

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Shape up, Oregonian

Portlanders of color, progressive concerns, and issues affecting low-income Oregonians are being misrepresented by the homogenized, status quo reporting by Portland's only daily newspaper — *The Oregonian*.

It's unfortunate that there has yet to emerge a daily competitor to compare the elitist journalism decimated by *The Oregonian*. We still have a bitter taste in our mouths as we recall the sharecropper's attitude and double standard superimposed by *The Oregonian's* editorial board on former Commissioner Charles Jordan.

Jordan stated that a person of color could replace him on the City Council to ensure adequate representation of all Portlanders. The all-white male editorial board hinted that Jordan's remarks were reverse discrimination. Prior to the general election, Jordan accepted a position as Park Commissioner in Austin, Texas. The editorial board said Jordan owed it to the voters to serve his term.

The double standard of journalistic racism met the deadline as other white politicians who upgraded their lives were given a sendoff with praise while Jordan receive the brunt of their criticism.

Because of the business-as-usual status quo, perspectives employed by their political reporters *The Oregonian* could not see stagnant Frank Ivancie's predictable defeat in the primary election. They covered the mayor's race with blinders on as they ignored Bud Clark and a large percentage of their readership.

Their basic reporting of events, individuals and issues affecting Portlanders of color is paternalistic at best and racist at worst. Whenever there is a remedial program covered, an Afro-American is pictured. Our youth are given ink as long as they are

dancing, singing or involved in sports.

In reporting the disaster last week at Harriet Tubman Middle School, *The Oregonian* reporter defined Tubman as the school built by "loud protest from the Black United Front." This is far from the truth, and the results of this under and mis-reporting perpetuate stereotypes in the majority community.

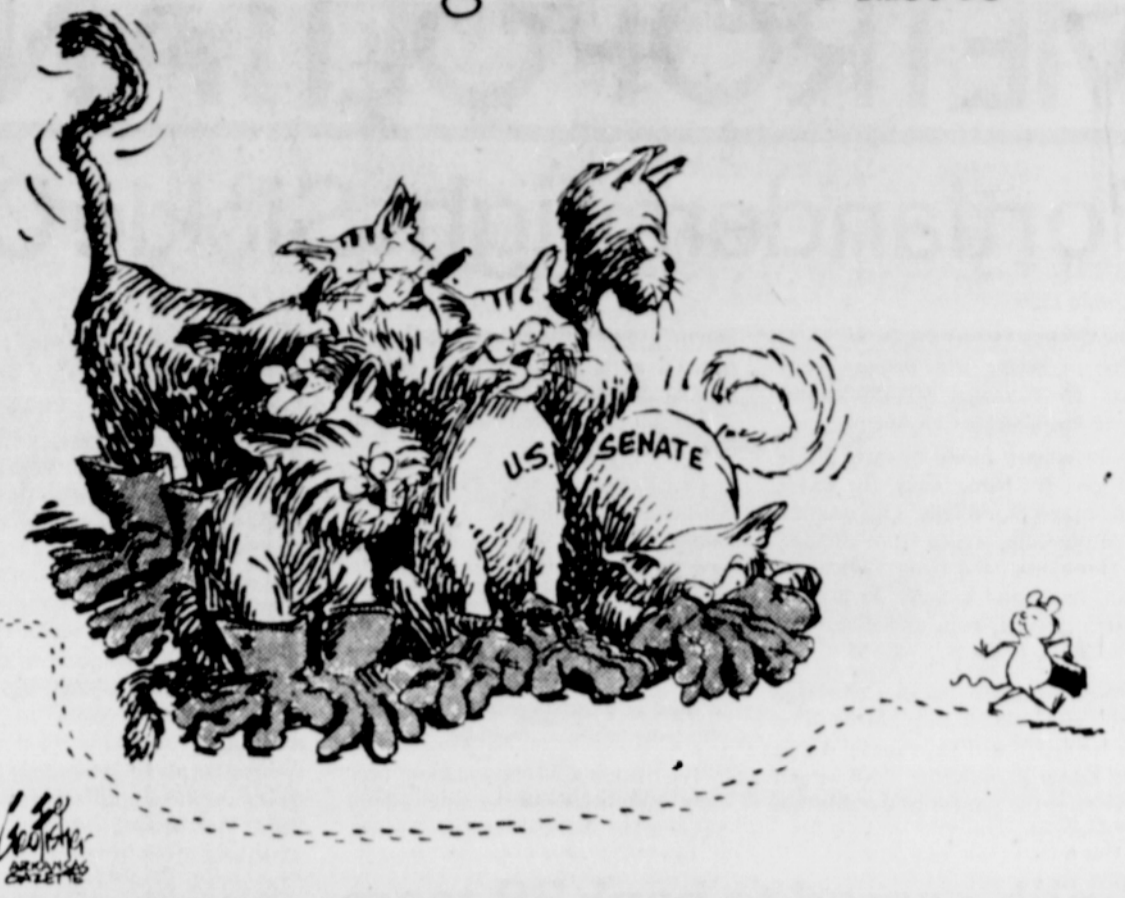
Their art critic did an injustice to the Member's Gallery, a group of Afro-American artists and photographers, by printing a review of their exhibit on the day it closed. There are hundreds of other reviews published days and weeks in advance. It was not fair to their readership to inform them of an exhibit on the day it closed.

It would require pages upon pages to recount the narrow, racist and uncreative journalism fostered by *The Oregonian*. The bottom line is that we are not being served journalistically by them. And as subscribers and readers, we should not allow this type of journalism to continue unchallenged. Challenge their journalistic racism and poor Affirmative Action record. It makes no difference if an editor is Black when a rainbow perspective is not incorporated in its journalism or in the newsroom.

In 1984, a study conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors reported of the 49,600 professionals in the newsroom, only 2,862 were Black. The study also found that 61 percent of the nation's 1,693 dailies did not employ any people of color on their staff. There is no excuse for this journalistic apartheid, especially when progressive issues are getting front page coverage.

We have an investment in how people of color are represented. And until structural changes occur in mass newsprint, we will continue to monitor and challenge our interpretation by outsiders.

Cats in gloves catch no Meese



POSAF ON SOUTH AFRICA

Mighty Clouds of Joy removed from cultural boycott list

Unity in Action, an organization that aims to end the collaboration of artists with the apartheid regime in South Africa, has secured a letter of agreement from gospel recording artists, The Mighty Clouds of Joy, pledging that they "will not be returning to South Africa until the situation as it now exists is completely turned around."

A planned picket of the scheduled January 26 performance of the group at the Beverly Theatre in Beverly Hills was averted owing to timely and productive discussions between the group's manager, Zachary Glickman, and Unity in Action during preceding weeks.

Unity in Action has property notified the United Nations Center Against Apartheid, African National Congress, and affiliate organizations. As is customary, Unity in Action gratefully acknowledged other activist pro-liberation forces whose concerted, very visible, and embarrassing protest demonstrations were the major force which brought about this victory.

The Mighty Clouds of Joy agreement signals yet another major breakthrough for local, national, and international anti-apartheid forces who are continuing the campaign to keep artists and athletes out of South Africa.

The following is the text of the Mighty Clouds of Joy letter sent to Mr. Ron Wilkins, chairman of the cultural boycott:

"Dear Ron, "During the telephone conversation last week between myself, on behalf of The Mighty Clouds of Joy, and you, the cultural boycott imposed by the United Nations on South Africa was explained to me.

"When The Mighty Clouds of Joy went to South Africa several years ago, they went as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Neither they nor myself were aware of the cultural boycott. There was no intention on their part for their presence in South Africa to mean that they in any way approved of the apartheid or the ruling government.

"Since our discussion, I can assure you that The Mighty Clouds of Joy will not be returning to South Africa until the situation as it now exists is completely turned around.

"Please accept this document in the spirit in which it was written and utilize it as you see fit in helping to stop the apartheid in South Africa.

"Sincerely,"
ZACHARY GLICKMAN
Manager,
The Mighty Clouds of Joy

Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard J. Brown

The Street Beat team gave Portlanders a chance to rate the mass media with, "How would you evaluate the coverage the media gives issues and individuals?"



Chris Jenkins
Driver

"It depends on the issue. They are pretty correct, but on the recent clerk's strike, they left a lot of information out."



Nate Nickerson
Mental Health Director

"I don't think minorities are portrayed very fairly. But the minority media does a good job."



Carl Buchanan
Security

"Sometimes things are out of proportion. They go far out on one thing and not far enough on others."



Rachel Walters
Student

"Sometimes they print things that aren't true just to sell papers."



Michael McCormack
Upholstery Worker

"Seems stale. The same old things are reported. I would like to see something on the human side and more humor."



Robert Newsom
Preacher

"Not so good. I've been other places where the coverage was better."

Letters to the Editor

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be typed or neatly printed and signed with the author's name and address (addresses are not published). We reserve the right to edit for length. Mail to: Portland Observer, P. O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

No more "nigger"

To the Editor,

This is written by a white man. If I can be allowed an observation on the Black human condition, I wish to make it here, for there is something that bothers me greatly. It is a word.

The word is "nigger." It is a blight, this word, one I thought was eradicated from all but the ignorant plantation mentalities of the Deep South. It is a word I grew up learning was an evil part of the irrationality of racial distinction.

Yet the other day, near my house in Northeast Portland, I witnessed a Black man call his young son "nigger." A Black friend of mine was shocked when I told him this story. "He called him WHAT? That is really terrible." He said even among his friends, "nigger" is reserved for heated arguments on the basketball court.

But I frequently hear Blacks address each other this way. Perhaps as an insult among friends it has a harmless role, no differently than we may say "moron" or "lunatic" in fun.

But when I heard a man call a child

"nigger," there seemed to be something angry and derisive in the use of the epithet. Even a white man calling a Black man "nigger" can be vaguely understood. But to use it on another Black — and a child — is truly wrong. Truly objectionable.

Black men call each other nigger. The statement begs to become a question, for disbelief is inherent: Black men call each other "nigger"?

Dick Gregory wrote, 20 years ago in his autobiography, "Nigger": "And now we're ready to change a system, a system where a white man can destroy a Black man with a single word. Nigger."

Has anything changed? I wonder how the realist Gregory's words could be reversed in such a sad fashion, and by Blacks. Not whites.

Is it rebellion? By calling each other "nigger," do Blacks seek to deny the potency of the epithet used against them by whites for so many cruel years?

Is it pride? To turn a name of shame into an expression of amaraderie?

I don't think this is what Rosa Parks had in mind. They called her a nigger and it must have hurt. James Meredith was shot and the bullet said, "nigger."

Rev. Martin Luther King's eloquence of 1963 might have been very different if he had imagined Blacks calling each other the very thing lynch mobs and corrupt riot police wielded when killing and humiliating Black men, women and children.

Rev. King would have spoken not of a Dream but of a nightmare.

I try to imagine what that little boy must think when his father calls him "nigger." I think he is too young to know the power of words, even careless ones. But he is not too young to FEEL them. His father's intent may not be negative, but the boy's subconscious is mature, and the word is nothing casual. "Nigger" has not become impotent with age. It is powerful and fearsome. If it has a contemporary purpose of protest or comaraderie, those meanings seem minute compared to the real, ingrained force of the word.

For the boy knows that to call another person "nigger" is another way of crushing his will, of denying his humanity.

KIRBY NEUMANN-REA

Thanks for good coverage

To the Editor,

I want to thank you and others at the paper responsible for this very favorable coverage of an event I wish could have been avoided.

It was not the happiest way to end my deanship, but I am heartened by the reawakening of Affirmative Action concerns spurred by my action.

Thanks again for your good coverage.

DEAN DERRICK BELL

Portland Observer



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