

# EDITORIAL

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## The Portland Observer

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

## Oregon Coalition To Abolish The Death Penalty

### Message From The Chair

At the Annual Meeting of the Oregon Coalition To Abolish The Death Penalty in January, we marked the 10th Anniversary of the Coalition. A review of 1998 indicated the hard work of many members on the written and oral appeals and vigil for Harry Charles Moore, on Oregon legislation, on correspondence with inmates, and on education through tabling, newsletter, magazine and newspaper articles and speaking. Mitigation Specialist Pamela Rogers of Bend spoke at the Annual Meeting about Coalition members keeping in contact with individuals on death row to avoid men volunteering to be executed. All of us as humans desire to live if we have someone who cares, listens and, when able, helps us out with reasonable requests, such as good medical care. Ms. Rogers also addressed the issue of "death-qualified jurors."

Only potential jurors who feel they in some instance could support the death penalty are allowed to serve in aggravated murder trials, making juries unbalanced toward a sentence of death. When called to serve on a jury, one must consider carefully what your answers will be during the challenges to seating the jury.

Positive movement is happening on the state and national levels for those of us who oppose capital punishment. Oregon's Capital De-

fenders, composed of lawyers and other experts such as Ms. Rogers, are giving and participating in specialized training to handle death penalty cases. The mother of a 16-year-old killed in Portland last summer appeared in court to explain her family does not want the death penalty for the young man who shot her son and who subsequently was sentenced to life with a minimum of 25 years. The Texas execution of Karla Faye Tucker has made many others reexamine their support of capital punishment. Out of the Timothy McVeigh case came Bud Welch whose daughter was killed in the Oklahoma bombing and who actively opposes executions. Crime Victims United, in Oregon, and the National Victim Center do not take a position on the death penalty because some members oppose it.

The Coalition Steering Committee meets monthly at First Methodist Church, 18th and SW Jefferson in Portland, from 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday. The OCADP web page is at <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ocadp>. Voice mail is (503) 249-1556. Email is [ocadp@compuserve.com](mailto:ocadp@compuserve.com).

The Steering Committee hopes each of our members will become more active and encourage others to join.

The abolition of the death penalty is more than the dream of a few. Please read on and join our efforts with hope.

# Identity And Motivation IV, Conclusion

We all knew, of course, that a significant effort to improve the future of our youth can never be concluded, it should only gain momentum as more relevant information is incorporated into the structure. "Grow it" as they say in that new exotic use of English grammar.

Next, just guess where a number of the youth and parents of our Neighborhood Science Clubs are going for their vacations this summer? It ain't "Disneyland", life has taken a serious and rewarding twist. After almost twenty year of effort, I have gotten through to a number of the brethren - thanks to the hard work and perseverance of some of my former students. Remember that in some cases I'm in touch with three generations of some families in the community.

Different groups will be visiting historic sites related to many key black inventors, birthplaces, museums and contemporary industrial applications of their innovations. For instance, in the case of Lewis Howard Latimer whose invention of the first practical filament for the incandescent light-making Thomas Edison's light bulb practical (No. 247,097, Sept. 13, 1881) - The kids will visit the black inventors house in Queens, New York. The General Electric Foundation contrib-

uted \$25,000 to save it in August 1988.

It will immediately occur to a number of readers that the group will be in proximity to the New York City Subway, whose very basic concept was predicated upon the scores of patented inventions of a great African Ameri-

can electrical engineer. The most obvious of his seminal contributions to subway transit systems was, of course, those that did away with the necessity for an "overhead trolley"; see Nos. 385,034; 678,086; 395,533; 463,020; 509,065; 569,443; 667,110; Granville T. Woods.

And there will be visited Black Inventor Museums in Atlanta, Detroit and St. Louis; different groups some I am advisor to. Interestingly I have always had great difficulty with curators of the "Thomas Edison Museum" near Detroit in even getting an admission that Lewis Howard Latimer ever existed - let alone that he was a honored member of the "Edison Pioneers".

Fortunately for the historical record, The New York City Library has pictures of all the "Pioneers" (including Edison) paying their respects at his funeral. Sic Transit Gloria, "how fleeting is fame."

Another point of interest is that all of those taking the New York trip have

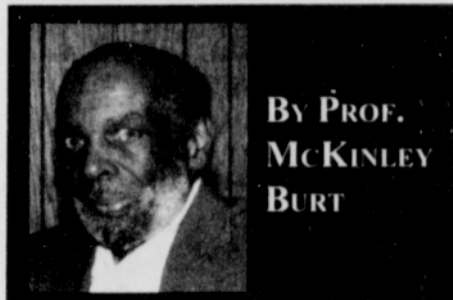
read my two-part article appearing in The Portland Observer at the end of 1996 and concluded Jan. 1, 1997, "Harlem, the Village Light Rail Built." Actually the line was an over-built disaster, but a black real estate broker converted a development fiasco into a cultural Renaissance. Here at home, we constantly impress upon the kids the economic payoffs of inventions and the sweeping cultural and social changes brought about. "You could be left out!"

Interested readers may obtain a relevant U.S. Government publication, "General Information on Patents" from the local Federal Bookstore, 1405 S.W. First Street, Portland OR 97201. The Price is \$3.95 and provides much valuable information for which those tele-

vision hustlers charge hundreds to a thousand dollars. Dorothy Williamson, the local inventor of the "Paint Caddy" started this correct way as I advised my students at PSU.

Later this year there will be more on Neighborhood Science Clubs and media introduction when they are well on foot. I would like to mention though that many of those successful modes from 'yesteryear' are working even better today; 'communication' is every thing, the cross-fertilization of ideas. And once again, former students of mine are meeting the challenge to get black kids prepared for year 2000 technology. Where in many cases they would be left out or put on the slow track.

A number have pen pals in other cities, kids/clubs with like interests in science and technology. Parents have given them models they first saw here. I've told how my mother had me to write Germany for model plane plans when I couldn't find that type here ("don't whine, Junior, you know how to read and write"). And I've told how we high school kids had the 'initiative' to earn and pool our money to contract moonlit excursion trips on the Streckfus Steamer Line. Hundreds of kids, big paddle wheel steamers like the Casino boat on T.V., hit by barges.



By Prof. McKinley Burt

## TO BE EQUAL Now Is the Time

By HUGH B. PRICE  
PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

Martin Luther King Jr. is thirty years gone, taken by an assassin's bullet that was meant to slay the Dream as well as the Dreamer.

But in fact King's presence is even more powerfully with us now--despite the efforts of tricksters to take a snippet of this speech or that sermon as support for their benighted

efforts to re-assign African Americans to second-class status in American society.

It is ever more powerfully with us because the advice and moral counsel he provided are as needed now as they were at that moment in 1963 when, in his "I Have A Dream" speech at the March on Washington, he reminded America of "the fierce urgency of Now."

"This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the

tranquilizing drug of Gradualism," he proclaimed then. "Now is the time to make real the promises of Democracy."

Martin Luther King was "an American leader of conscience and humanity," as Julian Bond, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said when we (along with the Reverend Jesse Jackson and Representative J.C. Watts [R-Okla.]) appeared together April 5 on

the NBC News program, "Meet The Press."

So, even as we celebrate the fact that millions of African Americans have moved into the middle class, and thus, come into full earthly possession of their own destinies--come closer, if you will, to the Promised Land that King spoke of on the last night of his life--we know that Martin Luther King is still calling us to action.

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