

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Love real kids not cabbage kids

Twenty million children die before they reach the age of four years. Millions more are stunted physically and mentally and can never hope to reach their potential. Millions are continuously hungry, lack medical care, have no homes and will never be educated. While his horrible situation exists—and is becoming worse—in many parts of the world American adults are going crazy over "Cabbage Kids."

All over the country and even in Britain, adults are hysterical over the dolls—spending enormous amounts of time and money trying to acquire one.

The 18-inch one-of-a-kind dolls come with "adoption papers" and a parenting booklet.

The Cabbage Kid might have its own "personality" but it is still just a toy.

We must wonder what is happening to the American people, who will go to any means to obtain a doll to love, while millions of children are starving and while millions are homeless. Yes, it does take more commitment and love to raise a child. He can't be locked in a drawer or thrown in the garbage can when a better toy comes along.

But those who are looking so desperately for something to love would find that a child can return that love. And for those who can't adopt a child, there are many helping organizations that could use money or volunteer help.

## Nixon henchman on the loose

Henry Kissinger is bursting on the scene again—being drug out of hiding by President Ronald Reagan.

His glamour was somewhat tarnished when he was found to be deeply involved in Nixon's crimes and he slipped out of sight for a while.

It is rumored that Kissinger is being primed to take over as Secretary of State during Reagan's second term. Reagan recalled his great expertise in foreign policy—which included his complicity in the violent overthrow of Salvador Allende and Allende's murder—when he sent him on a

"fact finding" mission to Central America. That the people of the U.S. should ever be expected to believe anything Kissinger says about Central America is simply amazing.

Then we saw him on ABC-TV, following "The Day After," advocating the "limited nuclear war" theory that the entire world rejects as suicidal.

The sight of Henry Kissinger, so frequently on TV and considering his sordid past, points out even more how crucial it is that Reagan be defeated next November.

## Black children scrooged again

by Ron Herndon  
Co-chair, Black United Front

During holiday seasons our thoughts frequently center on children and the special joy we want them to share. Thousands of Black children attending Portland Public Schools will find little joy in their future seasons because they will not have been taught necessary skills to meet the challenges of an increasingly technological world. At the ripe old age of ten these children are already two or three grades behind white children. Their adult lives are almost guaranteed to be filled with suffering and abject poverty. Future seasons contain prospects of low-paying jobs if any, welfare, little if any health care, the penitentiary and an early death. Portland Public Schools could help Black children avoid this horror; it is the institution capable of providing children with the academic and technical tools which could enable them to lead productive lives. Unfortunately the school system is not doing this, only making excuses for their failure.

For those who faithfully embrace the racist notion that poor Black children can't learn, please read the countless reports written by Dr. Asa Hilliard, chief desegregation consultant to Portland Public Schools for the past four years. He has provided documentation of public schools all across the country in which Black students are performing at grade level and above. Dean Derrick Bell and other eminent educators have also made reference to these schools. In spite of this evidence, far too many administrators, principals and teachers in Portland

still spout this nonsense about "socioeconomic make-up" being responsible for Black children's poor academic performance. As one distinguished educator so aptly observed, "Schools' response to family background is the principal determinant of pupil performance. Schools teach those they think they must, and when they think they needn't, they don't."

Dr. Hilliard recently referred to the November 28, 1983 *San Francisco Chronicle* report that the average eighth-grader in Sausalito, California public schools reads at the eleventh-grade level. This school system is 42 percent Black, most of whom are poor. This success could be replicated in Portland. Failure to do so again validates Dr. Kenneth Clark's analysis that, "These children are perceived and treated as if they were uneducable. From earliest grades they are programmed for failure."

Correcting this shameful situation is not a priority for Portland Public Schools. If the majority of white children in Portland's schools performed below grade level, it would be viewed as a crisis and concrete steps would be taken immediately.

Portland Public Schools has no systematic approach to free Black children from this educational out-house. In spite of Dr. Hilliard's repeated recommendations of math and reading programs proven effective in other cities, Portland has adopted none of them; however, the same local educators who have failed to educate Black children claim to have programs as effective as Hilliard's. Not only is this unproven, but even those so-called effective local programs have not been systematically placed in schools des-

perately in need of help. Dr. Hilliard's recommended math program guarantees a minimum of two grade levels of gain for each year of instruction as well as teaching algebra and geometry. Dallas, Texas, has tried it and is so pleased it is now moving to expand the program system-wide.

Portland principals and teachers have not been taught how to implement programs and strategies that can reverse this case of pervasive child abuse and neglect. "Do your own thing," reigns supreme from school to school, classroom to classroom.

To make matters worse, principals recently received a memo from administration stating, "Principals are not directly accountable for the achievement of their students. . . . [Principals] should not and will not be evaluated directly on the basis of their building's achievement test score levels or gains." The memo further states that teachers are not responsible for the achievement of their students and will not be evaluated directly on the basis of their class's achievement test score levels or gains. Like modern-day versions of Pontius Pilot, all have washed their hands of low-scoring Black children. Contrast all of this with various School Board policy statements about quality education being available for all children. "Three card molly" at its best.

It is clear—Black parents, organizations and concerned citizens must step forward now; if we don't, Black children by the thousands will be continually sacrificed on the twin altars of gradualism and political expediency.

## An appeal to the Black community

by Dr. Dapo Sobomehin

I have been in Portland for about six months with my wife and kids and I want to thank most of my Black brothers and sisters who have received us so well. When these people knew that I was in need of a job, there was a great pronouncement to the community leaders. These people rallied around me to see that I found a job as soon as possible. I want to thank Commissioner Jordan and his wonderful staff, George Rankin of Urban League, Commissioner McCoy, Ronnie Herndon of the Black United Front, and Shirley Minor of City Hall's Affirmative Action office. Many of you that I did not mention have spoken to me to show me the corners to cut and the Barometric changes to be aware of, to the extent that you educated me so well that within a short time I became a Portlander.

Although I felt a great sense of unity on my behalf I have not seen that unity in facing the problems of the Black community in Portland. As a Human Relations Specialist for

the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, I have had the exposure to the low achievement ratings of the Black children in the school systems. It is very sad and discouraging as is the high rate of unemployment among Black youth. All these things have become of great concern to me.

I am a Nigerian by birth but have spent my adult life in America. I specialize in Black affairs and Black political systems. But if one were to look at all the Black communities all over the world, credit must be given to the Black Americans. They have been struggling for the last 200 years. They have a sense of purpose and a sense of direction. If one were to have watched CBS' 60 Minutes program on Nigeria, West Africa, on Sunday, November 27th, 1983, one would have sensed the hopelessness of over 100 million people, a nation with tremendous potential, both in manpower and natural resources. Ghana is another tragedy. Zaire is in a state of despair. One can feel that the Grenadians have become a subdued people.

I am appealing to all of you that I am your brother here to join you in

this struggle. I want you to know that I have rolled my sleeves up. I am ready to work with you. We are all in this together. Black people suffer together, wherever we may be. Our destiny lies in our hands. Our survival, our freedom, our liberation is in our hands. Together we can succeed.

You are all attractive to me. You are all wonderful. But we have work to do. The future of our children in education, the future of our youth in employment, we all must come together to find solution to these problems to ensure the future is a bright one. It is an African saying that the future belongs to the children and that we must prepare them for what lies ahead. I do not want to sound paternalistic. This is from the bottom of my heart—that you are all good people. I am glad to be part of you. We must work together. It does not mean we are not going to disagree but our disagreement should not divide us but rather be an incentive to bring us to a closer understanding of one another. Unity is a must.

Thank you very much.



## Letters to the Editor

### White for Jesse Jackson

To the editor:

If I have the opportunity, I'm going to vote for Jesse Jackson. I am old, white, widowed—a member of a minority that is probably the most disadvantaged in the country. I am a retired union member, and during my early years I believed that labor would lead the way to economic and social justice. But labor, through years of prosperity, seems to have forgotten its roots. I'm presently convinced that Black people are the only ones to have the guts and the gumption to challenge the wimps and Strangeloves that dominate the two old parties.

If Blacks, politically aware women, Chicanos and other minorities should united behind Jackson, and even if he didn't win, we could at least scare the hell out of that old crowd of bunglers, and probably make them change for the better.

May B. DuBois

### Miss America misses boat

To the editor:

I have read the *Portland Observer* for many years, and have always found your newspaper to be an informational source of personal and professional current events, in and outside our Black community. The importance of having a newspaper in the community is unquestionable. Recently I read an article—in your Nov. 23, 1983 issue, in the Observations section, (subtitled "From the Sidelines")—that I was disappointed in. After reading the article I was confused about whom the article was reporting on. Was the article reporting on the first Black Miss America or was it an advertisement?

Being a native of Portland, over the years I've read of and seen many positive actions we can attribute to the prominent family of the late Lucius Williams. I would have been proud to read about Ms. B.J. (Wil-

liams) Thompson's future business ventures in a separate article but certainly not upstaging a historical event such as the visit of Miss America to Portland, Oregon.

Being a parent of three teenage children in our current economic status, I would have enjoyed reading a little more about the young Miss America and to what experiences she attributes her success. More detail on her background, and her future goals, would have been nice. I think we missed an opportunity to give something more positive in negative times to our young people.

Jacqueline M. King

The Observer welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters should be short, and must contain the writer's name and address (addresses are not printed). The Observer reserves the right to edit for length.

### Grenada

(Continued from page 1 column 6)

Since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 and the U.S. victory in the Spanish American War in 1898, the trend has been for the U.S. to step into the shoes of Spain, England and France as the colonial power in the Caribbean. Between 1898 and 1965, he said, the U.S. intervened 34 times in Central America and the Caribbean to "restore order," staying as long as 18 years in the case of Nicaragua in the early part of this century. The process involved setting up rulers from those countries sympathetic to U.S. imperial interests, hence leaders like Tom Adams, Eugenia Charles, Eric Gairy and Anastasio Somoza.

The Grenada invasion constitutes the first incursion of the U.S. into a

former British colony, Purcell observed, and could be a model for things to come as the U.S. tries to step into England's colonial role. Repression and the U.S. might make it likely that revolution is not imminent in countries like Jamaica and Haiti, however, said Purcell. The conditions are there, he said, but the leadership is not. So what do energetic young people do? "These countries have never really belonged to us, so we leave," said Purcell. And many, like Purcell himself, come to the U.S.

Purcell migrated to the U.S. in 1968 at age 20 after a childhood of extreme poverty in an agricultural area of Jamaica. Two years spent in the U.S. Army, including 13 months in Korea, "was an extremely good education for me," he said. "It was in the army that I learned

about American racism. I started reading about history, racism, and so on."

After the army Purcell entered Brooklyn College and eventually earned a Ph.D. in anthropology from Johns Hopkins University. His odyssey, leading from impoverished Jamaica to his job as one of two Black professors at Reed, has not been without stress, he said.

Being a Black instructor teaching Third World subjects in a predominantly white college with a curriculum "biased toward western Europe" has left him feeling alienated.

"Since I come from a poor background, I don't want to appear like I'm educating the elite. . . . I am someone who cannot separate my academic and my political life. My anthropology must have relevance to the people."



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