

Rhythm rap

By Nyewusi Askari
(aka Kelly Norman)

In keeping with the spirit of last week's sharings, this week I will share with the readers, a letter received from a Black sister from Portland. Read and think!

Dear Brother Askari:

Your article of April 17, 1980, in the *Portland Observer* newspaper was on time, in time and very well written. It inspired me to write a brief letter to my man, in hopes, that he will understand my feelings as his Black woman. Asante Sane Ndugu! (Thank you Brother!)

Your Ndada (sister)
Ayanna

Jambo (hello) Kwame...
Tonight, I want to reach out and touch you using words: sweet-words, deep words, words you have heard before...simple words.

And this letter is about my thoughts alone with you. Moments when words paint thousands of lovely pictures of peaceful, sun shiny, full mooned, progressive, dreamfilled times.

We, you and I, know about dreamfilled times don't we? Mainly because we've lived them for so long. They have taken us near, they have taken us far, and on a real bad day, they have taken us nowhere at

all. The point is, for a long time we have sat on the edge of a dream, and now I feel we are falling off.

It's very important to me, that we be able to communicate our feelings without fear. You see, when we are together I FEEL YOUR UNEXPRESSED FEAR. You be uncomfortable, uptight and distant. It makes me feel very alone and empty.

It means so much to have you not only as my Black man, but as my friend, my brother, my teacher, and my protector. I need those moments when you will reassure me that everything is going to be alright. There are times now when I am frightened by the way things are going in the world. I am being frightened by the way Amerikkka is relating to me. I am frightened by your refusal to communicate with me.

You feel that I am trying to narrow your world. I am not. I am just trying to be a forever part of your world. Right now, there is a dangerous space between us...

Kwame, my thoughts are getting wet...are ending but never my love Black man, never my love.

Always yours,
Ayanna

GSA practices affirmative action

(Continued from page 1 Col 6)

there is no conflict between affirmative action and open competitive hiring.

"Targets of Opportunity" is the way the Department of General Services views affirmative action, he said. Every vacancy has a potential for an affirmative action hire.

The department is now using a "Batting average" report, compiled monthly listing the number of vacancies, number of new hires, and number of affirmative action hires made. Ralls says this way each administrator is made aware monthly of his/her affirmative action efforts.

Why is General Services successful? Ralls said it is because of a committed executive staff. It uses advertising and community contacts. By now its biggest advantage may be that it has a proven "track record." He said the department had demonstrated it is willing to give all applicants a fair shake, and women and minorities have been hired in key positions. Ralls expects that the trend will continue.

The state Department of General Services has a commitment to affirmative action for several reasons. One is because of Rall's own philosophy about affirmative action. Another is Gov. Vic Atiyeh's commitment.

Ralls praises the work of Kay Toran, director of the governor's affirmative action office. She responds to each request for applicants. "We're not flooded with unqualified candidates," he said. "An earnest effort is made to match applicants who'll fit the requirements of the job. We've been impressed with the quality of operation of that office and with Kay's help."

General Service's hiring practices philosophy is represented in Rall's example of a woman hired to manage a warehouse. "She doesn't necessarily need to know how to

operate a forklift -- but it is her problem," he said. "It's not a reason not to select her for that position, but she's got to earn her stripes. We made the decision to hire her, that she's best qualified for the job. It's her responsibility to prove us right."

What Darrell Ralls says he really wants to do is to "get affirmative action behind him...implemented and get on with the job." He believes he can effectively utilize minorities and women, he has the governor's commitment, and he has carried the message to his staff. Somehow, it works.

Report quilts

Mrs. Oslly J. Gates has initiated Project Quiltarian, a library reference to assist in providing documentary information about quilts of traditional designs, contemporary designs, original creations hand-made by Afro-Americans (particularly in Portland).

Photographic and biographical materials are needed on existing quilts by Blacks. Contact the Art Department of Central Library to complete a documentation form and other data for the following categories (ownership, construction, authorship):

- 1.) ownership of an existing hand-made quilt by an Afro-American
- 2.) construction of a hand-made quilt currently existing by an Afro-American (the maker)
- 3.) authorship of published or unpublished work on Afro-American quilts.

The above information will remain on the premises of the library for reference.



Warm spring weather inspired neighborhood resident to get out in the sunshine and do needed yard work.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

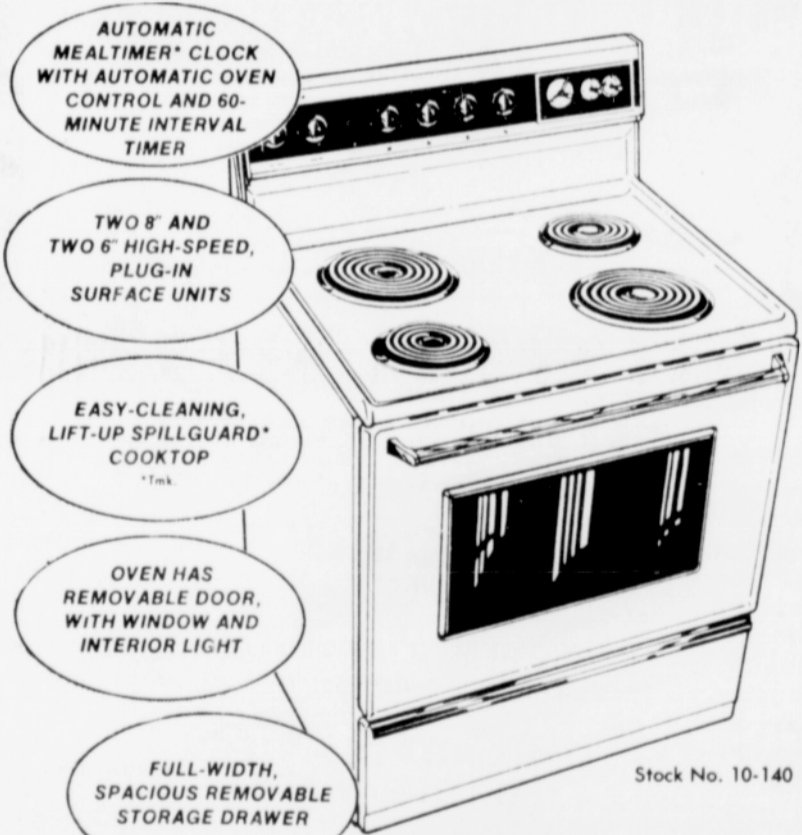
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