

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor:
My name is Lavont E. Baker. I am a Black inmate at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution and I have been subjected to intense racial discrimination. Please, I'll explain.
On March 25th, 1991 at 3:00 p.m. as I took a shower in my housing unit, Correctional Officer; Dwight Mitchell, looked at me for several minutes while I bathed and then so boldly took out a pencil and pad and drew a picture of a "monkey" taking a shower, with my name, "Baker," written at the bottom of the drawing. This officer then showed the picture around to other inmates including myself before he threw it in the trash can, from where I later retrieved it and made copies.
This matter has been investigated by the Inspector General office and the State Police and my allegation was substantiated and turned over to the Institutional Branch of action. Claims Investigator for the State, Michael Baker, has informed me that the State does not provide coverage for what an officer does outside the scope of his duties.
My Brother/Sister, does this mean

that a State employee can intentionally inflict emotional distress upon me and practice racial discrimination while sworn in under the "Color of State Law." I have been humiliated, degraded, and outright punished because of the color of my skin, by the Color of State Law and its representatives. That is also cruel and unusual punishment. The State has basically told me that my pain and sufferings aren't worthy of its compensation.
I have constantly tried to contact several attorneys, but my communication has been limited and my efforts have been fruitless. Please, if there is anything you can do to give me some outside support or advice on how I can seek help, I would be most appreciative. I don't want to let this insane matter go unchallenged and because the State refuses to acknowledge my situation I feel the public should know how Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution and Corrections Director, Fred Pearce are letting this sort of discrimination be overlooked as unimportant.
Please respond.
Truly,
Lavont Baker

U of O Brings Roy Jay Back By Popular Demand

Portland business entrepreneur, Roy Jay has been asked to return to the campus of University of Oregon on October 4 to be the keynote speaker at the college last February, attracted the largest crowd of staff and students of any of previous business speakers, according to Alice Carnes, program administrator.

"This is the first time in the history of our program that students and staff asked to have a speaker return again," said Carnes. The college has already planned to move the presentation to a larger facility for Jay's upcoming presentation.

The African-American business owner who was raised in Portland's Columbia Villa Housing project has also been asked by the Dean of the Business College to serve on one of the colleges business advisory boards.

Jay, at 44, is involved in several business operations in Portland and is involved in various community and business organizations throughout the state.

For further information, contact Trade-Mark Corporation, 244-2689, Ext. 42, or Alice Carnes, University of Oregon/Lindquist College of Business, Eugene.

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

Nintendo To The Rescue

We should not be surprised at all if the Control Data Corporation should win the next "Malcolm Forbes Award" for excellence in the American business community. And just what has this major player in the world's computer industry contributed to a lagging industrial sector that it should deserve the highest of honors for Technology and innovation?

If you were watching the Town Hall program on KATU Sunday evening, you would know that this firm has made a technical contribution that cannot help but affect the education of our children on a nationwide basis. The electronic wizards on their staff have modified the Nintendo games such that you (or your child) MAY PLAY LOTTO FROM YOUR LIVING ROOM COUCH. The possibility that students would become involved in this gambling was heatedly denied by the head of the Oregon State Lottery. He made a very strange (naive?) statement; "Kids will not be able to play because parents will be given a code and besides, they HAVE CONTROL OVER THE TELEVISIONS IN THE HOME."

Now, is this man a fool or a charlatan - or both? The world knows that kids from nine years of age up are breaking into the computer files of industry and the data banks of the military and the space programs. So, why would codes devised by persons of the just demonstrated smarts of the Lottery Commission be impregnable to precocious children? Other participants stared at our lottery guru in incredulity as he glibly spun off the answer above and a

number of other patronizing statements. Note that the School District has just issued a new advice on homework.

African American state senator Jim Hill won the respect and support of a large number of the participants when he roundly condemned this caper. He was joined in this position by a number of concerned citizens like the honorable Rodney Page; they pointed out that aside from the expected diversion from prime study and homework time, this was a dangerous escalation of the gambling syndrome to the level of INTERACTIVE CASINO WAGERING IN THE ONCE SACROSANCT HOMES OF OREGON CITIZENS. (Casino gambling is specifically forbidden under the Oregon Constitution --but the Lottery Commission is on a roll -- out of control). How many budgets and families will suffer?

I hope that many of you readers will write Senator Hill in support of his interest and dedication in issues vital to us all; Jim Hill, 4584 12th Place S., Salem, OR 97302, (1-378-8071). This was not my original agenda for this week, but I believe that critical issues like this should always have priority. As often said in these columns, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty -- and a decent education for your child." By the way, you cannot reach those bureaucrats at the Lottery Commission by asking *Information* in Salem, but their number is 1-373-0267 (State phone directory). The 1991-92 "Oregon Blue Book" provides the following entré into the mystical domains; James J. Davey, Lottery Director, 2767 22nd

St., S. E. Salem 97310, 1-373-0202. Good luck!

Do not underestimate the necessity for citizens of this state to monitor and interact with their state commissions and other institutions. What often goes on in Oregon is often a microcosm of Washington, D.C. -- and you know how that is. In closing I will cite an example, events of a decade ago which could not help but arouse suspicions of circumstances beyond just an inept bureaucracy. This was in earlier days of the "Oregon Economic Development Corporation." "I had been distressed by complaints of minorities that were not getting their (or any) share of the pie.

It required several all day rounds of being passed from phone to phone and desk to desk and bureaucrat to bureaucrat before getting even a half-way intelligent or coherent answer to the query, "How does one go about getting an application form for requesting a share of the highly touted largesse? What, you don't have one?--well how about a brochure or pamphlet describing your program?" Well, there was none of the above to be had by a small fry Oregon taxpayer, but two weeks later I did get an official looking piece of mail from them. Inside was a single, sloppy PHOTOSTAT OF A PAGE FROM THE OREGON BLUE BOOK. I got their name, address, and phone numbers which I already had (Any better now?)

So heavy on the vigilance folks, and it's back to the more familiar aspect of the educational ranch in the coming weeks.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Celebrating Contributions of African American

From The Aquarian Bookstore on Western Avenue in Los Angeles to the Liberation Bookstore on Malcolm X Boulevard in Harlem, millions of persons have benefited from the unique and important contributions of African American bookstores established across the nation. In particular, the African American community has been well served by the presence of community-based bookstores that have made available books and printed material on the African and African American experience. Very often the books that these bookstores offer can not be found anywhere else because of the existence of racial discrimination in both the publishing and book distribution industries.

This is a "good news" story. On Saturday, October 5, 1991, African American authors, storytellers, and leaders from throughout the country will gather at The Aquarian Bookstore located at 3995 So. Western Avenue in Los Angeles, California. The occasion is the 50th Anniversary Celebration of The Aquarian Bookstore, the nation's oldest continuously running African American bookstore.

Under the theme, "50 years: A Legacy of Knowledge," a National

Aquarian Bookstore Jubilee Coordinating Committee has been organized. We join with the National Coordinating Committee in paying tribute to the historic efforts of Dr. Alfred M. and Mrs. Bernice Ligon, the proprietors of The Aquarian Bookstore, for their outstanding vigilance and commitment to the African American community.

Since 1941, Alfred and Bernice Ligon have worked together and struggled to keep the doors of the bookstore open. They have witnessed first hand the constructive role of African American literature in the various "movements" for freedom, liberation and justice during the last five decades. They are also aware of the need to keep the African American literary tradition alive for future generations.

At a time when there is a need to strengthen institutions serving the interest of the African American and other racial and ethnic communities, it is important to draw lessons from the successful experience of Alfred and Bernice Ligon and The Aquarian Bookstore. For example, back in 1941, the Ligon's not only had "a dream," but also they understood the necessity to work consistently to make their dream a reality, despite the hardships and dif-

ficulties thrown by society in their path.

Dr. Haki Madhubuti, President of the African American Publishers and Booksellers Association and owner of the Chicago-based Third World Press confirms that there has been a steady increase in the number of African American bookstores during the last 30 years.

Some of us still remember the profound positive impact of The Drum and Spear Bookstore on the African American community in Washington, D.C. 20 years ago. Today, Hodari Ali's Pyramid Bookstores provide the nation's capital city with writings of the struggle of African Americans.

Thus, the contributions of Alfred and Bernice Ligon go far beyond the city of Los Angeles. The youth of our communities especially need to receive the wealth of knowledge that can be found in these bookstores. When this year's holiday season begins, let us give more gifts of books and knowledge rather than fall into the traps of mass consumerism.

Thank you Alfred and Bernice Ligon for the 50 years of service at The Aquarian Bookstore. Thank you for "Keeping the faith."

Portland Observer encourages our readers to write letters to the editor in response to any articles we publish.

The 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

The PORTLAND OBSERVER is published weekly by Exie Publishing Company, Inc. 4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Portland, Oregon 97211 503-288-0033 • Fax 288-0015



Deadline for all submitted materials:
Articles: Monday, 5:00 pm--Ads: Tuesday, noon

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 the 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. © 1991 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

Subscriptions: \$25.00 per year.

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.

SUBSCRIBE

The Portland Observer

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER CAN BE SENT DIRECTLY TO YOUR HOME ONLY \$25.00 PER YEAR.

PLEASE FILL OUT, ENCLOSE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER, AND MAIL TO:

SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
PO Box 3137
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

Name _____
Address _____
City, State _____
zip-code _____

THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Observer Salutes

Black Electricians

UNION LOCAL 48



United Airlines

The Portland Observer

Are • The • Proud • Sponsors • Of

Reinvestments in the Community

What Is a "Good Faith Effort"?

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 (seldom 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 commentator 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.

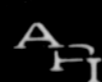
"The Congressional Black Caucus weekend is the most glaring evidence of a two-decade-old saga of ineptness, mismanagement, lack of accountability and vision of our so-called... "After 20 years of CBC weekends, the most obvious evidence of Black leadership having been on Capitol Hill are thousands of 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 formation 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 race3 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!



"Reinvestments in the Community" is a weekly column appearing in API publications through out the USA