

EDITORIAL

Editorial articles do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of The Portland Observer

The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680) Established in 1970

Charles Washington
Publisher & Editor

Mark Washington
Distribution Manager

Gary Ann Taylor
Business Manager

Paul Neufeldt
Production & Design

Danny Bell
Advertising Sales Manager

Rovonne Black
Business Assistant

Gary Washington
Public Relations

Contributing Writers:

Professor McKinley Burt, Lee Perlman, Eugene Rashad

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.,
Portland, Oregon 97211
503-288-0033 • Fax 503-288-0015
Email: Pdxobserv@aol.com

Deadline for all submitted materials:

Articles: Friday, 5:00 pm Ads: Monday, 12:00pm

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes To: Portland Observer,
P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Second Class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

Subscriptions: \$30.00 per year

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and cannot be used in other publications or personal usage without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1996 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

The Portland Observer—Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication—is a member of the National Newspaper Association—Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc, New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association • Serving Portland and Vancouver.

SUBSCRIBE TO The Portland Observer

The Portland Observer can be sent directly to your home for only \$30.00 per year. Please fill out, enclose check or money order, and mail to:

SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER; PO Box 3137
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State: _____
Zip-Code: _____

THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In Memory of Ennis William Cosby

On a long lonely road
you waited for help
but instead of help
the devil came.
He raised his cruel weapon
and shortened your young life
but God intervened
and carried you to Heaven.
Your mother and father and
four sisters you left behind
sonless and brotherless
but your spirit lives on
in them, in us, in the world.
In the beautiful
"special children"
that you loved so much
and taught to be brave and free.
We shall miss you sorely
but we shall carry on
the work that you began
and through loving one another
keep your love and memory
alive in our hearts.

--Gina Bettis Lawrence, (1/16/97)

In memory of Ennis William Cosby who was slain on January 16, 1997, Bill and Camille Cosby have set up a foundation to help special education children.

Send Donations To: The Ennis William Cosby Foundation; c/o The Brokaw Company; 9255 Sunset Blvd, Suite 804; Los Angeles, CA 90069

Ennis Cosby graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta in 1992. He was teaching special needs students at a school in New York and was pursuing a doctorate degree in Special Education at Columbia University in New York. His goal was to dedicate his life to the teaching of special students to help them overcome learning disabilities. Ennis, himself overcame dyslexia as a college student.

An Open Letter From The Marine Corps To the Mothers and Fathers Of America

Many of you have seen the video of a hazing incident that took place in the Marine Corps in 1991. I was outraged by the images on that video. The fact that this video was made in 1991 makes no difference - not to you, not to me. I am the Commandant today and I am responsible to you for the conduct of the Marine Corps. My duty in this matter is clear.

This so called "ceremony" is contrary to that which is most dear to Marines ... the ability to count on one another to take care of one another, to be faithful to one another.

Tradition in the Marine corps has nothing whatsoever to do with hurting or humiliating each other. It has everything to do with Marines exhibiting mutual respect, a strength of character, and a willingness to sacrifice for one another.

You have entrusted your sons and daughters to my care, believing that they will be treated with dignity and respect. They have become like my sons and daughters ... that is how strongly I feel about my responsibility and your trust.

My policy for the treatment of

Marines is also clear. All Marines will be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. There is no place for hazing, sexual harassment, discrimination, or any other form of degrading or immoral behavior in the Corps. No part of what makes the United States Marine Corps the world's premier fighting force has

ever relied on brutality. These actions are anathema to our core values of honor, courage, and commitment, and those who cannot live these basic moral tenets do not deserve to wear the Eagle, Globe and Anchor. I will not allow them to tarnish the sacred trust between you and one of America's most depend-

able, steadfast institutions ... The United States Marine Corps.

I want you to know that the overwhelming majority of your Marines are magnificent ... they sacrifice daily for this great nation of ours. They do it willingly because they are men and women of character. It is with an eye towards strengthening such

character that we have, in the past year, enhanced the battle-proven way we make Marines. The "Transformation" process that has recently been so prominently covered in the media, produces stronger Marines, more capable warriors, but most importantly, Marines of character and sound values, prepared to fight and win not only the warfighting challenges of today's world, but the ethical challenges as well.

Semper Fidelis, C.C. Krulak, General, U.S. Marine Corps; Commandant of the Marine Corps

The upcoming Citizenship Education Fund & Rainbow/PUSH Coalition Public Policy Conference on Education (Feb 23-25) is shaping up to be a major event concerning urban education.

Rev. Jackson first had the idea for the conference during the media firestorm about Ebonics, believing that educator could use the public debate about Ebonics to lift up the real issues facing urban schools these days.

In fact, Rev. Jackson's keynote address on Monday morning Feb. 24th, is entitled: "Turning Heat into Light," as a direct result of the Ebonics debate (We should note that due to space limitations, attendees are by invitation only. If you are interested in attending, please contact Ms. Wilma Brooks at CEF, 202.296.6726, and she can give you more details.)

The Council of Great City Schools has agreed to co-sponsor the event, which will attract many of the School

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Closing the gap

Superintendents of our nation's largest school districts. Among those who have agreed to participate are:

*U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, who will speak at lunch on Tuesday, 2/25, discussing Federal priorities for the next 4 years, a timely presentation given President Clinton's emphasis on education in his State of the Union address.

*Dr. Mary Francis Berry, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

*Chicago School Superintendent Dr. Paul Vallas.

*Dr. William Julius Wilson, Uni-

versity of Chicago, an expert on societal problems caused by unemployment, whose keynote address at lunch on Monday, 2/24, is entitled "Economics & The Social Impact."

*Dr. Charles Ogletree of Harvard, who has agreed to serve as facilitator for the event.

*Dr. Henry Gates, Harvard's DuBois Institute, who will keynote dinner on Monday with an address entitled "Racism & Education."

*Dr. Barbara Sizemore of DePaul University, who will lead a Town Hall session on "Standards, Stereo-

types, and Student Performance" on Monday afternoon.

*Dr. Samuel Proctor, who will keynote breakfast on Tuesday, 2/25, on "The Challenge of Character Education."

*Dr. Wayne Watson of Kennedy-King College, which is hosting the conference.

The conference participants will also visit the new Cook County education, jail vs. Yale. This nation is spending more every year on prisons, while finding it harder every year to maintain its urban schools. Urban education, particularly for minority students is in a state of emergency with ramifications that go far beyond radio talk show rhetoric about Ebonics.

This conference will not only discuss the current state of emergency; we will also discuss "best practices" from America's urban schools, and issue a 10-point plan of action for the urban schools of the next century. We will, in short, turn heat into light concerning urban education.

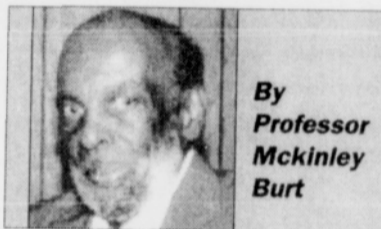
Have I Got An Education Plan For You!

You might very well ask what brought on this new brain storm? No mystery; President Clinton said, "My No.1 priority for the next four years is to ensure that all Americans have the best education in the world."

Whoa! How many times and in how many ways have we been told this in some form or fashion over the last forty years? Ever since that catholic priest upset the education establishment with his book, "Why Johnny Can't Read", we the people-public, parent-have been hammered besieged and beguiled with a zillion promises and protestations to the effect that "things are going to get better." From politicians and educators alike.

Well it just so happened that my reading of the White House polemics coincided with a phone call from "The Black Inventors Museum" in St. Louis, Mo. It seems that they had just discovered that the author of their best selling book - my "Black Inventors of America" -- was a "home town brother". They also would like

a special late spring appearance on my part. Right on! But the best part of our half-hour conversation was our absolute agreement on an effective education process.



By Professor McKinley Burt

The principal agenda for our mutual admiration society turned out to be a common interest in repairing a disabled education system that "might not yet be beyond retrieval." As a fact, my electronic correspondent was as her mother had been, a teacher in the St. Louis school system. Add that to the fact that my mother and aunt had similarly been employed in the same city, and you have the makings of a very, very productive discussion.

Particularly, we reached consensus on two very important issues. Quite naturally, I suppose - since her forte also is African

American technology - she supports my thesis that in an age of technology, nothing could be more logical and productive in the motivation and education of black youth than the use of such superb role models as the many African American inventors and scientists of the industrial revolution.

Secondly, since our 'love affair' with the role of the pedagogue goes back for several generations, we achieved mutuality in another perception as well; that schools were much better 'back then' -- certainly in St. Louis. And here, of course, is where I began to see very clearly that the restoration of a competent education system in America -- and the implementation of effective learning systems -- does not depend upon the importation and imitations of systems in China, Japan, Germany, Sweden or anywhere else.

"My Plan" is simple. Not so much "back to the drawing board" as "back to the future". A future that was more than adequately prepared for 'back then' before World War II when even in the Jim Crow ghetto

schools it was thoroughly understood that language was a precise code that would not only expedite upward mobility and economic success -- but would unlock the mysteries of science and mathematics.

A number of times in these columns I have cited the very basic curriculum of a southern ghetto high school in the 1020's and 1930's. Algebra I & II, Geometry I & II, General Science I & II, Biology I & II, Physics I & II and Chemistry I & II. Then there was History, Geography, a mandatory 'choice' of either Latin or French, with English all four years. Oh yes, there was mandatory music -- general, band, glee club or choir. Also gym and sports. That is if you wished to get a diploma!

Of course, you could handle this rigorous academic exercise because in grammar school you had learned all the parts of speech by the fifth grade, and by the eighth grade you didn't split infinitives, end a sentence with a preposition, or mismatch verbs and subjects. Have I got a plan for you!

Civil Rights Journal

Chicken Rights VS Human Rights

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

Perhaps you remember the news story. It was 1993 and 25 workers were killed in a fire in a chicken processing plant in North Carolina. Most of them black women. All of them dead because the doors to the plant had been chained by the owners, who had accused workers of theft.

Perhaps you don't remember that it was a Perdue plant in Hamlet, NC, a tiny town whose only significant employer is Perdue. A town with a majority African American population, in one of the poorest counties in the state. A county where the chief of police and school board are white and there is still a baseball park which was donated on the condition that it remain for whites only.

A recent report by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), an interfaith organization dedicated to non-violence and economic and racial justice, was the outcome of the work of its Women of Color in the Workplace Project and a series of hearings

and interviews conducted as a result of the 1993 fire. FOR found that employees work in conditions hazardous to their health and that the plant doctors are not adequately treating injured employees.

I also found that workers are required to clean and gut chickens at the rate of 120 per minute on the processing line and to sort and pack 30 to 40 wings a minute. As a result, many of the workers are experiencing carpal tunnel syndrome; some after only three or four weeks working on the line.

When workers report to the plant doctors, they are given pain relievers and told to return to the line. Many workers have been permanently disabled, with crippling in their hands, muscle spasms and serious back problems.

Workers reported to FOR that government officials and others routinely call the plant before inspections. Thus, when they arrive, the line is slowed down and "hand-picked" workers answer questions with guarded replies.

Some of the women also reported

that working conditions are degrading in addition to being dangerous. For instance, workers are only allowed to leave the processing line during lunch and the two breaks they are given a day. Sometimes they have no choice, therefore, but to urinate on themselves. One woman, suffering from a urinary tract infection, was forced to stay on the line even after urinating on herself. When she did report to the nurse, she was refused permission to go home and change her clothes. She had to return to the line in soiled clothes, despite working in very cold conditions.

According to the FOR report, the Perdue Lewiston plant is "very clearly divided by gender and race," with 95% of the workers being African Americans who work primarily in non-managerial positions, while the other 5% are white and work primarily as managers, doctors, supervisors or secretaries in the office. Processing line workers earn about \$12,000 a year before taxes.

There is no union at the Perdue plant, although unions have twice

had votes, they did not win. Hearings conducted by the National Labor Relations Board confirmed that there had been violations in the first election and prior to the second vote. Perdue is reported to have offered workers cash bonuses of up to \$1,000. The union is seeking to have the second vote set aside as well.

The FOR report reminds us that we live in a consumer society where everything comes packaged for our convenience. We take for granted buying boneless, skinless chicken breasts, the women who work on the processing line -- in unsafe working conditions and at very low wages -- are invisible to us.

(You can write to Perdue at Perdue Farms, Old Ocean City Rd., Salisbury, MD 21801 or to the NC Commissioner of Labor and Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Harry Payne, at 413 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, NC 27603. Tell them you support a safe working environment, adequate medical treatment and the right to organize without interference.)



Letter To The Editor

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