

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## GUEST EDITORIAL: To be Equal

by John E. Jacob

At a point in history where we seem to be enjoying an economic boom, when there is practically full employment among white male workers; when the nation is enjoying one of its lowest official unemployment rates in many decades, the unemployment rate for Black America is still officially around 12 percent.

I say "officially" because when we factor in what we call hidden unemployment — people who are working part-time when they want full-time work, or people who become so discouraged that they have stopped looking for work altogether — we're no longer talking 12 percent, but 20 percent unemployment.

Clearly, when we still have 2-1/2 times the unemployment rate for Blacks as we have for whites we have a serious disparity in employment.

Despite that, I think there is a significant window of employment opportunity that may open for Black Americans. Not because America has suddenly become more moralistic about this issue, but because America will have a workforce supply and demand problem that will require it to end discriminatory employment practices for its own economic survival.

As we move into the year 2000, we are confronted with a shrinking white male labor pool. It's expected that only 15 percent of new entrants to the workforce will be white males.

Workforce growth is among minorities and women, who represent the population base which this country will have to draw from in order to fuel the economy and to do the jobs that must be done.

The difficulty we will confront is that the jobs that will be

available will need skills different from those possessed by the people who are now looking for work.

That's why the Urban League and other minority, community-based agencies are placing such great stress on education and on getting minority kids' school performance up to parity with national averages.

We have mounted an attack on the educational deficiencies that exist institutionally, and are also working with the kids in our cities to raise their performance levels in a measurable way.

The purpose is first, to keep them in school, and secondly, to get them to take the right courses.

It's not enough to graduate — it's of equal importance that they take courses that will equip them to interact and succeed in a highly technological, information-oriented society.

So we are trying to get kids to take math and science, an English course. We are trying to get kids to be smarter, more analytical, more technologically literate, because we believe if we do that, race will become of less importance.

What America is going to need are people with skills, and because the supply will be so short it won't make any difference whether they are female or male, black or white or purple.

The fact is that by the year 2000, the country will be so desperately in need of skilled, trained, highly educated people, that Black people will finally have the opportunity to participate equally in the system.

So what we do today to encourage our young people to excel in school will have a tremendous effect on the economic future of all Black people.



## The Other Side

### LaVell Williams

by Harold C. Williams

In Sunday's *Oregonian*, Oct. 2, 1988, there was an article written about LaVell Matthews. A former student and track star from Jefferson High School who is now doing ten years in prison at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton for attempted assault with a firearm.

What is very disturbing is that I personally know this young man and felt that he had great potential. It is disheartening to read to see that he has gone astray and that his life is being wasted away. What is also disturbing is that this great talent will not have an opportunity to reach its potential because it's being wasted away in prison. One can't excuse the crimes that LaVell committed with just a slap on the hand, however, but ten years is a little harsh. For many who have committed murder and have been in and out of prison many times are not given as harsh a sentence.

We all are concerned about stopping crime in our community, slowing the spread of gang influence on our youth, but to make an example of a unique talent is beyond one's comprehension of fair play. If there is an issue we chose as a community to give someone a second chance, what a great opportunity this would be for all of us to collectively invest in LaVell Matthews. He is only 19-years-old. If given the opportunity, with what he has already experienced behind the prison bars, we can be reasonably assured that this young man

could be turned around and put on the right track for a successful life.

We cannot let the Crips and the Bloods destroy such talents and we sit on the sidelines and say, "Oh isn't that too bad?" It would be a shame knowing the talent that LaVell Matthews has and his potential, and then to allow him to rot away for ten years would be a disgrace. We could collectively come together as a community and make a plea to the powers that be to put this young man on parole now, giving him an opportunity to get his GED and get started in college. We have invested in others in the past who were less deserving, why not one who could win if guided right?

Prison is not the solution to LaVell's problem, but a committed community sending a statement to the State of Oregon, the gangs, and to young people who are going right that we are sensitive and do care about what happens to them. We will not tolerate their wrongdoings, but if they are willing to correct themselves, we will assist in getting them back on the right track. This appeal is to the right track. This appeal is to the total community to help this young man get a second chance. Would you please write or call the *Portland Observer* at 288-0033 and state your willingness to be involved in the crusade to free LaVell Matthews. If we can do this it would be a great triumph for LaVell, the community, and also hope for us all. Please call and let's make this happen.



THE BLACK UNITED FUND OF OREGON

"The Helping Hand that is Your Own"



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

### Stop police abuse

Dear Editor:

Police abuse threatens Black and Hispanic communities, strikers and groups demanding social justice.

In San Francisco on 9/15/88 the police brutally beat United Farm Workers co-founder Delores Huerta at an anti-Bush rally. Huerta's spleen was removed because of the severe beating. On 9/17, 3 pro-choice activists were wrongfully arrested because they defended women's access to the Pregnancy Consultation Center from rightwing fanatics of Operation Rescue, a national campaign to close abortion clinics. The 3 women, Radical Women (RW) organizer Roanne Hindin, RW member Kathy Seeley and supporter Kass McMahon face a felony charge of "failure to disperse" that carries heavy fines and jail. Huerta, Hindin, Seeley and McMahon were punished for exercising and defending constitutional rights to assembly and to abortion.

The Bay Area Coalition Against Operation Rescue, who organized the clinic defense says "The police are the rightwing in uniform." Seeley says of her arrest "They had no reason to arrest us but they did anyway. Groups like ours are a thorn in Mayor Art Agnos' side, since he directs the police to seek to maintain the status quo. The teetering economic system cannot afford human rights today."

Portlanders face disrespect and abuse by the police daily.

This is the responsibility of state and city officials who prefer to crack down on those demanding change than to fund serious programs for equal opportunity in education and jobs for women and men who are poor and/or of color. The media promotes scapegoating of the Black community for crime and drug abuse and ignores the U.S./C.I.A. involvement in drug smuggling and the lack of a decent future that traps too many in poverty and/or crime.

In Portland those who protest abuse have no where to turn. The Police Department stonewalls citizen complaints and the Portland Internal Investigations Auditing Committee is hampered by no authority and some members who are pro-police. In San Francisco the police are going wild and if they are not stopped it will signal open season on people across the country.

Defend the right to demand a better future and stop the police from crushing social protest. Demand that San Francisco Police Chief Frank Jordan be fired, that the charges against Hindin, Seeley and McMahon be dismissed and that the police who beat Delores Huerta be fired and prosecuted for attempted manslaughter by writing to D.A. Arlo Smith, Hall of Justice, 800 Bryant, Room 322, S.F., CA 94103 and to Mayor Art Agnos at City Hall, Suite 200, S.F., CA 94102.

Sincerely,  
Adrienne Weller  
Portland Radical Women (RW)

You've tried the rest  
Now try the best

PORTLAND OBSERVER

"The Eyes and Ears of the Community"

288-0033



## Along the Color Line

Dr. Manning Marable

### Why Dukakis may lose the election...

With only one month prior to the presidential election, a definite trend has developed. Vice President George Bush is unquestionably in the lead in every poll, with Dukakis struggling to gain ground. Bush has been successful in dictating the major issues or perhaps more accurately, he has skirted the central public policy questions in favor of patriotic demagoguery, shrill rhetoric and reactionary posturing. Bush has wrapped his campaign in the flag, implying that "loyal Americans" don't favor the near-subversive positions of Dukakis.

Since the Republican convention, Bush has been on the offensive. The Dukakis team was first in disarray, apparently less experienced in handling the pressures of a national campaign in a general election than Bush's forces. The media played a contributing role in Dukakis' August and September nose-dive, by "underreporting" the Democratic nominee's policy position on financing college tuition payments and the more recent health care program initiative. By creating the appearance of going overboard in its critical examination of Senator Dan Quayle's personal problems, the media created a sympathetic backlash for the Indiana reactionary. By focusing too heavily on the pseudo-pledge of allegiance issue, the press and television media boosted Bush's fortunes. Back in 1984, the media handled Reagan with kid gloves, doing all it could to return the Republican president to the White House. Now it appears that the press is trying to repeat this service for Bush.

But if the Dukakis-Bensten

ticket goes down into political oblivion next month, the Massachusetts governor should not look for scapegoats to explain his defeat. The temptation will be great to cast the blame on Jesse Jackson, the Rainbow Coalition, and the remarkable electoral mobilization of American progressives and minorities in 1988. Dukakis and his team of sour grapes experts will declare: "It's all Jesse's fault! Without a Jackson candidacy, the Duke would have locked up the Democratic party's nomination before the Wisconsin primary, and certainly by New York's primary. Jackson's high negatives among Jewish voters, low-to-middle class whites and Southern whites turned off the Democrats who had previously voted for Reagan. Dukakis's tireless efforts to move the Democrats back to the ideological center, and to go after the political moderates, was too kittle, too late. Jackson's radicalism and rhetoric doomed Dukakis."

I suspect that this script is already drafted, a political scenario which would fit nicely with the national electoral ambitions of former Virginia Governor Chuck Robb, Georgia Senator Sam Nunn, and New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley, who sat out the primaries on the sidelines. Their view is that the American people need two Republican parties, not one; that "Reaganism" can be administered by Democrats more efficiently and humanely. Jackson simply doesn't fit into this conservative consensus, so he will catch the blame for any defeat. Never mind the fact that Jackson's core constituency will vote by a margin of ten to one in favor of Dukakis over Bush.

### Creed Of The Black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from social and national antagonisms when it accords to every person, regardless of race, color, or creed, full human and legal rights. Hating no person, fearing no person, the Black Press strives to help every person in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

## Perspectives

### Anybody seen the North pole?



by Professor McKinley Burt

After a romance of almost eighty years the prestigious National Geographic Magazine has turned upon its most famous and eulogized hero, Robert E. Peary, the "official" discoverer of the North Pole — That is until this year! (see the September 100th Centennial Issue).

And there in lies a tale, for all these many years **Matthew Henson**, his **Black Associate**, has been acknowledged as actually the "first man to sit on top of the world" (The *Oregonian*, 8/25/88). When Henson returned from a scouting trip to make this declaration, April, 1909, Peary was quite angered, and 'later' after making his own sortie, he (Peary) refused to shake hands with Henson, "both hands covering his face." As we shall say further on, we need to note the timing of this and other recent rewrites of history. It was only a few months ago that Black Matthew Henson was given a hero's burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

Additional light is shed upon the 'support' role of Henson when we consider particulars of the long-term association between Peary and the Black seaman-turned-explorer. From 1891 to 1902 the two logged more than 9,000 dogsled miles in the bitter cold of Greenland. It was in January 1899 that, after a foolhardy trip insisted upon by Peary, the 32-year-old Henson saved the leader's life by treating him for

severe frostbite, "When I cut his boots off, several toes from each foot snapped off." Soon afterward, Peary lost all but two little toes, severely handicapping him for exploration — almost ten years before, the final North Pole expedition.

The following should emphasize our need to be on guard against the latest round of tangential attempts to remove Blacks from a glorious heritage of accomplishment, yea, even to remove us from the grave of honor. Wally Herbert, the author of the National Geographic article, indulges in a hodge podge of supposition, invendo and undocumented speculation, ranging from doubts about the accuracy of Peary's compass to some 'missing pages' in the explorer's diary. Herbert even speculates about 'the state of Peary's mind' — as though he were a qualified psychoanalyst, rather than the post-mortem detractor he proves to be.

Our hats are off to Black Harvard professor of Neurophysiology, Dr. S. Allen Counter who is also a student of the lives of major Black figures. It is due to his efforts that Matthew Henson, who died in 1955 at the age of 88, was removed from an undistinguished grave in the Bronx, New York to Arlington National Cemetery, America's place for heroes. Let no wizened-souled detractors remove him in either fact or fancy.

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