

EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily
Reflect Or Represent The Views Of
The Portland Observer

Attention Readers!

Please take a minute to send us your comments. We're always trying to give you a better paper and we can't do it without your help. Tell us what you like and what needs improvement...any suggestions are welcomed and appreciated. We take criticism well! Get your powerful pens out NOW and address your letters to: Editor, Reader Response, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680) Established in 1970

Charles Washington

Publisher & Editor

Gary Ann Taylor

Business Manager

Iesha 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

Deadline for all submitted materials:

Articles: Friday, 5:00 pm Ads: Monday, 12:00pm

Send Address Changes To: Portland Observer,

P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Subscriptions: \$60.00 per year

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and cannot be used in other publications or personal usage without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1996 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

The Portland Observer--Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication--is a member of the National Newspaper Association--Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc, New York, NY, Oregon Federation of Advertising, American Minorities Media, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association • Serving Portland and Vancouver.

SUBSCRIBE TO The Portland Observer

The Portland Observer can be sent directly to your home for only \$60.00 per year. Please fill out, enclose check or money order, and mail to:

SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER; PO Box 3137

PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

Name:

Address:

City, State:

Zip-Code:

THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

JUST THINKING

By MAURICE A. DAWKINS

The first bull scale attack on the failings of the Welfare Reform Act passed by Congress and currently implemented at the State level is being launched by the militant Black founder of self help job training in America.

Calling together OIC Leaders and Community Based Organization Movement leadership of the Urban League, SER, and other Hispanic and Native American job training programs Sullivan is contacting Congressmen, Senators, and the White House on March 4th in the nation's capital.

He is calling for amendments to the Welfare Reform Act that will repair the safety net. Declaring that far too many welfare recipients are falling through the holes in the socio-economic safety net the founder of selective patronage boycotts in Philadelphia and highly respected advisor to Jesse Jackson's Operation Breadbasket is using the legislative process and focusing on the House and Senate Labor Committees.

A Bill outlining OIC Type pre-vocational training to "feed welfare recipients into community based job training programs" is receiving bi-partisan support from both Republicans and Democrats.

After ten years experimentation with Governor Thompson in Wisconsin the Milwaukee OIC has offered its experiences as a prototype for new methods and strategies such as church based mentoring, transportation subsidies, child care provisions and even short term loans to

help bridge the gap between welfare and permanent work. Thompson has agreed to get the National Governors Association behind the Sullivan initiative and the Black Caucus of State Legislators has adopted a resolution urging passage of community based organization pre-vocational job training. The Congressional Black Caucus is being urged to push with its considerable clout during the 55 day session.

Carol Geary, Publisher of the Black Milwaukee Courier has joined Dorothy Leavell, President of the National Newspaper Publishers in endorsing the Sullivan Initiative.

The Black Press Across the nation calls upon Black Americans to contact their Congressmen and Senators and urge them to support this new Community Based Welfare to Work Bill.

I went to Phoenix, AZ to ask Dr. Sullivan about this legislation. His daughter Atty. Hope Sullivan is the new Washington Representative of OIC coordination this effort. His response was as expected:

"We must help people make the transition from welfare rolls to payrolls, without the thousands of casualties that are being dropped into homelessness, joblessness and despair as is being reported from all the state. We must patch up the holes in the safety net.

We must help them help themselves as OIC has done for three decades now graduating more than two million disadvantaged Americans. "MEET ME IN WASHINGTON ON MARCH 4TH."

perspectives

"Bring Out The Noise, Bring Out The Brains"

By PROFESSOR MCKINLEY BURT

A long-time reader of the Portland Observer says you've done just that with recent "thrilling revelations in our 'Black History Month' section." Thank you but just wait until you see what we have for this week!

It seems that our proud reader went to the photocopy shop and had dozens of copies made to send all over the country to relatives, friends, and "frat brothers." When he called and later came by I said, "maybe you should have waited just one more week. We certainly appreciate your interest and enthusiasm, that's our goal, but check this out, Wednesday, February 25."

"Our presentation of another black engineering genius is a mind-blower: A 'home-grown' product of Portland's 'Benson Technical High School' as it was called in those days. Thomas M. Rutherford, or 'don' as he prefers (insists) on being called, was a 1932 graduate of Benson (Technical Aviation major) and a 1941 graduate of the University of Or-

egon.

Our brilliant, but modest engineer, went on to establish a fifty-year career in top level technology, including critical engine controls he designed and installed on Howard Hughes' famed "Spruce Goose," the world's largest plane. 'Don' says "it was actually made of birch wood!" But turn to our Black History Month section to read about the wondrous career between Benson High School and "Rutherford & Associate Engineers of Southern California.

Believe me there was not nearly enough room to describe this remarkable saga; I will be doing that in a national publication.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, it seems that I "was there fastest-with-the-mostest" as they quote a famed Civil War general.

The reference is to my weekly insistence that honoring Black History for just one month of the year is not enough it must be lived, experienced and exploited on a continual basis, rational, and spiritual. Readers have sent me

clippings from several 'Black' comic strips that emphasize this very point.

This past Sunday in "Jump Start" which features a black couple, a policeman, nurse and a toddler, we have them quoting Black History and ending up with the wife complaining, "...except that it's only taught for one month!" And in the daily black comic strip, "Curtis," the very same point was made. This latter series deals with a very real scenario built around inner-city life, especially as it affects the early black teens.

And it was with a deep gratification that I reviewed the communications from readers who remarked that I was "out there early on" with the admonition that Black History cannot be a periodic thing like Spring Break. Several readers noted that in the Portland Observer for 2/18/98, the guest columnist for the National Urban League takes up the theme I've been pushing for months. His delayed advice is "To Be Equal: Rediscovering Black History."

Good stuff, as far as it goes, but you will note the critical point made last week in the final article of my series, "Black History Month is Here (Again). It seems very well to present a carefully controlled, establishment and corporation approved roster of 'acceptable' black heroes-not a thing wrong with our greats, from Rev. King to Jackie Robinson and from Dr. Drew to Dr. Carver.

But as I pointed in my "Perspectives" column on the same page, there is a method in 'ol massa's madness."

The materials I've seen present a black whose existence in the universe began with slavery-No Egypt (known as Ethiopia to the ancient writers), no pyramids, no Black Popes, no Europeans attending the great universities of Timbuktu in West Africa, no Napoleon's black generals, no Pushkin, no Alexander Dumas, No Isaac Newton describing African mathematics and astronomy."

No nothing but a new slavery of the mind.

Why We March

The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, the Brotherhood Crusade, dozens of other progressive organizations and community leaders, and thousands of citizens marched from the LA Coliseum to the Ronald Reagan State Building on Monday February 23 at 8:00am to protest Propositions 209 (anti-race and gender), 187 (anti-immigrant), 226 (anti-worker) and 227 (anti-language).

Just as we face down foreign weapons of mass destruction, so too must we face down domestic policies of mass destruction. These exclusionary propositions are anti-growth. They are divisive. They seek to drive a wedge between us instead of trying to bring us together.

Devastating Impact of prop. 209. In the wake of Prop. 209, doors of opportunity are being slammed shut in minorities' and women's faces.

* Only one African American currently enrolled in the UC Berkeley Law School first year class.

* African American and Latino enrollment at California's public law schools and business schools has been nearly cut in half in only one year.

* There are virtually no women contractors with the City of San Diego.

* Of LA County's \$1.4 billion paid to contractors in FY 96-97, only

6.3 went to Community Business Enterprise firms.

* The number one growth industry in California and much of the rest

students admitted to UC-Davis Medical School under "special circumstances" than African American and Latino students.

RAINBOW PUSH COALITION

of the country is the Jail Industrial complex. We are throwing money into new jails to lock our youth up instead of investing money in new schools to lift our youth up.

Shatter Affirmative Action Myths
* Affirmative Action is not about race and gender preferences. Quotas have always been illegal. Affirmative action is a conservative remedy to demonstrated patterns of race and gender discrimination.

* Affirmative action is a majority issue, not a minority issue. In California, minorities are 48% of the population and women are 51% of the population.

* Standardized tests and grades are not the only criteria for university admission. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, last year there were more white

English-Only Measure (Prop. 227) counterproductive-English is a great language, but there is nothing sacred about it. Jesus did not speak it. In the new worldeconomy, America's greatest strength - our competitive advantage over all other countries - is our diversity. We should be striving to be bilingual or multi-lingual. Our ability to grow in the next century will largely be determined by our ability to communicate with people of all different cultures and nationalities.

Workers Under Attack

An issue on the June ballot in California, the deceptively titled "Campaign Reform Initiative" (Proposition 226) is a direct assault on the First Amendment rights of working people. It is a blatant attempt to silence working people and eliminate them from the political pro-

cess. If passed, this initiative would require union members to go through their employers for authorization to use dues for political purposes.

Campaign Finance Protections Already Exist

In CWA v. Beck (1988), the Supreme Court said that workers who are employed in a union shop do not have to join the union. As such, workers who do not want their money to be used for political purposes have the right to request that it not be. This ruling makes Prop. 226 unnecessary if its intent is truly to reform campaigns.

Similar Initiatives In other States and Congress

* Michigan and Washington have already passed similar bills.

* The results of the Washington bill are particularly disturbing. Because labor's political contributions have been slashed by 90%, both houses in the state legislature and the Governor's mansion are controlled by Republicans.

* States presently trying to force through anti-worker measures include NV, AZ, AK, WI, OR, MO, and GA.

* In Congress, US Senate Bill 8 and House Resolution 2806 are attempts to eliminate workers' voices in federal elections.

To Be Equal Black Poverty/White Poverty

By HUGH B. PRICE, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

Earlier this month I read a newspaper article about a part of Kentucky where hard-core poverty has settled over the landscape and the people who there-like a shroud.

This is an area where 46% of the residents live in poverty and at least 25% live below the federal government's baseline poverty marker-a rate almost double the national average; where nearly half the adults are unemployed, where two-third receive some kind of federal assistance, and where more than half the adults are so bereft of schooling that they are functionally illiterate.

This is an area where residents are in such despair that a new program to help them accumulate savings-for every one dollar individuals put into their own savings account, the program will contribute six-has, astonishingly, largely been ignored.

The program's administrator explained the low participation by saying: "They don't think they have a future. If they did, they would think about it and delay instant gratification. But they have no reason to. And they can't. They can only think about how they are going to feed the

children this week and pay the rent this month."

If you think this place is an inner-city neighborhood, peopled by destitute African Americans and Hispanic Americans, think again.

It's Owsley County, Kentucky, one of the poorest of the 399 counties in 13 states which make up Appalachia. This is one of the places where hard-core white poverty lives.

I thought of the people in Owsley County, Kentucky and throughout Appalachia when I watched, again, earlier this month, the "Frontline" program on PBS. The Two Nations of Black America, in which Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. and other black scholars and civil rights figures discussed whether a wide divide has opened up between the black middle class and the black poor.

They concluded that it has, and that the black middle class must find a way to narrow it substantially, although, it was strongly implied, some middle-class blacks could care less about the black poor.

These two news media considerations of poverty and poor people in America starkly illustrate how, you'll pardon the expression, colored our thoughts, our language, our perspec-

tive, and our public discussion are by our notions of black and white.

That is to say, how, when it's African Americans being talked or written about, the entire issue is placed inside a "black frame," and, very often, "dis-connected" and isolated from being considered part of the American mainstream.

It's not accidental that the "Frontline" program's title was "The Two Nations of Black America"-as if blacks live in a separate land, where what they do and think and aspire to has no relationship to what happens in American society-while the news article in *The New York Times* about the white poor in Appalachia was devoid of any reference to race or ethnicity, or, for that matter, a "culture of poverty" at all.

Why is that, particularly when the *Time's* wrenching report implicitly illuminated the parallels that exist between the continued existence of desperate poverty among both poor whites in the depressed, rural areas of Appalachia and the black and Hispanic poor in depressed urban neighborhoods?

No one can honestly examine the problem of poverty in Appalachia and then say that the problem of

those African Americans who are desperately poor is a "black problem" that every American but African Americans need pay no attention to. This is the old racist posture of "separate but equal" at its crudest and most dishonest.

Yes, even in this period when a robust economy is benefiting millions, there is a continuing significant problem of poverty in America among white, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and African Americans. It has systemic causes. Some of those causes have been discussed before in this column, and were all too briefly mentioned by the scholars and civil rights figures on the "Frontline" program and by the anti-poverty activists interviewed for the *Times* article.

We keep missing opportunities to both categorize things in racial terms and to discuss issues in ways that transcend racial and ethnic boundaries so that there can be a substantive conversation across the boundaries of race and ethnicity about what are *American problems*.

It's long past the time to break the color barrier that limits an honest discussion of America's public agenda.