



Cuba vs. U.S.A. volleyball game. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Cuba on display

by Robert Lothian

Portland hosted a Cuban-American volleyball match and the Cuban National Mime Theater last week.

Wednesday night at the University of Portland's Chiles Center, Cuba's national volleyball team took on the U.S. men's team.

Six players who were with the U.S. team when it won a gold medal at the Los Angeles Olympics played against Cuba in Portland. Cuba's team, ranked among the top five in the world, made Portland the last stop on a four-match U.S. tour before heading for Tokyo. Cuba had been unable to compete in the Olympics due to the boycott.

In action that was often lightning quick, the polished U.S. team won three out of four games, taking the best of five series. Cuba, struggling valiantly in what must have seemed a strange environment and surrounded by an unsympathetic crowd, came from behind to tie and almost win the first and second games, but lost 15-13 and 16-14. Cuba trounced the U.S. in the third game 15-7, but lost 15-11 in the fourth.

There was no doubt as to the crowd's sympathies — when the U.S. pulled ahead, the rafters resounded with yells of "U.S.A., U.S.A.!"

A Cuban cheering section was tiny by comparison. However, a large banner proclaimed, "Bienvenidos, Cubanos!" (Welcome, Cubans) near where American and Cuban flags hung side-by-side. "We don't see any politics in sports," said a Cuban spectator.

A difference in cultures was nevertheless evident. The suave and sun-bleached Southern California look of the Americans contrasted with the Cubans' exuberant exclamations in Spanish.

One fan wondered how the Americans would fare in Cuba.

Tuesday night, the Cuban National Mime Theater delighted an audience at the PSU cafeteria.

With simple movements, expressive faces and colorful costumes, Olga Flora, Ramon Diaz and Roberto Montero performed subjects directed toward the poor and powerless. The only sound was that of recorded Cuban music.

"Peanut vender" and "the roosters" communicated the pathos of pre-revolutionary life. "Piano player," "surgeon" and "the movies" were just plain funny.

The final performance, dedicated "in the memory of our heroes," gave expression to the anti-imperialist feelings that arose during the unsuccessful U.S.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion. The characters started as field workers, then went into a state of struggle as the invasion threatened. The three then formed their bodies into an anti-aircraft gun and realistically acted out the shooting down of an invading plane. Joy and celebration followed.

During their visit to the Northwest, the mime theater performed for street people in Seattle and for Mexican farmworkers in Yakima, said Katalina Montero, who represented Casa Cultural in Seattle, sponsor of the tour.

"I think the strongest message they are bringing is friendship, peace and unity," said Montero.

The troupe started out 25 years ago performing for Cuban coffee pickers. "The only flat place was where we dried the coffee and that's where we started our theater," said Diaz.

Some of their works are aimed at teaching people how to read, and others at "how a man should treat a woman," he said.

"In Cuba, nobody starves," there is full employment and people do not live in fear of crime, said Flora.

Native Americans denied rights at state prison

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU) filed suit on Monday, May 21, on behalf of Native American inmates at Oregon State Penitentiary (O.S.P.) charging they are being denied their right to freedom of religion. The suit was filed in the United States District Court for Oregon.

The ACLU is representing three inmates who are or have been incarcerated in the Segregation and Isolation Unit at O.S.P. The three Native American men have been denied the opportunity to participate in the Sacred Pipe Ceremony and Sacred Sweat Lodge, which are fundamental rituals of their religion.

The ACLU and the inmates contend that the denial is in violation of the inmates' right under the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and Article One of the Oregon Constitution which guarantee the right of free exercise of religion. The presence of a Pipe Holder is

needed for the Sacred Pipe Ceremony and materials including an eagle feather and pipe tobacco are also needed. Despite repeated requests by the plaintiffs and other Native American inmates, the prison administration has refused to allow the Pipe Holder to conduct the ceremony in front of the prisoners' cells in the Segregation and Isolation Unit.

Priests, ministers and spiritual leaders of other faiths are permitted to perform religious rituals in the Segregation and Isolation Unit at O.S.P.

The ACLU argues that O.S.P. policies are discriminatory. Stevie Remington, executive director of the ACLU, said, "O.S.P. administrators are treating inmates unequally. Inmates who are Protestant or Catholic and are in the Segregation and Isolation Unit are allowed to see a minister or priest. There is no threat to prison safety or security by allowing Native American inmates to practice their religion."



Edith Roberts (left) and Frank Milton (right) receiving awards from Oregon Literacy group.

Roberts volunteer of month

The Board of Directors of Oregon Literacy, Inc., honored Edith Roberts as a volunteer of the month at their last board meeting.

Mrs. Roberts has been an Oregon Literacy volunteer for two years and has worked with four students who were adult non-readers. "I want to share my joy of reading with others," she is quoted as saying.

She has been married for 33 years to Ernest, a retired Air Force man, who now works for the state in Salem. They have lived in all parts of the

United States plus France while Mr. Roberts was in the service. They have two sons and a daughter who live in Portland, also.

The Roberts' original home was in Brooklyn, New York, and they came to Portland in the 60s when Mr. Roberts was transferred to the Portland Air Base. They came back to stay in 1973.

Mrs. Roberts is an active member of the Hughes Memorial United Church and her hobbies, naturally enough, are reading and tutoring.

D.C. King memorial proposed

A national campaign to raise \$300,000 to establish a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Washington, D.C., is being spearheaded by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

The proposal for the Fraternity to assume the leadership for the project was adopted at the organization's 78th anniversary convention in Cleveland last August. The effort is being planned to coincide with the first observance of Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday and the Fraternity's 80th anniversary convention which will be held in Washington, D.C., in 1986.

Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy of the District of Columbia has introduced a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives in support of the project. Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland has entered similar legislation in the U.S. Senate. Both have indicated that they will urge their colleagues to endorse their respective bills.

A majority of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus have already indicated their endorsement of the project to honor Dr. King.

Marion S. Barry, Jr., mayor of the District of Columbia, and Andrew Young, mayor of Atlanta, both members of the Fraternity, are serving as honorary co-chairmen.

Once initial funds have been raised through Alpha Phi Alpha, the plan calls for taking the appeal to national Black organizations, corporate groups, private institutions, religious bodies, and the general public for additional financial support. For example, other Black Greek-letter organizations will be encouraged to back the project through their national leadership and through the Pan-Hellenic Council.

It is believed that the memorial to Dr. King, himself a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, would be the first to honor a Black man in the nation's capital. A statue honoring Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was erected in Washington, D.C., in 1974.

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