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"The Eyes and Ears of The Community"

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African-American Role Models: Yesterday and Today



From left, Dr. Hallie Johnson: "First lady, white or colored" to receive a certificate to practice medicine in the State of Alabama; Eugene Burkins: inventor of the "Burkins Automatic Machine Gun," 1903 Chicagoan's innovation was unsurpassed in world's military technology until World War II; Veronica LaVonne Holland: Local Honor Roll student at Jefferson High School, recipient of "Image Award" and a "Black Academic All-Star."

Students and Parents Win One! School District and Board May Get on Track

By PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

It is sure great to "win one" in this unceasing struggle to gain educational equity for the minority (all) children in the State of Oregon. I do feel that my testimony last Wednesday before a key state commission may have led to this reassuring subheading for an article in Saturday's Oregonian newspaper, "The Teachers Standards and Practices Commission Wants to be Sure Prospective Instructors Have Basic Skills." THE TEST WILL BE RETAINED! Be sure to see the Observer's follow-up on this page.

We promised to "be back at the School District 'ranch' for further examination of the Lesson Plan Delivery System." What we are most concerned with in respect to the Lesson Plans -- or with the entire Curriculum and Baseline Essay process -- is the delivery of a FINAL PRODUCT to the classroom. Just as in a well run commercial enterprise where management expects/demands close and structured cooperation between every department and all support personnel to expedite a successful MARKETING PLAN -- all the way down to the "detailer" who polices the shelves in the stores to be certain that THE PRODUCT IS READILY AVAILABLE TO THE CUSTOMER AND HIGHLY VISIBLE. If this does not happen the entire effort and investment IS WASTED!

For the past three weeks (really three years) the Observer has highlighted significant, documented models and examples of African American innovation, historic and current technological, cultural and role model material that has been submitted to the Portland School District (under contract, yet!) -- but which vital information has not surfaced on "the shelves of the stores," i.e. in the classroom, according to those quoted in that Oregonian article by Bill Graves which we reprinted last week; or ac-

ording to innumerable additional reports and inspections by pupils, parents and teachers.

At the same time there have been cited several documented examples of forward-looking, successfully tested, award winning programs submitted to the district that have received only the most cursory examination and dismissal -- if any attention at all. However, in November, when I spent three full days and evening in conversation with many score teachers and school administrators attending the annual conference of the National Association of Black Educators -- I not only found a great deal of interest in these proven models but several administrators have returned this summer for further orientation. They were put up at the customer's guest house maintained by the Beaverton computer/software company I cited. It's real folks! That "Partners For Success: Business and Education."

"WHERE'S THE BEEF?" Let us run down a few more of the significant African and African American contributors that seem not to have found their way to "the shelves in the District's stores." It was, we know, Bill Cosby who made that provocative video, "Black History: Lost, Strayed or Stolen." Last week, the front page article portrayed pictures of my teaching demonstration at the local Black Education Center. At the left: "Geometry and Algebra, using the famed 'Golden Section' (3-4-5 triangle) invented by the Egyptian Surveyors -- not the Greeks." Interestingly, this master element of computation was also used by Renaissance artists, and was recommended on Educational Channel, 10, by the "This Old House" program as a boon to do-it-yourself carpenters wishing to make highly accurate additions to their properties.

In the photo to the right I am demonstrating that "All computers use 'Binary' mathematics (base 2) devel-

oped by the African Scribes." This paradigm was the basis for the computer/communication project I put on in The Dalles, and which won the National Science Foundation Award. Again, an interesting aside. Dr. Stanley Jacobson, a famed scientist on the staff of Oregon Health Sciences University (invented DMSO) read an Oregonian feature on my project and called to have me introduce the concept to the Lake Oswego Montessori School; but nothing then or since from the Portland School District.

I'll list just several of my "African Benchmark Series" that were submitted but have yet to surface. Napoleon's 1803 Expedition to Egypt: Here I detailed the impact upon Europe and the world when the "general" took boat loads of savants, mathematicians, astronomers, scientists and artists to Africa. Standing his troops before the Pyramids, he stated, "40 centuries of greatness look down upon you." He then proceeded to cart back to Europe the treasures of the ages from Egypt and the Sudan -- forming the basic collection of the newly-constructed Louvre Museum. The Empire style of furniture and dress, new mathematical concepts including projective geometry, the so called, "Fibonacci Series," and much, much else.

Also, I submitted documented material demonstrating that the Russian scientist credited with developing the basis for "X-Ray Crystallography," began with and acknowledged that the North African Muslims had incorporated into their art and architectural designs a rendition of all 230 space groups and subsets that define the "molecular constructs of all matter" (since their religion forbade the reproduction of the human visage or body, they concentrated on complex and sophisticated abstract design).

More next week.

Statement by John E. Jacob, President and Chief Executive Officer National Urban League, Inc. on Visit of Nelson Mandela to the United States

Nelson Mandela's visit to the United States is a momentous occasion. As African Americans, we greet our brother Nelson Mandela with joy and gratitude for his soul-stirring fight against racism and injustice.

Nelson Mandela has suffered greatly for his leadership in the struggle to replace apartheid. In the process, he has given the world a shining example of strength and faith.

We have long supported his righteous cause, and today we urge our national leadership to heed his advice, to retain sanctions until a new order is negotiated in South Africa, and to fully support South Africa's freedom movement.

Business Profile: Donnie's Accessories

By ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

For many Blacks, who hail from cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, New York, Dallas, St. Louis, and other large cultural centers, Portland is considered a wasteland. They complain about not being able to find African fabrics, Black greeting cards, Black art and paintings, and other items that might add sanity during periods or moments of feeling isolated.

Raleigh and Donnie Lewis have solved this problem with the opening of Donnie's Accessories in Northeast Portland (925 NE Broadway, 249-7204), that is the problem of finding Black oriented accessories like the one mentioned above.

Like many people in America, Raleigh and Donnie wanted to work for themselves and eventually gain economic independence. The Lewises have been dreaming together for a long time. It all started back at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Mo. where they attended college. Raleigh, a native of Connecticut, majored in sociology and Donnie majored in elementary education. She was raised in St. Louis. They met, shared more dreams, marriage, and out of their vision evolved three children (Kevin, 27; Djuana, 26; and Cheryl, 24). They also have two grandchildren.

Portland Observer - What made you realize that you did not want to work for someone else anymore?
Lewis - "Doing the same thing day after day and year after year. I didn't know what else to do because like most people, you don't want to give up that steady paycheck. You've got that and everything else is chance, especially when you're going out on your own. I had never been in business before and I didn't know how it worked or how to

start it. Once I left my job to move here with my husband, I said that if I'm ever going to do it, this would be the time..."
Portland Observer - describe your store?
Lewis - "We have a little bit of everything. We are trying to evolve into a

another three or four years to capitalize on it, but it feels great to be able to do what you want to do. Right now, I'm still making up my mind about exactly how I want to evolve. Fortunately, I have the lead way to do that because again, my husband is working with me."

Portland Observer - Can you see the light at the end of the tunnel or are you still walking in darkness?
Lewis - "I'm still walking in darkness, but I'm hopeful. I'm really encouraged by the people that come in and the comments we get. I'm convince that it is going to work. We are going to make it."



DONNIE LEWIS

Photo by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

Portland Observer - Do you believe that Blacks do not support Blacks in many business situations?

Lewis - "Yes, I do think that. I think that if you want them to support you, you have to get out there and cultivate them. Even I won't support a business because it is Black. Now, I'll go and try to support it, but they have to give me encouragement to come back. They have to show me something for me to keep coming back to them. I will not support a business simply because it is Black. I will attempt to support them for that reason, but whether or not I keep coming back is entirely up to them."

Portland Observer - Are you one of the best-kept secrets in Portland?
Lewis - "I have to wonder because we have people coming in day after day telling us how their friend or sister told them about us. Not just Blacks are coming in; all types of people are buying our products and it's happening more and more. Word of mouth really puts our business out there..."

Portland Observer - Good luck in the future.

Lewis - "Thanks."

Teacher Testing Intact: Well, Sort of!

We take this opportunity to provide our readers with this follow-up on the July 25 hearings at Salem on "The Proposed Repeal of the Basic Skills Test." Professor McKinley Burt, a feature writer for this newspaper presented very telling testimony in favor of retaining the C-BEST, an evaluator of the "most minimal skills".

What is new is that last Friday (July 27) the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission, State of Oregon, galloped to the monumental hedge of the century. As headlined by Bill Graves, education reporter for the Oregonian, we have the following, "Panel Seeks Compromise on Way to Test Teachers: The Commission wants to be sure prospective instructors have basic skills." And, then of course there was the famous Missouri Compromise. Right?

The commission asked its chairwoman, Deanna Woods, to appoint a committee to structure proposals for its September 27 meeting. The com-

mission was inclined to allow those who failed one section of the three-element examination to seek a WAIVER to become certified. Consistent with a description of the commissions action as "waffling", Deanna Woods is quoted in the Oregonian article as saying, "We're looking for a compromise because we still have a public that doesn't feel it is ASSURED OF QUALITY TEACHERS." We'll attest to that, which is why the Observer has mounted a determined advocacy for students, parents, and those competent teachers who highly resent any further deterioration of the system.

There has been a very pronounced increase in tempo at the Observer offices since several pro-test advocates made an Oregon (and multi-state) mailing of Mr. Burt's key critique of the C-BEST test and its detractors. Phone calls and subscription orders have come in from all over (the article was published June 27, front page).

There was a very informative conversation with Ms. Elizabeth Johnson of

Redmond, Oregon who gave some of the most telling testimony in favor of retaining the test. She was a prime mover in the 1983 effort that brought the tests to Oregon. Johnson had only recently returned from Washington, D.C. where she gave structured input to the national meeting of a teacher credentialing organization. Ms. Johnson was a member of the State Board of Higher Education, 1962-1975 and is a member of the American Association of Higher Education.

Professor McKinley Burt was also privileged to a lengthy conversation with Dr. Richard Majetic, Administrator of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, State of California. Burt was thanked for his thought-provoking article and his key testimony before the commission. Dr. Majetic is sending him a recent test evaluation, along with important statistics as soon as the package is completed. All requested subscriptions to the Portland Observer (Do you have yours?).