

E d u c a t i o n

Well, What Was It All About?

The 'real' history of American and African blacks is as essential a tool or instrument of our educational development as pencil, paper or computer

By Prof. McKinley Burt

We are told that this summer's presentation of articles here was many things but, mostly we like hearing that we might have been a little bit better than usual (no summer doldrums at the Portland Observer)—and that we filled a number of diverse needs; some we hadn't thought of.

Well, one thing for sure, we certainly anticipated a strong need for as much information as possible in the fields of science, mathematics and technology-in-general. We tried to achieve this objective with such warmly received series as, "Is Sci-

ence Scientific (Ethical)?" and the follow up set, "More Science: The Right Kind."

That was a grouping designed to provide teacher, student and parent with an easier-than-conventional means of approaching and comprehending a field of learning that usually is made more difficult than necessary. And we approached our task from a number of viewpoints, taking into account the audience's levels of interest and preparation. We ranged from real-time examples to the historical.

Most successful in my interaction with those parents who were interested in forming science clubs

in the neighborhoods—an old idea 'back to the future'—was the technique of 'naming a club' after a famous minority, inventor or scientist. This was a motivational scheme that worked, and worked well. It was rewarding that not only were role models chosen from my book, "Black Inventors Of America", but people went far afield, documenting innovators new to me.

It was very rewarding to become a 'change agent' for our youth in the field of technology. Especially when it is so vitally necessary to overcome the defeatism of those naysayers who insist that minority youth cannot master the "hard stuff". I love

making it obvious to the world just who it is that is not a master of the process. I got many calls on the computer programs I designed almost 30 years ago for the five and six year-olds at the Lake Oswego Montessori School. This opened our parent's eyes.

At the other end of this process I used a number of the "Good Summer Reading" presentations to document an exceedingly import historical background of African Americans on a traumatic stage. A good example is my book review of "Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail", Jeffrey Bolster, Harvard University Press, 1997.

How amazed were so many readers—parents, student and teachers—that blacks sailed "tall ships" like the US Constitution ('Old Ironsides'). It is very important to the process of learning to know "who you are and what you and your kind have achieved from 'day one'." Too many of our children have become victims of the racist rewrites and omissions of history.

The 'real' history of American and African Blacks is as essential a tool or instrument of our educational development as pencil, paper or computer. I can remember what I think was one of the Rev. Jesse Jackson's greatest programs. This

was his national project to inoculate pride and consciousness of 'self' among black people. Do you recall the little figures of black children skipping about with sweater, lunch boxes and briefcases bearing the legend, "I Am Somebody." Lets see them again.

Let's see, "what else was it all about?" We told of the important manufacturing plants established by blacks very early on, the magnificent professional heights reached by black women during these times, and the victories and travails of black labor from the Civil War to the present day. Our youth must know who they are!

Recipe Wins Prize in Oregon Fryer Commission Contest



BETTY NICHOLS OF EUGENE WINS FIRST PLACE WITH "WALNETTO CHICKEN WITH CITRUS-MUUSTARD SAUCE" IN THE BIENNIAL OREGON FRYER COMMISSION CHICKEN RECIPE CONTEST

Letting Children See That Reading is 'COOL'

James Michael Brodie grew up believing that reading was "cool."

His father, a computer programmer, read the newspaper everyday, and his mother, a homemaker, was always buried in a novel, magazine, or the Bible. "Our house was filled with encyclopedias, story books, and books from different cultures," say James, one of America's most respected children's authors. "There was always something exciting to read in our house! Books took me to places far away from where I was. Lorraine Hansberry, Chinua Achibe, and William Shakespeare were some of my favorite writers."

But growing up, James noticed that he rarely saw positive images of himself in books. "I guess I reached a point in my life," he recalls, "when I thought, 'if I want to see myself in print, I'm going to have to do the work.' In my family I saw all these heroes and sheroes, people who were positive examples of what to be. I wanted to put them on the page."

Brodie also wanted to share his love and knowledge of literature with children and their families. "I wanted kids to see how exciting words really are," he says. "We wonder why young people don't have the knowledge we have. At some point, someone sat me on a knee and read me a story, told me how to behave, how to carry myself. Now it's my turn to pass on that oral and written tradition." With the publication of Sweet Words

So Brave: The Story of African American Literature, James was able to accomplish his ambitious goals of putting positive African Americans in print and passing on to young people our rich tradition of storytelling.

Sweet Words, written by James Michael Brodie and Barbara K. Curry, chronicles African American literary history through the eyes of a young girl and her grandfather. When the young girl pleads with her grandfather, "Please tell me a story and make it sing for me. Draw word pictures...so I can find myself," he answers by taking her on an extraordinary journey filled with places and people who have changed our lives for the better. Beginning at the tip of Phillis Wheatley's quill and continuing onto Toni Morrison's Nobel Prize for Literature, this eloquently written book exposes children to the faces and voices of those who have documented our collective life in America. Sweet Words also reveals the influence of our historical social and political struggle on literature from Frederick Douglass' call for our emancipation from slavery to Dr. Martin Luther King's call for our emancipation from Jim Crow. The easy, comfortable prose reads more like a wise elder speaking simple truth than it does a history lesson and is seasoned with historical photos and documents, and beautiful original art by Jerry Butler. The book, which is as visually stunning as it is informative, helps African American children see

how far we have come and challenges them to keep working for our continued progress.

Given the great legacy of African American writers, rappers shouldn't be the only scribes our children know. And what a legacy it is. In a country in which African Americans were once forbidden by law to read and write, our accomplished scribes have compiled an impressive canon of poetry, prose, essays, novels, lays, and films against tremendous odds. With our words we have won the Pulitzer prize and the Nobel Prize for Literature. With our words we have been named Poet Laureates and composed verse for presidential Inaugurations. With our words we have changed the conscience and the laws of our nation, for as James acknowledges, "it's still the word that carries the thought." Our words are a vibrant and powerful extension of our spirits and souls, and Sweet Words So Brave pays homage to the vision and tenacity of talented African American writers and leaders. Letting our children see us read and sharing this book with them are great starts to helping them see how "cool" reading can be.

James Michael Brodie is also the author of Created Equal: The Lives and Ideas of Black American innovators.



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Immunizations: important for family health

HEALTH FOCUS

A true advance in medicine in the 20th century has been the continuing development of vaccines to provide protection for our children against many diseases. All children, however, are not taken for their "shots" in a timely fashion.

Childhood immunizations should be started at age 2 months. By the time your child is 2 years old, many of the required immunizations can be completed or in progress. Shots generally are given at ages 2 months, 4 months,

6 months, 12 months, 15 to 18 months and during years 4 to 6.

Following immunization guidelines is crucial for your child's health. A survey by Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, revealed that in that region, less than 20 percent of 2-year-old children were properly immunized.

Don't let your child's health go unprotected.

Immunizations are now available and recommended for protection against the following diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), hepatitis B, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), and varicella (chicken pox).

Some vaccines are combined in one shot. Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis are given together as "DTP," and measles, mumps and ru-

bella are grouped as "MMR." A new combination for DTP and Hib has also been developed.

As a pediatrician, I recommend that you schedule your infant's first "well baby" doctor's appointment two weeks after your child is born. Your pediatrician will give you a schedule that will tell when each immunization is needed.

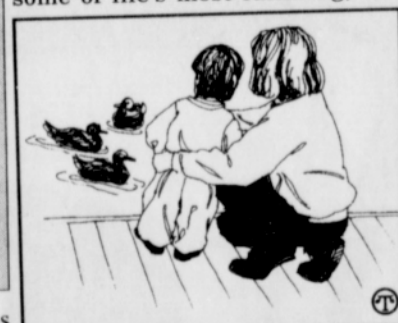
While scheduling your child's vaccinations, don't forget to take care of yourself as well. Adults should receive a combined diphtheria and tetanus shot every 10 years, and those who have not had chicken pox are encouraged to get the varicella vaccine.

Immunizations provide you and your child with the best defense against many diseases. Make sure your child gets immunized on time.

Welcome Home Successful Psychology For Mothers

(NAPS)—Making the transition to being an at-home mom can be smoother with the following advice from Mothers at Home:

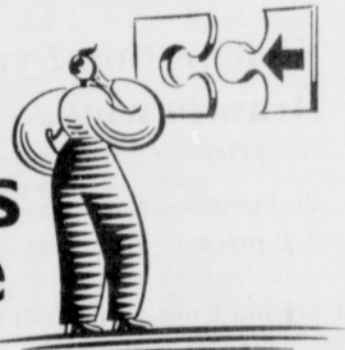
1. Give yourself time to make the transition. The rewards of motherhood can ultimately be some of life's most fulfilling, but



Women choose to be home to nurture and cherish their children.

they may not always seem evident in the first few difficult months. You can acquire skills to cope with the frustrating parts and transform many negative aspects into positives.

School That Fits Your Life



Flexible programs. Convenient class times. Classes at three campuses, three centers, and 200 neighborhood locations. Affordable tuition.

- ◆ Start on a bachelor's degree.
- ◆ Train for a new career.
- ◆ Upgrade your job skills.
- ◆ Enhance your life.

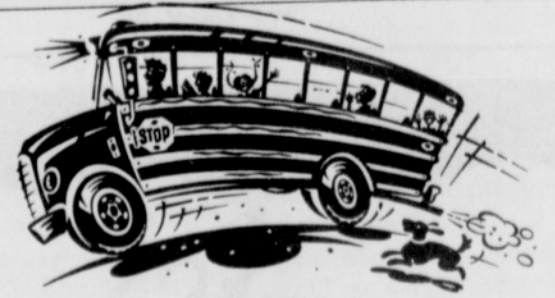
Register now. Classes start Sept. 22. Call 977-4382 for information or visit our web site at www.pcc.edu.

Cascade Campus

Portland Community College

Free Vision Screenings

OFFERED FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL



More than ever, children depend on a healthy visual system and good eye health for development of essential learning skills such as reading and writing.

As a community service, Pacific University College of Optometry Eye and Vision Centers and affiliate clinics, provide free vision screenings for infants, pre-schoolers, school-age children, and adults. Although screenings do not take the place of a complete vision exam, they do provide important information about visual clarity, eye health, and eye coordination... information key in identifying and treating the vision and eye health problems of children. Eye doctors stress the importance of regular vision care prior to or early in the school year to detect and treat vision problems before children fall behind in their school work.

Our free vision screenings take about 30 minutes and do not cause discomfort. Screenings may be scheduled during evenings, weekends and regular business hours. Interpreter services can be arranged upon request. We also provide vision screenings for schools, businesses, and community organizations.

To schedule an appointment and for more information about other vision care services, please call.

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