

# EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily Reflect Or Represent The Views Of The Portland Observer

**M**onday, the National Rainbow Coalition protested this year's Academy Awards because only one of 166 nominees is African American—Dianne Houston, for her live action short film "Tuesday Morning Ride".

## NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### Oscar! Lights, Camera, [Affirmative] Action

We protested not just the result—the one nomination—but the process. African Americans constitute 12 percent of the population and 25 percent of the movie goers. Whites comprise 96 percent of those who vote on the Academy Awards.

blacks in the segregated South. The film's director, Tim Reid, said, "It was turned down by every major studio for being 'too soft' and 'too human'."

Activists representing Asians, Latinos and Native Americans in Hollywood will join forces with the Rainbow to draw attention to the under-representation of non-whites throughout the movie industry in Hollywood. The protest is also being joined by the Los Angeles Urban League.

A community meeting on racism in the motion picture industry will be held during the weekend preceding the protest. It took place Saturday, March 23, 10am to 1pm at the Holman Untied Methodist Church, 3320 West Adams Street in Los Angeles. During the meeting, strategies were discussed for the day of the protest and beyond. The Rev. Jesse Jackson said, "We will protest institutional racism that is manifest in three ways in Hollywood: racial exclusion, cultural distortion and denial of access to production."

Jackson said, "African Americans are 12% of the population, Latinos are 10%, Asian Pacific Americans

are 3% and Native Americans are 1%, but our participation in front of the camera, behind the camera, and in the executive suites is minuscule."

\*The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences—5,043 members, 3.9% African American.

\*The Directors Guild—10,097 members. African Americans are 2.3% of membership, Latinos 1.8%, Asian Pacific Americans .9%, Native Americans .2%. Non-white directors only received 4% of all directing jobs between 1992 and 1993.

\*The Writers Guild. African Americans are 2.6%. American Indians in Film reports that general representation of Native Americans in television networks, motion picture studios, unions and all aspects of multi-media is 1%.

Jesse Jackson call the situation "cultural distortion," and said "it is a form of violence." Jackson continued, "The media portrays African Americans and other people of color in five deadly ways. We are portrayed as: (1) less intelligent than we are; (2) less hard-working than we work; (3) less universal than we are; (4) less patriotic than we are; and (5)

more violent than we are." Jackson said, "We bear this burden every day as images are translated into action and reaction. Because we continue to live in a racially stratified society, our art, film and television reflect the shape of this reality. Social inaccuracies continue to be expressed as realities through our cultural forms for all the world to see."

Guy Aoki of the Media Actor Network for Asian Americans said, "Unless we have people open-minded enough to give Asian American actors the chance to play good roles, we cannot be in the pool from which people are nominated for Oscars. We're tired of always being seen as foreigners or gangsters who are not a positive part of this country, so we share the concern of the Rainbow Coalition."

Sonny Skyhawk, founder of American Indians in Film, said his people have been in a "celluloid time warp since 1898," always "shown off with feathers and a loincloth. Today we are doctors, lawyers, teachers, cab drivers and actors, but to Hollywood we are virtually nonexistent. The shame of it all is that the Native American is the only minority that was ever a majority. We do this to improve the situation for our future generations.

When a native American child watches TV and wants to be the cowboy instead of the Indian, something is wrong with that picture."

Jackson concluded, "Naturally, we are proud of the involvement of Quincy Jones and Whoopi Goldberg in this year's Academy Awards, as well as film director Dianne Houston. We support them on the inside, even as we protest on the outside the lack of more of us" in the Academy."

## perspectives What To do For An Encore II: Back To The Future

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

**"Encore I" has certainly set up some interesting dialogue. Keep those calls and faxes coming, or write if you will. The community, the world, can always use new ideas and, considering today's human condition, we dare not refuse that innovation which may improve our lot.**

And where we talk of the internet or World-Wide Web, let me make a correction in the next-to-last paragraph of last week's Perspective article. The final sentence was a comment on how they would be "used"; not sued (smiles).

Now back to this idea of "what is new and what is old", the concept of invention and innovation or the old adage, "there is nothing new under the sun" (they didn't mention the moon, did they?). At the risk of starting a philosophical argument, I will venture that the only things of importance is whether the concept is new to "you" -- or if it is being employed in "a new or different way." Our Latin teacher put it, "modus operandi"

An excellent case in point (two in fact) is a common thread to those communications spurred by that "Encore" article. Several readers suggested, "Get into the classrooms with your terminals and national/international networks, McKinley, That's hot stuff now, maybe 'they' will finally let you in after all these years." These fearful folks? I'm quite seriously considering starting my own school and have a very interested potential clientele -- black and white.

But another reader, very familiar with my early operations points out that "some of these neophytes in the Portland School District who are hooping" and hollering about the Internet and World Wide Web, and the lack of funds for implementing these system, were not even born yet when you were doing the exact same thing with seventh and eighth graders thirty years ago (October 1966)."

The reader, who was the only black child in The Dalles School District at the time of my demon-

stration, makes my point about "modus operandi" (or as Shakespeare would have put it, "The play is the thing"). Though my system used the technology of the times -- teletypes, punched tapes and ASCII (acronym for American Standard Code for Information Interchange), the children, nevertheless, were able to exchange information with schools, industry, and federal agencies in America and abroad at a transmission rate far faster than anyone could immediately read.

And if you were to ask the organizer at that big downtown church on S.W. Twelfth (he was the 12yr. old facing the camera instead of me in the picture of that 1966 demonstration in my Black inventors book), he would tell you that my "modus operandi" included what so many students are not getting today. A thorough understanding of the "Binary" system or "language", coding, symbols and the underlying logic of it all. Most kids today can't write or understand code.

And the interchange individual students had with engineers, scientists, wharf masters, et. al. both locally and in far off places spurred their interest in geography, commerce and many other fields. Today my design incorporates both the new visuals and graphics and a 'new' parading for incorporating the 'old' readouts into planned and instantly edited texts (Patents and copyrights cost fortunes).

Also, those who remembers when I designed those computer programs for the four and five year-olds at the Lake Oswego Montessori School, should be happy to know I've brought that technique up to date as well (and beyond). My "Math 2000" program is not only for Montessori Schools but head Start-Type institutions as well. Thanks in great part to Dr. Stanley Jacobs at OHSC (inventor of DMSO) who read of my computer innovations in the Portland Oregonian 25 years ago and directed me to the Lake Oswego Montessori School where his wife was the director. He was recently featured in a major article.



By Professor McKinley Burt

## Civil Rights Journal

### Response To The Church Burnings

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

**This is an amazing country we live in. Just when I become so discouraged and disheartened and wonder if ever African Americans will be allowed to feel at home here, I hear a story of grace. Last month, when I wrote about the 23 African American churches in the South being burned, was one of those down moments. This month, as I begin to hear the responses, is a moment of hope.**

This month Jet Magazine printed a picture of Green Bay Packers player Reggie White, who is an Associate Pastor of Inner City Church in Knoxville, TN, receiving a check for \$142,261.42. That check was the gift of the people of Wisconsin, who wanted to show their support for him and his church. White's church not only had been firebombed, but was also painted with racial slurs and later looted.

Undoubtedly, there are people

around the country who also have sent funds to the churches directly, or to the Greene County Emergency Church Fund, which is collecting donations for the churches burned in Greene County. Several of the churches were uninsured and their losses were total.

One group which responded to the needs of the people in the Alabama churches was the Washington Quaker Workcamps, a group of Quakers in the Washington, D.C. area, who organize and carry out church building projects by volunteers. They immediately contacted Spiver Gordon, City Councilmember from Eutaw, AL, who was designated as the churches' contact, and offered their services.

The Alabama churches have now designated the Washington Quaker Workcamps as the group responsible for recruiting and organizing volunteers who wish to go to Alabama to help rebuild the three churches in Boligee. They are expecting help

from people from all denominations and across the country.

There will be several ways for volunteers to help. There will be three month-long residential workcamps during the months of June, July and August. Volunteers must get themselves to and from the Birmingham airport and be present for the whole month. They will be housed at the Federation for Southern cooperatives Center in Eppes.

There will also be week-end workcamps. Volunteers must get themselves to and from the work site and may also attend services at both black and white churches nearby.

In addition, clergy and respected religious leaders are being invited to come to serve as spiritual guides to the workcampers and the local community. Contractors, builders and trained workcamp leaders are also needed. There are applications forms for each group.

It will cost the Washington Quaker Workcamps over \$41,000 to run

these workcamps. They will be providing food, lodging, local transportation and health insurance for those without it.

There's an old hymn entitled "Blest Be the Tie that Binds." We are bound by a tie of God's love for us and for justice. The people in Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana whose churches have been burned must be feeling a sense of that tie that binds as we help them rebuild their churches. Maybe there is hope yet.

For workcamp applications or details or to make a contribution to the workcamps, write Washington Quaker Workcamps, Harold Confer, Executive Director, 1225 Geranium St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20012, Fax (202) 723-5376. Or you can send contributions directly to the Greene County Emergency Church Fund, The Rev. Levi Pickens, Treasurer, Rt. 2, Box 94, Eutaw, AL 35462.

## Vantage Point

### Mobilizing Black America To Lead A General Strike

BY RON DANIELS

**The wall of racial and economic oppression in the United States must come tumbling down, but they will not crumble without a concerted effort to smash them by black people and the oppressed in this nation. There are a variety of tactics which can be utilized to eradicate racism and economic exploitation in this country. However, there is no more powerful action that Black people and the oppressed could initiate than a general strike.**

As the public sector workers in France recently demonstrated, a general strike can virtually bring and entire nation to a standstill. The French workers took to the streets and withheld their labor to protest proposed cut backs in the elaborate network of social welfare benefits which insure a minimum standard of

living and quality of life for all French citizens irrespective of a person's income or class standing in French society. Universal health care, generous paid pregnancy leave, day care, free public education from pre-school through college, subsidized meals for students from daycare to high school, mandatory five weeks vacation in most jobs and nine weeks in highly stressful occupations are among the benefits which comprise the safety net in France. It was to protect this kind of safety net, flowing from a culture of rights and concept of equality which goes back to the French Revolution, that French workers were prepared to shut the entire nation down.

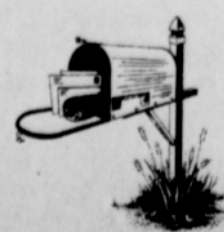
The French system of social welfare benefits is far more extensive than the crumbs meted out through the so called safety hoodwinked large numbers of Americans, including some of the beneficiaries of the safe-

ty net, into believing that the crisis in American society is a result of the "burden" of the welfare system. There is also the not so subtle suggestion that much of this burden is due to the large number of Black people and people of color who are recipients of various forms of public assistance. Using this race card to whip up public support for what is essentially and anti-people of color, anti-poor and anti-working class agenda, the radical right is hell bent on drastically cutting back on the meager benefits of the safety net in the U.S.

Since the Reagan years the scheme has been to rob poor and working people to enhance the fortunes of the rich and the super-rich; to reduce the working class to subservient wage slaves at the mercy of transnational corporations in the name of the "free market" and "global competition." As a consequence, the rich

are getting richer and more secure while the poor are getting poorer and less secure. The walls of racial and economic oppression are higher and stronger than ever before.

The Question is when will Black people, people of color, poor and working people, the working class, bring this madness to an end? Unfortunately, organized labor surrendered one of its most potent weapons when the right to use a general strike was abandoned in favor of limited strike actions within particular skills, crafts or work arenas. Indeed, if there was ever a time that a general strike was in order it was when Reagan fired the Air Traffic Controllers and broke PATCO as a union. This act signalled a conscious effort by the ruling elite to break the back of union across the board, and yet labor is virtually impotent in the face of provocation.



## Letter To The Editor

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