

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## Waiting for Freddy to be Yunkered

It did not take a soothsayer to predict that Mrs. Pettet would not return to her office in the AFS

by Stephen E. McPherson,  
Special Correspondent

Mrs. Freddy Pettet decided to step aside "temporarily" for sixty days as Director of the Adult and Family Services Division. She did so in order to protect her biennial budget that was being considered in the State Legislature at the time. This column observed then that such an exercise was a very poorly disguised attempt to immolate a sacrificial lamb. It didn't take a soothsayer to predict that Mrs. Pettet never would return to her office. We still stand by that statement.

Everything Jon Yunker has done since the governor commissioned him to study the accusations made against the leadership of the Adult and Family Services Division has been carried out in such a manner which would preclude even the remotest possibility that Mrs. Pettet could resume her vacated position and maintain any sense of credibility.

The following actions Mr. Yunker took in his short tenure were underscored by certain curious machinations which suggested that he did not enter into this evaluation with an open and objective mind. He had not assumed his position more than one week before he called a press conference to announce several major changes with regard to the procedures established by Mrs. Pettet.

A very telling tale emerge in Bend, Oregon portended more ominous changes to come. Tom Water, the regional director of that area had been under continual attack from Beverly Clarno, the maverick and conservative freshman legislator from that area who made no secret of the fact that she perceived people on the dole to be less deserving of public funds. All along Mrs. Pettet had defended the manner in which Mr. Waters pursued his responsibilities. Curiously, Mr. Waters was the first person to be excluded from government service. His ouster was reminiscent of Mrs. Wanda Wright departure from government service after having been castigated by one of the local weeklies.

It became quite obvious that Mr. Yunker was pursuing an agenda which deviated suspiciously from his purely investigational process. In short order the manager of public affairs resigned under a cloud and some of the staff were redistributed to functions outside the central office. By then it could not escape any thinking person that several other key persons would leave government service before the end of the year. It became clear that a process which was initiated as an investigation for the purpose of evaluation had deteriorated into a mass slaughter.

It is now two months and ten days since Mrs. Freddy Pettet "voluntarily stepped aside, temporarily." The final report to the governor that was

to be forthcoming at the end of two months will now be presented to the public at a press conference in Salem on Friday morning. In the mean time, by his own admission, Jon Yunker will not relinquish his present function and return to the office of Budget management, he will continue to function in some unspecified capacity in his "temporary assignment."

Mrs. Freddy Pettet who held down an office in the Justice Department where she had been studying federal welfare reform, recently moved over to the accounting division where her assignment is untitled.

There is little wonder that the voting constituents here in the lower Northeast sector of the City of Roses are quite perplexed because they feel deceived by the very person in whom they placed so much trust. It is difficult to challenge such a pessimistic view given the fact that the voters are expected to accept and to believe so many implausible happenstances, distortions and misrepresentations. This most recent incident leave no doubt that the process of black executive continues unabated.

If Mrs. Freddy Pettet had any faults, it was because she took her job so seriously and made every effort to discharge her duties in a professional and humanely efficient manner. If that were so it was a grievous fault and grievously has she endured the consequences.

Virtually everything Jon Yunker has done so far was cosmetic and politically expedient. He has not addressed the real problem of the recalcitrant in government who would deny the indigent and the poor those basic consideration which a compassionate and abundant society would dictate.

Mr. Yunker's egregious approach to his perception of the problems in the Adult and Family Services Division will only create numerous false expectation from the public with regard to Mrs. Pettet's replacement. This in turn will engender an extreme reluctance on the part of any sane and competent person to want to step into that hotbed of contention. It is rather obvious that Mr. Yunker is in charge of the whole show and will remain so for some time. Mr. Concannon does not plan to be present at Friday's press conference.

It is truly unfortunate that Governor Neil Goldschmidt scheduled elective surgery to repair an old high school injury at such a crucial juncture in these very important deliberations. We are quite happy to note that he required only two stitches to repair his aching, torn tendon. It is very likely that his recurring disabilities will preclude his participation in pursuing the very rigorous and demanding responsibilities of a United States Senate. What a tremendous loss this is going to be to the State of Oregon.

## Vantage point



## PARENTAL NETWORKING; REASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR REARING OUR YOUTH

As a National African-American Community we need to reassume responsibility for the rearing of our youth. Far too many African-American youth appear to be on their own to raise themselves. In the process basic values like respect for adults or the elders, and a sense of commitment to self, family and community have eroded. The problem is that in poorer neighborhoods parents, in many instances single female heads of families, are often devastated by the sheer struggle to survive. In more affluent neighborhoods parents are frequently too busy doing that which is required to maintain "success" to be adequately involved in monitoring the growth and well being of their children and other youth in the neighborhood.

Indeed with parents/adults in the African-American community there has been gradual deterioration of the values that helped us to survive as a people on these hostile American shores. Coming out of the rural south into urban communities in the south, north and midwest we brought with us a set of values that uplifted the extended family, promoted caring and sharing for neighbors and the community, and a kind of collective responsibility for child rearing.

As a general rule there were no motherless children and no fatherless children. Every adult and parent felt the responsibility and obligation to look after the children and young people in the neighborhood. Teachers communicated with parents, and parents communicated with each other. There was an informal system of ADULT/PARENT NETWORKING which helped to bring some measure of stability to the child/youth rearing process despite hard times. If a child/youth got into trouble several blocks away from home the news of that event would likely greet the offender when they entered their home. The Atlanta child murder crisis of a few years ago could not have happened in my old neighborhood in the Hill District of Pittsburgh. In that neighborhood everybody knew everybody on my block, and everyone felt a responsibility to look after the kids.

We need to recapture some of the principles, values, and mechanisms which helped us to survive and maintain as a people in the past. ONE PLACE TO START IS BY CONSCIOUSLY REINSTITUTING THE PRACTICE OF PARENTAL/ADULT NETWORKING.

I have a middle son who is quite out going. About 20 young boys his age are constantly coming over or are on the phone. Occasionally a bunch of them get together to go to the mall, the movies or a party. One day I was reflecting on how many of the parents of these 20 or so young men we knew. We only know the parents of 4 out of the 20 young men who frequent our home and vice versa. And the communications with the parents that we know is really inadequate. Our situation of inadequate acquaintance with our sons friends, and inadequate communications/networking with their parents points out the kind of flawed community youth rearing arrangements (or lack of them) that have become far to prevalent in our community.

As a matter of internal policy and priority African-American churches, civic associations, civil-rights organizations, community based organizations, and fraternal orders should be pushing the concept of parent/adult networking as a means of re-assuming the collective responsibility of rearing African-American children/youth. Of course in the final analysis the priority of parent/adult networking must be implemented by groups of individual families agreeing to come together to begin the process.

In the case of my own family for example we are moving to do two things: First we have asked for the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all the parents of the young people who frequent our home. We intend to be in touch with them to begin the networking process. Secondly we intend to advise the parents of our interest in organizing some back yard "rap sessions" among the circle of youth that visit our home. We hope that these rap sessions will evolve into a youth leadership club where these young people can work together to engage in community service projects, and cultural, social, educational and recreational projects.

Hopefully some of the parents will agree to play supportive roles for such a youth undertaking. But at minimum the parental networking can help to re-establish some of the basic values which provided some stability to the community child/youth rearing process in the past.

We should feel secure in knowing the parents of our children's friends and feel comfortable in calling them to discuss problems, misconduct, or the need to work together on activities for our sons and daughters. Common agreement on such things as rules for social activities, curfew times, conduct in public, respect for adults and elders and rules on alcohol, smoking and drugs etc. can be an effective counter to peer group pressure by establishing a collective set of dos and don'ts.

Most of all parenting networking may help to prevent our youth from falling through the cracks and turning to crack. Lets get back to doing it the "old fashioned way". It worked!

## CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

### FREE AFRICAN YOUTH: USA

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

During the last twenty-five years, I have consistently advocated the establishment of a uniformed national organization of youth in the United States in concert and in dialogue with the growing organization of youth throughout the world, particularly in Africa. We have commented time and time again about the difficulties and the opportunities that challenge African American youth as well as other racial and ethnic youth in this nation.

It is with a sense of pride and diligence that I am able to report that recently in the small rural village of Manson, North Carolina, at Oak Level United Church of Christ, a new movement and a new youth organization was established. I believe this new organization: "Free African Youth: USA," has great potential for providing a positive educational, cultural, political and nurturing alternative experience for African American and other youth who desire leadership development and involvement.

We receive numerous requests from young people all over the nation yearning for an opportunity to be involved in something positive and uplifting at the local level. One of the great tragedies of this present age is the lack of outreach by national organizations to involve the youth of today in something positive.

When the Young Pioneers of Angola learned of the existence of the Free African Youth: USA young pioneer organization in North Carolina, an invitation was extended for a group to travel to Angola to stay for four weeks of fellowship and a range of youth activities. Of course, the group in North Carolina accepted the invitation. One of the leaders of the Free African Youth: USA is the dynamic and eloquent eight-year old Wiletra Burwell whom we have written about in other commentaries.

I witnessed Wiletra and four other members of the free African Youth: USA board a Air France jet plane at Kennedy Airport to fly to Angola. They were accompanied by Wiletra's mother, Mrs. Dollie Burwell, who serves as one of the founding adult advisors to the group.

They were all excited about going to Africa and in particular to Angola. They carried their organizations' red, black and green flag as well as the United States flag and the flag of the State of North Carolina. I am sure that this group of young pioneers will represent the African American community well.

It is our hope that the enthusiasm and determination and sense of purpose of the Free African Youth: USA now emerging out of North Carolina will soon spread throughout the nation.

## PERSPECTIVES

by McKinley Burt

I left off last week with a vivid description of today's tragic economic situation of Blacks in Detroit where the massive layoffs of Black autoworkers have wreaked havoc with the family structure. Thousands of homes are being lost, kids pulled out of college, mounting suicides and divorces, increased alcohol and drug abuse, not to mention overcrowded jails. I also documented that this situation should have been anticipated if one could read or think.

I am as familiar with the genesis of this situation as anyone who has not lived in Detroit, only visited there several times. In the early 1970's I spent many scores of hours talking with a Black engineer there, David N. Crosthwait (1891-1976), the Black Inventor whose 34 U.S. patents and 80 foreign patents reflect his genius in designing the heating and air conditioning systems that are standard in all high rise buildings in the world today. Our conversations often began with technology and the Black man's pioneering contributions from day one. Especially he loved to cite the jobs and wealth created and how there should be a structured technique designed to avail ourselves of this economic largesse.

It is not surprising then that Mr. Crosthwait spent so much time bitterly complaining about "Darky Blockers" (sic), the "gangs of belligerent-but helpless-poverty pimps" who had taken over the community by the late sixties. He said they described themselves as the "only legitimate organizations representing the nation's grassroots network working to combat poverty". And went on to say that if you disagreed, there were a number of thugs and hoods available to change your mind; especially when the grant monies came in: Tell me about it.

What our poor, naive Mr. Crosthwait had done was to offer to assign many of his valuable patents to finance a project for supporting new (and competitive) minority-owned technical enterprise, for training our youth in the new technologies (including automatic and computer-controlled systems for heating and air conditioning), and for retraining those Black autoworkers with marginal skills. As the man was later to remark, even a fool could see that the latter group would always be the first to be laid off when there was any retrenchment in the industry. And that it was already evident that foreign vehicles would severely affect the market. Our man was blocked, laughed



at or just plain ignored by galloping hordes of Black elected officials, rhetoric-loaded social engineers and poverty pimps. None seemed to realize that America is a capitalist country.

In the context of my last week's comments on the constant repetition of errors and the extinction of the dinosaurs, I believe it appropriate to remark that I did not always fare that much better myself in Portland. I discussed with Mr. Crosthwait my error in supposing that my book on Black Inventors (1969) would have an immediate and galvanizing effect on the community--technology is where it's at and we are good at it. "I spoke, too, about my failure to sell the Portland School District on my innovation of placing On-Line and Stand-alone computers in elementary school rooms. Other cities did it and doubled the students' interest and capabilities in mathematics and communication skills (The Dalles, Oregon and Birmingham, Alabama). And this is not to mention the career preparation and direction into growing and viable fields that resulted.

For me it is not sufficient to just hope that my new innovations or projects for the 1990's are going to succeed simply because I now have a realistic learning curve in the public sector as well as in industry. Examination of the current activities and data bases in many areas of community development reveal many of the past errors--or just plain lack of innovative ideas. The yellow section of a large out-of-town phone directory will cite many types of new enterprise. If there is one business Blacks could certainly support in the community it is a photo-development plant. I admit that the most depressing thing in this area is the inability to communicate with many of those involved in the process--that is on a meaningful or serious level.

Further, whether it is deliberate or not on the part of the establishment (designed-to-fail syndrome), the preponderance of access to the system--resources, finances--are given to those who are either too young to have developed the experience of a learning curve, or too arrogant to consult or to research. And it still does not occur that there are many competent and experienced Black businessmen in other parts of the country who could be brought in to operate viable businesses--Such as the former Fred Meyer Shopping Center! If whites can finance it without money (and don't even own it), then surely Blacks can. More on Development or lack of it next week.

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## NISSAN AWARDS 25 FELLOWSHIPS TO PROFESSORS AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

To encourage the development of Black scholars teaching at Historically Black Colleges (HBCs) and universities, the Nissan Motor Corporation in USA has selected 25 professors from HBC's to attend the Nissan-HBC Summer Institute. This is the first year the fellowship and Summer Institute is being offered.

The Nissan fellows will take part in an intensive study of finance-oriented topics at the John E. Anderson Graduate School of Management at the University of California at Los Angeles from July 30 through August 4. Sponsorship of the Institute is part of Nissan's overall program to support improved educational opportunities for minorities. Historically Black Colleges graduate approximately 70 percent of all Black men and women with baccalaureate degrees in the United States. The Nissan fellowships and the Summer Institute were established to support the Educational Testing Service of business administration faculty development at Historically Black Col-

leges. Nissan is joined in its effort by Princeton, N.J., the Graduate Management Admissions Council, and the Riordan Programs of the Anderson School.

Funding for the program is provided by Nissan Motor Corporation in USA, the sales and marketing subsidiary in the United States for Nissan Motor Co., Ltd., of Tokyo, Japan, the world's fourth largest auto manufacturer. The Institute's sponsors are the Riordan Programs, a group of projects at the Anderson School founded by Los Angeles Attorney Richard Riordan to encourage minority interest in business careers. The Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC) consists of representatives of 83 graduate schools of management.

Educational Testing Service is America's largest private educational measurement institution and a leader in educational research. ETS has been working with Historically Black Colleges since 1983 when the ETS-HBC collaboration was initiated.

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