

Give Some Support

Sexual Assault Support Services, a new Lane county non-profit agency, which provides crisis intervention, advocacy, and counseling for persons who have been sexually assaulted is seeking volunteers for the 24 hour crisis line. Those persons interested in volunteering are invited to attend a volunteer orientation Wednesday, January 15, from 7-8 PM at the S.A.S.S. office, 1659 Oak. The crisis intervention training runs, Friday evening, January 24, and Saturday and Sunday - January 25 and 26 from 9 am - 5 pm. For more information call Erin at 484-9791.

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Four Oregon Representatives To Hold Health Care Town Meetings Across State

The schedule of the January 14 meetings is as follows:
9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.: Health Care Town Meeting with Representatives DeFazio, with guests AuCoin, Kopetski and Wyden, at City Council Chambers, 777 Pearl, Eugene.

St. Mark C.M.E. Church
3995 W. 12th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon
Activities

- December:**
15th Christmas program
29th Missionary Service 3:30
31st Watchnight Service
- January:**
12th Stewards and Stewardesses Annual Day
19 through 24th Revival
- February:**
9th Sr. Choir Annual Day
- March:**
15th Oliver-Generations of Faith in Concert
29th Missionary Service 3:30
- April:**
12th Youth Choir Annual Day
26th Annual Chicken Dinner
- May:**
17th Confirmation Service
31st Missionary Annual Day
- June:**
14th Youth and Young Adult Sunday
- July:**
12th Church Anniversary of course all of these activities are in 1992

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perspectives
by Professor McKinley Burt

Nostalgia: Don't Leave Home Without It; Conclusion

As we wrap up this trek along memory lane, it occurs to me (and others) that to a kid, living conditions described by sociologists as traumatic are often only *adventurous* to youth. From the age of twelve, I remember a series of moves, each deeper into the ghetto (whenever the rent became too far past due). But each time there was a new set of interesting playmates and schoolmates--each with its own distinctive approach to life, games and innovative economics.

It may sound like a "Theatre of the Absurd" as we recount these depression years, but, then you're aware of *our capacity to live it to the max*. I was able to introduce my new and rougher playmates to some scenarios learned from that past (richer?) life; like going out to the huge "Forest Park" in the center of the city with its free "St. Louis Municipal Opera." For 12 weeks each summer, this outdoor amphitheater featured productions that ranged from colorful operettas like "The Student Prince and New Moon" to "Show Boat" and other Broadway musicals. If one arrived early before curtain time (sunset), enough golf balls could be retrieved in an adjoining area to pay for all the popcorn and soda pop.

In turn I was introduced to startling plays from the ghetto "Commedia del Arte." One evening as we sat on the project steps facing the second floor offices of a juke box distributor, we could hear the older boys trying to hammer open the safe. Failing in this, they pushed it out the window onto the concrete driveway below. Miraculously it came open, spilling out what seemed like a million dollars in coins. For the next half hour an entire neighborhood of kids and housewives armed themselves with pots and pans and began *cleaning up the mess*.

Another time a front wheel came off the bus on Olive Street and the axle dug up a half block of asphalt pavement--exposing a sub strata of creosote-soaked wooden paving blocks. The next morning the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* had a banner headline "CITY STREET STOLEN OVERNIGHT!" Again, the neighborhood had gone to work and every baby carriage and kids wagon had been pressed into service to gather up this *fuel from heaven* in the middle of a bitter winter.

In later years this area became the site for the "Wendell Pruitt Project," the first of a series of disastrous experiments in building huge *highrise* apartments for the poor (Wendell as a high school classmate of mine who became famous in World War II was a flying ace with the 99th squadron from Tuskegee). You've probably seen this project a number of times on television as the entire six block complex was demolished in 30 seconds with carefully placed

explosives.

The same Sumner High School, though a great *learning place*, was also the scene of many a ludicrous event. Like the time "McDunkin's" father died and somehow the 16-year-old student received the \$3000 cash from the insurance policy. Among other things he bought a new Ford and six suits which he kept in two adjacent lockers at school. He would change clothes before each class and before long "Pretty Mac" had everybody's *woman*. This is the same high school where, as I've mentioned before, the father of "Bobby McFerrin" sang in our choir. We knew he was Metropolitan Opera material even before a girl jumped out of the balcony when he sang "Goodnight My Love." Evelyn survived and went on to have six kids.

And at the same school in 1939, the Royal Canadian Air Force was soliciting those black youth (so good at math) for service overseas in the "Battle of Britain." You got a huge salary for the times, 90 days of training in Newfoundland and an *opportunity* to ferry your own plane over to England. You had to be 18 and my mother would not sign off for me, but Carl Cable, my best friend, went and when I met him again in Los Angeles 20 years later, he recounted his adventures. Sitting in the tavern he owned at West Adams and Normandie, he said he still remembers *coming to himself* at 6000 feet over France in his Spitfire and atop all that high octane gasoline: "Mama, what am I doing here? Pray for your child."

The kaleidoscope of memory has too many images to record here. Mother had a shirt-tail relative who lived across the river in East St. Louis in the 1920's, "Josephine Baker," who had gone to Paris and "made good." When the famous entertainer was here in Portland I went backstage to visit and she asked about "Gladys" and my Aunt Marjorie. I can remember the early cumbersome braces they had for children's teeth. They had two tiny screws that held them in and because the kids at school called me "brass mouth" I would take them off when I left home and put them in my pocket. Predictably, I lost a screw one day and it took me to 11 p.m. to find it--so I got it anyway. Man, that woman was angry.

From 1939 to 1943, I must have accumulated a bale of Postal Money Order receipts from money sent home while working on various railroad "Extra Gangs" building and repairing tracks across the country: "Decator, Illinois; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Denver, Colorado, Pocatello, Idaho, Riparia, Washington; Oakridge or Klamath Falls, Oregon; you name it, all interspersed with a myriad craft and labor jobs. A learning experience about people and folkways that cannot be duplicated.

Brian T. Work D.M.D.

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