

COMMUNITY FORUM

Perspectives



Don't Let Them Put You Down

Part IV

Professor McKinley Burt

I have been absolutely delighted by reader response to this series of articles describing the 'Put Down' of Black people by establishment media and text. Many parents tell me that they are discussing these presentations with their children--and asking if the kids are getting this kind of information in their classrooms. (They certainly should be, since we consultants to the districts Desegregation Program provided this sort of in-depth reply to racism in curriculum.)

I would not leave the subject of the black African Moors and their contribution to the Renaissance of Europe without comment on that fabled era of art highlighted by such names as Leonardo da Vinci (Mona Lisa), Raphael, Titan, et al. This genre (class) of art would never have achieved its magnificence except for the concept of projective geometry (diminishing perspective) introduced by the Moors. Other "so-called" new techniques, introduced by people like Luca Pacioli--"The Monk Who Was Drunk On Beauty"--included the incorporation of the famous African Golden Section.

This last is the fabled mathematical ratio developed by the Africans over 4000 years ago, and described by the Greek philosopher Plato as the 'Key to the universe' (see his Timaeus). The Renaissance artists used this function to standardize the proportions of their human figures and for balance in rendering physical structures. As an architectural standard, the Golden Section or ratio goes back to the pyramids where the Africans employed it to allow easy conversion from Polar to Rectangular coordinates in projections of the Northern Hemisphere--throughout the Renaissance, and on to today, where the famed architect Corbusier used the ratio in his design of the United Nations Building in New York (see Tompkins, pp. 189-194, Secrets of the Great Pyramid).

This Golden Ratio also yields a quadratic equation, $X(2)-X-1=0$, or $X+1=X(2)$, and from this we derive the constant, Phi, W1.61803398. The famous Italian mathematician Fibonacci used this African discovery to develop the ubiquitous mathematical series which bears 'his' name. The formula has proven very important in the areas of biology, physics, chemistry and particularly, in nuclear physics.

The inertia and outright antagonism to 'including in the curriculum' the type of African-American material I have presented in my column this year is just as prevalent at the University level as in the elementary and high schools. A case in point: One afternoon the workstudy student assigned to my office at Portland State University (a white female) came storming in from her art class to request

all the documentation available for establishing the presence of Blacks in the Americas before Columbus (see Van Sertima, They came before Columbus).

Her art instructor--also a white female--had sworn before the entire class that the reason the huge heads sculptured from iron-hard basalt stone by the ancient Olmec culture of southern Mexico (500 B.C.) possessed such "Negro Features" as thick lips and rather flat noses was because the heads had fallen over and flattened themselves against the ground (soft, humous jungle soil, yet!). Since this secretary of mine had spent six months typing my research, it was not difficult for her to return to the art class with reams of documentation to counter the racist diatribe (Note: 'Basalt' is the principal rock of the Columbia Gorge)



For openers, she documented that the exact same "Negro" statues with typical West African head dress (some with cornrows) have been found from British Columbia in Canada to the Central American rain forest and in South America. With photos my secretary demonstrated that these ancient Blacks "were building elaborate tombs and using the complex mathematics of the calendar" (National Geographic Magazines, J.A. Rogers, Sex and Race, Vols. 2 & 3). Further she made the case that Thor Heyerdal (Kon Tiki) had proven that Blacks had migrated not only to the Americas, but all over the Pacific Rim and Asia--By reconstructing in Africa the same type of reed sailing rafts and retracing the routes, by the way the exact same heads are found in India (Angkor Temple and early 'Buddhas'; see Rashidi, African Presence in Early Asia). Also see, Columbus, Journal of Third Voyage.

All of this was to no avail of course so don't ask what kind of grade the lady received for the term. And that folks is how Blacks are Put Down--At every level of the 'educational' process. And it is equally obvious that whites too are punished for getting out of line.

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.



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FILP Soon To Expand To Include Youth 16 and Over In CSD Foster Care

Federal Independent Living Program will soon be expanded to include all young people 16 and over in CSD foster care.

Starting in January 1989, all CSD youth over age 16 in substitute care will be eligible to receive services that prepare them for independent living. Services had been limited to those youth whose families meet low income requirements. Lee Cornforth, program coordinator, estimates the new federal law changes will allow an increase from the approximately 240 youth now being served to about 1000 youth.

Transitional services have also been added to provide a support system to help young people adjust through the first critical months after leaving foster care.

Oregon's annual grant of \$598,000 for the independent living program concentrates on teaching skills that will enable older youths to become self-sufficient adults. CSD branch offices around the state pool efforts with other local agencies to create tailor-made programs for each young person.

The purpose of the program is to "assure youngsters are as ready as we can make them before they must take on adult responsibilities," stated Cornforth.

In addition to program changes, funding of this program was extended for another year, and funds can now be carried forward from previous years.



THE OTHER SIDE

1988 - The Year We Became Black Again

by Harold C. Williams

Many crisis force Black people to begin to talk to one another again. Economic status, political affiliation, and religious beliefs were set aside. Color tones within our pigmentation which has divided us for centuries (light complexed, brown) which has separated us for decades seems to be an issue because we realize we were all on the same ship sinking at a rapid pace and our only hope is that we remove the crab syndrome and pull up together as one.

The political insult that the Democratic party cast upon Jesse Jackson was another eye opener for Black people, for we realize there was no comfort level for us in the Democratic party. We were only used by the party as frontline soldiers and discarded after the victory.

Economically we had to face the fact that a few of us were able to eat two hammers on a regular basis. A greater number of us were unemployed or under employed and at the rate of the mood of this country, the so-called new Black middle class, is the next target. So we are all coming together in churches, community forms, and saying what can we do to save ourselves? Black women and Black men begin to reassess the value to one another in 1988 and believe it or not, we are talking again.

On the local scene, we've faced the tragedy of self hate with Black youth in gangs killing one another for some stuff called crack and territories that are not worth having. We witnessed the killing of a brother from the Motherland by the skinheads, which forced us to look at the fact that our community is small on a global scale and if your face is Black, you face the same tragedy of hatred whether you are from Cuba, Brazil, Africa or

America. We see more and more of our Black senior citizens having to make the choice between heat and eat and few were extending a hand to them. We have come to the conclusion in 1988 that their survival is depended on us.

We also saw a social and political statement by Commissioner Dick Bogle, which few were sensitive to, that he must carry a weapon for his own personal safety. The press made mockery of the fact that he carried a weapon, not looking at the reality that he is one of the few Blacks in public office who is very vocal, visible, and a walking target for warped-minded racists. Those commissioners who are non Black will never have to face the same fear and seek the same protection that Commissioner Bogle and other Blacks must surround themselves in order to survive. Last week we saw a demonstration of how the police deals with those of us who get involved in crime. It was in vivid color on TV; nine policemen and a dog attacking one man, clubs, feet and all to protect the public. The question is who were they protecting? The lack of sensitivity to public image should alert all Black people to be careful even with those who are stated to protect our interest because it is quite clear far too many don't give a damn how we are treated by the law.

There are many areas that could be addressed, but these few alerts us to the fact that we are Black again and 1988 with the reawakening of Black people to the reality that our hopes and our future is embedded in us and the only real hand that will be extended will be the hand that we extended to one another. Peace and love for 1989, welcome back Black brothers and sisters to reality.

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LIFESTYLE OBSERVATIONS

Oregon Food Bank's Child's Path Program is Booming!

After just 15 short week, Oregon Food Bank's Child's Path program is booming! Child's Path is a supplemental food program designed to meet the needs of families whose financial circumstances interfere with their ability to meet the nutritional needs of their children.

Child's Path, located at 3724 N. Williams, assists pregnant women, women up to one year postpartum, children under the age of six and infants. This pilot program offers participants who live in North/Northeast Portland free, nutritious food to supplement their daily diets. Family incomes must not exceed Child's Path income guidelines. These guidelines are substantially higher than the federal poverty levels. Participants in the Child's Path program are still eligible to receive food stamps.

The program offers participants a variety of free, nutritious foods including infant formula, evaporated milk, honey, instant non-fat dry milk, cheese, egg mix, meat, peanut butter, cereal, rice, beans, and variety of fruits, fruit juices and vegetables. Families may select foods according to their needs and Child's Path guidelines.

Child's Path is coordinated by Ms. Trinh Vu. Vu is pleased with Child's Path's progression.

"Since September 2nd, when we first opened our doors to families needing Child's Path services, business has been booming," she said. "The program was originally scheduled to run through December 1988. We now serve nearly 400 participants, and the program has been extended through June, 1989," she said.

Child's Path business hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The program does not operate on Tuesday or Thursday.

If the community need is clearly demonstrated in North/Northeast Portland, this pilot program may be extended to other areas of the city, as well as throughout the state.

Child's Path also works with the Oregon State University Extension Service. The Extension Service's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps families get the most for their food dollars. It assists them in learning to prepare tasty, low-cost meals, to improve their diets and health, and to handle, store, and preserve food safely. Often the clients are at a loss as to what to do with some of the commodities, such as farina and dry egg mix. On Wednesdays and Fridays, nutritionists from EFNEP come to Child's Path to perform cooking demonstrations for program participants.

Basically, the program is set up to nutritionally benefit the child. If the only eligible family member is an infant 0-3 months old, and that child is not breast fed, the family is eligible for 31 cans of liquid formula or eight cans of powdered formula. If an eligible woman is pregnant, she gets the full package." Evaporated milk, instant non-fat dry milk, rice, farina, juices, fruits, vegetables, meat, egg mix, cheese, and butter.

To be eligible for Child's Path, participants must live in the North/Northeast area of Portland. Families receiving welfare, energy assistance, social security, or other public assistance are automatically eligible to participate in the Child's Path program. Otherwise, family income must meet program guidelines. A child under six years old who is no longer eligible for WIC (Women, Infants, Children program) may still be eligible for the Child's Path program. A woman or child currently enrolled in WIC are not eligible for Child's Path.