



PERSPECTIVES

By Professor McKinley Burt

Down With Gloom & Doom; Forward With History

There is no contradiction in that, none at all. No other race in history has a greater opportunity to utilize the lessons and data of the 'past' to GO FORWARD than the African American of today—from culture to technology, and from educational institutions to learning styles; from role models to patents.

But, as I said last week, if those in charge or at the forefront of the media-circus have a not-always-well disguised self-contempt, then values of all that magnificent black heritage will be lost, and those resources will be forever unavailable. The same applies to contemporary resources and 'people' whose talents will never be realized, and whose wisdom will be denied articulation.

In many quarters "gloom and down" is the cry of the day among those of us of little faith (or perception) who anticipate that the current economic turndown in the affairs of 'ole massa' will lead to massive cutoffs at some of the shakier political and "disadvantaged grant" feeding pens. Last week I cited the fuzzy foot work of some of these frightened brothers who descended upon me with a grandiose scheme to "get some of these 'new dollars' that will be available with the contemplated importation of European science and technical education systems." Once again, check out "Pogo".

Let me proceed to deal with this problem in my usual historical fashion; very recent history that gets right to the heart of the situation. And keep in mind that it is not...just blacks who seem to have 'lost faith'. The white establishment would seem to grow in despair and confusion also, flailing themselves with accusations and hindsgits. One wonders though, if there is such a dire lack of educational opportunity and upward mobility in America, why are millions of foreigners trying to break down the immigration barriers in order to COME HERE? How about that!

Now, for another African American contributor, one of considerable magnitude. And one who spent a great part of his lifetime trying in vain to convince his black brethren that we had available in our history (and current genes) 90% of the know-how and education methodology necessary to gain parity with or surpass the nation or world. He is DAVID CROSTHWAIT, mechanical engineer extraordinaire (1891-1976).

Without his inventions and engineering technology in the field of heating and air conditioning systems and controls for skyscrapers, modern man could not inhabit buildings over 12 stories tall anywhere in the world. He gave us the concept of the "INTELLIGENT HIGHRISE", highlighted by his design and installation of the computerized control heating and variable vacuum process in such building as the ROCKEFELLER CENTER in New York City (34 U.S. and 80 foreign patents).

Before his death in 1976, I spent many hours talking with this brilliant African American about the incredible potential and resources possessed (but not used) by our group. Our...conversations usually began on a 'high note', with general discussions of pioneering and seminal technology developed by blacks from 'day one'. His favorite e "genius" was NORMAN RILLIEUX, the black engineer from Louisiana whose "Triple-Stage Sugar Evaporator" (Patent No. 4,879, Dec. 10, 1846) not only made the United States the world leader in sugar refining technology, but that the German

Liz Narvaez Speaks Out Against Drugs



Liz Narvaez is outspoken against drugs and takes whatever opportunity she can to visit schools and talk with young people about the issue. She and her co-stars from "The Cosby Show" often went as a group to different high schools to advocate that students use their heads and stay clear of this killer: "Don't do it! Don't think about it. You don't need it. I was around drugs, like most kids, but I never had any problem saying no. I owe that to my parents, mostly my mom."

"A lot of the problem stems from their parents. Parents need to be involved in their kids' lives. Kids care most what their parents think about them. If the parents aren't there or don't have an interest, the kid falls prey to anybody who acts like they care. My mom knew where I was, who I was with and what I was doing. Parents have to take an interest."

"To just say no is not enough. You need your brain and you need to be able to see clearly how you want to live and not feel the pressure from other people to do stupid stuff. Being cool is not being afraid to be who you are."

industrialisms used his developments in THERMODYNAMICS to become world leaders in that area of the chemical and dye industries (The United States Department of Agriculture did pronounce RILLIEUX'S patent." The greatest invention in the history of chemical engineering".

On the downside to this story, there, again, is a gross failure of African Americans to realize and exploit the resources and genius for learning that we possess. Dr. Crosthwait complained bitterly that though he offered time, money, knowhow and patent trusts (for foundations) to the black community and school in the Detroit area, he was rebuffed and blocked at every point by the 'traditional' black organizations and "closed incestuous power groups (tell me about it)." "There was no avenue to the people", he said. Politics and hordes of 'elected black officials' would solve everything-in credible of course, with an evaporating tax base of 'white flight' an accompanying degeneration of social services.

Of course the crime and gangs grew and grew and grew. The man died of frustration, unable to implement or deliver his realistic concepts of necessary motivation, role models and relevant technical curriculum to the students and community. I decided some time ago that "the clowns will never kill me". As many readers know the Portland School District twice turned down my award-winning "Computer-Communications" educational project. Fairly recently, I had the same luck when presenting a technology project to a local technical high school. It incorporated the same African American motivational models as incorporated in the first-and as advanced by Mr. Crosthwait. However, a former student of mine presented the concept to the major technical training center in his home city in the south. It was snapped up like hotcakes, and once again I have generated a six-figure grant which "Portland could have used in these lean times" (and that is 'before' the matching contribution from industry). At present I am completing the design of a second such "motivational-technology project" based upon a modern city's infrastructure. My data base is derived from a Portland City Bureau on whose advisory board I serve.

Will the Portland School system 'buy' it. I doubt it, but my Beaverton "Industry Partner" is putting up two other southern school officials at the company guest house later this month. All these people plan to 'import' is coffee! My history and my fore fathers (mothers) guide me. What about you?

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