

EDITORIAL

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

At a joint NOW/NRC demonstration in front of the White House last month, Jesse Jackson and Patricia Ireland led a strong picket line demanding that the President reconsider his decision [the signing of the welfare bill].

Rev. Jackson pointed out: "When it comes to corporate welfare for the rich and powerful, it's look but don't touch. When we talk about affirmative action for the middle class, the President finally decided to mend it, not end it. But when it comes to welfare for poor women and the children then the government decides to end it, by rending FDR's New Deal safety net--end it, by rending it."

This decision was made for only one reason--so that the political leadership of both parties could look tough to the voter in an election year, using poor women and children as

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Stop domestic violence

punching bags.

By the best current estimates, this assault on the poor will drive a minimum of an additional one to one-and-a-half million children into poverty. It will not solve our problems, since the bill includes no resources for job creation, health care, job training, child care, or public works jobs--in short, nothing that is needed to actually move from welfare to employment, except the threats of poli-

ticians.

One quarter of our children already grow up in poverty, in this, the wealthiest nation in the history of the world. One half of all Africa American children already grow up in poverty. The bill will have an especially severe impact on low-income disabled children, children in working poor families, and children of legal immigrants. This bill will make their lives worse, not better.

According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, by the year 2002, this bill means \$27 billion in food stamp cuts. It means that our poorest households, those with incomes below 50% of the poverty line, will lose an average of \$785 in food stamp benefits per year. The elderly poor will find their food stamps cut by one-fourth, while the working poor--those who are so often extolled for playing by the rules, exemplifying the work ethic, reflecting the true American spirit--will find their benefits cut by 20%.

The truth is, contrary to stereotype, most poor people are not on welfare. They work every day, but don't get paid a living wage. Most poor people are not Black; they're white, and female and young. Two-thirds of those on welfare are children 9 million in all; and 60% of those children are under age 6.

I'm not a victim, I'm a man

BY MICHAEL SHARP

I'm not a damned victim so please quit treating me like one. I'm tired of your willingness to accept my failures without encouraging me to get back up. I'm tired of your willingness to accept the emasculation of the Black male. I'm tired of your willingness to accept less than what I'm capable of. In short, I'm tired of what is currently recognized as African-American leadership.

I've come to the harsh realization that Black people have been pimped, just like a woman of ill repute. Black people have been exploited in every way imaginable, yet our leaders still expect us to keep coming back for more of the same treatment. Even

worse, Blacks who do become part of the free market and start to enjoy the privileges of being an American are either ridiculed or ignored by their leaders.

This poses quite a dilemma. Civil rights leaders have limited Black society to two choices: Either adopt the victim mentality, wait for the handouts and be praised--or accept responsibility like a man and risk being labeled an "Uncle Tom." Personally I was fortunate to have a father who taught me discipline so I chose to be a man. Being a man means taking control of your situation and leaving charity for those who really need it. After years of being ostracized because of their reluctance to subscribe to the victim mentality, conservative Blacks have

been continuously confronted by philosophical ignorance. It stands to reason that if current African-American leaders are upset because Black conservatives use intellect and integrity to make the best of a situation, then the leaders need to take a long hard look in the mirror and ask themselves who are the real "Uncle Toms."

If promoting and dwelling in victim hood is the solution to our prosperity, why do we continue to suffer? I'm sure that you are as aware as I am that as long as we've used this excuse our situation has worsened and so has the level of self-hatred among our people. These negative consequences may not be the intent of our leaders, but the result is the same no matter their motives. It's time for African Americans to think for our-

selves and for our leaders to start listening to us and stop preaching to us. After all, we are the ones who know what's wrong with our communities. Our world is changing and so are our political opinions. If we are to be a legitimate force to be dealt with, we have to disassociate ourselves from the slave mentality and embrace the spirit of the American Constitution.

The fact is slavery was a Godawful experience and we should remember our people who were oppressed by it. But, the truth is today we are free to be victims or to be self-supporting individuals. Today, unlike our ancestors, we do have a choice. It's time for us to tell our leaders that. If they don't listen, then it's time to elect new ones.

Letter To The Editor
Send your letters to the Editor to:
Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Judicial review

As a result of my bitter and disappointing experience with the judicial system for the last ten years, I will be contacting members of Congress both at the federal and state levels to inform them and care less about their suffering.

As tragic as the injustice would do to the public because a judge breached a judicial obligation to the victims, our legislators should take notice that there is urgent need now to introduce a bill in the Congress making judges liable for breaking the law and for their betrayal of public trust in furtherance of injustice.

Personally, I will intensify all my efforts to see to it that Congress will pass a bill holding judges liable for rulings they make that is inconsistent with the moral and legal duty of our legal system. From now on, I will be proactive in this direction until the Congress acts on this issue in order to preserve the integrity of our legal system as an assurance to those victims who are seeking justice and protection.

I am ready to testify and prove that judges act and rule unlawfully whenever they have opportunity to do so. Are the members of Congress ready to listen and hear my testimony.

--Samir Tara

Committed to Bruggere

You may not be able to judge a book by its cover, but you can judge a man by his actions.

And if we were to judge Tom Bruggere's potential as a U.S. Senator by his conduct as a CEO, it would be clear that Bruggere takes his responsibility to his community very seriously.

While head of Mentor Graphics, Bruggere made a commitment to giving back to the community in a number of ways. He established sound corporate policy to reduce and recycle waste and built a wet-

lands on company grounds to protect wild species. He paid all his employees a living wage and made sure they had generous health benefits. And he made sure that part of corporate benefits were donated directly to the community in the form of funding for scholarships, public broadcasting, and cancer research.

Bruggere's conduct as CEO shows he's committed to Oregonians and their concerns. His visions and leadership are what Oregon needs in Washington.

--James Manning

Clinton's ban on tobacco

BY WILLIAM REED

Moving quickly to snuff out republican charges that he's lost the war on drugs, President Clinton has given the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to regulate tobacco and crack down on teenage smoking.

Many say Clinton's actions are politically motivated and designed to strike at a perceived weakness of his presidential foe, Bob Dole, a former smoker who this summer questions whether nicotine is always addictive. Polls show that 80 percent of Americans support restricting cigarette sales to teens. But what should be of most concerns to blacks, and their leaders, is not the politics of the situation for white people.

The ministers and politicians, who will make a fuss about our tobacco smoking is higher than average among Africa-Americans. Although we compromise 12.5 percent of the national population, among many brands we smoke 20 percent of the cigarettes sold. Blacks also chew more gum, per average, than whites, but marketplace opportunities, and philanthropy grants, from chewing gums companies back to the black community pales in comparison to the largess that comes directly to black associations, conventions, think-tanks, cultural programs, and other, and other events and projects,

from companies such as Philip Morris, R.J. Reynolds and Brown & Williamson.

The first steps towards curbing cigarette sales of the \$45 billion business are to allow the FDA to regulate nicotine as an addictive drug, ban vending machine sales, curb advertising targeted at teens and require tobacco companies to pay \$150 billion a year into a fund for educating teenagers to avoid such products. By declaring the nicotine in tobacco an addictive drug, the government could eventually rule it dangerous and outlaw drugs to adults. This borders on being a severe infringement on human and consumer rights. The bottom-line is Clinton's decision to crack down on smoking, in reality, comes from a report citing a 105 percent rise in teen drug use from 1992 to 1995. Such a surge illustrates to the white community the scourge that African Americans have known first-hand for some time, that Clinton has lost the war on drugs.

The sad fact is that the increases in kids' smoking are so far overshadowed by the geometric growth in drug use. Blacks should not allow themselves to get caught up in the current Clinton policy of smoke and mirrors. If Clinton's public policy is to break his own vow to reduce government regulations in everyday life and crack down on anything to save America, that crack-down should be

on crack cocaine. Actually African-American teen smoking is down, compared to white kids, but the epidemic of crack cocaine has shattered lives of the young, and old, of black communities across the nation. Crime, the breakdown of the black family and increasing violence and mayhem are living legacies of crack among most Black Americans in America's inner-cities.

The realities for most African Americans in not a problem of Joe Camel tee-shirts, but one of prison garb. One of every four young adult black males is held hostage in the law enforcement system due to the war on us and drugs. While many blacks allege that some segments of the government is engaged in supplying us drugs, most of our association and politicians know of the tobacco companies' reciprocity toward our communities and programs.

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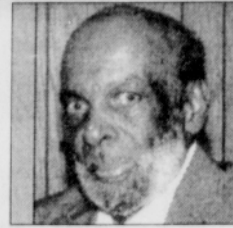
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perspectives

The Best Laid Plans for Mice and Men

"Of Mice Of Mice And Men" was the title of a famed book of popular 1930's author, John Steinbeck. He also wrote that a depression classic, "Grapes of Wrath", but it is the first novel that draws our attention to the laws which say, "if anything can go wrong, it surely will."

First off, I gave the date 1982 for the famous "Land Grant Act" (Morrill Act, Document No.



By Professor McKinley Burt

216) in the last week's description of the "most important piece of legislation on behalf of education ever passed", the correct date is July 2, 1882 (Abraham Lincoln, who signed the bill into law, didn't really live for another hundred years).

In the next instance, it seems that I completely ignored past experience when cited as a most reliable source for "documentation of fact and law", 'Documents of American History', By Henry Steele Commager (at your public library). "Murphy's Law" took over completely when several key members of a planned fows group on 'Higher Ed Finance' got lost in their exploration of other fascinating material in the historians erudite collection "of the fundamental sources of American History".

I make that reference to a memory lapse, because I have since recalled that about ten years ago I cited this same valuable book several times during a controversial series I wrote about the destructive impact of European immigration on the black economic condition. As in the present case the readers were completely overwhelmed by a rush of factual information often ignored by the general media ("Lost, strayed or stolen" as Bill Cosby used to say about 'Black History').

I say, "well and good" for it is all about learning isn't it? So our 'Upper Alberta Street Conclave on Higher Education' will be delayed a week or two. How much would 'we' be able reduce that "one third" figure given for college-bound Oregon students who leave the state? How could we possibly help resolve the enigma of the engineering

schools--upstate or downstate emphasis? (If enough citizens try?)

This morning my cab driver informed me that he has a recent engineering degree from Portland State University, but found that he did better a temporary in the field--"just didn't get no respect!" He had some interesting and rather acid comments

about PSU's "Roger Dangerfields of Technology." I'll retreat to that famous quote of yester-year, "All I know is what I read in the papers." Actually, a number of us have gone a bit further than that, especially the more well-connected members of the Association of Oregon Industry.

For now, let us return to Mr. Commager's document ranch. Among the key records and revelations to be found are such evidentiary accounts of ambition and empire as Document No. 1. "Privileges And Prerogatives Granted To Columbus", April 30, 1492 (No. 2) Papal Bull, Inter Caetera, May 4, 1493 (No. 11) The Mayflower Compact November 11, 1620 (No. 66) Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776 (No. 150) The American Anti-Slavery Society Constitution And Declaration, December 4, 1833 (and Dred Scott to Gettysburg).

The preface in my copy begins, "Here are the fundamental sources of American history which all students of the subject read 'about', but for the most part have not 'read'. The literary historians in the mid-years of the nineteenth century cared little where they found material as long as it molded well into a moving narrative". There is a further description of the serendipity course that documentation took up until the present day.

In the second half of Commager's massive book ("since 1865"), we find documents ranging from "The Freedmen's Bureau", to "Powell's Report on the Arid Lands of the West", "The Open Door In China" to the Clayton Anti-Trust Act" and "The Social Security Act" to "The Surrender of Germany".

As said, the documents are a fascinating learning process, but next week we return to 'Oregon's education process'.

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