

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

Storm Clouds Over Oregon State University Campus

We knew it was coming; a resurgence of that old "Newest Immigrant Prejudice" that has bedeviled this nation from colonial times.

We say it was expected because of the growing onslaught of right-wing tirades and polemics launched against anyone in sight (even each other) by the desperate politicians involved in current campaigns.

One February 3, The Daily Barometer, OSU's campus newspaper, featured a rather shocking article by editorial page editor, Ken Hile; "hundreds of illegal aliens from Mexico scurry across the border like ants...

AMERICANS who have been citizens in this land for generations will be fleeing to more prosperous nations to search for a competent government that allows for opportunity."

Like where? Japan, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan? I'm just being facetious of course; it is rather scary when we consider the level of thinking that would generate the title for the column: "Immigration Policy Will Kill Our Already Floundering Economy."

We deplore the fact that the young man is no better acquainted with numbers than economics, and we ask, "How could a top rated school of journalism produce a senior who apparently has not read any of the vast data bank on current immigration policy and legislation?"

The Oregonian for Monday, Febru-

ary 17, carried an interesting commentary on the scene, "Column brings racism issue at OSU to surface" (by George Rede, Staff).

I began visiting OSU at the request of demeaned black students as far back as 1971, the same year I began teaching at Portland State University.

One was told something by the boldness and the hostility of these "educators" in their confrontations with black students or parent. Their racist language left little to wonder about in terms of their attitudes or culture--not all of course, but few protested, very few.

BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT LINE

by James Posey



Construction Opportunities: Is It An Avenue To Realizing King's Dream

BY JAMES POSEY

This article is about economic conflict and how we must take the battle to our adversaries. Some may be offended by that characterization but in truth there can be no real peace and harmony until there is some degree of economic parity between the races.

In January like many communities across the nation we in Portland celebrated the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King and his dream of equality for all.

As a community we are reported to be addicted to everything from too much television to the chronic use of crack cocaine. But maybe the most harmful and devastating addiction is what appears to be an all consuming dependence on social service oriented programs and the corresponding blaming

of white folks for our foes. Evidence of this mind set shows up in our everyday discussions when we talk routinely about such subjects as the African American male becoming an endangered species.

beneficiaries of programs, we need to keep in mind that there is an inherent danger of becoming too dependent on them. These programs should be used only to give individuals who have been previously denied opportunities a springboard to self-sustaining enterprises.

- Construction impacted programs (not an all inclusive list)
ODOT Oregon Department of Transportation Supportive Services
City of Portland First Source Hiring Program
PIC Private Industry Council Employment Security Placement Services
Urban League Employment Placement Programs
Oregon Youth Outreach Northeast Skills and Work Force Center
Northeast Economic Development Corporation
Portland Development Commission
Portland Public School Home Repair Program
BFit at Portland Community College
OAME Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
More next week...

"Roots" - An Ode to Alex Haley

BY BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS JR.

African American History Month 1992 witnessed the passing of a great writer and historian. Alex Haley's contributions to African and American history were remarkable and the impact of his writings and research will have a long lasting imprint on the history of the United States.

Haley was born in Ithaca, New York, in 1921 and was reared in the southern town of Henning, Tennessee. As the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "Roots: The Sage Of An American Family," Alex Haley won the admiration of millions of persons throughout the world.

In fact, "Roots" was so successful that the book and television dramatization helped to inspire the establishment of thousands of community genealogical societies and family reunion clubs among African Americans.

European slave trade.

Although there were some who argued that "Roots" romanticized the awful pain and misery of slavery in the United States, we believe that Alex Haley should be given credit, praise and respect for getting as much of the salve reality as he did on prime time television for the entire nation to see.

Even before the publication of "Roots," Haley had made history with the publication of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," which also became a best seller.

Dr. Dorothy Height described Alex Haley as "a modern prophet." We agree. A prophet does more than foretell the future.

and watched "Roots," a better national consciousness emerged concerning the urgency of doing more in the present to challenge the lingering vestiges of slavery, segregation and all forms of racial injustice.

Just about a month before Haley's death, national cable television networks re-broadcast "Roots" to millions of other viewers.

As the nation observes the 500th anniversary of Columbus discovering "that he was lost," it would be a fitting ode to Alex Haley for a national inquiry into the truth of 500 years of exploitation of the peoples of Africa, North and South America, and of the Caribbean.

Alex Haley was 70 years old and died from a heart attack while preparing to lecture in Seattle, Washington. Haley enjoyed his work and took seriously his labor of historical research.

One Monument Lacking

BY LILLIAN SPEARS

Throughout the ages, slavery, in one form or another, has been a part of, or impacted on, or otherwise affected every culture in the history of civilization.

Always, from childhood, slavery has haunted me. I am a white woman who grew up in Alabama, and I have lived in other parts of the deep South, thus spending my childhood in the backwash of the Civil War.

As I grew older, I became absorbed in studying more about this whole puzzling relationship. Obviously, most of the available information centered around the particular form of slavery that developed in the United States; and I learned that it was a comparatively vicious form of the age-old institution.

increasingly exposed, I went into a slow burn, having caught a glimpse of the vineyard where the grapes of wrath are stored.

Then, something else happened. Maybe it was all too much for me. Maybe I just had to believe the Bard of Avon, who found that, "Sweet are the uses of adversity; Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in its head."

In the midst of all this mental and physical anguish and bludgeoning, the slaves created their own folklore and music, rising way up in the sky, with a song as big as the soul, leaving to us all the heritage of one of our purest American art forms: the African American spirituals.

We cannot bring these victims of our power and greed back and undo what was done to them; nor can we even pay them a minimum wage. There is, however, something we can, and should, do for them and their heirs, as well as for us: we can recognize and face up to what they did, and what we did.

Incidentally, so far as I know, there has never been a tangible lasting tribute, monument, or memorial created in rec-

ognition of the slaves' sacrifices, legacy and contribution to our culture. I believe that there should be such a monument, and I think it is long overdue.

Therefore, lest we forget, I propose that a Monument to the Unknown Slave be designed, created, and installed prominently in a public place, preferably on government grounds in the Nation's capital.

Finally, as I said, realization of this proposal has long been the greatest desire of my life. Along the way, over the years, several organizations, scholars, leaders, and celebrities have expressed approval and support of the concept and proposal.

I have scarcely been the same person since the spring of 1990, when I learned that this great effort was being organized; and I am really elated that the march toward full implementation continues today, extending to active promotion of appropriate measures in the National Congress to authorize and enable the project to go forward.

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