

# EDITORIAL

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## The Portland Observer

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

There was something special about celebrating Dr. King's birthday on the same day President Clinton was inaugurated for his second term.

For those of us in Rainbow/PUSH, the highlights for the day were provided by Reverend Jackson's inspired preaching at the early morning prayer breakfast, as he offered to help the President mobilize and energize the population on behalf of change and reform; and the marvelous singing of Sanita Jackson, backed up by choirs from burned churches.

Much of President Clinton's Inaugural Address was also worth remembering. After all, it's not every day in America that a President talks about the curse of the racial divide in our history. Jayfax is reprinting some of those high points below (with emphasis added), and we offer our help in making these parts of his vision come true.

Frankly, we would like to see the

p e r s p e c t i v e s

## Weather Forecast: Still Overcast But Clearing Predicted, II

Last week I promised to launch my Black History Month Contributions with a recitation of the several "African Renaissance that have retrieved the fortunes of the race. This inspiring account will begin on another page.

We will continue on here with my description of the creative and skill-oriented nature of black youth of past generations; the social and cultural interaction which was self initiated and which developed and matured over the generations. This process evolved and gained sophistication mostly without adult intervention -- granted, of course, that responsible adult advice was sought and treasured when indicated by circumstance. Somehow, we've got to regain this drive.

Once again readers of the Portland Observer have expressed an intense interest in this socialization process, part and parcel of the warm spiritual and cultural inheritance that has sustained and nurtured peoples of African descent from day one. In

## NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### To redeem the promise of America

President make history books--because great presidents, enlightened presidents, are known for taking risks, for standing up for the common people, for finding solutions to age-old problems. The great historic president expanded the "big tent" that is the promise of America, using the help of an energized people.

When the President strays from these words, we will remind him; but when the President and the First

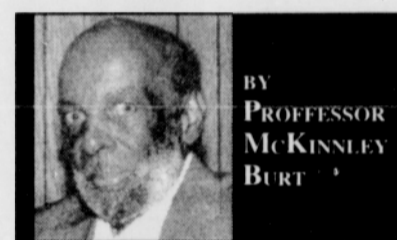
Lady stand up for them, we will fight alongside.

• "Martin Luther King's dream was the American dream. His quest is our quest--the ceaseless striving to live out our true creed.

"Our history has been built on such dreams and labors, and by our dreams and labors we will redeem the promise of America in the 21st century."

• "The divide of race has been

the few short days since the "Weather Forecast" hit the street, I have heard from directors of public agen-



BY PROFESSOR  
MCKINLEY  
BURT

cies, teachers, parents and social workers.

But it is "deja vous all over again" as that baseball manager put it, for I look back through my files and see that I have introduced this subject several times during the last decade -- emphatically! But that oxymoron aside, it is a fact that each time there has been a momentary surge of a professed interest, then the tide ebbs when it is discovered that a great deal of effort, commitment and perseverance is required.

In the mean while, of course, an increasing number of youths die on the cruel, mean streets (children, really!). I am no longer capable of personal intervention from the economic standpoint, as I did in the seventies and early 1980's. When teaching at Portland State Universi-

ty, those technical and social programs and monies I brought to this community were the result of initiatives, research, contacts and airfares funded from my faculty salary. Never a dime from any agency or foundation. We're talking hundreds of thousands.

I carefully explain this to people today, people who make those grandiose moves and "bogus" declarations of intent. I point out how depressing it is in this era of latter-day Aunt Jeminas and Uncle Toms and their "Ebonics" hustles, when I cite all of the real property resources I brought to the "hood", or the two major medical and health career programs I either saw elsewhere and brought to Portland (federally funded), or developed myself from scratch e.g. the Providence Medical Center technical training slots for high school students.

But surely the resources are there just as surely as they always have been. That is quite obvious to me as I scan the daily newspaper or watch special programs on television -- even the "news" can occasionally yield a bountiful harvest of relevant leads to resources and support. I would scan the business and indus-

America's constant curse. Each new wave of immigrants gives new targets to old prejudices. Prejudice and contempt, cloaked in the pretense of religious or political conviction, are no different. They have nearly destroyed us in the past. They torment the lives of millions in fractured nations around the world...

"We cannot--we will not--succumb to the dark impulses that lurk in the far regions of the soul, everywhere. We shall overcome them, and we shall replace them with the generous spirit of a people who feel at home with one another.

"Our rich texture of racial, religious and political diversity will be a godsend in the 21st century. Great rewards will come to those who can live together, learn together, work together, forge new ties that bind together.

"And for the very first time in all of history, more people on this planet live under democracy than dictatorship."

section of the newspaper with the telephone at hand and develop scores of summer jobs for minority youths with a few calls.

This is a skill and technique possessed by those of us who developed and matured in the real world of American economic life. And we have found it ever so difficult to transmit this know how to the 'school-of-social-work' types who, in the main, are in charge of the urban programs. And the same wall is encountered with so many -- too many -- of those in charge of the education process.

Today I listened to a tale of woe from some concerned parents with technical skills who tried to interact with a social/education programs and were "rebuffed in an effort to provide realistic skills and counsel to the youths."

I cited a neighborhood science project where I got no -- where persuading the 'black elite' to involve the very excellent role models I had recruited; a black scuba diver, a former 'Navy Seal' quite knowledgeable in oceanography -- and a black expert in traffic control technology. You see, they had "no science degrees." But held jobs.

## A small, but real salute to Dr. King

BY DR. LENORA FULANI

The empty celebration of the presidential inauguration and the equally empty celebration of political hypocrisy seen in the resolution to the Newt Gingrich ethics controversy makes me reflect ever more deeply on the profound legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The country marked his birthday in the midst of a political circus that is becoming all too common in America today.

And while the disingenuous hoopla marred the observance of Dr. King's birthday, there was a small but mighty acknowledgement of his legacy in New York City.

On January 20, the day of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday celebration, Pam Lewis, a young African-American woman and colleague of mine who is the National Producer of the All Stars Talent Show Network, together with a group of some 20 Black youths, released information on the steps of New York's City Hall crediting young people in the South Bronx, Central Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant with the unprecedented drop in crime and violence in our city.

The All Stars, a 13-year old anti-violence program, last year involved 30,000 Black and Latino youth in some of the poorest communities who produce, perform in, and attend

development workshops, auditions and talent shows. In the last three years approximately 12,500 young people participated in anti-violence events in Bedford-Stuyvesant--and during that time there has been a 22% decrease in the seven major crime categories. Five thousand young people participated in anti-violence events in Brownsville, and there has been a 37% decrease in crime. Five thousand young people participated in anti-violence events in Central Harlem and there has been a reported 36% decrease in crime. Ten thousand young people participated in anti-violence events in South Bronx and there has been a 40% decrease in crime.

"Many people are eager to claim these wonderful developments for their own gain, or even say they have a quick-fix solution to the social crisis in New York," said Pam Lewis, who has been the National Producer of All Stars for the last seven years. "The real credit goes to those who have worked to carry on Dr. King's dream--people like the youth leaders of the All Stars and many other unsung heroes in our poorest communities. They are making Dr. King's dream a reality, and he would be proud. They are the leaders of tomorrow. We must recognize their achievements, and support them to

grow!"

"Youth in my neighborhood, and all over the city, are working together to build some positive alternatives to violence and drugs--we are creating a life for ourselves and our communities," said Antoine Joyce, the 19-year-old Assistant Producer of the All Stars, who hails from Bedford-Stuyvesant.

As Pam Lewis told a reporter from Fox Television, "When the crime and violence rate is up who gets blamed? Our young people. Today the crime rate is down and I'm proud to be standing here today with some of the young people who I think deserve the credit."

As an Executive Producer of the All Stars show, I am so proud of these young people and all they have given to their peers and their communities. If you're interested in the All Stars, give me a call. Lenora B. Fulani twice ran for President of the U.S. as an independent, making history in 1988 when she became the first woman and African-American to get on the ballot in all fifty states.

Dr. Fulani is currently a leading activist in the Reform Party and chairs in the Committee for a Unified Independent Party. She can be reached at 800-288-3201 or through her home page at www.fulani.org.

## Landslides and landuse planning addressed

To the editor:

For the second time in a year, Oregon and most areas in the west have been inundated with unprecedented rainfall. The rainfall has caused injuries, death and property and resource damage in all areas of Oregon from the cities, suburbs, farms, to our coast and forests.

While the effects of the rainfall have impacted people in all areas of the state, mud slides and debris torrents that caused the tragic deaths and

destruction in Coos and Douglas counties in November and December raised a number of issues. Some of these issues relate to public safety, land use planning, clearcutting on steep slopes and its effects on slides and forest practices regulations.

Recently, there have been a number of news stories and editorials regarding the relationships between timber harvesting and landslides. In some cases, information about past studies, the Forest Practices Act and

the role and responsibility of the Oregon Department of Forestry have been inaccurate. Some comment have left the impression that the state has not and is not willing to take the necessary action on behalf of the public's safety. This is far from the truth. A number of actions are currently taking place and planned for the near future that will address many of these issues.

--Lou Torres, Oregon Department of Forestry, Public Affairs.

## Which way On MLK?

BY EUGENE RASHAD

Residents of Northeast Portland have high hopes for what's happening on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Just ask Edna Pitman.

"I've seen a lot of changes," said the 55-year-old grandmother who has lived here since 1949. Pitman was on the committee which changed the name of the street from Union Avenue to Martin Luther King, Boulevard several years ago. "Every week it seems something new is being built," she said.

### SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET

Add to this, plans for sidewalk improvements, and the introduction of on-street parking, the boulevard is fast becoming pedestrian-friendly. Part of the success is due to good timing, opportunity, and the cooperative work of several entities which include Metro officials, neighborhood association representatives, business and community leaders.

For many residents banking, shopping and grooming is a short walk onto the boulevard. Consider this: two minority-run banks, a slew of small retail outlets such as record stores, barbershops, and hair care parlors. That's not all. Add to the list major projects in the making: two multiple mixed-use projects, and a new plaza.

With current projects completed such as the Walnut Park Retail Center, with its minority-run book store, a bakery and photo studio, the potential everybody believed was there for so many years suddenly bursts into a thing that can be touched.

"This will mean more jobs and a recycling of the dollar," said Lou

Boston, who heads a training and marketing management consulting group.

MLK Blvd. may not be the next N.W. 23rd, teaming with small shops and sidewalk dining, or Southeast Hawthorne, but at least now the culture and flavor of the community has a stage to shine on again. This is far more than its ever been since the days of decline some 25 years ago. It was during the late sixties through mid-seventies.

### WHERE DID OUR LOVE GO

That period was the water mark that showed how low the area fell from grace: boarded up buildings, business closures, and vacant lots dotted the seven mile stretch once known as Union Avenue.

And although there were some gallant efforts during that time to restore the street to past glory by city and civic leaders, downshifts in the economy and job loss showed the signs of a community in decline. Than a group of residents came up with an idea to honor an American hero by renaming Union Avenue to MLK Boulevard.

### THE LONG WALK HOME

Many of the business owners rejected the idea to rename the street. Even such a worthy American like King failed to conjure within the hearts of some a spirit of positive change in the midst of low morale and business closures.

"You still have some businesses today that use the name Union Ave.," said Bruce Broussard, local business man who once owned a building on Northeast Shaver at MLK. He sold the building in 1994.

A portrait of King still blazes the side of the building. For his part, Broussard believes the name change

represented community pride and cultural identity. "You would think this city would maintain something to show the contributions of blacks," he said. Though happy with the support given by the MLK Jr. Blvd. Action Committee and other federal and state agencies, Broussard is fearful an ill wind is blowing.

"I don't know," he said, "there might be efforts to rename the street again."

He's also concerned that progress on construction of a new church at the former Egyptian Theater site at Northeast Russell Street is dragging. And he feels one car wash on the street is enough.

Broussard applauds businesses like Craven Butter and Roth BMW for staying the course.

Most folks agree that to keep the strip viable will take a community effort. Lou Boston encourages people to recycle their dollars in those businesses "even if we might have to spend a few extra bucks at first." He also sees expansion possibilities east and west on Alberta and Killingsworth streets. "I see the potential for partnerships and joint ventures."

### BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

Tough lessons and hard turns may get the community back into the driver's seat. And one thing is certain: More investment on MLK Blvd. According to stats kept by the Portland Development Commission, there has been more investments made in a five-year period from 1992 to 1997 than in the previous 25 years. The road ahead has always been straight. Perhaps now it will be a wonderful journey into the next century.



## Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:  
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