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The AFRO goes visiting with Ralph Reckling . . . retired

By BILL SLATER

What does a person do when he's retired?

Is he able to keep all the plans he made or do they collapse like a punctured balloon?

From week to week the AFRO intends to visit retired persons to find out how they are enjoying the end of punching time, clocks and competing in the sometime frantic world.

• • •

THE FIRST person to be visited in this series is one of Baltimore's best known citizens.

Until June, 1956, Ralph W. Reckling, 2627 Ruxton Ave., had been in the Baltimore school system for 46 years... 11 of them as principal of Douglass High School.

A leader in his community, Mr. Reckling attended the public schools of Baltimore and went on to Brown University in Providence, R.I. where he graduated in 1910.

From Brown, he came directly to the Baltimore school system, where he has devoted nearly half a century to education.

On June 24, 1912 Mr. Reckling married the former Miss Constantia Brown, also a teacher in the school system.

• • •

MRS. RECKLING, incidently was the first colored music supervisor in Baltimore.

Mr. Reckling started his teaching career at Harvey Johnson Junior High School where he spent three years.

From there he went on to Douglass where he stayed until his retirement.

• • •

WHEN THE AFRO visited the Reckling family, the week Mr. Reckling was sitting in the living room in his favorite chair.

Clad in a pair of brown pants a brown sports sweater and matching shirt and tie, he spoke.

"What can a person do after he has retired?

"He's too old to work, but that does not mean that he has to shut himself in, away from the world.

"I still try to be of help to people if I can. School children come to me frequently for help and I'm glad that I'm able to help them."

When asked did he ever feel the urge to return to his old position, he replied:

"I didn't want to leave in the first place. The retirement age is 70 and I had to retire when I reached that age."

"My school was my life, my work. Since I've retired, I've had to learn to take other interests to heart."

"I've learned to cook and I do quite a bit of reading.

"Since my retirement, I have lots of time to devote to following my favorite sports."

Mr. Reckling says that there's no particular sport that he prefers.

He thinks of himself as a general sports fan.

• • •

"I'VE ALWAYS wanted to travel," said Mr. Reckling, "but due to my wife's ill health, we have not been able."

Speaking slowly and in a low voice, Mr. Reckling added:

"My only other pastime is watching television and watching my granddaughters grow."

The granddaughters that he was speaking of are Senora Reckling, 18, 2501 Powhatan Ave., the daughter of his son, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Reckling and Heromine Hardin, 16, 2628 Ruxton Ave., the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Luther Hardin.

• • •

"I'VE had some rich and valuable experiences" and memories in my life — enough to live on for a long time," Mr. Reckling said.

When he spoke of experience and memories, he was reminded of his college days at Brown where he starred in such sports as tennis, golf and bowling.

Exhibiting his many trophies and awards that he had got, he said, "These are some of my most valuable possessions. When I can find nothing else to do, I can always look at these and reminisce."

The former 1918 runner-up in the American Tennis Association Tournaments had some definite ideas concerning retirement.

• • •

"RETIREMENT is a job in itself. It's a period of adjustment.

"If you can adjust yourself to a new routine, a new way of life, you can prolong your years; if you can't, you don't."

He intend to sit back, relax, and devote most of my time to my church, my organizations and my family."

Mr. and Mrs. Reckling are long time members of St. Katherine's Episcopal Church.

Mr. Reckling, who has always been a civic leader, is a member of such organizations as Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternal, YMCA, NAACP, Urban League and the Retired Teachers.

Mr. Reckling's job was a well-done one and in the opinion of many people, he is truly a credit to his community.

RALPH W. RECKLING
He looks back on the crowded years of yesterday

Pity the poor male; women have invaded his barbershops

There was once a time when a barber shop was a place for men only.

It was a haven of masculinity where the male animal sat around happily telling his tall tales, which his listeners usually took with more than the proverbial grain of salt.

When conversation lagged there was always a game of checkers, cribbage, poker, blackjack, "shin" or in some rare instances, bridge.

As if things got dull—well a fellow could always get a haircut or a shave.

• • •

THE LANGUAGE used was often strong enough to turn the air a shocking shade of blue and was calculated to let you know immediately that the conversations were for men only.

But alas, like the nickle cigar, these days seem to have vanished into the wild blue yonder.

The barber shop is now knee deep, or should that be skirt deep, in a new era.

• • •

GONE ARE the days when male of the species could twist the truth a bit in the almost sacred confines of his barbershop, and boast of his conquests in sports, affairs of heart, politics, affairs of the heart, politics, affairs of the affairs of the heart.

The barbershop, one of the last places in the world free from the influence of the weaker sex, has been invaded by women, millions and millions of them, who have fallen for a new fad, the short haircut.

Many a male has been unaware that a revolution has been quietly taking place and now in some barbershops, half the customers or maybe more are women.

• • •

YES, WOMEN have invaded and taken over the American barber shops.

Do the barbers care?

Listen to some of the comments made by a few of the local barber shop owners.

Roosevelt Neely, manager of a shop in the 1500 block Pennsylvania Ave., had this to say:

"Women have been a great asset to our business.

"Besides the business they give us, they help make the barbershops a more respectable place to be.

"The man today has to readjust himself to the changing times.

"He can no longer think of the barber shop as being strictly for him.

"He's got to move over and make room for the woman.

"Move over, men. You've got to share your barber seats with those of the opposite sex.

"Proof that women have taken over the barber shops is to be found in the shops themselves.

"Take the price list.

"Once upon a time all the price list consisted of was a razor and a haircut.

"Nowadays we see manicures, eye brows arched, women's shape ups, massages, and women's hair cuts.

• • •

BRUCE KEE, who has a shop in the 1400 block Pennsylvania Ave., commented:

"I've had to make up a new price list. There were so many new things to be added.

"I find, though, that men don't mind the women coming into the barber shop.

"As a matter of fact, I get more man customers when they see women in the shop."

Take a hint from this all you unmarried men. If you would like to meet your mate, go to a barber shop.

• • •

ANOTHER CHANGE noted in the barber shops these days is the type of conversations used by men with or without the presence of ladies.

Instead of the foul, boisterous noise they once made, the conversation now deals with such intellectual subjects as political affairs, national and international affairs and race problems.

"The conversation today is different from those in the past.

"People have more and better things to talk about today, and with the women present, they naturally select cleaner conversations."

Edward S. Riley of Warren's Hygenic Barber Shop was the man responsible for the observation.

"The presence of women has definitely given more class to my barber shop.

"Now that I have women customers, the men don't lout around here any more," he said.

• • •

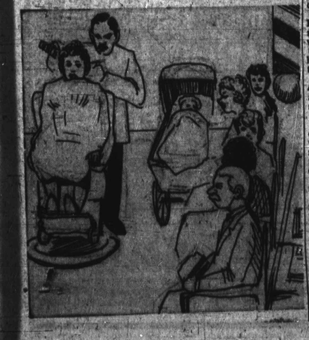
THE AFRO'S survey of the city's barber shops also revealed another reason (which no barber mentioned) why female customers are so welcome in the barber shops.

They usually pay more for their haircuts.

Whereas men only pay from $1-1.25 for their haircuts, women pay as much as $3 and more.

Oh, you smart barbers you!

Although many barbers give an indication that they would like to be away from the women for a while so that they can kick up their heels and get loud. They all agree that the woman customer has a permanent place in the barber shop.



STARTING YOUNG — Ladies and gentlemen meet Mr. Chauncey Jenkins who is all of two years old. Young Chauncey isn't too skilled on this teletype machine from which type is set for the AFRO, but give him a couple years and he'll probably be a whiz. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Jenkins, 1512 E. Eager St. His mother, Mrs. Gertrude Jenkins, is employed in the teletype department of the AFRO.

Imprisoned father sends son a gift—a Christmas Story

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a letter from an inmate of Maryland Reformatory who had no Christmas gift for his child except a story he had written himself.

Even though Christmas has passed, the father's story to his son makes good reading.

To that son, whose name we cannot use, this story is dedicated.

• • •

THE IDEA OF CHRISTMAS

On Christmas Day, 1958—snow blanketed the earth silently and softly like a mother caressing her sleeping child.

In one big city, very much like Baltimore, many children were happily playing with their new possessions — sleds, wagons and dolls — left by Santa Claus.

Turning slowly to his mother from the window pane he had clouded with his breath, Ronald said to his mother:

"I'm five years old today and you promised you'd take me to thank Santa Claus for the beautiful things he left me —that was to be another Christmas present for me."

• • •

LITTLE RONALD'S mother smiled and enclosed her child in her arms tenderly, saying:

"I love you so much. Nothing will stop me from doing as I promised."

Immediately, she dressed Ronald in his warmest clothes and they set out to see Santa.

On another side of this city which resembled Baltimore, another little boy pressed his nose against a window pane as he watched snowflakes fall softly.

This was little James and his house was very cold inside.

A wood stove in the corner of the room did its best to warm little James, but soon, even the stove surrendered to the cold winds that stole between the cracks in the house.

Little James' mother stared at her son, then looked in the corner at the practically bare Christmas tree.

Her only gift to her son that year was the gift of love for at Christmas time, her pocket book was empty.

A tear rolled down her cheek.

• • •

LITTLE JAMES' mother didn't even have money to have a real Christmas dinner for her son.

The little boy turned to his mother and was startled to see her crying.

"What's the matter, mommy? Are you sick?" he asked.

His mother quickly wiped the tears from her cheek with the corner of her patched apron and smiled as she gently hugged little James toward her.

"No, baby, mommy isn't sick," she said, "Mommy just wants you to have beautiful things like lots of other little boys."

Little James looked up at his mother and smiled.

"I'd like you to have beautiful things, too, but we don't really need them, because you are beautiful and I love you," he said.

This only made little James' mother cry more, and little James, cried himself because his mother was unhappy.

• • •

SOON, a smile brightened the poor mother's face. "Little James," she said, "How would you like to see Santa Claus?"

Little James jumped up and down. "Oh mother, what a wonderful Christmas present! When can we go?"

"Right now," his mother answered and began to get him ready for the trip to see Santa.

She took his tattered coat from the closet and the treasured mittens she had knit from a drawer. Then she put on her own worn coat and they started out.

On their walk through the city like Baltimore, to see Santa, little James saw many other people on the way to see Santa.

Meanwhile, little Ronald and his mother were on the way to see Santa, too.

Little Ronald saw many other children dressed in warm clothing like he was. He saw many different toys in store windows that he passed.

"Oh, look mommy," he cried. "Look at the beautiful train. I didn't get one for Christmas. Please may I have it?"

• • •

"NO, DEAR," his mother said. "You didn't ask Santa for one this time. Maybe next year," she added.

"I just wanted that little boy," said Ronald's mother to little James and his mother heard what little boy said.

"Shhh," Ronald's mother said. "He'll hear you. The poor little fellow probably has no boots," she explained to her little boy.

Unfortunately, it was too late, because little James and his mother heard what Ronald had said. But both of them, little James and his mother, kept walking. Each hoped the other had not heard.

They continued the trip in silence.

• • •

WHEN THEY reached their destination, little James' mother stopped suddenly.

"Suppose little James heard what the little boy said," she thought to herself.

"Suppose he asks Santa to send him a pair of boots? What will I tell him? I haven't any money to pay for them."

Once inside the place where Santa was stopping in the city so much like Baltimore, little James' mother was sure she had done the wrong thing.

All of the other children who came to see Santa were dressed in their best clothes.

But little James got a glimpse of Santa, and there was no turning back until he had talked with him.

She stopped fearfully in her tracks when little James said loudly, "Mommy, why is everyone looking at us?"

His mother looked at his tattered clothing, and said, "They aren't looking at us son, its just your imagination," not she knew little James was telling the truth.

• • •

AS LITTLE James drew closer to the little pot bellied man with the red suit and white beard, he jumped up and down.

Suddenly, excited by the thought of seeing Santa, little James slipped his hand from his mother's and tore through the crowd.

In his rush toward Santa, he accidentally knocked a little boy to the floor. It was the same little boy they had met on the way to see Santa—Little Ronald.

The other parents in the crowd squirmed in their seats and looked at little James like they imagined he had no manners at all.

One of them snatched little James aside and knelt down to console little Ronald.

Little Ronald's mother looked around sarcastic to see who the guilty little boy was.

Heaven only know what injuries her poor little Ronald had suffered.

Just then, little James' mother made her way into the crowd.

Little James was crying because he didn't know what was going on and everyone was looking at him angrily.

• • •

THE OTHER parents and children in the crowd stood back, anxious to see little Ronald's mother correct the wrong that had been done to other little boy's mother spanked him on the spot.

Little James' mother kneeled beside her son and picked him up in her arms just as the other lady raised herself to her full height and came toward them.

Little James' mother let her son slide from her arms as she rose and the two women stared at each other threateningly.

Suddenly, the mothers recognized each other as the ones they had passed on the street when they had gone to see Santa.

At the same time, Santa had stopped his sleigh and started Christmas carol and the crowd, who having forgotten the incident, began to sing with him.

"Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright ..." they sang, and turning at the chorus, the two women who had exchanged angry looks so soon before, joined the mothers and children in the sleigh to sing: