

benton
county



"It's that freedom train a comin'; get on board, get on board."
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EDITORIAL BOARD: EARNESTYNE EVANS, ALBERTA TIPLER

~~WHITE~~
SCHOOL



"DADDY, I THOUGHT YOU
SAID THAT THE
WORLD WOULD
COME TO AN
END!"

Citizens to plan a Kindergarten

The citizens of Benton County voted at the county meeting last Tuesday night to ask the federal government for its own kindergarten as part of "Operation Headstart" rather than go along with the superintendent's kindergarten.

They are against the superintendent's plan because the community had no part in the planning of the kindergarten. Nobody in the community knows what's really going on. Jobs have not been offered to the community-at-large which the kindergarten should provide.

If our plan for a kindergarten is approved, the kindergarten will be set up in different churches and open to children of all races. Parents will be paid to cook food for the kindergarten, and to drive children back and forth.

The classes will be taught by a combination of experts and local people who will get special training from the Delta Ministry at Edwards, Mississippi.

Details of planning will be worked out at district meetings this coming week:

2nd district, Sims, Tuesday, May 11, 7:30 p.m.

3rd district, Mount Zion, Wednesday, May 12, 7:30 p.m.

1st district, Hardaway, Thursday, May 13, 7:30 p.m.

Mrs. G. N. Reeves was elected chairman of the kindergarten. The program, "Operation Headstart" was explained to the citizens by Mr. Bobby McKinley, chairman of the Marshall county "Operation Headstart" and northern Mississippi coordinator for the program.

Summer workers invited

Invitations are being sent to specially invited volunteers to participate in Benton county's Summer Project. Names of volunteers were given by the citizens to the secretary of the Citizens Club at last Tuesday's meeting.

Among those who are being invited are Gloria Xifaras, Pete Cummings, Sidney Sugarman, Charles Brewer, Bill Price, Bill Golden, and Mike Lappin. At least 15 houses in the county have offered to house the volunteers.

Detailed plans for the summer will be worked out at the district meetings this week. Each district will decide what programs they want to work on (such as freedom school, literacy, voter registration), and the training of the volunteers will be discussed. Problems to be considered are: who will train the volunteers? How will they be trained? How can they best be acquainted with life in Mississippi so as to be subject to the least possible dangers?

Apply for jobs

Jobs for Negroes are opening up around the state. Teaster Baird is making \$11.60 per day training as a cotton measurer. When his training period is over, he will be making more.

But no job will just fall out of the sky. Those who move first will get the best jobs--providing they are qualified. Factories and federal jobs are in the process of desegregating, but people will have to apply to get them.

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Anyone interested in working as a forester can apply in Holly Springs at the forestry department next to the Merchants and Farmers Bank.

Anyone knowing of job availabilities, please send information to the Freedom Train. And anyone who has trouble applying for jobs--such as rude treatment--should inform an officer of the Citizens Club.

Editorial:

Stop breaking laws!

We have heard rumors that Negroes are going to the Cotton Patch Cafe--to the outside window, speaking through a small opening, and asking for food.

What does it take to make us understand that we have a right to go inside? It is bad enough when whites break the law. But when Negroes break laws designed to protect their rights, things are really pitiful.

It has taken a long time to get these laws passed. We have had brothers and sisters of freedom killed and injured to get these laws. They didn't do it so that their own people would break these laws.

Negroes who continue to go along with segregation and discrimination do it out of fear. They don't mean to break the law. But they are degrading their own people every time they accept segregation --and pay money for it!

It is time now! Stop poking heads through the little window. Instead, put your best foot forward and go inside. Stop abusing laws and stop abusing yourselves.

NOTE: deadline for all articles for the Freedom Train is Fridays. Address is: Rt. 2, box 100, Holly Springs.

A Farewell

To the people of Benton County:
Dear Friends:

By the time you read this, we will be on our way to California to go back to school. We want you all to know that seeing the people of Benton County organize and work together has been one of the greatest rewards of our work down here.

We know that you will keep on working and fighting for the day when we all are free. Not just free from discrimination but the day when no one has his sleep disturbed by hunger; when no one need worry about clothes and shelter; when each person has the chance to develop as far as his capabilities allow; when there shall be no more war.

It's going to be a long, hard fight and it will take black and white together to win. But we proved we can do it here in Mississippi. So when you're eating at a cafe in Ashland, working in the shirt factory, or sending your kids to the Ashland school, remember that there is still much to be done in this messed up world. And when you see a student demonstration in Berkeley or San Francisco on TV, think of us. We'll be there.

Love,
Frank & Bobbi Cieciorka

Help!

Apparently the people of Benton County have lost their ability to write--or so it seems, because the Freedom Train has not been getting any articles. So we'd like to invite our northern readers to contribute articles to the paper. At the rate things are going, there may be no paper next week!

Negro Literature Section

BREAKFAST IN VIRGINIA

by LANGSTON HUGHES

Two colored boys during the war. For the first time in his life one of them on furlough from the southern camp was coming North. His best buddy was a New Yorker, also on furlough, who had invited him to visit Harlem. Being colored, they had to travel in the jim crow car until the Florida Express reached Washington.

The train was crowded and people were standing in white day coaches and in the colored coach, the single jim crow car. Corporal Ellis suggested to his friend that they share for the part of a night the seat of other kindly passengers in the coach marked Colored. They took turns sleeping for a few hours. The rest of the time they sat on the arm of a seat or stood smoking on the vestibule. By morning they were very tired. And they were hungry.

No vendors came into the jim crow car with food, so Corporal Ellis suggested to his friend that they go into the diner and have breakfast. Corporal Ellis was born in New York and grew up there. He had been a star track man with his college team and had often eaten in diners on trips with teammates. Corporal Williams had never eaten in a diner on trips with his teammates. Corporal Williams had never even eaten in a diner, but he followed his friend. It was midmorning. The rush period was over, although the dining car was still fairly full. But fortunately, just at the door as they entered, there were three seats at a table for four persons. The only occupant of the table was a tall, distinguished gray haired man. A white man.

As the two brownskin soldiers stood at the door waiting for the steward to seat them, the white man looked up and said, "Won't you sit here and be my guests this morning? I have a son fighting in North Africa. Come sit down."

"Thank you, sir," said Corporal Ellis. "This is kind of you. I am Corporal Ellis. This is Corporal Williams."

The elderly man rose, gave his name, shook hands with the two colored soldiers, and the three of them sat down at the table. The young men faced their host. Corporal Williams was silent, but Corporal Ellis carried on the conversation as they waited for the steward to bring the menus.

"How long have you been in the service, Corporal?" the white man was saying as the steward approached.

Corporal Ellis could not answer this question because the steward cut in brusquely, "You boys can't sit here."

"These men are my guests for breakfast, steward," said the white man.

"I am sorry sir," said the white steward, "but Negroes cannot be

served now. If there's time, we may have a fourth sitting before luncheon for them, if they want to come back."

"But these men are soldiers," said the white man.

"I am sorry, sir. We will take your order, but I cannot serve them in the state of Virginia."

The two soldiers were silent. The white man rose, looked at the steward, then said, "I am embarrassed, both for you and for my guests. If you gentlemen will come with me to my drawing room, we will have breakfast there. Steward, I would like a waiter immediately."

The white man led them along the blue-gray corridor, stopped at the last door, and opened it. "Come in," he said. He waited for the soldiers to enter. It was a roomy compartment with a large window and two long comfortable seats facing each other. The man indicated a place for the soldiers, who sat down together. He pressed a button.

"I will have the porter bring a table," he said. Then he went on with the conversation just as if nothing had happened. He told them of recent letters from his son overseas, and of his pride in all the men in the military services who were giving up the pleasures of civilian life to help bring an end to Hitlerism.

Shortly the porter arrived with the table. Soon a waiter spread a cloth and took their orders. In a little while the food was there.

All this time Corporal Williams from the South had said nothing. He sat shy and bewildered, as the Virginia landscape passed outside the train window. Then he drank his orange juice with loud gulps. But when the eggs were brought, suddenly he spoke: "This here time, sir, is the first time I ever been invited to eat with a white man. I'm from Georgia."

"I hope it won't be the last time," the white man replied. "Breaking bread together is the oldest symbol of human friendship." He passed the silver tray, "Would you care for rolls or muffins, Corporal? I am sorry there is no butter this morning. I guess we're on rations."

"I can eat without butter," said the Corporal. For the first time since he had been with his host, he smiled. Through the window of the speeding train as it neared Washington clear in the morning sunlight yet far off in the distance, they could see the dome of the capitol. But the soldier from the Deep South was not looking out of the window. He was looking across the table at his fellow American.

THE END