

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Need for communication

The Police Bureau and the community have come to an impasse - an impasse that has been along time in the making but that was brought to a head by the "possum incident". Although there have been charges of police harassment, brutality and racism, never before have police officers been fired - and fired publically - for mistreatment of Blacks.

The police union has always rejected claims of racism and now is challenging the termination of the two officers.

Citizens complain that police officers are not available when needed; yet they see as many as five cars at the scene of a traffic arrest. Officers claim they are verbally abused, fear for their lives, and that their job is so boring that the most exciting event of the night can be when the words "CPK" (certified possum kill) crackle across the airwaves.

Yet the community needs and deserves an

efficient, sensitive, competent police force. What is the answer? A good first step would be communication between the officers and the citizens they are supposed to serve. A broader understanding of the community and its citizens would do much to temper the actions of the police officer.

Stan Peters, president of the police union, says he is ready to talk - that he is willing to identify racism where it exists and attempt to eliminate it. He is willing to discuss changes in those police policies controlled by the union contract.

The challenge is now on the community to respond in kind - to educate this man who has the power to make dramatic changes within the police structure. The challenge is also with the community to take steps to insure that the move is reciprocal - that good police work will be met with respect.

Districting the community

For ten years, since Clay Myers reapportioned the legislative districts in 1971, Blacks have charged that dividing the community into four House and four Senate districts has prevented the Black population from selecting representatives responsible to it. Blacks make up a small portion of each of the four House and four Senate districts, so no elected representatives has to pay much attention to the needs and desires of their Black constituents.

This year, the process will be done over again and Black people have hoped that it will be done more fairly.

The OABA discussed reapportionment at its January meeting, appointed a Task Force to research the matter, and is lobbying for the resulting plan. This plan would place the North/Northeast area where most of the State's Blacks reside in three House and two Senate districts. According to OABA president Calvin Henry (see page 3 col. 1) reap-

portionment could mean the Black community would have at least four Representatives and two Senators representing it. (Decreased from four each).

The problem is that none of the districts would have enough Blacks to elect a representative or even to provide a significant influence (Note the efforts of the past ten years).

The proposal we support would place the major portion of the Black community in one House and one Senate district - giving Blacks about 42 per cent in the House district - a number large enough to elect a representative and to have a decisive voice in electing a senator. Even more important, any legislator serving a district with that significant a Black vote would have to be responsive.

Although no plan can guarantee the election of Blacks, the "one district" concept offers the greatest possibility. We have already seen that a little influence in a lot of districts does not work.

From the Grassroots

The election of Margaret Strachan is a good sign for local elective politics. For too long the voters have been complacent, many declining to vote and others basing their votes on name familiarity or on slick advertising campaigns.

Margaret Strachan came out of "nowhere" to defeat a well know politician, Earl Blumenaur, who has consistently held public office for many years. The "nowhere" she came from was many years of neighborhood organizing around the issues of concern to citizens. This service on behalf of citizens gained many friends throughout the city who came forward to work for and vote for a person they felt would represent their interests on the City Council.

One of the dangers of elective politics in this country is that it no longer operates as it was planned. The Republican system enables the public to elect citizens to represent them in local, state and national positions. Theoretically those persons - common citizens living in the neighborhood - can represent the citizens needs and concerns.

In reality, the elected representative soon becomes a professional politician - either staying in office for many years or moving from office to office. This person eventually becomes overly concerned with keeping the position - which has become his profession - His identification with the people back home lessens as he becomes more and more dependent on campaign contributions of major corporations and special interest groups to retain this position.

The U.S. Congress is a prime example. Congressmen elected in their youth remain in Congress until they die. Many have, out of necessity or out of political expediency, lost all relationships with their home districts. They cannot, under any stretch of the imagination, still be considered as citizen representatives.

The elected official who can resist the impulse to become part of the political system at the expense of truly representing the citizens is rare. Coming from years of neighborhood activity, we hope Mrs. Strachan is such a person.



African names

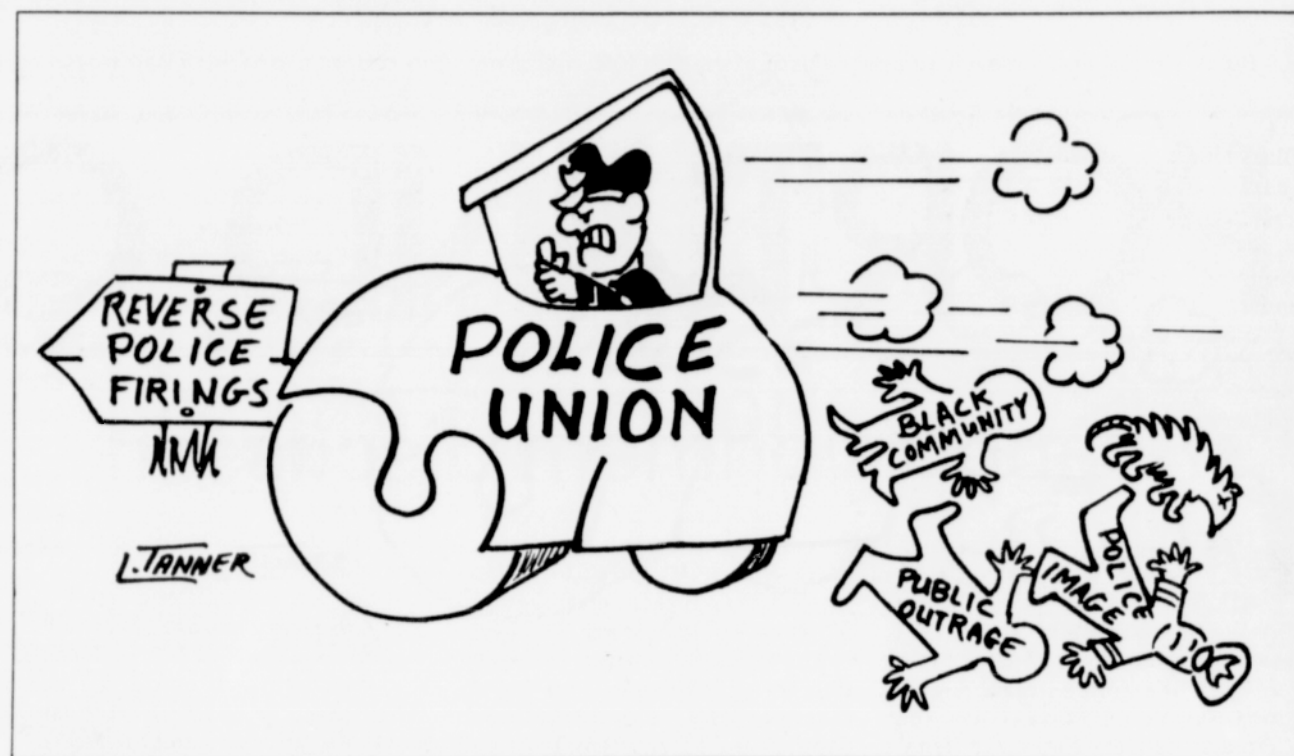
By Fungai Kumbula

African names have the distinction of always standing for something. A son born on a Saturday night might be called Kwame, Ashanti (Ghana) for Saturday. Another might be called Rutendo, Shona (Zimbabwe) for "Thanks." This week we explore the fascinating world of African nomenclature concentrating, for starters, on Zimbabwe. For simplicity and clarity, the following symbols will be used: S for Shona, N for Ndebele; the two major languages spoken in Zimbabwe; U for Unisex, can be used for either male or female; F for Female and M for Male. The names have been arranged in alphabetical order. The Shona and Ndebele alphabets both only have twenty-one letters so some letters will be skipped. The closest English translation for each name is given:

A: Amhlope (N,U) "Congratulations."
 B: Bayezwa (N,U) "They hear"

maybe referring to the ancestors.
 C: Chido; Chishamiso (S,U) "Loved one"; Something Amazing."
 D: Dhladhla (N,U) "Trot in place."
 E:
 F: Fungai; Farai; Feso; (S,U) "Think"; "Rejoice"; "Thorn."
 G: Garai; Garikai; Garakunzwana; (S,U) "Stay"; "Prosper"; "Living is cooperating."
 H: Handisumbe; Hamadzash; (S,M) "Fearless"; The King believes."
 I: Inkululeko (N,U) "Freedom."
 J: Jabulani; Jongwe; (N,U; S,M) "Rejoice, make merry"; Rooster."
 K: Kumbula; Kudzai; (N,M; S,M) "Remember"; "Respect."
 L: Linda (N,F) "Trust."
 M: Musekiwa; Mafehlefehle; (S,M; N,m) "A fun person"; "A fat person."
 N: Nhamo; Ngoni; Nomuhle; (S,U; S,U; N,F) "Troubles";

"Problems"; "Beautiful, flawless."
 O:
 P: Panganai; Pasipanodya (S,U) "Share, Exchange ideas"; "The ground devours."
 R: Rumbidzai; Runako; Runwadzano (S,F) "Praise"; "Beauty"; "Fellowship."
 T: Tendai (Tendayi); Tsitsi (S,U; S,F) "Give thanks"; "Mercy."
 U: Unhloni (N,F) "Shy."
 V: Vulindhela; Vusi (N,M) "Open the way, Trailblazer"; (N,M) "Wake up."
 W: Wadzana (S,F) "Get along with one another."
 X: Xetsha (N,M) "Search, look for."
 Y:
 Z: Zano; Zita (S,U) "Idea"; "Name."
 Pronunciation? Well, I will have to tell that to you individually.



Letters to the Editor

Why no crime prevention?

To the Editor:
 In his recent press conference Police Chief Bruce Baker said he didn't know why the other officers present when two policemen threw dead possums in front of a Black-owned restaurant didn't try to stop them or why they didn't report the incident to their superiors themselves.

If Chief Baker and Commissioner Jordan conducted a thorough investigation into the incident, as they claim they did, why don't they know? Didn't they ask the officers involved? What did they say?
 It certainly appears that the other officers were simply covering up for

their buddies or that the incident was nothing unusual and so, not worth mentioning to their superiors. It also now appears that Baker and Jordan are in turn trying to cover for these officers.

Baker and Jordan went on to say that their investigation determined that the other officers did not violate department rules in this incident.

Does that mean that if policemen see me throw dead animals in front of a restaurant downtown that they'll just ignore it? Or is that a privilege reserved for policemen in Black neighborhoods?
 Yours truly,
 Larry Tanner

Wear a green ribbon

Dear Editor:
 I want to tell you about the campaign, the wearing of the green ribbon, which means the symbol of care, for the Atlanta children that are disappearing and being murdered.

A lady in the Germantown section of Philadelphia, by the name of Mrs. Georgia Dean came up with the idea of wearing a green ribbon on person or display on your car, around the house, anyplace where it can be seen, to let people know you care. It's similar to the yellow ribbon that we displayed for the 52 hostages, but they came home. But the

children's life is gone and we don't know whose child might be the next victim.

Mrs. Dean said the green stands for life, like the green grass and the green trees that grow. We the people want to make this a nation wide campaign of wearing a green ribbon until the perpetrator is found. I know some of your readers would be concerned about the campaign of wearing a green ribbon for the children of Atlanta.

Hopefully Yours,
 Mary Ann Johnson
 5032 Larchwood Ave. # 2
 Philadelphia, PA 19143

Lonely prisoner

To the Editor:
 I am a young man, age 25, in prison with no family or friends who care. Would very much like to hear from someone to help me from losing myself in loneliness.

Paul Brinkman
 P.O. Box 100
 Jean, Nevada 89019

Correction

We recently ran an open letter to President Reagan regarding bilingual education. The following names should have been on the letter:

By: Gale Castillo/President
 Hispanic Political
 Action Committee

By: Candido Morales/Chairman
 Oregon Hispanic Coalition

By: Gregory Perez-Selsky
 Chairman/Hispanic Commission
 of Oregon

By: Jesse Luna/President
 IMAGE de Oregon

By: Felipe Paris
 Chairman of the Board
 of Directors
 Colegio Cesar Chavez

By: Jose Calderon
 Chairman of the Board of
 Directors/Committee of Spanish
 Speaking People of Oregon



Bruce Broussard
 Editor/Publisher

Portland Observer

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The Portland Observer is a champion of justice, equality and liberation; an alert guard against social evils; a thorough analyst and critic of discriminatory practices and policies; a sentinel to warn of impending and existing racist trends and practices; and a defender against persecution and oppression.

The real problems of the minority population will be viewed and presented from the perspective of their causality: unrestrained and chronically entrenched racism. National and international arrangements that prolong and increase the oppression of Third World peoples shall be considered in the context of their exploitation and manipulation by the colonial nations, including the United States, and their relationship to this nation's historical treatment of its Black population.

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