

Where are our buffalo? Closure

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

We find it necessary to reassure several readers that there were some very progressive and forward-looking African American businessmen in the 1950 and 1960 economic ferment in Los Angeles. They simply were outnumbered by an ambitious and narrowly-focused majority who occupied and controlled center stage in the black community (more later on the "progressive").

Certainly, this is not a bad situation in itself, since, typically, this is the economic engine which drives urban development. But, it is also the case that in the institutionalized racial structure of America the very same situation may give rise to a black power structure with some very unusual (and restrictive) powers.

Too often this group, as in Los Angeles, has a relationship to the white establishment that is very similar to the "advise and consent" role of the U.S. Senate in respect to the President.

Today's establishment may not be as brutally frank and direct as in the days when Booker T. Washington fielded the inquiries preceding the appointment or promotion of an African American to an important position, "Is he/she a good, safe nigger (sic)?" However, the "dance" is much the same.

I believe that I made an incisive and revealing assessment of this problem in my May 1997 series of articles in The Portland Observer, "Who should interpret America's Neighborhoods." But, nevertheless, we

must ask "how can there be a return of the buffalo" - that is the logical and prosperous development of African American resources-when we are constrained by the social and economic controls described above? (Shepherders?).

In the April 2, 1997 edition of The Portland Observer, there appeared, to my delight, a very relevant article by Cathy Galbraith, Director of the Bosco-Milligan Foundation: "North-east Portland and Light Rail-Urban Renewal or Removal." Particularly cogent was her observation that, "...people's homes and businesses should not be clinically examined as 'under-developed real estate.'"

My neighbor came over to question, "what have our usually effusive leaders and black spin-doctors had to say about this? I've neither seen nor heard anything at all." I asked my senior citizen friend, "and exactly how much did you hear from this fraternity in opposition to the 'Model cities' wipe-out of the black business community-or to the later Emanuel Hospital's super-ambitious, but aborted plans for the remaining real estate which would have been a natural extension (or replacement) of the black business district."

This question, of course, was rhetorical and we went on to discuss contemporary implications and models of that 'yuppie-oriented' economic development caper, high rises and all. The properties were acquired by 'eminent domain' for a fraction of their real economic value, and then left standing vacant for years, unpro-

ductive in terms of commerce or taxes for the city-but very productive in terms rats, vermin and drug pushers. Looked like the war-torn areas of Lebanon.

In respect to the more "progressive" African American business people of that frenetic area of Los Angeles economic activity, I particularly like to cite the saga of the "Spikes Family" who established the "Mecca Mortgage Company" in the 1920's. Through the years this remarkable group made many great contributions to the entire community, financing thousands of homes, promoting plays and concerts and supporting charities.

Accounting clients of mine (late 1950's), they showed me newspaper reports where, to publicize a concert in the 1930's they had a black woman to parachute into an outdoor arena to begin the program. And it was the eldest brother, Richard B. Spikes, whom I featured in my book, "Black Inventors of America": Invented an Automatic Gear shift in 1932 (Patent 1,889,814), a related transmission the next year, and much else. Two of his granddaughters reside here in Portland.

This was but one of the "progressive" groups at the time, but, unfortunately as happens in many cities, they were greatly outnumbered by the gate-keepers. There will be more soon in a later series on "Minority Economic Development"-depending on reader's responses. These are crucial times and we need to be as alert and vigilant as ever.

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

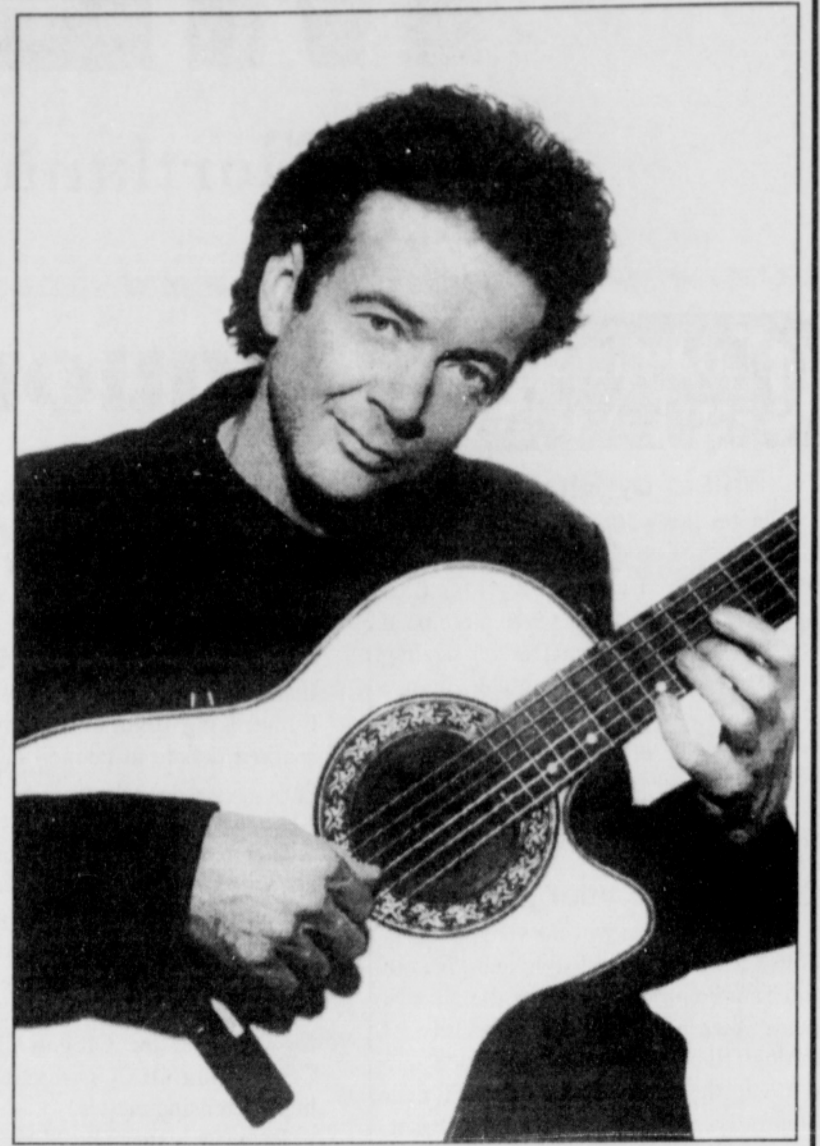
Guitars & Sax Tour

Peter White performs At The Mt. Hood Jazz Festival on Sunday, August 3, 1997, along With Richard Elliot, Rick Braun & Craig Chaquico.

Peter's latest album Caravan of Dreams, is currently #11 on Billboard's Contemporary Jazz Album Chart.

Caravan of Dreams continues in the R&B vein of his previous two discs (1993's Promenade and 1994's Reflections). To better accentuate the urban sensibilities his previous albums only hinted at, he chose to collaborate with veteran producer Paul Brown, whose street vibe with Boney James has helped make the saxman one of rhythm and jazz's premiere performers. And just when you think it can't get any better, James tops it by featuring Basia on his latest single "Just Another Day"...put it all together, and you have a street-smart groove with a free-spirited breeze.

Peter brings to the album and the stage a care-free, infectious energy. For more information please contact VMG (310) 275-9697.



Peter White

Food Bank Blues Fest success

Oregon Food Bank an hunger-relief agencies across Oregon and Clark County, Washington are celebrating the Fourth of July a few days late, as staff finish weighing food and counting cash donations from the 10th Annual Miller Genuine Draft Waterfront Blues Festival.

Gate donations of \$160,000 and nearly 70,000 pounds will enable Oregon Food Bank to provide approximately one million pounds of food to local and regional hun-

ger-relief agencies. Food Bank officials estimate that the Waterfront Blues Festival covers approximately five percent of its annual operating costs.

Organizers had worried that cutting the festival from five days in 1995 and 1996 to four days this year would heavily impact donations. Despite the change, cash donations increased by \$5,000 and the totals for food donations dropped by less than 10 percent. Total atten-

dance for the weekend is estimated at more than 100,000, with tens of thousands of spectators overflowing the bowl in Waterfront Park to watch the July 4th fireworks.

The Oregon Potters Association sold enough handmade pottery at the festival to earn \$12,000 for Oregon Food Bank through their Empty Bowls project. In only five years the project has gleaned \$50,000 and has already helped the food bank purchase a truck.

Observer Vancouver

Free Summer Heritage School

A limited number of spots, for youngsters age 11 to 15, are still available in Vancouver's free, eight-day Summer Heritage School. The program is presented weekdays, between July 14 and 23, from 1 to 4 p.m., at Grant House, 1101 Officers Row.

Summer Heritage School features field trips through Vancouver's National Historic Reserve, which includes Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Officers Row, Vancouver Barracks and Pearson Field.

Students will also work on a special project on the historical topic of

their choice.

This Summer of Service project is a partnership of the Cultural Division of the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department, the Human Services Council, the Grant House Folk Art Center and Washington State University.

Summer Playground Program

The Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Summer Playground Program runs Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at nine elementary schools.

The program features arts, music, sports, and field trips designed around a weekly theme for children from kindergarten to sixth grade. A one-time fee of \$3 helps buy supplies for the summer, although no child will be denied participation if the family cannot afford the fee.

Lunches are available to all children attending the program and to others under the age of 19. Children who are members of food stamp households or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) are automatically eligible for the free lunch.

Lunches are provided at these sites:

- **King Elementary School**, 4801 Idaho Street, noon - 1pm
- **Fruit Valley Elementary School**, 3301 Fruit Valley Road, 1pm-2pm
- **Peter S. Ogden Elementary School**, 8100 NE 28th Street, 11:20am- 12:20pm
- **Hough Elementary School**, 1900 Daniels, 12:45pm-1:45pm
- **Washington Elementary School**, 2908 "S" Street, noon-1pm
- **(*)Image Elementary School**, 4400 NE 122nd Ave., 12:25pm-1:25pm
- **(*)Minnehaha Elementary School**, 2800 NE 54th Street, 11:45am-12:45pm
- **Harney Elementary School**, 3212 East Evergreen Blvd., 12:20pm-

1:20pm

- **(**Roosevelt Elementary School**, 2921 Falk, 11am-noon
- **Vancouver Housing Authority (Meal Only)**, 500 Omaha Way, 11:45am-12:45pm

Parent Permission Slip: Permission slip must be completed the first day the child is in the program. Permission slips can be obtained from Bagley Community Center, or from the site leader at the playground site.

***Eligibility Forms:** Minnehaha and Image Elementary School require an income eligibility form to be completed.

****Hearing Impaired:** Roosevelt Elementary School will have sign-skilled staff for hearing-impaired youth.

Day camps entertain

Day camps for preschool kids ages 2-1/2 to 5-1/2 years are running at Marshall Center, 1009 E. McLoughlin and Bagley Center, 4100 Plomondon. Day camps operate from 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Thursday. Parents can sign up for two, three or four days a week. Children must be toilet trained to participate. **Weekly themes are as follows:**

- **Session 5**, July 21 to 24 Puppet Pals and Paper Mache
- **Session 6**, July 28 to 31 Rainbows, Ribbon and Rhymes
- **Session 7**, Aug. 4 to 7 Stamps, Rocks and Stickers
- **Session 8**, Aug. 11 to 14 Koolaid, Camping and Kids

Activities include arts and crafts: nature walks, water play, recycling activities, cooking, drama, music and science experiments. Children should bring a lunch. Fees range according to how many days are chosen. Limited scholarships are available. Call Pattie Amann, 696-8065 for details.

Kids learn sports basics

The Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department has several children's coed sports camps and classes scheduled in July. They include the following classes:

Soccer clinic: Learn soccer skills. Session I: ages 4-5, from 9-10 a.m. Session II, ages 6-8, from 10:30-11:30 a.m. both sessions take place on Saturdays, July 12-Aug. 9 (no class Aug. 2) Meet at the west end of David Douglas Park, or in Marshall Center gym in case of rain. Fee is \$15 (\$13 for city resident).

All sports youth class: For ages 4-7. Try a variety of sports, learn the basics of T-ball, soccer and basketball. Meets Saturdays, July 12-Aug. 2, from 9-10 a.m. at Bagley Center. Fee is \$15 (\$13 for city resident).

Youth basketball class: For ages 4-7. Learn basic skills, play games. Meets on Saturdays, July 12-Aug. 2, from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at Bagley Center. Fee is \$15 (\$18 city resident).

Amtrak answers I-5 bridge closure

Added rail runs to ease bottleneck

Rail service, operated under contract by Amtrak, will be available between Vancouver and Portland for the duration of the 21-day closure of the northbound structure of the Interstate bridge during its repairs, beginning Sept. 16.

Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation approved the contracted service as part of the project's Traffic Management Plan.

The train will be offered free of charge to commuters traveling between Vancouver and Portland during the bridge repair project.

From Vancouver, three morning trains will be offered to commuters traveling from the Vancouver Amtrak Station located on West 11th St., south to Portland's Union Station on NW 6th Avenue, at 5:30, 6:45 and 8:00 a.m.

Evening trains will leave Portland at 4:00, 5:15 a.m., returning at 4:30 and 5:45 p.m. all train service will be offered Monday through Fri-

day, only.

Amtrak will be using Amfleet cars, accommodating approximately 700 passengers per trip.

Trips between the two cities are estimated to last between 20 and 30 minutes.

Parking will be available near the Vancouver Amtrak station and on Fourth Plain, with shuttle service provided by C-Tran.

In Portland, additional parking near Union Station will also be available along with direct access to TriMet's transit mall, downtown.

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In addition, a separate Friday Night Blues event will present Buddy Guy, Robert Cray Band and Paul DeLay Band on Friday, August 1.

Daily general admission tickets, as well as a special 3-Day Pass for \$60, are available at all TICKETMASTER OREGON locations, including GI Joe's and Meier & Frank outlets, or by calling 503-224-4400. For further information, call (503) 232-9162.

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