

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

By Professor McKinley Burt



Great Day A-Comin'

I don't know about the possibility of freedom suggested by that phrase from an old spiritual the slaves sang--whether they anticipated Abraham Lincoln or the second coming--but I do know that a great month is coming up: Black History Month.

As usual during these times, from now through February, I will be citing the old and the new contributions of African Americans (and Africans) to the culture and technology of the world. There will be provided many new and exciting examinations and insights, a theme; "We did it before and we can do it again." As usual, I will be available for presentations in the schools, community gatherings, public agencies, and for television appearances.

Reflecting that it would be very apropos in these particular times to lead off with an educational them, I began sorting through material amassed on those super-competent, early African American educators and their techniques. It is fascinating to draw on the documents describing the accomplishments of those ex-slave teachers who, within five years of the end of the Civil War, had prepared the blacks to set up their own infrastructure of county government, schools, roads, hospitals and the like (cited by General Saxton, Military Annals, Howard University Library).

And there will be updated information on the accomplishments of the newly-freed Bishop Daniel Payne who devised and taught from lesson plans and curriculum that took blacks from illiteracy to stellar performance on the entrance exams to the top universities now opened to them (for a short while): grammar, mathematics, biology, geography, as-

tronomy, Greek, Latin and so forth. An early "Father Clements", if you will. What's happened since?

This does not mean that the role of our African forefathers (mothers) will be slighted--from the Temple Schools of Ancient Egypt and Sudan in African, 4000 years ago, to the fabulous University of Timbuktu on Africa's west coast. And, then there were the Schools of Navigation and Geography set up in Portugal by the dusky moors from North African whom Shakespeare made famous. (And weren't Columbus and Magellan happy that their navigators were schooled by this African Curriculum). Of course, Shakespeare did quite well himself from African curriculum--given that the works of the great ancient poet, Terrence, was an important and mandatory part of the curriculum of Shakespeare's schools. The five act structure of his most important plays was taken from the works of black Terrence (Plimpton 1933, Baldwin 1945, 1965, Ill.). And we shouldn't omit the historical works of Leo Africanus from whom Shakespears drew so heavily for his scenarios and backdrops.

So you can understand my stomach tremors when a small delegation of brown-skinned acquaintances dropped by--somehow managing to find me! I say "somehow" because this particular group is unable to locate me except when they are in dire need of something; never when their grant money and other goodies flow like wine. It seems that a new "hot" scenario has come on stage in the educational arena, "INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT". The brothers were drooling; "Jesse Jackson, even, is on top of it. I saw him on C-SPAN." "You know that there is going to be some monies we can get in on" they exclaimed. "You know how to make a case for the disadvantaged getting all the assistance possible--from any quarter. And you've got a good track record for getting grants." They didn't sound like people who would be interested in

the proven award-winning lesson plans and curriculum I have developed over the years (as good as any import).

Now, what was all that about? I'm sure our readers are familiar with the current uproar about the failures of America's educational system--and the catastrophic consequences predicted for this nation in the INTERNATIONAL scheme of things. The president, congress, Secretary of Education, schools and industry have all been in concert with the cry, "We shall become a THIRD-RATE NATION--behind Japan and India--unless by the year 2000, we raise our achievement levels to a parity with the rest of the industrialized nations of the world. Our workforce must be made technologically competitive."

Brave worlds, but that time table, of course, is impossible. Any person living in a real world, who has taught in our schools or who has hired or supervised the workforce now entering our industry and government agencies, knows better than this. Both the American educational and political establishments are very adept at avoiding reality, while embarking upon messianic crusades designed to blur the issues and postpone the day of reckoning (Budget Deficit). I am sure you remember two such crusades that were supposed to put America in the forefront of the world's technology: "THE NEW MATH and THE METRIC SYSTEM." Wha' happen? And what was that great observation Pogo made?

At the beginning here, I introduced some revealing insights into what might be called a Black Learning Machine. And I cited the instance of some African Americans and their crusade (hustle). Apparently, there are both white and black Americans who have lost faith in themselves--bordering on self-contempt. We need foreign input like a hole in the head! Next week we will further develop this theme of history and education. We've done it before and we can do it again--if we KNOW WHO WE ARE!

Oregon's Court Denies Youths Licenses

Oregon's courts ordered nearly 1,850 driver license denials for youths between the ages of 13 and 17 during the first months of 1990, according to the Motor Vehicles Division.

The 1,841 denials were based on court convictions or determinations involving alcohol or drug possession, use or abuse. After such convictions, courts order DMV to suspend licenses or deny the privilege to apply for a license or permit. Driving privileges may be denied even when the offenses are not related to driving a motor vehicle.

There were 1,551 denials for possession of alcohol or drugs. This accounted for 84 percent of the total. Of the remainder, six denials were for having an open container of alcohol or drinking in a motor vehicle; 221 were for intoxication or driving under the influence of intoxicants (DUI); and 63 were for miscellaneous alcohol and drug offenses such as theft, delivery or manufacturing of a controlled substance. Males accounted for 1,340 of the denials, or 73 percent.

Under the law, first offenders are denied licenses for one year or until the person becomes 17, whichever is longer. Repeat offenders are suspended or denied licenses for one year or until the person becomes 18, whichever is longer. DMV statistics show that 268 were second denials, 56 were third denials, 15 were fourth denials, four were fifth denials, and one was a sixth denial.

IRS Impersonators Promoting Tax Scam



Carolyn Leonard

Internal Revenue Service officials are alerting Oregonians of a scam involving impersonation of IRS officials.

In cases reported thus far, the scheme has cost several Oregonians over \$400 apiece. Each victim has responded to a telephone call which instructed them to pay taxes to claim a new automobile won as a prize.

The telephone caller(s) identified themselves as IRS officials and explained that a car had been won. They said delivery could not be made until a federal tax had been paid. The would be winners were told to pay the tax to the telephone caller through Western Union.

IRS District Director Carolyn Len-

onard explained that individuals who doubt the validity of a telephone call should contact the IRS Inspection Office at (503) 326-2787.

Leonard said that occasional persons posing as IRS employees attempt to harass taxpayers or collect money for what the impostor claims are unpaid taxes. She offered the following tips to avoid being taken in by a bogus IRS agent:

\*Normally, your first IRS contact for an audit or tax collection is by mail. If you fail to respond to the letter, an agent may call or visit you.

\*Normally the IRS prefers payment by check or money order made payable to the "Internal Revenue Service". (Note: do not abbreviate I-R-S, spell out the words)

\*If the IRS needs to audit you, you will be asked to discuss your tax situation at an office.

\*IRS employees usually work during business hours on weekdays, never on the weekend or evenings.

\*If contacted by the IRS, the employee will have access to your social security number. Although this is not a fool proof method, you can ask for this for verification.

\*If an agent comes to your door, ask for identification. All IRS field employees carry distinctive identification that clearly displays their name and picture.

Oregon Symphony Concert

same name where vendors sell live, cooked, and pickled snakes, and where crowds throng the marketplace in a hurly-burly of sights, sounds, and smells.

In addition to "Snake Alley," which was first performed in 1989, Dzubay also has published additional compositions for orchestra, string orchestra, brass quintet, solo horn, and saxophone quartet, among others. His works have been performed in the United States, Europe, and Asia by orchestras such as the Chicago Civic Orchestra, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Indiana University Philharmonic, the New World Symphony, the Oakland East Bay Symphony, the New York Youth Symphony, and the orchestras of Detroit and Honolulu.

In addition to many other scholarships and prizes, Dzubay has received BMI Student Composer awards and ASCAP young Composers awards.

Leon Bates

Pianist Leon Bates has established himself as one of the leading performers in America. In addition to his Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall appearances, he has performed with all of the major symphonies in United States and also performs world-wide. Critical acclaim follows Bates wherever he goes. The New York Times has described Bates as "a pianist with a touch of the poet." The San Francisco Chronicle said, "What emerged was a reading of remarkable emotional complexity. The opening page of the finale, which...went from a delicate piano to a blazing forte in minute, almost imperceptible increments, was characteristic of Bates' control."

A Philadelphia native, Leon Bates was recognized as a child prodigy. His early enthusiasm led him to study with the late Irene Beck and later with internationally renowned pianist Natalie Hinderas. At the age of 19, Bates won the

Philadelphia Orchestra Competition and played with the Philadelphia Orchestra for the first time. From this auspicious beginning, his career has grown to include many awards; numerous recordings on the Orion, Performance, and Naxos labels; and a schedule of over 100 performances annually.

In addition to this full schedule, Bates is a master teacher and is often called upon to give master classes to promising young musicians. While in Portland, Bates will visit Jefferson High School on January 17 as part of the Oregon Symphony's "Musically Speaking" program and will teach a master class at Moe's Pianos on the same day at 7:30pm. Individuals interested in the master class are asked to call Moe's Pianos at 775-2480 for more information.

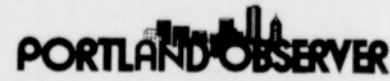
Bates also is well known as a sports enthusiast and a disciplined body builder, which he feels aid his playing ability.

Uncertain Futures Documentary



Noah Nelson, Urban correspondent for NBC News, hosts UNCERTAIN FUTURES (W.T.), a documentary that examines why young black men have problems setting goals for themselves and highlights the growing number of people and organizations working to help these men change their lives. (2/29/91 10:00 p.m. one hour)

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Reinvestments in the Community

What Is a "Good Faith Effort"?

By Professor McKinley Burt

We often hear that phrase, a "good faith effort" as having been made by someone or another--or by a particular organization. But, just what, exactly, does it mean? Under some circumstances we feel that we know very well the extent of the implied commitment--to deliver, to expedite, to discharge a debt, or whatever. For instance, we often have it from the United States Government, "backed by the full-faith and credit of [the government]."

But, today, I would lead us into another area for assessment of this ubiquitous term. While I've been writing this current series on "Minority Business" (concluded this week on Business Page), I find myself returning to frequent thoughts concerning the level of commitment--and, indeed, the sincerity--of many of the African Americans who make such a noisy and highly-publicized case for an immediate and massive escalation of the minority business effort (sceldom accompanied by action, let alone a structured plan for implementation).

In the immediate case, my reflections are prompted by a recent column of Tony Brown, the well-known black television com-

mentator and publisher of "Tony Brown's Journal". Here, he took to task some of the most hallowed and respected echelons of the black leadership hierarchy. Specifically, he furnished the following quotes of William Reed, a columnist for the Black-owned Washington, D.C. newspaper, Capital Spotlight.

"The Congressional Black Caucus weekend is the most glaring evidence of a two-decade-old saga of ineptness, mismanagement, lack of accountability and vision of our so-called

"After 20 years of CBC weekends, the most obvious evidence of Black leadership having been on Capitol Hill are thousands of Scotch bottles, a slew of chicken bones and a host of white merchants rushing to the bank to deposit the one-half billion dollars they receive each year from CBC hotel rentals and the sale of Scotch and hot buffalo wings."

"This is one of those 150 annual get-togethers where middle-class Blacks are spending 3 billion dollars with white people while discussing how bad off we are and blaming racism for it. I, of course, have proposed that all Black groups cancel their 1992 meetings and use the \$3 billion as a capital for-

mation fund to rebuild our community."

"I think this position is well taken, a rather succinct assessment, right to the "inept" point--and every bit as caustic a presentation as I would have made (smiles). Further, I think it is a logic that could be applied to this microcosm, Portland, Oregon. We know that I have made this case a number of times, not only in articles and in speeches--but, going so far as to design and implement university classes incorporating both the standard business and legal structures of enterprise, but also the real-time experiences of successful entrepreneurs.

So what is that can be done--that isn't being done--that must be done? Never in history has the race had so many college graduates, so many blacks in experience-gaining positions in management, technology and the financial interface. But it would seem that it was the lesser educated and exposed blacks of yesteryear who had the drive, ambition and motivation to successfully launch many viable business enterprises. What do you think is the answer? Write us here at the paper; we'd like to hear from you!

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