

PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volume XVII, Number 5

December 10, 1986

25¢

More Black Entrepreneurs Self-Help The Key?

by Terrance Tudhope

It was Martin Luther King, Jr. who pointed out that after equal rights under the law was won, equality in opportunity would be the next battle. "The emergency we face now is economic, and it is a desperate and worsening situation," he said. "For the 35 million poor people in America . . . there is a kind of strangulation in the air. In our society it is murder, psychologically, to deprive a man of a job or an income. You are in substance saying to that man that he has no right to exist."

Today, the majority of Blacks are working out better lives for themselves. In the last 20 years, the percentage of Blacks in the middle class has doubled. Yet, about one third of all Blacks and 1 out of 2 Black children still live in poverty. And nearly 1 out of every 2 Black teenagers is out of work.

The passport into the middle class is no secret—a good job. So it comes as little surprise that in a national survey done last year, unemployment was ranked as the number one concern for Blacks. The Black unemployment rate is nearly twice that for Whites.

Nevertheless, the combined economic power of Blacks is considerable. According to figures released by Brimmer & Co., the gross income of Black Americans last year was estimated at \$202.6 billion dollars. Ebony magazine pointed out that if only 10 percent of that income was spent with Black businesses, the Black economy would be booming. Black enterprises would show a 40 percent increase in revenues, an approximate extra \$8 billion dollars.

A sharper awareness in Black communities, especially amongst the middle class, to "buy Black" whenever possible would be a powerful offensive against poverty, promoting increased Black employment.

But it's a two sided coin. Black businesses must also be able to effectively compete with White companies. Charity only goes so far, and people, no matter their race, want quality goods and services for their money.

Perhaps even more important, these statistics highlight the necessity for more Black businesses to create additional Black jobs. They point out how urgently we need more Black entrepreneurs to launch new companies.

Washington Post columnist William Raspberry has warned the growing Black middle class that a new message is needed to those left behind in the ghettos: "It would help enormously if the well-off would let the poor—especially the children—in on their vital secret. You can make it if you try."

But perhaps there is an even more vital message. Perhaps what we really need to be telling the young is: **you can create your own job and your own future if you work for it!**

But for many, no matter how bad the situation is, no matter how bleak the current job prospects look, no matter how tough it all seems, there is still a hope that somewhere, somehow, their break will come. They put in time on the streets, getting by the best they can, while they wait. It is these who if shown a way to make something of themselves, just might take it.

Deck The Halls: Wreath-Making Workshops

No one knows winter greenery better than the Bureau of Parks and Recreation. Our workshops will show you how to create special holiday wreaths that will have your own personal touch.

Fulton Park Community Center, 68 S.W. Miles; Session A, Dec. 11, 7-8:30 AM; Session B, Dec. 10, 7-9 PM. Bring gloves and clippers. Fashion a 12-to-14 inch wreath using a variety of greenery, cones, and bows. Learn secrets to keeping greens fresh. Fee is \$3.

Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 N.E. Knott; Session A, Dec. 10, 1-3 PM; Session B, December 10, 6-8 PM. Includes greens, wire frame, pine cones, and ribbon. Bring any additional ornaments you may want to add. Fee is \$3.

Burch To Become Legislative Assistant

by Jerry Garner

Faye Burch, a staff assistant at Pacific Northwest Bell, has been picked by District 18 Representative Margaret Carter as one of her legislative aides for the upcoming legislative session which begins January 12th in Salem.

Burch, who has been employed at Pacific Northwest Bell for ten years, has been granted a community service leave by the phone company which will enable her to serve as Rep. Carter's aide during the legislative session. Usually community service leaves are granted only to employees who have been elected to public office.

As a legislative aide to Carter, Burch will write speeches, schedule appointments, do research work, assist Carter on the floor during legislative sessions, seek qualified individuals to testify on bills sponsored by Carter, and serve as a fill-in for her at meetings.

Burch said she feels honored to be chosen as a legislative aide by Rep. Carter. "I admire her (Carter) greatly. She is extremely competent and is a credible person."

She said working as a legislative aide will be a learning experience for her. "I have always worked in the corporate world. Serving as Rep. Carter's aide will give me first-hand knowledge of the workings of the political process," Burch said.

Burch feels that her corporate background and her involvement with community organizations will be beneficial to Rep. Carter. "The individuals who are in these organizations are constituents of Rep. Carter."

In order to prepare Burch and other in-coming legislative aides on their responsibilities, the House Majority Leader will sponsor a one-week orientation beginning January 5th.



Faye Burch

Photo by Richard J. Brown

Non-Military Solutions Needed In El Salvador Says Activist

by Jerry Garner

The United States government should cease all military and economic aid to the government of El Salvador and should urge Salvadorian officials to seek a non-military solution with the resistance forces fighting in that war-torn Central American country said Maceo Pettis, Co-Chair of the Oregon Rainbow Coalition.

Pettis recently returned to Portland after spending five days in El Salvador. He was part of a nine-member Oregon delegation which went to San Salvador, El Salvador, to attend a peace forum entitled "In Search of Peace: A U.S.—El Salvador Conference", held at the Catholic University of Central America.

The conference was sponsored by the National Unity of Salvadorian Workers (UNTS), which is the broadest opposition coalition in El Salvador. Overall, 176 U.S. and 250 Salvadorian delegates attended the conference. The 176-member U.S. delegation is the largest American peace delegation ever to visit El Salvador.

Pettis said the purpose of the conference was to find ways to work towards a peaceful negotiated settlement to the seven-year-old civil war between the government and the Farabundo Martin National Liberation Front (FMLN).

He was critical of the Reagan administration's approach to the solution of the conflict, saying that administration has only encouraged a "military solution" to the problems in El Salvador.

"Furthermore, the Reagan administration should work closer with organizations such as the UNTS. The UNTS has the support of the majority of Salvadorians living in the urban areas and is the driving force behind the trade union movement in El Salvador," Pettis said.

He said support for UNTS has increased over the years because of the social austerity programs and human rights violations by the government.

Pettis was asked whether he felt that the majority of Salvadorians support the resistance fighters or the government. "Although I was only in El Salvador for five days, I felt that many support the efforts of FMLN. Many wouldn't say this publicly for fear of their lives by government death squads."

When asked was there a strong U.S. influence in El Salvador, he replied, "Yes. Throughout our stay in El Salvador, we had to get approval from the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador. I got the impression that the U.S. government was running the show down there."

Pettis said another topic discussed at the conference was the lack of effort by the Duarte government to assist the people who were victims of the earthquake on Oct. 10th of this year. The earthquake killed 1,500 people and left thousands homeless. Critics of the Duarte regime, including Pettis, alleged that the \$50 million earthquake relief fund allocated by the Reagan administration to assist victims of the quake isn't reaching them. "There are indications that the funds are being diverted for military use," said Pettis. He recommends that U.S. citizens who want to help the "damnificados" (the earthquake victims) to send their donations to the Catholic Church in El Salvador.

Pettis said delegates at the conference agreed on a resolution calling for the U.S. to cease all military and economic aid to El Salvador; to start dialogue and negotiations for peace among all parties and sectors to resolved the conflict; to cease all repression of unions, cooperatives and the people, in general; to support the unconditional defense of human rights, freedom for political prisoners, and an end to disappearances; and to immediately meet the demands of earthquake victims for food, clothing and shelter.

Pettis said the two things which surprised him most during his visit to El Salvador were the prevalence of poverty in the country and the racist



Maceo Pettis—Co-Chair, Oregon Rainbow Coalition.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

nature of the Duarte government. "Unemployment in El Salvador is anywhere from 25 to 50 percent. Power in El Salvador still remains in the hands of the private sector and the military."

Pettis said he wasn't aware that the El Salvadorian government was racist until an incident occurred during his visit there. He said his delegation was stopped by military officials while returning from a resettlement camp and was ordered out of the bus. "While the troops were checking the credentials of one of the passengers, I started to walk around but was told by Suzanna Cepeda, co-director of the U.S. delegation, that I should stay with the group because the government is racist and is hostile to Blacks."

Pettis said 15 percent of the U.S. delegates were from minority communities. He said he went to the conference to bring back information to Portland's Black and Hispanic communities.

Pettis gave a slide show presentation last Sunday to a group in North-west Portland. Another presentation will be given Thursday, December 18th, at 7:30 p.m., at the Musicians Union Hall, 325 N.E. 20th.

If any groups or religious organizations are interested in viewing the slide presentation, they should contact Pettis at 287-2835 or 249-0600.