

EDITORIAL

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The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680) Established in 1970

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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

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Davis rises to new challenge

Continued from Front

called, but we didn't get the chance to implement it. The rug was pulled from under us!"

Portland School superintendent Jack Bierwith announced staffing changes.

"It was very rough, like a slap in the face or a punch in the stomach -- pretty painful," she sighed. "He never came over to talk to us or give us a good reason" she said.

Judy Bryant got her slot at Humboldt.

Davis taught for 12 years -- grades First, Third, Fifth and Sixth -- before becoming a unit leader at Martin Luther King Elementary School, where she worked for 20 years.

As a unit leader, she coordinated curriculum for pre-kindergarten through second grades, what she calls "a school within a school."

That first taste of school administration involved 350 children in 16 classes.

Davis beams with pride about her part in developing a voluntary desegregation program at MLK, recalling a visit to Chicago during the 1970s to review a model program there.

While at MLK, she was named woman of the year by the women's education sorority, received an excellence in education alumni award from Oregon College of Education and was included in the 1990 Who's Who.

She hasn't put the plaques on

her office wall at Applegate yet. "I've been too busy trying to learn Applegate and its programs," she told the Portland Observer. "The aesthetics will come later."

Even with a new school, Davis still has challenges. With 271 students at a school in a lovely Farragut Park setting, she has 12 certified teachers and only three educational assistants for tutoring and other tasks.

"The teachers are determined to help me make it successful," she said, noting school-wide involvement in the 90 minute daily reading blocks, and 60 minute blocks for both writing and arithmetic.

Applegate's third grade test scores are the lowest in the district.

"We still have a big challenge, but we will rise to the occasion," Davis said.

The first regional assessment tests were given last month and the school is awaiting its first scores.

"After parent-teacher conferences this month," she said, "scores will be evaluated and curriculum goals will be revamped to reflect the children's needs."

"My husband Ralph has been my rock, grounding me in all these changes," said Davis. "Between my husband and my Lord, I made it."

"We are going to put Applegate on the map in spite of the odds!"

perspectives



BY PROF.
McKINLEY
BURT

That supplement to the title for this series may suggest 'nourishment', but you will see that to be quite in keeping with last week's promise to evaluate the earlier economic possibilities of the N.W. corner of NE 19th and Alberta.

The sturdy, stone former-Masonic Temple has seen quite a number of players on its site; from fraternal affiliation, to health spa, church, second-hand store, you name it. We begin here with the year 1982, when I became aware that both the building and the equipment of the current operator were for sale.

This enterprise proved to be an "Institutional Food Supplier" and its customers were city, state and federal facilities ranging from army bases to correctional facilities. In fact, that supplement to the title is taken from a U.S. Army supply bulletin I have before me, "Master Menu for February 1983" (planned; published and mailed to interested institutional suppliers August 1982). Several restaur-

ant chains were also served by this N.E. Alberta St. Operation.

When I met the owners, my first thought was "I must be in a Scandinavian Senior Citizens Center". Each friendly entrepreneur seemed to be well over six feet, blonde, blue-eyed and 'over seventy years of age'. And that latter characteristic seemed to be no problem as they took me on a brisk tour of the huge, two-story plant; followed on with leisurely inspections.

My second thought was that "this reminds me of my first encounter with the middle-aged and elderly black men of the "Acme Business Club." I became the accountant for this group in 1947, learning that their cooperative effort and commitment to community had created the Williams Ave. business district -- and much else that was wiped out by Urban 'Renewal'.

The skeptics scoffed when Reverend Jackson first announced a second march to "Save the Dream," arguing that Sacramento is just not a marching town. Gov. Wilson's flunkies scoffed, too, saying it was "too little, too late."

But it was not too little, as thousands and thousands of marchers converged on the Capitol last Monday morning, to oppose the resegregation of higher education in the once-golden state of California.

And it is definitely not too large, as Reverend Jackson has called for a third "Save the Dream" march in Los Angeles next February. This struggle is far from over--as Dr. King said, the arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice.

Pete Wilson is only the latest in a long and tragic series of mean-spirited politicians who have divided Americans by race, as a means of advancement to higher political office. Gov. Wilson was once regarded as a moderate Republican (a species Eugene McCarthy defined as those

RAINBOW PUSH COALITION Save The Dream #2

who "come down out of the hills after the battle, to shoot the wounded").

However, that was before Wilson began to use race as a wedge issue to prove his right-wing credentials; before he pushed Prop. 187, attempting to blame California's economic woes on Hispanic immigrants; before he tried to limit Native American tribal sovereignty; before he joined the Faubus/Wallace side of history, by sponsoring Prop. 209, which is now resegregating California's professional schools.

This battle is not over. The mere fact that a small majority of voters

approved a well-funded and mis-labeled initiative which limits equal opportunity for Blacks & Browns in California does not mean it was right; nor does it mean that Prop. 209 will ultimately pass constitutional muster. After all, even Bakke allowed consideration of race and gender.

Besides, most Californians voting on Prop. 209 last year only heard one side of the story on TV-Gov. Wilson's limiting equal opportunity in higher education, and because of Rev. Jackson's intense efforts to keep fighting to save Dr. King's dream, California voters are hearing another

side.

Notice that no one who supported Prop. 209 last year is out there bragging about the results this year. Notice that none of the outspoken right-wingers who argued that affirmative action should be replaced with a broader assistance program based on need or class, has yet stepped forward to introduce such a replacement program to the state legislature. Notice that Gov. Wilson has not yet brought forward his equal funding/Head Start/pre-natal plan, to start all our school children on a level playing field.

They never intended to; their arguments last year were just cover for dividing Californians by race. These were promises they never intended to keep.

Jesse Jackson made a promise he will keep. He promised Dr. King that he would keep his dream alive. He promised Dr. King he would keep fighting for justice. He promised Dr. King he would keep on marching.

Save the Dream March #3. Los Angeles, February. We'll be back.

Civil Rights Journal

Teaching Children Survival Skills

By BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

I remember when I first heard a parent talking about it. It was right after the Bernard Goetz incident in the New York City subways where several black youth were shot by a man who claimed they were menacing him. The mother was talking about teaching her teenaged sons how to survive in New York City - how not to look "threatening," how to dress, what to look at on the subway. But now, according to a recent New York Times article, parents of children of color are feeling the need to teach their children, especially their sons, how to act when they are stopped by the police. A new kind of survival skill for children of color.

One African American parent, a banker, had to strategize with his son prior to buying him a new car. They planned what to do when a police officer stopped the son because he was driving a nice car. They decided that the son would carry his father's business card and offer to let the

police officer call his father. A Hispanic parent told how her child, despite much coaching from his parents, already had been stopped three times at gunpoint by the police. Each time he was in a car that the police suspected of carrying drugs, but no charges were ever brought.

Some agencies which work with young people are teaching them survival skills in dealing with police officers. One Bronx-based youth program is beginning lessons in legal and civil rights issues for youth and a Harlem agency already is teaching a course called Conflicts with Cops to help young people in their encounter with police officers. Even minority police officers associations counsel youth on how to deal with police. The president of the Latino Officer Association, for example, tells the young people to note the officer's name and to use it throughout their encounter.

Targeting youth of color is not a tactic of every police officer, but

clearly it happens too often, across class, education and political lines. Children of middle class families are just as subject to be stopped as children of the poor. And girls are victims as well as boys. One African American mother told how her two daughters, 17 and 18 years old, were coming out of a subway station with their boyfriends when they heard gunshots. All four found themselves pushed against a wall with guns to their heads by police. And her son, a champion fencer, was stopped in a subway station in a white community and asked what he was doing there. When he replied he was going to a fencing club down the street, he was taunted and not believed by police.

And make no mistake about it, this is not just a New York City phenomenon.

Parents of color in cities across the nation are finding they must teach their children these new survival skills. Polls show that people of color

believe that police officers do not treat people of color and whites with equal fairness. Indeed, that is one of the greatest chasms between white Americans and people of color--their belief in the justice of the criminal justice system.

The fact that many police officers do not live in the communities they serve aggravates many of the stereotypes that some of them have about youth of color. Thus, they scoff at the story by the black youngster that he is a fencer or they believe that only a drug dealer could be driving a nice car.

It's a sad commentary for children of color. It's a sad commentary for our nation. As long as parents of color find themselves having to teach their children how to survive an encounter with police, we will know that racism is alive and well in this country. In the words of one parent, "It's depressing. If I had not told my son to be cool and respectful, he would probably be dead."

Big Economic Gains Lift Very Few Children

Numbers of Uninsured Children and Working Poor Families Hit Record Highs

The Children's Defense Fund express disappointment in the virtually unchanged child poverty rates for 1996, even while median income rose.

The rate of child poverty de-

clined by only three-tenths of one percent from 1995 to 1996, and rose slightly for children in working families.

"Many claims have been made about families who have left welfare," said CDF President Marian Wright Edelman. "While far too little is known about their

children's well-being, today's data warn us that many are failing to rise out of poverty, and even worse, some are losing their health coverage as well."

In the fifth year of economic recovery, our children deserve a fair share of the fruits of economic growth, but they are being

denied it," said Edelman.

The child poverty rate is higher than that of any other age group (the child poverty rate was 20.5 percent in 1996, compared to 13.8 percent for all Americans).

Likewise, more than two-thirds of all Americans losing health coverage in 1996 were children.