

Mrs. Frances Schoen-Newspaper Room
University of Oregon Library
Eugene, Oregon 97403

Portland, Oregon

PORTLAND OBSERVER

25¢

VOLUME XX • NUMBER 5

"The Eyes and The Ears of the Community"

JANUARY 31, 1990

Community Leaders Condemn Death Threats To Rahsaan

While news of the death threats at Halim Rahsaan was still spreading Monday, community leaders gathered to condemn the threats and call attention to the lack of racially-integrated businesses.

Halim Rahsaan, an advisor at Portland Community College, has received several threatening phone calls at work and home. The callers used racial slurs and threats of physical abuse to Rahsaan and his family.

Student organizations and staff members at PCC lobbied for an affirmative action plan that includes accountability before the college Board of Directors, January 18th. An article appeared in the college's newspaper January 25th and Rahsaan was quoted in favor of the A.A. plan. The phone calls started the next day.

Rahsaan was not present at the press conference, as advised by Ron Herndon, co-chair of the Black United Front. Herndon opened the conference with a statement from the black United Front condemning the situation at PCC.

"We believe that his activism around the issue (affirmative action) has made him and his family a target for the cowardly racist threats he received," said Herndon.

Jean Drew, co-chairperson of the African-American Council at PCC, presented statistics on minority affairs. 85 out of 4,100 employees total at PCC are Black, Drew said, but the Council maintains that number is 65 Blacks.

In 1987 to 1988, seven out of the 17 discrimination complaints filed were racial harassment. Currently the college has no racial harassment policy and is considering a plan presented by the Council on racial and sexual harassment.

Bishop A.A. Wells spoke on behalf of the Albina Ministerial Alliance to protest the threats.

"Steps must be taken in practice, strategy and public expression, denouncing and condemning such acts and attitudes lest we be perceived as condoning it," Bishop Wells said.

"Those therefore, who have been out front in proclaiming these truths for racial harmony and equality, we encourage to continue," he said.

Harold Williams of the Coalition of Black Men said, "We have come to support Halim's efforts. We ask those at PCC to stand up and be counted."

Later Williams added, "When something like these threats happen, you know whose going to stand up in the community." The challenge is to the larger community, he said.

"When Black people talk about affirmative action, people think you're taking the shovel out of the hands of whites," said Herndon.

"There's an unspoken agreement," Herndon added, "we don't have to hire Blacks."

Commentary

by Leon Harris

Two recent issues of the Portland Observer (1/10-1/24/90) featured articles concerning Black Male/Female Relationships. Written by Ulysses Tucker, Jr. the articles dealt primarily with expressed opinions of some Black males and females regarding the difficulty of social interaction with each other. Tucker, a free-lance columnist for the Observer wrote the articles after a roundtable discussion (informal) with a group of Black professional males, who expressed a desire to meet Black females who were professional, mature, goal oriented and had their "heads together." The group, ranging in ages 27-40 years old and allegedly with incomes between \$29,000-\$500,000 annually, talked about their desire to meet and hopefully build a relationship with Black females, without the expectations of having to be the sole source of economic security if the relationship develop maturity. They also expressed consternation relative to getting involved in a relationship that introduces a "ready-made family."

Understandably, the burden as sole financial supporter in any relationship has

historically created havoc for the individual upon whom the burden falls unless he/she understands and is prepared to accept full responsibility.

But, a "ready-made family" is a fact of life in today's society and be it Black male/female or white male/female, if the "chemistry" is right, one could care less.

Tucker made a good point in citing the failure of Black males in the forementioned salary brackets to fraternize in an environment conducive to meeting Black females. At least two of the Black males who responded to his articles expressed surprise when informed by the Observer that many Black females who meet or exceed \$29,000 annually, socially interact in N.E. Portland. So, perhaps those Black males who wish to meet articulate, professional, and beautiful Black females, would fare better if they came back to their "roots."

And as Tucker stated also in his articles, what is sorely needed in the Black community are more social events or places to meet to bring the two together.

Any suggestions anyone?

Cross Burning At Washington Park

Commenting on the January 15th, cross burning in Washington Park, City Commissioner Mike Lindberg said, "There once was a time when Germans thought Hitler's brown shirts were a mere nuisance, unworthy of much attention. I am not making that mistake here. I want to emphatically express my total disgust with the skinheads and Nazis who were involved in the cross burning at Washington Park. It was an act of barbarism perpetrated by cowards. All parks personnel have been alerted to watch for racist activity, and I am committed to supporting stepped up police efforts to catch the criminals involved in acts of racist terrorism.

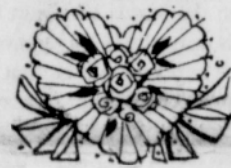
There is no place in Portland for racist trash. I want to see them driven out of our city and out of our state. I urge all citizens to report acts of racist terrorism to the police. It is important to understand that we are not dealing with one or two isolated incidents. Sadly, there is a rapidly evolving hate movement in our country. Citizens must commit themselves and their respective organizations to combatting the rising tide of bigotry in our community. We must all speak out publicly and often. The time to take a stand is now. Waiting only increases the likelihood that more Nazi vermin will look to portland as a good place to nest."

CONGRATULATIONS!!!



To Dennis G. Payne of Metropolitan Transportation Service District of Oregon. Payne was recently promoted to supervisor of the fare inspection and money room operations, monitoring and coordinating the payroll tax collection system and assisting in developing and monitoring Tri-Met's investments.

VALENTINE'S DAY



My introduction to history began in the second grade and it was in the form of a little poem that went something like this . . .
"Christopher Columbus Sailed The Ocean Blue Discovered America In 1492"

Of course, it never happened that way. The only thing that Columbus discovered was that tool-making Africans had landed in the New World many centuries earlier. His detailed reports to Queen Isabella of Spain describe how the metal arrowheads sent back to the assayers proved to be of the exact same alloy as used by the peoples on the west coast of Africa. See Ivan Van Sertima's book, They Came Before Columbus (Mr. Van Sertima, a Black Rutgers University Professor, is a consultant to Portland Public Schools, and a world-recognized authority on the early presence of Blacks in the Americas). It was the Norwegian explorer, Thor Heyerdahl (Kon Tiki, 1950) who conclusively demonstrated that it was easily possible to traverse the broad expanses of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in the simple balsa and reed boats used throughout history by peoples of African descent.

Given the conventional omission of these accomplishments from standard texts, what then, is history. Is it simply a compendium of damnable lies concocted by an allegedly superior master race, with the intent of maintaining an ethnic and cultural oneupmanship? Is it a finely-tuned cultural device to justify the horrors of slavery and colonialism? Is history simply a manipulative tool for shaping the political and social infrastructure of Third World Countries to a format which permits a continuation of centuries-old economic exploitation? Is history the current scheme for denying identity and self-esteem to African-Americans in a society where image is everything? History is any and all of these things. So who is it so blind and so naive to ask, what is the need for Black History?

In direct relevancy, it most immediately comes to mind that there is in this world a most monstrous travesty of a nation, South Africa, whose white (enfranchised) citizens still claim to have taken over an "unoccupied" land. Anyone who has read the well-documented book by Black historian, Walter Rodney (How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Howard University Press, 1982) will well understand why in the preceding paragraph I have suggested the real intent of establishment versions of history. The fact of the matter is that the African owners of the land have left

Publisher Of The Skanner Appointed To State Banking Board

Oregon Gov. Neil Goldschmidt has appointed Bernard V. Foster, publisher of The Skanner newspaper, to the State Banking Board, effective Dec. 29, 1989. Foster will serve a four-year appointment.

The State Banking Board, which falls within the Department of Insurance and Finance, consists of five years employment as senior officers of banking institutions, and the other two should be members of the general public with no banking associations. Foster fits the latter category.

"I'm excited and proud to be a part of the State Banking board," Foster said. "It is a tremendous opportunity to learn, and I will strive to help the state's business community during my term."

As an appointee to the State Banking Board, Foster's duties will include reviewing statewide banking needs and functions, recommending rules and policy changes and proposing legislation for the welfare and progress of the banking industry and the public it serves. The board also reports on bank failures and law violations within the banking industry.

"I've always been heavily involved in affairs of the business community and have always encouraged economic development," Foster said. "As board member, I hope to continue pursuing those goals."

Outgoing members include Doris K. Bounds of Hermiston; Stephen K. Foster of Portland; Kenneth L. Smith of Portland; Joseph H. Johnson of Portland; and Geraldine C. Thompson of Portland.



Bernard V. Foster
Publisher 'The Skanner'

Bernie Foster is Vice President of the West Coast Black Publishers Association, Board member of the Portland Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the State Fire Marshal's Public Education Advisory committee.

District-Wide Workshops For Albina Community Plan Feb. 10, March 3, and March 24

Citizens of North and Northeast Portland will have the opportunity to participate in three district-wide workshops being held in February and March. The dates for these workshops are: Saturday, Feb. 10th; Saturday, March 3rd; and Saturday, March 24th. The first workshop will be held at Peace Lutheran Church, 2201 N. Portland Blvd., on Saturday, February 10, 1990 from 9:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Citizens are invited to attend and participate.

Sponsored by the Portland Planning Bureau, the workshops are designed to solicit input from citizens and interest groups about the future of the Albina Community Plan (ACP), a blueprint for revitalization of inner North and Northeast Portland.

"These workshops provide an excellent opportunity for citizens to participate in shaping the future of their neighborhoods and community," says Earl Blumenaier, Commissioner of Public Works, "hopefully this community based process will ensure your participation and access to city employees and others currently involved in the development of the ACP."

The ACP total study area includes all or part of 13 neighborhoods: Arbor Lodge, Boise, Concordia, Eliot, Humboldt, Irvington, Kenton, King, Overlook, Piedmont, Sabin, Vernon and Woodlawn. In addition to discussing land use issues, participants will have an opportunity to identify problems and opportunities within the area and work with others addressing much broader issues, including: employment, housing, image, transportation, education, family services, economic development, public safety, historical preservation, and capital improvements.

"These workshops provide an excellent opportunity for citizens to participate in shaping the future of their neighborhoods and community," says Earl Blumenaier, Commissioner of Public Works, "hopefully this community based process will ensure your participation and access to city employees and others currently involved in the development of the ACP."

participation and access to city employees and others currently involved in the development of the ACP." Blumenaier will open the workshops, along with representatives from the Planning and Transportation Bureaus who will be providing information and facilitating the session. This effort, along with other neighborhood, business and district wide meetings will produce a comprehensive plan for the inner North/Northeast district.

New Guidelines To Help Oregonians' Get Low-Interest Loans And Tax Credits

Sen. Bill McCoy, D-Portland, said that new guidelines for low-interest loans and tax credits will help Oregon families with below-median incomes buy a first home.

Starting Feb. 6, a family of three or more with a maximum annual income of 431,700 will be eligible for the loans or for credits on their federal income tax returns. Households of two will qualify with an income of up to \$28,500 and one-person households with an income of up to \$24,000.

Sen. McCoy said, "This is the first time the program has considered family size as part of eligibility, and it should stretch the funds and tax credits available to reach the largest number of people possible."

Limits on the price of homes to be purchased vary by location from a low of \$57,420 in Marion and Polk counties to a high of \$121,880 in some metropolitan areas targeted as economically distressed. Statewide, targeted areas include all of 13 counties, seven cities, and portions of six larger cities.

"Parts of Portland in this district are designated as targeted areas, including areas along NE Broadway, NE Seventh, and the St. John's District," Sen. McCoy said. "That means there is more leeway in the price of houses eligible for the programs so people can get into the type of house they really want and need."

African Image Challenged

by Professor McKinley Burt

Aspiring to dispel that image and heighten awareness of Africa's global significance is Dr. Robert J. Cummings, director of the African Studies and Research Program at Howard University, who has recently been elected vice president of the African Studies Association (ASA).

Cummings is the first Black American to be named to the post and in 1985 will assume the presidency of the nearly 30,000 strong international organization of scholars and specialists in African research and affairs.

"What I would like to do is try to transform the negative image of Africa," he says. "If Africa is not respected, then Black people are not going to be respected."

In this presentation, the first of my four weekly monographs for Black History Month, I wish to introduce and define some of the terminology that historians use. These terms provide some insight into the structure and modality that historians use to develop their ideas and data. Even understanding this brief exposition of their methodology should enable one to follow and criticize the mindset of some practitioners of the art. What I am really hoping for by the end of this series is to furnish that modicum of guidance which will turn the reader on--and that might even provoke a new and enthusiastic interest in historical accounts as he says to himself, "aha!, so that is what's going on, this is the way they can cleverly assemble an extensive data base, completely accurate, yet in totality comprise a damn lie! There follows some initial terminology.

Euhemeris (Euhemerism): Eu-hem-er-is was an ancient North African historian whose investigations revealed that most myths grew out of a people's traditional accounts of historical persons and events.

Eponym (Eponomous): It was common for ancient tribes to call themselves after the name of an ancestor (eponym), real or fancied (e.g. "Hellenes" from a man named Hellen--or Ham, Canaan, Cush, et. al.).

Putative: Commonly accepted--assumed to have existed.

Tradition: The handing down of information, beliefs and customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction--cultural continuity in social attitudes and institution.

Minerals exempted
"Ten South African-produced strategic minerals, have been ruled exempt from the U.S. import ban under the anti-apartheid sanctions law because they were essential to the U.S. economy or defense, a State Department official said Friday.

Another official said five companies had been removed from a list of 144 South African companies that are being boycotted by the United States.

Among the minerals that can be imported are andalusite; antimony; chrysotile asbestos; chromium, including ferromanganese and ferrosilicomanganese; platinum group metals; rutile, including titanium-bearing slag; and vanadium."

This, of course, is in addition to the trillions in gold and diamonds produced by slave labor to date.

For years there has been a valiant effort on the part of African-Americans to regain and authenticate their history--with only partial success. An illustration is the following excerpt from an article appearing in the Portland Observer, January 4, 1984. In the 1970s there was a revolt on the part of the Black scholars in this white (African) organization, scholars whose disgust and resentment of the standard pervasions and omissions by the authorities prompted them to withdraw and set up their own African Studies organization. This development in no way implied that the problem had been solved--anyone than one Affirmative Action appointment of a single Black signifies that there is equality of opportunity in a given industry. Less than one-tenth of one percent of the membership of this African studies organization was (is) Black.

African image challenged
"To many Americans, the mention of Africa conjures up a land of wild beasts, dark jungles, half-naked natives and tyrant leaders--what some refer to as the 'Dark Continent.'