

Rhythm rap II

By Nyewusi Askari
(aka Kelly Norman)

In view of the many positive responses to my articles published weekly in the *Portland Observer* newspaper, it's necessary to say "Thanks" to the readers. I also find it necessary to share with you, a very important response received a few days ago from a special Black man; a man who knows that "On the other side of midnight is day."

And that's what it's coming down to b'tween us Black folk; effective communication without feeling negated. There be the negatives, the love the caring, and the sharing of us/with us/to us/for us/.

There is something beautiful here...

Dear Brother Askari:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the article addressed to the brothers at OSP.

Like myself, there are others who feel the shame of letting our brothers and sisters down and through our writings, we try to paint a picture of the road that led to our dilemma.

If I can save one Black, from the ordeal of confinement, my suffering would not have been in vain and I will be able to say: through my ignorance and foolish pride shown the beacon of hope.

Write on brother, write on. And as I sometimes say to my brothers: "painted pictures in printed words proves beyond a doubt, that a picture is worth -- ten thousand words."

Your brother in Blackness and Faith
Nathaniel Scott # 41877

My brotha Nathaniel:

Your brief letter was deep/soul soothing ex/pression of brotherly love. And after years of hard struggles, defeats and spoiled victories, we discover each other fighting on the same battlefield. The blockade was crushed!

Contrary to the thoughts of those who constantly scream our demise, our performance as Black men is holding strong at the seam. And as we move into this crazy decade of the 80's, the strong in our ranks must step forth, speak the language of our people, be precise and announce our presence. Then we must move from "A whisper to a scream!"

The connection b'tween us had to be made. A divided house cannot stand, and it's all too easy to lose control of our spirits and find them on the auction block and exposed to the highest bidder.

Life for us on this battlefield is tough! And despite our ability to sometime see thru the atoms of darkness, the light we often see has no horizon, thus, not being able to see one, we tend to tire and seek darkness.

The masters of deicet are aware of our situation to the fullest. The psychology is, "A tired man doesn't have much fight left in him." Vision fails/spirits get weak/legs get tired of stumbling/the world slows down.

By the time we regain control of our mind, a lotta things can have happened; brutal, soul busting "things" that snatch our lives right out from under us. Brotha it's a

very slick war.

Among the greedy and insensitive, it's a struggle for an illusive power which calls for the systematic elimination of entire races of people. Daily we hear of different nations locked in deadly combat. Innocent men/women/and children are being killed, starved and very dangerous thinking men are assuming decision making positions.

There are more buffaloes now than Indians, the Mexican Americans are being driven back across the border, poor whites are being taught to hate those whose skin is different and our situation is equally as badddd.

European nations are lining up against First World nations, revealing a dangerous, international politic that has the nature to set Black people back a 100 years. A combat war maybe...another cold, terrible drain of Black manhood from our families/communities/wives/children/from the world we are striving so hard to create...another drain of future leaders, inventors, doctors, warriors, educators...maybe something worst?

Whatever happens we must be prepared to deal with it. And it's scary b'cuz at this time, we are at a loss to know exactly all we are going to have to deal with. We don't really know how insane and bold the schemers are.

And we brothaman, we gotta talk to each other/gotta scream to each other/gotta educate each other/got-

ta help each other make it thru the days and nights of this war/gotta organize each other/gotta be each other!

Our world is small and getting smaller every day. The police are degrading us in front of our children/our women/our elders. There is no such thing as the re-rise of the KKK. They have never died. They have never vanished. They have never laid down their guns. They just took off the sheets for awhile.

It hurts to talk about it; hurts to think about. Hurts to have to live the realities of it. Most people think we crazy when we scream of our oppression here in America. They say to themselves "Them niggahs ain't about nothing but small talk heard a hundred years ago. This is 1980. Blacks are no longer slaves..."

Some of the same people didn't believe Nixon was a crook (we could have told them), so they elected him as president. The records show that Nixon was a killer of Black people. It is documented that more than 26 Black panthers alone were killed by designed; a design of a president named Nixon. The point is, we no longer can afford to wait on people to believe in our reasons for constantly screaming and fighting for a justice that is ours, but is frozen. Souls on Ice. Ours.

You are a growing, Black writer. And in this war, your weapon is the word. The word that goes deep into souls, give sunshine, inspiration, beauty, strength, love, purpose, and dreams. Write on brothaman, write

on!

We are but a tiny speck of walking flesh in this mass of humanity and can be easily missed. NO GOOD! Let your voice be heard! Your spirit felt! Your dreams realized!

Paint the pictures you talked about and just maybe one day, "ten thousand Black voices will rise from beneath these ashes and scream WELCOME HOME BROTHA!"

Trying to step into tomorrow
Your brotha
Askari



Citizen of the Week



A person who will be seen at most community meetings where decisions are to be made is Betty Walker. A strong advocate of citizen participation, Mrs. Walker dedicates many hours to community service.

Active in the Sabin Neighborhood Association since 1968, Mrs. Walker is currently co-chairman. She represents Sabin on the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods board and the City's Comprehensive Plan Citizen Involvement Committee.

She was a member of the Task Force that designed the King Neighborhood Facility and serves on its board.

She is a member of the board of the Reading Tree -- a program that provides tutoring and recreational reading in Irving Park -- and was a member of the Community Coalition for School Integration and the Committee for Quality Education for All Children. She served on the Model Cities Education Committee.

Mrs. Walker is a Democratic Party Precinct Committee-person.

One of her fondest memories is participation on the Irving Park Committee which brought improvements to Irving Park, making it one of the most heavily used parks in Portland. Prior to the committee's work, the City had a rule that improvements could not be made to existing parks. Prior to their efforts Irving Park had only a broken water fountain, damaged tennis courts, one basketball court and an undersized ball field and was avoided by many neighborhood residents.

Mrs. Walker has lived in Portland all of her life and in Sabin since 1959. Her three children attended Sabin and Grant High School. Hoyt is now a computer programmer for scientific experiments at Livermore Laboratory; Marguerite is the mother of two; Caroline is a student and track star at OSU.

Mrs. Walker is a secretary/bookkeeper at the Reed College Library.

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Albina Action Center struggles to survive

(Continued from P. 1 Col 6)

The board refused to obey the instructions since they considered it unlawful under Oregon law to dismiss and replace elected Board members. TAAC is incorporated in Oregon as a limited purpose agency.

CSA did refund TAAC. On March 8th, executive director Jerry Rodgers was notified by the board that it was imposing a hiring freeze until the financial situation could be accurately assured. Amid charges that an alternate proposal and not the one approved by the board had been submitted to CSA for funding, Rodgers was dismissed.

Although TAAC has been refunded, funds for the Food and Nutrition Program, which provides emergency food, gleaning and gardening for low income people, has been denied. Hill said he was advised by telephone by regional CSA staff that CSA will not grant TAAC Food and Nutrition funds "under any circumstances."

"I asked her if the area was to remain unserved by a Food and Nutrition program and she said someone might be funded to serve the area; it could be PACT, the City

or some other agency, but not TAAC."

TAAC continues to operate its emergency food program through donations. In the first three months of this year 1,094 persons were served. The \$6,387 request to CSA would have allowed the purchase of protein foods to supplement donated bulk and perishable food, and to hire a part time aide.

The community gardens project will be continued, with donated seed. A truck was recently donated by Pacific Power & Light.

TAAC is also having problems on the state level. Last June TAAC was notified by the State Community Services Program that there were serious problems in the weatherization program funded through that agency. The state team found that financial records were poor, an inventory of materials were not maintained, tools were lost. Although client files were adequate, there was no way to verify work orders. The agency was advised to improve its record keeping.

On February 21st, weatherization funds were frozen. A March review found a poor performance record,

lack of fiscal records, poor supervision, disregard of the February 21st freeze. The state is now reviewing the matter, but rumors are that the program will not be refunded through TAAC.

As to why the program was not administered correctly, "The state provided the money, staff orientation, technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation. Why they didn't realize there was a problem, I don't know. I think TAAC and the state were equally responsible."

Another program that fell by the wayside was the Youth Program. Because the former director did not submit the proposal to Region X it was not funded, Hill said. He recently was approached by PACT, the southeast Portland Community Action Program, with an offer to serve north and northeast area youth.

Hill's explanation of the agency's fiscal problems is poor management. "There has not been strong administration; the board has not been provided information they need to make decisions. There is a thin line between policy making and administration, and each has to function without interfering with the other. When the board has been able to get the information they need, they have been decisive."

"I think we have a good Board. The board has to be kept informed of financial and personnel decisions."

"Lack of financial records is another problem. There have been

four directors and a large staff turnover. There just hasn't been the continuity needed to maintain records."

As money has been withdrawn from the "war on poverty" programs, they have had to turn from economic development to subsistence, Hill explained. This emphasis, the fact that social programs are no longer popular, has made the recruitment and retention of quality administrators more difficult.

For years dynamic programs were operated in this community, he said. Many of the directors and employees of those programs have gone on to good positions with the City and the State. Now it's more difficult to get people who have administrative experience and who are interested in social programs. The agency will soon begin the recruitment process for a permanent director.

Programs now being operated by TAAC include: *Crisis Intervention* - fuel and utility assistance for low income persons.

Food and Nutrition - emergency food, gleaning and gardening.

Optometric - examination and corrective glasses for low income people; fee on a sliding fee scale

Dental - referral to the Russell Street Clinic



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IMPORTANT NOTICE:

JOIN BEFORE MAY 19th and your weekly dues will be \$4.00 for as long as you maintain membership.* Weekly rate for new members and rejoining members will become \$4.50 beginning May 19th. Registration fee remains unchanged at \$6.00.

For information call COLLECT Portland (503) 297-1021, Weekdays -- 8:30 - 5:30

* Offer good only in Franchise # 083.

A PERSONAL MOMENT FOR THOSE WHO CARE

The mast on a sailboat could support only a small sail if it were not for the guy wires. These wires can be compared to bits of knowledge we add to our lives which enable us to support a larger sail. If we added only to the mast and not to the bit of guy wire knowledge we would become like the dinosaur and soon worthless. A perfect combination of guy wire and mast is like a perfect love, it makes for smooth sailing.

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