

Around The Educational Scene I

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

Last week, at the end of my article on the Pro-Sports Machine and black high school students, I promised future comment on, "Oregon's Higher Ed System to correlate with high school curriculum". I was not able to get back as much comment from the education fraternity as wished -- but, perhaps, later. Anyway, there is this so far, simply as a matter of intent.

Norma Paulus, state superintendent of education acknowledges "these steps taken by higher education" apparently taken after much "goading". The reference is to the "admissions project" designed by the state board which has developed a list of what students must "know" in order to enter college. New requirements (1998) will not take into account "courses taken". That will be interesting.

Mr. David Reinhard, Associate Editor of the Oregonian, recently had some interesting comments on "Chapter I" the federal education program for "raising the academic skills of the

nations disadvantaged school children". While I am not at all supportive of his intimations that the program was an expensive and gigantic failure, he does have a point or two.

In no way can one take 1991 and 1992 test results (reading and math) and extrapolate such a supposed "evaluation" to a longitudinal critique of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program. As one interested enough to interact with schools, teachers, parents and pupils in inner cities during critical periods of chapter I programs, I can attest quite positively to many concrete educational gains. You need to have been present at both the 'before and after'. And to remember the 'ground zero' debacle.

The somewhat mixed decline in 1991 and 1992 test scores say much more about the fall out from worsening socio-economic conditions than about Chapter I failures. Certainly, during the 1970s and 1980s I was able to find some marked improvements in the educational delivery system for

predominately African American schools -- personal experience in New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Portland and several other cities.

Where as Mr Reinhard sees such things as "inadequately trained teacher's aides, low expectations and deficient materials" as the prime ingredients of a pedagogical disaster (alleged), those of us in the trenches recognized that many of the deficiencies were really marked improvements in most areas of a long neglected system ("ground zero").

Here, I can speak directly to a disturbing situation encountered during my administrative jobs in industry -- especially from 1955 to 1971. Many of us in the same or similar circumstances discovered what had floored the Catholic priest who wrote, "Why Johnny Can't Read"; the reason the personnel office was sending us both high school and some college graduates who could not read write or count decently was that many urban school districts had utterly failed to deliver

on their supposed mandate -- to properly educate the children.

It is within this context only that I said Mr Reinhard's "deficiencies" [in the chapter I program] were really "marked improvements in most areas of a long neglected system". In other words we are saying "it was better than the nothing that preceded it", as sad a commentary as that is on those who professed themselves to be "professionals" at every opportunity and on a media that was so late in raising an alarm. More variations on the Theme next week.

Can anyone help me to identify the very committed high school teacher who informed a member of the Portland Opera chorus the other Sunday that their "Peasant Chorus from Eugene Oregon" sparked an intent to apprise her classes that it was adapted from a novel written by Alexander Pushkin, the great African poet who transformed Russian letters. She had a copy of an observer article I wrote on the subject.

State Awards Teacher Training Grants

A total of \$6.2 million in state grants has been awarded to 342 schools to help train teachers and other school employees in the various elements of Oregon's school reform program.

Retraining is the top priority of the school reform program this biennium. The funds were appropriated by the 1993 Legislature.

The goal of the school reform act, passed by the 1991 Legislature, is to produce the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a work force equal to any in the world by the year 2010.

"To do this," said State School Supt. Norma Paulus, "we must invest in retraining teachers for it is they who will make the difference."

Paulus said the average age of an Oregon teacher is 41. "What we know about teaching has grown dramatically in the last 20 years," said Paulus, "yet we haven't given teachers the time and other resources to make needed changes."

For instance, Ontario High School

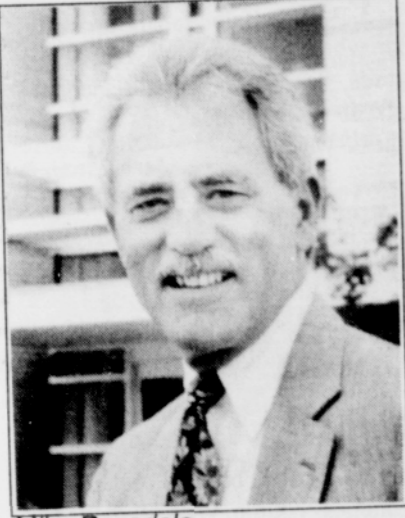
will use much of its grant for computer training. Mike Taylor, principal of the school, said Ontario has a computer in every classroom, but not all teachers are trained to operate them. "This grant will give us a real opportunity to do some serious staff development," he said.

All schools which received grants have site councils - including teachers, other employees and parents - which steer local improvement efforts. The grants, which run from \$3,000 to \$70,000, will be used during an 18-month period beginning in January.

The recipients were selected from 465 applicants. Grants cover 41 percent of Oregon's schools and 333 of the 36 counties.

"Our grant will provide training for school and community representatives on our site council to work effectively together to make sound decisions for kids," said Kathleen Hering, principal of Calapooia Middle School in Albany.

Ragsdale's Metro Executive Campaign Headquarters Opens



Mike Ragsdale

The Mike Ragsdale for Metro Executive campaign has opened its headquarters in the historic Centennial Building at 206 SW Morrison in downtown Portland. Situated at the SW 2nd and Morrison ave. Max stop, the campaign office is geographically central to the Metro district and easily accessible to residents who want to

stop in and learn about the campaign.

"We wanted a location that was central, accessible and visible," said Ragsdale. "Metro has been the invisible government and Metro races have had little media coverage in the past." Ragsdale went on to say, "I hope that the region's news media will make the commitment to bring greater attention to this critical race which will directly affect so many people."

Metro is the regional government that serves over one million tri-county residents. The 1992 voter-approved charter calls for Metro to develop and implement a comprehensive, region-wide, 50-year growth management plan. The next Executive Officer will lead this effort.

Candidate Mike Ragsdale is an independent business man who served in the state legislature in both the House and Senate. He also spent four years on the Metro Council-two of those years as presiding officer.

City Seeks People With An International Inclination

The City of Vancouver is seeking applicants to serve on the newly-created International Affairs Commission.

This nine-member board will serve in an advisory capacity to city council on matters relating to international activities and events and will serve as a clearinghouse for information and will raise citizen awareness about events in the area. It will examine pertinent issues and make recommendations to City Council for consideration. The main goal of the Commission is to encourage and support international activities in the community and to expand educational benefits by encouraging citizen participation.

Interested applicants should contact Marie Day, in the Mayor's Office, at 696-8211 or (FAX) 696-8049, for an application. Completed applications must be submitted to Vancouver City Hall, PO Box 1995, Vancouver, WA 98668-1995, by Tuesday, Feb. 1, 1994.

Denise Richardson Wants To Communicate With Americans Of All Colors

(TV Correspondent Says Fear Often Kept Her From Fully Experiencing Life Until She Bungee-Jumped While on Assignment in New Zealand)

"When you fly up front, you've always got to be ready to go back and fly coach," declared Denise Richardson, who, as the first black woman to be featured on one of the daily network morning shows, wants to communicate with all Americans.

"Despite my color, your color, we have much more in common than we have differences," Richardson told PARADE Contributing Editor James Brady, who interviewed her for this Sunday's issue of the magazine. "As a child, I watched TV and didn't see anyone who looked like me. Now I do. Sure, I'd like my own show one day, but now I simply love what I'm doing."

She added, "morning anchor spots are a little frightening because



Denise Richardson

they remove you from real people. I don't ever want to be distanced from real people. Explaining that she first turned down her job as correspondent for ABC-TV's "Good Morning

America," partly from fear, Richardson said that when she was asked to reconsider she told her former boss at "Good Day New York," "I want to see if I can play with the big kids."

Fear has often held Richardson back from doing things, which is why she surprised herself by bungee-jumping when GMA was in New Zealand. "I had to do it," she said. "You know, I've been afraid of so many things in my life, and that held me back. I'm very shy. I can work a room if I'm sent there on a job but not if I'm there as a guest. So when the network proposed talking on four challenges for a feature--white-water rafting, jet-speed boating, a chopper ride in the mountains and bungee as the culmination--I went for it. My whole career had been New York, a hometown girl from the South Bronx. I knew I had to break out."

Visibly Committed



The work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC) of America, the National Urban League, and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) is essential to the communities they serve. That's why R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company is committed to their continued growth. No where is this support more visible than in the R.J. Reynolds Public Service Billboard Program.

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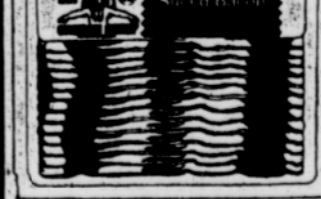
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