

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

Nostalgia: One More Once!

I didn't realize how many younger readers were interested enough in the "old days" to call and ask about particular aspects of that experience (some older folks, too). Several kids said it is unfair to indict them for today's failures since it is obvious that they are not getting either the education or guidance that was available SIXTY YEARS AGO (Actually even before then).

Since this is the holiday season, let's comment on how they used to be. In one sense things were much as they are now, except that in the neighborhoods kids organized a lot of the Christmas caroling on their own--we would go from area to area singing our lungs out, not always on key. One thing was markedly different; if anyone had heard of a constitutional prohibition against celebrations of Christmas or Easter on school grounds it was pointedly ignored (separation of church and State. It was the same in the Jewish neighborhoods).

Pupils, teachers, staff and parents spent weeks preparing for these festive events. All sorts of decorations and religious icons were to be found in classrooms, hallways and outside on the grounds (and old pagan Santa Claus did his thing). Competing schools outdid themselves in vying for awards for the best exhibits or performance of religious plays. On Christmas Day we kids would carry gifts out to both the "Colored Orphan's Home" and the "Colored Old Folk's Home." Both these institutions were supported partially by the state and partially by the black community: Masons, Elks, Fraternities, Sororities and other social or business organizations.

Back to my grandfather whom I can see (and respect) as clearly today as yesterday. He was a railway mail clerk on the "Wabash Line," a job that has

disappeared into the technology of jet cargo planes. From the turn of the century to shortly after World War II, all fast passenger trains included a MAIL CAR. On board these specially designed coaches were performed the very same activities you see performed in the post office today. They ran between the big urban cities. These clerks stood before long rows of sorting bins, classifying letters according to the cities that would be passed. Bags of mail put on board at the city of origin would be sorted on route into other bags for those new cities--thrown off the speeding train which never stopped, while at the same time a hook mechanism grabbed new bags of unsorted mail; at sixty miles an hour.

My grandfather was gone three days and at home the next three. I can't remember his exact route but I know it stretched from St. Louis to New Orleans, with Chattanooga and Memphis in between. What a joyous time it was whenever he returned from a run, like 100 holidays a year. I would rush up to his room, knowing that he had a present for me and a fascinating story. This room itself was a fascinating place, filled with books and sheet music, and with his mandolin and rifle from the Spanish American War on the wall. There was the traditional roll top desk and there was what had to be the first "Lazy-Boy" reclining chair, a device which could enchant any small boy, all shiny black leather. Press a button and you went into ecstasy.

This is where I would go for my tutoring and reviews of my schoolwork. It is amazing how focused and clear a rebellious and mischievous mind can become under the direction of a hickory stick. He was a combination of kindness and discipline that prepared me to survive in a treacherous world. There is no one who has more respect than I for the

many women who successfully raise children while alone, underpaid and undervalued. This, of course, became my mother's role in time, but that essential early foundation had been laid.

A humorous note; I once overheard grandpa and his cronies talking about sex. It seemed that when they were young men they would gather at the streetcar stop to watch the women board the high platforms. Though their skirts reached to the top of their button-up high shoes, nevertheless, the ladies had to hike up those skirts to a considerable height--exposing a great deal of calf. Since they claimed this would "make their day," I am led to wonder what would happen if they were around today's miniskirts? Cardiac arrest?

One thing has not changed. There were dirty old men and flirty old men hanging around the elementary school grounds; the first group to sell us kids sexually explicit "comic books," and the second attempting to entice little boys and girls into their cars. When caught they could be assured of several severe, sometimes fatal beatings; first by the school janitor, then by the police and finally by other prisoners wherever they were incarcerated. And in those days automobile doors opened toward the front, making the day for bug-eyed males who watched for ladies making reckless exits in a flurry of skirts, thighs and undies.

Well, so much for human nature. There was much else, but I would have to write a book--and probably will. There were the little crystal radios we built in cigar boxes (the first transistors), and there were our first store-bought portables; weighed 20 pounds and had 6 foot aerials. And a Kellogg's box top and one dollar would bring a baby alligator THROUGH THE MAIL. Nostalgia!

Christmas Tree Recycling to Benefit House of Umoja

Here's a chance to recycle your Christmas tree while helping to support special community efforts. On two Saturdays, January 4th and 11th, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, trees will be accepted at St. Andrews Church, 806 NE Alberta. There will be a drop-off charge for handling and processing your tree of \$2 at the site. If you live within a designated area, home pickups can be pre-arranged by calling 288-8612. A \$4 pick-up fee will be charged. In Northeast Portland, the collection area boundaries are Portland Blvd. to the North, the Banfield to the south, the river to the west, and 57th street to the east. All decorations must be removed. Flocked trees are not accepted.

This fundraiser is sponsored by the Columbia-Willamette Greens, House of Umoja and St. Andrews Church.

SPORTS

Blazers Looking Forward To 1992

by Bill Barber

In a post-game interview, Terry Porter made two things known. He is going to become a new father, and even at 19-10, the Portland Trail Blazers haven't even hit their stride yet.

The Blazers have been winners of the last four straight games. The team had an unaccustomed Christmas vacation. You know what some people say about vacations: "It's nice to have the time off to relax and to have the chance to reflect but you're usually worked extra hard when you go back to the job." When the Blazers came back to work, they did the job, winning four games in three nights. In last Sunday's 129-96 win over the Miami Heat, the Blazers extended their winning streak against the four recent expansion teams to 19. They also own a 34-1 mark against that group and that is the best in the NBA. That victory also moved the Blazers to within a half game of the Pacific Division leader Golden State and gave them the fifth best record in the league.

There has been a lot of concern among Portland fans about the inconsistency of the shooting percentage. Sometimes the players must feel like someone has strung chicken wire over the hoop. The home team finished the year off right, hitting 56.8 from the field. Making 50 of 88 was a season high record that they hope to take into 1992 in a big way. The bench strength

has been another concern. Lately they are really making things happen. For instance, in Sunday's game, they outscored the Heat's reserves by a 59-35 margin. During the first half they went on a tear, humiliating their counterparts with a 21-0 run. Most of the team will admit that even if the high shooting percentage hasn't always been there, they have been over-achievers in other areas of their game.

They have been playing some excellent defense. After Saturday's win over the Lakers, Cliff Robinson hit the nail on the head when he described the Blazer's tough defensive strategy. "We did a very good job of rotating to the shooter and double-teaming the ball." It must be working. Portland has held Seattle, Dallas, and the LA Lakers to fewer than 90 points in the last three contests, before allowing Miami a generous 96 points. It is the first time in franchise history that the Blazers have limited more than two consecutive opponents to fewer than 90 points. The Blazers are 10-0 when they have held their opponent to fewer than 100 points. Adding that to last year's mark of 23-2 and the previous season's record of 24-0, Portland has won 57 of its last 59 games when the opposition has failed to reach the century mark. That is an amazing .966 winning percentage. Every fan who follows the NBA loves to watch those

high scoring games, but here in the Rose City the fans are yelling for DEFENSE.

Rebounding has been another area of vast improvement. It is a welcome fact that the Trail Blazers are on the top of the NBA list in the rebounding percentage rankings. Miami's Rony Seikaly one of the best rebounders in the NBA at 12.2 per game, gladly left town with only seven Rebs. The recent rebounding dominance started in Portland's 98-87 victory over Seattle on Dec. 22, although the Blazers have out rebounded their opponent in seven of the last eight contests. The Blazers exploded in the second half against the Sonics; outrebounding the NBA's best rebounding team 25-12 down the stretch. Portland sports a league-leading .528 rebounding percentage and trails only New York (.712) in defensive retrieve percentage with a .698 worksheet. In the last nine games, the Blazers have outrebounded the opposition by a 331-227 margin.

The Blazers have had a short break since Dec. 29th, when they completed their 15th consecutive month with a winning mark (9-4). They suit up Thursday at Utah. The Blazers' next appearance at the Coliseum comes next week against the Philadelphia on Jan 6th. Orlando will be in town for the Jan. 6th game.

Portland and the Blazers are looking forward to a happy New Year.

Reebok Human Rights Award Shines Light On Haitian Refugees In South Florida And Children Of War In Mozambique

Sauveur Pierre, 31, a former Haitian boat person, working on behalf of migrant farmworkers in South Florida and Abubacar Sultan, 28, the national director of Save the Children Federation, an organization that helps former children soldiers of Mozambique deal with the trauma of civil war, were among the four young activist who recently received the 1991 Reebok Human Rights Award.

In a highly emotional ceremony, attended by former President Jimmy Carter, internationally acclaimed human rights activists and celebrities such as actors: Alfre Woodard, Holly Robinson, Esai Morales, C.C.H. Pounder, Paul Winfield, and Sinbad, the recipients were honored for their efforts to advance the cause of human rights worldwide.

"We are celebrating today the power of the human spirit, said Paul Fireman, chairman of the advisory board and chairman of Reebok International, in addressing the audience. And added: "Each of our winners this year represent the grim reality of the victims of recent political upheavals. The Reebok Human Rights Award is sending a message to governments around the world that human rights abuse will not be tolerated and will be exposed."

"No one could participate in a ceremony like this without a sober reassessment of our own personal obligation to address human rights and the suffering associated with it," said President Carter in a powerful keynote address. He added, "It is not enough just to come to a ceremony like this once a year and bask in our own freedom, our own security, our own influence and

then ignore human rights the rest of the year. It's the powerful and secure like us on whom rest the fate of those who are weak and vulnerable."

Sauveur Pierre has experienced first hand the brutal exploitation in the sugar cane fields of South Florida. In 1980, he came to the U.S. with thousands of other Haitian refugees who made the perilous voyage to escape the Duvalier regime. Paid far less than the minimum wage by employers who knew the language barrier and fear of deportation would prevent opposition, Pierre vowed to pursue justice for himself and his fellow workers. After teaching himself English, Pierre was hired by the Farmworkers Justice Fund of Washington, D.C. as a paralegal/investigator to assist in that organization's lawsuits against Florida sugar cane growers. In this position he was able to secure information that helped the courts expose violations. Presently, Mr. Pierre identifies important legal problems facing clients and assists in devising appropriate legal strategies for the Florida Rural Legal Services.

In accepting his award, the soft spoken yet determined Pierre said, "the sugar cane (field) owners know what's going on but they close their eyes...Well, I will not close my eyes. I will never forget."

Abubacar Sultan has created a special program that helps former soldiers, ages 6-13 years old who were forced into war due to civil war in Mozambique. Many of the 200,000 orphans were forced to watch as their parents were slaughtered by guerrillas and then forced into military service. By creating a sense of community,

Sultan's program helps these children to express their feelings and talk about their families.

"On behalf of the children, I appeal to the United States to help stop the war in Mozambique," said Sultan in one of the ceremony's more poignant moments. He beseeched world powers to: "help us build a better world for our children."

Each recipient will receive \$25,000, which will go directly to the human rights organization of their choice. Pierre and Sultan shared awards with: Carlos Toledo, 24, a Guatemalan street educator with Casa Alianza (Covenant House), who has protected more than 5,000 street children against police brutality and serves as an advocate for the rights of homeless children, and Mirtala Lopez, 22, who has been arrested, tortured and imprisoned for championing the rights of the displaced people of El Salvador. Two special awards were also presented at the ceremony. The parents of three Russian citizens who lost their lives defending the Russian Parliament on the night of August 20, 1991 received posthumous awards and Ashley Black, 11, received the "Youth In Action" award for spearheading the drive to ban hate video games in Marlboro, New Jersey.

The Reebok Human Rights Award is given annually to young people who, early in their lives and against great odds, have significantly raised awareness of human rights. Now in its fourth year, the award is one of only three established human rights awards in the world. It is the only one honoring young people and the only private sector initiative.

Pro Trainer Treats Football Injuries, Scores With Motivation

(NUI) - When the Minnesota Vikings thunder onto the football field, physical therapist Fred Zamberletti is there on the sidelines to help them do their best. The 59-year-old Zamberletti has been head trainer and physical therapist for the Vikings for three decades, longer than most coaches have been in the National Football League.

He estimated that he has seen more than 700 preseason, regular season and postseason games, including the four Super Bowls the Vikings lost.

"I'm not sure it's not a little bit of an addiction," Zamberletti said. "It's also a situation where you're with young people all the time and it seems that you don't age until you look into the mirror."

In addition to his work with the Vikings, Zamberletti is in private practice as a partner in CenterTherapy Inc., where he serves mainly as a consultant.

For information about physical therapists in private practice, contact the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association, 1101 17th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, or phone 1-202-457-1115.

Martin Luther King Jr. Award Luncheon

On January 9, Dr. Darryl S. Tukufu, President and CEO, Urban League of Portland will be one of many distinguished speakers honoring the extraordinary work and memory of Dr. King. The annual luncheon sponsored by the Portland Federal Executive Board will be held at the Oregon Convention Center, 777 NE MLK Jr. Boulevard from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 each or \$150 for a table of ten. Mail check or money order to: Portland Federal Executive Board, Rm 1776, Federal Building, 1220 SW Third Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 (Contact 326-3010 for ticket information no later than January 2, 1992).

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