

# EDITORIAL

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

## Attention Readers!

Please take a minute to send us your comments. We're always trying to give you a better paper and we can't do it without your help. Tell us what you like and what needs improvement... any suggestions are welcomed and appreciated. We take criticism well! Get your powerful pens out NOW and address your letters to: Editor, Reader Response, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

## 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	Tony Washington Arts & Entertainment
Gary Washington Public Relations	Audrey Washington Business Assistant

### Contributing Writers:

Professor McKinley Burt, Lee Perlman,  
Neal Heilpern, 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.  
Periodicals 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.



## Letter To The Editor

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

## All Young People, Their Parents, and the Community-At-Large

Dear Friends:

On February 12 it was not a good day for the kids on Hawthorne or nearby Belmont Street. The police were out in force, undercover buying and busting, buying and busting. Like shooting fish in a barrel, why go after real criminals when it's so easy to bring down some kids for pot. After all, in the stats it's just another drug bust to justify a continuation of "war."

Consider what happened to one young lady as she was using a public pay phone adjacent to Coffee People at SE 35th and Hawthorne. I'm not going to reveal her name, because her mother - a local business owner - is out of town at the moment and I want her to hear it from her own daughter first. I can tell you this though, she is one of the best kids I've ever known, she's considerate, intelligent, and about as big a risk to this community as a fly.

She explained that as she was talking on the phone a couple male officers came up behind her, grabbed the phone out of her hand then proceeded to search her. Why? Because she had reached into her pack for something and the officers thought that was justification for a search. A search that involved these two male officers making this young girl lift her skirt to prove she didn't

have any drugs taped to her legs. Mind you this is out on Hawthorne, in the middle of the day.

Needless to say this young lady is hurt and she now fears the police. But she's also very angry about this violation of her person. She promised to come to the next meeting and share this experience with the group. If anyone from the press or media wants to talk with her, please call me I'll try to arrange it with her mother.

It's so hard to believe I sat here last night with 15 other people and we talked in a calm, rational way about the harm these sweeps were doing. How we as a community want to approach this problem differently, with compassion and understanding. Representatives of both Southeast Uplift (Martha Gross, 232-0010) and the Hawthorne Blvd. Business Association (Nancy Chapin, 774-2832) were present at last night's meeting. The HBBA met on February 13th at the SEUL office. Obviously the results of last night's meeting were completely ignored. I wonder what kind of message that sends to the kids?

**"Kids & Drugs On Hawthorne"**  
Tuesday, Feb. 18 7:30 p.m. at the  
Phantom Gallery 3125 SE  
Belmont Street, Portland, Oregon  
In solidarity for "Drug Peace!"  
Floyd Ferris Landrath - Director

In the February 24, 1997 New Republic, Roger Simon summarizes the latest installments of the Jackson/Clinton dance. The thrust of the article, which makes little attempt to be fair to Jackson, is clear from its subhead: "How Bill Sandbagged Jesse."

[This is only the most recent example of the genre Rev. Jackson classified under the "Jesus Can't Swim" category--as in, if the modern-day press had been present when Jesus got out of the boat and walked across the water, the next morning's newspapers would have blazed this headline: "Jesus Can't Swim!"]

As is traditional with the new Republic, especially in commentaries on Jesse Jackson, the Rainbow, or anything progressive, there are belittling insinuations, misleading assumptions, and inaccurate conclusions drawn from insufficient

## NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### Not So Simple, Simon

data.

And, of course, there is the usual snide commentary intended to demean Jackson--what New Republic article would be complete without it?

Despite all that, a close reading of the essay led this observer to conclude that it actually proves Jackson's clout, rather than the "political irrelevancy" the article implies.

In an attempt to demonstrate that Bill Clinton and the White House

political team "sandbagged" Jesse into supporting the President's re-election campaign, Simon really shows that Jackson forced a reluctant White House to:

- defend affirmative action ("mend it, don't end it");
- protect Medicare & Medicaid in the budget negotiations;
- spend a tremendous amount of time and energy worrying about what Jesse--and therefore his constituencies--wanted (e.g., standing strong

against the church burnings);  
• refuse the bad budget deal offered by Gingrich and the Republican Congress, leading to the government shutdown which America, and boosted Clinton's popularity back up to a level which eventually led to his re-election. (We should note here that Jackson's position of standing firm on the budget won out over the objections of Dick Morris; in short, even according to the New Republic, Jesse's politics were a main force in Bill Clinton's victory, over the opposition of his much-touted experts! Good, progressive principle and policy was also good politics--take that, conventional wisdom!)

The truth is, Rev. Jackson made a conscious decision not to challenge the President. He concluded this was the best strategy he had to defend his principles, and the people he fights for, over the long run.

## Celebrating Black History: Reflections On The Motherland

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

**Black History Month, began as Negro History Week by the African-American historian and scholar Carter G. Woodson, is a time for all Americans to recall the contributions of black inventors, philosophers, entrepreneurs, educators and activists. It is a time to name for our children the names of those who helped to build this nation.**

But this year I am celebrating Black History Month by remembering those whose names we don't know--those who died on the trek to the slave ships, those who died in the dungeons awaiting the boats, those who died on the waters of the Middle Passage, those who died once they reached the shores of the Americas. And this year I am remembering those who lived through the unspeakable horrors of enslavement, but whose names we will never know.

Ghana lies on the coast of West Africa and a pleasant two-hour drive up the Atlantic coastline brought me to the towns of Elmina and Cape Coast. Perched on their shores are two large fortresses, one built by the English, the other by the Portuguese.

These fortresses were originally built for their trade of gold and Ivory and other natural resources, but these nations soon found a much more profitable trading commodity--human beings being sold as slaves. These buildings are ironically and euphemistically called slave castles.

The fortresses were turned into dungeons where women and men were held separately in dark, crowded, dank conditions for up to twelve weeks until the next ship arrived. Some had already perished on the long, tortuous march to the coast and those who remained alive were weakened and exhausted. They were herded into large rooms with little ventilation or light, with few or

no provisions for sanitation. Those who rebelled were put into rooms with no light and no air and given no food or water until they died a slow, painful death. Women were often brought out into the courtyard and chained to cannonballs for the commanders and soldiers to choose sexual partners from.

At the Cape Coast slave castle there is a narrow door marked the Door of No Return. Through that door those surviving the forced march and the imprisonment were taken, single-file and still in chains, into the waiting ships for the long trip over the Atlantic. Once through that door, those men and women would never again see their families, their friends, their native land. It was a doorway into hell for them and they would never again return or be free.

More and more African Americans are visiting Ghana and visiting the slave castles in order to understand our history. Very few of us are blessed

as was Alex Haley to have the stories of our ancestors passed down from generation to generation so that we can actually identify where our ancestors came from. But we can see for ourselves the places in Ghana and Senegal which our unnamed and unknown ancestors endured so that we might live.

As you walk over the bridge which spans the moat around the Elmina slave castle, the guide asks all to stop for a moment of silence and to let visitors know that you are stepping onto sacred ground. And the sign inside calls upon the world to never again allow such genocide, such atrocities to occur.

As we celebrate Black History Month, let us recall with a new sense of awe those whose names we don't know. And let us understand that we who are African Americans may truly be the Eighth Wonder of the World simply because our ancestors did survive those unspeakable horrors so that we might exist.

## Part I: The Triumph and Tragedy of Bill Cosby

BY EARL OFARI HUTCHINSON, PH.D.

**What started out as a relaxing evening at a local jazz club in Hollywood quickly became an annoying experience for me sitting at the table next to Bill Cosby.**

Cosby had barely taken his seat when people began parading to his table waving their business cards and shouting one scheme or another in his face. They bumped and jostled me as they passed with no thought of apology. This incident happened several years before NBC's The Cosby Show, enshrined him as America's number one dad, and made him one of America's wealthiest men.

But that evening Cosby was already a hot commodity. He was the first black to co-star in a network TV series I Spy, the national pitchman for Jello-O and Coca Cola, and a popular nightclub comedy per-

former. Cosby took the intrusion in stride. He smiled at each supplicant, shook their hands, took their business cards and listened patiently to their pitches.

As I watched the spectacle at his table I suddenly felt intense empathy for him. He was a public figure who could not relax and enjoy a quiet night out. Once or twice when I caught his eye, he nodded at me, faintly smiled, and shrugged, as if to say, this is the price I must pay for being a celebrity.

Two decades later, Cosby was still paying that price. He was voted by an MCI Father's Day Poll, in USA Today in 1996 as the most memorable TV dad of all time. And was at or near the top of Forbes annual list of the richest entertainers in America, with his net worth at an estimated \$300 million. He was so idolized that the FBI enlisted him in its national publicity campaign to

find missing children.

Cosby had seemingly smashed all the barriers to African-American progress in entertainment and society. The New York Times called him "The black face that's a mirror for everybody." He had become a mythic icon and America's universal symbol of hope and accomplishment.

That all suddenly paled when Cosby heard the shattering words from an LAPD official, "I have the worst news to tell you," during a rehearsal for his CBS show. The bad news was that his son Ennis had been murdered.

The public reaction came as close as American comes to a national day of mourning that is traditionally reserved after the deaths of Presidents and revered public figures. Ennis' life even offered tragic vindication for Cosby's preachments and ideals. His was a story of a directionless and

underachieving young man struggling to get out from under the massive shadow of his superstar father.

The Cosby image was carved from a life that is a storybook testament to the American dream. The son of a Navy messman, Cosby grew up in a rough Philadelphia neighborhood, dropped out of college, bounced around for a short while on the comedy circuit before finding success with his nightclub act.

His first big break came in 1964 when he landed the co-starring role in the I Spy TV adventure series. Cosby was paid \$1,250 per episode and for a time spent money like crazy.

Despite his achievements there were still two huge problems that money and fame couldn't erase: negative stereotyping and racism in the entertainment world. Cosby realized that even his legendary stature didn't exempt him from either.

## The Renaissance Market: an idea whose time has come

BY EUGENE RASHAD

**Residents of Portland get another opportunity to patronize a minority-owned grocery store with the grand opening of The Renaissance Market.**

Formerly E&M Market, located at 909 North Killingsworth St., last year Emmanuel Temple Full Gospel Pentecostal Church purchased the store. The Emmanuel Community General Services, a non-profit development organization, will oversee the day to day operation of the market.

### SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL GROCER

Nothing explains why people would complain about the need for minority-owned business, but refuse to patronize. Previous owners finally had to shut down for good last April due to poor sales overhead. The new owners taken in all past mistake and plan to market the store with great energy and enthusiasm. The blending of community spirit and commerce comes at the right time and could lead to a cultural renaissance.

### PEOPLE OVER PROFITS

The store must now show people something they can touch which demonstrates that community investment and pride is a priority. The stores must offer tangible proof that something is being put back in the community. And this is where the greatest chance for success of The Renaissance Market lies. Here's why.

Operators of the market have a stated goal to make the store more than a place to get groceries. For example, with each purchase shoppers are contributing to the building and support of community based programs that assist youths.

Monies will be reinvested into social service programs to create mentorships, and job training.

The store wants to convey the idea of a community, family-oriented market. Hence, no cigarettes or alcoholic beverages will be sold. And because members of the church nearby will undoubtedly shop at the store, a real opportunity for connecting with people exist.

### TRUST IS THE KEY

In order to succeed, smaller operations such as The Renaissance

Market must depend on loyalty of neighborhood residents for support to keep the door open.

In his book TRUST Francis Fukuyama writes, "...The ability to associate depends on the degree to which communities share norms and values and are able to subordinate individual interests to those of larger groups." Fukuyama concludes that out of such selflessness and shared values comes trust, and trust has a large and measurable economic value."

### REINVENT CAPITALISM

There must be a blending of social values with economic reality to generate consistent commerce and growth in business. A task which now confronts The Renaissance Market and the community it seeks to serve. Thomas Gladwin observes in his book Sales Of The White Myth "...The most profoundly destructive effect of capitalism on a communal, kinship-oriented society lay in undermining the bonds of family, clan and community." Most people stake a claim in familial ties and bonding with each other.

Capital To The People

Individual gains must not displace the idea to serve one's community. The people should come first, not profits. The business community wonders why the original store had such a rough time convincing people to shop there.

One major obstacle is fragmentation of the community. The competition will not be with large chain grocery stores that can offer a cheaper price. The community must see that the store represents cultural pride, community spirit, and with support, reasonable prices.

### UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY

With the backing of Emmanuel Temple Church, history is on the store's side this time around. That's because of adherence to an age old lesson: The parts are no greater than the whole. With the opening of the store under the auspices of the church community, shoppers can be taught that "Charity begins at home and spreads abroad." It's been a long walk down the aisle, but the basket always returns with tithes.

The Renaissance Market, with community support, is an idea whose time is now.

## 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