

EDITORIAL

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

Identity, Motivation And Innovation III

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Letter To The Editor

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:
Editor: PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Letter to the Editor:

I agree and applaud the real point of the editorial in the Oregonian: that libraries are an essential public service, and that every effort should be made to provide access to Multnomah County libraries throughout the upcoming multi-year branch library renovation process.

The information you conveyed to your readers, however, contained a significant inaccuracy.

We are NOT planning to have North Portland and Albina branch libraries closed at the same time. Work on the North Portland branch is scheduled to begin in 1999; the Albina Branch Library renovation is scheduled to be finished before the end of 1998. (Albina's renovation will take place as part of Nature's Fresh Northwest's renovation of the shopping center on NE Fifteenth and Fremont; Nature's owns the building that houses the Albina Branch Library.)

Of greater concern to us is a possible overlap of work to be done on the North Portland and St. Johns branch libraries. Both North and St. Johns will require extensive work: new roofs, plumbing, mechanical systems and wiring. North Portland, an unreinforced masonry building, will also require major seismic work and St. Johns will be adding additional space for a community meeting room. Each building will need to be closed for approximately one year. We are working to coordinate these projects so that the construction schedule avoids or minimizes any overlap in these closures.

I'd also like to point out that since the middle of March we have been conducting a series of public meetings - one at each branch library - to talk about renovation plans. Upcoming meetings include one at St. Johns (June 9 at 7 p.m.) and one at North Portland (June 17 at 7 p.m.).

A very perceptive reader says those three processes fit together like parts of a well-designed machine. There follows here some of those 'well-designed' supporting materials I've promised: For student, teacher and/or parent.

First in relationship to David Crosthwaite whose scores of thermodynamic (heat transfer) inventions made 'Skyscrapers' a livable and comfortable domain, I recommend the following materials. All have proven more than successful for the purposes we've indicated.

"Skyscrapers: a History of the Worlds Most Famous and Important Skyscrapers", Judith Dupre. You may obtain this beautiful, oversize (8X14 1/2) book with photographs and clear, informative commentary of over 25 of the World's tallest buildings ... from "Barnes & Noble, Books By Mail" (only) Item No. B139716, \$19.98 plus S. & H. \$3.95 (800)242-6657 by Credit Card or, One Pound Road, Rockleigh, N.J. 07647 for mail order, check enclosed.

The book has a fantastic introduction and foreword - The Pyramids and The Washington Monument (The "African Obelisks" article I presented during Black History Month). There

also is a list of the world's "100 Tallest Buildings", and there is an excellent bibliography, 25 "Suggested Readings."

Interestingly, when my "Crosthwaite Neighborhood Science Club" was downtown touring two of Portland's tallest buildings - 11 kids, two mothers - this book was almost snatched away from them by marveling people; even a building superintendent who insisted, "I've just got to have one to show visitors". In fact, the book would make a heck of a coffee table item even if you had no real interest in Crosthwaite or thermodynamics.

I wish to cite here another very relevant book which also may be obtained at a publisher's closeout price from the same "Barnes & Noble, Books By Mail" (only). This is the ultimate 'physics' reference book, "Understanding Physics", by the famed Isaac Asimov (I do not have the order number so call (800) 242-6657). Remember that David Crosthwaite made skyscraper occu-

pancy possible and comfortable, but he was not an architect. He was a mechanical engineer whose specialties were heating, plumbing, airconditioning, ventilation.

Asimov's book, "Understanding Physics", makes difficult concepts quite clear and has proven to be of invaluable assistance to junior and senior high school students as well

as college youths. The very first of the 'three-volumes-in-one' is "Motion, Sound and Heat." That is "thermodynamics",

Crosthwaite's specialty. A local African American mechanical engineer with his own shop will develop this group.

It is to be seen here that what might have begun simply as a single citation of a reference book on Skyscrapers is fast evolving into a broad area of scientific disciplines which support an apparently independent concept. And that is the way this science field is; ever new, ever challenging, ever expanding and reward-

ing - and connected.

Several years ago I wrote here of a brilliant young African American student at Grant High School who won first prize in the "Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) essay contest. Para Stroud Johnson chose as her subject, the black inventor of the "Sugar Refiner, Norman Rillieux. The very same Rillieux, American pioneer in Thermodynamics, whom David Crosthwaite told me was his model and hero.

It was gratifying that this young lady cited my book, "Black Inventors of America" as one source of documentation for her essay. I still work at assembling in an organized manner, reams upon reams of material on the technical contributions of Africans and African Americans - for distribution by book, video, documentary, World Wide Web, whatever. It takes longer than one would think hundreds of correspondents. Obviously our youth needs this.

Interestingly, "Kelva Johnson", the sister of Para Johnson the 'DAR' essay winner, and a senior at Grant High School is a finalist in this year's Coca Cola Scholarship Foundation competition. congratulations to you and your wonderful mother.



BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

RAINBOW PUSH COALITION

Another Member of Our Family Goes to Congress

In northern California, State Senator and Rainbow/PUSH Coalition California Chairperson, Barbara Lee was elected in a landslide to complete the unexpired term of retired Rep. Ron Dellums.

Congresswomen-elect Lee is a shining example of what determination and enlightened government

can produce. Her rise from young, single mother on welfare to congressperson is primarily the result of tremendous individual drive and commitment and faith.

But let there be no mistake. Not even these laudable individual qualities could overcome overwhelming odds without governmental support. Lee's rise, like a Phoenix from the ashes, was only

possible in a state that was once committed to providing a social safety net and a ladder to climb beyond one's circumstances.

Unless Californians overturn Proposition 209 and other initiatives that close doors to opportunity, there will not be any Barbara Lees ten to twenty years from now. Because of these shortsighted initiatives, Californians will be deprived of good, capable, committed people to lead the state into the twenty-first century. Every other state in the union should heed California's warning.

Rev. Jackson Answers Plea

In Texas Rev. Jackson met and prayed with Erica Sheppard, a 24-

year-old mother of three, on death row.

The meeting occurred at the request of Amnesty International and Ms. Sheppard's mother, Madelyn McNeil. After Ms. Sheppard took the extraordinary step of asking the state to end her appeals, both Amnesty International and Ms. McNeil appealed to Rev. Jackson for help.

Rev. Jackson spoke with Ms. Sheppard and convinced her to reinstate her appeals. The execution, set for April 20, was subsequently postponed indefinitely pending the outcome of the appellate process.

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