

EDITORIAL

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Charles Washington
Publisher & Editor

Gary Ann Taylor
Business Manager

Ilesha Williams
Graphic Design

Mark Washington
Distribution Manager

Larry J. Jackson, Sr.
Director of Operation

Tony Washington
Associate Editor

Contributing Writers:

Professor McKinley Burt,
Lee Perlman,
Neil Heilpern
Joy Ramos

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.,
Portland, Oregon 97211
503-288-0033 • Fax 503-288-0015
Email: Pdxobserv@aol.com

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Real Hard Work

By HUGH B. PRICE
PRESIDENT NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

Sarah Breedlove was born to ex-slaves on a Louisiana plantation just after the Civil War. Her formal schooling ended, soon after her parents died. She was married by fourteen, was soon a mother, and a widow by twenty. Determined to support herself and her daughter, she worked for seventeen years as a laundress, seemingly destined to live out the life of poverty and hardship American society then set aside as the special lot of black people.

Instead, Sarah Breedlove - as Madame C.J. Walker (she took her second husband's name) - proved in the first two decades of this century that she possessed one of the sharpest business minds American society had yet seen. She concocted a hair ointment and process for treating black women's hair and scalp that was an immediate success (and unquestionably, great enhanced the self-image of million of black women).

Then, she (with, initially, her husband; they later divorced) used her keen organizational and marketing skills to build a huge company that directly employed some five thousand black women in a business empire of factories and laboratories, beauty salons and schools, and door-to-door saleswomen, the "Walker agents," that stretched across the United States, the Caribbean, and parts of South America.

Walker was one of the first American women to become a self-made millionaire, and she did not deny herself the luxuries such wealth made available. But she was also extraordinarily generous to black educational institutions and charities, and a passionate advocate of women becoming economically self-sufficient. Her will stipu-

lated that two-thirds of her fortune go to various charities, and that her company, which is still in business, always be controlled by a woman.

The clue to that message can be found in the words Walker herself spoke:

She said, "If I have accomplished anything in life, it is because I have been willing to work hard. I never started anything doubtfully...There is no royal flower-strewn road to success, and if there is, I have not found it, for what success I have obtained is the result of many sleepless nights and real hard work."

Walker herself possessed an ambition, intelligence, shrewdness, and, as she put it, a capacity for working very hard for a very long time, beyond that of other mortals.

But we other mortals can still go very far if we employ those very gifts we have to the fullest. We shouldn't forget that Walker herself was representative of the astonishing zeal with which African Americans had rushed down all the pathways to success - including starting businesses - they could find in the five decades between what they themselves called the War for Negro Freedom and World War I.

Celebrating and spreading that spirit of entrepreneurship has been part and parcel of the Urban League's mission since it began in 1910. We have always worked both ends of that economic lifeline: helping those at both the lower and upper rungs of the educational and skills ladder.

We've sought to emphasize how important it is now at the dawn of the 21st century for African Americans to become more aware of the need to be economically secure and economically powerful. We did deliberately take as our conference theme last August, "Economic Power: The Next Civil Rights Frontier."

p e r s p e c t i v e s

Black History Month Is Here (Again), Is Celebration Enough?

This week the Portland Observer begins its traditional account of the strong black men and women who shaped more than their share of the world's history. These expansive and inspiring presentations have always been well-received in the community, and beyond.

By "well-received," we imply a greater effect upon the readership than simply the generation of favorable comment. Community-wide, the impact is evidenced by incorporation of the material into lesson plans at all three levels of the education system - elementary, high school and college. Each year, students, teachers and parents anticipate more exciting and documented revelations of a glorious black heritage.

And in addition, our materials have been cited on television, radio and cable, and have become standard reference at many lectures given at community institutions. So, as our title im-

plies, what possibly could be lacking in so many apparently successful Black History Month celebrations across the country?

Well, you may or may not know it but there is deep concern in the land that certain very real and vital messages imbedded in black history are not coming through. As they Once Did! There is increasing perception that a number of blacks - perhaps too many - are beginning to accept and celebrate Black History Month as though it were an enjoyable recurring event, like the 'spring equinox a natural phenomenon.

It has been said. "We have too many young who have not been told and too many elders who have forgotten" what dedicated and heroic effort was required to establish the concept and the legitimacy of a "Black History Month" (or of the underlying venue itself). Many black educators lost any chance for tenure in their institutions, and many blacks outside the system lost

jobs or promotions in consequence of their advocacy. Those were dangerous times.

It is mandated that some of us need to move beyond the 'spring break' mentality, beyond the ethnic fad approach and to revitalize these basic accounts of our seminal and glorious past. A marvelous and epic a saga as a Greek tale told by a Homer, Plato, Socrates, or even Shakespeare. But a documented drama which, as we know, has been deliberately concealed and rewritten; "Conscience makes cowards of us all."

Then, it goes without saying that many of our young people must be strongly and immediately made aware of these critical facts which will shape their commitment and continued support of a glorious cultural heritage. With those of us who are older, it is mandated that we renew the vigor and enthusiasm of those who came before. Those social and economic gains that

African Americans have seen to date result from long and difficult struggles supported by a deep knowledge of history and "who we are." (The philosopher's "Self".

So when I ask, "Is Celebration Enough?", I am sincere, it is no idle query. As historians reveal, "the barbarians are always at the gate!" Some of the more prudent and 'aware' of African Americans seem to be quite conscious of this fact, entertaining notions as far afield as "careful, this new 'middle class that appears to have made it, may not have - too easy to fall back when you're on the lower rungs of the ladder."

While others consider, "that 'Million-Man March has produced little if any of the promised social, cultural or economic gains. What was it all about? Maybe we need to search our history in a serious meaningful way."

The answers may be obvious. Is history repeating?

Compelling National Interest

Diversity is a compelling national interest. Above all else, what our conference on Wall Street proved is that we must diversify, we must expand the workforce, we must expand the marketplace, if we are to continue to grow the economy into the 21st century.

Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan said in his address, "Discrimination is patently immoral, but it is now increasingly being seen as unprofitable." Our mission is to drive this message home to corporate America.

Chinese Wall Syndrome-Centuries ago, the Chinese built the "Great Wall" - a miracle of human ingenuity to keep their enemies out. The

RAINBOW PUSH COALITION

unintended consequence of their action was to close themselves in and limit their possibilities. Wall Street and the other major business centers throughout this country have fallen victim to this syndrome. When walls come down and bridges are built in their place, everybody benefits.

Our mission is not to be confrontational. Agitation and confrontation

are last resorts. Our mission is to lead through enlightened self-interest. The private sector-the ones who stand to gain from the fruits of diversity-must assume more leadership in this struggle.

We want to build partnerships with business leaders.

That said, those companies who do not see the light must know that

we intend to shine the light upon them and demand respect as investors and consumers.

Ezekiel, Chapter 36:

"Thus says the Lord God, 'On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt. And the desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passed by.'"

It is our moral obligation to green-line the red-lined zones, to irrigate the scorched earth. For our nation to be strong, our cities must be strong. For our cities to be strong, all our neighborhoods, ghettos, and barrios must be strong.



Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:
Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

The Story of Anthony Branch Jr.

The Story of Anthony Branch Jr. (Smurf) and the Richmonds is part fact and part theory. I never dealt with my relative as "Smurf". Idealt with him always as little Anthony. Anthony stayed with my wife and I off and on from 1992 thru 1994.

Anthony a slender young man, was always shorter than the other boys. Most of Anthony's adolescent years were spent with our Aunt Ralphleen Harris who helped raise him. Teaching him to respect and giving him positive values while trying to guide him in the right direction. Anthony at home always showed respect he was very child like always wanting love and nurturing. Often sitting right up under you or when you were resting laying right next to you. Always giving me hugs and telling me he loved me. Anthony was loved and he touched many lives. His

home going service was filled with many people from all walks of life. There were expressions of appreciation and love for him from teachers, counselors and social workers.

Anthony may have been many things but he was nothing like the Willamette Weekly article portrayed him to be. "A notorious criminal." Those of us who really knew him know that the article written about him is more theory than truth only street rumors and police theory none of them proved.

The reason I'm speaking out at this time is because of the untruthful accusations made not only of him but our family in general. The article was so unnecessary and unprofessional and so disruptive to a family that doesn't deserve the damaging and painful false accusations. My family and I were very disturbed when we heard about and read the articles. Reporters who had

written and had never met either Anthony or family members.

The report paints a picture as a criminal family, never mentioning the many family members who have never had contact with the law enforcement officials. Many of them community workers, others college students or professionals. Aunt Ralphleen and Anthony's grandmother as well as myself and other family members tried to instill positive values. Anthony chose on his own a different road as people often do Anthony Jr. and Anthony Sr. do not represent the whole family nor do their actions speak for the whole family we are all accountable for what we do as individuals as in any family large or small.

The article slandered innocent family members elderly, young, working class all labeled because of having the same name. This is 1998 not 1947 you're black so

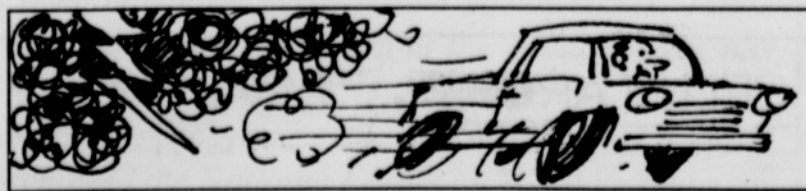
you're this or because you have the same name this is what you are all about.

Our family is trying to go on with our lives after suffering from two senseless losses. Two young men where brutally murdered not gang related, nor did either of them have weapons on them of any form. Heartless brutal murders and the news reporters say a notorious family. Not once has anyone in this family murdered. This had been for our family an extremely difficult time to have both deaths dredged up and then to add insult to deep wounds having the whole family labeled with untruths. If it can happen to our family it can happen to any family in the community. Is it really okay for the press to use the first amendment to justify their vicious attack.

From Fredrick Wood - Relative



The largest McDonald's in the world opened in January 1990 with 700 seats and 27 cash registers. It is located in Moscow.



According to the Safir-Simpson scale, the slowest wind speed a hurricane can have is 74 m.p.h.