Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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Black History

February is now nationally recognized as Black History Month a fact perhaps taken for granted by those too young to know of the herculean effort by the late black historian Carger G. Woodson and other scholars who insisted in the ears of a deaf world that black Americans came from a glorious African heritage and further, that in this land of their captivity, blacks have from the 17th century on made major contributions to the growth of America.

Our feeling, and the editorial cartoon on this page sums it up, is that black history is something to be be imparted to our children in some measure each day.

Our achievements have been often individual and group miracles given the opposition to our efforts and black parents and teachers should always be about the business of stressing this heritage to our young people at every opportunity.

We celebrate Black History Month but we have an obligation to live the positive aspects of our cluture and traditions each waking day.

Our history and our knowledge of that history gives us the strength we need to perservere as a people.

City Council freeze

City Councilpersons, according to some journalists, are miffed with their new council mate Kwiesi Mfume for rattling back to William Donald Schaefer and committing other assorted heresies.

Accordingly, they are giving young Mfume the cold shoulder until he learns how to "play the game."

We hope Councilman Mfume does not roll over and play dead which is the thing most present Council members do best when the mayor snaps his fingers.

Given the performance records of Council members they are hardly in a position to become indignant when Mfume begins to talk about racism in municipal government and other problems they have been closing their eyes to since assuming office.

We applaud the new Councilman's courage. He is rocking the boat but we feel confident that the people who voted for him did so for just that reason.

So long as Mfume keeps a clear dialogue going with the voters he represents we are sure they will back his efforts to bring reason to a most unreasonable body.

Shopping security

Those handsome, busy and consumer-appealing shopping malls scattered in and around our city are becoming terror sites.

About Christmas time a young woman shopping at night at Westview Mall was stabbed repeatedly by an assailant as she tried to enter her car.

At Golden Ring Mall more recently another young woman was abducted, raped and left injured on a county road.

This week a young man, a tough ex-serviceman, was killed by pistol shots as he helped his mother do her shopping at Mondawmin II. This was in broad daylight.

Even the bravest of us must admit to some feelings of trepidation as we take the long walk from car to the gaily lit stores housed in such malls.

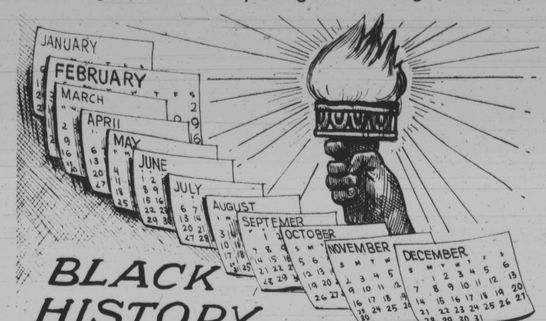
While some of this violence is completely irrational much of it can be controlled.

Before more of violence plagues such places of commerce we strongly suggest that Mall operators take steps in the form of security patrolman on the parking lots, better lighting and other preventive measures.

As things stand now shopping is tantamount to taking one's life in one's hands.

This cannot be.

Knowing our own history can give us strength each day



And Schaefer digs it!

Madeline MURPHY

By Madeline W. Murphy

If memory serves well, it seems not many years ago, a black member of the Board of School Commissioners had to resign because he lived in Baltimore County, as his membership ran against the City Charter.

But according to a recent study by the Ednor Garden-Lakeside Association, the majority of the members of municipal boards and commissions not only live in the Northern-Northwestern sections of Baltimore City, but surprisingly more representatives live in Towson and Baltimore County than those on municipal boards from either East or South Baltimore.

Maybe the mayor is waiting for the revitalized sections of the latter areas to be populated by returning middle-class white consumers before he rectifies his flouting of city law and intent.

This surely should tell blacks in Baltimore that all the shining promises of "attention to all the people" in his recent third inaugural address were mere puffery of self and meaningless rhetoric.

And despite the demands of the legislative black caucus, whose raggedy paper tiger image was stained by disunity, secret deals maybe, Schaefer against this background of flip-flop resolve, has no reason to worry about empty threats.

Now really, when do we get our stuff together?

Are you who are constituents of some of these legislators keeping score of victories or defeats? of sticking to strategies rather than upstaging?

Because the mayor and city solicitor are certainly kicking sand in our eyes as well as the legislators.

It is really ludicrous, also to find out that the Board of Huckster, Hawker and Peddler Licenses has no blacks. That's a real plantation operation, when you realize how many of the hucksters are black. Yet how romantically each spring, the A-rabs are trotted out in pictorial essays depicting Baltimore's unique local color!

When the peddlers made such a ruckus a few years back about being kicked off Howard and Lexington streets, it would have been more evenhanded had blacks been sitting on the board. Instead their appeals were heard by "Massah" whose self-interest out weighed the equity of the situation and then "Massah" up and left downtown.

Moreover, Lexington Market with its disproportionate influx of black patronage demands that blacks become board members as consumer advocates. But this might shake the cozy status quo.

All eleven lily white boards out of the 44 should be opened up, like we did in the late '60s when we pressured the mayor to increase the Board of School Commissioners from two to four. Yet that number after 14 years has remained the same despite a 70-30 percent black white pupil and teacher ratio.

Oh, if only the black legislative caucus and stuck to its guns and stood pat on the equal number of blacks and whites appointed to expiring terms on boards and commissions.

Also, the black City Council persons could be more effective if they had followed Kwiesi Mfume's lead in raising unified voices against the appointment of Norman Ramsey, an upper middle class white, part of the musical chair arrangement that makes boards like country clubs. This atmosphere of back scratching, hand washing keeps Baltimore a colonial society.

Have the City Council persons become so smug and out of touch with the needs of their constituents that they are unable to recognize an insult unless they hold a meeting to study the insult?

Is it any wonder then that more and more voters distrust politicians, black and white?

In another vein, while we look the other way we had better look again at Chicago. "The city that works" has become the city that's overspent!

Since the idol of Mayor Schaefer is Chicago's late Mayor Richard Daley, let us hope that in his same desire to remain Baltimore's king-for-life, that it is not because, he too in this period of no cash flow, might be revealed to be just a few steps away from no dough at all!

Let us pray that when he (as he must) leaves office, he won't leave the same fiscal mess, commingling of funds and flexible fancy bookkeeping propping up all the glittering mortar and brick and glass of "Baltourmore" like Daley did.

George Orwell predicted it this way: "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, but IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH!"

And how Schaefer digs those last two slogans!

LETTERS

Alumnus opposes proposed Morgan State merger

Dear AFRO:

I can appreciate the state's need to continually assess the effectiveness of higher education and continually explore ways and methods to strengthen such areas as fiscal control, administrative procedures, etc.

While all of this is a must, it appears that all too often when consideration is given to these matters, left out is the real concern also to explore the best ways to satisfy the continuing needs for quality education and cultural enrichment for the state's black population. It often appears there is a deliberate attempt to dilute it.

Currently, rather than seriously addressing the problem or problems as they pertain to Morgan, we find the institution in the position of diverting considerable amounts of staff, resources, and time in an attempt to convince those who propose or advocate a merger under the University of Maryland, whose record leaves much to be desired in serving the peculiar needs of black students, such a merger would not be in the best interest of the black community.

What also is interesting is the strategy used to help assure the merger. At approximately the same time the merger proposal was formally announced, a group of so called "well meaning, knowledgeable," citizens alleged that the current president of the University is not properly managing the institution and its resources.

Following these allegations a sizeable group of University instructors met, under what has been referred to as questionable procedures and took a vote of no confidence in the president.

Shortly thereafter came the announcement that despite rising cost this year's state appropriation to Morgan remained substantially the same as it was the previous year.

What made this announcement even more significant was the revelation that the University of Maryland, College Park was given a substantial increase.

Whether there is or is not any connection between the events is not at this time important.

If there has been poor management by the president, those allegations can and should be investigated, merger or no merger. The same is true of the disproportionate differences in funding between institutions. Those who support a merger certainly must view these series of events as fuel to support their position and reduces their sensitivity and concern for the overall well being of thousands of the state's black citizens.

Those who suggest a merger as being best for all concerned seemingly fail to take in consideration:

1. The profound effect Morgan has had on the state's black community.

2. The peculiar and necessary sensitivity it has shown despite severe odds to serve the black community and its unique needs.

3. The lack of awareness that even in 1980 predominately white educational institutions with few exceptions are not doing a good job providing black students a total college experience.

4. The understanding that regardless of the status of integration there still remains a large group of blacks who prefer the relationships and experiences of association with a black controlled institution.

I am also concerned that Maryland appears to be joining the bandwagon of other states in its attempt to dissolve black institutions as is apparently happening to such schools as, Texas Southern, Bishop College, Jackson State, all schools of great tradition, serving the common needs of black students and whose status remains in jeopardy.

Although many predominately white institutions have made efforts to satisfy these requirements, sadly, in far too many instances these efforts have fallen woefully short of the expectations of those blacks who need or desire these experiences.

I cannot unequivocally state that a Morgan merger under the University of Maryland would prevent it from continuing to provide the experiences mentioned above. I do suggest the University of Maryland's own past demonstrations in these areas would make Morgan's task much harder.

Past experiences with proposed mergers of Morgan under the University of Maryland makes those of us who are familiar with these attempts question the real motivation whenever subsequent mergers have been proposed.

Although very logical reasons were articulated by those who supported a take over of Morgan by the University of Maryland in the late '40s, such as increased ministrative accountability, history has shown there was a not - so - subtle hidden agenda.

The real reason at the time was an attempt by the University of Maryland, to circumvent direct admission of blacks to the main campus of the University.

...The University hoped to delay, if not prevent, attempts by blacks to be directly admitted to College Park. With the incorporation of Morgan under the University of Maryland, the state could proudly acclaim that the University was indeed integrated.

As a result of the efforts of a strong, dynamic and interested board of directors, unlike what appears to be the case at this time, a dedicated faculty led by a dynamic president and an active, alert student body, the merger never occurred.

A much needed building program was initiated, a greater emphasis was placed on academic improvement and Morgan moved forward to produce some of the nation's and state's finest leaders, scholars and athletes.

The victory was tainted by the decision to incorporate the then Princess Anne College under the University of Maryland, renaming Princess Anne the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, partially fulfilling the original intention when Morgan was the target.

Subsequently, with the changing social climate and with much opposition, integration was achieved at the University of Maryland. Despite this, there still remained a real need for Morgan and other similar institutions.

There is an absolute requirement for Morgan to remain as a separate institution, to control its own destiny, to be personally accountable to the government of Maryland, the student body, the parents, the faculty and the community, unencumbered by yet another layer of administrative controls.

With adequate financial support, proper administrative controls, a united dedicated faculty and support staff, and a student body with high morale, Morgan will with vigor and imagination serve those it has served so well over the years, and with concentration of effort, a commitment to improvement also to continue to serve all others who desire to avail themselves of Morgan's uniqueness...

DONALD B. HILL, Morgan alumnus, director, Division of Conduct, Discipline and Appeals, Social Security Administration

Straight talk on aging

Two better than one

By Dr. Matthew Tayback, State Director on Aging

Surgery is a serious and expensive matter.

The practice of medicine is not an exact science.

Put those two statements together, and you arrive at a conclusion that, for many people, isn't self-evident" at all: when you're told you've got to have an operation, it often pays to get a second medical opinion.

Certainly there is no implication here that your first doctor is not competent. I simply mean to point out the fact that there are frequently differences of opinion about the best way to treat any given medical condition, especially when the patient is elderly, with a naturally limited life expectancy.

Most physicians are not offended—they actually give their blessings when their patients seek a second opinion. Many, in fact, seek second opinions when they themselves are facing surgery.

Here I should point out that broadly speaking, there are two categories of surgery. The first includes operations that must be performed as a result of a true medical emergency—an emergency that results, say, from a severe automobile accident. In such cases the question of a second opinion obviously doesn't arise.

But, more often, surgery is not an emergency. Many times a patient can choose not only when he wants to have it, but even whether he wants to have it in the first place. Prostate surgery comes to mind as just one example; so does hernia repair surgery, particularly when the patient is elderly.

In such non-emergency situations, you really should get a second opinion. With it you can more intelligently weigh the risks and benefits of having the operation against the risks and benefits of not having it.

How can you go about getting a second opinion? Several ways.

You can ask your own doctor to refer you to a colleague who is a specialist in the area that's troubling you.

You can contact your local medical society.

Or, if you are covered by Medicare, you can call your Social Security office.

The federal government maintains a toll-free hotline for surgical second opinion referral: 800-492-6603.

There's nothing to prevent you from getting a second opinion without your original doctor's knowledge. If you choose to advise him of your intention, however, and if you request that he send your records to the second physician, you can avoid having to repeat tests that have already been done.

How to pay for second opinions, is, of course, often a problem. Medicare will pay for them at the same rates it pays for other office visits, diagnostic tests, lab procedures and so on. Medicaid payments vary from state to state. In Maryland, second opinions are covered by Medicaid.

A few final points about second opinions...

They are part of good medical practice and they help you make sure you're getting the care that is in fact best for you.

They are not ways to "doctor shop," and they are definitely not to be sought solely to give you an excuse to postpone a much needed surgical procedure.

And second opinions are not commandments. They simply provide you with another professional point of view. The final decision regarding surgery is up to you. The third opinion is yours.

SAMUEL L. BANKS

The avenue to power

Historically, our nation has affirmed in principle and supported in practice, the concept of majority rule. It is highly paradoxical and painfully ironic that the majority population in Baltimore runs counter to the principle of majority rule.

Blacks in Baltimore constitute approximately 54 percent of the 850,000 residents of Monumental City. However, a review of who controls the locus of power in Baltimore renders blacks to a veritable invisible state.

The palpable facts are: 1) the mayor is white; 2) president of the City Council is white; 3) the overwhelming number of the nineteen-member council, 14 members is white; there are five black members; the Greater Baltimore Committee is almost totally white; whites control decided majorities on most boards and municipal commissions.

In short, blacks in Baltimore constitute the human number; whites control the power.

The basic and fundamental problem as to why blacks do not have access to power or control it cannot simply be charged to institutional racism.

Institutional racism, to be sure, flourishes in Baltimore, as is true of the nation, but the primary and overarching failure of blacks in Baltimore to have political power is the lethary, inaction and pusillanimous behavior of Baltimore's black middle income residents who fail, for the most part, to provide leadership in critical socio-economic issues.

The examples of Atlanta, Ga.; Richmond, Va.; Washington, D.C.; Newark, N.J.; and Gary, Ind. among others, demonstrably indicate what can happen when the ballot is fully exercised. Blacks have political power.

It is clearly time, particularly black middle income citizens of Baltimore to cease fulminating and whining and complaining about what the white minority is doing to them.

The avenue for political power and the social and economic benefits which flow there from is readily available to you: the ballot.

G. JAMES FLEMING

Good old days?

By G. James Fleming

Columnists read each other, so I could not overlook Matt Seiden's recent column in a daily newspaper calling attention to the importance of "Seeds" as well as "Roots". Indeed, it was a black man who pointed up this contrast, or this complementary relationship, to Seiden.

"Seeds," the man said, "is the word for the Eighties. We've had enough of roots. Roots don't take you anywhere. Roots keep you where you are. Seeds take you into the future . . ."

Seiden addes: "It is not in our nature to yearn for our original soil until we have been transplanted. Peasants don't have time to extol the virtues of the bucolic life; slumdwellers rarely stop to praise the inner city. They are too busy trying to break away."

Of course, there is psychological importance in knowing the best of one's ancestry and history, and there can be no seeds where there have been no plants and no roots.

What Seiden and his informing friend had in mind, extolling "Seeds," is that present generations ought to be looking forward, and ought to be living in the present, with all of its differences and all of its problems.

This matter of worshipping the past can also be misused.

"In a city like Baltimore ...", to return to Seiden, "roots can become an excuse for prejudice, and a justification for the perpetuation of racial and ethnic ghettoes."

At worst, "Roots" can mean neighborhoods in Baltimore, Boston, Detroit and other cities where the inhabitants are all of one racial or nationality background and where these early arrivals raise barriers against all others "trying to move into our neighborhood."

"I don't mean we should forget where we've come from, but I for one am ready now to think a little more about where we are going." To this we should all be able to agree.

The "Good Old Days" often get the same kind of worshipful glorification as "Roots," as too many men and women remember only the good in the days gone by, or as they screen out and forget the mean and ugly.

I have a friend, for instance, an authority on 18th Century America, who glories in its charm, its graciousness and its culture. He dislikes the tawdriness of modern America.

Often, I must remind him, however, that if he could return to the 18th Century, he would deliver me again to slavery. "For me and my people, the 'Good Old Days' were never that good," I tell him from time to time.

Even blacks often extoll their "Good Old Days" in rural South Carolina or Mississippi. I understand their situation, and I appreciate it when they refer to their close-knit family life, the outdoors, the fresh vegetables, and hog-killing time. What speaks more loudly, however, is the fact that they are most worshipful the farther north or west they are—as they live in Baltimore City, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Chicago or Los Angeles.

Persons of Irish background are also famous for singing the praises of their parents' respective counties in Ireland—the farther away they are from Ireland. Ditto for the Italians, the Poles and other ethnic Americans.

A sense of "roots" and a feeling for the "Good Old Days" have their value, as the psychiatrists point out, but these values must be balanced with dug regard for the smallness of the present world; the cosmopolitanism of present-day urban life; and the demands of present-day technological society.

The concept of "Seeds" should be fruitful, especially for young people, as the Rev. Jesse Jackson realizes, speaking as he does to many student groups and as he bids young blacks to "be somebody," and to "excel."

From "Roots" must come "Seeds" worthy of their rootage and even better than their roots.

Year of the Family— By Marion Banfield

The designation of 1980 to "The Year of the Family" appropriately follows "The Year of the Child". Certainly we need a family for a child.

A family can be a wonderful support system for a child. While some of us groan about changes in the family structure, I prefer to recognize a change in structure of family. That change can get very complicated as we think about blended families of today.

Just in case you're wondering what a "blended" family is, let me remind you of the high divorce rate, but high numbers of marriages to divorcees.

That means "his", "hers" and "our" children. Varying degrees of grandparents, step-grandparents. It also entails relations by marriage in a far more complicated fashion than we formerly knew.

What I want to stress is the importance of the family as the group of persons giving approval, love, acceptance, pride, a feeling of belonging, a feeling of support in time of need.

The emotional strength is what we need to build on. Each of us needs to feel accepted and appreciated by blood, adoption and marriage ties.

Considering how uncaring government officials and bureaucrats have become, we all need to hold to our family unity.

Mrs. Banfield is director of Family Life Education for Family and Children's Society.

JUST THINKING

Super copy editor Jenkins

By Al Sweeney

Long before Betty Freidan and Ailene Hernandez, one of the original Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioners, organized NOW to spark the womens movement, the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers had women executives in its newsroom.

There were a trio of women who manned the AFRO's copy desks and struck terror into the hearts of the young reporters, most of whom were male.

The AFRO's top copy editors were Julia English, who is currently rounding out a career in the D.C. school system; Audrey Weaver, who recently retired as managing editor of the Chicago Daily Defender, and Ruth Jenkins, the Washington AFRO's city editor.

If you look around the country and if you find a black journalist over 40 and going on Social Security age, you can bet they came under the whip and lash of the AFRO's nine trio.

Bob Maynard, now editor of the daily Oakland Tribune; Simeon Booker, the vefran Ebony - Jet Washington Bureau chief; Carl Rowan, the richest of the black journalists; Moses Newson, now with HEW; Herb Mangrum and Rufus Wells of Agriculture; Louis Robinson, the Hollywood based writer; Vincent Tubbs, Warner Brothers publicist, Jimmy Hicks, the New York newshawk, and Jimmy Williams of the Urban League, to name a few proteges of the AFRO during Ruth Jenkins time.

There is no better news person in this nation than Jenks. She helped train all of us. Now, after many years, she is leaving active service.

In the old days, Jenkins would give a reporter hell in her own inimitadle style. No one surpassed Jenks, as they called her, in finding an angle to a story.

She stood apart from the other two members of the AFRO's executive trio by her ability to hang out with the boys when work was over.

When Jesse Walker, the New York newsman, shared the Baltimore AFRO administrative duties with Jenks, it was a nightly ritual for the staff to gather at Smith's bar, a dingy bistro in an old Baltimore hotel that resemble a relic of an old western town.

Jenks could hold her own with the best of the elbow benders, including Walker. But, if you couldn't get back to the office the next day clear headed and ready to roll, she would admonish the offender.

"If you can't handle it, don't hang out."

There were few poker players who bluff better with a handful of nothing than Jenks. She would have a pair of sucesses showing and a guy would have a pair of Dueces showing and a guy could have a pair Kings Damn, if she wouldn't bluff the holder of the Kings to fold.

She joined the Baltimore AFRO staff after serving as a reporter and editor of the Philadelphia edition. Before she was selected as city editor, she handled the police, political and court beace.

So, there wasn't a thing that a reporter could hide from her.

Because she was a real pro, she knew when a staffer was shucking and jivin', as they used to say.

One of the great stories that made the old AFRO newsrooms involved a reporter who was covering a traditional rivalry football game. It seems as the game ended, a brawl ensued.

When the reporter returned the office, Jenks asked the reporter:

"How did it go?"

The reporter replied:

"The game was fine. But, a fight broke out."

"What happened" Jenks asked excitedly as a possible front page story appeared to be in the making:

"I don't know," the reporter replied. "It was time for me to return to the office and sign out."

Needless to add, it was the reporter's final punching of the clock at 628 North Eutaw, the home of the AFRO.

The role of Ruth Jenkins was an unsung one. The city editor and copy editor are anonymous to the average reader.

While the columnists and the reporters get the by - lines and appear to be more glamorous figures. It is the person who handles the copy churned out by the writers who really make the stuff readable.

A good copy editor can make the worst writer appear to be a Hemmingway. Jenkins, and persons such as she, have to wrestle with bad material full of typos and grammatical errors. It's no easy task.

She is one of the best. And there are many former AFRO staffers around who will drink to that. The AFRO newsroom will not be the same without her.

It appears that those of us who have passed through the AFRO took her for granted. She was always there when you needed her.

FOR ALL WE KNOW

By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

ABOUT MANY THINGS

WELCOME to our AFRO family Irvin H. Phillips III, SON OF Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Phillips Jr., and grandson of our librarian, Mrs. Laura Phillips and Henry Phillips our former photographer. The little darling bowed in at Maryland Square Hospital in Essex at 8 lbs. 2 oz., cute as a button.

PLEASE go to Essex Community College Saturday, Feb. 9 from 9 A.M. to 5 p.m. and cast your vote for the Rev. John R. Bryant of Bethel AME who has been nominated as a delegate to the White House Conference of Families. IMPORTANT. Just go on and do it and when there you'll find out all about it. Rev. Bryant needs your support.

IF YOU CAN today (Friday) get to the farewell for Marion M. Banfield who is retiring as director of the Western District Family and Children's Society. The reception at 204 W. Lanvale is set for 3:30 p.m., a lovely affair for a lovely lady who has served above and beyond the call of duty.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for Friday, Feb. 15 so you can be at a grand event at Asbury Methodist Church at Annapolis — the Benjamin Banneker Commemoration Stamp ceremony — and purchase some of the very first ones for your own history collection. How precious they are.

The Benefit Luncheon and Program follow the 11 a.m. ceremony so that the day will be one long to be remembered. The feast begins at 12 noon and only for a $6 donation you will be guest of the Banneker-Douglass Museum Foundation and The Friends and the Maryland Commission on Afro-American History and Culture.

BANNEKER STAMPS will be on sale in the Asbury Church Lounge as well as other historic materials prepared by the Commission of which Carroll Greene Jr. is executive director. You will also meet some of Maryland's foremost historians who are themselves very famous.

COLLECTORS of Afro-Americana will love it and be delighted with the books, stamps, postcards and paintings readily available.

1970 MEMBERS of the Douglass Hi graduating class, please get in touch with Lillian Minor Greene - 444-8200 or Larie Norris - 944-1139 so that you may help plan for the June 10-year reunion.

MARCH 16 is the date set by the 4th Dist. Demos for their Awards Banquet. Guest of honor is Mayor Richard Arrington of Birmingham. The event at the Blue Crest North is $20 per with tickets available by calling 669-7110.

THINK ABOUT IT, Birmingham, Ala. was once called "Bombingham" and twas there that Dr. King's home was bombed. Lots of terrible things went on there due to racial discrimination in the '50's and '60's. Remember? Now the clouds have almost cleared away, the city has a black mayor.

YOU WILL WANT to shake Mayor Arrington's hand and ask him how he was elected by both black and white citizens.

WISH I COULD have made it to the M.W. Hiram Grand Lodge, AF and AM and Naomi Grand Chapter OES benefit recital. I was to have been a guest but had a touch of the flu. Nevertheless, we extend to Grand Worthy Matron Helen M. Carter and Most Worshipful Grand Master John V. Thornton, my longtime friend, wishes for success in the Building Expansion Drive. Also, if I can help later, I will be glad to. The AFRO has always been available to those fine people. Call me.

EVELYN PATTERSON BURRELL is the Poet-In-Residence of the Md. Commission on Afro-American History and Culture and she has arranged a delightful 8-week seminar beginning Feb. 13 for Senior Citizens. Downtown at the Central Pratt Library, in the Poe Room, the dates are Feb. 13,20,27 and March 5,12,19,26 and April 2, 1 to 3 p.m. each of those dates you can hear her read Phyllis Wheatley, Frances E.W. Harper, Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes and all your favorites. Very nice.

WANT TO BE A NURSE? A good paying job, that is. If so register at Union Memorial Hospital School of Nursing. Call 235-7200, Ext. 2647.

IF YOU ARE out here jogging you need to check at Union Memorial with John Roemer, president of the Baltimore Road Runners about the talk "Sudden Death in Jogging" by Dr. Michael Keleman, UMH chief of cardiology and Roemer's theories on "Footwear."

ACCORDING to the research by UMH physicians you just don't get out in the street and jog. Call 235-7200, Ext. 2253 before you hit the road again.

You missed the seminar Feb. 2 at the UMSports Center but maybe you can catch up by phone.

CONGRESSMAN MITCHELL has been named to the Commission on a National Agenda for the Eighties. House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill named him to the important post to help develop a national program for the decade and P.J. is one of 100 Congressional advisors along with some private citizens to be named by President Carter. Chairman is Columbia University President Dr. Wiliam M. McGill.

MITCHELL'S reply to the high appointment is that he will be glad to serve to look after the interests of the poor and black citizens in the 1980's and he says "The poor and minorities must be firmly protected in the blue print of the national agenda." Good.

HERE IS AN UNUSUAL LETTER I received:

Mrs. Anna M. Williams writes:

The mother of Judge Archie D. Williams, Mrs. Magnolia Williams, Arcole, Warren County, N.C. celebrated her 90th birthday Jan. 23.

I find her interesting and a delightful person and I am happy to be her daughter-in-law. Happy Birthday Mother Magnolia.

Some 30 members of the family attended the surprise birthday party given by her children and grandchildren. She is the mother of eight children and has 32 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. She delights in the family reunions which have been held at her home the past five years.

In the past three years she has had her first airplane flight and liked it so much (flying alone) she decided to fly again in 1978.

She keeps busy doing the things she loves, her garden, making fashionable dresses and beautiful quilts, does her own washing and ironing.

CAN SHE HANDLE a rifle.? The answer is "Yes".

And if you're one of her lucky visitors, she'll give you some of her canned fruit and vegetables. Each Sunday you find her in church where she teaches Sunday School. She doesn't miss a Communion Sunday because she has been making the Communion wine for years.

AN AVID letter writer, if you send her a gift, you can expect a hand-written thank you in a few days.

OUR CONGRATULATIONS to Mother Magnolia on her 90th birthday.

COMING SOON is Del. Frank Conaway's birthday party for his father who will be 80 years young this month. Best wishes to the lively gentleman.

SAT. FEB. 9 we're guests at the Little Theatre on Liberty Heights when the Free Spirit Theatre Inc. presents "From Deep River to Harlem" with Bonita Cartwright in the talented cast. The top shelf drama runs through Sunday, Feb. 10 if you get a chance.

TONIGHT (Friday) we'll be at the dinner party at the Johns Hopkins Club as guests of the Phi Delta Kappas to hear Herman Behlin speak on China. Although TV and the news media highlight Iran and Russia, we need to be more concerned with developments in Africa and China. You know that, don't you? Actually, Africa is the hottest spot and we're soooo much out of it while worrying about hostages.

DEACONS DAY at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church is Sunday and with Rev. Reginald Daniels at the helm, it will be a great day. Dinner will be served following the morning services.

FEB. 13 is an important day. It begins at 9 a.m. at the Hilton with the Maryland State Board of Higher Education conducting a hearing which involves Morgan University. See you there.

FEB. 14 VALENTINE'S DAY is the date you have in Annapolis to get the Banneker Stamp and have lunch. FEB. 15 is the Postal Alliance Dinner Dance at Fontaine Bleu on Erdman Avenue. That's their annual Sweet- heat Dance, always a beautiful affair.

SUNDAY, Feb. 17 is that grand occasion when Earl DeWitt Williams and several others of Providence Baptist Church are ordained. By the way the church has on the drawing board the blue prints for the first solar church in the USA. How about that?

FEBRUARY Black History dates when I will tell the school children about the AFRO's history and my trip to the Middle East are: Gist Elementary, Feb. 19; Fairmont Hill Feb. 20; Feb. 28, teachers, department heads and students will gather at Mt. Royal Elementary auditorium and Feb. 29, I go to Pimlico Elementary to speak to the 5th and 6th grades.

SOME six other schools have asked and I'll set the dates next week – dates which will extend into March.

FEB

'Your children need you now!'

Dear AFRO:

Recently the Rev. Jesse Jackson extended a challenge to parents regarding their children's education. He cited the necessity of parental involvement in every phase of our children's development, particularly where it concerns their educational development.

Too often we as parents are content to allow teachers and administrations to make all of the decisions concerning our children's education.

As the parent of five children who have attended public schools, I know first hand that the wheel that squeeks the loudest gets the most oil.

This is not to say that a parent has to be rowdy or insolent in manner to obtain the rights of his or her children, it merely states that they must become involved and see how the educational system works and make it work for them and their children.

I have done volunteer work in the school system now for nearly 10 years and I work every day, so I know it can be done if you take time to get involved.

Your children need you now! Not later.

BEVERLY CARTER

Challenging sports announcer's views

Dear AFRO:

I take strong exception to the commentary Klaus Wagner, sports announcer for WJZ-TV, did on Tuesday, Jan. 29, 1980, relative to the refusal of Henry Aaron to accept an award from the commissioner of baseball, Bowie Kuhn, and the remarks he made concerning the racism that he feels is so prevalent in baseball.

The part of your commentary that really annoyed me most was your assertion that Aaron had in fact hurt the cause of other blacks by being so undiplomatic.

Come now, how could Aaron's remarks possibly hurt the chances of other blacks for promotions? In the past blacks, for the most part, have not protested and they also have not gotten the jobs. So much for being diplomatic!

Blacks are qualified to hold any job in baseball including Commissioner Kuhn's, and your reference to the need for Aaron to be more diplomatic is, to my way of thinking, just another way of telling a black man that he should quiet down and remember his place.

One only has to look around at the number of managerial, coaching, announcing, and executive positions in baseball and then look at the number of blacks in those positions and you are left with the inescapable conclusion that Henry Aaron is right and that Klaus Wagner and all who agree with him had better get their heads out of the sand.

WILLIAM B. GARRETT

What's new for federal income tax returns

Although there were no major changes in the income tax law for individuals last year, a number of previously enacted changed will come into effect for the first time on our 1979 federal income tax returns.

The Maryland Association of Certified Public Accountants has reviewed these federal income tax changes to alert taxpayers on what to expect when preparing their income tax returns.

A key change is the loss of the general tax credit which was the greater of $35 per exemption, or 2 percent of the first $9,000 of taxable income not to exceed $180. To compensate for this, the personal and dependency exemptions have been raised from $750 to $1,000 per eligible dependent.

The new gross income filing levels for 1979 are:

Married, joint return, $5,400; Married, joint return, one spouse over 65, $6,400; Married, joint return, both spouses over 65, $7,400; Married, filing separate returns, $1,000; Surviving spouse, $4,400; Single taxpayer, including head of household, $3,300; Single taxpayer, 65 or older, $4,300.

The zero bracket amount, that is, the amount of income on which no tax liability is incurred, has been raised to $2,300 for single taxpayers, including head of household, $3,400 for married taxpayers filing jointly, $1,700 for married taxpayers filing separately and $3,400 for surviving spouses.

If the deductions do not exceed these amounts, you may be eligible to use the convenient short form version of the individual income tax return, Form 1040A.

The deduction for political contributions has been abolished, but the credit for contributions individuals last year, a number of previously enacted changed will come into effect for the first time on our 1979 federal income tax returns.

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Gasoline tax is no longer a personal itemized deduction on your federal income tax return, but it is still deductible as a business expense. In late 1979, the mileage rate was increased from 17 to 18 (one-half) cents retroactive to Jan. 1, 1979.

Some previously untaxed income will be taxed for the first time this year.

If federal and state unemployment compensation payments for the year, together with the recipient's adjusted gross income exceed a base amount ($20,000 on a single return; $25,000 on a joint return), the recipient is required to include in gross income the lesser of the following:

1. The amount of the unemployment compensation; or

2. One-half of the excess of the total income (including the benefits) less the base amount.

The refundable maximum earned-income credit for parents in low-income brackets has been increased to equal 10 percent of the first $5,000 of earned income. If you have no tax liability because you do not meet the income requirements, you may still be eligible for the credit, simply by filing a tax return.

And, if your tax bill is less than your credit, the difference is refunded. The credit starts decreasing, however, as your income increases beyond $5,000 and is completely phased out at $10,000.

Parents incurring child-care costs while gainfully employed may now pay a relative to provide child care, so long as that relative is not a dependent.

In an effort to offset the effects of inflation on any salary increase you might realize, Congress broadened the tax brackets, making it possible to earn more money without going into a higher tax bracket. This doesn't work completely, however, because if the dollar keeps shrinking, and the tax rate is not shrinking—then we aren't really staying even.

Employers will want to note that the jobs tax credit, intended to encourage the hiring of the hard core unemployed, has been modified to place emphasis on the hiring of specific types of individuals: Vietnam veterans, certain welfare recipients, the handicapped, the young and some ex-convicts.

The 10 percent investment tax credit, made permanent in 1978, has been liberalized making it easier for businesses to offset their tax liability by investment tax credits earned during the year. The credit has also been extended to cover the purchase of certain buildings used in agriculture and the cost of rehabilitations expenditures incurred in buildings that have been in use at least 20 years and which are used in business or productive activities.

The rules covering tax-qualified pension plans have been simplified to make it easier for a small employer to take care of his employee's retirement needs through contributions into Individual Retirement Accounts.

Where the employer does make such contributions into an IRA, the limits have been raised on how much can be invested in a plan each year; it's now 15 percent of earned income, up to $7,500.