

King principal discusses education issues

By Stephanie Cole

When it comes to discipline problems in education many Black children are considered its culprits. Some teachers who have one or two unfortunate incidents with Black children, begin to formulate opinions that all Black children have active or potential discipline problems. This is especially true for Black children who are bussed into predominantly all white neighborhoods.

Often these assumptions are exercised in the classroom. A problem that a Black child has in another area will be immediately perceived as a behavioral problem that didn't exist before. The common chain of those assumptions concerning Black children and discipline are that Blacks in general have no respect for any form of authority be it governmental authority, police authority, educational authority, or any kind of authority that society has procured. With these kinds of assumptions formulating about Blacks apathy toward discipline, the real reasons for Black apathy are smothered in the previous assumptions and Blacks are denied the right to lift them.

In part III of the interview with Gerald these and other aspects of education important to the Black community are discussed.

Observer: As a principal how do you perceive the assumptions that many Black children have discipline and behavior problems?

Gerald: A segment of all children have discipline problems regardless of their race. I think it's sad that an assumption like that has to be made to be applied only to Black children.

Observer: How do you see the problem of discipline in general and what is your method for dealing with it?

Gerald: Expectations may be part of the problem with discipline, maybe there's not enough allowance for different patterns of behavior. I personally believe in trying to set a basis for children immediately, to insist that the child will recognize what those rules are and not violate them. To tell those youngsters at every turn that when in fact they violate those rules, they are violating the rights of all of their friends and neighbors immediately around them, and try to put in their minds that they have a certain responsibility to do certain things that are reflected in good citizenship everywhere. When in fact that breaks down and you can't get that child's attention, then I believe it is time to go and make contact with

the parent and let the parents know immediately that we have a situation where the student continues to break rules, to tell them specifically what the student is doing and to ask for their help. But I feel one should take all those steps before excluding that child from school I would look toward suspension as only a last resort, except in instances where a violent act is committed and its determination that this child needs to be removed from the scene immediately.

Observer: What parties would make that determination?

Gerald: Parents, teachers, the principal, the student, basically anyone who would be directly involved. I would look very carefully in going step by step, by step with each child until hopefully we've worked out a solution and then only using suspension as an absolute last resort.

Observer: In disciplining a child are you in favor of corporal punishment?

Gerald: Corporal punishment or physical discipline is both against Oregon law and Portland Public School policy. There is to be no corporal punishment in the schools.

Observer: Was corporal punishment effective in handling discipline problems as opposed to the large numbers of discipline problems in schools today?

Gerald: The question is was that effective. Again I found it to be situational, in some instances that seems to have done the job. My personal opinion is to stay away from corporal punishment. In being a principal for twenty years I've had opportunities to apply corporal punishment to a child, but I've always been able to find some other way even in a situation where I was legally empowered to do so. But I've never used corporal punishment as a method of discipline. I do know that there are people from another era, another time who have thought and have said that corporal punishment is the way to go and have applied that to a discipline problem.

Observer: Do you find that children who have a discipline problem in school generally lack discipline in the home?

Gerald: That's very difficult to determine, it would be easy to say yes because many people make assumptions, but they really don't have the kind of information to tell you this, and those assumptions are the same kind of ones that you were talking about earlier. Even if you made a home visit and you get that impression it would not be fair to say that because it would take

alot more knowledge than we or they have about that home, about that child and about those parents to assume that there is a break down in that home and that contribute to the discipline problem that this child has in school. I really wouldn't want to make that assumption.

Observer: As far as the school administrative staff is concerned should cultural awareness workshops designed to make educators more receptive and sensitive to Black and other minority children be required?

Gerald: Yes, I believe that all staff who work in predominately Black schools should know what some of those differences are and what the success could be in being exposed to different cultures. Also I think the cultural awareness would be an advantage in terms of having that as a base for information.

Observer: Are there a lot of educators who perpetuate their own stereotypes and prejudices in the classroom?

Gerald: I think basically that everyone goes about with some stereotypes, it depends upon how strong those stereotypes are and how foolishly you use them. Yes some people in the field of education do bring stereotypes into the classroom, hopefully its only a small segment.

Observer: Those educators who make their prejudices active in the classroom, are they the ones who generally haven't taken any cultural awareness workshops?

Gerald: Not necessarily, no. Again I would say that you're better off in the long hall offering those workshops that could help people, but in no way is that going to 100 percent of those cases do the job that you're hoping it will do. There are some educators who aren't going to change, they're going to remain the same no matter how many times you pour that water over them they just won't change.

Observer: Black parents and leaders have constantly been stressing the need for Blacks to venture into other occupations besides sports and entertainment. Should getting Black children into these areas start in the earliest years of education and can stressing these areas soon enough pay off in the long run?

Gerald: It had better. If it doesn't start then, we can kind of forget this business of pulling them up by their boot straps. Although I am a great sports fan and see some great value in what has happened with some Black athletes, I know that we need to concentrate in some other areas. Everytime I give some thought to that, the thing that comes back to me is a little story about Jesse Jackson of the PUSH program. The story goes that Jesse went out on one of the city play courts and there were a number of Black children all playing basketball. All of them were having fun but four or five of them were just very, very, good. Jesse called two or three of them over and asked, "How in the world did you get so good at such an early age, what did you do?" And the kids said, "We practice, practice, practice." And Jesse said, "Do you realize that if you practice, practice and practice on your homework every night, that one day you'd be president of this country, and that tells the whole story. Black children do put forth a lot of effort sometime, and this is not to imply that there aren't many Black student athletes, or athlete scholars as well as athletes, but there are an awful lot of them who think they can put all of their efforts into just athletics.

Observer: does television and society play a influential part in enhancing these stereotypes, and don't these stereotypes strengthen the stereotypes that others have of Blacks as well?

Gerald: Yes definitely. You see, if we could influence television programming to the extent that the roles they lay out for Blacks were different and diversified, then it would do all of us a great deal of good.

Observer: Since Blacks aren't in a position to greatly influence the kinds of Black role models portrayed on television, what can Black parents do to ensure positive role models for their children?

Gerald: What we need is career exploration and orientation at a very early age. We need a number of role models in science, government, etc., so that every Black child knows that he/she can do and be anything in the world and know that they can get there, but must practice, practice, practice and put forth that effort.



SHARON MITCHELL

TV career

(Continued from page 1 col. 6)

take credit for what comes out when I sing because it is truly the gift of God. I'm just a steward of his gift..."

Mitchell has a "mouthfull" of advice for all the youngsters desiring a career in the field of Broadcast Communications.

"My advice would be to take as many English creative writing, and journalism courses as possible. To be effective in the field of communications, I feel that you should collect as much general knowledge as possible. I also feel that speech and diction classes are vital.

"Lastly, I think that an acting class or two wouldn't hurt and get involved with the school newspaper and television production," she said.

Fighting for freedom

(Continued from Page 1 Col 6)

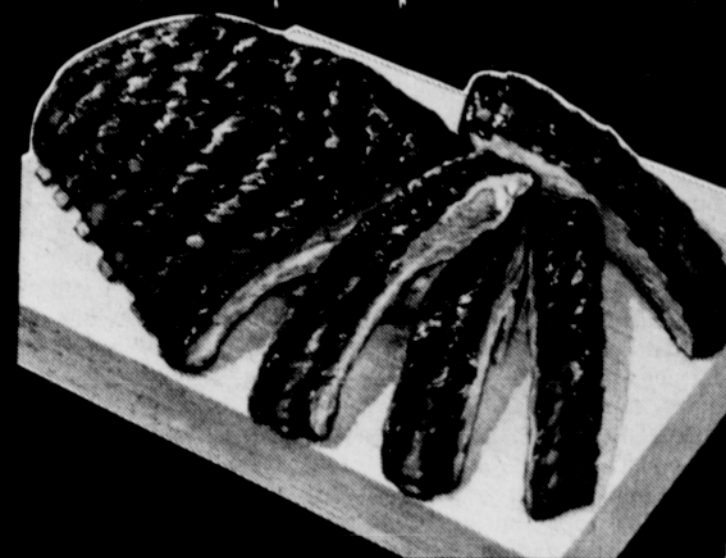
"I was shot at twice, first on the right hand and then on the left foot and I had to hide in a cave to heal up. I was lucky though I did not get hurt badly. I saw a lot of my friends die and that was a hell of an experience."

The life of a soldier in the forest is not only to keep an eye on the opponent but to avoid wild animals that were dangerous. "In my area we did not encounter many wild animals but I had one experience I will never forget. I woke up one day and I realized I had slept on top of a python". Pythons are very dangerous snakes.

"Fighting for four years day in and out needs resistance. Sometimes you get so tired that you hope you don't come into contact so that you could rest. Some contacts," he added, "lasted for 12 hours."

The war ended in 1979 when the white government agreed to come to some agreement with the Blacks. This meant that all the surviving fighters had to return home and rejoin their families after so many years. "I was happy when the British surrendered. Four years in the bush fighting is a long time. I wanted to be with my family again," he said.

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TRADEWELL

DOT adopts minority rule

The Oregon Transportation Commission today adopted a temporary rule for establishing compliance with Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirements under federal law.



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porary rule for establishing compliance with Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirements under federal law.

The rule establishes a system of procedures and criteria under which the Oregon Department of Transportation will comply with federal requirements designed to assure maximum participation of minority-owned and women-owned business enterprise in public works and construction projects contracted by the department. The MBE program applies to all of the department's contracting activities.

The rule is required to ensure the department's continued eligibility to receive federal funds for public works projects, and to provide maximum opportunities for minority business enterprise to participate in working on these projects for the department.

The temporary rule is in effect for 180 days, during which time the department plans to take the necessary steps to make it permanent.

Water leaks cost money

The next time you spot a leaky faucet at home or at work, think twice about how much that leak is costing. It is thousands of gallons of water dripping from that faucet each year if not immediately fixed. If the water is heated, that drip will show up on your heating bills, as well.

To impress this point on your family and freinds, the Alliance to Save Energy recommends that you try the following experiment:

The next time a faucet is dripping, place a measuring cup under the drip for fifteen minutes. How many

ounces of water were captured? Multiply that number of ounces by 35,040 to find out the number of ounces wasted in a year. To convert to gallons divide this figure by 128. A lot of water is being wasted.

If the drip is from a hot water faucet, heating that wasted water took a low of energy. For instance, a thousand-gallon-per-year hot water drip took roughly 10 gallons of fuel oil, or 1,000 cubic feet of natural gas, or 300 kilowatt-hours of electricity to heat.

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