

Forty Acres And A Mule; U.S. Department Of Agriculture Still Holds The Dream, Part II of II

By Prof. McKinley Burt

Last week's follow up on recitals of the Agriculture Department's racist misdeeds (by the establishment media) did not in anyway speak to the conduct of the U.S. Forest Service, a subsidiary agency.

As many readers are aware, I spent more than a decade (1972-1983) contracting with the Forest Service for the development of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity presentations and curricula for their personnel. There was some success in remedying a racial and gender profile that for all practical purposes, was exclusively white male, here in the Northwest. I was on PSU faculty at the time.

However, our reference was to the discriminatory conduct, of agricultural agents employed by the parent operation to aid farmers in the economic and technical development of their lands. Particularly, the present administration and the courts have admitted to a long-standing practice of denying loans to qualified black farmers; ensuring losses were inevitable, and huge.

I can understand the

puzzlement of some readers when I cited "another big land-grab" - "which one of perhaps dozens?", they might very well say. Infact, several callers have tried to anticipate me, either citing one of the contemporary dispossessions - or a classic historical instance. Strangely, no one has cited plain old naivety, or the failure to exercise due vigilance - in a system based on unfettered competition, at that.

However, it is rewarding to discover that we do have a number of 'thinking' villagers here in the northeast, and that includes both white and black residents. I had two visitors to ask, had I "noticed that 'Light Rail' may have replaced the now outdated 'Urban Renewal/Removal' as the developer's instrument of choice". I sure did - "Hello, North Portland."

There are more ways to acquire a peasant's property than were available back when the Kings (and Queens) were flirting with the concept of "eminent domain" (it's mine in the first place, sucker, so there!). And there are a thousand euphemisms for the obvious - and painful. Urban Growth vs Urban Boundaries; pioneering Livability; Suburban Malaise, name it.

What has come to mind, since citing that "land grab", is that with Black History Month so near at hand, I would not have the time and resource which my original concept deserved - and readers would expect. So, let me reference it in this manner.

Did you see the media coverage of president Clinton's recent vacation on "Hilton Head Island", a fabulous playground for the well-appointed and anointed? In some shots you may have seen poor old 'disabled' "Buddy" romping around the golf cart and wagging his tail. Previously, I had planned to reprise my 1990 account of these "Sea Islands" off the coasts of the Carolinas.

I had much new material on a lot of this land that was formerly owned by blacks, and which, in the 1970s, sold at well over \$1,000 a front 'inch'. But, we will do that later, in the Spring. For now I have some fascinating revelations concerning African and African American contributions to the world's literature, language and communications. You didn't hear this on the "Grape Vine." My introductory preface to this series for Black History Month begins January 27, 1999.

Science Scholarships Available for Minority Students

Minority high school seniors planning to major in chemistry or chemical engineering are encouraged to apply for scholarships from the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society, and funded in partnership with PPG industries.

Under the ACS/PPG Scholarship Plus Program, scholarships are awarded to incoming college freshman enrolling in four-year chemistry or chemical engineering undergraduate programs and are based on academic achievement, financial need and geographic location (see below).

Scholarships will be granted for amounts of up to \$2,500 a year and can be renewed.

The program is designed to encourage African-American, Hispanic and American Indian students to pursue college degrees and careers in the chemical sciences. The goal of the scholarship program is to aid in building awareness of the value and rewards associated with careers in science and to assist students in acquiring the skills and credentials needed for success in these areas.

The deadline for applying for the 1999-2000 academic year scholarships is February 15, 1999. Application forms may be found on the American Chemical

Society Web site at <http://www.acs.org/pafgen/minority/acs2.htm>, or call toll free 1-800-227-5558, ext. 6520, or via e-mail to scholars@acs.org.

Complete details of the Society's Minority Affairs programs can be found at <http://www.acs.org>

Applications must be a high school senior from one of the following locations: Lake Charles, La; Natrium or New Martinsville, W. Va; Pittsburgh, Pa; Cleveland, Ohio; Shelby and Lexington, N.C.; Oak Creek, Wis.; Houston, Texas

Shelter Campaign Begins For Homeless Sexual-Minority Youth

This month a campaign is beginning to recruit shelter parents to house sexual minority youth. It is a first-time collaboration between two local nonprofit social service and mental health resource agencies - The Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon, and the Network Behavioral Healthcare's Program Roots and Branches. Identified in recent reports by Metropolitan Human Rights Commission, research centers, and social service experts as the largest segment of the homeless youth population in Oregon, sexual-minority youth are also at high risk for suicide, drug abuse, prostitution, and sexually transmitted diseases.

The goal of this campaign is to recruit, certify, and train shelter parents to work with this specific population. Shelter parents assist in transitioning youth off the streets and teaching independent-living skills.

The Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon is a private, nonprofit agency that provides short-term shelter care for children and youth up to age 18. It is the largest private provider of shel-

ter care in Oregon. Network Behavioral Healthcare, a nonprofit mental health and addiction treatment agency, operates Roots and Branches, a counseling program of comprehensive

treatment and case management services for sexual-minority youth.

For more information on the Shelter Care Program, call Elizabeth Chambers at 222-9661.

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An Evening With Chief Justice Edwin Peterson and Vocalist Linda Hornbuckle

At their 16th Annual Ebony and Ivory Scholarship Benefit

Please join us for an evening with vocalist **Linda Hornbuckle** at the 16th Annual Ebony and Ivory Scholarship Benefit. The Oregon Chapter of the National Bar Association (OC-NBA) will award scholarship to outstanding law students who excel in their studies and plan to practice law in Oregon. The event's feature special guest speaker will be **Chief Justice Edwin Peterson** of the former Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme court.

The Ebony and Ivory Scholarship Benefit will take place on **Sat-**

urday, February 27, 1999 at the **Portland Art Museum** in Sunken Exhibition Hall, 1219 S.W. Park Avenue, from 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. This semi-formal event will feature live music and the vocal talents of **Ms. Linda Hornbuckle**, hors d'oeuvres and no-host bar. Musical entertainment for this event is co-sponsored by the law firm of Lane Powell Spears Lubersky LLP.

The primary objectives of the Oregon Chapter of the National Bar Association (OC-NBA) are to encourage and promote academic

excellence among law students of African descent, to increase representation of African-Americans in the legal profession in Oregon, and to promote professional and social interactions between members of the Oregon State Bar.

Tables (seating 10) are available for \$500.00, and individual tickets are available for \$50.00 or two tickets for \$80.00. For more information or to purchase tickets, please call Melvin Oden-Orr at (503) 778-2198 or e-mail the OC-NBA at Oregon.NBA@junco.com.

Katz Work Group Recommends Steps To Achieve A "More Fareless" Transit System

PORTLAND—Eliminating transit fares could significantly increase ridership says a work group formed by Mayor Vera Katz. And to put Portland on the road to having a regional system that's perceived as more competitive with the car, the Fareless Transit System Research Work Group recommended several steps to achieve a "more fareless system."

"I commend the members of the Work Group of taking a good hard look at the realities of our current system and how we might do better," said Katz. "In my State of the City speech last year, I said that we are not doing enough to build a transportation system that connects us and gets us out of our cars. That is still true today, even more so with failure of S/N on the November ballot. I look forward to continuing the public conversation on what other options we have to expand and improve our system, and to get more people to use it."

The report showed that a completely fareless transit system would show ridership gains about 25 percent during peak hours, 60-65 percent during non-peak. Two of the barriers to attracting riders, the report said, are uncertainty and complexity.

"Until we can put fare boxes in cars, leaving the playing field among the transportation choices that daily confront people will require making transit services more attractive

and transit fares less unattractive," the group wrote. For now, they believe the solution is instead to provide both high-quality transit service and motivation to use it....a system that attracts riders."

Therefore the group recommended steps to increase transit's competitive advantage and create a "more fareless system." Central to two of the recommendations is getting transit passes into the hands of more people. Once in hand, a transit pass, in essence, make the system fareless and increase the tendency to ride. Specifically, they recommend.

Expansion of PASSport program: Tri-Met and local jurisdictions should expand participation in the PASSport program by: 1) modifying the current program so employees face increased prices only when services is added, thus opening avenues for Tri-met to partner is negotiated, targeted packages of service improvements and subsidies for pass purchases, and 2) running a one time program in which all employers would be eligible to receive free three-month passes for all employees.

Fare simplification: Tri-Met should eliminate the zone fare system and establish one fare for rides throughout the system to reduce complexity and confusion for all.

Extend Summer Youth Pass Program: Tri-met and local juris-

dictions should make transit passes more accessible to young people, by expanding Tri-Mets discounted Summer youth Pass program to year-round. A full-year Youth Pass program would sharply reduce the cost of passes for young people during the school year (from \$29 per month to under \$15) and would encourage school districts and local jurisdictions to work with Tri-met for bulk purchases.

Regional Parking Tax: Financing investment to make transit more competitive, both by expanding service quantity and quality and by making the fare system more competitive, is a major challenge for the region. While the work group recognized that adopting a regional parking tax to pay for transit would face both legal and administrative challenges, their report found that the payoff in livability for the region should motivate the city to keep at it until it succeeds.

True Costs of Auto Travel: Research conducted for the Work Group illustrated the difference between the perceived costs of automobile usage (for a 10-mile trip, usually 50 cents to \$1) and the true costs (\$5-10). Society subsidizes auto travel at 17 to 26 cents per mile. The Work Group recommends that local and regional governments continue to examine the true costs of the automobile and ways to make sure driving pays more of its full costs.



Just think: Your son is bright, healthy and headed for college one day. You love the direction your

career has taken. You're doing a lot of the things you planned and even a few you didn't. Living life to the fullest is easy when you have family behind you. American Family Insurance. Call and talk to one of our helpful, friendly agents. You'll find out why we're consistently rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best, the insurance rating authority. Then, go on. Dream. Plan. What you do next is up to you and we'll be here to help you.

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