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The SPIRIT

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Volume III, Issue II

March 1998

FREE

Reflections in Herstory

A Celebration of Women's History



From The Editor's Desk

Welcome to another issue of *The Spirit*. In this issue, we highlight the strength, beauty and diversity of contemporary and historical women. The poem, *Phenomenal Woman*, by Maya Angelou came to mind while putting together this month's issue. And the women highlighted on the following pages are truly phenomenal.

When one woman succeeds, we all succeed. When one woman fails we must all come together and ensure that she will indeed succeed. We are all bound of water and spirit, of triumphs and defeats, in good times and trying times ... we stand as One. One voice, One cause, One destiny, One love.

We hope you will enjoy reading about these women and remember the women who made the world a much better place for all humankind.

"Giving of the self, through your time, knowledge and a commitment to positive human progression, is the key to immortality. In the end, Love will remain."



Amirah Muhammed

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On The Cover: from l to r, Valerie Papaya Mann, DC Care Consortium; Peggy Cooper Cafritz, Duke Ellington School of the Arts and Patricia Coulston, Patrician International.
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The Spotlight

Reflections in Herstory

In celebration of Women's History month, *The Spirit* interviewed three Washington residents, who all have unique, yet similar stories to tell: **Valerie Papaya Mann**, executive director, DC Care Consortium leads the interview, followed by **Peggy Cooper Cafritz**, co-founder of The Duke Ellington School of The Arts, and **Patricia Coulston**, long-time human activist, a makeup artist and an herbalist, leaves us with some powerful food for thought. Someone asked me what these three women had in common, and I said, besides all being activist, their names all begin with the letter "P." I think it's no coincidence that this occurred. I have always said that there is a 3P rule of thumb for being successful in any endeavor: patience, prayer, and perseverance. I know each of these women have had to incorporate this rule in their lives to accomplish all that they have done.

Chatting with Papaya:

TS: What have you done in the past and what are doing now to contribute to the community you are involved in?

PM: I have worked as a education rights advocate, a spiritual rights advocate, women's rights, lesbian and gay rights, civil rights, human rights, and am advocating for people living with AIDS on a national level and here locally with the DC Care Consortium. I am the executive director for this organization. We are an agency that acts as an association for AIDS organizations. I am a spokesperson for the organization in that I provide advocacy for AIDS services, step up to the plate when the District is not paying the money, participate on the Mayor's Advisory Board for HIV, work with the Ryan White Planning Council, participate on the board of the National Lesbian and Gay Health Association representing people and lesbians of color, and the National Minority Aids Council.

TS: Why did you choose human rights as your path?

PM: It's really a spiritual commitment. It was clear to me, early on, that a lot of rights were inhibited in this country and that they needed energy. And I had decided that instead of being a victim, I could be a part of the solution. Part of my personal commitment and responsibility has to be and has been to go back to the community. I would say that whatever I do and however I proceed in life, and no matter what material things I acquire, that the people

whom I am serving are a reflection of me. These people are my people. As the oldest female child, and being the first to go to college and the first to do many things, it's always been my responsibility to mentor others around me. That's why my receptionist is a seventeen year old girl.

TS: What is your inspiration?

PM: What drives me is my spiritual commitment - the connection that I have within myself. It makes me understand that is important to do these things. That is where my satisfaction comes from. My satisfaction does not come from where I put the energy because that is like giving something to somebody with one hand and expecting something back with the other. I know that if I give it to the universe I get it back, so I am abundantly blessed in my life and I have manifested this abundance in my life.

TS: You seemed to have found a personal freedom in your life. What is like to be an openly gay, black woman?

PM: I would say it is a liberating feeling. It is something that you take instead of it being given to you. What keeps a lot of us in the closet is fear. Not fear of things that wouldn't happen, but of things that may happen. It's not like there are not struggles in being an out lesbian woman. But, again, it goes back to spirit. If I am going to look at myself and feel like I have made the right decisions and have proceeded with integrity, if I am going to be a mentor, I have to be honest with who I am and be willing to share that. If I am mentoring a seventeen year old and I don't tell her that I am a lesbian then I have not exposed all of my cards. So how can I tell her you need to live in your integrity and be who you are. For me it is always a personal issue. And I am still working with it. I think as long as we are alive, we will be working on issues. ■

Chatting With Peggy

TS: What is the role of an arts activist?

CC: I have been active in the arts all of my life. I love the arts for the sake of art. I think that I've always seen the arts as a means towards education, towards future and shaping a culture. I have a different take on the arts. I think the arts play a tremendous role on politics and policy and education. And its within this context that I am an activist.

TS: What do you do as Vice-Chair of the Presidents' Committee on the Arts and Humanities?

CC: I think in doing the work that I have been involved in, African-Americans and Latinos have many more jobs at the Smithsonian and have a much bigger role in setting

policy than they would have had. Through Duke Ellington alone, we place more kids in colleges throughout the country who become "Denise Graves", or curators, or heads of education in museums, or have positions that we've never seen or heard of before. I think that has a tremendous political influence. When you are in positions like that you really can help to shape the culture. I also think that when you take people like Bill Clinton and Al Gore who are influenced by the culture; the more present we are, the more their policies will be shaped by that. Of course, we have a long way to go, but we are getting there.

TS: What are some of the roadblocks that you've face in your plight?

CC: I think one of the biggest roadblocks is having donors, i.e., individuals, corporations, and foundations, take an institution that is predominantly minority-owned and understand that it is a major institution and it cost as much to run it as it does the Kennedy Center or the National Gallery. They seem to have a very difficult time interpreting that. Another roadblock is that many black institutions have been so badly managed that there are not a lot of good examples set before us. Another plight is that as the systems that serve kids close down, and criminal acts are committed against kids everyday, the students we get at Ellington are unprepared and more needy than they used to be. But, they are smart and they must be served. They should be served and takes more money to do that.

TS: Why did you choose art over practicing law?

CC: I'm glad I went to law school, but I thought that I could have more to do with children. I've always had a passion for children. I have occasionally used my training in law to help kids.

TS: Why is it so important for young people to understand arts and humanities?

CC: I think that arts and humanities are civilizing forces in our society. I think that they help men respect women, they help women respect themselves. They temper us. They expand our thought and intellect.

TS: What do you think is your most significant contribution to history?

CC: My kids. But even beyond my own kids, providing a framework which will allow a lot of children to rock and roll. And I hope and pray that you all will be rocked by those kids for a long, long, time to come. I think Ellington is the framework and my home is the framework. The bottom line is the kids.

Continued on page 8

Mind & Body

Spring Cleaning for Your Body

by Richelle Taylor

Spring is in the air. It is a time for us to start cleaning out our closets and making room for new clothes and other items. This season, while you're in the process of cleaning out things, consider a personal cleaning of your internal body "closet." Yes, you can clean your insides, too. In the next few paragraphs, I'm going to give you suggestions on how. But, first I want you to understand why it is important to keep your insides clean.

Take your intestinal system as an example. Imagine it to be like the pipes in your kitchen sink. Everyone who has a sink has experienced the pipes clogging up at one time or another. "Why does it do that?," you ask, especially when all you want to do is wash the damn dishes! Well, it's like this, every time you wash dishes, particles form along the pipeline. After a while, if you don't occasionally add Roto Rooter or something, those particles buildup. They then become sludge and paste, which makes it harder for water to pass through the pipes. Eventually, the paste thickens and hardens and prevents the water from passing through.

Sounds a lot like constipation doesn't it? That's exactly what it is! That is exactly what happens to your system when you've eaten all that food that your body can no longer remove properly.

Continued on page 8

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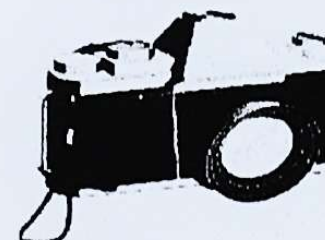
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Chatting with Pat

TS: What is your main contribution to history ?

PC: I think my entire life has been about helping people help themselves. I've volunteered with the Red Cross, serving in Vietnam. When I was in Vietnam, I would spend one day a week with the Vietnamese orphans. I learned their language and their culture. Through CETA funded programs, I've worked with handicapped and with ex-offenders. I've set up programs to help prepare them to get jobs and provide training. When I was working with the ex-offenders, I decided to take specific female inmates and run aptitude test on them and then place them in different educational programs. We had a situation where an inmate would be taught how to be a sewing machine operator or work in the laundry. And I said well, wait a minute, they're not going to be any better off when they leave jail than they are now. I compared a sewing machine operator's duties to that of a machinist and found that they were very similar, only a machinist made five times more money. So I decided to train women, who had the aptitude, and teach them how to be machinists. One thing I specifically did while working in the handicapped program is to help a blind man get a job working as a welder. My rationale being if one of his senses is not functioning then the rest must be functioning better. All of these programs have geared me in a direction for having made a difference in peoples' lives.

TS: Now, you also do something which I find very unique, and that is provide skin care for African-American women.

PC: Well, here's the deal. If you can understand color coordination it doesn't matter what shape the skin is. Doing facials is just another aspect of what I do to help people help themselves. Creating beauty inside and out, I believe, is my refined purpose in life. I did it in Vietnam, and with ex-offenders, and now I'm doing it with Nature Sunshine herbs and vitamins. With the expertise that I have, I am helping those who want to wear makeup do that. It just happens that the majority of my customers have been African-American women.

TS: What kind of joy to get out of doing the things you do?


PC: I just love people. I love the human race. On applications where you have to specify race, I circle "other" and write "human". I believe that God gives us everything and our job in this life is to open ourselves to receiving what is already here. I believe that abundance

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runs rampant, but we lose sight of it. I believe there are people who are placed here to help us understand all of the beauty that is ours. I have denied what I have done, I have not interviewed with people, I've actually run from it. But something in my spiritual training said open up to receiving your abundance and I did. And in doing so, I realized that I am truly able to help others receive their abundance. ■

Spring Cleaning - Cont. from page 5

How do you remove the blockage in your pipes? The answer is you do it naturally! Yes, you see, although the over the counter drugs alleviate the constipation, they leave residue that the body cannot digest. This residue can cause side effects. So here's what you do. You contact me. I will give you three terrific herbal combinations that will relieve the constipation, get rid of the toxins, and help you lose weight in the process! In addition, herbs in their natural state do not leave residue.

The first combination is called Tiao He Cleanse. This is a Chinese herbal cleanse that target the upper and lower intestines, the liver, the kidneys, urinary and circulatory systems. This herbal cleanse has a "sweeping" action that literally gets rid of old waste along the walls of the intestines to allow for proper movement. If you remember anything, remember this: **Waste is weight.** When you get rid of the waste, you will lose weight! This 10-day cleanse is very gentle and works well when taken fifteen to thirty minutes before each meal.

Next, is my personal favorite, and an extremely effective combination called LBS II. LBS is an acronym for Lower

Time for the Signs

Signs & Seasons
by Minister Gabree Amlak

Pisces - Feb. 19 to Mar 29th

The fulfillment of plans and projects that express your personal interest are real responsibilities at this time. A self-confident and optimistic approach is justified by the progressive energies of this cycle. Avoid power struggles and dubious tactics. Conserve personal resources.

Aries - Mar. 21st - Apr. 20th

This is a great time to work in solitude on projects that provide an avenue of expression for your unique talents and abilities. Creative writing is especially favored. Communications from remote people and places bring opportunities to expand your consciousness.

Taurus - Apr. 21st - May 20th

Spend quality time with friends who encourage you to pursue progressive goals and objectives. Be discriminate in financial transactions. Business ventures that involve family members are mutually beneficial. Network with people who intensify your spiritual consciousness.

Gemini - May 21st - June 20th

Reward for creative contributions in the fulfillment of vocational responsibilities are received by conscientious Geminians. A serious evaluation of the true meaning of friendship will increase success in the manifestation of cherished hopes and wishes. Social activities with religious and educational objectives could be very beneficial.

Leo - Jul. 23rd - Aug. 22nd

A proper assessment of the resources of intimate associates could enhance the success of your creative endeavors. Knowing what you want will attract what is needed. Devote time to seeing and feeling the things and conditions you desire as realities in your present existence.

Virgo - Aug. 23rd - Sept. 22nd

Relationships that deepen your understanding of family matters and professional challenges are on your astro-agenda this month. Assistance from behind the scene sources will lend a helping hand in the fulfillment of career-related objectives. Initiate a study program on the eternal nature of life. For a truly provoking experience, read "Life Between Life," by Witten and Fischer.

Libra - Sept. 23rd - Oct. 22nd

A renewal of attitudes and energies in activities that relate to work, health and service is one of your blessings this month. Work that compliments innate abilities will increase service you give to others.

Scorpio - Oct. 23rd - Nov. 22nd

Sharing creative activities with children and significant others will deepen emotional bonds and stimulate intellectual communications. Recreation with family and friends may improve in financial affairs. Seek advice from those with more experience in work-related situations. Joining a network of health-oriented people could intensify your attempts to adopt a more wholesome lifestyle.

Sagittarius- Nov. 23rd -Dec. 22

"Letting go" is a major theme in domestic affairs. Release your hold on family situations and use this energy to achieve personal goals and objectives. Control the tendency to overextend yourself - it creates unnecessary problems. Structure a program for the completion of creative projects.

Capricorn - Dec. 22nd - Jan. 19th

Changes in your approach to communication with others is a challenge this month. Honesty with regards to motives and intentions is of vital importance. Resist the temptation to be harsh or rude. Take inventory of unresolved emotional clutter. Create a plan for its disposal. Make time to communicate with elderly family members.

Aquarius - Jan. 20th - Feb. 18th

Transformation of basic values and attitudes towards finances and friends is the theme of this cycle. Is there inconsistency in these areas? Problems related to them will indicate a need for change. Dedication to an ideal that reflects your life purpose will harmonize and integrate these components. Study career-related subjects.

Spring Cleaning -Cont.

Bowels. The "II" means target. Meaning that this herbal combination specifically targets the lower bowels. This region of the intestines generally contains five to ten pounds of old waste. Can you imagine that?!! Visualize, if you will, a five to ten pound baby. (I know this analogy is gross, but I'm trying to stress a point.)

LBS II traditionally has been used to treat constipation, dry stool, obesity, fever, skin inflammation, jaundice and liver dysfunction. This herb is also very, very gentle and should be taken with meals.

The last, but not the least combination, is called the Chinese Para Cleanse. Some people will find it hard to believe that our bodies can contain parasites that literally feed off our organs and the food we put into our system. You've all heard of intestinal worms, I'm sure, but did you know that worms can exist anywhere in the body - anywhere there is mucous. See, parasites have to have something to cling to in the body. When mucous builds up, it becomes thick enough for a parasitic worm to latch on to and survive. So you could have worms in your stomach, your intestines, anywhere! Yuck, right?! So

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