

Perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt



by Prof. McKinley Burt

A Recap of Adventures in Learning

My readers tell me that the last two week's descriptions of my curriculum development and implementation at Portland State University opened their eyes to what an "urban" university should be about (could be about). "How can it be", several asked at a neighborhood meeting, "that a school, presenting itself as the primary hub of information and direction toward improving the quality of life in inner cities have previously so inadequately addressed the REAL structures and issues of the urban infrastructure and its dominant group in most cities, African Americans?"

First, let me say that this was and is not the only school with this disability, in Portland or elsewhere in this nation. Next, I would point out that when I left the institution, neither my courses nor similar ones of broad spectrum comprehension of the developmental and contemporary urban problems was permanently integrated into the curriculum (check your catalog). In this series you have seen me develop an experience-based learning curve that would enable one to design and deliver a learning mode which would at every point reflect the sophisticated interface in America between labor, industry, technology, culture, and the constraints generated by this interaction (racial and in general).

This fact could have been even easier to grasp had I had the space to develop the parameters of another course design, "Urban Business Administration". Here, I sought to remedy a major deficiency discovered in the preparation of urban program managers to manage their operations in an efficient manner. This concern was not generated by media descriptions of myriad debacles, cata-

strophic failures in the delivery of social services, or of real or imagined theft and misfeasance -- but, rather, I was prompted by my own real-time experience with these urban exercises.

Coming to academia from industry, it was not difficult to perceive that the very same business disciplines of accounting, organization, budgeting, and personnel policies found there had universal application -- and that here in urban programming it was sorely lacking. At the same time I held contracts with the "Model Cities" program of the "Great Society" movement for the fiscal management of such operations as "Supplemental Welfare, A.M.A Day Care Centers, Minority Business Enterprise, etc." This is what I meant by "real-time experience", where, daily, one sought to rectify the disabilities of inadequate data bases (no business or administrative library - or training), no concept of business choices (buy or lease? - negotiate or accept blindly) - not much of anything except an exuberant desire to deliver an ill-defined improvement in the "Quality of Life".

For this reason, he course began with an introduction to business problems and the principal types of proprietorships - individual, partnerships and corporations. Never mind that legislators and the funding agencies obviously thought these matters unimportant to the administration of "social programs"--governmental authorities neglected such training and orientation. The latter part of the course got down to particulars concerning the administration of "Non-Profit" enterprise, where we suppose the very name of these entities inspired a reckless disregard of all the financial disciplines and constraints one would expect to find in institutions

handling huge sums of monies. Many readers may wonder if there has been substantial improvement in this scenario. What is your experience? Were you on the board of directors when the Urban League experienced its trauma? What was your training and orientation toward becoming a responsible, "well-informed" director of a social program?

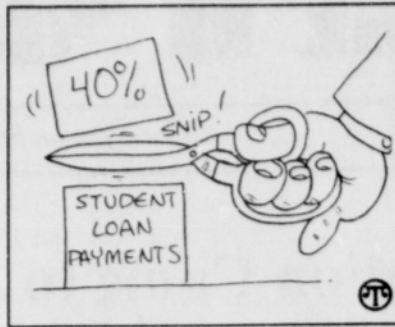
Again, as with my prior course, other instructors became quite agitated when scores of whites enrolled in a class where the enrollment credits (and resources) would to the maligned Black Studies Department. Both undergrads and practicing program managers had been made cognizant of a major gap in their educational preparation for urban life or for delivering an adequate social product to their clients. As before, the other departments of the school were forced to incorporate into their own curriculum the key elements of an adequate urban interface--in selfinterest of course!

It is not just the case, then, of historical omissions of important facts in the development of the American infrastructure, from Black contributions to the traumatic constraints placed upon their progress--but that the efforts to correct the disabilities of the system are severely hampered by the establishment's failure to honestly and forthrightly deal with the problems in this current era. This series should certainly make African Americans of the inadequacies out there that separate goal from practice. Again, I project that we will not "overcome" until we gain control and direction over the programs and education modes which can integral to our very existence. (See my front page series, Blacks and Science.)

NEWS OF EDUCATION

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If a pop quiz for college students contained the question, "What's loan consolidation?", there's a good chance they would know the answer. Growing numbers of students are turning to loan consolidation to help make student loan repayment easier.



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Why Don't People Stick With Their Own Kind?

Misery Loves Company.

by Vickie L. Hughes

I am writing this story to share a personal experience with others. I am a progressive, career-minded black woman with a promising future. I have always been a friendly, happy person. My parents always taught me that people make their own happiness. Recently, I discovered that this is not always true; others tried to destroy my happiness. I am a strong individual and yet I almost fell into The Trap! Here's the story.

I recently ended a relationship with a man whom I dated for over a year. Let me now set the background so that you know how this began. I moved to Portland about a year and a half ago. I came here single and happy. As soon as I moved here, everyone I knew insisted that I needed to meet a man. Some friends introduced me to a man although I did not come to Portland looking for love. This man caught me right "off the plane" as one might say!

With much hesitation, I became involved with this man. Because I had not been here long, his friends became my friends. Most of these friends were unhappy people due to several reasons. Unfortunately, they came with the territory. If I wanted to be with him, I had to be with them.

My relationship with this man started out beautifully. Of course there were those moments when I had to sit and listen to these friends talk about their problems. And these people had more than the normal share of problems. Eventually, hearing about all of these problems started wearing me down and I began to be unhappy.

One day this relationship turned sour, yet, it continued on for months after it was truly over. Our friends diverted their attention to our problems

to forget about their own problems. Soon, these friends seemed to enjoy seeing us unhappy and began to feed on and contribute to these problems.

When this disastrous relationship finally ended, all attention turned to me. I was supposed to be unhappy because I was the woman in the relationship and they believed that the woman, in this case, always suffers the most emotionally. I began to believe this and found myself extremely unhappy. After two months of feeling this way, I finally decided that my life did not have to be this way. I am attractive, intelligent, ambitious, and loved by God and others. Why surround myself with unhappy people and become who they are? I deserve happiness and can be happy - I have a lot to be thankful for.

These feelings helped me to make a decision. I was no longer going to be unhappy. I let go of my unhappy friends and began to surround myself with positive, happy people. My old friends were shocked at the change that had taken place in me. It was as if they wanted me to stay unhappy and dwell on a past relationship. For those of you who I left behind (you know who you are), I still love you - I have no enemies. But I want you to know that now I am happy! I hope that one day you too will find happiness within yourselves and surround yourselves with other happy people.

And this ends my story. Remember - misery loves company. People should stick with their own kind.

Introducing Vickie Hughes, the newest freelance writer for the Portland Observer newspaper. Ms. Hughes, a native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is a graduate of Spelman College (B.A.) in Atlanta and Roosevelt University of Chicago (M.A.). Welcome aboard!

spotlight on children

Role Playing

Pre-schoolers and grade-schoolers have rich imaginations, too, and like to imitate grown up jobs and activities. To help, Fisher-Price has created a number of just-like-the-grown-ups type toys.

With the Fisher-Price Post Office, youngsters can "sort" mail and "deliver" packages. There are working doors and slots, a package compartment, post office boxes with clicking keys, a stamp dispenser and a letter carrier tote. Children three to six can store important documents in the Post Office safe and change the time on the clock. To complete the fun, they can write

notes on the wipe-off stationery, put them in the play envelopes and snap on a pretend stamp.

Kids can record and playback their own voice on this realistic pay phone.

Also calling up imagination in children two to five is the Record & Playback Telephone. When a child picks up the phone and speaks, a light comes on and the phone records and then plays back the child's own voice. The toy comes with a one year limited warranty and features a coin release slot and realistic-sounding key pad.

NEWS OF JOBS

Legislators Fight To Save Jobs

Thousands more American jobs could be forced overseas if legislation currently proposed is allowed to be passed into law.

That law would ban U.S. companies from exporting agricultural chemicals not registered here. Though designed to protect people, the law could actually hurt millions here and abroad, says the National Agricultural Chemicals Association (NACA) by decreasing the ability of world agriculture to produce needed food, and costing many U.S. workers their jobs.

Some pesticides produced in the U.S. and sold overseas are unregistered here because the specific pest controlled is not a U.S. problem, or because crops concerned are not generally grown in America—coffee, rubber, cocoa, bananas, tea. The chemicals are not, however, unregulated because they are approved in countries where they used and no chemicals exported by any member of NACA are banned or severely restricted in the U.S.

NACA believes American companies should not have to spend millions on securing a domestic registration for a product used on pests or crops not present here. Those high costs—and the loss of sales to companies in other nations where the registration process is more expedient and less costly—could put companies out of business and put thousands of Americans out of work.

If famine-stricken nations can't purchase the crop protection chemicals they need from the U.S., they may buy the chemicals from competitive companies in countries whose safety and ethical standards aren't as good as ours. For more information about this issue, write: National Agricultural Chemicals Association, 1155 15th St., N.W., 9th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005.

VOLUNTEERISM IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE 1990s

Profile of clubwomen is changing as working women find they can spare time for community service.

By Alice C. Donahue
International President
General Federation of Women's Clubs

When President George Bush referred to "a thousand points of light" during his inaugural address last year, he said the country must "turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows: the goodness and courage of the American people."

For those like myself who are long-time volunteers, it is exciting to have this emphasis on volunteerism coming from the highest levels of government. There was a period during the late 70s and especially in the 80s, as more and more women entered the work force, that getting and holding a paid job seemed to be the ultimate goal. A woman's success rating was directly related to her salary and her ability to juggle career and marriage, rather than to any voluntary contribution she made to the world at large.

Today, women are finding that collecting a weekly paycheck and running a home don't necessarily add up to a full and satisfying life. As a result, many of them are seeking ways, often through volunteer service, to contribute to their communities.

During my presidency these past two years of the world's oldest and largest volunteer women's organization, countless women across the country have described the satisfaction they have gained from such community projects as building a town playground, assisting displaced homemakers and working on environmental projects.

And equally important as what they give is what they get: many new and good friends. This is especially true for someone who is a newcomer in town or for a person who is recently widowed or divorced.

Friendships and strong ties, both with people inside the volunteer organization and with others in the

community, seem to come easily to clubwomen. Working side by side with individuals committed to making their town or city or country a better place, is indeed a kind of glue that lasting friendships are made of.

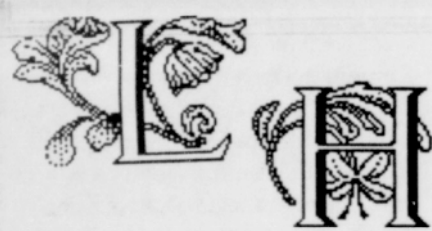
Many career women who volunteer also find that they can do as much "networking" in that setting as they do at their professional meetings. And, since the people they meet come from a wider spectrum of the population, they benefit from a broader field of contacts. Studies indicate that women who do not volunteer still understand the importance of voluntary service and know they should do more. To those women I say, just start doing something. Find one community service initiative that allows you to solve a critical problem. Even if you can't spare a lot of time—give a couple of hours a week.

It's good for your country and it's good for you.

For a free brochure describing GFWC projects, write: General Federation Of Women's Clubs, 1734 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-2990 or call: 1-800-443-GFWC.



Attorney General Dick Thornburgh congratulates GFWC International President Alice C. Donahue during ceremony at which she received a national Crime Prevention Award. GFWC Crime Prevention Division Chairman Barbara Wallace looks on.



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(USPS 959-680)

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PORTLAND OBSERVER
is published weekly by
Exie Publishing Company, Inc.
4747 N.E. M.L.K., Jr. Blvd.
Portland, Oregon 97211
P.O. Box 3137
Portland, Oregon 97208



(503) 288-0033 (Office) * FAX #: (503) 288-0015

Deadlines for all submitted materials:

Articles: Monday, 5 P.M. -- Ads: Tuesday, 5 P.M.

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