

Economic Development-Criminal Justice Style, Part I

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

The conservative and widely-read "Harpers" magazine reports the following "fascinating, kaleidoscopic view of our paradoxical world." We presume an ethnic pertinence to an interesting aside which precedes the four "fascinating" views cited.

"Date on which the state of Mississippi ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, abolishing slavery: 3/21/95"

1. Mandatory minimum jail sentence, in years, for possession of five grams of crack :5

2. Chances that an American sentenced for crack-related offenses is white: lin 25

3. Mandatory minimum sentence for possession of five grams of cocaine :0

4. Chances that an American sentenced for cocaine possession is white: lin 3

So it is not surprising at all that last Monday's headlines saw the Justice Department predicting that the number of inmates in America's jails and prisons would double in ten years. Nor should it be surprising, given the four factoids cited above and the racist nature of that "structured unemployment we've been describing, that it is expected that 40% of these prisoners will be black men, women and children (Blacks are 12% of total population).

Incredibly, one in 167 Americans were in prison or jail at the end of 1995 and the total number has risen

a shocking 113 percent since 1985. In an international race to see who will incarcerate the most of its citizens, the lead seesaws between the United States and Russia with both nations far outdistancing the rest of the world. As of the end of 1995, 'Justice' reports there were 1,078,357 men and women in federal and state prisons. They don't give the cost.

Wouldn't you think that would throw our unemployment statistics off--doesn't it strike you that there is quite a lot of room for mischief here in the allocation and application of resources needed to ameliorate the economic condition of large sections of the population? Exactly how many are there who are "available and looking for work?" Just here in the state

of Oregon, 8000 are said to be behind bars, and Oregon Public Radio cites the recent increases as the biggest in the nation, percentage-wise.

Is it any wonder then that many of America's most inspired and imaginative entrepreneurs are cashing in on America's biggest new cash cow in decades. Those climbing aboard for the 21st-century "Yukon Gold Rush" range from construction engineering firms to respected social and academic institutions, from manufacturers of corrections hardware ranging all the way from cell blocks and holding pens to handcuffs and other restraining devices. And then, of course there are the gun and ammunition makers who see a golden opportunity to compensate for lost Pen-

tagon orders. New "Contract Confinement" firms are springing up all over the country and in inspired competition, prison and jails temporarily under-capacity are in bidding wars to house the overflow of over-crowded facilities in other parts of the nation--for very lucrative fees. As equally inspired are the writers of advertising copy for the big bold display ads for these goods and services appearing in the law enforcement journals.

And it seems that there will be no lack of employment opportunities in the area of criminal justice if one looks at many California, midwestern, eastern and southern classified advertising sections of the

big daily newspapers; often entire pages relevant in some way to law enforcement. And the fall offerings of the universities and community colleges require expanded sections to list the plethora of courses related to the justice system.

It's indicated that there will be a need for hordes of new lawyers.

But some are asking questions that may not be as facetious as they might sound at first blush; for instance, has America enough black people to support all this economic development? And if so, on which side of the bars? And the fateful query, "is this what 'America-the-beautiful' has come to after just a brief two centuries?"

Continued next week.

More winning outdoor sculptures exhibited at Museum

Maryhill Museum of Art has selected two more artists as participants in its first annual Outdoor Sculpture Invitational. Winners for the second selection phase are Dan Klennert and Brandon Zebold. The competition was open to artists living in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

Dan Klennert, based in Kent, Washington uses discarded and recycled steel to create stylized, whimsical animal forms. He will exhibit Material Vision, a life-sized mare with colt, and Courting Birds, two birds, each over 8' tall, standing face-to-face. His sculptures have been exhibited throughout western America, including in Arizona, New Mexico and the Northwest.

Seattle artist Brandon Zebold will exhibit Portal #1, a 6' diameter ribbon of steel with leafy cut-out patterns that seem decorative, but which act as a metaphor for growth and the decaying power of nature. Zebold received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington. His sculptures have been included in numerous solo and group exhibit since 1988. He is represented by the Linda Cannon Gallery in Seattle.

These sculptures are being exhibited through November 15 in the museum's 26 acre parklands along with those by artists Rip Caswell and

Michele Van Slyke, who were selected in the first phase of the competition.

"The museum's grounds present a perfect showcase for these exciting works of art and we have received wonderful responses from the

more than 10,000 visitors we welcome each month," said Josie De Falla, Director.

The museum inaugurated the Outdoor Sculpture Invitational to complement its extensive collection of famous Auguste Rodin sculptures.

Artists based in the Northwest may submit slides of existing works or proposals for site-specific art anytime. "Only sculptures that are completely weather proof and capable of withstanding strong winds will be considered," said Special Projects

Officer, Lee Musgrave.

Maryhill Museum of Art, a castle-like chateau overlooking the Columbia River Gorge, is located about 100 miles east of Portland, Oregon on Washington Scenic Route 14 and is open daily from 9-5 including

holidays. Cafe Maryhill serves gourmet coffees, European America beverages, deli food and special desserts. A gift shop features original Native American jewelry, books, post cards, posters, t-shirts and unique art gifts.

Toxins taint Oregon

Continued from front

They identified reproductive toxins where the scientific literature is strongest and which are tracked by the Community Right to Know Act.

Speakers offered policy recommendations for addressing the threat posed by reproductive toxins.

These recommendations focused primarily on expanding the public's right to know about chemicals used in their communities and on applying the precautionary principle to the way we manage chemical exposure, rather than assuming chemicals are safe until proven otherwise.

According to Bennett, North Portland residents have complained about emissions from Freightliner and other Swan Island facilities, and have urged the Department of Environmental Quality to deny air discharge permits until more infor-

mation is available about the risks associated with releases of hazardous substances in the area.

"Knowing that Freightliner is releasing hundreds of thousands of pounds of reproductive toxins into the environment practically in our back yards doesn't make it any easier for me to sleep at night," said Bennett.

"The growing evidence about the effects of these emissions makes the need for information about pollution in our neighborhoods more urgent than ever. It is also absolutely essential, in light of the reproductive threats posed by industrial emissions, that our environmental permitting process put public health and safety first," Bennett added.

More than 70,000 synthetic chemicals and metals are currently in commercial use nationwide. The toxicity of most of these chemicals is unknown or incompletely studied.

"Unfortunately, the date we are

releasing represent just the tip of the toxic iceberg," said Tucker. "We have almost no information available to us on 99 percent of synthetic chemicals released into the environment and even less information on how much is actually being used at industrial facilities."

Efforts are underway to expand the public's right to know about toxic chemical use and releases.

EPA recently proposed adding seven new industries to the Right to Know reporting requirements. Among these industries are several major sources of reproductive toxins, including incinerators, metal mining, chemical wholesalers, and electric utilities.

"We urge Congress to strengthen our nation's toxic reporting laws so that every American knows what they and their children are exposed to in their homes, workplaces and communities," said Tucker.

The past and future of science and technology

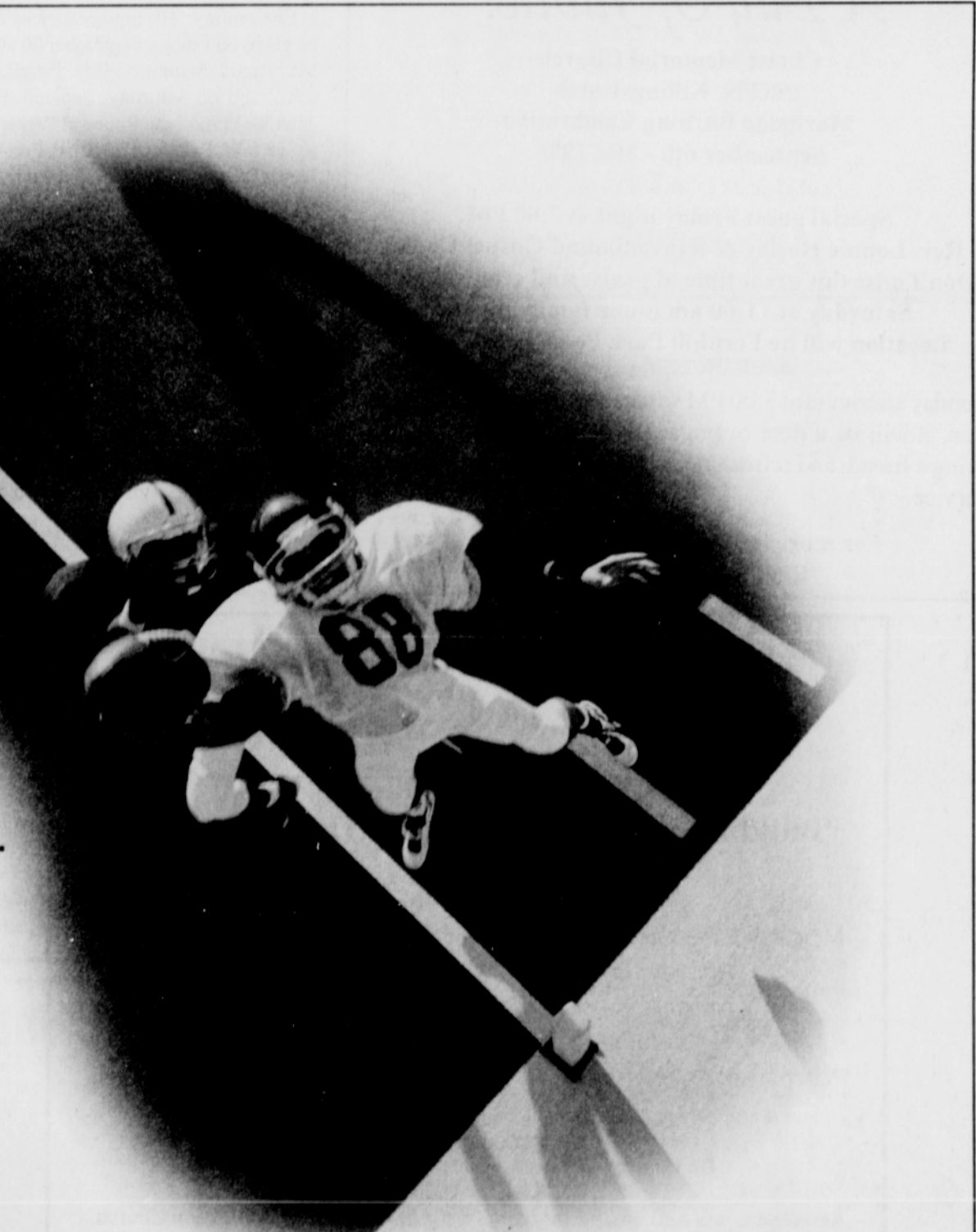


In *Nano: The Emerging Science of Nanotechnology* (Little, Brown), noted science writer Ed Regis takes us inside an imminent scientific revolution, nanotechnology. Profiling the visionary scientists and engineers who may soon make molecule-sized machines a reality, Regis explores nano's implications, from medicine and manufacturing to computing and warfare. In *The Pinball Effect* (Little, Brown), James Burke takes readers on a fascinating tour through history's most dramatic innovations--and shows "how sometimes the simplest act will have cosmic repercussions a hundred years later." For example, he shows how the solution to early colonists' malaria ultimately led to the development of better car tires, and how clingwrap had its origins in fake-lacquer furniture. This is a journey through knowledge with all the twists and turns of a detective story.

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