

EDITORIAL

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The Portland Observer

The Portland Observer

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Letter to the Editor

Attention Portland to Vancouver Commuters:

I have been intently watching the number of vehicles that travel to and from Portland/Vancouver with one person in the car for quite some time. Unfortunately, I am one of these people, but not by choice. (Granted, for those of you who may argue, I do not live and work in the same city). However, I have contacted Tri-Met carpool matching programs and they've been looking for a match for 8 months now. I am shocked and displeased that there is no match yet, but I understand that the number of requests they receive is still low.

I am very surprised and somewhat irritated by this. I thought more people living in the Northwest would be more involved when it comes to protecting the environment. Even if you don't care about the air we breathe or what all the pollutants are doing to our health and the environment, do you not care about how much money you spend on wear and tear on your car or on gasoline? Ok, if that doesn't bother you either, then how about the headaches and hassles from driving back and forth to/from Vancouver every day? Don't tell me you enjoy it! Everyone I know complains about it I personally am tired of it for all the reasons above.

I am personally asking you to please consider carpooling--even One day each week will make a difference. It may seem like too small a thing to bother doing, but really, if each of us (look at the number of cars) didn't drive one Day, it would make a big difference. Perhaps we could even lessen the traffic problems this way. Or, if you want you could alternate with another person and carpool two days or more. Some people list that they would prefer to be a driver only, a rider only or both. The options are limitless.

How does it work? Actually it's very simple. You call the carpool match office, they ask you some questions, they add you to their list, and you wait for a match. It is your choice as to what pick-up address you list. They will not give out your home address or your last name. They will give out whichever phone number you list. And you can decide if you'd like to commute with a person of the same gender if you like. So really, why not at least give it a try?

Here are the phone numbers: If you live in Portland, Tri-Met, Von at 503-238 5833; if you live in Vancouver C-Tran, Lori at 360-696-2824.

I encourage you to consider it and at least give it a try. If more people don't join, the people who have already joined may not get a match (like me). And then, the whole idea will never work.

A concerned resident of the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

The first annual conference of the newly-merged Rainbow/Push Coalition will be held in Chicago, from Wednesday, July 30th through Saturday, August 2nd. Please join us--this will be an important convention.

The conference, which is entitled "Equal Educational Opportunities: Opening New Markets," will be held at the Chicago Hilton & Towers Hotel, 720 S. Michigan.

After a morning Rainbow/Push Board meeting, the conference registration starts at 1 pm on Wednesday, 7/30. The afternoon focus is on "School Finance Reform," examining the unequal property-tax-based funding systems that leave inner city and rural public schools underfunded, crumbling, and without the high-tech infrastructure necessary to train our kids for tomorrow.

RAINBOW PUSH COALITION Conference Time!

That night, Reverend Jackson will host a major Town Hall Meeting on "racism," to help set the country's agenda while we engage in the current national discussion on race.

The Thursday labor Breakfast features AFL-CIO president John Sweeney as our featured keynote speaker. Recognition will be given to Linda Chavez-Thompson, the UFW strawberry workers, and the mushroom workers, for their organizing on behalf of working families.

The Women's Luncheon on

Thursday, 7/31, will feature Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman. Education workshops will follow that afternoon, with a Gospel Concert that night.

On Friday, 8/1, Elaine Jones, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, will highlight the Education Breakfast, while the Business Luncheon features Rev. Jackson's keynote address from noon to 2 pm.

Friday night, Rev. Joseph Lowery will be honored for his lifelong service on behalf of peace and justice, at

a banquet and concert.

Saturday morning, 8/2 from 7:30 to noon, will feature an open Town Hall discussion on "Vision 2000," as we hone our game plan and priorities for the remaining few years of this century. The regular Saturday morning radio broadcast will feature Congresswomen Maxine Waters.

The noon luncheon will honor and involve ministers from all across the nation, and the conference will close Saturday night after a "Next Leadership Generation" youth town hall meeting.

Adult registration for the convention is only \$35, and even less for students and senior-\$20! (Meals and concerts are charged separately.) Please call Ms. Velma Wilson at 773-373-3366 for more information. Don't miss the first Rainbow/Push annual conference!

perspectives

How Do You 'Conclude' Science?

Well, the truth is, 'you can't' and I might just as well have attempted to put a closure on 'time' last week. Needless to say, I am gratified with a continuing response of Observer readers to my four-part series, "more Science - the Right Kind" (June 16 thru July 9).

Equally delighted are the callers whom I was happy to advise that they had a lot of company among other community parents committed to an adequate preparation of their children for a world where science and technology will play a key role. All were enthusiastic about my reprise of the "neighborhood concept" of science clubs; named after black scientists and inventors and engendering the same pride and motivation as my peer group experienced - Charles Drew & Granville Woods as well as Edison.

Several parents quoted my comment on "an ongoing neighborhood relationship among peers and school-mates," citing advantages seen at work in other areas: "kids can reinforce and support each other, you have the extra socialization of 'children-teaching-children', and there is proximity to parental support and guidance when needed, more productive than 'midnight basketball'." At this point, let me correct a

recurring error. That magazine article deploring the fact that several major computing companies in fierce competition to gain market share are "dumping millions in computer hardware and software on overburdened teachers" appears in 'Atlantic monthly' magazine (not 'Forbes').

And finally, I have for you the address of the famed "Edmund Scientifics" company that puts out that eclectic "Annual Science Catalog for Educators, Students and Inventors: Astronomy, Optics, Physics, Microscopes, Robots, Biology, Chemistry, Motors, Pumps, Magnets, Etc." 101 East Gloucester Pike, Barrington, N.J. 08007-1380., call 1 (609) 547-8880, Fax 1 (609) 573-6295.

Sheer amazement is the only way to describe the reaction of three parents who came by for additional information and direction on neighborhood science clubs. What got their attention as much as my extensive science, math and language libraries were pictures and descriptions of my 1969 S.E. 24th & Belmont St. operation--a full-scale replication of my 1966, The Dalles Oregon "Computer Terminal-in-the-classroom" demonstration that won a national Science

Foundation award: 28 and 31 years ago, respectively.

When my visitors ceased marveling at the fact that while on the main floor of my Belmont Street operation there was a model classroom with several on-line terminals, teletypes, closed circuit TV and an adjacent curriculum print shop (equipped like today's "kinkos", with press/binders and cameras and plate-makers) - the large, full basement housed a 1500 sq. ft. workshop for assembling science club-type devices I had earned to build after transferring to the instrument repair shop at The Dallas aluminum plant.

It was a case of "carpe diem" (seize the day), for these committed parents could readily appreciate that any individual application or a combination could be selected for a club project. An enthusiastic father said, "say Mr. Burt, a club could do anything from the simplest beginner's project to something sophisticated enough to enter in a national science competition."

A mother said she was starting by taking neighborhood children over the weekend (7/11 & 7/12) to

McMinnville for the unveiling of Howard Hughes famed "Spruce Goose" airplane. Last year she saw a Portland Observer article where I revealed that the sophisticated engine controls were designed by engineer, Don Rutherford, an African American graduate of our local Benson High School. Don's niece, Charlotte Rutherford, a former student of mine at PSU, is an attorney and the Hearing Officer for the Oregon State Liquor Commission.

A final comment by the group was that "it is incredible that 30 years ago you had representatives of the Portland School District (among others) at your Belmont St. open house, and over the following years made many follow-up presentations to the district of your "computer-in-the-classroom" technique with proposals to contract installation and there was even a picture of an actual school demonstration in your book; Black Inventors of America' (1969). Industry took part in your operation. Nothing happened!"

There was a further comment that "Portland could have been ahead of the nation." I replied, "well, as you can see, I haven't been asleep at the switch. Once again, my designs and concepts are years ahead of the game. We will see what happens this time!"

An apology for slavery? contrition carries conditions

BY CONGRESSMAN JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

I am not opposed to a congressional apology for slavery, but contrition carries conditions.

A government apology for slavery is a valid collective symbolic act, but it is appropriate only if it is accompanied by substance that repairs the damage that is the basis for the apology.

I do not question the intentions of those who are sponsoring this legislation, because I believe their intentions are good and their concern is genuine. But just a simple apology, without anything attached to it, seems a little hollow to me.

My Bible tells me, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It does not say, "Where your heart is, there will your treasure be also." Jesus had an objective measurement for the 'human spirit.' Therefore, it would be inconsistent for the Congress to say that America's heart is with an apology, but we cannot do anything about the unjust legacy of slavery, segregation and discrimination

because our treasure is consumed with balancing the budget, not in responsibly reinvesting in America's future.

Obviously, it is appropriate for the federal government to apologize for slavery, since the federal government was intimately involved in establishing and perpetuating slavery. It passed laws (e.g., the Fugitive Slave Law and the Missouri Compromise of 1850) which furthered slavery. There were also Supreme Court decisions that bolstered slavery and established segregation (e.g., Dred Scott, 1847, and Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896).

But I am a little perplexed over all of these apologies - apologies for syphilis, apologies for slavery - because they always seem to come when the country says it is broke (we are not), that we must be fiscally austere, that we must balance the budget or reduce the budget deficit. In other words, contrition without content.

Roman Catholic theology explains that you cannot just apologize to God and be admitted into

the kingdom of Heaven. You must first go to purgatory and pay a kind of reparation for your sins before you can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Webster's Dictionary explains it this way, "Purgatory is a place or state of punishment wherein, according to Roman Catholic doctrine, the souls of those who die in God's grace may make satisfaction for past sins and so become fit for heaven."

It is not politically possible for the country to apologize just for slavery and grant reparations to African Americans exclusively. So I have a different recommendation. We should provide a full employment economy with jobs for All Americans, create a health care system that provides comprehensive and universal health care for All American, create a mixed economy that provides affordable housing for All Americans, invest in a public school system that provides a quality and multicultural education for All Americans not just something for African Americans.

In such a climate of Economic

Security, the American people will be better able to hear a message of racial reconciliation, and will be more amenable to understanding the need for and be more open to supporting affirmative action, majority/minority congressional districts, immigration, economic set-asides and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

Like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I too have a dream that we can make such economic progress if we organize and create the political will. I have a dream that if we make America economically more secure for Everyone, we can make tremendous progress on the race question. I have a dream that we can move from racial battleground to economic common ground and to moral higher ground. Yes, I too have a dream for America that makes America better and includes every American. And I'm going to spend the time I have in Congress working on that dream.

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. is a second term congressman from the Second Congressional District of Illinois who serves on the House Banking & Financial Services and the Small Business Committees.

TO BE EQUAL: THE COSTS OF "COLOR-BLINDNESS"

BY HUGH B. PRICE,
NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

The first results of the judicial and legislative bans against affirmative action at public universities in California and Texas are in. They dramatically illustrate the costs of color-blindness-the fantasy that we can reduce the continuing impact of racial and ethnic bigotry simply by saying they no longer matter.

Enrollments of African-American

and Hispanic-American students in the new Classes at the leading public-university law schools in California and Texas have fallen sharply.

At Boalt Hall, the law school of the University of California at Berkeley, it's likely that just 1 black student and 18 Hispanic students will enter the 270-member class in the fall.

At the UCLA law school, 10 black and 41 Hispanic students will enter this year, compared with 19 blacks and 45 Hispanics in the class of 1999.

The numbers are as precipitous at

the University of Texas law school: There, 3 black and 20 Hispanic students are expected to enroll in the 500-student Class, compared to 31 black and 42 Hispanic students in the Class above them.

Stark as the declines are, in fact, quite a few people fully expected the impact to be this severe.

But Ward Connerly, of all people, the black regent of the University of California system who led the campaign to ban affirmative action in the state, expressed dismay at the figures.

"It's a bucket of cold water in the face," he said. "I am obviously concerned. I am petrified at the fact that we have as far to go as we do. You cannot look at the situation and come away with it than anything other than dismay."

More credible was the shock and disappointment expressed by others, including some white students and faculty.

"It's so stunning, it's almost unbelievable," said Marjorie Schultz, a Berkeley law professor. "The leading

public university in the most diverse state and the most diverse educational system is going to just withdraw behind some siege wall and be a white institution? It's preposterous."

Saying that the enrollment figures at Boalt Hall were "worse than our predicted worst-case scenario," its dean, Herma Hill Kay, said that some whites had also declined to attend the school an had cited the reversal of affirmative action as the reason.

What is happening at these institutions, which have worked assiduously

to overcome their own exclusionary pasts, show that the costs of these bad policies and bad judicial decisions are going to be borne not just by the black and Hispanic students who could have ably matriculated at them.

No, those costs will be shared by the institutions themselves and the larger society as well.

It is not just African Americans and Hispanic Americans and Native Americans who need policies that promote inclusiveness and opportunity; it's the entire society.