

Slow Down For Kids



Regina Banks (from left), Sheila Frank and her son, Shrone Dobson welcome the addition of a banner across Alberta Street at 18th Avenue urging drivers to slow down for kids' sake. Portland's Bureau of Traffic Management is offering the banners to area neighborhoods to promote traffic safety.

New African American Law Judge



Lee Johnson

Comptroller John Sharp announced the appointment of Lee Johnson to the prestigious and important position of Administrative Law Judge for the State Comptroller's Office. Johnson becomes the first African American in Texas State Comptroller history to serve in this position.

"In addition to being an individual of renown respect, Lee is also actively involved in the community," Sharp said. "He has keen knowledge of state tax policy and a deep concern for the rights of the individual."

as an Administrative Law Judge, Johnson's major responsibility is to provide arbitration between the Comptroller's Office and Texas taxpayers. In cases in which a taxpayer believes a tax liability has been unfairly assessed, the individual is given the option of taking the case to the Administrative Law Judge. After a hearing, the Law Judge issues an opinion on whether the tax liability was fairly assessed.

Ray Bonilla, General Counsel for the Comptroller's office, says These Judges deal with difficult tax policy issues on a daily basis. "Their decisions are obviously important to the taxpayers involved in the case, but they are also important to overall tax policy. Lee has the experience, judgments, and temperament to enable him to perform in this capacity very effectively," Bonilla said.

Johnson is a 30-year-old native of Portland, Oregon. He received a bachelor's degree from Oregon State University and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Texas School of Law in 1988. He worked

for the Texas Railroad Commission after graduation through 1991, when he joined the Comptroller's Office as a Hearing Attorney.

Johnson has also held various civic and community offices, including the Board of Directors for the Austin Area Urban League, the Board of Directors for the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program and as a member of Texas Organized Professionals (TOPS). He hosts a local television talk show.

"I am excited about this new challenge," Johnson said. "This position offers more than the opportunity to affect tax policy. It offers the opportunity to demonstrate to our youth that dreams can be realized through dedication to education."

"All too often minority youth are only shown the narrow road of success traveled by athletes and entertainers. I want youth to be exposed to the broad highways of success that take just as much dedication and hard work, but can be traveled by a greater number of individuals," Johnson added.

Science And Technology II Learning On The Job

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

As promised, we shall continue our journey through a revealing landscape of explorations and rewarding discoveries - mostly free of the mind-numbing technical terms with which we have so frequently been threatened. So many of us have been about science, as that Supreme Court Justice was about 'pornography': "I can't describe it, but I know it when I see it." (Let's hear it for "mother wit.")

Let's start with a 'learning-on-the-job' example. That aluminum plant in The Dalles, Ore. provides an excellent model for applying the technique; wasn't it a 'brother' who coined the phrase, "let down your bucket where you are." (Dr. Booker T. Washington). Here is where, in a five-year period, I moved from riding through the plant on a bicycle picking up time cards and then transmitted such labor data to a central computer in California - to sponsoring a kid's science club and winning a National Science Foundation prize for the local school district (demonstrating, on-line in the classroom, how math, science and

telecommunications are used in industry).

I'll use last week's description; such things are "no biggie" if you pay attention to your surroundings, ask questions and read! Something I learned to do as a teenager, working in scores of shops, factories and similar institutions in St. Louis, Mo. In the first 30 days at the aluminum plant, I realized that what we had here was a complete, self-contained city - with its own power and light department, water and other utilities, street and sewer departments, garages and other vehicle maintenance, first aid, police/fire department, chemical laboratories, mechanical engineering, electronic instrumentation, you name it; even a bureau of buildings - plumbing, carpentry.

I soon realized that I was in paradise, and being an opportunist of the first rank, honed in on this chance to learn first hand how all the technical aspects of modern urban infrastructure intermeshed. I figured there was enough here to not only satisfy the most inquiring of minds, but the material for developing all sorts of 'real time' training and education curriculums. Supporting this observation was the presence of every imaginable type of operating manual, training guide and programmed instruction tool for each of the many departments cited

above (I took a shift on the power console from Bonneville.)

I soon switched from the accounting department, taking a pay cut to become an apprentice electronic instrument technician; again, a job that got me into every department of the huge plant. All I had every learned in high school science clubs came into play - not to mention thousands of hours of relevant reading over the years. Already, I was developing renewed interest in my collection of research on "Black Inventors and Scientists," and to further redevelop my skills I organized a kids' science club in my neighborhood.

One can just imagine the "high" I was on - projecting how school districts that were moaning about how difficult it was to motivate disadvantaged (and other) children in the areas of math, science and technology would soon have available a skilled practitioner who could design realistic curriculum, write motivational material with role models to whom they could relate (the "Black Inventors"). And above all, here I was, living proof that persons like me and many others in this country without degrees in the scientific disciplines

could nevertheless, design, service and install the most sophisticated of technical devices. We can provide initial orientation to our youth.

In my garage at home, I was converting the entrails of old jukeboxes into devices to demonstrate planetary motions, and functions of various instruments and systems at the plant and other functions for the kids in the science club. At work, I was repairing instruments that measured and controlled temperature, pressure, velocity, speed, voltage, amperage, watts, viscosity, humidity, ph, mass spectrography, whatever. I was telling other members of the 'ham radio club' that "my kids" would soon be able to grow crystals of acceptable quality for your experimentation.

These plans for Portland were too much too soon (1969), but there is still hope for our youth. More next week.

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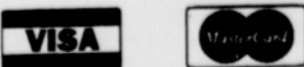
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