Grand Jury

The city's special grand jury has had its term extended another 30 days.

This is the panel charged with investigating allegations of police pay - offs by narcotics dealers, last summer's wave fo dope - related assassinations and other vicious and related concerns.

The usual procedure at the end of a jury session is for indictments to be handed down based down based on the evidence presented by the state's attorney's office during the months of the jury's functioning.

In the case of this particular grand jury much as been speculated about, and thus far, nothing has been forthcoming.

Among the rumors was the key one that high - ranking police were found culpable in pay - offs and other traffic with the narcotics underworld and would be so exposed and brought to trial.

That has not yet come to pass and the special jury's need for an extension would indicate that no evidence sufficient to bring indictments on this or other matters before the panel is yet in hand.

At some point, the jury, or more specifically, the states' attorney's office, is going to have fish or cut bait.

This an election year and the undertones of this jury's work as political as they can be.

For this panel to drag out its work with so many names of public officials aired as "guilty" or somehow involved in scandal without conclusive action on these unspecified charges is a nasty business not to mention a piling up of the taxpayers' money.

States attorney William Swisher and his staff are now under the gun to produce meaningful cases seeing as how muchtime they have had to investigate.

We find it notable that while we still await some results from the special grand jury, federal prosecutors have been able to trace down the murder weapon used in the execution of Elijah "Ditty Wo" Davis and to identify persons who posessed this gun.

It was Davis murder, you will recall, that triggered the whole series of events that become the focus of this grand jury.

If you are wondering how the feds are able to move ahead and put important pieces of our local dope - murder puzzle together while local prosecutors still ask for time, we wonder also.

The states attorney's office must produce something to justify the time it has consumed on this special jury's inquiries or be judged incompetent.

Ripping off the city

We already know one of the most important stories to appear in the next edition, Tuesday, May 30, of the Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN.

It concerns the findings, announced May 25, by Del. John Douglass and Dr. Cleveland Chandler, the Morgan State University economist, on the huge sums of money taken out of this city each year by city government workers who live in other jurisdictions.

Douglass, running for the city comptroller post now held by Hyman Pressman, has made a reputation for himself as a meticulous student of government workings during his Assembly career. Dr. Chandler has long been one of our academic activists.

Their conclusions about the money being drained off from the city by non-residents, some $71 million annually according to their estimates, bears our most careful attention.

We will be reporting this data in our next edition but even at first glance, in the face of this city's need for revenues and its citizens need for jobs, what Messrs. Douglass and Chandler report makes a municipal residency requirement law increasingly needed for this town.

We are being ripped off, as the suburbs grow fatter.

Please follow this issue in Tuesday's edition.

Prison plight

Recent rulings by Maryland judges that overcrowding in the Maryland House of Corrections and other penal facilities in this state amounts to a violation of inmates' rights is long overdue.

We have consistently stated that Maryland's programs of penal reform and prisoner rehabilitation are ineffective. They hardly make a dent in the recidivism rate and in no way meet the needs of black offenders, most of whom are incarcerated because of a host of socio-economic reasons the prison system is not equipped to handle.

Add to that the historic, barbaric treatment of offenders in this state's correctional facilities as evidenced by overcrowding and little hope for our prisons as rehabilative mechanisms can be held.

Jamming two prisoners into cells of 40 to 44 square feet, the courts have found, amounts to "cruel and unusual" punishment and state prison officials have been ordered to remedy this horrendous situation immediately.

The judges did not specify how this was to be done just that it be done.

Which places everyone in a pickle. Any new prison construction is at least two years away from completion. No community wants a prison in its midst. No alternative sites, plans or solutions come to anyone's mind.

Yet overcrowding must end.

We have also held that new prison buildings are no real solution in any event. They become self-fulfilling prophecies. More jails, more crimes and criminals, more jobs for the corrections industry.

Something must give. We think the courts' ruling in favor of prisoner rights to habitable confinement can be the turning point in forcing the corrections' establishment into some clear thinking about penal programs.

Packing prisoners into quarters insufficient for them to live in is no answer, the courts have found. This just turns inmates out meaner, more bitter than when they came in.

The real problem, particularly with black and other minority prisoners, is just why they are in jail in the first place.

No one wants to deal with that and so we are all in the fix we presently find ourselves, law-abiding and law-breakers alike.

Scant money for new prisons and an end to overcrowdedness in prisons as court-ordered brings all of us to the precipice.

If it a desperate situation and time is running out on our elected officials to come up with solutions.

Welcome Shriners

Our torn's Jerusalem Temple No. 4 of the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of North and South American, better known as the "Shriners," plays host this weekend to members of the order from North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Many of us will see the traditional colorful parade Saturday morning and it is this merriment most folk associate with the Shriners.

Less widely known, though it should be, is that the Shriners are one of our strongest charitable fraternal organizations with a long history of civicendeavor and forceful political activism and advocacy for all black citizens, not just their own membership.

So strong is this commitment to forthright good citizenship, you will be interested to know, Shriners require every member to become a qualified registered voter and that each member in turn see that five other citizens not previously qualified to vote to do so. The order is non-partisan but if you are not a registered voter you cannot be a Shriner.

Fiercely independent, black Shriners battled white Shriners through the courts util they gained legal victory as a recognized and official masonic body. Black Shriners fought white Shriners in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana to gain this court ruling. Which, considering the racial climate of the times, took much courage.

Quietly, but with tough-mindedness, Shriners have contributed money, time and energy to all the important causes of black America.

When you see these hardy men in their red fezes participating in the Gala this weekend, remember that they, with the Daughters of Isis, their women counterparts, are black Americans with strength and purpose.

We proudly welcome them to Baltimore and praise the local Shriners for being good hosts.

A LITTLE ABOUT A LOT: MADELINE MURPHY

By Madeline W. Murphy

I wonder that so much said in outrage about the recent decision of probation and prison "penance" for the Pallottine priest Guido John Carcich, failed to mention the primary issue of separation of church and state.

Surely, the moral issue should not be overlooked, for it is an ignominious defeat for all Christians who believe that the church should be unique in giving succor to the poor, humble and unloved. The diversion of millions earmarked for the poor of the world cannot be easily sloughed off with self - righteous platitudes.

Church and state

This in itself is the greatest indictment against any and all charities, religious or otherwise, whose accounting remains secret, whose auditing, infrequent.

But ah, then, the sacred nostrums like: "The Lord loves a cheerful giver." "Store not treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt," or "It is better to give than receive," from the lips of the prince of the church, swiftly rebut some faint hearts' disgruntlement; reinforce the guilt; and blame the victims, yet again, who helplessly cry: "foul!"

Moreover, with the sanction of the court, the attorney general, reduction of the plea to one count rather than 68, adds insult to injury. Because where else would one learn, except in a trial of these counts, the labyrinth of the church's meddling into politics:

— the events that led to the suicide of one of the principals;

— the alleged laundering of loans to former Governor and Mrs. Marvin Mandel for his divorce settlement from Bootsie;

— the numerous characters in the plot who had official political connections, perhaps still anonymous;

— the possible tacit approval by the Archdiocese before the fact of the mismanagement by the Pallottines and extent of its wealth?

Which leads to the cynical political nature of this case.

Are there implicit benefits as a result of the decision that would not only undergird the uncertain political future of one candidate for governor, but also fulfill the political ambitions of another — the one who pronounced sentence?

In all the seeming back room deliberations in bringing about substantial reduction of the charges, will the mawkish rationale that other charges would be hard to prove, be merely cover - up, hiding the influence of the Catholic Archdiocese in Maryland politics?

With its extensive land holdings, its struggle for power, its property and banking connections, its sanction in its schools, churches and lending institutions, (following the tide, reluctant to break new ground in former years) of segregation; its power, yet the obvious reluctance, to discipline severely its notorious "heeler - dealer, Guido John Carcich, one is forced to believe that it's OK to waive Christian principles when money and political leverage are the issues.

The more sinister meaning of the decision is the frightening reality that puts to shame the pompous moutings of faith, hope, charity; and the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

While at the other end of justice's scale are those who shall be imprisoned, heavily dined, the welfare cheaters, whose crime is also to bend the system, a system oftimes in collusion with the church, that seems unfair, excessively, penurious, not providing adequate livelihoods, nor a dignified life style.

It is paradoxical that the two crimes surface simultaneously, where now the tarnished image of justice blindfolded and impartial can never be talked, nor alibied away. How fitting in the month that was heralded by Law Day, USA!

It is no surprise therefore that these and other self - defeating actions are the reasons people remain poor, rivers become cynical; that the pomp circumstance will no longer hoodwink the humble into further humility or blind obedience.

With past history as prologue, we must be vigilant. For slowly but surely, as church institutions become more instrusive into public policy, as in public aid to private schools; as in powerful anti - abortion lobbying; as in light slaps on the wrist for monstrous wrong doings of its own members, its corruption will become absolute, its power complete.

The preachments of the church will be merely that, practice having become victim to political opportunism and greed, as all too many already suspect.

WASHINGTON REPORT:

PARREN J. MITCHELL

Black colleges and Small Business Development Centers

Mr. Mitchell represents Maryland's 7th District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is presently conducting a pilot project to determine the feasibility of establishing a network of "Small Business Development Centers" (SBDCs) on campuses across the country.

It is envisioned that colleges and universities would obtain grants from SBA to establish and operate such centers for, quoting from the

" . . . small business oriented employment or natural resources programs; for studies, research, and counseling concerning the manging, financing, and operation of small business enterprises; for technological assistant, technical, and statistical information for small business enterprises; and for the delivery or distribution of such services and information."

Presently, the SBDC project is funded at a total of $350,000 for fiscal years 1977 and 1978, for eight pilot projects.

However, most importantly, the House of Representatives has very recently passed legislation (H.R. 11445, SBA Programs and Authorizations) which would target funding for the SBDC program at $60 million for fiscal year 1979 and $65, $70 and $75 million, respectively, for the next three fiscal years.

The Senate has already passed a version of legislation in this regard (S 972, the Small Business Development Center Act of 1977) which would authorize $8 million for fiscal year 1979 and $15 million for each fiscal year from 1980 through 1982 for program grants as well as $5 million for each fiscal year from 1979 through 1982 for research grants.

Although the House and Senate differences in authorization levels are yet to be resolved, it appears rather certain that a large amount of funds for the SBDC program will soon be available.

Most people know that I have an intense interest in the plight of minority oriented institutions of higher learning as well as a similar level of interest in the minority business enterprise community. It was very disturbing, therefore, to learn that there has been little effort, if any at all, to ensure the inclusion of black colleges or to address the needs of minority businesses in the development to date, of the SBDC program.

The importance of various minority groups getting linked into these type programs from their beginning cannot be stressed enough. In an attempt to reverse what could become the trend with the SBDC program, I have written to each and every president of historically black, junior, four year, graduate and professional institutions urging that they immediately contract the SBA indicating a desire to participate or at least be kept abreast of the program's finalization and implementation.

My office has been monitoring the response of minority institutions of higher learning to SBA and, to date, it has been great.

For example, the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore (formerly Maryland State College) pointed out that that institution "long had an interest in developing such a center on (its) campus."

The initial exclusion of a minority emphasis in the SBDC program was probably not just a mere oversight. We are not the only ones who realize that economic parity lies the door to our survival and education is the key.

LETTERS

What have they done for us?

Dear AFRO:

Some of Gordon W. Crane's allegation in his article in the May 16 edition of the AFRO are puzzling.

The headline reads, "Conspiracy against black Baltimore's leadership exposed!"

I disagree. I don't believe that he supported his arguments with the proper evidence.

Also, I'm not sure that they are our leaders. Many of the so - called "leaders" have no one to lead. There is not a dominant black political organization in the city.

Black politics in this city seems to revolve around a few charismatic leaders who have been unable to build a solid organization. What we have is a bunch of people running helterskelter.

His defense of Col. Watkins is interesting. Crane has asked us to support Col. Watkins, why? What is Col. Watkins doing for blacks in general and black policemen specifically?

He even alludes to police brutality against black people. Why hasn't Col. Watkins used his high position to bring punishment to the officers who use excessive force?

Before you ask us to support him, tell me what has he done for us.

You use the term "occupation syndrome" to denote that the city's white minority still controls the government. Throughout history whenever a group was colonized, it seems that the elder - leaders of the colony have taken accomodationist attitudes. Many times it was the young rebels who brought about independence.

If we have good leadership, then why are more blacks going on welfare; why are more blacks unemployed? Why don't we have more black councilmembers?

My point is that you should find out what they've done for us before you ask us to support them.

KEITH L. CHRISTIAN

Elevate the consciousness

Dear AFRO:

It is not my habit to comment on articles printed in newspapers. However, when I read the Political Commentary published in the May 16, edition of the AFRO — entitled "Conspiracy Against black leadership exposed." I felt it was the season to undergo that initiation.

The article is refreshingly informative in that it "spotlights" the detriment of a people's silence against the same type or tacucs being employed by whites in South Africa to suppress "progressive black advancement" in the city of Baltimore.

I am a Baltimorean — imprisoned for more than nine "full" years. I have acquired a high degree of political hindsight over the many years of "forced separation" from family members and friends and a critical analysis of events happening throughout the world having a "direct" or "indirect" bearing on my existence.

Thus, to conscious people throughout the world (especially to the young black leaders of tomorrow and to those well seasoned with years of wisdom), I say, take a look around you. Elevate the consciousness of those who cannot see or perceive as clearly as you the "writing on the wall"... you owe it to yourself and posterity to ACT in defense of your own (unified) best interest.

Dare yourself to read the aforementioned article (grasp its full meaning). . . Then, dare yourself to respond to it, accordingly, before it's too late.

You have the power!

I commend you, Mr. Gordon W. Crane, for writing such an article of enlightening savor.

HARRISON E. COLVIN

DSS chief thanks the AFRO

DEAR AFRO:

I am very appreciative that the AFRO printed my letter last week responding to the recent Grand Jury report on welfare fraud.

Since writing that letter a newpaper reporter, not from the AFRO, has erroneously quoted me as saying that recent welfare fraud indictments were part of " a long - needed crackdown on welfare cheating."

Those are "code" words which are not my words or sentiments.

Welfare fraud is a probelm that cannot be minimized or confined. At DSS, we will continue to make diligent efforts to uncover and prosecute fraud.

But the subject of fraud must not be inflamed out of perspective: 95 to 97 percent of welfare recipients do not cheat.

KALMAN R. HETTLEMAN,
Director,
Department of Social Services

AFRO invites letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication.

Write to Letters to the Editor, Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN, Box 1897, Baltimore, Md. 21203.

G. JAMES FLEMING

NOW AND THEN

Eternal Vigilance still needed

By G. James Fleming

This is an old theme — the need for "eternal vigilance"; for being "on guard"; for keeping one's power dry.

Nowhere is this caution needed more than in the continuous battle between rich and poor, between the haves and the have - nots, between the powerful and the less powerful and, in the United States, between racists and blacks.

Not only oratorical racists, but also those whites, on all levels, who know how to manipulate laws and regulations so that blacks realize few, or none, of the gains that laws and regulations promised them.

There are obvious practices to "beat" blacks out of their civil rights there are also very subtle means, many of which can be defended under the Constitution.

These conclusions and the evidence on which they are based, were recently presently before the DuBois Cirle of Baltimore, at the organization's 72nd closing dinner, by Clarence Mitchell Jr. & that man who has spent 35 years as the NAACP's "outward and visible sign" and spokesman in the nation's capital.

Some of these same observations were made by Clifford L. Alexander, secretary of the Army, when he gave the commencement address for Morgan State University on Sunday.

Mitchell gave example after example of how monies intended to aid black - oriented projects in many counties have been detoured to other projects of less benefits to blacks.

He pointed to the many lawsuits being brought, challenging "affirmative action" when such actions benefit blacks, women and other minorities. Of course, he pointed out the pros and cons of the Bakke which is now before the Supreme Court.

Most of the time, blacks do not even know what is happening to them — how they are being "ripped off" and how rights and monies, once won, are being siphoned off.

The NAACP has taught the Ku Klux Klan, the White Citizens Councils, and others of their ilk, how to use the Constitution and the courts, and these organizations have found their white Thurgood Marshalls.

Presently, and from here on, there will be less burning down of "Negro quarters," less physical segregation by law, and no overt lynchings. Close investigation shows, however, that the objectives of the Klan, the White Citizens Councils and the lynchers (by whatever name) are being achieved just the same.

This does not mean that there are not gains, some spectacular, relatively speaking. But as both Mitchell and Secretary of the Army Alexander agreed, most of the poor are still poor; most of those who have always held the lowest paid jobs still hold the lowest paid jobs and the groups most hit by chronic unemployment are still thus hit.

No better examples are needed that to point to the fact that law has made only slight dents in housing discrimination and the abolition of substandard housing; nor has law given to blacks much better education than they had before 1954; nor have all the efforts of government reduced the overwhelming unemployment of black youth.

Clarence Mitchell Jr., often called the 101st United States Senator and recently named "distinguished visiting lecturer" at Morgan State University, did more than put blacks on the "qui vive." He reminded the 300 guests of the DuBois Circle that blacks are not the only "handicapped" people in the country.

He called attention anew to the millions of physically and mentally disabled for whom very little provision is made in our system; he updated the fact that there is still a notable gap between the pay given women, as compared to that given men for performing the same work. He might also have pointed to the plight of the American Indians.

Mitchell (seven honorary degrees) was no pessimist, however. As he reviewed the past 40 years, he was loud in praise of the American political system and of Congress. He was positive about the possibilities in America to move the system from where it has been, or where it is, to higher levels of justice, democracy, and service to the people.

While Secretary Alexander made a plea against apathy, Mitchell warned that "progress does not come of itself; it must be promoted and supported by people who care and who are on guard; it must have the leadership and expertise of a stronger NAACP; and it must have more blacks and minorities registering to vote and voting."

FOR ALL WE KNOW

ELIZABETH M. OLIVER

By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

JUDGE U. THEODORE HAYES, master in chancery, is honored by the jurists June 14, 12 noon to 2 p.m. at Humperdinkers and the retirement luncheon has a program including Judge Rifman, Chief Judge Sodaro, Master Paul A. Smith, Judge Hargrove, Ed Lang, Chuck Richards, and more top brass plus a gift. A grand fete.

FRANK CONAWAY and friends have a bull roast tonight, May 26, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Martin's West, "dancing and all you can eat". HON. LARRY YOUNG's friends hold their June 25 affair to return him to the House of Delegates at the Pikesville Hilton, 5 p.m.

DR. RALPH ABERNATHY speaks Sunday 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. at Mt. Lebanon for the church's 54th anniversary. Rev. Olin P. Moyd, pastor is running for the House, you know, with the blessings of the Maryland Baptists.

CONG. P.J. MITCHELL speaks at the Sunday commencement for Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn. The physicians and dentists graduating are from elite families who are several generations of doctors. Ritzy crowd.

GERALD FORD, former U.S. president, is a dinner guest June 13 at the Martin's West $100 - a - plate affair by GOPs and Dr. Aris Allen heads the list of hosts. However, on the news letter from Ron Nessen, Dr. Allen's name was left off. Shame on the Republicans who are begging for black votes.

AFRO's Melvina Jackson (retired ad lady) is getting salutes June 27 at a banquet by the Md. Vocational Rehab staff for "meritorious service. She's been there 18 years and deserves praises.

THE HENRY EVANS GAINESES of Chicago marking their 50th wedding anniversary May 13 wrote AFRO President John J. Oliver of their memories in their hometown, Brazil, Ind. Mrs. Gaines is granddaughter of Mrs. Edna Boysaw and was sent to Provident Hospital in Chi to become a nurse by the late Dr. Jacob B. Oliver.

DRACULA at the Mechanic received five curtain calls and standing ovations Monday night. You've never seen such scenery on stage. It's all magnificent, the whole play. See it!

LOW INCOME home - owners can apply for weatherization funds by calling Urban Services Agency, 396 - 1305 or 396 - 1306 to get storm windows etc. for winter — and its time to do this NOW.

RED CROSS seeks young people for summer volunteers to work bloodmobile sites, rec centers, nursing homes, hospitals. Call 467 - 9905, kids.

HENRY C. PARKS JR. has formed a committee for a series of events related to African art, all to be held at Walters' Art Gallery during the show "Nigeria, Art and Everyday Life" June 16 to July 9.

TONIGHT, Friday, May 26 is the 75th birthday party for Susie Murphy, remember? It's a grand affair at Wayland Baptist.

A HEALTH FOOD place on North Charles has sandwiches somebody said look like someone cleaned out the back yard weeds and all. Bean sprouts are the only really good health food.

HOWARD OWEN, the late Fire Board chief, died this week at 38 and led a full, glamorous life. His offices at the Hilton were fabulous. He once wore a white mink, full length coat to a late night winter fire. Brought to Balto by ex Mayor Tommy D'Alesandro, he at one time took over as head of the Mechanic Theatre. His parties were legend. Farewell, Howard.

LIJ IMRU ZELLEKE, an Ethiopian ambassador residing in New York is our guest next weekend. "Lij" is the title which signifies "royalty". He's also visiting Cynthia and James Askew and we're rolling out the red carpet, a - hem - for royalty from the 2,000 - year old nation of Ethiopia.

MT. MORIAH BAPTIST CHURCH was in all its splendor this week for the guests from across the state of the Baptist convention. Dr. C. C. Alexander is the gracious pastor who is leaving his post as chief of the 156 churches and 150,000 members. Joined by his lovely wife, he made many a milestone in his 4 - year term as head of the largest religious group in the state.

BEAUTIFUL HATS and lovely spring frocks plus the fabulous meals served, made this convention one long to be remembered. Rev. Arthur Benn and his Mt. Moriah congregation are the hosts for the splendid affairs. Tonght is the last session, a great experience. Be sure to go.

NON - BLACK students can get graduate school grants at Coppin. Call 383-5916

WE'RE invited to the weekend in Las Vegas for the heavyweight fight June 9 when Ken Norton is featured at Caesar's Palace. Don King sent the special bid. We met him at the White House dinner for the Shah of Iran.

POLICE warn that Tim Hammers are plentiful. One is a minister (?) who says he wants money "to help a poor man get his life straight". Beware!

BREAKFAST at the Holiday Inn June 3 marks the 42nd year of the Business and Professional Women, Edith M. Thomas, president.

DR. JOYCE PARKS and Vertis have their family at the Dozens Country Club June 3.

JUNE 4 is the brunch at the Woodholme Country Club which honors Morgan's James E. Lewis.

MAY 27 is the Sugar Hill Assembly's dinner at the Blue Crest North, when all the old neighborhood get together.

MAY 30 we are guests of the 1906 Class at Dunbar Hi. The 11:15 a.m. event is about black writers who will be present. A delightful occasion, this is, and carried on entirely by the students.

ON THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY

LESLIE KING HAMMOND

Dr. Hammond is dean of graduate studies, Maryland Institute, College of Art.

Why wait 12 years?

As we all well know, life is full of many ironies. Last Sunday, May 21, The Sun critic, Barbara Gold, wrote an article which tried very hard to state her philosophy as a critic.

That in itself is not unusual but the fact that she decided to do this after 12 years of writing reviews does make one wonder why she waited so long to communicate with the public.

This article illustrates one of the major continuing problems and responsibilities of the art critic in society, an endless and controversial issue.

Writing this column has been a strange adventure for me and probably an even stranger adventure for this newspaper. So far, the response from the AFRO readers has been enlightening and encouraging and positive.

The black paper traditionally has not given serious critical coverage to the visual arts other than a brief mention in terms of words and photos.

This is a special time in the current historical development of Baltimore City. It is one of the objectives of this column to address this new growth and its relationship to the black community.

More importantly, the presence of this column provides a unique opportunity to explore and explode many of the myths that surround artistic expression and the role and function of the black artist in American society.

All this brings to me the responsibility of the critic or reviewer who writes a column for a specific audience.

This writer determined that the critic must be, in simple terms, a middle class person between the artist and you, the audience or viewer.

The critic of the visual arts in the black community has a more complex job than most other critics. Since the annual of the African to the new world, countless generations of oppressions have convinced many black people that we are not capable of expressing ourselves in the so - called western fine art tradition.

And so the black critic tries to write about black artistic expression in a black newspaper, even when many black people are not able to recognize or worst believe that they are highly creative people.

References and illustrations are taken directly from the daily aspects of black life style, which is certainly one of the most creative, inventive and artistically expressed lessons in the experience of human survival.

This is a critical time for the African - American. We are no longer in vogue. The quality and direction of our lives depends more than ever on the ability to share information and skills.

The black artists are especially important and vital to our culture because they tell us visually who we are and how we exist in relationship to our environment.

Someone once remarked that the artist is like an endangered species and they must be protected! It is difficult to protect something or someone you don't understand or recognize as being in danger.

I cannot afford to wait 12 years to provoke your visual senses even hopefully heighten your understanding.

This period of the '70s will have to be a collective effort to reconstruct our past and build for our future.

MORE LETTERS

Thanks for coverage

Dear AFRO:

I wish to express my sincere appreciation and that of the board and staff of the Constant Care Community Health Center for your publication of the extremely well done, accurate and complimentary account of the activities of the Constant Care Community Health Center.

The new concepts it poses for the Baltimore community as published in the Friday, April 14 issue of the AFRO - AMERICAN Newspaper represent an englightened approach to health care delivery in Baltimore.

We also extend our appreciation and commendations to Mrs. Pimlie Ross, author of the article, for her indepth analysis of our program and her kind concern over the welfare of the patients that we serve.

I do believe this commendable piece of newsworthy information will be of significant value in assuring employees and most particularly its patients that they can obtain a high quality of health care and that we maintain our sense of perspective and responsibility to the community at large.

We have received many comments, calls and words of appreciation for this outstanding article, and I wish you to know our appreciation for your printing it.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve this community and appreciate your continued support of the humanitarian efforts of Constant Care Community Health Center, its staff and board.

HARVEY WEBB Jr.
Executive Director

Jobs for lawbreakers?

Dear AFRO:

The members of the Westport - Mt. Winans Youth Council are opposed to the use of prisoners to clean up the stadium.

Mayor Schaefer should know we have a number of people here in the Westport - Mt. Winans community who do not have a job.

Many of the people here and a number or large families are in great need of jobs. We feel that these jobs shouldn't be given to people who have broken the law.

We have been trying to get in touch with the mayor for the last three weeks.

WALTER SMITH, President,
Westport - Mt. Winans
Youth Council

Health Maintenance Organization

A growing trend in U.S. health policy

Dear AFRO:

The health care industry in the United States is a very large and labor intensive system dominated by professionals.

In 1976, it generated $139 billion dollars in goods and services or 8.7 percent of our gross national product.

In comparison, as recent as 1965, medical care consumed only 5.9 percent of our gross national product or a monetary equivalent of $39 billion dollars.

Ostensibly, national health policy is rapidly endorsing the principle that a minimal standard of care, like education, is a right not a privilege to every American citizen.

This philosophy, in the absence of free - market forces and cost containment measures, will continue to manifest a fragmented, pluralistic, wasteful and expensive medical system.

Most health experts agreed that some form of a universal health insurance bill will be enacted by 1985. Although such a program would certainly improve the accessibility of health care to the approximately 25 million people who are uninsured, it provides little assurance of modifying the manner in which services are delivered or the attitude of the providers.

As the American society has learned over the past decade, supply and demand forces do not readily apply to the health care industry. Under a medical delivery system linked to reimbursing providers on a fee for service basis, the cost of physician fees continues to creep higher, irrespective of the ration of physicians to providers in a defined geographic area.

For example, a recent survey conducted by the National Chamber Foundation revealed "there are now about 400,000 physicians in the United States and almost 800,000 are expected to be in practice by 1990."

The question which naturally arises is that with more physicians providing services to a relatively slow growth population, competitive forces within the market place ought to constrain increasing fees.

In practice this is not the case, however, because a physician induced - demand system embraces the health care industry.

Therefore, many health experts portend that a precipitous increase in trained medical specialist (already overabundant relative to the increased need for primary care physicians) will exacerbate the ration of fees - level of output generated through physicians' services.

Some statistics to dramatize the cost - push inflationary forces impinging upon the health industry are:

— Total health expenditures rose from $29 billion in 1960 to more than $139 billion in 1976, with an increase of $21 billion alone between 1975 and 1976.

— The overall consumer price index rose about 125 percent from 1950 through 1976. However, Health care rose a whooping 240 percent over the same period.

— Hospital cost per patient day averaged about $16 in 1950 as opposed to $175 in 1976.

With respect to private industry, skyrocketing health cost have devastated their operating budgets.

Several prominent businessmen offered these comments during last year's White House Conference on escalating health costs.

— Charles L. Glass, assistant treasurer of Eastern Air Lines Inc., said "per employee health insurance costs have jumped from $400 in 1973 to $850 in 1976. Except for the cost of fuel, I am unaware of any single cost element which has escalated as much as medical insurance cost."

— John J. O'Connell, vice president of Bethlehem Steel Corp., reported that health benefits cost rose from $48 million in 1970 to $110 million in 1976.

— James Mortimer, manager of employee benefits at the Continental Bank in Chicago, reported that per employee benefit cost at five banks their's increased 45 percent from 1971 to 1975, not including the effect of changes in benefits.

It is well known by now that General Motors spent more on health insurance for its employees than the raw steel that it needs to produce automobiles. In dollars and cents, a GM spokesman reported that current health insurance cost for GM is approximately $825 million dollars per year, equivalent to $100 per month per employee.

Such astronomical increases have forced smaller businesses to deny health insurance protection to their employees altogether. This is a tragic trend inasmuch as 47 percent of all private companies consist of four or less employees.

Though there are a multitude of forces that contribute to spiraling health care cost, several basic reasons are lack of business intervention, professional autonomy, absence of free - market principles in delivery of services and costly duplication of expensive and life saving technology.

In my opinion, the health industry cannot become truly cost responsive until providers are rewarded for preventing illnesses as opposed to the traditional caveat of curative medicine.

Greater competition, coupled with adequate financial controls must be imposed upon the industry to discourage excessive utilization of medical services, fraud and sub - standard care. Incentives must be created to inspire providers (physicians, dentist, nurses and health administrators) to join prepaid group practice and - or other programs which are geared toward preventive care.

I am convinced that the preservation of the American health care system depends on the proliferation of prepaid group practices. Health Maintenance Organization, wherein the ultimate reward is keeping people well and away from expensive hospital and costly diagnostic and surgical procedures.

Incorporated in this approach to medical care are such positive incentives as prospective rate setting, geographical accessibility, competitive but ethical fee schedules, physician diversity, share services, and exceptional opportunities for peer review.

Most physicians can concentrate providing the highest quality health care because non - medical professionals would be available to render essential support functions.

Additionally, the full spectrum of medical services offered could be tailored to meet the epidemiological needs of the targeted populations.

In this regard, HEW is attempting to serve as a catalyst to spearhead the development of HMO by private corporations and labor unions. In addition to revising the 1973 HMO Guidelines, the Secretary of DHEW sponsored a National HMO conference in Washington, D.C., March 1978.

The conference was designed to encourage business and labor to work in concert in promoting the further development of Health Maintenance Organizations throughout the country.

Also, under the new regulations employers with 25 or more employees must offer to its labor force the HMO as a dual option to traditional health protection plans, if one exists in the community.

Direct grants are available through the federal government to support feasibility studies and contribute to the capital financing of HMO facilities.

Loan guarantees are also available through DHEW to cover deficit financing during the HMO's first year of operation and beyond.

With management and labor in partnership with government in promoting HMO's, I vehemently believe that prepaid medical care will become an integral part of the American Health Industry within the next decade.

GARY B. SWIFT