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"The Eyes and Ears of The Community"

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Dance Theatre of Harlem Comes to Portland in 1992

Courtesy of the New York Times

On My Mind

A. M. ROSENTHAL

Support A Toe Shoe

Who was that standing and cheering, so full of pleasure and happiness? Why, it was all of us, everybody in the huge ballroom, hundreds of us. And what were we cheering and hugging ourselves about?

The children, of course, and the young adult artists, but also something we had forgotten how to cheer and cherish — all the talent and creativity, bounce, zest and desire of New York, the great city of New York. You heard me: the great city of New York.

It happened at a benefit. Can you believe that? Now everybody knows that benefits are necessary. Where else is the money going to come from for this philanthropy or that cause? Particularly now, when the government — every one of them, city, state, Federal — is cutting back to the bone and philanthropies, like hospitals or schools for talented children, or causes, such things as human rights or trees, will have to go, just too bad, if you don't kick in yourself.

Yes, but benefits have to be wearisome. Everybody knows that too. It is some kind of a law, and it is very useful. It prevents people at the benefit from getting above themselves just because they can afford a ticket or a table. Boredom is the great leveler, uniting everybody in the room — donors, beneficiaries and waiters.

This benefit was on 34th street,

which is nowhere — south of usual benefit country, but not south enough for SoHo chic. It was in the Manhattan Center Ballroom, long closed but now prettied up, fit for the honor of receiving and displaying the beauty and genius of the Dance Theater of Harlem, for which the benefit was organized.

The DTH is a dance troupe, a dance school, and it is an inspiration. Under Arthur Mitchell and his staff, it inspires children to value themselves enough to absorb the relentless disciplines of art. Then it teaches them to dance in such a way as to enrich their lives, and the souls of those who watch them.

Unhappily, New Yorkers do not get to watch them enough. Things are getting tighter for this glory of New York, as it is for the other glories of New York — the other talent-schools, performing troupes, museums, libraries, concert halls without which this would not be a place worth visit-

city to commit cultural suicide. But then they are not economists or government officials.

Some of the girls and boys who once danced at DTH have become ballet stars or managers. Others have become executives or doctors. Some of them testified on video that the discipline and self-mastery they learned at DTH stayed with them always and were part of their success in life.

That is obviously true. But the point is not that DTH turns all its youngsters into impresarios, CEO's or brain surgeons. It teaches children growing up in mean streets to find value in themselves, which of course is essential to being of any value to anybody else. Also, it teaches them to dance like crazy.

I do not know the terminology ballet critics would use to describe what we saw but to me the whole performance was a dance of growth. Through the choreography, very small children grew into somewhat larger children, who became young adult dancers, who became principal dancers and Broadway stars, and then they were dancing together, all separate and all part of each other, in elegant ballet or shaking the place with stomp, as life and art moved them. In the darkened ballroom, it was a sunburst, an hour or so of sunburst that was pure, total New York.

Please, don't write to me telling me I am too old, too well paid, to be sentimental or too whatever to admit how horrible, poor and stenchy New York has become. I know, I know. But, listen, I also know a sunburst when I see one.

So call or write the Dance Theater of Harlem, 466 West 152d Street, New York, N.Y. 10031, or phone 212-967-3470. With very little money, you can support a toe shoe or give a whole year of them to a dancing child. □

Cheer
and
sunburst
in the
great city.

ing, and certainly not a place worth actually inhabiting.

Naturally, these are the first to go in times of budget-cutting. The city stands to lose scores of millions in ticket and tourist money, but that's how it goes.

Fortunately, New Yorkers like Gayfryd Steinberg and Elizabeth Ross Johnson Kennan, co-chairmen of the DTH evening, find it difficult to see the cost benefit of allowing the



Sanda Wadsworth, Urban Entertainment Coalition, and Donna Walker-Collins, Associate Director of Marketing for the Dance Theatre of Harlem have teamed up to promote the Dance Theatre of Harlem visit to the Northwest next year.

Testing for Aids

Twenty-three-year-old Kimberly Bergalis is dying. She'll be the first American to die of AIDS after being infected by her dentist. Four other people contracted AIDS from the same Florida dentist, David Acer, who died last year. Meanwhile, dozens of medical workers have been infected by their patients in the past decade. These incidents have ignited a raging debate over HIV testing: Should patients have the right to know if their doctor or dentist is HIV positive? Do health-care workers have the right to know the same about their patients?

In July, the Centers for Disease Control recommended that health-care workers who test positive for the AIDS virus tell their patients. This summer, the U.S. Senate voted to send HIV positive health care workers to jail if they know they have AIDS but continue to treat patients without telling them. This measure isn't law yet, but critics fear that mandatory testing is on its way, invading privacy and sending the untruthful message that HIV-infected people are highly contagious. Critics of testing believe the best way to protect public health is by focusing on better infection control procedures.

How great is the risk of doctor-patient AIDS transmission? How can the public be protected from irresponsible health-care workers? Should all hospital patients be routinely screened? Are there alternatives to mandatory AIDS testing? What do YOU think? Join Jack Faust for this discussion on Sunday, September 22, 1991 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. For seat reservations, call Frank Mungeam, Alison Highberger of Liza McQuade at 231-4620. Guests should plan to arrive at the KATU studios (21st & N.E. Sandy Blvd.) between 5-5:15 p.m. The public is welcome, but reservations are required.

PDC and Housing Authority of Portland to Undertake Second Joint Project; Will Rehabilitate Cambridge Court Apartments

The Portland Development Commission (PDC), pending final approval by Commissioners at their monthly meeting September 11th, will make a \$391,000 Investor Rehabilitation Loan (IRL) to the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) to renovate the Cambridge Court Apartments at 5224 N. Vancouver Avenue.

It is the second joint project PDC will have undertaken with HAP. The first was Rosenbaum Plaza, which was completed in 1978.

The Cambridge Court Apartment building is a 20 unit complex of two bedroom apartments. Upon completion, 14 unoccupied units will be rented to clients of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Homeless Families Program. This program includes Section 8 rent subsidies as well as funding to provide special services such as counseling and child care on site for residents. HAP will manage the property, located in the Humboldt neighborhood in N.E. Portland.

Project financing will include Private Lender Participation Agreement (PLPA) funds from Security Pacific Bank. HAP will invest energy rebates and private resource funds to meet the difference in project financing. Total renovation costs will be \$451,737.

Renovations will include complete electrical upgrades, total renovation of the kitchens and bathrooms and conversion of the basement to meeting rooms and program offices. Indoor and outdoor play areas for children will also be constructed. The architect on

the project will be William Wilson, AIA, and the contractor will be Walsh Construction.

Under a separate request, the Commission is also expected to approve a \$184,500 IRL for acquisition and rehabilitation of an 11-unit apartment complex at 2530 N.E. Killingsworth.

The building features one-bedroom apartments and one- and two-bedroom townhouses. Project financing for this project will include PLPA funds from Security Pacific Bank and personal investment by the building owner, Douglas McCabe.

McCabe will manage the property as well as perform the needed renovations on the project. The apartments, located in the Concordia neighborhood, will provide additional low- and moderate-income housing in Northeast Portland.

PDC's loans for both the Cambridge Court and McCabe projects will include funding from the City's Bureau of Community Development.

PDC's Investor Rehabilitation Loan program provides technical and financial assistance for rehabilitation of residential rental property where the property needs repairs in order to comply with local codes. Residential properties are to be offered at affordable rents and occupied primarily by low- to moderate-income families.

The Portland Development Commission is the City's urban renewal, housing and economic development agency.

Parents Face School Daze, Part II

by Prof. McKinley Burt

If last week's article emphasized the observation that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" (or education), then today's message is "parent initiative". Or in terms of that old street directive, "You've got to bring some to get some."

This means taking advantage of any and every opportunity to enhance and support your child's learning structure. Considering the cutbacks in services I cited, it is more imperative than ever that the parent participate in those formal groups already organized to bring parent, teacher and pupil into a productive interface—not only the PTA, but those less structured vehicles for their interaction initiated by the administration at many schools. You need to be seen, heard and involved (you have got to 'show up').

But beyond this, the parents need to bring to the process their own insights and innovations if they are to shore up a faltering structure. Certainly, the daily paper and television are reflecting a nationwide apprehension in respect to our schools. The point is that both media are going beyond hand-wringing and are citing examples contrary to the trend—from Schools of Excellence to the techniques of gifted teachers who are delivering quality education against all odds. So these are times when the parent needs to be on top of things, reading and assessing this priceless information, looking for an element(s) that could make the difference right in the local school.

For instance, how many saw that "Learning In America" documentary last week on Public Television, Channel 10. There was a wealth of the type of educational resource I just cited. It was an eye-opening exposition of the people, 'attitudes' and techniques that are making a big difference in some parts of the country—like moving from

a 25th to 97th percentile in math or reading. If you missed this program, get out your VCR; it is running again at 10 a.m. on Sunday, September 15 on Channel 10. Don't miss it I am quite sure you will perceive the possibilities for local applications.

A parent called me Friday because she "sensed a definite concern" in my comment on the dearth of African American Science and mathematics teachers—or their full utilization. Pointing out a "horrible" lack of science and environmental orientation and commitment at her daughter's elementary school, she and other minority parents HAVE ORGANIZED THEMSELVES to take on a lackadaisical administration this Fall. They have asked me to pass on several goodies to your other parents. (They put in a lot of hours at the public library downtown this summer, surveying the literature and publications of Corporate America and the Education Associations and Government Agencies—The group found \$15,000 worth the resources in two months, Free!).

Try these. Bird Box, Phillips Petroleum Company, 16C4 Phillips Building, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74004. This program provides bird nests of 'recycled' paper for the little kids to take home as part an Environmental Education Program. "Because as life unfolds inside these cardboard walls, so too does an understanding and respect for the wonder of it all." And of course there is IBM, MacDonalds, Apple, The Blazers, General Electric and so on. In other words there are those parents who are going to "enhance and support" their child's learning—and there are those who are going to wait in vain for the uncaring and the downright inept in the administration to do it for them. Won't happen!

I hope that you are taking notice

that where I usually begin a series from a "gloom and doom" position as I did last week in this case—a breakdown in that critical, hard won structure created for the enhancement of minority education—just consider that I have to get your attention, and that I usually come forward with solutions and remedies that can turn the tide. WE CAN EMPOWER OURSELVES! In this context we want to be on top of things in respect to some very excellent programs where there should be no thought of cuts or attrition; TAG, MESA and similars.

Also, there is a super excellent program run by the Urban League of Portland, Russell St. and N.E. Wil-liams: Whitney M. Young, Jr. Educational and Cultural Center. The level of tutoring and other afterschool support for our youngsters is the best in the city (3 to 8 pm Monday through Thursday; call Gloria Phillips, Program Assistant @ 280-2600). I love the depth of their library (understandable) and wish to emphasize that this program deserves all the support we can provide. There are other good programs I have not mentioned here and parents need to get over to their schools, work on committees and even visit that 'great orange administration building' to avail themselves first hand of the data and specific informational services.

Yes, it is true that 520,000 children enrolled this fall in Oregon's financially strapped education system—and that we don't know how this academic vs vocational tracking ploy is going to play out for minority kids, and we are cognizant that further cuts are coming—but, nevertheless we are going to have to take the offensive as indicated. When we think of our commitment think of the Latin name for the Redwood Tree, Sequoia Sempervirens, "Everlasting, Everliving!"