



PERSPECTIVES

By Professor McKinley Burt

Now We Know What It Aint!

Last week we posed the query, "What is a good faith effort?", and went on to review the reflections of Tony Brown, the well known black television commentator. His quotations from the column of William Reed, a respected black journalist lent considerable credence to his [Browns] position that Blacks have failed miserably in utilizing their tremendous buying power to advance their economic welfare.

Now, irony of ironies, though Mr. Brown's article severely took to task black leadership and organizations for holding an increasing number of national meetings where billions are spent yearly to the litany, "how bad off we are"-the money going to "white merchants rushing to bank with the money from hotel rentals, scotch and chicken"-Brown was selected as the KEYNOTE SPEAKER for the August 'super meeting' of 100 black organizations convened by the NAACP in Washington D.C.

Over a million dollars was spent (blown?) by the conferees at this exuberant binge on facilities and amenities while reaching the momentous conclusion that things are indeed bad-and calling for another "Domestic Summit of African American leaders with President Bush to discuss 'critical issues' facing Blacks" (remember the old ghetto folk tale about the animals meeting in the jungle to decide who would hang the bell on the lion?).

We are indebted to a black newspaper, The Milwaukee Community Jour-

nal for a vivid and detailed description of the entire "ironic" affair (August 29, 1990). Feature writer Larry A. Still pretty well kept tongue-in-cheek but we think it occasionally escaped. Let us further examine their "good faith effort".

Hooks also told the televised press conference that TV communicator-educator Tony Brown's keynote speech, urging all African American organizations to cancel their 1992 conventions-costing approximately \$3 billion-and to put the money into proposed "self-help" programs, came as a bombshell.

However, the NAACP executive said the plan was too complicated since convention funds are not spent by the organizations but by individual delegates who would have to decide whether to donate funds they would not spend in 1992.

"Individuals could still donate to such a fund, Hooks said, in disclosing that former New York Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm offered to contribute \$25,000 and said that she knew of at least 20 other supporters who would donate \$1,000 to \$10,000.

Such comments by the leadership we have come to expect and are, of course, quite beside the point. The "point" is [is] there ever to be found at these gatherings a structured methodology for 'information retrieval' and follow up on important proposals requiring detailed input and collation? consider now, that in this highly technical age of "information explosions" and data processing, there are widely advertised tools, equipment and procedures available to such "high-rolling" organizations for implementation of their objectives. Also there are innumerable courses, workshops and seminars available. And yet we have it-you are witness-that it always seems to be "too complicated" or too unwieldy a process to follow upon important matters. What is the 'real' problem?

Keeping in mind the hundreds of millions of dollars these organizations have been cited to spend on "amenities", I cannot help but reflect upon the scope of my own 1969 S.E. Belmont Street operation. True, the scope proved to be too far ahead of its time, but it was a Good Faith Effort to deliver in the most effective manner possible my educational product of curriculum, lesson plans and audio-visual instruction from a then state-of-the-art electronic data base-including the latest in-house equipment and this financed primarily with my personal savings.

Today, it is simply incomprehensible that in this modern day and age, not only do these top black organizations find things "too complicated" or member groups structurally unavailable, but we individual members around the country cannot electronically-albeit competently-interface with them to retrieve information or effectively participate in the process. Of course, we have to consider that it is the case with some organizations we know, such inaccessibility is deliberate-as are the 'books'.

And, today, my view point on these matters is not greatly enhanced when, with my limited resources based on 'retirement' and occasional writing income, I have developed an 'office-at-home' capacity to implement many of the data processing and national interfaces which many of our top organizations have yet to achieve. This from in-house FAX and 800 lines, to a temporary tie line with the facility of a former student in Beaverton for WATTS line and 900 number service-until my own service is installed after the first of the year. I am making a "good faith effort" in this re-entry into the education and African American history field. But I have serious doubts about the efforts and commitment of many of our major organizations.



BY: A. LEE HENDERSON

Miss America was once a part of the hoax that presented the American Dream in shades of anglo-Saxon antiquity: its golden-haired paragons of virtue and beauty (no matter if dipped in peroxide!), its ivory-skinned demoiselles pale and without any hint of suntan to mar the implied virginity of whiteness, its strict adherence to the fantasy factory standards of fairytales and maidens freshly arrived from families bearing the standards of old-fashioned tradition manufactured by those who wanted to blindfold us to what America was really all about in the hope that any 'taint' of non-purification would go away. Miss America used to be a WASP configuration geared to reactionary standards. Used-to-be is OVER!

It is somewhat ironic that the last two reigning Queens of America's apogee of beauty are royal in their blackness, and that their achievements are recorded for a turning point in a time when the very foundation of the Miss America pageant became threatened by criticism from feminist camps and from those who are outspoken on the subject of reducing women to judgments based on physical proportions or any dimensions beyond intelligence.

But I believe that credit is certainly due to the progress inherent in the Miss America pageant today. Certainly, the categories for talent and community participation, for public speaking and a keen concern with issues bespeak criteria that are weighed heavily in the balance. Such was certainly the case when Marjorie Vincent, of Haitian descent, a 1988 graduate of DePaul with a Degree in Music, performed at the piano with the disci-

pline of a virtuoso as she performed the difficult Chopin's Fantasy Impromptu Opus 66. The joyous outpouring of her inner radiance shimmered into the perfection at the keyboard which was born of years of dedication, devotion, and plain hard work.

Ms. Vincent arrived in the United States when she was three years old. She speaks French and Creole, and she was the only black contestant in the 1991 completion. We now know more of the inside workings of what it takes to compete. Here, too, is an enormous amount of preparation. We are told that the average contestant is aware that she will often need the tutoring of a professional consultant to work with her on a daily lesson basis! Modeling clothes, assuming performance steps and ensemble work is the least of the requirements which pay meticulous attention to the way one's hair, make-up body language speaks of confidence and pride.

In the category of self-pride Marjorie Vincent spoke to all of us and to the world. Her bearing, impeccable and stately carried the message of freedom and self-worth. Her plans to practice international law and to render help to those caught in the web of impoverishment in distant nations echoed a universal message from the Miss America stage. The young third year law student at Duke University has brought new status, new prestige to the old Miss America pageant and awakened the American dream for all of us.

Unique, indeed, on the heels of lovely and God-inspired Debby Turner, walking with Jesus in every phase of her life as the retiring 1990 Miss America, that another black Queen shall reign in 1991!

The strings on the piano reverberated with a message that I hope, during Marjorie Vincent's performance, will resound to each and every one of us who aspire to change our lives for the better. There is hope in the American Dream provided we set our sites realistically upon a given objective and proceed to labor for that objective.

We must labor personally for what we desire.

We must labor career-wise and job-wise for what we aspire.

We must labor community-wise for the concert of all our efforts to make things better in education, in housing, in entrepreneurship, and employment.

We must labor city, state, and nationally, and internationally to make our voices and our actions count.

We have said time and again that apathy is a disease and activity a passage to hope.

There is hope for the American Dream to respond to the changes we have brought about, only if we participate and prod ourselves into a re-awakening that we deserve a slice of that great American Pie by never giving up, always going forward, never backing down when we fall, always picking ourselves up and marshaling our strength to do more, to do better, to do best.

Each one of us, remember, is a piece of the America which can be put together by us to re-create the land of golden opportunity in our own image to the Lord's glory.

We may always enjoy th symbol of a Miss American which indeed was re-created in our own image to the Lords' glory and as a beacon of betterment for all humanity.

Black Newspapers in America: A Struggle For Survival

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal describes the Black Newspapers across the U.S. as perpetually "under-capitalized, under-equipped, and understaffed." It cites as reasons declining advertising revenue, circulation and profits, making the mission of black newspapers increasingly difficult.

Recently, the NAACP's Executive Director, Benjamin Hooks, announced a campaign to revitalize the Black Press. He said the industry is "Locked in a struggle to survive" because of forces and factors that it "cannot control". The Journal points to the experience of The New York Amsterdam News, one of Americas oldest and largest black newspapers, which has witnessed a drop in circulation in the past two years from 50,000 to 31,584-a decline of 16% The Amsterdam News Editor-In-Chief, William Tatum, attributes this decline in readership to the "Freedom Rides in the 1960's." Even more alarming is the fact that in 1980, the circulation of The Amsterdam news was a healthy 81,200.

But the problems of The Amsterdam News are not unique to other black newspapers in America. The Baltimore Afro-American, the oldest black newspaper in America (1896) had an audited circulation in 1980 of 26,400. Today, the Afro-American is audited at 11,614, or a 62% drop in circulation. As shown in the Chart below, other major black newspapers across the country are reporting

declining circulations. Many problems of the black press are indicative of the newspaper industry as a whole. Advertising has been soft for several years running, as Americans spend much more time watching television. But the impact is especially severe on black newspapers. According to the Wall

Newspaper (City, year founded)	Audited Circulation		
	1980	1985	1990
NY Amsterdam News (New York, 1909)	81,200	50,000	31,584
Michigan Chronicle (Detroit, 1936)	41,712	32,000	24,516
L.A. Sentinel (Los Angeles, 1933)	34,100	29,356	23,886
Afro-American (Baltimore, 1892)	26,400	12,500	11,614
Mobile Beacon (Mobile, Ala., 1954)	7,560	4,678	4,672
Louisiana Weekly (New Orleans, 1928)	17,370	9,600	4,651

Street Journal article, another reason for lack of support is the indifference shown by middle class blacks. The article quotes Herry Labrie, a writer for the publication, Editor and Publisher, who has surveyed black newspapers since 1970. "The black press took relatively conservative positions on Civic Rights activism during the 1960's and 'fell out of step with the youth.' Many 1960's activists are now members of the black middle class, he says, but they never developed a loyalty to the black press.

OREGONs two major black publi-

cations, the PORTLAND OBSERVER and THE SKANNER, while experiencing an increase in readership, find that major Oregon department stores and retail outlets are reluctant to advertise in black newspapers, claiming that the state's black population is too small. Periodically, these outlets will advertise in once a year specials such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday, or Minority Business Enterprise Week. Seldom, even when recruiting for minority staff will they advertise in Portland's two most respected black publications, but spend thousands of dollars, daily, advertising in white newspapers, dailies and weeklies. These merchants will insist on a black newspaper spending up to \$3,000 for an audit of their circulation which verifies readership but once this is performed, they give excuses like, our advertising budget is already allocated for the year, or we have an advertising agency". But the most common or insulting excuse is, "we get better results from the Oregonian.

Black newspapers cannot survive without the support of the white business establishment, simply because too few black businesses generate enough financial support from the black community to advertise in a black publication.

Support for a black community newspaper can only come from its readership, that readership must buy products that are advertised in black newspapers. They must also demand that merchants support community newspaper.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mrs. Spears: I read your article on "Growing In Grace and Wisdom". It was a very interesting article; but, it wasn't true and it was insulting to me. All of these experiences that you have explained all happened after World War II. I was born here long before that time.

The way of life in Portland was not prostitution and gambling. Portland was a small city with very few Negroes, as we were called before the war. There was some prostitution and gambling but it was all in their own community. After the war and shipyard days, Portland changed. Folks began to move to Portland. Prostitution and gambling had their district. It was not all over town. White folks put up signs on restaurants and on empty houses-WHITE ONLY. Segregation signs were all over the city. You, if you were colored, and had a hard time

finding a house to rent. It was hard to find a house on the other side of Northeast 17th Avenue.

Families stuck together. Everybody knew each other. We had three well-known churches in town.

Being a segregated city on the west coast, it was hard for Negroes to get employment. Many Negroe families did well. The men worked for the railroad as porters, cooks and the like. Some cleaned up the tracks from the train trips from state to state. The men worked as janitors in different kinds of businesses. Few were postmen. A couple of them had new and second-hand furniture. We had about four doctors and few dentists striving a number of years. We had a couple of men to move families from rented homes to more tented houses. It was hard to buy houses then. The men raised vegetable gardens to help feed their

families. The wives helped and stayed home and raised the children in the church. Most of them sent the kids out of town to colleges where they came from.

Now-after a few generations, Portland has and is improving it: many of instances. Negroes are becoming better citizens in most all businesses. Negroes can buy property in most neighborhoods without a lot of hassle if they are financially able. Employment is more fair than ever before, and wherever you see a sign you can sign up for any position you want and can qualify.

Portland is getting better after going through the years after the wars.

Prostitution and gambling has never been the way of life among the respectable Negroes. I am a native daughter born in 1913. (Name withheld)

Civil Rights Journal by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. President Bush's Veto: A Standard of Immorality

BY BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.

On October 22, 1990, President George Bush made history. Bush became the third president in the history of the United States to veto a Civil Rights Act that had been passed by the Congress. The first civil rights veto was done by President Andrew Johnson, a staunch segregationist, in the 1860's. The second civil rights veto was done by President Ronald Reagan in the 1980's. Despite pleas from national civil rights and church leaders, Bush chose to "do the wrong thing."

President Bush, in explaining his position, stated, "I deeply regret having to take this action with respect to a bill bearing such a title." Bush concluded that the Civil Rights Act of 1990 was a "quota bill" which would demand specific numerical or proportional remedies

to prevent employment discrimination. However, the text of the bill as passed by both the House and Senate specifically stated that the Civil Rights Act of 1990 does not call for quotas as a remedy.

Senator Edward Kennedy countered Bush by stating "The President's veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1990 and his repeated efforts to pin the false label of quotas on this legislation are part of a disreputable tactic to appeal to public resentment and prejudice." In other words, we now find the President of the United States abandoning all notions of public morality in favor of an appeal to the most vile elements of this society, that is, appealing to the forces of racism and sexism.

The extent to which African American, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women in general are systematically discriminated

against in the workplace is the extent to which discrimination has become institutionalized in society. The Congress was correct in trying to rectify wrong decisions made by recent rulings of the Supreme Court.

Many African Americans and others are outraged that President Bush would act to deny protection from employment discrimination. In particular, in the wake of Bush deploying nearly one hundred thousand African American and other racial and ethnic women and men who serve in the United States armed forces to the Persian Gulf, the veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1990 exposes a gross contradiction. Does the President expect these soldiers, who have been sent to risk their lives to help defend the strategic interest of the United States, to welcome the news that their Commander in Chief has deliberately acted not to defend their civil rights at home?

At a time when our nation is becoming more and more racially polarized, President Bush's veto may make matters worse. The President is the elected leader of the nation and has a responsibility to help set not only political direction, but more importantly, to help establish the moral tone of the nation. The tolerance of racial injustice and employment discrimination will destroy the moral fiber of any nation.

The standard of leadership that Bush is now exemplifying helps to create the notion that discrimination and injustice are morally and politically tolerable. We reject this notion. We believe this is a challenge that must be responded to by the people. Therefore, we are encouraging all of those who believe in justice and equality to begin immediately to organize, at the grassroots level, in every congressional district throughout the country to build support for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Bush's veto and the inability of Congress to override the veto are not the last words on this matter.

As we witness other parts of the world take significant steps toward a greater sense of democracy and justice, President Bush is leading the United States in the wrong direction concerning basic civil rights. We are just several days before the November elections and we encourage people to send a strong message to Congress and to the White House on Election Day. Let the word go out that we do not intend to allow this nation to continue taking steps backwards on the issue of justice. Political immorality will not be tolerated.

PORTLAND OBSERVER
(USPS 959-680)
OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION
Established in 1970

Alfred L. Henderson
Publisher

Joyce Washington
Operations Manager

Gary Ann Garnett
Business Manager

Leon Harris
Editorial Manager

The 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.

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208. Second-class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of this newspaper and can not be used in other publications or personal usage, without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. 1990 PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

Subscriptions: \$20.00 per year in the Tri-County area; \$25.00 all other areas.

The Portland Observer - Oregon's Oldest African-American Publication - is a member of The National Newspaper Association - Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York, NY.