

MEMBERS OF MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY'S MILITARY COLOR GUARD HELP BALTIMOREANS CELEBRATE

AFRO photo by Roman Hankewycz

Happy Birthday, America?

By Elbert Guillory

Happy Birthday America! That's what this Bicentennial stuff is really all about-Not the Bicentennial minute on TV every night, not the key chains, drinking glasses, and salt shakers with flags on them; not of the typical American commercialization. . .but the rather knowledgement, the noting, the celebration of 200 years of America. During its 200 years of

existence, America has -vacillated between dark nights of deep oppression and a few brighter less

oppressive days.
The first night was night of slavery. It lasted from the very beginnings of the U.S. as we know it into the period dominated by the freedom loving founding fathers and -through to a century American existence. In -fact the entire first half of 'America's life was -marked by the oppression of slavery and America's *Centennial celebration was the mere celebration of shame and inhumanity. was certainly for -nothing célebrate.

America's first day was Reconstruction during which the light of freedom shined briefly, flickered and was snuffed out. Afro-Americans made economic and political advances, and began harvest the fruits of America and the fruits of our labors in America. W ring that period and to uffed out by the reverse Post-Reconstruction: 35 to 45 years of gangs of thugs hiding in white sheets. Thousands blacks were lynched while other Americans turned their backs and went

making the world safe for democracy returned home to a bright period of development in music, poetry and the arts. Young Adam Powell trek to his Washington. Marcus Garvey taught about black nationalism. Afro-Americans made economic advances. Things were bright for black Americans, but then came the darkness of the depression. It seemed that America had not only decided to treat us with benign neglect but also malevolent overattention. We seemed singled out to bear the brunt of the economic hardship which marked

life during the depression. We lost our economic advances made after World War I and we received no invitation to America's birthday parties. We were locked out of the parties and the doors were barred to us.

During the post World War II era of the 40's through the 60's America experienced an economic and Americans fared better than before. The military was desegregated 'with all deliberate speed' (and Americans in Boston and Kentucky would have something to fight about 20 years later)

Day really started to America into morality. We sat-in, atein, swam-in, freedomrode, were maced and

we worked to overcome The national response was the high noon of America's brightest day. Attention was given to our cities and urban areas. Community action programs came into existence to look after the interests of all of us and to employ many of us. Federal and state antidiscrimination legislation was passed to protect our rights in the areas of employment, housing,

With the end of the 60's night settled quickly-

The Vietnam War created a polarized people, and a nation preoccupied with that war turned away from human rights. The environment and other issues became popular drained away America's resolve to complete its battle for human rights. 'Law and Order' politics helped to us farther into night. The purveyors of Order, America's two biggest crooks, the President and Vice-President, were stealing America blind while they talked about law and order and justice.

The night was dark. The economy started to America was faced with inflation, deflation, stagflation, or whatever

they call it now. In the black community there was clearly a depression. Thousands were laid off. The old cycle of last hired and first fired once again ripped from our hands the limited economic gains that we had made in the few years previous.

During this dark period black court reverses started to plague the human rights movement. The U.S. Supreme Court ducked the issue of affirmative action refusing to validate it as a means of historic redressing wrongs and their present

The Maryland Court of Appeals declared that the state's antidiscrimination enforcement agency could no longer make awards of shotgunned together as monetary damages and victims of discrimination were left with a hollow

and remediless right. Major assaults on antidiscrimination agencies were mounted. These are agencies designed to enforce the fair housing. fair employment, and commodations law. Right now the Maryland antidiscrimination agency i receiving its assault.

> Things are pretty bad, but that's where we are as prepares t

celebrate, but how to get out of the mess we're in, how to once and for all break this cycle of day and night, of marginal feeedom and deep op-

pression. The question is how to get out of America's cellar so that hard times for America won't mean depression for us. This i not America's first big problem. When America determined that it was in the national interest for an American to walk on the moon, in less than 10 years after its creation, NASA had put a man on the moon. Now that is an accomplishment which resulted only

America decided it was in its national interest to coordinate the activities of the Army, Navy, Air Corps, Marine force, so the Department of Defense was created. It can give you whereabouts of every unit, every ship and every missile controlled by America throughout the world and it can do that in a matter of seconds.

What is clear is that when America has a problem - a big problem-it can create an effective agency to resolve the problem. It gives the agency suficiently broad power, money, and staff to do the

economically depressed area of America regularly flooded its banks, killed people and livestock and destroyed crops. The problems of that river valley were illiteracy, erosion, no electricity, unemployment, poor health services, ineffective local government. Hence the Tennessee Valley Authority was created and completely changed the lives of the

Valley residents. The TVA is a Federal agency directly responsible to the President and Congress. It is a model cooperation between the federal, state and local governments. Its mission was to build an integrated program of regional

wherewithal to do the job. It did everything necessary to upgrade the quality of life in the Tennessee River Valley and indeed in that whole region of America. If it

regions, it can surely be done for a whole people. propose that we celebrate America's 200th birthday by having America pass Minority National Recovery Act of 1976. The Act would create a super agency like the TVA and the goal of that agency

can be done for whole

would be to rehabilitate the quality of life minority Americans.

In the field of housing it could build, buy, sell or rent housing anywhere. It could investigate housing discrimination complaints, create zoning variances to ensure good quality, low-cost housing for all Americans.

In the field of employment, it would perform as a bigger and stronger EEOC. It could investigate, hold hearings, and enforce orders. It could stop any

contractor, labor union, unit of government, or employer which discriminates from doing business in this country

In the field of health and welfare it would build and operate hospitals, clinics and child care centers. It would ensure medical care to minority persons in schools and would specialize in the problems undernourishment, vitamin deficiency, hypertension and other problems of minority

It would operate and

maintain parks and recreation areas. It would ensure proper food and hourishment to minority children and adults. In the field of education it would build, operate top-flight maintain schools needed, everywhere including areas where local boards

It would desegregate existing schools and it would ensure that no minority child in the inner city or on a reservation

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The AFRO today accepts the challenge of the future, joins our readers in staking our claim in this nation

July 4, 1776 We hold these truths to be selfevident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by unalienable Rights, that among

pursuit of Happiness... And for the support of this free. Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, nation's heritage as ours and its we mutually pledge to each other future as ours. This is our our Lives, our Fortunes and our responsibility to move forward with sacred Honor.

Declaration of Independence 1892; some 85 years ago, has continuously fought to establish the belief that all men are created equal. We still assert and always will that the unalienable rights of pursuit of Happiness.

Two hundred years ago or more, black persons joined other immigrant peoples from the world over and we helped create this nation. Indeed, we were the earliest settlers despite the fact we came from the shores of Africa in bondage. At that time, the nation was

not a free country and not the free

As we mark the July 4 birthday of our nation, we also mark our status their Creator with certain as free men created equal, men who have committed our talents, these are Life, Liberty and the our energies, our wisdom and our lives that this nation may remain

Let us therefore consider this the United States of America, participate fully and when The AFRO since the founding in necessary fight for the right for our children and their children' children. We are in the mainstream and we will not turn back. We deserve and we have earned the American Dream of which Dr. all men are Life, Liberty and the Martin Luther King Jr. spoke. This will be our black experience today,

tomorrow and always. Inside this No. 2 AFRO Bicentennial Edition and the AFRO No. 1 Edition published in March, are traces of our prolific past, our great present and guidelines to our future. We hope these stories and photographs inspire our readers to

greater heights as we look forward to another 200 years. We also hope that in the years to come there will be a sense of brotherhood among all peoples, knowing that each one now has a finer appreciation of our role as black citizens.

In these AFRO pages we establish our identity in all phases of life in Baltimore and the nation...committed inspite of our suffering; dedicated inspite of our deprivation; responsible men and women, despite our trials which are still many

The AFRO has always participated in our struggle for full citizenship. Owned these 85 years by the descendants of the founder. John H. Murphy Sr., we rank as the largest chain of newspapers published predominately black readership. John H. Murphy III is chairman of the board of directors; John J. Oliver Sr. is president; Mrs. Mae E. Dyson, secretary; George A Lottier, treasurer; Frederick A Howard, vice president, production: Raymond H. Boone, vice



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