



Linda Williams (far right), former staff writer for the *Oregonian* and currently with the *Wall Street Journal*, poses a question to media panel (left to right) Lee Swanson, John McMillan, William Hilliard and Mark Zusman, Saturday. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Panel discusses Oregon media coverage

by Nathaniel Scott

The Oregon Journalists Coalition, an Association of Minority Journalists in Oregon, held a panel discussion Saturday, Sept. 14, at St. Andrew's Catholic Church.

The discussion titled, "Oregon's Media Coverage: A whitewash or a rainbow?" was attended by approximately 50 people.

Derrick Bell, professor of law at the University of Oregon, gave the keynote address. Bell presented his address in the form of a fictionalized account entitled "The Amber Cloud." The gist of Bell's speech was a paradox of minorities dealing with the news media.

The speech emphasized how rich, white affluent people in this society would react if their children were struck with a "ghetto disease" resulting from an "Amber Cloud." Bell's amber cloud only affected the children of wealthy white America. According to Bell's point of view, no resources would be spared in the quest for a cure. Legislation would be passed and the priority of military budgets would be put on hold. Once a cure had been secured and the last victim cured, a national day of thanksgiving would be proclaimed.

"The question is," Bell asked, "how would the media handle the 'Amber Cloud' story? What is the reality of the racism under which the nation's media function?" Bell said "every institution" in this society provides a rationale to maintain racist ideologies.

"How the media would handle the 'Amber Cloud' story must be asked and answered," Bell maintained.

In addition to Bell, there were two panels. A, community panel made up

of Ron Herndon, co-chairman of Portland's chapter of the Black United Front; Jose Gutierrez, executive director of Oregon's Commission of Hispanic Affairs; Carolyn Leonard, evaluator from Portland's school district; and Reymundo Marin, executive director of Portland's Metropolitan Human Relations Commission.

The media panel included William Hilliard, executive editor, *The Oregonian*; John McMillan, publisher, *Statesman-Journal*; Lee Swanson, assistant news director, KATU-TV; and Mark Zusman, editor, *Willamette Week*.

The community panel maintained that the media presented minorities in inferior ways.

According to Marin, the media will expose the bad housing of the poor but they will not expose the landlord's side of the story.

"The reason behind the story is never reported," he said. Marin maintained that *The Oregonian* employs a total of 1,178 people. He said 16 are Black, eight Hispanics, 18 Asians and three are native Americans. A total of 45 minorities out of a work force that exceeds 1,100.

Leonard said, "What people in Oregon see and what they hear is what they believe about minorities." She said the media distorts facts.

"It is extremely important that we realize that minorities have a critical impact upon our lives," she said. "It's critical that the white media care about the kind of information given."

Herndon said that at most news conferences, the reporters are white. He drew a sharp parallel between the reporting of white males and white females.

"When you have only white report-

ers covering the Black community, you get two entirely different stories when the reporters are men and women," he said.

Herndon maintained that if the condition the Black community is in was present in the West Hills, "It would be seen as a crisis."

"We need to address drugs," Herndon said. "If not, we are going to have serious problems." Herndon said he hopes the media will give the Black community the kind of attention that will arouse public confidence.

Zusman said, "There is a real need to focus on minorities concerns." However, he added, "The media, particularly the print media, is targeting an audience that's white and well-educated."

Hilliard said, "I have no quarrels with the criticism I've heard because most of them are true." He added that the need is really for a commitment for basic human rights.

The Oregonian and the *Statesman-Journal*, according to Hilliard and McMillan, have affirmative action guidelines.

Art Alexander, an aide with City Commissioner Mike Lindberg, asked the media panel: "When are you going to adopt intelligent standards and when are you going to institute changes that don't depend on financial or violent threats?"

Alexander also said, "There are many stupid, white journalists."

At the close of the panel discussion, Mark Sanchez, moderator from KOIN-TV, asked the media panel what they had learned.

McMillan said the forum had been "useful" in reminding him that the media do have "valid and legitimate obligations."

State-wide fall cleanup planned

The Second Annual Bag-it Days is coming for a full two weeks this fall. Governor Atiyeh had proclaimed September 21 through October 4 as time to clean up and recycle litter around the state. So plan to thank our great Oregon environment for a fun summer by cleaning, reusing, and recycling.

Bag-It Days will be kicked off with the pickup of plastic (harmful to wildlife) along the 300 miles of Oregon coastal beaches on September 21, to be followed by locally sponsored program throughout the state.

Last year 3,000 people spruced up more than 50 cities in two days. Over 2,000 volunteers picked up 23 tons of plastic from our beaches in the "Plague of Plastics" campaign.

"Over 500 projects have already been planned for this year's event, and more are coming in each day," reports Judie Neilson and Ernie McDonald from Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism. "Schools, youth groups, and many individuals and organizations have been contacted and encouraged to sponsor or volunteer to participate in cleanup and recycling projects during this Second Annual Bag-It Days event."

One focus this year will be to emphasize the identification of recyclables in an effort to reduce throwing away reusables.

Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism (SOLV) is encouraging communities to organize and coordinate community-wide projects that can bring citizens together to improve the livability of their community. Cities, communities, and organizations interested in more information can write to SOLV, P.O. 40047, Portland, OR 97240, or call toll free 1-800-322-3326 for a planning and publicity kit.

Nuclear weapons to be held

"Hanford, First Strike, and Global Proliferation" is the title of a slide-show and presentation about nuclear weapons production at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in south-central Washington, to be given by Chuck Bell of the Oregon Hanford Oversight Committee. The talk will take place on Monday, Sept. 23, at 7:00 p.m. at the Friends Meeting House, 4312 S.E. Stark. For more information, call 295-2101. The presentation is free and open to the public.

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- FACT:** Bottled water isn't regularly monitored for some toxic chemicals, except in states like New York where monitoring is required. In 1982, the Suffolk County, New York health department tested bottled water sold in the county and found potentially hazardous chemicals in 46 of 110 brands.
- FACT:** The EPA has identified serious groundwater contamination in 34 states.
- FACT:** The United States Geological Survey pinpoints sources of contamination in every state.

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Africa after the famine

The second year of Portland State University's new International Studies Program begins this fall with a free public lecture on "The Historical Continuity of Japanese Civilization" scheduled for Thursday, September 26 at 7:30 p.m. in Lincoln Hall Auditor-

ium, corner of S.W. Broadway and Market St.

The hour-long presentation will be given by Dr. Tadao Umehao, a noted cultural anthropologist who is Director-General of the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan. The mu-

seum is considered to be one of that nation's top institutions devoted to the study of national culture.

Dr. Umehao's appearance at PSU coincides with "Japanese Awareness Week," sponsored by the Portland Japanese Consulate, which is working with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to further enhance relations with the U.S.

The importance of Dr. Umehao's talk was underscored recently by Gil Latz, an instructor of East Asian geography at PSU. "When we talk about Japanese culture," he noted, "Americans need to distinguish between contemporary economic trade politics and the kinds of attitudes and beliefs which bind Japanese people together."

Latz believes that a better American understanding of Japan requires an appreciation of both cultural as well as economic factors particular to that nation.

Dr. Umehao's talk will offer Americans an insider's view of Japanese society by analyzing the persistence of traditions amidst rapid social and economic change, Latz noted.

"Japan is the world's only modern, non-Western industrialized power and it is a much older, more established country than our own," he added. "The extent to which we are sensitive to this country's history and culture will ultimately deepen our ties with the Japanese at all levels of international exchange."

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