

GUEST EDITORIAL:

The Black Vote Can Make The Difference!

by Norman Hill

Recently, I went to Chile as a monitor of the Oct. 5 plebiscite on whether General Augusto Pinochet should continue as President.

Our own Nov. 8 presidential election may not offer as much drama as the Chilean plebiscite. But it is vital because, as I indicated in my last column, there are crucial issues at stake.

And like the voters in Chile, Blacks can demonstrate the power of the ballot in this year's election — just as they did when their votes made the difference in the 1948 Truman-Dewey election, the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon contest, and the 1976 Carter-Ford race.

Furthermore, the Black vote is becoming increasingly important because it is growing. The number of voting-age Blacks is 20.4 million or 11.2 percent of the electorate, up from 18.4 million or 10.8 percent in 1984.

But that's just the beginning of the story. The significance of the Black vote is compounded by its concentration in the South and in major northeastern and midwestern states.

There is even more striking evidence that Black voters are heavily represented in high-stake states. Of the 13 smallest states (each having fewer than 5 electoral votes), 8 have a voting-age population that is less than 1 percent Black.

As further illustration of the power of the Black vote, consider the following. In 10 states, the Democrats will need only from 30 percent to 40 percent of the white vote to win, assuming that Blacks continue their past pattern of voting.

So like the voters to their votes — they could be crucial. Besides, Blacks have had to fight harder for their right to vote than any other group in America.

Norman Hill is President of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

A Token Of Appreciation

Dear Editor: The Uhuru Sa Sa Organization give special thanks to their host of guest that attended their October 7 meeting.

The evening began with Charles Dalton of Southern Willamette Private Industry Council. Mr. Dalton a dynamic speaker who indeed, spoke powerful words. He enlightened the audience with knowledge, as well as giving lucrative advice to the organization to help it be more fructified.

Silence fell when he traveled back in time to show how Africans were once the only civilized nation of people on the planet Earth. He concluded his speech by expressing the importance of seeking education while incarcerated.

Next, the audience was dazzled by the multi-talented Nyewusi Askari, editor of the Portland Observer. He displayed many skills that included the mastering

of various musical instruments, and samples of his gift for singing. His talent combined with his words of wisdom, called for a standing ovation, and prevailed astonishing message that left many positive results.

Dana Ritley gave a succinct, however, sententious speech. She spoke of an AIDS seminar that is to be held this month. Dana Ritley was followed by the voluptuous Patty Sikes, sales rep for the Observer. She spoke briefly, yet held several people's undivided attention. She appeared to be a very positive, and confident. We would like to see more of her in the future.

Also present was Uhuru Sa Sa's ways and means, Stanley Holmes. Mr. Holmes demonstrated his intellectual abilities by presenting a number of plans to better the community, Uhuru Sa Sa, and the African-American man. Mr. Holmes definitely proves that whatever the mind of a man can conceive, and the heart can believe, then he can achieve.

Allen R. Cotton Sr. Treasurer - Uhuru Sa Sa

Responses To 'Abusive Teacher' Article

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to the message written in the October 6, 1988 issue of the Portland Observer titled "Abusive Teacher" written by Deloise Williams regarding Mr. Camuel Cross. I have known Mr. Cross for two years as a fellow band director and Christian brother.

When I first read the message, I was extremely upset that Ms. Williams would air dirty laundry to the press. How vindictive can you get! First of all, her account of the alleged abuse is totally different from the account I received from Mr. Cross. Granted there are two sides to every story, lets talk about the kind of person Camuel really is.

Last school year (1987-1988) I worked with Mr. Cross at Wilson High School before he was transferred to Marshall High. The success of the Wilson High Instrumental Music Program last year (Second Place P.I.L. Band Festival, Third Place in the National Jazz Band Finals in Orlando, Florida, and Second Place among Oregon schools in the Grand Floral Parade, just to name a few. When he was transferred to Marshall High School in January, he still helped out at Wilson on a regular basis. As a result, the music students at Wilson got to know him well. They loved him. In fact, many of them still keep in touch with him. Camuel Cross is, without a doubt,

one of the best high school band directors in the State of Oregon. I have played a number of professional engagements with Mr. Cross and he's also a great musician. The Portland Public Schools is fortunate to have a teacher the caliber of Camuel Cross.

With the problems facing the Black Community in Portland, good Black male role models such as Mr. Cross should be appreciated and encouraged, not ripped apart in the press.

Camuel and I are members of the same church. He's a devout Christian who loves the Lord and cares deeply about people.

The purpose of this letter isn't to criticize Darwin Singleton (who I know through my association with the Portland Civic Band) but if we are going to air our dirty laundry to the press, I challenge Ms. Williams to disclose and make public the accomplishments and dishonors of the last five years of Darwin and his friend (who was allegedly hit on the head) and compare that to the accomplishments and dishonors of Mr. Cross. Let's include musical accomplishments, academic records, letters of recommendation, police and arrest records (if applicable), etc. and let the people decide who is the better role model.

Greg McKelvey, Band Director Wilson High School

Dear Editor:

We are writing in response to your recently published editorial letter concerning Mr. Camuel Cross—a music director for Portland Public Schools. Mr. Cross was referred to as "an abusive teacher" and an "unfit role model."

Last fall, Mr. Cross came to Wilson High to work with our band. Not only did he exhibit outstanding musical ability and leadership, but also acted as a strong positive role model. During the short time he directed our band, Mr. Cross maintained not only professional but also personal relationships with his

students. He became our friend, going far beyond the call of duty to reach us. He encouraged us musically, academically, and personally, helping us to become not only better musicians, but better people. Few teachers make the extra effort to show personal interest in their students, and fewer still make a significant positive impact on them. Mr. Cross is one of the few who does both, and we will always remember him and thank him for it. We love you, Cam!

Sincerely, The Wilson High School Band

A collection of handwritten signatures and notes, including names like Adam Rubin, Peter Mattheis, and Eric Wilson.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Unjustly Imprisonment



by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

The plight of political prisoners is a person who has been unjustly imprisoned not because of criminal activity but because of political or controversial activity. In most cases political prisoners have to depend on extra legal support from as many sources possible as well as activist legal representation in their behalf.

For two African-Americans to be unjustly held in the African nation of Liberia means that the contradictions of political imprisonment are not just limited to regimes where white racism rules the day in court. The case of Curtis Hayes Williams and James Bush in Liberia is a case of unjust brutality and illegal imprisonment.

On July 13, 1988, Curtis Hayes Williams and James Bush were arrested without charge and imprisoned in Liberia, West Africa. They were held incommunicado for more than a week and detained for almost two months before any charges were brought against them. They are currently being held in the BTC military stockade

in Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia. On Sept. 6, Williams and Bush were charged with treason.

For the first few weeks that Williams and Bush were in Liberian custody, they remained in solitary confinement without any of the most basic life necessities, such as a toilet or bathing facilities. They were not given a bed or mat to sleep on and only received a meager diet of rice. According to several reports, both men were beaten and have been pressured to talk without having had private access to an attorney. Although Williams and Bush are both citizens of the United States, they have been charged with treason against the sovereign state of Liberia. How can a person be charged with treason inside of a nation that he or she is not a citizen of?

I have personally known Curtis Williams for over 20 years and I know him to be a very committed and talented social activist. Williams is a veteran of the 1960's civil rights movement. We believe that letters should be written and other forms of support expressed directly to the government of Liberia on behalf of Williams and Bush.

Martin Luther King, Jr. stated that "an injustice anywhere, is a threat to justice everywhere." Certainly, we join with thousands of supporters here in the United States to demand the freedom of Curtis Hayes Williams and James Bush.

Dear Editor:

As a student within the Portland Public School system, I feel that I have the obligation of wiping a smear from the reputation of one of the best teachers that I have ever had. On October 6, 1988, in the Portland Observer, an article was published condemning a Mr. Camuel Cross as an "abusive teacher and an unfit role model."

I am the drum major of Wilson High School's Marching Band, and last year I was granted the privilege of working closely with Mr. Cross. Since that time I have kept in contact with him, watching him closely since I greatly respect his teaching and leadership qualities. I credit Mr. Cross as being my biggest influence and role model. One of the most important things he taught me was: keep them moving, learning, smiling and laughing - with, not at you. I have never seen, or heard of Mr. Cross reaching out his hand for anything other than a reassuring pat on the back. I can not say

that what was printed did not happen, but I can say that it is more out of character for my teacher and friend, Mr. Cross, than anything I can imagine him doing.

As drum major, I feel extremely fortunate to have worked with someone as genuinely interested in the well being of the students' activities, talents, and interests. Mr. Cross is one of the most wonderful people I have ever come into contact with, and I can only hope that everyone stumbles upon as great and as caring of a friend. Camuel Cross is anything but an unfit role model and abusive teacher.

It is a shame for people such as Mr. Cross to be susceptible to such abusive slander written by someone who so obviously does not know him, and whose information was based on her son—a grown man who, if he is as much of a student as she claimed, ought to have written the letter himself.

Amy Amato

Point Of View

Dear Editor:

I want to share my outrage with the community-at-large regarding a series of recent events.

My favorite, very special person is a beautiful Black woman, 81 years young in mind and spirit. Occasionally she uses Tri-Met bus when shopping or picking up church literature for the classes she teaches.

One day, this lady was startled by a loud noise and a sudden splash of some kind of liquid that drenched her clothes and covered her glasses.

The young culprit responsible for this behavior had been harassing the driver and other passengers. He had thrown an open can of pop through the window as the bus waited for the light.

"Thank you" to the female passenger that assisted mother's attempt to dry her dress in some manner. Fortunately mama was also able to clean her glasses just enough to see where she was going.

At first when she heard the loud noise that was accompanied by the surge of liquid, she'd been afraid it could have been the firing of a weapon.

Now comes the second invasion of her privacy and another frightening excursion into fear. About three weeks ago she got on the bus, showed her pass, gathered her package in her arm and

reached for her purse. It simply wasn't there? There was a three block ride before she could get off, with her heart pounding heavily. She walked back to the bus stop. Two young girls sitting there had seen 'a lady' get on another bus with the purse stating she was going to turn it in to the bus driver.

Needless to say, that didn't occur! Well hello to you too! It's good to know that you're "such a caring individual" that you used the credit cards and kept the purse, the money and the keys.

There was a brand new bible in that purse, just recently bought, waiting until the time when her initials could be put on it.

Salud! I'm sure you're a bible-reader ... at least, everyday without fail. It appears you're a Christian who loves to read the word of God and you're a practitioner of the faith.

Who ever you are, you two people who are responsible; that's a misnomer. Whatever else you may be you are certainly not responsible.

These acts can only serve to remind you that you're not in the main stream. Your behavior is not acceptable. We live in this community, too, and we are to be considered. Stop the outrage!

Daares G. King, retired

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