

EDITORIAL

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Standing for Children in 1997

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

Last year on June 1, over 300,000 Americans came together in Washington, D.C. at the single largest demonstration ever on behalf of America's children. Sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund and co-sponsored by 3,700 plus other organizations, Stand for Children showed that Americans do care about what happens to our children and re-committed themselves to caring for all our nation's children.

In 1997 the Children's Defense Fund is once again sponsoring Stand for Children on June 1, but this year's version will not take place in the nation's capital, but in our own communities. This year, Stand for Children will focus on the health of our children because there are 10 million children (one in every seven children) who have no health insurance. Nine in ten of them live in working families. Likewise, every day 466 babies are being born to mothers who received little or no prenatal care and 788 babies are born below normal birthweight.

Stand for Children will focus on the health of our children because one in four children under age two are not fully immunized and one million babies and toddlers have anemia and hundreds of thousands suffer from life-threatening asthma and undetected and untreated vision, hearing and learning problems. Stand for Children will focus on health of children because every day 16 children die from gunfire.

This year the Honorary Chairpersons of Stand for Children are

Rosa Parks and Rosie O'Donnell, who believe that the precarious health of so many American children is morally wrong and unnecessary. Indeed, meeting all our children's health coverage needs is an urgent and achievable goal for our nation.

Each community will participate in Stand for Children in its own way. Some will have a rally or parade, some will have immunization fairs, some will have playground clean-ups, some will have student-led drives against cigarette smoking and alcohol abuse, some will have church-sponsored programs for safe spaces for children.

Complementing the local Stand for Children Day activities will be a "Virtual Stand for Children," an online event that will take place on the Internet from May 25-June 7. During these two weeks people will be able to come together at the Stand for Children web site to sign a petition, to find out about local events, and get information on children's health.

If you are interested in participating in Stand for Children 1997, write to them at 1835 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 or call 800-663-4032 or fax 202-234-0217. Their internet e-mail address is TellStand@stand.org and the web page address is www.stand.org.

(Bernice Powell Jackson is Executive Director of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ in Cleveland, Ohio.)

As we mentioned in last week's message, the Rainbow/PUSH Public Policy Institute was meeting in Memphis, to honor the life and vision of Dr. King.

As we revisited Dr. King's words and remembered his teachings, I was reminded of a wonderful essay written about the time of President Clinton's inaugural address, by columnist Holly Sklar (author of the book "Chaos or Community?").

Since progressive columnists like Ms. Sklar are rarely given space in America's major newspapers, most of you never got a chance to read her essay. We think it is worth seeing, especially as we reflect on the three decades since Dr. King's murder.

Ms. Sklar has graciously given us permission to re-run her copyrighted column below:

Imagine that today was Martin Luther King's presidential inauguration. What would he tell us?

I believe he'd tell us how to make the American dream real for everyone. He told the students of Lincoln University in 1961, "The substance of the dream is expressed in these sublime words... 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'"

King preached in his last Sunday sermon that "if a man doesn't

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

What Dr. King Would Tell Us

have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness."

To make the American dream real for everyone, President King would say, "We need an Economic Bill of Rights. This would guarantee a job to all people who want to work and are able to work."

President King would focus our attention on the "glaring contrast of poverty and wealth."

Since the 1970s, the top 1 percent of families have doubled their share of the nation's wealth, while the percentage of children living in extreme poverty also has doubled.

President King would not take the low road of ending welfare, but the high road of ending poverty and unemployment. In his book, "Where Do We Go From Here?", he wrote, "The time has come for us to civilize ourselves by the total, direct and immediate abolition of poverty."

President King would tell us, "There is nothing but a lack of social

vision to prevent us from paying an adequate wage to every American citizen whether he be a hospital worker, laundry worker, maid or day laborer. There is nothing except shortsightedness to prevent us from guaranteeing an annual minimum--and livable--income to every American family."

President King would show us the wisdom of having full employment instead of full prisons. He would encourage the states to stop shifting money from education to incarceration.

President King would tell us why we still need affirmative action: "The roots of racism are very deep in our country, and there must be something positive and massive in order to get rid of all the effects of racism and the tragedies of racial injustice."

He would tell us that discrimination has not been reversed. The Black unemployment rate is still more than twice that of Whites. White men hold 95 percent of senior corporate

management positions, while the United States imprisons Black men at a much higher rate than South Africa did under apartheid.

President King would lead us in changing our national priorities. As he told students at Lincoln University, "I never did intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few."

President King would not slash aid to impoverished Americans, disabled children and elderly refugees to close a budget deficit produced by excessive military spending, tax breaks for the rich and subsidies for globetrotting corporations.

"A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death," he warned in his famous 1967 speech at Riverside Church.

President King would show us the meaning of leadership, just as he did in his last Sunday morning sermon: "On some positions, cowardice asks the question--is it expedient? And then expedience comes along and asks the question--is it politic? Vanity asks the question--is it popular? Conscience asks the question--is it right?"

King never had a chance to become president. But we can continue his work by opposing cowardice and expediency--and by standing up for what's right.

perspectives Business Information You Can Trust

While I've expressed considerable concern that neophyte small business persons might be misled by the jumble of alleged business information on the market--much produced by hucksters who have no more experience than those whom they presume to advise--there are some excellent guides based upon the 'real' world.

For openers I suggest, "Starting & Operating A Business in Oregon: A Step by Step Guide", Jenkins and Sniffen. The Oasis Press, 1996. (300 North Valley Drive, Grants Pass, OR 97526) Should be available at your local bookstore.

This comprehensive 8X10 1/2 manual does in fact take you step by step from "making the decision to go into business" and "choosing the legal form" through "a trip through the red tape jungle", "licensing-business pointers--sources of help and information" to "Federal and State laws and taxes." The well-designed manual contains a number of relevant forms and worksheets including valuable self-evaluation checklists for going into business.

Many long-term readers of the Portland Observer may nod their heads in assent when I place a stamp of approval on a business text, but that is because they are familiar with my decades of real-time business experience. Others know only of my academic tenure at Portland State University although it was said by both the business school faculty and older-students from the ranks of industry that I brought a high level of realism to the genre of urban economics.

When a text like this meets with my unstinting approval it is because I am drawn back in time to consider how hazardous was the domain of commerce when I started out as a young accountant in 1949. One had to put together one's own "How-to-do-it" guide book; perusing federal, state, county and city forms and law, begging and borrowing critical information from wherever and whomever.

However, it is not as though the development of such technique and

discipline is a waste of effort. Through the years of public and industrial accounting or business ownership and office management, the ability to organize and classify the information relevant to a process always kept me a step ahead of the game and competition. This proved to be a very effective tool in designing meaningful curriculum at the university.

So what we are saying here is that even though you didn't collect the information in this business text from all the diverse sources, it nevertheless has an intrinsic value as a model for the process; study it carefully.

A number of years ago I cited two valuable sources of classified and specific information for either the new or the experienced entrepreneur; for the very small or for the large scale operation. Find both of these at your downtown public library; the first is described below.

For marketing or operating infor-

mation see "Gale's Encyclopedia of Associations." America is the most organizing country in the world as you will quickly learn from this book. Every association is listed from farming and manufacturing to religious and fraternal--from ethnic and academic to military and retail. From the National Association of Supermarkets to the Association of Charitable Foundations or those groups related to foundations, recording industry, foundations, prisons (prisoners), whatever. And, all have membership lists.

As they say, it should not take a rocket scientist to see what a valuable tool this book can be for marketing. Another aspect is that most of these groups develop crucial operating and accounting materials specific to their function. This would include marketing, personnel, equipment, materials quality control.

How do you think I was able to set up the Union Avenue Finance Company for those used car dealers back in 1949 and only a year out of school. I got a complete set up from the National Association of Auto Finance Companies in Utah.

This Way for Black Empowerment "Remaining awake through a great revolution"

BY DR. LENORA FULANI

I recently read in the New York Times of President Clinton's plans to issue an apology on behalf of the Federal Government for the secret syphilis experiment run on African Americans from 1932 to 1972.

On the same page of the newspaper was another article headlined, "As His Legacy, Clinton Seeks to Improve Race Relations."

The writer of the second article stated: *Under fire for months over Democratic campaign finance practices, the White House has been searching for issues and events that make Mr. Clinton appear intent on the people's work, rising above what his aides hope will seem by contrast to be inside-the-Beltway nattering. A high-profile stance on race would seem to fit snugly with that strategy.*

The tortured and incomplete struggle for civil rights and economic inclusion for Black Americans is, in the eyes of our President (and the

political party to which we have given our uninterrupted loyalty for 60 years), an opportunity to score political points, deflect public criticism and create a "legacy" for himself.

Perhaps Mr. Clinton, ever on the lookout for chances to use his "triangulation" formula--zigging and zagging from left to right in the hopes of identifying a center he can cling to--wants to counterbalance the "legacy" of his welfare bill and other assaults on the poor and people of color.

This month marks 29 years since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I recently read the text of Dr. King's last Sunday morning sermon entitled "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution," delivered just five days before his death. It is a stirring response--three decades early--to Mr. Clinton and other advocates of his brand of welfare reform.

Now there is another myth that still gets around; it is a kind of overreliance on the bootstrap philosophy. There are those who still

feel that if the Negro is to rise out of poverty, if the Negro is to rise out of slum conditions, if he is to rise out of discrimination and segregation, he must do it all by himself. And so they say the Negro must lift himself by his own bootstraps.

They never stop to realize that no other ethnic group has been a slave on American soil. The people who say this never stop to realize that the nation made the black man's color a stigma; but beyond this they never stop to realize the debt that they owe a people who were kept in slavery 244 years.

In 1863 the Negro was told that he was free as a result of the Emancipation Proclamation being signed by Abraham Lincoln. But he was not given any land to make that freedom meaningful. It was something like keeping a person in prison a number of years and suddenly discovering that the person is not guilty of the crime for which he was convicted. And you just go up to him and say, "Now you are free," but you don't

give him any bus fare to get to town. You don't give him any money to get some clothes to put on his back or to get on his feet again in life.

...It's all right to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps.

We must come to see that the roots of racism are very deep in our country, and there must be something positive and massive in order to get rid of all the effects of racism and the tragedies of racial injustice.

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., March 31, 1968

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 the Committee for a Unified Independent Party. She can be reached at 800-288-3201 or at www.Fulani.org



Letter To The Editor

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