

"The Blue Devils Of Nada": Conclusion

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

Folks in the 'hood used to employ a highly descriptive epithet whenever a temper-shortening issue would stir up a hornet's nest of controversy; "Up jumped the devil", they would say.

If that still holds true, then 'Dante's Inferno' had no more forked-tail inhabitants than were stirred up by Albert Murray's book on the 'blues'.

By phone, fax or personal encounter I've heard some rather heated commentary (as if I didn't know you cared). Some folks who already had the book took the author to task for a "super-sophisticated analysis of indigenous soul stuff." These accused the author of being a "poseur", stating that no African American cultur-

al genre would yield to the "European style of critique" (The Scandinavians come closest). Mr. Murray left me adrift when I discovered that there was no mention anywhere in his book of "Mr. Blues-personified, B.B. King. This is the man of whom it has been said, "He'll pass up a dozen notes to nail the perfect one!" You know that's right, if you've ever looked over a hazy night club and watched the body language when the King is on the stand caressing his faithful "Lucille" (that's anywhere in the world). We often could have put it to that swaying, finger-popping 'congregation'; "are you ready--as if you didn't know exactly what he's going to do to you? And as he's done for generations, we

could count on "Mr. B.B." to lead them all to a precipice of anticipation--toying with them before "nailing that perfect note."

And then, having spent the proper amount of time on a rhythmic narrative of African American loves, triumphs and the unrequited, our ebony piper would make that 'bad' move--releasing many a tense body and mind from a paroxysmal emotional excitement, "Mr. B.B. baby, please!"

I'll tell you how I feel about it, Mr. Albert Murray. I've nothing against Ernest Hemingway--he's a good (excellent) writer and I have read just about everything he has written. I am, of course, in agreement with

that, "fundamental Hemingway principle: the one that requires good writers and musicians to know what they really feel, rather than what they are supposed to feel or have been taught to feel."

Under these circumstances, sir, it is difficult to understand why you would not have presented Mr. B.B. King himself as your 'Blues Model'. A reader suggests that this omission "pulls the covers off Murray" and his discomfort with certain 'slings and arrows' to which he may have been subjected as an African American attempting intellectual discourse.

The reader refers to several quotes I made from Murray's book last week. In particular, the one about whites feeling "brownskin" writers have

nothing to say unless "they are moaning about injustice." And his statement "they find it much easier to praise such writers for being angry than for being innovative or insightful." Mr. Murray, we are certain that you meet both standards and again, yours is a very, very good book, this, "The Blue Devils of Nada," Pantheon 1996.

Another group of readers remind me that, about a decade ago I wrote about an 'African blues venue' or literature of over 4000 years ago (African Literature and Poetry: The Birth of the Blues). I pointed out that in Egypt between 2181 B.C. and 2050 B.C.--the chaotic area between the end of the Old Kingdom and the beginning of the First Intermediate

Period -- a vast "literature of alienation" was produced.

The modern school of spiritual nihilism called "existentialism", led by its principle disciples, Sartre and Keiergaard took a good look at the modern European world and declared "God Is Dead!" "We see no hope for the predicament of Western man." These philosophers and religionists of defeatism borrowed very heavily from African literature, the first blues (of course, the Hebrews did as well, even before the sojourn in Egypt).

See almost verbatim translations of blues literature produced in a cultural crisis: "Ancient Egyptian Literature, 3 vol." Miriam Lichtheim, 1976, Un. of Calif. Press. Covers all three kingdoms.

Chinook Winds Opens Casino

Continued from front

reclaim for prizes, such as stuffed animals. Playland has a snack bar for kids with an appetite, serving popcorn, pretzels, hot dogs, chips, nachos, fruit, soda and juice.

Charge for daycare is \$4.95 for 4 hours and \$1.95 for each additional hour, with a maximum of 6 hours. Operating hours are Sunday through Thursday 9 am-10 pm and Friday and Saturday 9 am-12:30 pm. The casino also offers theme birthday

packages as a part of their services.

In a news conference with the press, Delores Piggley, Chair of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, stated that, "The opening of the facility sets the tone for the future of the tribe in terms of economic development."

"We have reached several milestones this year... and I think the first one was the opening of our administrative building in Siletz. It brought the tribal programs under one roof... Then last week, we com-

pleted the Siletz Indian Dance House on a cultural site that was designated by the tribal council. We have had our very first winter solstice on the reservation. And this week is the opening of the Chinook Winds Gaming Center."

The Gaming Center's shape is in the form of a traditional Pacific Northwest Indian long house and a drum. It incorporates both Giltz and Pacific Northwest Indian motifs in its design, most notably on the exterior where the

art represents Siletz basketry designs and Giltz designs in the neon-illuminated game room.

The Siletz Tribe has been successful in generating revenue for tribal members and creating jobs where unemployment among tribal members is low.

Although the particulars have not been worked out yet, all revenue from the casino will go to better the welfare of tribal members, probably in the areas of health, education and housing.

Martin Luther King Median Generates Heat Again

Continued from Metro

posed any changes on the street that would "result in additional traffic on residential streets."

Nor were traffic and parking the only bones of contention. Commercial developer and North-Northeast Business Association President Bill Leigh complained that by zoning some land on the street strictly for high-density, housing the city was retarding development. "We need to encourage business and job development, not subsidized housing," he

said. He compared the blue color for high-density housing on city zoning maps to seas in which developers and property owners are "drowning."

Sheila Holden of the Portland Economic Development Alliance agreed, and noted that two recent major housing developments are occurring on land zoned EXD, intended in the Albina Plan for business development. She suggested that the city either rezone housing land to compensate, or do something to make business development more competitive in the EXD zone.

In contrast, Aviva Groner of the Eliot Association said that if on-street parking is returned to the avenue, the business zones should be narrowed and the land behind them "returned to the neighborhood" for lower-density housing development.

Despite the differences, a recurring theme from most who spoke was a need for change on the street, and a need to modify its design as a way of getting it.

Veteran activist Charles Ford complained, "We've studied, studied and studied. Now let's move expeditiously."

I'm an old man, and I want to see something happen before I move on."

Weekly Unemployment Payment Increase

Beginning June 30, the maximum amount paid to Oregonians filing for state unemployment insurance will increase slightly. According to the Oregon Employment Department, the state agency that administers the unemployment program, the maximum weekly payment will rise to \$314, while the minimum amount will be

\$73. Under Oregon law, each year the Employment Department recalculates the maximum and minimum amounts paid weekly to those filing for unemployment insurance. The amounts are set as percentages of the average weekly wage earned by Oregonians. In 1995, this average week-

ly wage was \$491.74. The minimum unemployment figure is 15% of average weekly wage, and the maximum amount is 64%. Both dollars amounts are rounded down to the nearest dollar as required under law.

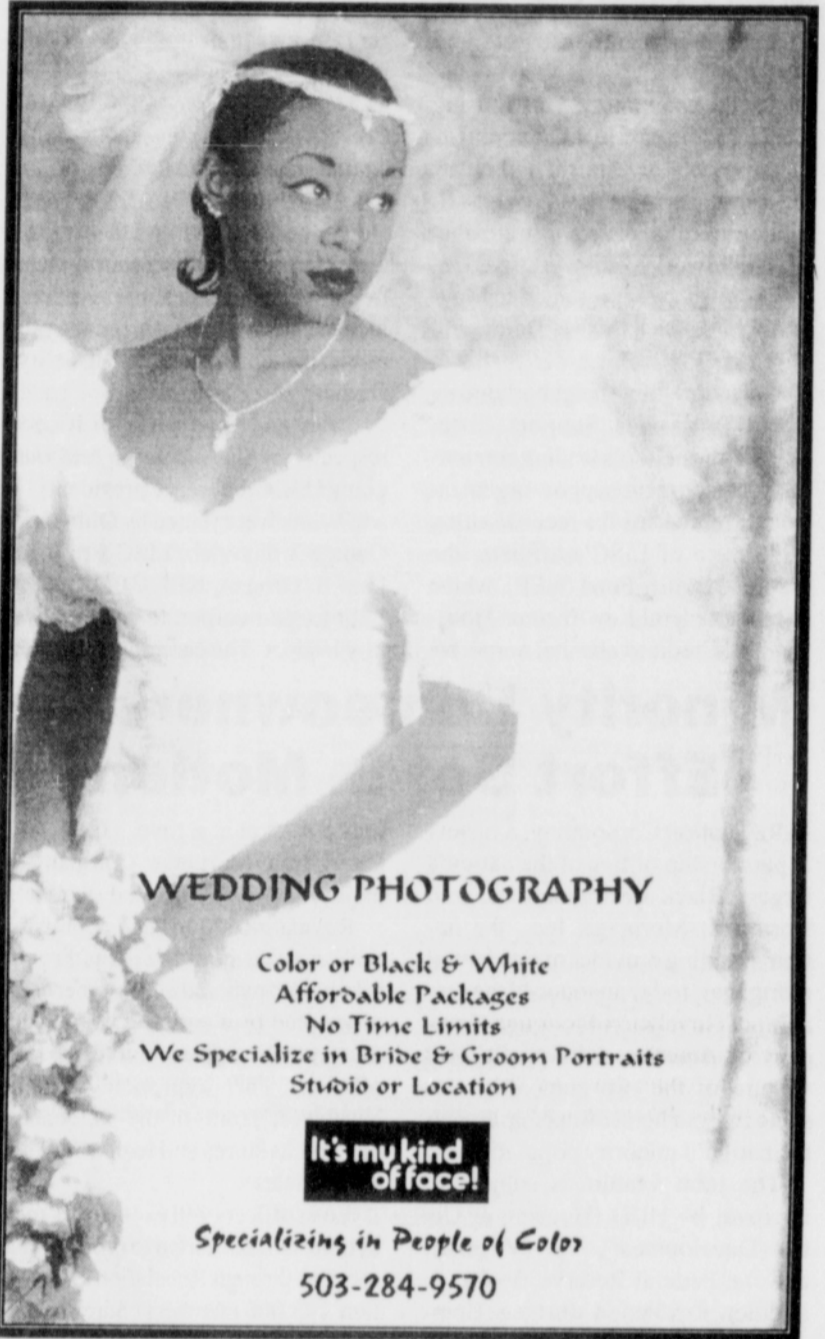
The new payment amounts are up slightly from those paid over the past year.

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Lou Rawls July 5th & 6th

June 28th is the Grand Opening of Oregon's premiere gaming & convention center, Chinook Winds. Discover Las Vegas style entertainment and the most exciting casino experience in the Northwest. Early shows begins at 7pm and the later show starts at 10pm. So, expect week after week of the best headliner entertainment available. Then, enjoy over 800 video slot machines,

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