

# Can we afford to do less today?

BY MCKINLEY BURT

This article first appeared in the Portland Observer on June 26, 1991, titled "Show And Tell."

A reader supplied the title for this week's article when my brief mention of "Atlanta Exposition" provoked her comment that African Americans have comment that African Americans have to do a better job of "showing and telling our genius." Nobody is going to do it for us." She, too, was depressed at our pitiful showing in the graduation ceremonies at Oregon Universities, especially in the sciences. Let me repeat that though-provoking citation.

"100 years ago blacks put on the 'Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition', September 18, 1895 (see the Congressional record, 53rd Congress, Second Session, p.8382). People from all over the world came to see and buy the inventions of African American engineers, stoves locomotives, steam engines, improvements to farm, factory and

railroad. Can it happen again?"

Now, isn't that unbelievable? That a century ago we were not only 'demonstrating' our technical genius but also doing an adept and sophisticated job of publicizing our abilities to all the world. Not to mention developing an effective structure for financial gain. It was not lost upon our readers that were African Americans creating similar 'stages' today for their wares and innovations, "ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT" would take on new meaning for the race. Her further comment was that it went without saying, "Complete new avenues for the technical education and motivation of our youth would be opened up."

Again, we are reminded of how dependent we are upon the perceptions and commitment of the black female if we are to succeed in the struggle to 'regain' a credible position in the scheme of things. I would immediately remind you of the description I gave here several years

ago of the 1978 West Coast meeting of the Black Scientists and Engineers which I attended as a representative of Portland State University. The convention was designed and implemented by two black female engineers. It was a marvel of operational structure, logistics and telecommunications. And YOUTH WAS SERVED as scores upon scores of black youth were flown in to be entranced and motivated by the inventions of the black engineers.

For the moment, let us return to that 1895 "Atlanta Exposition." It would seem that most of our readers identified that great event only with that famous speech opening day by Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee fame - certainly not with the greatest exposition ever of black technical (and cultural) genius. This was the occasion of the frequently quoted admonition, "LET DOWN YOUR BUCKET WHERE YOU ARE," and "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps." Along with this advice that the races

could accomplish much while remaining "as separate as the fingers on your hand," Washington pleased the whites but earned the undying enmity of W.E.B. Dubois and the black intellectual-integrationist movement (voting and accommodations).

As stated, this aspect of the Exposition is the one that has been impressed upon the consciousness of American blacks and whites alike - and not the yeoman efforts of African Americans from every walk of life to make the spectacle possible in the first place. We need not wonder, do we, why racists, Uncle Toms (and the brainwashed) have not dwelled upon the wonderful, positive nature of the greatest "Show and Tell" in our history.

That citation to the Congressional Record is for the August 10, 1894 speech by Black Congressman, George H. Murray from South Carolina, and ex-slave who spent two years at the State University until all blacks were expelled in 1876. Elect-

ed in 1892, we have him here addressing his colleagues in soliciting federal support for the Atlanta Exposition. He was successful and his own eight patented agricultural inventions were displayed.

"We have proven in almost every line that we are capable of doing what other people can do. We have proven that we can work as much and as well as other people. We have proven that we can learn as well as other people. We have proven that we can fight as well as other people, as was demonstrated in the late [Civil] war. There are still, however, traducers and slanderers of our race who claim that we are not equal to others because we have failed to produce inventors..."

...I hold in my hand a statement prepared by one of the assistants in the Patent Office, showing the inventions that have been made by colored men within the past few years...

This statement shows that colored men have taken out patents upon

almost everything, from a cooking stove to a locomotive. Patents have been granted to colored men for inventions and improvements in the workshop, on the farm, in the factory, on the railroad, in the mine, in almost every department of labor, and some of the most important improvements that go to make up that great motive power of modern industrial machinery, the steam engine, have been produced by colored men...

...Mr. Speaker, the colored people of this country want an opportunity to show that the progress, that the civilization which is now admired the world over, that the civilization which is now leading the world, that the civilization which all the nations of the world look up to an imitate - the colored people. I say, want an opportunity to show that they, too, are part and parcel of the great civilization..."

And there was also the "Paris Exposition" of 1906 and the "Emancipation Exposition" at Philadelphia in 1913.

## Shuttle services Eugene

Shuttle by United will land in Eugene Oct. 31 when the unique short-haul carrier expands to six more cities in the U.S. West. Using B737 jets, the Shuttle will operate four daily roundtrip flights between Eugene and San Francisco, and add service from San Francisco to Boise, Medford, Salt Lake City, Santa Barbara and Spokane.

"The Shuttle's low fares and consistent reliability have been applauded by a growing number of travelers across the West," says Bob Thomas, United Airlines General Manager-Customer Service at Eugene. "This Shuttle expansion also solidifies United's long-term commitment as a member of the Eugene community."

With the new service, Shuttle by United will offer 410 daily departures to 18 cities in California and across the Western U.S.

Since it was developed and launched by employees two years ago, the Shuttle has doubled the number of cities it serves and its daily departures have risen 125 percent.

## USA Today Endorses Medical Marijuana

USA Today, the nation's most widely read daily newspaper, has endorsed access to medical marijuana. The endorsement stemmed from a USA Today editorial entitled "Anti-drug focus keeps marijuana from the ill" and came just two days after the newspaper featured a major article on a California ballot initiative that would allow seriously ill patients to use marijuana as a therapeutic agent with a doctor's recommendation.

Calling marijuana "one of the least toxic medical compounds in the world," the editorial cited both marijuana's relative safety when compared to other legal drugs and medicines and decades of scientific

and anecdotal research maintaining its medical efficacy.

"It is entirely possible to fight the drug war without harming innocent civilians in the process," concluded the USA Today. "But lawmakers must be careful to choose the right battles. Therapeutic marijuana isn't one of them."

"The statements made by USA Today in support of medical access to therapeutic marijuana should have a positive impact on America's views toward this issue and may translate into a significant number of votes among California citizens in favor of the Medical Marijuana Initiative," stated NORML Deputy Director Allen St. Pierre.

## Calling all volunteers!

Oregon Special Olympics is seeking individuals to serve on a state competition committee to organize its Fall Classic Games, scheduled for November 2-3, 1996 in the Portland area.

A planning meeting is set for 6 p.m., Thursday, August 15, at 3325 N.W. Yeon, Oregon Special Olympics' chapter headquarters. OSO is especially looking for people who will plan the following activities:

awards presentations, volunteer recruitment, meal preparation and special events. More than 1,200 athletes with mental retardation from across Oregon, as well as hundreds of coaches and volunteer are expected to attend. Competition includes aquatics, soccer, roller skating and bowling.

To RSVP the meeting or to find out more, call Kris Wilson, sports competition director, (503) 248-0600 or (800) 452-6079.

## Citizens can sue CA drug dealers

The California state Senate has unanimously approved a sweeping bill (S.B. 1754) that would allow private parties to sue drug dealers for damages even if the defendant had nothing to do with the specific drugs or incident that caused the damage.

Under the Drug Dealer Liability Act, introduced by Sen. Charles Calderon (D-Whittier) and co-sponsored by Attorney General Dan Lungren, drug dealers could be sued in civil court for any damages caused by the same kind of drug elsewhere in the same city or country, regardless of who actually furnished it, using a radical, new "market participation" liability doctrine.

For example, under the provisions of a similar law in Michigan, dealers who can be shown to have sold 650 grams of a controlled substance are

liable for injuries throughout the state, while those who sold less than 50 grams can be held liable for injuries in the country where the sales occurred.

Those allowed to sue under the California proposal would include: parents or family members of users; employers of users; medical facilities, insurers, or other institutions that fund drug treatment programs; individuals exposed in utero to an illegal substance; and persons injured as a result of the willful, reckless, or negligent actions of an individual substance user.

"It's a way of fighting (drug dealers) by hitting them right in the pocket," said actor Carroll O'Connor, who has lobbied for the measure.

Defendants could be sued if they (1) provided the drug or (2) had "as

a pattern" participated in the market for that drug within the same city or country. The latter is defined to mean that they provided the same illicit drug on at least two instances, with a least one conviction. Cultivation of under 25 marijuana plants would not count as an offense.

"When is enough, enough?" asked Mark Kappelhoff, legislative counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in Washington, D.C., in a recent Wall Street Journal article. Kappelhoff maintained that adding civil judgments to criminal prosecution and civil forfeiture could be tantamount to constitutionally cruel or unusual punishment or double jeopardy.

The California state assembly is expected to approve the measure by the end of August.

## Trow defends school funding

Senate Democratic Leader Cliff Trow (D-Corvallis) criticized the turnaround in Gordon Smith's priorities after the announcement that the Senate President was willing to call a special session to spend extra money for schools this fall.

"The Senate President had his chance to help schools during the regular legislative session," said Senator Trow. "Any special session would only lead to a special boost to Gordon's campaign, not for the stable funding of schools."

Senator Trow points to just three of the bills that the Senate passed, with Senate President Smith's Leadership, that preempted any possibility of adequate school funding. "Senate Democrats challenge these bills time after time in order to save scarce revenue for schools," said Senator Trow. "Our arguments came up short, and schools came up a distant second

to the Senate President's big corporation tax break agenda time and time again."

Senator Trow said that Senate Democrats have always been in full support of adequate, stable school funding. While Senator Trow generally agreed that the Senate President's plan to infuse schools with \$32 million is a positive step it wouldn't end the need for stable funding.

**Three bills that cost schools money:**

**1. SB 323 - Capital Gains Tax Break for the Wealthy**

SB 323 reduces the General Fund by \$14 million this biennium and \$58 million in 1997-1999. The worst part is that Oregonians who incomes over \$200,000 a year will get over half of this tax break.

**2. HB 2202 - Corporate Kicker Tax Windfall**

HB 2202 enabled \$167 million in income tax to be refunded to large business who pay the corporate tax rate. This amounted to over 50% of the total corporate tax responsibility to Oregon. This had the effect of cutting the taxes of the largest corporation down to nearly 3%.

**3. HB 2255 - Tax Credits for Everyone**

During every legislative session legislators must determine which tax credits will continue, and whether to enact new ones. Of the 11 credits renewed, all but three were written to aid businesses by lowering their income tax exchange for a certain practice.

The only new tax credit was designed to reward businesses for eliminating the use of toxics. Sometimes they shouldn't have to be paid to do. Total price tag: \$13 million in 1995-1997, \$34 million during the next two years.

## New MAX car is born

Officials from Tri-Met and light rail car manufacturer Siemens Transportation Systems celebrated the arrival of the nation's first low floor light rail vehicle at Tri-Met's Elmonica operations facility along the Westside MAX line in Aloha.

"This is an historic day for mobility in the Portland region," said Tom Walsh, Tri-Met general manager. "These new cars will provide quick, easy boarding and cool, comfortable travel for everyone who rides MAX."

"The community of individuals who cannot climb stairs -- including those who use wheelchairs -- will benefit immensely when these cars go into service," said Nita Brueggeman. Brueggeman, a Tri-Met board member who is liaison to the Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT), has long been an advocate of low floor cars.

"The cars mean we will be able to remove the clumsy lifts that hoist people in wheelchairs up to the floor level of today's MAX cars," she said. CAT committee chairman Sterling

Williams today demonstrated the use of short ramps that extend from the middle doors of the new cars to provide roll-on entry for wheelchairs, shopping carts and bicycles. The new cars can accommodate four wheelchairs; today's MAX cars hold only two wheelchairs per two-car train.

By fall 1998, when the Westside line opens, Tri-Met will operate fully accessible through service from Gresham to Hillsboro by coupling old cars to new cars.

Forty-six of the cars are on order from Siemens.

Siemens shipped Car 201, first of the Westside order, on July 5. The car traveled slowly by rail on a flatbed car and arrived at the Westside MAX facility yesterday.

Car 201 will undergo a month of tests inside the shop before it moves out to the test track behind Elmonica for several more months of dynamic testing. The extensive testing program is necessary to assure this car, the prototype for its 45 siblings, meets Tri-Met specifications.

In a press release, they stated, "Tri-Met ordered 46 low floor light rail cars from Siemens Duewag in June 1993 at a cost of \$2.5 million per car... The middle two-thirds of each car has a low floor--4" above platform and 14" above rail... All for doors are in this section for convenient boarding... A short ramp can be extended from the middle two doors for wheelchairs, bikes etc... Interior steps lead to seating areas and operator's cabs over the powered wheel assemblies at each end of the car... The cars will be air-conditioned... The new cars will run singly, in pairs, or coupled with one of the existing MAX cars... Trains will provide through service from Gresham to Hillsboro when the Westside line opens in September 1998... The "lifts" for passenger in wheelchairs along Eastside MAX will be removed, speeding train operations for all riders... Each car has 19 microprocessors and 30 miles of wire... Thirteen more cars now are being assembled at the Siemens plant in Sacramento... The next car will arrive in Portland this fall."

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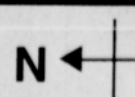
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