

# New Northeast Coalition President wants more outreach

BY LEE PERLMAN

Willie Brown comes from the northeast Portland community, and he'd like to see the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods be more in touch with it.

Brown is president of the board of non-profit community outreach program this year, succeeding Pauline Bradford. His personal priority this year, he says, is for the city-funded program to do better outreach to individuals and institutions in the area. For one thing, he says, he plans to visit with each of the thirteen neighborhood associations that make up the coalition and are served by it.

"I want to know if they're getting the quality of services they want," Brown says. "It's fine to make decisions in an ivory tower, but we're bound to give the services citizens want."

"One of the things we've fallen short on is our advocacy role on behalf of citizens. When people bring issues to us, we have to deal with them in a more timely manner."

Gesture toward the new development now under construction on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, and the traffic changes recently installed he says. "Decisions are being made that affect the people who live here, and how many

of them know about the hearings where those decisions are made." He is concerned, he says, by those adversely affected by the changes as well as those who benefit from them.

Brown has served on the board for five years. He has been one of the members most concerned about the loss of programs started by the agency such as the Northeast Workforce Center (which split away to become a separate agency), and the Youth Gang Outreach Program. The \$280,000 contract for the latter was awarded by Multnomah County this year to the House of Umoja in partnership with the Janus Youth Pro-

gram and Edgefield Youth Center. Brown says his concern was that the award represented a diversion of money and attention to youth crime problems away from the inner north-east.

"I certainly am concerned about the direction of funds going out of the area," he says. "There's no other area that you can tell me has the frequency of drive-by shootings, of people killed on the street, as here. I'm really appalled at the way this program was dealt with. We put it together, and they did things with it

that were not appropriate." Noting that President Clinton recently declared fighting youth gangs a top priority he says, "I hope state officials do the same. If we had the resources the state gives to fight forest fires we wouldn't have these problems."

Another priority, he says, is "doing more with less." "With Ballot Measure 47, citizens were sending a message to government. They're saying, 'You have enough money, change the way you're doing business.'" One way, he says, might be a

cooperative arrangement with other non-profit agencies to share staff functions.

Now 47, Brown works at the Donald E. Long juvenile center. He has served on the city's Housing and Community Development Commission, and the bureau's Bureau Advisory Committee. He is divorced, and has one daughter. He grew up in northeast Portland, where his mother was a foster parent for 30 years. "If it hadn't been for some caring people I wouldn't have done as well as I have," he says.

## Four great African renaissances

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

No, these fecund wellsprings of intellectual vigor did not gush forth on a single continent; but rather, the African spirit and drive is an ongoing, continuous expression of an age-old 'elan vital' (The French term for the vigorous life force of the universe).

What does Webster have to say about such momentous, culture-shaking convulsions which, sometimes, have rendered society asunder, but always have advanced mankind to a new plateau; does the dictionary definition speak to the sort of spiritual rebirths that not only have sustained the sons and daughters of Africa in times of trial and tribulation, but have propelled them to new heights? (Taking the other races along with them).

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate dictionary: "renaissance (ren-ah-sans, fr. to be born again) a. The transitional movement in Europe between medieval and modern times beginning in the 14th century in Italy, lasting into the 17th century, and marked by a humanistic revival of classical influence expressed in a flowering of the arts and literature and by the beginning of modern science." (Much more than Shakespeare told us).

On what devious rascals some Saxons can be. Just as in most American textbooks, novels and movies there is no mention of the fecund catalyst that launched this "humanistic revival of...arts, literature and science", e.g. the culture-laden "Moors", the dark-skinned

Muslims who, using Africa as a launching pad, charged across the Strait of Gibraltar into Spain and then on into France. The complexities of their populations eternally reflecting a dusky inheritance from the southern invaders who retrieved Europe from its infamous "Dark Ages".

Not only did the Moorish intelligentsia bring with them mathematics, including the ubiquitous symbol zero, and the powerful computational tool, algebra, but because their religion did not permit them to make representation of the deity or other theistic icons, their art concentrated on the exploration of geometric concepts. The beauty and intricacies of the genre led to many benefits beyond the esthetic, beyond fresco, architecture.

For instance, modern mathematicians and scientists have reaped a rich harvest from the pioneering work of the Moors; few if any giving attribution to the invaders from Africa. The Russians, who are credited with the innovation of "X-Ray Crystallography", the important tool by which chemical analyses are made, pursued this science after discovering that the Moors had completely defined the possible configurations of two-dimensional and three-dimensional space (The 230 basic space groups). Abstractions how revealed nature's order.

Those interested in more specifics of spatial geometry should get "Introduction to Geometry" by Coxeter. A most revealing look at the intellectual prowess of the dusky

Moors can be gained from the 'May-June' 1982 issue of the 'ARAMCO World Magazine', "Science: the Islamic Legacy", (Vol.33, No.3). Here, of course you get the unadulterated truth -- the power of petroleum riches can liberalize the most conservative minds, witness this introductory statement (My Muslim students told me even more).

"Because Saudia Arabia and Aramco - The Arabian American Oil Company -- have been so closely associated with petroleum, one of the world's chief sources of energy - and with each other - it is particularly appropriate that this special issue be devoted to the story of Islamic Science in both the Golden Age and the modern age; Saudia Arabia, Kuwait, The United Arab Emirates and other Islamic countries".

Will wonders never cease (also see the July, 1988 issue of "National Geographic" Magazine, "When The Moors Ruled Spain: The Art of the Moors"). The first publication from 'Aramco Inc.' 1345 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019 (I don't know the price. Mine is a courtesy copy). Some excellent books on the subject by famed black historians Van Sertims and J.A. Rogers may be found at the Reflections Book Store at Martin Luther King Blvd. and N.E. Killingsworth. I will be autographing my Book on Black Inventors there on Saturday, February 8 at 4 P.M. Another Black Renaissance.

Other "Black Renaissances" to follow in February.

## Urban League to sponsor Forum on Measure 11

The Urban League of Portland's Legal Education and Empowerment Project (LEEP) and Citizens for Measure 11 Reform are sponsoring a community forum on measure 11 on Saturday, February 1, from 10:00am to 3:00pm at Lutheran Inner City Ministries located at 4219 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Passed in 1994 by 66% of Oregon voters, Measure 11 establishes mandatory minimum sentences for certain felony crimes. Measure 11 bars early release, leave or a reduced sentence for any reason. The measure applies to juveniles 15 years or older and includes first time offenders.

The forum will include testimonials from parents and families with loved ones serving time under the measure, an overview of the impact the measure is having at both the state and local levels, and options for reform through the 1997 Oregon Legislative Session.

The purpose of the forum is to increase community awareness of Measure 11 and the ongoing effect it is having at both the state and local level and to create an opportunity for networking for people and organizations concerned with the measure and its impact. "We need to make sure that everybody knows what Measure 11 is about and the impact it is having on our community. Dis-

proportionate representation of people of color in Oregon's President and CEO of the Urban League.

Citizens for Measure 11 Reform is a recently formed group of Oregonians who are concerned about the long range effects of Measure 11 on the state of Oregon. Its mission is to affect the repeal or substantial reform of the measure.

The Urban League of Portland is a nonprofit, community-based human service, economic and social justice agency serving youth and families, students, job seekers, and seniors in the metro area. The Forum is made possible by a grant from A Territory Resource (ATR).

## Retaining African-American dollars

Ray King is president/founder of Black Heritage Products, Inc. from Greensboro, North Carolina.

Ray King was here in Portland Saturday through Monday, January 11th-13th, 1997 to demonstrate and discuss the mission of this unique Afro-American owned manufacturing company.

Black Heritage Products, Inc. has been growing since their inception in 1993 with representatives spread out across America, plus two countries with the goal to educate Afro-Americans and others to realize the collective buying power of our people and to effectively rechannel some of the millions of dollars that are currently leaving those communities back to the people, resulting in a

stronger community for all.

He shared also a startling finding that came from a Smithsonian report regarding how long dollars were retained in various communities across America. The comparison was this: dollars were retained in Anglo communities forever, Jewish communities 28 days, Asian communities 21 days, Afro communities 4 hrs.

Also only 7% of Afro American dollars were spent with each other of the collective \$350-\$400 billion at their disposal according to Kwaanza Kunjufu (Black economics).

This was very disturbing and revealing, indicating that there is a need for a change if people are truly concerned about the unable longev-ity continuation of Afro-Americans

communities.

To find out more about Black Heritage Educational Products and how you can participate and become a part of the solution instead of the problem, call Joshua Polk at 283-1476 or Balinda Bowman at (360) 944-7756, or office: (503) 285-5286 #2, 24 hours.

John Olive and Beverly Lockhart Stose are representatives of Black Heritage Educational Products. The product lines features a wide range of personal care products with unique fragrances, home care products, health, educational etc. products are marketed directly through the network market. The office is located at 7050 N.E. MLK Blvd., 285-5286, 24 hours a day. Also call for appointment 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

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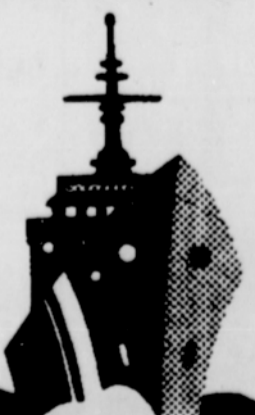
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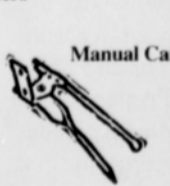
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