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PORTLAND OBSERVER 25¢

Volume XX, Number 23

"The Eyes and Ears of The Community"

June 20, 1990

Blacks and Science II: Operation Rescue

By Professor McKinley Burt

It is so heartbreaking when one encounters the number of so-called "disadvantaged" youth that I do—in the neighborhood, on the bus, and in the park you find them, unknowing: "Who am I? What am I? What is my heritage? Where am I going? Some of us have belatedly come to understand that these young African Americans were "disadvantaged" by the educational process to which they were subjected. And I use that latter term advisedly.

The dilemma of our children moves one to recall passages from an oft-quoted set of quatrains by the famous Spanish poet, Roberto Juarroz: "I run with what I was and with what I will be, on the race of what I am...and sometimes I play that I pass myself. Then maybe I run in the race of what I'm not..."

And maybe you run in gangs because the system has failed you. No question mark should follow that conclusion. In the previous piece of this series I said that here at the threshold of the 21st century, "We are told that only the scientifically literate and the technically proficient will be able to make it." But I also asked a question: "Can it really be true that African Americans stand helpless and naked before the storm?"

Of course not, and that "massive Black intervention" I spoke of is already underway in some innercities around this nation. It is true that these responses are geared to varying concepts of time remaining and the immediacy of catastrophe—but the important thing is these events are in motion, and the remedial efforts are directed at the heart of the problem, i.e. the "Education System" for our children. In this respect, I hope that you will draw from my "Perspectives" column on the inside page some very significant expositions of "Educational Excellence" that will support the more general points I make here. As before in these pages, Chicago and its "community control" process is given in example.

Greer Debuts

by Nathaniel J. Baker, Jr.

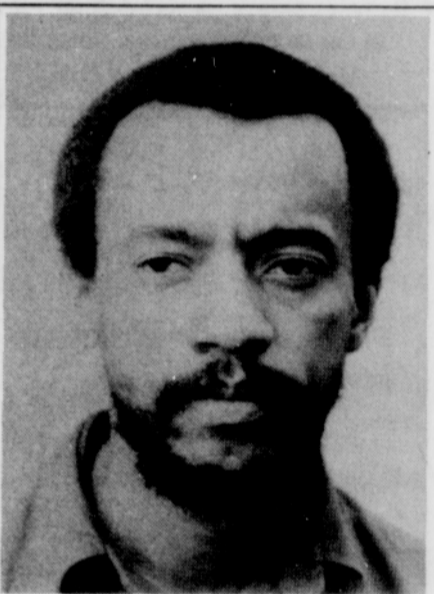
Angela R. Greer, native Portlander, now thrives upon a new career. Aside from being an executive for Adult and Family Service, model, wife, and mother, Angela is now embarking on yet another career as an actress. She recently performed in the African American jubilee theater performance at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

Mrs. Greer explains that the role she played as a slave was so powerful that she could really feel what her ancestors felt in that era.

This was Mrs. Greer's debut, and she also plans to achieve the status the many other Black actors and actresses have achieved in a market where there are not many roles for Blacks. As dedicated as she is to have her four other careers, she just might make it.

Congratulations

In reference to "response" mechanisms that are in place and already making a significant nationwide impact, there can be no better model pre-



Ron Herndon

sented than that commitment-driven organization, "National Association for Schools of Excellence." Having held its first meeting in Oregon in 1988, this group of dedicated, nationally recognized principals has responded to the crisis in a manner matching the urgency of the situation. Last week there was mailed to every school principal in the state of Oregon a how-to-do-it book, "Partners For Success: Business and Education". This book detailed the successful operation mode of each of the 22 talented educators in the organization.

This "manual of intervention" was accompanied by a video which gave graphic exposition of the keys for success in successively educating low-income and minority youth. An excellent narration by symphony conductor James DePriest wove the threads of the individual vignettes into a coherent and impressive presentation. "Partnership" was indeed the word, for the produc-

tion, packaging and shipping was all financed by the "Associated Oregon Industries" group and members (their support was vital to the formation of the principals group as well—and many others participated, too numerous for listing).

The Associated Oregon Industries' cover letter for the mailing advised that "next year we want to begin a statewide program called the 'Oregon Educational Excellence Awards'—Pay Less Drug Stores Northwest has stepped forward with a grant to underwrite the costs of presenting sixty \$1000 awards to outstanding school principals and teachers." I love it! This type of partnership between education and industry is a fast-developing trend across the nation—I opted for it when teaching at the university, when chair of the Minority Teachers Organization over a decade ago, and quite often in these pages.

The price for that book, Partners for Success, is \$9.95; and the video may be obtained through the Albina Ministerial Association Head Start Program (503) 283-1267. Nationwide distribution follows and there is no doubt but what this organization will bring about the particular types of change that I and others have advocated for years -- if we are to have the scientists, engineers, technicians and support people necessary for survival. Again I refer you to my "Perspectives" column inside here. We cannot allow any school administration to tell us we can't have successful innercity schools--now can we permit them to fail to deliver.

I would like to congratulate Ron Herndon for having the commitment and drive to carry the "Partners For Success" concept from idea and visualization to a program of great national significance. Thanks a lot old buddy, I enjoyed the view all the way from that first meeting.

Next week, specific science models and role models in the classroom--why can't we get it done here in Portland?

First Annual Gospel Jubilee Excites 900 at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Brenda Phillips Elates the Audience

Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall packed in nearly 900 people for the First Annual Northwest Gospel Jubilee last Saturday. The crowd was extremely jubilant in response to the program. The evening's presentation consisted of two acts; the first act introduced evolution of gospel music from the early 1600s (and



BRENDA E. PHILLIPS

included the presentation of slaves and their masters). It illustrated the tyranny, the violence, the heartache, and the separation of families that the slaves endured. These sufferers had been brought over on slave ships against their will to be sold in America. During the second act, gospel music was presented to the audience, through the African dance and its music of that era, led by Bruce Smith and the African Ballet dancers. In their depiction, they caused the audience to feel the true rhythm of African music as it was over four hundred years ago.

The Sojourner Truth Theatre's actors and actresses gave a life-like imagery of the suffering of the slaves. The cast consisted of both Black and white performers.

Brenda Phillips, who portrayed a blues singer, rendered an extraordinary performance. She showed to the audience the correlation between blues

and gospel music. This performance was more than just a form of entertainment: there were slide presentations that gave stimulating imagery on triple-screens. The penetrating voice of Glenda Pullen brought the audience to their feet with the presentation of "Precious Lord, Take My Hand", as it was sung by Mahalia Jackson many years ago. The work that went into this production, the assistance from the community, and the sponsorship from the various businesses, all came together to make the event enduring and very successful.

A special twelve-voice ensemble

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presented spirituals, such as "Amazing Grace", "Steal Away", "Go Down Moses", and a presentation from the FISK Jubilee Singers of Nashville Tennessee. The music director Ricky Callier, along with producer Bruce Watts, developed the script and the format. The second act presented Maranathe Choir, the Angelic Glow and Love Band, Sermonettes, and the Watson family from Tacoma. The inspirational sounds all came together in the presentation of the second act, giving the audience a well-rounded presentation of origin of African American Gospel music. The first was narrated by J. Camell Foreman. The emcee for the evening was Jeanette Russell Brown; the program director was Bruce M. Watts; lighting was done by Kobe Enright. Costume design was thought up by Wanda Walden; the theatrical director was Nyewusi Askari; Bruce Smith acted as dance director; while

Glenn Butler and Ayanna Patterson were in charge of stage direction. Set design was conducted by Mark Loring; the technical director was John Pierce; Gloria Carter was in charge of publicity; and the program assistant was Andrea Salmon.

The president of the African American Festival Association, Waverly Davis, would like to convey this message:

To the citizens of metropolitan Portland: you should be proud of Portland and this region for bringing the African American Festival into the mainstream of special events. It is truly a pleasure for the African American Festival Association to have been able to bring to the Portland metropolitan community, a great visibility of the rich culture and art of the African American Community through this unique presentation that introduced the course of gospel music from the early 1600s to the quality of livability we enjoy in Portland, and wish to further enhance, which would not be possible without committed citizens continually striving toward the goal of unity in the community. I would like to convey special thanks and deep appreciation to our board of directors and executive committee for their lavish efforts. Commissioner Mike Lindberg, his staff and the Portland City Council, Portland Rose Festival Association and its president Norm Daniels. A very special thanks to the Portland Observer newspaper's staff and management for their hard work and dedication.

I wish to give the most high honor to the Lord for the vision and the challenge to serve in this capacity and to serve the N-NE community.

"June-teenth" Tradition Kept Alive By Pioneering Spirit of Portland Woman

June-teenth Celebration at Bethel Church



Clara Peoples
"Keeps tradition alive"

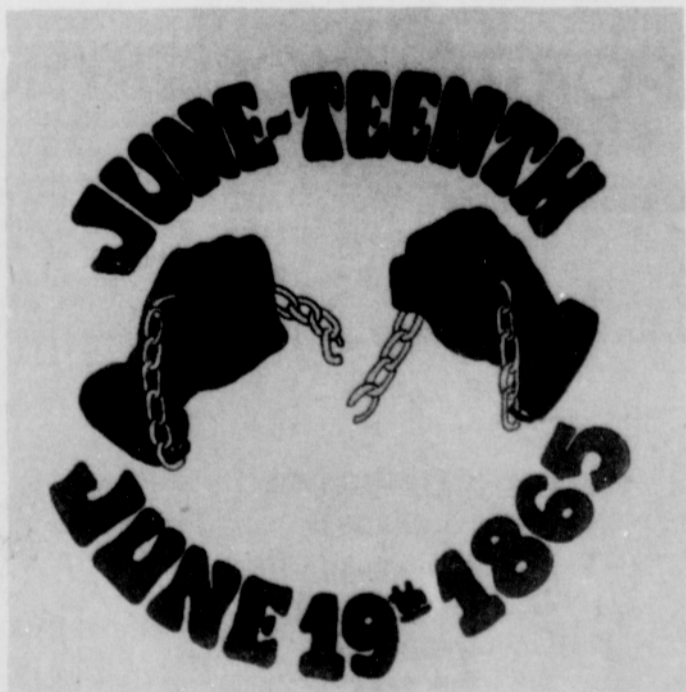


Strawberry soda, fried chicken, barbecued ribs, and watermelons are traditional foods of the June-teenth celebration

Clara Peoples has pioneered a significant number of programs and kept traditions alive in our community, and this being the week of June nineteenth, she continues her efforts for the June-teenth celebration.

On June nineteenth, she coordinated a gala celebration at Bethel Church which drew over 400 people. Mrs. Peoples talks about the importance of keeping the June-teenth tradition alive.

Traditions can easily slip away unless we do more to educate our youth. Tradition will keep us strong.



"June-teenth" symbol submitted by Claudia Peoples. In past years this symbol was placed on tee shirt during the June-teenth celebration.

The Portland Observer is the Official Newspaper of the African-American Festival