

James Avery as Sizwe Bansi in the theatre production "Sizwe Bansi is Dead," which will be featured at the University of Portland Buckley Center Auditorium on January 24th and 25th.

OSU studies explore middle-age

"Turning Points" and "Sexual Fulfillment" are the newest circulars about the middle years just published by the Oregon State University Extension Service.

The first in the series "In the Middle Years" was published a few months ago. It is called "Facing Adulthood."

"Turning Points," like "Facing Adulthood," was prepared by Marcelle Straatman, Extension human development specialist. "Sexual Fulfillment" was written by Vicki Schmall, Extension gerontology specialist.

The circulars were prepared to help people understand the social, psychological and physical changes which occur as people move into and through the middle years, the specialist explain, and to dispel some of the stereotyped ideas and expectations many people hold about this age bracket.

The series is particularly timely, they believe, because the number of people in the middle years is increasingly rapidly as the children of the post-World War II baby

boom move into their middle aged years.

"Turning Points" stresses the role of change in everyday life and notes that it can be used constructively or not, depending upon how the individual perceives his or her role in life.

Not all changes at mid-life are crises, points out Mrs. Straatman. For instance, many couples welcome the departure of their children from the family home.

"Turning Points have many sources. Some begin internally as when new aspirations take hold and promote action. Others come from external sources such as a special event, people or changing roles. Almost everyone finds turning points difficult as we fear the discomfort change brings," she explains.

Modern young people and adults are realizing they have many choices and are making life events less age-related and more related to individual timing and need, Mrs. Straatman believes. The middle years allow people to exercise

greater thought and control over their destinies.

For many the middle years may be their first opportunity to manage their own lives. More often the shifting of priorities leads to greater satisfaction after the trauma of change subsides, the specialist points out.

"Sexual Fulfillment" explores facts and fallacies about mid-life sexuality, common sexual changes and their psychological and social impact, and how a person's attitudes, health and life circumstances affect sexual response.

"The meaning of sex in mid and later-life is often different from youth when physical stimulation and excitement may have been primary," explains Ms. Schmall. "With age, the emotional component -- intimacy, the sharing of feelings and being close to another person -- generally assumes greater importance."

She notes that although middle-aged and older persons have different levels of sexual interest,

"there is no specific age at which all sexual activity ends. People who enjoy sex in early adulthood tend to continue to be sexually active."

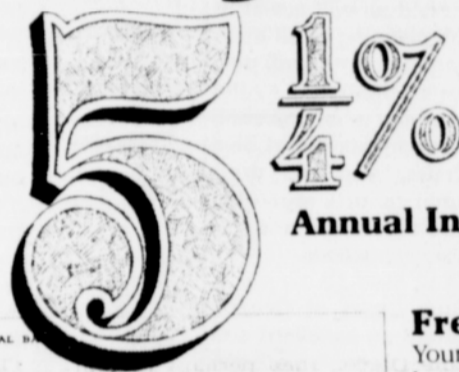
The gerontologist emphasizes that barriers to sexual activity in mid-life are generally psychological and not physical. She cites embarrassment about sex, tension, work and family pressures and mental fatigue are some of the barriers.

The bulletin discusses such physiosexual changes as menopause in women and the slowing of sexual response in men, prostate gland problems and impotency.

Sexuality involves giving and receiving tenderness, warmth, and attractive, and desired, the specialist notes. It involves open communication between partners, good physical health and a willingness to work at keeping a relationship vital.

Copies of the new circulars, as well as the earlier "Facing Adulthood," are available from county offices of the OSU Extension Service. Single copies are free to Oregon residents.

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Textbooks teach discrimination

(Continued from Page 1 Col 6)

back to the 58-70 level and the major publishers are again under-representing a significant portion of the population in this country."

Lumpkin pointed out that the racial minority percentage refers primarily to Blacks.

"Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans, Americans of oriental descent -- they're still either invisible or treated negatively," she said.

The educators did, however, find the percentage of male characters in the latest textbooks have dropped from 61 percent in 1974-76 to 42 percent, and the study's remaining category, labeled "other" increased from 7 to 31 percent.

Britton explained the other category is divided into two sections. One is for inanimate objects such as cities or vehicles, and other part is for those occasions when females and males are treated equally.

"We're finding less all-male stories, which is encouraging because they are not so far over-represented. And we're seeing some stories showing both genders equally, which is great," she said.

"But, overall, the major textbook publishers have not yet lived up to

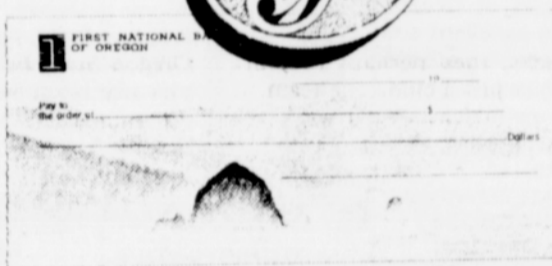
their own guidelines," Britton added. "Those guidelines, published in the middle 70s by the publishers themselves, said they were aware of biases in their textbooks and they would take action to correct them. But that is still not a reality."

Lumpkin and Britton said the reason textbooks are not improving, "not reflecting the times we live in," is simple: money.

"If you check the copyright dates on individual stories in the new textbooks, you'll find many were written in the late 50s and early 60s," said Lumpkin. "Older stories are less expensive to buy and that's why publishers use them. It's business."

"But publishers, school districts and taxpayers should realize that it is not good business to put groups down, to limit their aspirations, to perpetuate the racial and sexual ghettoization of intellect," she said.

"The best business, the most effective mission of schools, is to help every student aspire and accomplish. It's estimated that 80 percent of school time is used working with textbooks. As school budgets are cut, that time is going to increase because there will be more reliance on books and less reliance on supplementary materials. Therefore, it's imperative that textbooks be fair and unbiased," said Lumpkin.



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