

"Brothers Gaining Equality" Role Models All

By Jimi Johnson

Waleed Sadruddin, a 16 year old junior at Benson Tech is on a mission. He and a group of young high school students from Benson and Jefferson High recently formed a "self help" group called "Brothers Gaining Equality Through Excellence", better known as B.G.E.



Waleed Sadruddin

Recognizing the need for more positive role models in the African-American community, Sadruddin and some friends decided to form an organization to address these problems. On September 10, 1988, Sadruddin and a friend Donta Warren (who chose the name for the group) met at Warren's house with a few other students and B.G.E. was born.

Starting slow at first, B.G.E. soon blossomed to over 25 members and hold meetings each Sunday at 3:00 p.m. to discuss the problems facing our community and young African Americans throughout our state.

As President and founder of B.G.E., Waleed Sadruddin is a busy young man these days. An articulate and caring person, Sadruddin has spoken at several elementary schools about goal setting, being positive with classmates, and how choices you make today can have a "profound affect on your life in the future". At present B.G.E. is setting up a mentorship program for Boise/Eliot students, they will be examples of how young people can achieve if they believe in themselves and don't get involved in negative activities such as drugs and gangs.

With group members such as Isaq Shamsud-Din, Vice President, Ray Nelson, First Officer, Chris Brown and Reynald Tage, Treasurers, and Duran Beasley, Secretary, the meet-

ings are ran by parliamentary procedure and quite orderly. Members are asked to maintain a 2.5 G.P.A. minimum. If a student's grade slips below the minimum, group members will get together to assist the student academically to help him restore a respectable G.P.A.

Sadruddin is a positive thinker who believes you can do anything you want, if you put your mind to it. Many activities sponsored by B.G.E. have been successes, the latest was a dance given at St. Andrews school to raise much needed funds for operational cost and implementation of future goals.

An excellent organizer, Sadruddin and group members chair various committees to plan fund raisers. "It's nice to see something you really work hard at come together" says Sadruddin.

"Brothers and sisters fought for rights in the 60's and 70's now it's time for us as young men and women to stand up and fight for the rights that have been regressed in the 80's" Sadruddin added.

Future goals of B.G.E. are to have a chapter in every school in the P.I.L. and encourage students to take education seriously and understand the price "our" people paid just to read a book.

Sadruddin says he'd like to see B.G.E. continue after he and the present members graduate and go on to college. At present young members are being groomed to take over leadership roles as the current leaders are preparing for their career and educational futures.

In the long range future, Sadruddin sees B.G.E. as a National College Fraternity with chapters on college campuses throughout the United States. As fraternities nationwide, the mentorship program will remain a focus and self-help the goal.

"I'm pleased with the strong support of the community, the support of my B.G.E. brothers and the support of my parents Tauheed and Hadiyah Sadruddin, for they are always there in times of need," states Sadruddin.

It is refreshing to see young African-American men attempting to forgo a future for themselves as well as those who follow. Brothers Gaining Equality Through Excellence is a welcome addition to the Portland community, and I believe it's here to stay.

Drug related Murder abhorred

Denise Hawkins

Now is the time for the religious community at large, as well as professionals, to take a stand against the drug-related murders and mayhem that have thrust Washington, D.C., into the nation's headlines, United Methodist Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel said here May 18 during a news conference at the Mormon Visitor Center.

Bishop Yeakel, episcopal leader of the Baltimore Conference, which includes Washington, said too often the problem is left up to "professionals (who) have little specificity to offer us beyond the use of jails."

The news conference was held prior to the annual dinner meeting of the 10-year-old interfaith group to release a two-page "Pastoral Reflection on Drugs and violence."

The document did not specify action plans for addressing the problem in metropolitan Washington, but acknowledged unified commitment of the religious leaders.

"We are outraged by the senseless and brutal destruction of life. We have counseled drug abusers; we have buried the victims; and we have comforted their loved ones. Our commitment to act is drawn from the prophetic vision of a just and merciful world where each life is infinitely precious," the religious leaders stated in the pastoral.

Bishop Yeakel said the development of the pastoral document is a step in the right direction, despite a "lack of specificity." He added, "If anybody has a stake in the community, in its values, its youth, it is the faith community."

Now, Bishop Yeakel said, those in leadership roles must take that concern and message back to congregations, constituents and community "to bring them the real truth (and) a new sense of focus, action and encouragement."

Senior citizen of the week



Dan Van Brocklin

By Jimi Johnson

Born in left Bridge, Alberta Canada, Mr. Dan Van Brocklin came to Portland over twenty years ago. A resident of Northeast Portland ever since his arrival, Dan (affectionately known as "Dan the Van Man") started out volunteering his services to the Urban League of Portland five years ago as a van driver for senior citizens. Eventually, the demand for transportation of seniors became so great that Dan was hired as a full time driver and senior citizen assistant.

A warm and friendly person, Dan takes pride in his job and says he "loves to serve the community whenever possible, it's a blessing". Van Brocklin is currently a member of the Highland Church of Christ and serves as the church moderator and head Deacon. Of course Dan has also driven the church Sunday School Bus during part of his nineteen years of membership to the church.

Without "Dan the Van Man", senior citizens will be hard pressed to find reliable transportation to and from their needed destination.

The Portland Observer salutes Mr. Dan Van Brocklin for his dedication and contributions to our community.

Mrs. Freddy Webb-Pettet's Problem Only Obscures Real Dilemma in the Executive Branch of State

by Stephen E. McPherson,
Special Correspondent

It is a very well-known fact of political life that every appointee exists at the pleasure of the politician who appointed them. To be sure, most astute politicians have their appointees submit a resignation at the time of their appointment so as to avoid the embarrassment of a recalcitrant who wants to hang on to the job longer than is convenient to his mentor. The recent exercise that came out of the governor's office with regard to the new assignment of Freddy Webb-Pettet is a very poorly disguised emolument of a sacrificial lamb. If several investigations already have cleared Miss Webb-Pettet of wrong doing, then what useful function is to be served by having her step aside while yet another fruitless investigation is conducted?

If such an approach comprised the criteria for improving governmental service here in the State of Oregon then a large number of executives would be removed from their offices long before their term had expired.

The real problem Miss Webb-Pettet faces is the fact that she is doing battle with a hard core bunch of anti-welfare Republicans on one side of the aisles who are augmented by an even harder core of die-hard Democrats who would resist change from any source. Such resistance is even more pronounced when the challenger is a Black woman. It is somewhat of a comic paradox to have Freddy Webb-Pettet submit to a performance evaluation because (1) she instituted a time reporting system which saved the General fund \$1.5 million; (2) reduced the revolving fund checking account by 70% and the error rate by 5.5%; (3) enhanced the special cash pay system to service clients better, (4) reconciled bank accounts in a more timely manner, (5) instituted a stockless supply inventory system, (6) made it possible to identify accounts which had been unreconciled for more than 10 years, (7) Consolidated budget functions for better management, (8) developed an effective affirmative action plan, (9) Reviewed, analyzed and allocated about 2400 positions to a new classification system and (10) upgraded the performance standards of the agency. It would be difficult to find any executive with such an outstanding performance record.

It would be difficult for anyone who has studied the problem to deny

the fact that the current welfare and penal systems as they exist in the United States represent an unmanageable albatross that strains the very sinews of the democratic process. Yet, few state governments have made a serious attempt to resolve the ever increasing dilemma for fear of losing the other battle generated by uncompromising political considerations.



Mrs. Freddy Webb-Pettet

Both problems have played a prominent role in recent national and state elections. While at the national level other factors have dictated the assignment of a diminished priority to such concerns they remain an ever pressing unsolved riddle in the State of Oregon.

Last year when attention was focused on how the Human Resources branch of the executive department was working, the leadership caved in to these concerns and as a result Portland suffered the loss of not only several significant parts of the program but also at least a half dozen committed state workers who somehow made an impossible conglomeration of service function with some modicum of success. During that period the leadership style and effectiveness of Kevin Concannon was called into question.

Such an approach did not silence persistent critics of the system. A series of leaks to the news media exposed "the exorbitant life styles of executives within Adult and Family Services Division."

It is very interesting to observe that none of these revelations became known until immediately after Freddy Webb-Pettet, the new chief, made certain organizational changes which would not only streamline her office and make her more visible to her subordinates but also over the years would save the tax payers millions of dollars. Certain members of

the legislature made no secret of the fact that a political pet had been affected adversely by the changes. It doesn't take a political pundit to recognize the fact that it is quite impolitic to alter political patronage at a time when the legislature is in session, especially if such an action has not previously been sanitized by a clear mandate from the governor.

It doesn't take an astute political pundit to recognize that Governor Neil Goldschmidt separated himself from the political process before the November elections. Before then he did make some vague pronouncement about a children's agenda and then dis-involved himself from the presidential campaign before disappearing into the woodwork. At one point Vera Katz, the Speaker of the House and one of the Governor's staunch supporters averred to follow her own instincts because she was getting no direction from the Governor.

After sending Freddy Webb-Pettet unassisted to do battle in an uncharted jungle, it is a cute little political ploy to first compliment her for the terrific job she is doing and then pull out the rug from under her. More often loyalty and commitment are made of sterner stuff. The "temporary" assignment of a top executive to a staffless position in an exit tract is a derogation of the innovative management process she has instituted in Adult and Family services but also an abrogation of the very votes that elected him to his high position. That he took such an action is not very surprising, one needs only to recall that Willie Hunter was treated just as shabbily.

History is not only a good recollection of things past but often an excellent prognosticator of what can be expected in the future. At a press conference called by the Coalition of Black Men to protest the ill-treatment of Mrs. Webb-Pettet, Harold Williams, vice president of the group called the action by the State, "executive genocide". When does the other shoe drop? Who now is top person on the hit list? A climate has developed in this nation with the approval of the courts to abrogate every hard fought gain made by African Americans during the hey day of the civil rights movement. The problems that we now face in the public sector are not only a matter of fairness but once more the challenge of survival weighs heavily upon us.

Arthur Fletcher to Head U.S. Civil Rights Commission

ARTHUR FLETCHER, a man with a record of civil rights activism that dates back to the early 1950s, will replace WILLIAM BARCLAY ALLEN as chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission as soon as a vacancy occurs on the commission for Fletcher to fill. Allen, who was appointed by President Ronald Reagan, raised a storm of controversy when he was arrested on February 7 for allegedly kidnapping a 14-year-old Apache girl from an Arizona Indian reservation in the course of intervening personally in the investigation of an adoption case. Fletcher, whose mother was nearly 100 percent American Indian, stated recently, "I don't plan to be going to any Indian reservations." But as he anticipated taking the reins of the commission, which was formed in 1957 to investigate discrimination, Fletcher says he is "pleased to return to toiling in the civil rights vineyards."

Civil rights leaders hope Fletcher's appointment will pull the beleaguered agency out of the mire of recent controversies and that it will restore the public's confidence in it. The Commission's previously exemplary record of civil rights monitoring was soiled when President Reagan packed the commission with appointees having little commitment to civil rights.

In 1982, CLARENCE PENDLETON, a former Urban Leaguer and an outspoken opponent of affirmative action, was appointed chair of the commission: his leadership was adamantly opposed by civil rights advocates throughout his tenure. Pendleton died while holding that office in June 1988. Similar criticism was leveled against the commission's then staff director LINDA CHAVEZ, who once proposed that the commission hold hearings on reverse discrimination against white males. She resigned that post in November 1983 and was soundly defeated by Democrat BARBARA MIKULSKI in the 1986 race for the U.S. Senate in Maryland. Frustrated with the Civil Rights Commission's domination by these Reagan appointees, black, Hispanic, and women members of the House of Representatives succeeded in having Congress cut its funding in half.

At the moment, Fletcher's nomination is problematic, since there are no vacancies on the eight-member commission for him to fill. Allen, a black Republican whose term expires in 1992, has shown no inclination to resign and commissioners can only be forced out for neglect of duty and malfeasance in office. Since the commission's reauthorization is now under consideration by Congress, the agency's leadership crisis is particu-

larly critical. But according to insiders, the Bush administration is trying to lure away one of the presidentially appointed members from the commission with the offer of a post at another federal agency.

Fletcher later served as deputy urban affairs advisor to President GERALD FORD. After leaving government, he became executive director of the United Negro College Fund and later formed Arthur A. Fletcher & Associates, a consulting firm which maintains food service contracts at military bases and assists corporations in the development of affirmative action programs.

Fletcher believes that the U.S. must eradicate all vestiges of discrimination by the year 2000 if it is to equip coming generations with the skills needed to ensure a fully productive and competitive work force in the next century. "The United States has lost the option of relegating blacks and other minorities to the lowest positions in the labor force," Fletcher says. He has also stated that he wants to return bipartisanship to civil rights policy and to change the perception some may have that the GOP is a haven for racists.

Oprah Winfrey endows Morehouse College

ALANTA — On Sunday, May 21, during the 105th Commencement of Morehouse College, the nation's only African-American all-male undergraduate institution, Oprah Winfrey, nationally acclaimed television talk show host and CEO of HARPO Productions, Inc., announced her gift of \$1 million to establish the Oprah Winfrey Endowed Scholarship Fund.

In the commencement ceremony where 285 young men received B.A. and B.S. degrees, Ms. Winfrey was also presented an honorary doctor of humane letters.

"I have traveled around the country and witnessed the educational crisis our young African-American men face; today marks the beginning in my personal efforts to halt that crisis," Oprah Winfrey said to an audience of more than 5,000. "The Oprah Winfrey Scholarship Fund is my contribution to help insure that educational opportunities remain available for African-American male youths today and in the future."

"Morehouse was selected because it has educated many of my personal heroes. We must guarantee that Morehouse continues because it is a national resource. For over 122 years, the college has consistently educated generations of strong effective African-American male leaders," she continued.

Born in Kosciusko, Mississippi, Ms. Winfrey is a graduate of Tennessee State University. Her broadcast ca-

reer was officially launched when she was hired by WVOL Radio in Nashville, and later she signed on with WTVF-TV in Nashville as a reporter/anchor.

In 1976, Ms. Winfrey moved to Baltimore to join WJZ-TV News as a co-anchor, and in 1978 discovered her talent for talk show hosting when she became a co-host of WJZ-TV's "People Are Talking."

In 1984, Ms. Winfrey moved to Chicago to host WLS-TV's faltering morning talk show, "AM Chicago." She soon turned it into the hottest show in town, the format was expanded to an hour, and it was renamed "The Oprah Winfrey Show." "Oprah's gift is definitely testimony to her commitment to higher education and sincere concern about providing financial assistance for today's African-American male youths," said Morehouse president Leroy Keith.

Morehouse College, founded in 1867, is noted for its legacy of producing outstanding African-American male leaders and professionals in a variety of fields. Morehouse is the alma mater of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Health and Human Services secretary Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, filmmaker Spike Lee, Olympian Edwin Moses, and magazine editor Lerone Bennett.

For more information, call: Robert Bolton (404) 681-2800, ext. 495 or 496