking for new industrial sites use published Census reports as part of the site selection process.

These are only a few reasons why an accurate census count is essential.

Be fair to yourself and your community—complete your Census Questionnaire.



The Census—Why Is It Important?

When you receive your questionnaire, fill it out completely and accurately and mail it by the April 1 deadline. It's important to you and your community. Here are just three reasons:

1. Your representation in the House in Congress could be affected. A low census count could result in redistricting, even in a loss of representation.
2. Your community's share of Federal Funds might be reduced. For every uncounted person, your community could lose \$200 per year for ten years—a serious loss for many communities.
3. Your community could also lose out on new industry. Many companies use Census reports to determine where to locate a new business or industrial plant.

When you are filling out your questionnaire, remember all personal information will be kept in the strictest confidence. No information will be available to any other government body, business or person. There has never been a case on record where personal information has been released by the Bureau of Census. Help yourself and your community...be counted

This message is brought to you by:



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