

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## Perspectives



### Planning The Family Reunion: Conclusion

by Professor McKinley Burt

I am sure that many of you saw the Smithsonian traveling exhibition at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center during January and February of this year: "Field-To-Factory; Afro-American Migration, 1915-1940." During this period hundreds of thousands of African-Americans left the rural south in search of better lives in urban areas of the north. This massive movement, with its demographic implications (inspired by the magnet of industrial jobs created by two World Wars), set the stage for contemporary urban life in the inner-city.

Although the Great Migrations have spawned many debates, we cite here the significance of the cultural and family dislocations that have given added meaning to the family reunion process. Examination of this diaspora gave rise to last week's observation that without structure, planning and communication among family elements, the inevitable results are the forced sales to facilitate distribution of monies to quarrelsome heirs—or tax foreclosures upon elders who can no longer cope. However, economic as well as emotional ties can be restored, links that can lead to profitable as well as pleasurable associations. Our much-threatened family stability can be re-established.

An October 25, 1986 article in the New York Times illustrated how the planning and communications structure can lead to the retrieval of valuable resources that would otherwise be lost. This exploitative saga began sixty years ago in Louisiana's plaquemines Parish when in an all too typical instance the African-American Pinkins family was paid only \$700 for two acres of land seized by the state for a spillway. Told that without the project the City of New Orleans would be flooded, the Blacks in the area gave up some of the richest oil and gas lands in the Delta for a mere pittance (Good ole' Charlie Brown).

Determined, well-planned organization and cooperation among heirs and descendants in both the north and south have not only resulted in initial recovery of sizeable revenues (1984), but the state has been forced to place all subsequent revenues in escrow pending Supreme Court decisions which promise to be favorable. The age-old game of stealing Black wealth by the play of eminent domain was stopped dead in its tracks; at least here where there were well-

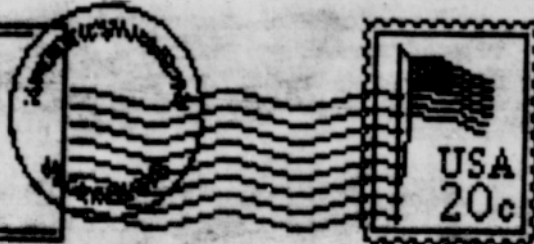
organized and committed African-Americans—if not in Portland. I recommend early planning and structure even though there may not be any current situations requiring confrontation and litigation. The indigenous population of this country is steadily increasing, buttressed by a similar rise in immigration. Foreign investors are exerting great pressures on land values, both urban and rural. African-Americans should have their structures in place in order to realize the wealth of their heritage.

One of the most unusual of family reunions was held September, 1988 in Creswell, North Carolina. From as far away as Seattle and New York, 2000 descendants of slaves sought their roots and celebrated Black history on the grounds of Somerset Place, a restored antebellum plantation.

This restored rice and lumber complex was the site of the second homecoming for the clan that issued from the slave couple, Joe and Ellen Collins. The reunion was the inspiration of Dorothy Spruill Redford whose dedicated research led not only to the identification of the thousands of members of her clan, but launched several Black history projects and the publication of a book. At this latest reunion a play was performed about "Harriet Tubman and her Underground Railroad." A dance ensemble followed a vivid choreography based upon a "John Kooner" dance which was said to have originated on the Somerset Plantation. One of the descendants declared, "We are not here to mourn, but to rise from the ashes—to celebrate and walk proudly" (Charles Blount, 67; majority leader of the Maryland State Senate).

It occurs to me that some serious readers may wish to use an old tried-and-true method of reaching unknown relatives that of running ads in African-American community newspapers in various parts of the country. I recommend the master list of over a hundred given in the publication below (This 176 page, 8-1/2" x 11" manual has much other valuable information, listing thousands of Black organizations under cultural, business, educational and scientific headings). Send \$12.95 + \$3.00 postage for the 1989 African-American Black Book: International Reference Guide. National Publications Sales Agency, Inc., National Plaza, 1610 East 79th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60649.

## Letters to the Editor



### I Refuse to Date Women with Children, Also!

Dear Editor:

It amazes me how much conversation the story, "Why I Do Not Date Women With Children," written by Ulysses Tucker, generated in my family and on my job. Women with children were the only ones offended. What people must understand is what Tucker shared comes from his life experiences. I refuse to date women with children, also. It is a personal choice.

My sister said that he gives single mothers a bad name. My opinion is the opposite. He, Tucker, said that he had a problem not with the single mothers, but with the fathers who do not accept another man raising their children. I was once shot at by an ex-husband. As the one sister wrote last week, if Tucker had intentions of bringing people closer together, he fell short of his goal. However, I think his intention was not to "Roast" single Black mothers, but to share the painful personal experience he

had as a child. He noted that he lost his father in a domestic fight or as he said, his father was killed by his girlfriend's boyfriend. He also related an incident that happened to his friend. You can not discard a person's personal experiences.

Lastly, there are women out there who will not date men with children. It goes both ways. Perhaps, those complaining should have the courage to share their personal struggles and innermost pain by writing also. I am sure that you could use guest writers every now and then. I guess if what Tucker said was in Ebony or JET, then people would have not moaned and groaned so much. They would much rather believe that "Novocaine" than a person who speaks from the heart. I am most happy that your paper has the guts to let Tucker share of himself so freely.

A concerned and regular reader, I am Sergio J. Houston, Gresham

### To Our Customers, From Portland General

Dear Editor:

Portland General Electric plans to ask permission to increase its electric prices starting on Jan. 1, 1991. This will be our first request since 1984. Several factors make this request necessary, including cost increases, customer growth, and service improvements. For example:

\* Inflation has pushed up the cost of the equipment, supplies, and labor we use to provide your service. The Consumer Price Index in the Portland area has increased 17 percent since 1984.

\* Our property taxes have gone up, too, from \$24 million in 1984, to \$34 million last year.

\* We are dramatically increasing our efforts to help you use energy more efficiently. PGE plans to invest \$15 million in energy efficiency and conservation programs next year. Energy audits, weatherization, better lighting, and more efficient equipment are all part of our plans.

\* We continue to improve the quality of our service. We are better at responding to customer calls and power outages, and we are working to improve our electrical system to prevent some outages from occurring at all.

\* We are investing in the Trojan Nuclear Plant so that it can produce more of its lower-cost electricity while further ensuring the highest standards of safety. We expect Trojan to produce 2 percent more electricity next year - enough for 15,000 new homes.

### EFFECT ON YOUR BUDGET

If the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) approves PGE's request, prices for residential customers will rise at the start of 1991 from an average of 4.6 cents to 5.1 cents per kilowatt-hour; an increase of 11 percent. A kilowatt-hour is the amount of electricity used by 10 100-watt light bulbs, for one hour.

The effect on your budget depends on how much energy you use. Customers using 1,000 kilowatt-hours would see their bills go from \$46.21 a month to \$51.28.

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Setting rates is a public process. Our request will be submitted to the PUC by the end of March. A copy will be available for review at each PGE office. The PUC will spend several months studying our request, and listening to comments and testimony from others. You can submit written testimony or make comments at public hearings. Your comments will be part of the evidence the PUC considers in making its decision. To get information on how to participate, you can contact the PUC in Salem at 378-6600, or 1-800-522-2404. If you would like additional information on our customer services, or on our rates, please call your PGE office. The number in the Portland area is 228-6322, or you can call 1-800-542-8818. Thank you.

Ken L. Harrison  
Chairman of the Board,  
Chief Executive Officer

## The New Immigration, Part II: Will There Be Room At The Inn?

(Continued from Front Page)



"Send me your poor . . . homeless."

The following self-serving statement by a new immigrant from India, serving as a highly paid political analyst in Washington, represents a not untypical viewpoint of many newcomers (and many establishment Americans): "And the melting pot not only remakes the immigrant, if also reshapes the country. New generations of immigrants bring vitality. The fresh new stream keeps the old water from stagnating." Can you believe this what should be said about the fantastic and often ignored contributions of African Americans, their inventions, their poetry, their music?

That was just the beginning: "Currently, the Asians are remaking the country much the same way that the Europeans once did. I look to them and their offspring—those who populate spelling bees and win Westinghouse Science Scholarships—when I envision America's future greatness. In their zeal to reshape their lives in this land of opportunity, these immigrants are reshaping American destiny far beyond the comprehension of most Americans." Next week we will see if this is "beyond the comprehension" of those middle class Blacks we described. We will conclude this week's article with some relevant reading.

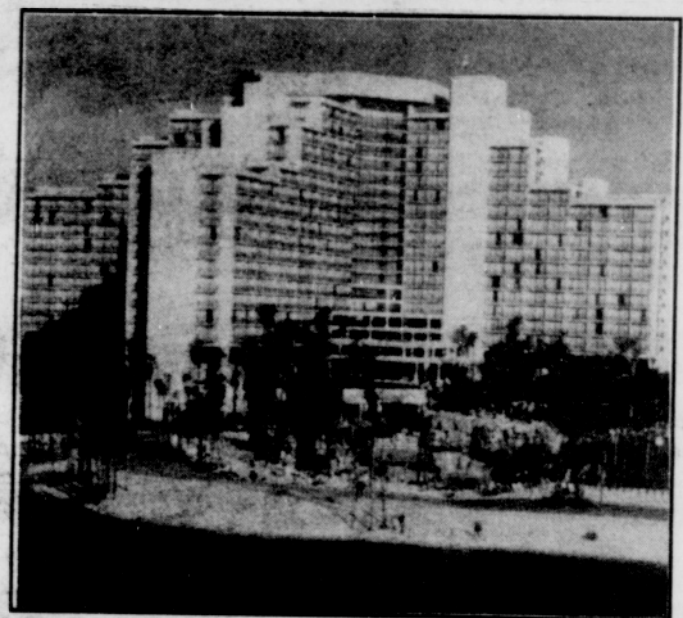
\* The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics, Michael Novak, 1973. McMillan Publishing Co.

\* The Mismeasure of Man, Stephen Jay Gould, 1981, Penguin.

\* The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815-59, William Stanton, 1960, University of Chicago.

\* Race and Civilization, Friedrich Hertz, 1970 KTAV Publishing.

\* Going to America, Terry Coleman, 1973 Anchor Books.



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## SPORTS/EVENTS

### The Locker Room

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.



### "The Dream" Gives Nightmares . . .

Akeem Olajuwon is known around the National Basketball Association as "The Dream," but he is a nightmare to opposing centers around the league when they play Houston.

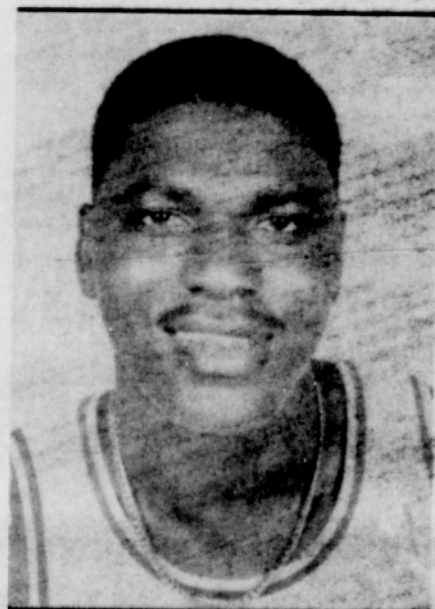
"The Dream" has the total package. He runs the floor, blocks shots, scores points, passes the ball well for a big man, and steals the ball. Olajuwon is part of a new era of young centers who have set a new standard for those making a living in the paint.

A No. 1 overall pick in the 1984 NBA Draft, Olajuwon has averaged 23 points, 12.1 rebounds, and 3.1 blocked shots per game. Last season, he became the first player in NBA history to record 200 steals and blocks in a season. He also became only the fourth center in history (along with George Mikan, Kareem, and Wilt) to be named to the All-NBA First Team for three consecutive years.

"I definitely think dominant centers are now making a comeback," said Olajuwon. "These things seem to go in cycles. The big thing about the other guys (Patrick Ewing and David Robinson) is they are young, so they will be around for awhile and might keep the trend going."

Olajuwon is currently leading the league in blocked shots (4.4) and rebounding (13.8). If he finishes the season at his current pace, he will be the first player since Bill Walton in 1977 to lead the NBA in two categories. Accomplishing that feat for "The Dream" should not be a major problem; he is more concerned about his team making the playoffs. He pointed out that winning more games is far better than individual glory.

"Making the play-offs is very important to me," he said. "I'm just doing eve-



Akeem Olajuwon

rything I can to help the team. I want to win in the worst way."

Before the season, many felt that Olajuwon would not be able to contribute much because of a mysterious circulation problem in his right leg. He missed the entire training and all of the pre-season games, but he gained enough strength eventually to open the regular season for the Rockets. The leg doesn't bother him anymore, but he is sure bothering other teams, with his all around play at both ends of the court.

"He is a difficult player to guard," said Buck Williams, star power forward for the Portland Trail Blazers. "You have to bump, push, and challenge him for position every time because he goes to the ball well,



Don Chaney, Head Coach

regardless of whether it's offend or defense. He is a player."

Patrick Ewing of the New York Knicks is impressed by Olajuwon skills and talent. "He's quick and agile. He can run and jump. For quickness and size in centers, there are only three—myself, Akeem, and David Robinson."

An ever modest Olajuwon says that Robinson and Ewing deserve all the credit and attention because their teams are winning. The Rockets are not. However, they sport a 7-2 record in the month of March and show signs of making a serious run at the final conference play-offs spot in the West. The Rockets are two games behind Seattle.

"We have to get there first," said Don Chaney, Head Coach of the Rockets. "As



long as we have a player like Akeem, we have a shot and a chance to win." Chaney has the player that dreams are made of.

SHORT SHAKES: Steve Jones, resident announcer says that the Rockets have no style. He believes that style is a statement made by an organization or coach. When you think about the Lakers or Pistons, what do you conclude? Both teams have style and tradition. So do the Blazers. More on Steve Jones and style, as well as his play-off predictions in weeks to come. Steve knows basketball. Hey Roman (Jones), what's been happening? I miss your press table insight and old basketball war stories! . . . Chris Shelton, I hear you made a killing off Ball State in the NCAA Tournament! Chris is with the Multnomah County Sheriffs' Office. He is a former standout basketball player at Ball State and a former Assistant Coach under Larry Steele at the University of Portland. What do Georgetown, Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri (Hello Byron Irvin), Michigan, Arizona, Oregon State, and others have in common with us? We are all watching the tournament on television.

Say You Saw It In The . . .  
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