

Happenings On Hilltop

Hilltop Neighborhood

Volume 2, Number 12

August 1992



"Count every thorn
a flower; every sharp
rock a milestone,
hurrying you onward
to the goal"

AUGUST AT A GLANCE

Actually, we haven't even started August yet, but I can honestly tell you that the way July went, we had all better hold on to our hats and batten down the hatches. Things are speeding up at an exciting pace. Well, it can be exciting if we see it as such.

At any rate, let us be mindful of the times we're in. This is not the time to start withholding and withdrawing in a physical way. We all need to be more Loving and kind and the extension of our families is a must to assist those who have no family. If anything, now is a time when we should all be looking within to find that hope or faith that will allow us to give when we are going to be short ourselves. This only makes sense because the time when each of us will need a helping hand is not too far off.

With school fast approaching, don't forget to make sure all last minute registration activities have been addressed for our youth. A number of families are faced with single parent situations. This doesn't have to be negative, but cooperation between all adults (who have any say so regarding the child) is of utmost importance.

As always, we could sure use a few donations, subscriptions and paper. But most of all, we need your prayers. Just like most families, spending so much time together with our dedicated newspaper staff wear's us all down from time to time. But we still believe, so help out any way you can.

PEACE

So with all that out of the way, let's get movin' and see what's Happening On Hilltop.

THE "C" WORD

by *Larry Norman*

Lately, I have been extremely (sometimes too extreme) busy walking, talking and driving through my neighborhood. Not that I haven't been doing this all along, as many people who know me are aware of. I have written many proposals, sat through too many meetings, joined various organizations and assisted many residents with situations in their own lives. This has been all well and good.

But I had gotten too caught up in trying to do things that would

make a difference in my community, to the point where my own personal life became a situation of concern for my family and closest friends. "How can you go out in the community, preaching the gospel of helping, working together and Loving your fellow man, when you haven't taken care of your family? The roof is leaking, the faucets are leaking, your children cry every time you leave the house on one of your missions, and your woman doesn't see you at all. How can you even begin to help someone else?"

Indeed, how could I help

someone else? Thus began a tug-of-war. Part of me realized the urgency of the situation on my home front and I quickly began assessing those activities I was involved with in the community. The other part of me began looking at the urgency of the situation in the community and began evaluating the projects which needed attention at home. After only a few short moments, I realized that I had backed myself in a corner. I was so committed to everything, that I had forgotten about having a commitment to myself.

I began to see that though I

prioritized my concerns, practically everything was a priority. There was just no room to include my personal priorities. I thought, "should I spend less time with the newspaper and more with my children?" I saw the major commitments that I had already made to both. Being a divorced father, I was all too aware of what happens to many of our children when there is no father-figure in their life on a regular basis. Yet, I had extended myself, both financially and personally to projects with the newspaper. We had just begun a subscription drive and stepped out on faith to purchase a copy machine. Both issues had their merits, with very few justifications for spending less time on either.

One day I was driving down the street and heard this song called "Committed." I fell in Love with it immediately. "That's me", I thought. But then, I started looking at how often I had said I was going to call someone or stop by their house, but didn't. And when I was confronted with why I didn't follow through, I would say that I was too busy and justifiably so, I thought.

I was almost too ashamed to admit it, but I wasn't committed, I was compelled. My emotions were dictating my actions. There was a difference. Sometimes commitment has little to do with

emotion. Commitment is when your children get sick at three in the morning and you have to get out of bed and assist them. Commitment is going by a friends house late at night to talk about their concerns, even though you have had a long day. Commitment is seeing a person laying in the street and stopping for a moment to ask how he or she is doing.

With so many projects I felt compelled to do, I began to see them as commitments. Now there was a fire and a desire to follow through. Instead of not calling a person because I couldn't make a

scheduled appointment, I committed to the phone call. Instead of not spending time with my children because I had too much going on, I set aside time in the morning for nothing but them.

Commitment, I learned was far deeper than any emotion. There is much sacrifice, but the rewards are immeasurable. Faith is good, but without a commitment to get it done, the desire soon fades and we are left with much unfinished business. I now see that I won't save the world, but I'm committed to try. What about you? PEACE

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

D. WALLER: MANIFESTO

by Larry Norman

Actors, directors, singers, writers. These are the people who entertain and teach us. We learn about morals, right and wrong, politics and a number of other essential social skills. Used correctly, the medium of television, music and theater can and should be the perfect tool to bring these valuable messages to a public who hungers for direction.

Unfortunately, Blacks and other minorities have had to wait on the sidelines to use these vehicles, if allowed at all. Why is this? Look at the great contributions Black directors, actors and musicians have made over the years; Quincy Jones, Sidney Poitier, Bill Cosby, Michael Jackson, Spike Lee, Van Peebles. The list is endless and so are the excuses by those organizations who have the power to open the door of Opportunity, yet choose to keep it conveniently closed.

It is easy to understand why Black Americans have an inability to cooperate and unify. Blacks spend billions of dollars each year in America. We support major markets of industry, including the music and entertainment field. Just as Leave It To Beaver, Patty Duke and many other classics have instilled appropriate moral behavior for its targeted audience, so should the opportunity be given to Black

America to portray its morals and goals. No, I'm not saying that I didn't get anything out of the old classics because the actors were White and I was Black. On the contrary, I firmly believe morals and the teaching of good and bad have no color. We should not forget that as different races and cultures, we need to see morals acted out in a way that relates, period.

I grew up in a nice neighborhood (Hilltop). I never saw any of the streets that "The Beev" or "Wally" grew up on. When I got in trouble, my parents gave me what was necessary to correct my negative behavior. I never saw anyone on television get punished the way I (or any of the kids I grew up with) did. Sure, it was great watching Franky and Annette surfing their way across movie screens. But that wasn't the way I normally spent my summer. Not that I wouldn't enjoy surfing, but what would really entertain me and keep my attention is something I can relate to.

Today, there are many fine and outstanding Black producers and

directors to assist in bringing this message to the silver screen and television. Locally, Dwayne Waller (D. Waller, if I may) has quietly built a reputation for creating material that relates to our environment. In 1990, Dwayne wrote his MANIFESTO, outlining his thoughts, goals and direction. In it, he explains why it is necessary to create opportunities for Black producers, writers and directors.

Dwayne points a truthful finger at the various forms of media who perpetuate negativity, ignorance and hostility. I had the opportunity to read Dwayne's MANIFESTO. I knew that he had also produced a couple of local Rapp groups (J1, check it out!). I was humbled by the depth in which Dwayne had carved into his calling. Only a person so devoted to his/her craft could analyze and critique so clearly. I was happy to know this man and his family for most of my life. It's like getting to meet a celebrity, but better! I don't have to wait in line for an autograph. All I need to do is drive by his mothers house which is just around the corner from mine.

What frustrates many Blacks is that we know so many great people like D. Waller right in our own neighborhoods. We know how great they are and what they could add to society as a whole. We are angered that in spite of this talent, these gifted individuals generally go unrecognized or give up due to lack of resources and opportunity.

In the final paragraph of his MANIFESTO, Dwayne sums it up like this: "I would like to some day have the involvement of the community from the point of production, post-production, all the way to community viewing and critique to assure that others are viewing a correct interpretation of that cultural or ethnic group. I would like to see these types of films viewed nationally." 'Nough said. Thanks D. Waller for caring enough to hold on to your dream. Hopefully, if the society at large can not or will not support an effort such as yours, our Hilltop community can and will.

Peace.

If you wish to submit an article to the Hilltop Newsletter, you can mail it to:

Happenings On Hilltop

C/O Preston Ward

1809 So. 25th St.

Tacoma, WA 98405

Or call Larry Norman

Please send your comments and suggestions!!! Please have your articles in by the 15th of each month.

Note: Pictures and Art work can now be put in our newsletter. We will try to return your work as soon as possible.

THE REAL "DRIVE-BY"

by Larry Norman

Not too many years ago, the term "Drive-By" meant a visit of short duration. As the violence has escalated in our streets, the search for terms to describe what is taking place has once again claimed another "innocent term." Today when we say drive-by, most people automatically expect the worst. "Who got shot today?", they say. Sad, but true.

What is really sad is that once again, another form of negativity which exists in all parts of our society, has been placed squarely on the shoulders of "gang members." Granted, gang members (I would prefer to say brother's on the 'Hood) are involved in situations where drive-by's occur. But let's be fair. If one of your friends or relatives got shot and you had an idea who it was and you knew that chances were good that the police wouldn't take care of it, you too, would be in favor of a drive-by. Whether we agree with another's point of view or not is not the point at this time. These drive-by's are easy to recognize. And to be honest, only occasionally do innocent bystanders get hurt. I must give these brothers "props" for being honest enough to openly display their anger. Many of us would love to harm our boss for laying us off, or the business man that took advantage of our

family, or even the Spotted Owl for taking our livelihood. But we don't. We allow the anger and frustration to build up inside until one day, we snap. That's when many innocent people get hurt.

What I would like to address are the DRIVE-BY'S being conducted by The System. This form is much more dangerous because as yet, no one has addressed it. You may not be a brother on the 'Hood, but you may be at risk for a drive-by from the System because it owns all the weapons. Maybe they don't come down the street slowly, waiting for you to turn your back, but the System will shoot you down in every way possible.

Let's say you've served some jail time when you were a teenager and are now in search of gainful employment. You know that if you put down on your job application that you have a prison record, you won't get a job, so you mark that question "No".

Two years after you've been working and had nothing but good reports from your supervisors, BAM!!! A DRIVE-BY. The company finds out about your record. You are disgraced in front of your fellow workers, terminated on the spot and it's three weeks before Christmas.

As the holiday approaches, you become more desperate. You are also becoming more depressed about life in general. You have not been speaking to your partner or three children for days because you feel like a failure. You decide to do something desperate. You borrow a gun (you can't buy one because you're a known felon) and decide to hold up a store. You've done it. Your first robbery.

But after you've spent that money, more needs present themselves. You can't keep up with the responsibilities. You've looked and applied for jobs, but no one hires a person with your "skills."

Now you're holding up old people. One day you slip up and try to grab an undercover cop's purse. BAM!!! Another DRIVE-BY. You've been hit again, only unlike a drive-by with a gun, you are left here on earth yet another day. To add insult to injury, on sentencing day the judge asks you why you went back to crime when every available opportunity was extended to you. BAM!!! you've been hit again.

The pain grows deeper with every stab or shot. There is no doctor to remove the bullet or patch up the stab wound, they all tell you it's in your mind. Even if there were stab wounds, you wouldn't get seen because you

don't have INSURANCE because you lost your job and you weren't working long enough to get unemployment.

Here's what is so scary about the scenario you just read: I didn't say if the person was a male or female. I didn't say if the person was black or white. I didn't say where this person lived. Now you begin to see that it doesn't matter who you are, what you do or where you live, you could be involved in a DRIVE-BY. Also, The System cares not who it affects. With a DRIVE-BY done on the 'Hood, there was definitely a reason. You have at least the decency of knowing that you had it coming. With the System, they just shoot!

Let us begin to observe what is going on and who or what the real adversary is. It isn't the individual who just turned left on 23rd street at a high rate of speed, gun still smoking, hoping to avoid the inevitable confrontation with the Police. No, he or she is merely a product of a System that still refuses to address the causes of why someone would shoot another person.

Nor is the culprit the logger who nailed a Spotted Owl up on a tree to voice his displeasure and frustration because The System let him and his family down. Let's face it, WE ARE ALL AT RISK!!!

Let's face it, we have taken a part in creating The System which dominates all our lives, but this is no time for any of us to hang our heads and give up. If you believe what I am saying, there are things that can be done, without further escalating the body count. We have to follow the lead given us by the late Malcolm X. He said "By Any Means Necessary." Let us look at the other means that are at all our disposal. If The System has turned against us, then we must reclaim it by voting and making laws that protect us from the System itself. We must also stop blaming certain people for the environment they live in. Forgiveness and prayer goes a much longer way. Besides, if you are so sure that the way they handle a drive-by is so incorrect, why not go tell them yourself. I must warn you though, if you are not sincere and don't have a workable solution, it would be best to leave it alone.

While we need to address the gang situation (for all races), let us not lose focus that it only represents a fraction of the overall situation we must confront. If anything, we are all being drawn further and further apart.

We can protect ourselves and each other by communicating. How are you being shot at? Maybe it isn't bullets, maybe it's reduced social security benefits, or lack of health care. Whatever, let's start to become a team who understands that it has one common goal: STOP THE DRIVE-BY'S.

The day that loggers from Washington team up with the brothers from the 'Hood, who have already teamed up with the Vietnam Veterans, who have already been working with the homeless... Yea, we will all have our adversary on the run. And then, only then shall there be...

Peace.

FESTIVALS ABOUND

by Larry Norman

During the last week in July, there were a number of social events that were going on. As I drove through the neighborhood, I was pleased to see children riding their bikes, old people walking or sitting in lawn chairs, and people generally enjoying themselves.

On Saturday, July 25, I visited the Ethnic Festival at Wright's Park. It was truly a great day to get introduced to the foods and ways of the various cultures which reside on Hilltop. It didn't matter that most of the business owners didn't reside in the Hilltop area because what was important is that we all had an opportunity to share our deference's.

Entertainment abounded, from basketball to karate demonstrations. From ethnic dancers, to sign up booths for the many organizations which abound in this area. It was all fun to be had by all.

An interesting thing I noticed was how, with so many different cultures intermingling, there was still an air of feeling out. Even though people were not being rude, there wasn't the down-home friendliness I had come to expect from interacting with the various cultures that reside in our community. Granted, there are

those situations where there is a misunderstanding or two between cultures, much like any other community. But life tends to go on. You know the people you can count on and those you can't, regardless of outer differences.

I think that's why it felt so funny at the park. With so many wonderful visuals, I thought I would be feeling energy much like that in the neighborhood. Perhaps the Ethnic Fair had attracted many different races from areas outside of Hilltop and it was a bit uncomfortable. The people I met and spoke to who

were from Hilltop, regardless of color, were nice and friendly. The persons from outside Hilltop, regardless of color, tended to be more apprehensive.

All in all, I think it was a great experience for us all. Those who came and needed more Ethnic interaction, were given that opportunity, while those have already broken through, were content to shake hands, drop snow cones, and really feel the life which emanates from such diversity. Much like a rainbow.

PEACE

COMMUNITY MEMBERS GATHER TO BUILD FLOAT

by *Larry Norman*

What do you get when you cross a college student at the University of Washington, with a mortuary assistant? Or maybe a T-shirt printer/artist who wears "dregs", with a bright young sixteen year old? Answer: A Float!

That's right folks. The combination above, along with many other residents, volunteers and organizations, have been assembled in record breaking time to assist in placing a float in the upcoming parade on K Street this Saturday August 1, beginning at noon. For many, this is their first opportunity to work as a group with such diversity. Most groups and organizations have a structure to where in order to get involved, one must believe a

certain way about certain issues or beliefs. The group that has assembled to build this float agree on very little. They have agreed on one thing; agree to disagree.

Anyway, once again, another businessman has stepped forward to save the day at the eleventh hour. Steve Gray of Gray Lumber has donated a flat-bed truck, space at his lumber yard, a driver and many other essentials to make the float a reality. Gee Steve, I wish I would have known you last month. You would have fit nicely in the article we'd written on businesses helping out.

Actually, everyone is helping out. There is no agenda. As a matter of fact, I lost the float design, so I can't really tell you

what this float is going to look like. We don't even have all the materials at the site yet, and it's Thursday morning! But one thing is for certain, whatever is produced today and tomorrow at Steve Gray's lumber yard, will be rolling down the street with a lot of folks very proud of the part they played in putting it together.

To all of the businesses, organizations, residents and volunteers who committed their time and effort to this project, I Love Ya! You are the example of what commitment and cooperation can produce in a short period of time, regardless of differences. I can only see blessings on the horizon for all of you.

PEACE

Happenings on Hilltop can be found at the following locations starting the first week of each month:

Location	Address	Location	Address
Safeway	11th & Sheridan	7-11	19th & K Street
A.M./P.M.	19th & K Street	Kentucky Fried Chicken	6th & Sprague
Maytag Laundromat	6th & Sprague	Pinches Deli	6th & Division
K Street Bar & Grill	11th & K Street	Lucky 7	9th & K Street
Sam and Terry's Barber Shop	17th & K Street	Northwest Dispatch	1108 South 11th Street
UTRA	1023 So. K Street	Your Fish House	1814 So. K Street
Silver Screen Video	2024 #G 6th Ave.	Southern Kitchen	6th & Sprague
MLK Center	1424 Tacoma Ave. So., Suite A		
University of Puget Sound, Cafeteria		Tacoma Community College, Cafeteria	

* Indicates new arrivals.

If you are a business, or organization and would like to have Happenings on Hilltop for your customers, call Larry Norman at 272-8133. We will be more than happy to get you started. **Please note; the views contained in some of the articles in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the staff of Happenings on Hilltop.**

Important Phone Numbers

Here are some important phone numbers to help you in the event that you are experiencing problems. Cut them out and keep them Handy.

EMERGENCY (POLICE, FIRE) - 911
 Crack Hotline - 475-CRAK
 Hilltop Action Coalition - 597-4808
 Safe Streets - 272-6824
 Crime Prevention - 591-5883
 Abandoned Autos - 591-5926
 Refuse Department - 591-5544
 Recycling Department - 565-5955
 Larry Norman (Editor) - 272-8133



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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide inspiration, information and direction to the residents, organizations and businesses on Hilltop.