



P E R S P E C T I V E S

By Professor McKinley Burt

When is "At Home" Not At Home?

These recent "Office At Home/Electronic Communications" may have prompted you to think, "hey, perhaps this is a way I can surmount some of these barriers (social or racial--real or fancied) that seem to block any enhancement of my financial situation. If so, you are absolutely right.

This electronic interaction can spring you. Already *Computer World* magazine reports "30 million Americans have computers at home and over 13 million have offices and/or businesses at home." Also, many seniors and shut-ins say they have moved far beyond the narrow world of a former isolation. Many African Americans say they are feeling a lot more confident and optimistic about the business world as they deal with satisfied mail order customers who neither know nor care who you are. The enterprise may involve the delivery of either service or merchandise--or both.

If you are a newcomer into the mail order world you may be wondering, "How in the world can you store all of that merchandise in your house or basement until somebody places an order--or, even, how can you afford to buy the huge quantities of stock?" Here, you need to be introduced to the concept of "Drop Shipments". When you receive the customer's order, it is forwarded to the manufacturer of the equipment or merchandise. He ships the order to the customer but bills you for your cost of the product. Usually, the customer assumes that is came from your big company or branch, rather than from YOUR KITCHEN!

A case in point is an article on page 1, section M, of Sunday's Oregonian. Here, we find a young couple operating a Waste Technology corporation that sells huge machines which compact and recycle garbage--made in Europe by a Swedish company. Their "headquarters" are a small suite on East Burnside Street, but could just as well have occupied a spare room in the family residence.

As I stated last week, we certainly need to see more African American women taking on the challenge of entrepreneurship--and, in particular, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by electronic communications. We see that some economists and sociologists are saying that women are reaching the upper limit of their participations in the work force. And, of course, we have the present downturn in the economy--plus the ever-present barrier of child-rearing demands. The electronic commercial interface from the home is a made-to-order solution.

Consider, too, that the operation of many of these new devices is not nearly so difficult as one might think: not nearly as frustrating as most of us males find the wife's new sewing machine, a technological wonder, the use of which she takes in stride. Many of the machines are self-monitoring, incorporating a tiny computer that continually trouble shoots and issues status reports. The following is an excellent example.

Be sure to get a FAX machine that prints out an "activity report" as part of its unattended routine. The other morning mine burped and whistled at 5 a.m. but there was no reason to get up and investigate. Later on I found an advice in the receiving tray which stated an unaware caller from back east--already in their office, 8 o'clock their time--had either put their transmission in upside down or had inadvertently put in a blank sheet of paper. Also, pressing "Traffic Assessment" furnishes a recap of a day or week's activity in both directions. It doesn't get any easier than that.

Last week, I did not have space to include the outstanding contribution in communications made by another duo of black females. Their effort was in support of the 1978 convention of the Black Scientists and Engineers in 1978 at San Francisco. I participated as a representative of Portland State University. The highly technical applications of modern telecommunications carried out by these two young ladies made this the most productive conference I have ever attended anywhere or at anytime.

This was a scenario where not only did the activities of several hundred African American scientists and engineers have to be supported, but those of plane-loads of black school-age youngsters from age 8 to 18 who were flown in from California cities as far away as Los Angeles and San Diego--to be motivated and advised on the technical exhibits and working models constructed by the engineers. These ranged from miniature waste treatment plants to electrical transmission towers.

Also, scores of west coast high school and college seniors were flown or bussed in to interact with college recruiters, or with industry and government recruiters from across the country. This daily activity took place on the floor of a huge ballroom that had been equipped with many scores of desks and tables--all connected by dedicated teleconferencing lines to the individual universities or to the personnel offices of the corporation or public agency.

A youth could practically close the deal on college acceptance or get clear instructions on his next move. A major African American travel agency was provided with on-site facilities including computers and reservation tie lines. Older youths could establish commitments for interviews, be provided transportation vouchers and be put on a plane straight from the conference. As I've said, I have not seen anything like it before or since. Some of us are ready and some of us ain't! More next week.

Vantage Point

By Ron Daniels

Fighting for a New Defense Policy in the U.S.

George Bush has decreed that the United States needs to increase its expeditionary force in the desert sands of Saudi Arabia to 450,000 troops by the beginning of 1991. What was initially supposed to be a force of 100,000 - 150,000 troops will now grow to a force nearly as large as the U.S. deployment in Viet Nam. In explaining this huge increase in U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region, Secretary of State James Baker reiterated the need to defend our way of life in the United States. The original cost of the U.S. deployment was pegged at 1.2 billion per month or 15 billion dollars a year. Neither President Bush nor Secretary Baker have floated the figures for these massive additions to an already costly and unaffordable force.

In the meantime entire American cities like New York, Philadelphia and East St. Louis, Missouri are on the verge of collapse. David Dinkins, Mayor of New York, appearing on NBC's Today Show, and reeled off statistics which go to the source of the problem. For every \$1.00 New Yorkers send to Washington they get \$0.77 back in revenues. Federal aid used to account for 19% of New York City's budget. Now federal aid accounts for only 10% of the city's budget. And in the critical area of housing Mr. Dinkins pointed out that for every \$1.00 the feds use to spend on housing, \$7.00 was allocated for defense. Now for every \$1.00 the feds spend on housing, \$46.00 goes for the military budget. In 1988 Jesse Jackson revealed that aid to education was reduced by 20% under the Reagan-Bush administration. Jackson noted that .55 of each tax dollar was going to defense/military spending while only .02

was allocated to education.

There are 30 million people in America who are illiterate and another 30 million people who are functionally illiterate. Some 31 million people, or nearly 13% of the U.S. population, are officially listed as poor. But according to Representative Tony Hall, Chairman of the House Select Committee on Hunger, there are another 13 million people who make up the "hidden poor" who live in desperate conditions but are not defined as poor by current official criteria. Including the hidden poor, 1 - 5 Americans lives in poverty. 37 million people have no health insurance. 3 - 6 million people are homeless. And millions of people have jobs with incomes so inadequate that they are joining the ranks of a rapidly growing category of people who comprise the "working poor".

Billions of dollars are needed just to repair public schools facilities in the U.S. that have fallen into disrepair. The infrastructure of federal highways, bridges, state, county and municipal roads and bridges is crumbling. This crumbling infrastructure is responsible for a growing toll of mishaps and fatal accidents. In addition, America's aging and neglected infrastructure is becoming a major drag on business, commercial and industrial development and expansion. The list of ailments which afflict "our way of life" is virtually without end.

All of this raises the question as to whose way of life is the U.S. expeditionary force defending the Persian Gulf. Certainly not the way of life of the vast number of Americans who are afflicted by the maladies cited above. For them the bloated military budget and foreign

mis-adventures like the invasion of Panama and the massive U.S. troop build up in Saudi Arabia are the real enemy. It is clear that the United States need a new definition of "defense policy".

What we need in America is a defense against human misery and suffering; a defense against poverty and hunger; defense against unemployment and underemployment; defense against homelessness, slums and urban and rural blight; defense against illiteracy and inferior education and mis-education; defense against infant mortality; defense against AIDS and drugs; defense against poison air, poison water and toxic waste; defense against racism, sexism, cultural chauvinism, anti-semitism, homophobia and all forms of prejudice and discrimination; defense against the rich and super rich who control the American political-economy and manipulate it (and us) to protect and enhance their wealth and to maintain their power and privileges.

Progressives must fight for a new defense policy which translates into the development of a socially responsible economy which fosters and promotes human development and fulfillment over property and profit. And a political-economy which promotes and pursues peace over war. Our real enemies are not in the Persian Gulf or on some far flung foreign shores. Our enemies are the maladies which plague the U.S. from within. The U.S. will either find the appropriate "defenses" against these enemies or no amount of military spending or wars against make believe enemies from abroad can prevent the total devastation, demise and collapse of these United States.

Black Networking Association Sponsors Workshop

The Black Networking Association is sponsoring a Career Development Luncheon Workshop on Dec. 13th from 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the second floor of the Smith Center, Portland State University. The luncheon workshop is entitled "Career-development Strategies for African American Public Employees". The keynote speaker for the luncheon will be Gerald Seals, City manager for the City of Corvallis, Oregon. There will be greetings, updates and information from representatives of Blacks in Government, The Black Professional Network, the National Forum, for Black Public Officials and key public administrators at the luncheon.

This workshop is geared to developing strengths to deal with issues, concerns, and problems unique to African Americans in the public sector. It will address overcoming race related stress; conflict; developing coping techniques; assisting participants to clarify personal values and career objectives; and pinpointing positive aspects of the black cultural experience which can be effectively used in the work place. Tom Nesby, President of Nesby and Associates, will facilitate this seminar.

Registration is required, there is an advance registration fee of \$25 for BNA members and \$35 for nonmembers.

This workshop is endorsed by the Sate Executive Dept., Portland City Commissioners Mike Lindberg and Dick Bogle, Black Professional Network and the State Department of Human Resources.



...And Justice For All

by Angelique Sanders



Government Secrecy: Democracy vs. Supremacy

I had hoped to write an uplifting column this week, but I seem to be (again!) downwind of a stench emanating from Washington, D.C....

Regrettably, I have only circumstantial evidence to cite, so this column shall be based on "awareness of the possibility" of a grave wrongdoing...don't judge a book by its cover, of course, unless its cover is a brown paper wrapper!

Here's the bad news: Joseph Gerson, of the Peace Society of New England, claimed on KGW that body bags and other blatant implications of war are being shipped back to the U.S. from the Middle East. We are already at war, he claims, and Congress, the press, and consequently the American public are unaware--as well as powerless.

I wish I could simply dismiss Gerson as an overzealous fanatic that was merely "crying wolf": but I have seen too much lately that leans toward the angle of Bush acting maniacally, that intimates Gerson might be privy to something most Americans don't want to face: has Bush declared war without anyone's knowledge or acceptance?

Several friends overseas have informed me that the government has asked their husbands (who are affiliated with the U.S. Army) for "help"...in case of war", said the military, but went on to verbally prepare them for a definite and imminent war. This was about a month and a half ago. The men declined--the lucky few who have enough seniority to turn down the option, yet with not enough seniority to be responsibly required to go. (By the way, this addendum may prove crucial: mail that these friends send to the states is monitored by the government--it is opened and read, and approved or disapproved for passage onto the recipient...what secrets do they have to hide? What can't I know about my own country's army, that uses mine and fellow taxpayers' money to fund their own activities? I feel like I'm being forced to give money to a generic charity, one labeled only: "Killers 'R' Us".)

Additionally, Bush's edgy behavior, which is attempting to hustle us into war, has been further indicative of--if not war--covert action of some sort in Iraq. America's growing rebellion has not yet tipped the scales of Congress' opinion toward war: but many Congressmen (don't take that word as

sexist, please) are wary of Bush's activities, and several House members have already threatened to take Bush to court over violations of the Constitution.

Congressmen Foley and Mitchell verbally reminded George Bush of the constraints--Constitutionally--placed on the powers of the presidency (namely, that he cannot go pushing red buttons as haphazardly as he cuts social programs and vetoes civil rights bills). Whipping a copy of the Constitution from his pocket (I'm not making this up! I know you're all wondering what a copy of THE DOCUMENT--the very one which states our government is of, by, and for the people--would be doing so close to Bush's fingertips and eyes. He must read the Constitution the way an anxious school-child reads his report card to his parents: skipping the unsatisfactory parts and jumping right to, and dwelling in, the parts he likes.), to Foley and Mitchell he snapped, "I'm aware of what the Constitution says, but it also says I'm Commander in Chief!" And, apparently, he intends to make full use of this title.

Playing a game of secrecy and deception surely comes as--read my lips--no new thing to Bush. As former head of the C.I.A., he is probably one of the most skilled deceptors of our time (at par, I'm sure, with ex-actors, such as Reagan). Perhaps our continual history of electing deceptive men to presidency (with the exception of Carter, who didn't have the ingenuity, especially on foreign policy matter, to spread any tall tales: but remember Hoover, with his intimate F.B.I. experience; Kennedy, with his extramarital affairs; Nixon, with Watergate; Reagan, with the Iran-Contra affair--which if you'll remember, would never have leaked had it not been for an irate Iranian arms dealer--I could go on and on) is not mere coincidence: perhaps we subconsciously seek a man with a poker-face to make us feel our nation is in glorious shape. It would be much harder (though much wiser) to be under the conscientious rule of Jesse Jackson, who would be screaming "Reform!" and pointing out the errors of our ways, while Bush, hands in pockets, would chuckle, "Taxes? Who needs 'em?"

I am definitely not saying that everything our government does should be exposed: I agree with the necessity to keep some technology and weaponry

secretive (although, on that note, remember when Reagan, a few years back, said that his Star Wars missile net technology would be--ah, yes--HANDLED OVER TO THE SOVIETS, so that we would all be equally protected by it, making war even more obsolete? My two responses to that were: A: Oh, RIGHT, you'll hand over that technology, and B: Even if you DID, it surely wouldn't make war obsolete, as the net was far from perfect, and only deflected 90% of projectiles...now, I have to figure, it only takes one bomb out of ten, considering the overspill of radiation, to kill most everyone within quite a circumference: 90%, while good, needs to be 100% to be at all effective. I read an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* recently that said the justice system is 99% effective, but isn't it awful to be caught in the other 1%?). I also can't argue that there will be--in any operation, including the U.S. government--some trade secrets, that it would be in stockholder's interest to never learn. However, I'm sure that most would agree that when those trade secrets jeopardize one's stockholdings, as well as one's life, the holder should be acknowledged, and permission should be requested to go forth with the plan--or at least, the president of the company or country should meet with the committee heads or Congressmen. And, brothers and sisters, we're not talking idly about jeopardized stock--we're talking about jeopardized LIVES! I am not looking forward to a day when it becomes the norm of our government to hide its actions from the American people: this day is coming, if no one protests.

Secrecy has been played to the hilt in all aspects of government lately. The December 10, 1988 issue of *Editor & Publisher* spoke of a photo ban: news organizations which refused to sign a government censorship document are barred from installing cameras near the space shuttle launch pad. A year later, on December 23, 1989, *Editor & Publisher* correspondent George Gameau (the same writer as in the last case in point) reports that the government is tightening up on information of all regards. "The flow of information from the Department of Justice is being choked to a trickle, according to the increasingly frustrated press corps there." In 1989, the Department of Justice's Public Affairs staff (which gives updates to

the press) was cut in half, and The Washington Post reported new Immigration and Naturalization Service regulations barring local offices from talking to reporters without first getting clearance from Washington. Additionally, a recent ruling bans prisoners from writing paid or bylined newspaper stories (again, I ask, what does the government have to hide? They're not protecting the public from lies; they're protecting the public from knowledge.) Los Angeles Times reporter Ron Ostrow, who has been on the Justice Department beat for 23 years, says: "You're finding in all parts of Justice [Dep't] a great reticence to disclose basic information that the public certainly has a right to know." He went on to tell of a recent incident in which he had lunch with a top official from the Department of Justice, and the official was later interrogated about their discussion. "That sent out a chilling message to people at any rank," said Ostrow, "that it would be better to not have any communications with reporters."

A book by People for the American Way called "Government Secrecy: Decisions Without Democracy" had several interesting items. "The National Security Council...has been extensively utilized by President Reagan to issue more than 200 'secret laws' on national policy matters. Congress has virtually no knowledge of the issuance of the orders. Even in the case of pertinent national security matters, the appropriate committees of Congress are not informed. These have included orders that: in 1981 first sent funds for covert training of Nicaraguan rebel to Argentina; in 1983 authorized Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) training and support of secret counterterrorist squads in the Middle East for the purpose of 'preemptive strikes'; in 1985 authorized agencies other than the CIA, such as the National Security Council, to engage in covert operations; and in 1986 authorized the Libyan 'disinformation' campaign." Summary, as I see it: it is not impossible--though we like to be able to put full trust in Congress to find out about things like this before they're enacted, and faith in the press to find information out before it's overexploited--that we could already be in a war with Iraq.

Continued next week

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