

# Education

## Here's my yearly "Good Reading list" Part I

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

You needn't always "beware of Greeks bearing gifts" as the old saying goes. Not only did I take a different route out of 'Eden', but I have it on very good authority (hearsay, what else?) that most of the books and tapes I recommended last year proved to be most useful or enjoyable.

I am well aware of the glut of alleged information that daily besieges our ears, our mail box, the fax machine, or e-mail.

Overwhelming our ability to comprehend it, let alone classify this flood. These citations should provide in a number of categories some

basic (standard) frames-of-reference as an aid in dealing with the media on slaughter (if the "medium is indeed the message", it is getting lost in electronic translation).

The first group was obtained from the 'mail order' division of "Barnes and Noble" catalog house, not from the store. This is a direct-mail discount house with substantially lower prices than retail stores. In case they are out of stock, I also have given the author and date of publication for each book so that you may obtain the item at your regular bookstore.

Barnes & Noble, 1 pound Rd., Rockleigh, N.J. 07647 (800) 242-6657 for computer check of invento-

ry-catalog "Principles of Money, Banking and Financial Markets", "Songs of My People", 209 pp. #A137481, \$7.98 (Little, Brown) 10X12 pb. photo-journalism.

\* My copy hasn't arrived yet but publisher is quoted: "Beautiful black and white photos from a rare assemblage of black photojournalists, plus distinguished commentaries for each section: Vital Signs, The Black Male, Boyz and Girlz in the Hood, Sisters Stand Strong, and Whither the Black Family."

"Crossing the Danger Water: 300 Years of African American Writing", ed. D. Mullane, 769 pp. #A137415, \$9.98 (Anchor pb.,

1995?).

\* W.E.B. Dubois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Alice Walker, Jesse Jackson, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Zora Neale Hurston, Harriet Tubman, William Wells Brown, Sojourner Truth, others.

"Encyclopedia of Black Folklore & Humor", H.D. Spalding 523 pp., HC, #A129780, \$12.98.

\* "Demonstrates the close relationship between folklore and history."

7th edit, Ritter and Sibley, 644 pp. #A137763, \$12.98 (Basic Books, 1991).

"Psychology, An Introduction", 3rd edit, John R. Gerow, 760 pp.

#A134046, \$9.98 (Harper Collins, 1992).

"Sociobiology, a bridged edit" Edward O. Wilson, 366 pp. #A142854 [?]. (Belnap Press, 1993).

\* This is the famous book that led to the present controversy about "selfish genes" and the 'real' purpose of evolution.

"The Guinness International Who's Who Sports", 730 pp. #A142854, \$7.98 (Guinness, 1995).

"Understanding Physics", 2nd edition, Isaac Asimov, 750 pp. #1539857, \$9.98, 1995.

\* This is a revision of the original 3 volumes-in-one edition which was

very comprehensive, yet easily understood, Dorsett Press.

"A History of PT", Peter Beckman, 200 pp. #1606340, \$6.98 (Barnes & Noble Publishing Co.).

\* A must for new insights into a math function usually taken for granted. Easy, pleasurable reading for all ages.

"Sweethearts of Swing", 3-cd set #C136908, \$19.98.

\* 10 songs each from Jazz Superstars: Ella Fitzgerald, A Fine Romance, Moonlight in Vermont, etc., Sara Vaughn, Misty, Star Eyes, When Your Lover is Gone, Billie Holiday, Lover Man, Night & Day, God Bless The Child.

## The Ebonics Controversy: Questions & Answers

Given the controversy over the Oakland school system's recent decision to train its teachers in "Ebonics," Jaxfax felt it would be useful to reproduce part of the question and answer sheet put out by Ms. Carolyn M. Gettridge, Office of the Superintendent, Oakland Unified School District, (Emphasis added.)

"Are you recommending these measures because other programs haven't worked?"

"The policy affirming that every child become proficient in Standard American English is a result of some very alarming statistics presented by the task force which reviewed the district-wide achievement data of African-American students. The data showed:

- low levels of student performance;
- disproportionately high representation in special ed; and,
- under-representation in Advanced Placement courses.

"The recommendation and data

from the task force, based on academic research, indicated that the unique language pattern of African American students had a direct connection to student achievement. It was evident that students who speak in this language pattern could achieve at higher levels if they were proficient in Standard American English.

"By calling Ebonics a national language, aren't you detracting from other methods that address the academic failures of African American students?"

"The real issue is that our children are failing academically. Our goal is to build on the language skills they bring to the classroom, without devaluing the students and their diversity. Our plan is to build a bridge from the language pattern the student brings to the classroom to standard English proficiency.

"Extensive research supports the idea that language and learning are directly linked. We want teachers to

appreciate and understand the ebonic language pattern and avoid stigmatizing students who use it.

"Was Ebonics a word actually used in the resolution?"

"We want teachers to recognize and understand the language pattern and avoid stigmatizing students who use it."

"Yes, it was used in describing the various terms that relate to language patterns that are spoken by many African Americans...The Oakland Unified School District is not replacing the teaching of Standard American English with any other language. We are not teaching Ebonics.

"Is this policy recommending segregating students into separate classrooms?"

"Absolutely not—that is a misconception. What we do intend is to

ensure that every child in our school system becomes literate in writing, speaking and reading Standard American English.

"Many people believe that recog-

nizing this language pattern will actually set students back.

"What we are proposing is an education strategy for the 21st century. Extensive research supports the idea that language and learning are directly linked. We want teachers to recognize and understand the language pattern and avoid stigmatizing students who use it. We cannot ignore the findings indicating that language has a direct relationship to achievement. By recognizing this fact and putting a policy in place we

can indeed change the outcome for students.

"How do you plan to fund this program?"

"Our plan is to use existing funds in new ways...We already have teachers who have been trained in these strategies. These concepts will be integrated into the Standard English proficiency training. We are not asking for extra funds to implement this policy.

"Ebonics is inner city broken English. Why not focus on teaching the right way without bringing up the issue of where it comes from...?"

"What we are doing in Oakland is providing our teachers and parents with the tools they need to address the diverse languages our children bring into the classroom. Improper use of the English Language is being sanctioned in the classroom every day by our failure to give teachers the proper tools to address students' language needs."

Reverend Jesse Jackson had his

own phrase concerning Ebonics: Detect/redirect/correct, as a bridge to the Standard English that every child will need to face the 21st century.

The first message out of Oakland was apparently that "Black english" was going to be taught as a second language, which created the media firestorm.

However, Ebonics is not a language, and is not going to be taught in the classroom. Rather, Oakland wants to prepare its teachers to detect, redirect and correct the language of its children.

The central issue must not be lost in all the fuss over speech patterns, we must keep our focus on the marginalization of urban public education, and turn heat into light.

That is why Reverend Jackson is starting the new year by calling for a Rainbow/PUSH Public Policy Institute "Conference on Education—Closing the Gap," to be held in Chicago from February 23-25.

## PCC grads take top scores

The 1996 graduates of the Portland Community College's Ophthalmic Medical Technology program who sat for national licensure examinations this fall scored higher overall than graduates of all other programs in the nation, reports Joanne Harris, a faculty member.

The pass rate for graduates of the PCC Cascade Campus program has continued to increase for the third straight year, Harris said. Sixteen graduates sat for the exam; 14 passed. PCC graduates achieved top scores in seven of the 12 content areas of

the examination, which is conducted by the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO).

Harris noted that each college whose graduates apply for national licensure receives the examination results as the average of the combined scores for that college's applicants, rather than as individual scores.

Ophthalmic medical technicians perform eye-care procedures under the supervision of a licensed physician and assist with direct patient

eye care. The field is growing rapidly and qualified technicians enjoy an expanding job market.

The Ophthalmic Medical Technology program is one of six health professions offered at the Cascade Campus. Also, it is one of several PCC programs whose graduates have traditionally achieved superior scores on national qualifying examinations.

The college's nursing, dental, dietetic and radiology programs are based at the Sylvania Campus in Southwest Portland.

## Vernon, Humboldt elementary students receive bikes for achieving goals

A dozen youngsters from Vernon and Humboldt elementary schools who achieved school and community service goals received bikes, locks and helmets at the second annual Holiday Bike Drive Awards Saturday December 21 at the Community Cycling Center, 2407 N.E. Alberta.

The students are among 80 area youngsters from 25 schools who have received restored bikes in the holiday program, according to Center founder and director Brian Lacy. Bikes were donated over the past two months by the public and BFI, a solid waste recycler and sponsor of

the bike drive. Students from Portland's Northeast Community School, as well as volunteers from the community, have restored and repaired the bikes. Refreshments and fun activities also are in store for children, volunteers and sponsors at Saturday's bike give-away.

## Ebonics And Black English

Continued from front

I am well aware that the readers have been saturated with information and misinformation on the subject of "Ebonics and Black English." The constraints of space prompt me to address specific and salient relevancies with which I am familiar. Particularly, those interested in the modern (if flawed) concept of a "Black English" could begin with J.L. Dillard, "Black English: Its History and Usage in the United States", Vintage Books Ed. 1973.

This book is useful for two important reasons. First, it has an excellent and extensive bibliography. But, therein lies a story, a critical point that escapes most of the present controversy—leading to our second observation. Many of the citations are of studies based on analyses "Foundation of an American Ghetto Language". Mostly nonsense developed by a closed society of 'expert', many, ethnic minorities themselves (excluding blacks), and representing a large number of ivy league graduate school theses polished up for publication.

These worshippers of the anthropologist-Linguists like Saussure and Noah-Chomsky had few if any real time associations with blacks and most 'knowledge' was derived from fellow students of color and the omnipresent "literature." I always found it extraordinary that these people would always want to dwell upon 'creole and gullah dialects' found in isolated regions. But, that they completely ignore the beautiful language and diction of blacks recorded in the Congressional Record, state archives, and other governmental records at the turn of the century (1900 and before).

Completely ignored were the legislative bills written by Black Congressmen before they were ousted from the legislatures, the prideful descriptions of Black inventions and technology placed in the Congressional Record by African American legislator/inventors, and the pronouncements of Black, judges, sheriffs, custom agents, teachers and business persons among others "Niger-Congo African Language Systems?"

I suggest that the Rev. Jesse Jackson had it right the first time in his

evaluation of the Oakland debacle. And I was reinforced in my judgment by the "Today Show" of 12/31/96 when Bryan Gumble brought together Carolyn Gettridge, the African American Oakland School Superintendent and Prof. John McWorter, Black Studies Dept., USC Berkeley. A very flaky lady with a very flaky position and who quickly retreats to 'buzz words' and standard academic metaphors: "recognized-instructional methodology-aware."

In conclusion, I would remark that surely you noticed the rather fast footwork of Lucella Harrison, President of the Oakland School Board who first said she "knew of no plans for Oakland schools to apply for federal funds for Ebonics." But in the next breath she presumes us to be quite stupid, "...it is likely that 'some' black parents would press for monies." Didn't I tell you so. Thus far the President and the Secretary of Education are saying "no way, do what you've been paid to do, teach, not hustle." Certainly many other dedicated and committed districts in worse slums succeed.

## Reading, 'Riting & Race- Grading America's Education System

Education is the one thing everyone should receive equally, but is the system making the grade, "...or failing for black students"? Sharon Robinson (Assistant Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Education) and Horace Cooper (Project 21) join anchor James Brown and commentators Julian Bond and Armstrong Williams address the very strong topic of "Reading, 'Riting & Race"...is the education system the one that needs the grade? America's Black Forum (ABF), the nationally syndicated television show examines--

When it comes to graduation rates, enrollment in higher education and scores on basic skills tests, blacks are still in the back of the class.

With increasing competition for jobs and the importance of math and literacy skills in the workplace, what is the future for blacks? After decades of busing and multicultural curricula, is there a need to re-think priorities?

Guests and commentators offer different perspectives on national debates over the issues of education vouchers...private schools versus traditional public education...the back-to-basics movement and prayer in schools.

Secretary Robinson points out that studies show that the best way to eliminate violence and other problems in schools is to increase student achievement. According to Secretary Robinson, "...when students are focused on achieving well and learn-

ing well, they have a lot less time to become involved in things... that will distract them from educational opportunities." As background, ABF looks at two inner-city school systems... Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

America's Black forum is a half-hour weekly television program seen on 67 television stations nationwide. Please check local listings for airtime and station. This season, broadcaster James Brown and syndicated columnist Juan Williams serve as alternating anchors. Together with commentators Julian Bond, Deborah Mathis and Armstrong Williams, they bring fresh and decidedly "different" perspectives to current top issues.

## College credit classes offered at community schools

Mt. Hood Community College will offer several new evening credit classes at three community schools beginning in January. Classes will be held at Centennial High School, Alice Ott Middle School and Sandy High School. Regular tuition rates apply, however, the courses are free to MHCC District residents age 62 and over.

Centennial High School, 3505 S.E. 182nd St. in Gresham, will host "Principles of Accounting" (BA2311) on Mondays, 6-10 p.m.; and "Children's Literature" (ENG221) on Wednesdays, 6:30-9:30 p.m. For more information call Diane Crane at 661-7612.

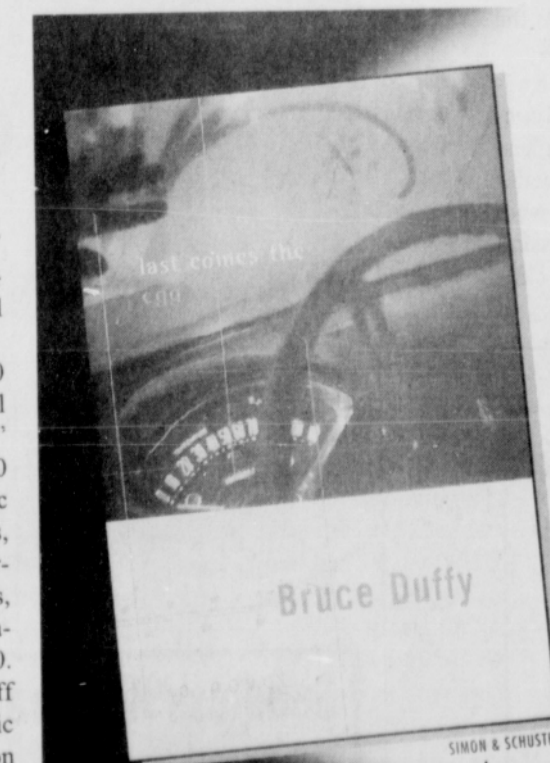
Alice Ott Middle School, 12500 S.E. Ramona St. in Portland, will host "Management Fundamentals" (BA206) on Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; "Fundamentals of Public Speaking" (SP111) on Mondays, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; and "History of Oregon" (HST240) on Wednesdays, 6:30-9:30 p.m. For more information call Dick St. Claire at 256-6510.

Sandy High School, 17100 Bluff Road in Sandy, will host "Basic Speech Communication" (SP100) on Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30 "Beginning Spanish Conversation" (SPAN111) on Wednesdays 6:30-9:30 p.m.; "Psychology of Human Relations" (PSY101) on Wednesdays, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; "First Aid: Responding to

Emergencies" (HE252) on Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; "Introduction to Your PC" (CS125PC) on Tuesdays or Thursdays, 6-10 p.m.; and "Beginning Windows" (CSX30W) on Tuesdays or Thursdays, 6-10 p.m.

for more information call Jerri Schwartz at 668-8011.

All credits earned are transferable to a four-year college or university or may be applied to a degree or certificate program at MHCC.



In Last Comes the Egg, Bruce Duffy manages the incredible. Here is an American novel that brings into uncanny focus the mysteries of life, death and lunar weirdness of adults—all as seen through the X-ray eyes of a kid. The kid's name is Frank Dougherty, and when he's twelve his extravagant mother fails him in the most profound way possible: she dies. In her wake, she leaves a new T-Bird his family can't afford and a host of troubling questions. Yet, perversely, Frank feels more alive than ever. And, in all innocence, he fights back.

**POWELL'S BOOKS**  
 • 1005 W Burnside, downtown Portland 503-228-4651  
 • 8725 SW Cascade Avenue, Beaverton 503-643-3131