

Oregon Black Business Interest Continue To Be Ignored.

BY JAMES POSEY

Although the lights are dimly on, it is clear that as far as Black business interest is concerned, there is no one at home. West side Light Rail, Metro, Port and City of Portland, Oregon Department of Transportation and other governmental bodies continue to side step and pander the idea of significantly including African American business interest in mega multimillion dollar expansion plans. For example, study the chart on light rail project dollar amounts captioned. This is a scenario that has been played out again and again and again. And if history is a predictor of future actions, Black businesses will continue to be ignored and placed on the extinction list. Do I have inside information on a scam to derail Black businesses? No. I wish it was that simple, but the problem has several disturbing aspects.

First let's look at Light Rail--mega bucks, a billion plus. Unless something changes, Black businesses will have major problems getting significant work on the Light Rail projects and here's why. Tri-met has just hired Leona Garcia Seabold, who was the former director of the state Office of Minority, Women and Emerging Small Business. This woman, state representative Margaret Carter and a cadre of other interest including Associate General Contractors, drafted the enabling legislation. It was suppose to be an alternative to the Crosion supreme court decision that struck down minority contract set-asides. A side from out-right racism, this

legislation and the resulting Advocate's Office has done more to directly harm the interest of Black businesses, especially contracting businesses than any other force in the recent past. The legislation encouraged a concept called the "Emerging Small Business". In theory it was a way to side step the restrictions of the Crosion decision, but in practice it served to further destroy preference for racial minorities and open the path for White women and legitimize the participation of white males already getting 99 percent of the contracts. During this time Blacks lost ground and the capacity to be ready to take advantage of the many Light Rail opportunities. While one can not totally blame Ms. Seabold she does share responsibility. The sad irony is that this woman will play a significant role in facilitating the participation of minority groups on the Light Rail project.

Other evidence that no one is at home when it comes to African American business interest is the recent appointments to the State Department of Transportation and Public Utilities Commissions. These commissions are two of the most economically influential commissions in the state. I know that state senator Bill McCoy sits on the transportation legislative committee that confirms these appointments but I wonder if Margaret Carter and Jim Hill knew about these appointments. In conversation with the Governor's board appointment staff (Carol Morse) she out right exclaimed difficulty in finding qualified minority

candidates. At times like these you wonder where is the Commission on Black Affairs, the Oregon Assembly of Black Officials (Cal Henry's group), the Black Leadership Conference, the Urban League and all the rest of them? All of this is a back drop to recent commotion around corporate boards. Why should the private sector pay any attention to diversity when the public sector can't get their act together. With exception of Operations Push's former effort against Nike, and there is no moral authority coming from minorities to make the majority culture do otherwise.

May be it needs to be said when it comes to the interest of Black people you can't rely on the good intentions of White women or anybody else no matter how liberal or seemingly sensitive they appear. Governor Barbara Roberts has a responsibility to insure that state commissions and boards are reflective of the population both in quality and quantity. Blacks should insist that they be represented on commissions and boards other than the Parole Board and Commission on Drug Abuse. The idea is that perhaps if appointed Black commissioners had influence to ensure that economic resources were being shared with the Black Community, there would be far less Black people in jail and on drugs.

So, when it comes to Black Business interest in the state of Oregon we better turn the lights on brightly, and someone better stay at home, less the whole house burns down.

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

Education Update: Science And Math

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

Yes, that again! And here is a situation where we have no "choice". These two factors will be driving our system from now on--jobs, education, communications, the environment and most of our physical and social infrastructure. Which is not to say that our culture couldn't develop more affective canons.

"Distance learning" is one buzz word we failed to cite last week. That is because the term has some real time and easily definable applications--what educational component is more "distant" than Telear 401? In last week's hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on Science (Senator Inoyve, Hawaii is chairman), Jack Clifford, president of Colony communication Inc., gave a very able exposition of the growing role of telecommunications in education. It was a valuable and informative update on both technical systems and the classroom interface; one teacher, 5000 pupils.

Several years ago I wrote here of an imminent surge in these techniques as educational systems were growing expensive beyond belief. Among the most prominent of these satellite tutors are the Colony Company mentioned above, Mind Extension University (my favorite, I'm taking more math, Channel 31), Cable In The Classroom and The Learning channel. Several southern state educational systems are leading the field; Texas and especially South Carolina, with 22 channels split off Telear's Transponder. The economies of scale could be a boon to Oregon and California. I've been promising that review of the Popular Science Magazine Series, "Crisis In Education". You know, I've got to have a little more faith in myself--after a month of reviewing the material, I find that I've pretty well covered the subject for Portland Observer readers these past three years. In fact, to

convey the essence of the principal essay, "Why Johnny can't Do Science And Math" we need only to cite the author's lead-in. I've been filling in the omissions.

"Poverty, discrimination against minorities and female, one-parent homes, poorly equipped schools, and inadequately trained teachers all contribute to the U.S. education crisis;" By Arthur Fisher. There were a few positive notes in the tragic litany of failures. Walter E. Massey, director of the national Science Foundation (an African American), announced that, finally, the federal government had funded a program for system-wide reform of science and math education in grades K-12. This, three years "after" President Bush announced that he was the "Education President" at the "Education Summit" 1989.

100 million was allocated over a five year period for eleven states--far less than the vote getting b. on doggle promised for rebuilding the unneeded Homestead Air Base. The article cites several of the tragic setbacks to American science that have occurred under these past three republican administrations. Particularly, we all recall the tremendous surge of cooperation between American industry, scientists and classroom teachers following the Russian's launch of sputnik. Had this type of collaboration continued, the "year 2000" goals would already have been reached. Mr. Fisher puts it this way, speaking of that collaboration; "These are just the type of scientist-teacher partnerships that flourished in the form of National Science foundation summer institutes in the post-sputnik years, but were eliminated During The Reagan Administration... because they were deemed ineffective in improving student's test scores." Or perhaps a reserve was started for savings and loan bailouts. Those hundreds of billions could have placed

America first in the world yesterday!--in economics and education.

Nest week, we will return to a discussion of the probable, particularly that new and quite nebulous concept, "Oregon School Reform." The state's "School Improvement Act" which, like an elephant, appears to have been designed by a committee (or the state legislature). After throwing in a little sugar at the beginning of the plan (expand preschool to serve all disadvantaged 3 and 4-year-olds by 1993 eliminating primary grades in all schools". And we've not started good yet.

"Require high schools to certify students who demonstrate initial mastery of academic performance standards at about grade 10 by the end of the 1996-97 school year. These standards, to eventually rival the highest in the world, include the ability to read and write well, speak a second language and understand high levels of math and science". These are just for openers. Subsequent projections, predictably, envision a segregation into college bound and "career" bound. A device that understandably makes minorities and women nervous.

Well, we will get into the "New World Order" for Portland schools next week. In the meantime you parents (and students), who realize that the system is really serious about science and math, send for the following free catalog. For 30 years I have found this company to be the most comprehensive source of science education materials, kits and models for ages 6 through adulthood--for teacher, hobbyist and do-it-yourselfer. Electronics, physics, optics, astronomy, biology, chemistry, etc.

Edmund Scientific Company, 101 East Gloucester Pike, Barrington, N.J. 08007-1380 (609) 547-8880

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Well the times have sure changed some aspects of the presence of large numbers of skillful African American athletes at the Olympics. Most Americans were thrilled to see all of the U.S. athletes compete successfully in the historic international sports event in Barcelona, Spain.

Some of us have not completely forgotten the 1968 Olympics in Mexico. It was at the Mexico Olympics when two African American runners, John Carlos and Tommy Smith, won the gold and silver medals. At the awards ceremony Carlos and Smith shocked the world by raising their fists with black gloves in the air and rendering a Black power salute. Yet, what these brothers were protesting was the state of oppression in the African American community.

Of course, the Olympics is really not the place to engage in politics. But we believe it is the place to raise questions about the plight of the state of the communities from which these gifted athletes have emerged. Athletes and entertainers are not exempt from social responsibility. This should be the case not just for African American participants in the Olympics but for all of the athletes.

This year the sight of Gail Devers winning the 100-meter final along with the irrepresible Carl Lewis winning another gold medal made people have a

sense of pride in their dedication to reach for excellence in sports. We would like to be able to gauge the level of racial sensitivity especially during the Olympics as compared to the overall public view when the Olympics is not in session.

For decades African American athletes have performed beyond the call of duty in far and distant lands only to return to a society that refuses to affirm the equality of all humanity. Racism and racial discrimination is just as blatant in 1992 as it was in 1968. It is against this historical backdrop that people of color athletes, entertainers, and those in other high profile professions have to run, jump and out perform in order to be taken seriously as a vital component of this society.

It is important, however, to point out that sometimes one can carry athletic competition too far. For example, the U.S. Olympic basketball team was referred to as the "dream team." To have Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, and Charles Barkley and other great players on the same team was in fact a dream come true. Basketball has developed into a highly physical sport, and thus it was not too surprising to see how aggressive the U.S. "dream team" played against their opponents. As we reflect on the manner in which the "dream team" played against the bas-

ketball team from Angola, we see the necessity to give a critical comment.

In particular Brother Charles Barkley at times during the game with Angola appeared to be too aggressive and even assaultive. The "Brothers" from Angolan teams were trying to understand the motive of their "Brother" from American who severely elbowed and pushed them during the game between the U.S. and Angola.

Barkley was quoted as saying, "Next time, maybe I should pick on a fat guy. You never know though, those skinny guys could wind up being like Manute Bol---got a spear somewhere." Given the fact that the Bush Administration refuses to allow official recognition of Angola as a sovereign nation, it was a bit of an irony that in the 1992 Olympics the U.S. had to "officially" face Angola at least on the basketball court.

The inequities exposed at the Olympics are both economic and social. The disparities between the rich and poor countries are astounding. For those who live inside the United States, no one can afford to insult, assault, or mistreat others, in particular, in the aftermath of sports events between nations. Everyone should be thy brothers and thy sisters keeper.

Yes, Black men can jump, but make sure you know why you are jumping and what changes it will facilitate.

Bank Of America And Blazers Team Up To Net \$45,000 For United Negro College Fund

Some college students from and the United Negro College Fund have received a big assist from a team effort by Bank of America and the Portland Trail Blazers.

Sales of "The Playmakers," a series of five limited-edition collector prints of Trail Blazers players, have netted \$45,000 for the UNCF. The lithographs, featuring each of the Blazers starting five--Clyde Drexler, Terry Porter, Kevin Duckworth, Buck Williams and Jerome Kersey -- were offered this spring through Bank of America's 85 branches throughout Oregon.

"We're overjoyed with the success of this program," said Adrienne Caver, area development director for UNCF.

"The results are especially gratifying because \$20,000 of the total proceeds will go directly to scholarships for UNCF students from Oregon." \$25,000 will go toward UNCF programs nationally.

The UNCF raises funds to help its 41 member colleges and universities

provide high-quality, low-cost education to over 50,000 students who come from all 50 states. Currently, about 50 Oregonians attend UNCF schools. Most UNCF students have great hurdles to overcome and more than 90% require financial assistance. More than half come from families earning less than \$14,000 annually. Funds contributed to the UNCF help provide tuition assistance for students and for colleges' day-to-day operations, new textbooks and laboratory equipment.