

# Envisioning a future illuminated by the past

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by Beverly Johnson

The optimist believes that the world is constantly getting better.

Rev. Richard Preston, a man who began as a slave, became a leader and is now a legend. "God wills us free. Man wills us slaves. I will us God's will. God's will be done."

From a time when Black people were assessed as property, their bodies and minds owned and controlled by their captors, the souls of

Black people have been strengthened through adversity. Black people in Nova Scotia have more than survived.

In 1857, William E. Hall, V.C. was named the first Nova Scotian to receive the Victoria Cross. Born of slave parents in Nova Scotia, William Hull became one of our greatest heroes. Portia White, a Nova Scotian Black woman was a world renowned contralto. She made her debut performance at Carnegie Hall, New York in 1944, and sang for Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip

in 1964.

Furthermore, despite the original reason they arrived in the United States, there are countless examples of high achieving Black Americans, including award-winning scientists and the inventor of the potato chip.

It is important, however, we are not duped into thinking Black people's history began with slavery. The Africans of ancient Kimit built the world's first university, which, at its peak, catered to some 80 000 students.

The University of Sankore in Timbuctoo was one of the finest institutions of its time. It possessed an outstanding faculty and offered courses in Astronomy, Mathematics, Ethnography, Medicine, Hygiene, Logic, Diction, Rhetoric, and other disciplines.

Intro to Dalhousie is a program designed to tell Black youth in Junior and Senior High Schools about university and other educational opportunities available. We view this as being one step in the planning process. The program is

ethnically specific, two Black students from Dalhousie conduct the tour, which includes information about Black achievements within this campus community.

Throughout the ages Black people have evidenced an indomitable spirit, and will to be all that they can be despite circumstances. The future looks bright. Our youth and their education represent an investment in the future for us all. The history of Black people, full of many struggles and accomplishments allows me to be an optimist.

## Put this down your piece pipe.. and smoke it



by Pete Moss

In the past few weeks the streets of Halifax have been littered with posters to turn in your favourite drug dealer. Is this just a public relations ploy by the police, or do they not understand the culture with which they are dealing at all?

A person who knows a so called 'pusher' would probably be a user. Why would a user turn in a person who is most likely a friend, or a friend of a friend?

Money! The root of all evil, of course. The two thousand dollar reward might be enticing to some poverty stricken, unemployed wretch. However, one must question if the risk would be worthwhile. The possibility of suffering serious bodily harm could loom large if one's identity was somehow revealed.

Almost weekly we are told of seizures of hashish on our Maritime coastline. The public is informed of the great heroics and are thanked for their co-operation in helping to stop this scourge to our society. The truth is that when these soft drugs are stopped more people will turn to harder drugs. These drugs are dangerous to all. The authorities continue to play a public relations game.

In fact, laws prohibiting soft drugs are completely hypocritical, as long as consumption alcohol is legal and accepted by society. Incidents of spousal and child abuse are higher in families of alcoholics. Driving while under the influence remains a problem even after the massive effort against it the past few years against it. This is not to say I advocate a return to prohibition, but I do think, as with other drugs, problems associated with alcohol are generally misunderstood.

The campaign to snitch on the "Drug Pusher" sets a dangerous precedent. It reeks of the paranoid state found in Orwell's classic 1984. It is important to guard our privacy, and maintain as much freedom as possible while living under the rule of the state. We must have the freedom to choose what we want to do, as long as this doesn't infringe on others rights.

If I choose to smoke hashish, or marijuana I do not believe I am hurting anybody else. It is wrong for the authorities to take advantage of this economic depression to fight the war against drugs. If this program is a success it makes a statement about society I do not want to hear.

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