Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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Morgan 'saved'

When Sheldon Knorr, state commissioner of higher education, introduced his proposal to merge Morgan State University with the University of Maryland during the Christmas holiday, we objected vigorously and predicted that Knorr's plan would be politically disastrous for him and his champions if it were pursued. This latest threat to Morgan's independence and its historic role as a traditionally black state school with predominantly black leadership seems to be subsiding. At a public hearing on the merger Wednesday Dr. Knorr faced a broadly based coalition of black leadership all of whom resolutely said that the merger plan was unthinkable and unacceptable to our community.

Some of those closest to the Morgan situation and more often than not battling each other over the way the affairs of MSU are administered, mainly the forces of President Andrew Billingsley and the counterinsurgents led by NAACP President Enolia McMillan, forgot their own civil war and shoulder to shoulder told the State Board they were in unity on the issue of Morgan's automony. There were some who felt such arguments in the "family" would weaken the university's position during the merger discussions. A notion we never agreed with, our position having been that the public's right to know what is going right and wrong with Morgan or any other tax supported institution transcended petty power struggles among self appointed leaders of an institution which is publicly endowed. Commissioner Knorr's slide rule calculations may have informed him that a merger of Morgan within the University of Maryland system might have been a tidy, seemingly efficient solution to any number of problems facing our state university and college programs. There is waste and duplication throughout this system and many changes are in order. To diminish the role or absorb Morgan's unique mission within the sprawling UM empire, however, struck us from the first as just plain silly. Morgan has been that institution to the largest degree acessible to our community. It has taken many young black people out of oppressive public school backgrounds and with intense dedication and caring, transformed them into solid, productive and disciplined thinkers.

Experience shows us that often when such youngsters with raw talent but lack of prior opportunity are mainstreamed into predominantly white institutions such as the University of Maryland their failure rate is tragically high.

The United Negro College fund television commercial tag line 'a mind's too precious a thing to waste' is quite appropriate in this context.

Educational behemoths such as the U of M are geared to deliberate student failure rates. The black student who has the raw skill but needs it nurtured is unnecessarily 'wasted' even before he or she begins in such a process.

Many Morgan alumni, now extremely productive and in roles of leadership locally and nationally, will tell you in no uncertain terms that were it not for the sense of mission MSU has had for a century, they would not have achieved. Morgan has polished many rough diamonds.

We feel the State Board of Higher Education must let the merger plan die peacefully.

Dr. Billingsley, in recent days, has released the broad outline of a five year plan of development and improvement of Morgan State.

That concept must be given the broadest possible airing and if weak must be made strong.

Differences between the various power groupings in and around MSU must be resolved.

Most importantly, now that the community has rallied to protect MSU's independence and integrity, Dr. Billingsley and his administration, Mrs. McMillan and other critics of the administration, must take their squabbling to higher ground.

The question now that Morgan apparently has won a reprieve is just what will Morgan be?

Any voice that does not speak to this question is disruptive and no friend of this splendid institution.

Caucus tradition

State Sen. Robert L. Douglass, last year's chairman of the black General Assembly caucus, is still chairman for this latest Assembly session.

The chairmanship, we understand, is to rotate between a Senator one year, a delegate the next session.

The caucus has not yet brought itself to vote on a new chairman for this session (a delegate) if former procedures are observed.

Insiders say the caucus cannot quite bring itself to approve the delegates who have proffered themselves for the post.

We do not know about that possibility but we do know that no one politico should serve in this sensitive leadership role ad infinitum.

A daily newspaper, earlier this week, commented on what it felt was Senator Douglass' supposed propensity for making some shrewd political and economic deals for himself while acting as spokesman for all 20 black elected officials in the Assembly.

The editorial went so far as to suggest that Douglass was perhaps in a conflict of interest at worse or not forthcoming at best on agreements he has been able to reach behind the scenes.

The example cited was Douglass acceptance of Mayor Schaefer's unacceptable (to the entire black community) position on affirmative action programs regarding municipal boards and agencies and minority participation in city contracts.

Douglass did come out of that meeting saying he could live with the mayor's position, as we recall.

Shortly thereafter a business Douglass heads received a whopping loan from a community group outside his own community

It was arranged through the Department of Housing and Community Development, the mayor's strongest instrument.

Which would of course explain why Douglass was reluctant to slug it out with the mayor. Don't bite the hand that feeds you.

While we are philosophically a galaxy apart from the daily newspaper which raised these questions, we can agree that such actions raise more questions than they answer.

We applaud Douglass for his efforts to develop viable black enterprise and have enthusiastically supported them. We do feel, however, that free enterprise and the public interest do not always go hand in hand.

What is good for Bob Douglass is not necessarily good for all the rest of us all of the time.

We have to keep some things separate for our mutual protection. Against that background we recommend that the Assembly Caucus resume its rotating chairmanship policy.

Douglass has done well. We would feel more comfortable at this point if someone else now carried the ball.

The Congressional Black Caucus has followed the rotation principle with great success and each legislator who has assumed this awesome responsibility has put his or her own personal stamp on this improtant body.

The Maryland black cuacus would do well to press on with this tradition.

Lauding outstanding teachers

Dear AFRO:

Negro History Week, pardon me, Black History Week is here again. I'm sure I have already dated myself. I'm proud to be placed in the times of many great black educators.

Do you remember William Anderson, George Murphy, Howard Gross, Fannie Barbour, Jake Nicholson, The Warton family, Mr. Lockerman, Frances Murphy, Miss Palm, Cornelia Wilson, "Piggy" Monroe, Elmer Henderson, Miss Henry, Alma Kelly, George Biddle, Jakie Holland, Edith Lynch, Bill Rawlings, Katharnie O. Johnson?

If you remember these outstanding teachers, you remember the days when rape, dope and murder didn't dominate the news. There were problems there too but these people, in their dedication, stood out very positively. It is great to have known them.

OLGA DORSEY

Metal not plastic in the war on rats!

Madeline MURPHY

By Madeline W. Murphy

To register or not to register for the draft is built upon the premise that 18,000 combat Marines, artillery, tanks are being positioned in the Arabian Sea to beef up the military, underscoring our threats against the Soviet Union.

Like kids not too playfully pushing one another back and forth, someone finally has to get hit. The prize is control of the oil that finds its way through the Persian Gulf. . . reminiscent of Vietnam.

Yet we are nowhere near a national emergency as we were in World War II. Moreover, we should have learned the lessons of Korea and Vietnam.

Most regrettable is the idea that women who advocate equal rights must also be responsible for protecting the country in the armed forces.

God forbid that war should be declared, but should that happen, who then will bear the children, keep the home fires burning, become the new wave of "Rosie the Riveter"?

In previous wars, the high toll among the dead, disabled, emotionally unstable young men had left an absence in our labor markets that only through the survival of women and their offspring were we able to rebuild the nation.

But now to say that women and men are identical beings is hogwash. Equal, yes, but not identical.

Nowhere, however is any group resisting registration in the name of peace. Worst of all, we the people, are letting the liberties granted by the Constitution and Bill of Rights slip through our fingers without so much as a squeak of dissent.

With 80 percent of the people hoodwinked into believing that they're either patriots if they support the president or traitors if they don't, they are silently bullied into consenting to almost hysterical noises made by all those surrounding the president, who have gone wild and anxious over re-election and the president's fragile popularity.

This manufactured crisis of Afghanistan as well as Iran shows how shrewdly the American public can be manipulated.

Without recognizing that in a free country patriotism is a matter of choice, not a Pavlovian response each time the flag is waved.

In addition, with the drums of war being beaten with frenzy, more restrictions in our freedom are at the brink of being enacted by Congress for the FBI.

ABSCAM is a good example of a test run, showing how the FBI can orchestrate the rounding up of allegedly corrupt politicians. Something smells rotten about a government agency that releases information in the form of leaks to the press before the victims are tried; that tars them with corruption to give the public reaffirmation that politics is dirty and that we need "big brothers" to do our thinking for us.

Having had a taste in the '70s of the police state instituted to quell dissent in the political arena against war resisters, demonstrators, Kent State and Jackson State, should we now be cowered so that we surrender our basic rights to this domestic spy brigade?

John Shattuck, head of the Washington, D.C. office of the American Civil Liberties Union said in a recent Washington Post interview:

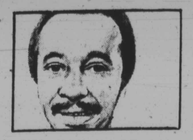
"(ABSCAM) raises very serious questions about the scope of FBI undercover operations" ..." it appears that government agents have been in the field for well over a year, building a case from nothing, a case that does not appear to be focused on anyone. It suggests a kind of runaway operation. It suggests the need of much more judicial controls. Among the other questions it raises is the whole area of prejudicial publicity."

And during any war period that threat of totalitarianism, by the FBI, the draft, the lockstepping of public opinion, makes us wonder as one mother did, "Why should I send my sons and daughters to risk their lives over petrified fossils?"

In the final outcome, we must all ask ourselves if we shall indeed permit our sons and daughters to risk death or if we shall express our patriotism in the hardest way we know by resisting a call to arms. For this call only means the protection of personal wealth of a few as against the safety, sanity, survival of the world as we know it.

Safety, sanity, survival

Don't blame OPEC for inflation



By G. James Fleming

Last year the momentum of production in our ceremony, as measured by real Gross National Product (GNP), switched suddendly from strongly up at the end of 1978 to sharply down in the first half of 1979. It then changed back to up in a move that caught nearly everyone by surprise.

Inflation raced ahead without so much as a pause throughout the year. Why? What caused the roller coaster pattern in real GNP? Why did prices rise as fast as they did?

The average price of imported oil increased 70 percent between the fourth quarters of 1978 and 1979. However, it is easy to overstate the economy wide price and production effects of the oil price increases which the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, engineered last year. Consumer prices in general rose 13 percent in 1979. At most, OPEC's price actions raised the Consumer Price Index (CPI) 4 or 5 percent.

A substantial part of the price increases which OPEC put into effect in 1979 served only to compensate for increases in other prices between mid 1974 and the end of 1978. In the middle of 1974 the dollar price a barrel of oil imported by the United States was $11.68; at the end of 1978 it was $13.38. It increased 15 percent in this period. In comparison, the CPI increased nearly 40 percent in the same period.

OPEC's price actions in 1979 raised the CPI in 1979 by 4 or 5 percent, but no more. Recalling that the CPI rose 13 percent last year, there remains 8 to 9 percent inflation to be explained.

All or most of the 8 to 9 percent non-oil 1979 CPI inflation can be attributed to the Federal Reserve allowing money supply to grow faster than our economy can absorb it. When money supply growth averaged 2 percent per year, as it did from 1954 through 1964, inflation averaged only 1-½ percent per year. In the last three years, money growth averaged 7 ¼ percent and inflation, including the prices of oil products, 9 percent.

What changed the momentum of U.S. production from strongly up to sharply down in the first half of 1979 and up again in the second half were two sharp changes in the growth of our money supply.

From October 1976 through September 1978, the money supply grew at an average annual rate of 8 ½ percent. From October 1978 through March 1979, it grew only 2 ½ percent per year. Buying slowed, real GNP slumped, and recession threatened.

Fortunately, especially for blacks, Hispanics and other minorities who are hardest hit by recession, the slide in economic activity last year was quickly reversed by a new burst of money growth that began in April.

What turned monetary policy around was OPEC's decision which resulted in our paying 50 percent more for a barrel of imported oil in the second half of 1979 than in the first half. Even before the higher priced oil was landed here, recognition that our oil bill was about to soar weakened the dollar on foreign exchange markets and put pressure on U.S. interest rates to rise. The Federal Reserve tried to keep them from rising by increasing its input of bank reserves. That, in turn, speeded up money growth.

In contrast, from 1965 through 1970, money growth, still measured over 12 month periods, ranged between 1 ½ and 8 percents and average 5 percent. In those years, dips in money growth produced one recession and one mini-recession, and at the end of the period year over year inflation reached 6 percent.

The lessons are clear. First, the entire post Korean War experience shows that rapid money growth inexorably leads to rapid inflation within two to three years. If we want to reduce inflation, we have to reduce the average rate of money growth.

Second, if we want to reduce inflation without at the same time triggering a major recession, we have to reduce money growth slowly.

As we understand the new policy of Chairman Volcker and his Federal Reserve colleagues, it is to reduce money supply growth over the years and to do so slowly.

LETTERS

Put plaques on sites of local gains

Dear AFRO:

The city of Greensboro, N.C. recently erected an historical marker and a plaque at the Woolworth store where the civil rights sit-in movement began.

I think it is about time that the city of Baltimore and the state of Maryland erected similar markers and plaques—so that people never forget that not even the right to sit down to a lousy cup of coffee, came without a fight.

I would like to see a plaque at the site of the old Ford's Theater where we had to picket for so many years before we won. And at the site of the Maryland Theater where we won our first short-lived victory.

Hoopers Restaurant where city police rioted against peaceful demonstrators and beat defenseless blacks with billy clubs. The White Coffee Pot restaurant at Mondawmin where the fight was taken up locally after we had integrated the dime stores and Reads Drug Stores.

Meadowbrook swimming pool and the skating rinks. The Northwood Theater and Hecht's lunchroom. Carlin's Drive-in which we opened after one semi-spontaneous "stationery drive-in".

The site of the old Park School, where CCB now stands and where in the spring of 1950 the students and faculty voted by a majority of 6-½ to one to integrate—only to be later told by the school board that "we" weren't ready.

The Douglas Memorial Church where the Freedom Buses left for the Eastern Shore, Annapolis and Western Maryland.

And, of course, Gwynn Oak Park.

I propose that the mayor or City Council and the governor or state legislature appoint commissions to determine where such historical markers should be placed and what wording should appear.

But that they not consider the commemoration of past victories (which incidentally occurred without the cooperation of such governmental bodies and mostly with their active sabotage) an excuse for not passing such needed legislation as rent control, decent welfare benefits, developing a public owned gas and electric company and pressuring Congress and the president for full productive employment in a peaceful economy.

A. ROBERT KAUFMAN

Concern about White House family conference

Dear AFRO:

I am concerned that female headed families may be overlooked by representatives to the White House Conference on Families. Families headed by women doubled between 1940-1975 from 3.6 million to 7.2 million or one of every eight families. Nine million children live in these homes - 50 percent of them below the poverty level - one-fourth of them under 6 years of age.

While more than 50 percent of the mothers work, they are employed in lower skilled and lower paid jobs than male household heads. The level of education is lower for households headed by women. Even when the mother is a college graduate, her median income is the same as a male with an eighth grade education.

Households headed by white females have a median income of $6,200 per year while those headed by black females is $3,800 per year. The median age of the mother is 43 years.

Those 9 million children represent a substantial proportion of the population. It is incumbent upon the delegates to the White House Conference on Families to recognize this kind of family as a priority issue in their considerations.

This family, a single parent and her children, are 12-½ percent of all families, a family existing on only 50 percent of the income of two parent families.

They are poorer, their number is increasing sharply, they are getting younger, they are predominantly white. When they work they are employed in lower skilled and lower paid jobs, the number of children in these households is increasing and the mother's level of education is lower.

Surely these children and their mothers (and I number myself among them) should be considered in any political, economic or social policy involving the American family. I hope those elected and appointed by Maryland remember them.

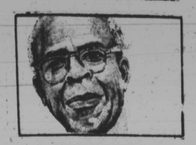
MYRA BONHAGE-HALE

AFRO welcomes 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.

G. JAMES FLEMING

Women registered for war



By G. James Fleming

Women—God bless 'em—cannot have it both ways. They are either something very speical, to be coddled, shielded, and protected, or they are equal to men, although sexually different. They are either special and different before the law, or they must be treated no differently from the male of the species.

If women are equal, politically, as they now are, then it is no surprise if they are considered equal also for assignment to actual warfare; first equal with men for registration and, later, for actual conscription into the war machinery.

Women cannot have it both ways. They cannot insist on equality, vis a vis men, and then say, "No thank you" when it comes to equality in defense of their country, even the ultimate defense.

This is not an easy confrontation to resolve, especially since Congress has previously legislated that women should not be committed to combat duties. — —

American young women are divided on the subject, but it appears that public sentiment is weighed largely against registration and the draft of women.

Now that the President has proposed their inclusion, however, many women may support registration as a sign of loyalty to their country, subject to the approval of Congress.

In the Republic of China and the Soviet Union, women serve in the armed forces. They near they get to the front lines, however, this column does not know, but there seems to be little deference for sex.

More important is the fact that there may be no front lines and no rear lines in the next major war. There may be no lines at all. In addition, no one will be spared exposure to death.

Nuclear warfare will cover all the people, both friend and foe—men, women and children; and plants and animals, too. Thus, whether women are registered and conscripted is largely an academic question. Women will be intimately involved, militarily, whether they wish it or not. — —

If women are not to be exempted, then it will become increasingly unacceptable for certain males to win exemption because of their college status, their "responsibilities" as fathers, or some other so-called "adequate" reason.

The rich as well as the poor, those enrolled in high school and college, and those of a wide range of ages will be drafted, as long as they can serve the defense needs of the nation.

Perhaps the drafting of women into the military won't be much different from the impact experienced by women when they were sloganized, during World War II, into becoming "Rosie the Riveter," stout muscles and all.

In World War II, it was an honor to women to be working in hazardous and other jobs they had never held before. In World War III, they may feel honored and wanted to be fighting alongside men, in the most dangerous places.

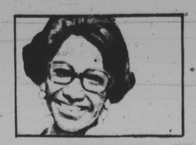
It may also be that both men and women will find ways to hold on to the old feelings across and between sex lines. Large segments of western women have known for a long time, how to be homemakers, family supporters, and wage earners, at the same time as they have been romantic lovers. Men are increasingly learning how to continue loving women who are their equals, or their superiors, in many or most instances.

After hoping for the best, we cannot deny that change in the status of women, whether in industry or in military activity, does change the relationship of men and women in most other instances.

Despite the Women's Liberation and the Equal Rights movements, it is true that women who earn their own monies, over and above the earnings of their husbands, find it difficult to adjust to being wives. Similarly, the husbands of these women find it most difficult being less than "man of the house" and "head of my family."

It is not easy, either, for military men (chauvinistic or otherwise) to subordinate themselves to a female superior officer, and if the superior officer is also a wife, it would be so much the harder.

FOR ALL WE KNOW



By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

PREPARATION FOR A NEW BEGINNING

FEB.20 is Ash Wednesday, a day which harbingers the coming of Spring and as sure as any sign you've ever known, the event signals the end of Winter. Whatever cold blow or snow comes, there will be just a few days of it. The earth is warming and even the deepest cold or snow cannot stay.

ALSO with Ash Wednesday's opening the 40 days of Lent, the occasion signals a preparation for a new beginning of life and hope. This happens every year and we never tire of it since hope springs eternal in all humans.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH symbolizes the new beginning by holding the 40 days of Lent as a time for soul searching, denial and fast to rid the mind and body of the past and find ways to begin again on a new path. The ashes distributed are from the burned palms of last Palm Sunday. We are told "thou art dust and to dust thou shalt return."

THE CHARGE is not to sorrow the soul but to make one humble so that new and magical thoughts and pathways may come. We take the cue from Nature as the earth begins to stir and even the birds and little animals spread the word. From now on you'll hear the chirping in the morning and begin to smell Spring in the very air.

NOW WE ARE headed toward the highest holy season of Christianity. Next significant day is Palm Sunday, March 30. Good Friday is April 4 and Easter Sunday April 6, the day of rejoicing that the Resurrection assures "that ye shall have life eternal".

MANY INTERESTING and not usually known facts surround Ash Wednesday and the coming of Spring, the period of repentance and the meaning of the Easter Season.

OFFERING A GOOD SERVICE is the Pratt Library which has initiated the new INFER hotline - 396-5430. Not only can you get information on the time, the season and other delightful things but also the answers to any and all other questions.

THE EXAMPLE given in the recent announcement gives this question:

Q- I am in debt up to my ears and don't know how to manage my expenses. Can someone help me ?

A- The Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Maryland is a free service that can help. For Appointment call 732-3604 Monday-Friday.

THAT'S just one of the examples. What is important to remember is the INFER Hotline phone No. and realize that the library is more than just "a book place". Call or visit for all the free services.

REFRESHING are the various Black History Month programs in the school and it is safe to say that nearly all the 180,000 students are now getting full knowledge of our roots. It's a gooood thing.

NOTEWORTHY is the Pimlico Elementary School's month-long program, the most complete we have ever seen. The full booklet is compiled by Senior Teachers A. Lyde, H. Barrett and P. Gross. Idell S. Pugh is principal and Shirley Curtain, assistant.

The objective stated says by the end of February the Pimlico boys and girls will have participated in a variety of activities involving oral and written language and mathematical skills.

The booklet spotlights black music, jazz, gospel, rock and disco. There is a film festival picturing all the greats of black history and an assembly featuring contemporary blacks plus educational field trips to Annapolis to see the black legislators and various exhibits here in Baltimore.

A WEALTH of material is also included with guides for pleasant study of every phase of life. Actually, the booklet Pimlico has designed shows hours and hours of preparation by the teachers and displays how much the faculty thinks of the students. Lucky kids.

REMEMBER when we were never told anything about our heritage ? We ourselves became ashamed and dared not mention it. Now everyone knows and every race is taking part. Most public buildings have displays on our famed folks and our heritage. Have you seen the one at the main Post Office ? Wow.

NICE THINGS to know if you are speaking during February are these facts: The three oldest institutions of black America are the Prince Hall Masons chartered in 1784; the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) which dates back to 1816 and the Black Press which began in 1827.

FOR 88 years the AFRO AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS, founded in 1892 in our town, Baltimore, has served continuously on the front line of the war against oppression, a strong, clear voice of and for black citizens.

TWO GRANDSONS of founder John H. Murphy Sr are heads of the AFRO, John H. Murphy III, chairman of the board of directors and John J. Oliver Sr., president. Owned entirely by the Murphy family, there are a score or more of descendants now employed at the firm.

THE AFRO is the largest chain of newspapers printed for a predominately black readership and has offices in Washington, D.C., Richmond, Va., New Jersey (Newark) and Philadelphia.

With readers in many foreign countries, the AFRO is mailed to servicemen around the globe by their families "for good old hometown news".

ALSO WHEN you are speaking, remember to use quotations from our literature, our famous authors like Frederick Douglass, Paul Lawrence Dunbar and James Weldon Johnson (who wrote the words to Lift Every Voice and Sing).

THE QUOTES I LIKE are found in a small booklet called "African Proverbs" and a delightful one is this " The mother leopard thinks all babies should have spots."

ANOTHER: The rain pours but does not wash out the leopard's spots.

AND: Do not cross the river if you know alligators are swimming there.

Every old crow thinks his baby's white as snow. The jungle bird thinks no one else can sing. The monkey who has just eaten a full dinner thinks no one else could possibly be hungry.

Bye and bye the nosey ape stopped snooping and looked inside his own hide.

THE ANTS did not say a word about where there's a will, there's away. They didn't need to.

WE DONT HAVE to prove anything said the king of the lions.

Year of the Family, Part II By Marion Banfield

How can a family strengthen a child? First, we accept the child as being worthy and rightfully due love as a human being. Whatever sex or physical features the child brings into the world should not detract from the child's feeling of being loved and sheltered from harm.

A child who is sheltered from harm is sheltered from the bad temper that gives physical or verbal abuse. A family has the responsibility of recognizing child abuse and getting relief for that child.

A family sharing in loving a child will not bring off the craziness of a mother or father who has periods when their lack of self-control harms children.

A family gathers, not for condemning, but for supporting a child's right to family caring. A family does not hide the abuser.

A family seeks the help of professional family social work agencies to help them to deal with family hurts when outside help is needed.

Seeking help and guidance is not a sign of weakness. Seeking professional help is proof of intelligent recognition of the values of a cooperative effort to ease pain and heal emotional wounds.

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

SAMUEL L. BANKS

On bringing back the draft

By Samuel L. Banks

President Jimmy Carter's legislative proposal to register all 19 and 20 year olds has evoked widespread public reaction within predominantely white colleges and universities. He will request registration, too, for women in the same age groups.

The responses to the President's proposals have been mixed. Nonetheless, one hears with increasing frequency, an old refrain: "Hell no, I won't go." The collective voice of blacks and other racial minorities who, in all likelihood, in the case of a military call-up, will bear the brunt of the draft and fighting has not been heard. There is ample evidence to support this view when one considers the disproportionate number of blacks slain in combat during the Vietnam war.

It is significant that President Carter offered a possible legislative sweetner for women in suggesting, as women are registered, the Equal Rights Amendment should be passed. The fact of the matter is that the ERA Amendment, as is true of the D.C. Amendment, should be passed as a matter of basic equity and fairness.

Another critical and pivotal fact is that young blacks are already heavily represented as volunteers in the military because of woefully inadequate job opportunities in the large society. It is a sad commentary, on our society that so many young blacks must enlist in the military as a means of survival.

The urban centers of our nation are lined with young and middle-aged blacks who are dispirited and demoralized in regard to the prospect of securing gainful employment. Locally, one only has to drive through Caroline, Aisquith and Baltimore Streets and Greenmount, Park Heights, North and Pennsylvania Avenues and observe unemployed blacks queued or huddled together on corners and alleys to understand the human tragedy of people without hope.

President Carter must be reminded that the same sense of urgency which dictated his legislative call for a resumption of selective service registration is also desperately needed for the black lumpen proletariat in Baltimore and other urban metropolies without jobs and hope. President Carter and the Congress have an obligation to resuscitate the U.S. Employment Act of 1946 which promises a job to all Americans and provide the monetary support for the dormant Humphrey-Hawkins Bill. Simple justice dictates this course of action as the nation prepares to put the military into a greater state of readiness. Economic sufficiency and jobs, Mr. President, are just as important to 30 million black Americans as your request for selective service registration.

JUST THINKING

Fame, fortune and Roberta Flack

By Al Sweeney

Those entertainment stars that escapists, young and old like to fantasize, don't just happen to blaze across theatrical skies by the wave of some magic wand.

All of them had to pay some form of dues. Those dues, if I am to believe some folks, take on various forms. But, the principal dues were paid by hard work.

Take my name. I don't care who or whom, I can promise you that before the name became widely recognizable there was plenty of toil and heartaches.

One of those theatrical personalities, who has achieved a superstar status, is Arlington, Va. - bred Roberta Flack.

Although born in Black Mountain, N.C., a tiny hamlet near Asheville, Roberta Flack attended Arlington schools and graduated from Howard University.

A protege of Hazel Harris, who taught piano at Howard and a member of Werner Lawson's famed Howard University choir, Roberta was teaching at Browne Junior High School when she began her public singing career.

She first "moonlighted" at the Trivoli Opera Restaurant in Georgetown, where she sang in a supper show after putting in her teaching stint.

It was while "moonlighting," that she was given a tryout at Mr. Henry's Upstairs on Pennsylvania Avenue in Southeast.

It was while singing at the tiny lounge from 1970 through 1972 that she attracted attention. Her projection to stardom has been told many times.

"Killing Me Softly," was the single that first topped the music charts, several albums, the latest she co-starred with Donnie Hathaway. The added fortune led to a share in a swanky New York cooperative that has Barbra Streisand and Lauren Bacall among her neighboring tenants.

As far as this column is concerned, what sets Roberta Flack apart from many other successful black performers is that she brought other black professionals along.

As Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune oft stated: "When the door of opportunity opens be prepared to walk through."

And as an added admonition the famed black woman educator advised: "Once through the door, turn around and extend a helping hand to someone else to come through."

Roberta Flack has done just that. Sharing the proceeds from her records and performances are a black personal manager and a black attorney.

Her attorney, a bright young Harvard-trained lawyer of Atlanta, Ga. is David Franklin. He has been guiding the Flack career through the maize of legal mines. He has dueled the sharpest specialists in the entertainment business on behalf of Roberta.

So, where others of color have gained the spotlight and nothing else but a few faded clippings left of fame, Roberta Flack's earnings will be protected for years to come.

The Atlanta attorney has such black artists as Richard Pryor, whose movie "Richard Pryor Live" earned the controversial comic more than a cool million. Part II of "Live" promises to more than double his earlier box office smash.

Attorney Franklin has Cicely Tyson and Julian Bond among his other clients. It was Roberta who helped him launch his career.

And vice versa, she will tell you quickly.

Her personal manager is a black Canadian Mervyn Dash. Prior to becoming Flack's manager, Dash managed several singing groups.

The other regulars on the Flack payroll include a musical director and a producer. So, the former D.C. school teacher is big business.

Roberta was in town this week promoting her new Atlantic Record album, "Roberta Features Donny Hathway." If I am to believe, Atlantic's veteran publicist Major Robinson, the album can't miss.

The record-spinners at WHUR were playing it this week on the Morning Sound and the Quiet Storm, and they share Robinson's optimism.

As for Roberta Flack, a lot is riding on the success of the album that she has co-produced with Eric Mercury, a songwriter and singer.

If this writer's perception of Flack and Mercury at dinner on Monday is clear, the co-producer's relationship is much more than professional admiration.

If I am to believe some of my friends who have followed the Flack career, recent months have not been happy ones for the former D.C. teacher.

As some of those who follow the top forty performers are aware, Flack's last big selling album was with Donny Hathaway, whose tragic death still is the subject of small talk.

While Flack came off buoyant during our recent meeting, I noted a bit public bravado in her friendly, gracious and her acute sense of humor.

But, that's neither her nor there. One thing is certain, Roberta Flack needs another big hit. Oh, she'll survive, if the album doesn't hit the top of the charts because she is a good entertainer.

But her friend and co-producer Mercury seems to hint at what makes Flack tick. "You just know how worked up to the point of seeming hatred that you get when you get involved in a record session with Roberta. She's a perfectionist."

And that appears to be the key. Roberta Flack wants to be the best. She strives for it.

"I have appeared in concerts and answered many curtain calls with the audience telling me I was great.

"But, deep inside. I didn't feel that I performed that well. But, I gave it all I could. And that's all that I ever do. I give it my best. But, sometimes, to myself, I am not satisfied.

So it isn't any wonder that when Roberta Flack has had enough of a singing career, she wants to become a psychologist.

To this writer, she is a beautiful person with a beautiful talent. She has used her career to help others. Her career has meant a career for others. What else can you ask?

I think that is the bottomline. It's not what you have personally achieved. But, it's how many others you have brought along.

Tax brackets need understanding

If you thought you were lucky because your 1979 income kept pace with inflation, you may feel less fortunate now as you consider the effect of that added income on your tax bracket.

Finding yourself, in say, the 40 percent bracket for the first time might give you nightmares about the tax collector taking 40 percent of that hard-earned salary, but that is not the way it works.

Such exaggerated fears, says the Maryland Association of Certified Public Accountants, probably result from widespread misunderstanding of our progressive tax system.

The system attempts to link tax rates to the ability to pay, but it is not nearly as confiscatory as "40 percent bracket" might suggest.

In fact, says the CPA Association, there is so much confusion about the meaning of "tax brackets" that tax practitioners have begun using instead the term "marginal tax brackets" to indicate that your bracket affects only the leading edge — the last few hundred dollars or so, the margin — of your income. The rest of what you make is either taxed at a lower rate or not taxed at all.

For example, assume you are married, file a joint return and your taxable income in 1979 is $28,000. What is your "marginal tax bracket?"

Let's look at the tax rate schedules: Taxable income of at least $24,600 but less than $29,900 results in a tax liability of $4,505 plus 32 percent of the excess over $24,600, or $1,088, for a total of $4,593 before credits. The 32 percent is your marginal tax bracket.

Most of us have not just one but many tax brackets, each affecting a different level of income. The first $2,300 of taxable income for a single taxpayer, is in the zero bracket — not tax at all. (That's why what was formerly known as the standard deduction is now called the zero bracket amount.) Even if you make millions, your first $2,300 still is untaxed.

Income over $2,300 is taxed at 14 percent until it reaches $3,400, when the rate climbs to 16 percent. At $4,400 it rises to 18 percent and keeps on going up like that until, when taxable income passes $28,800, you begin paying more than 40 percent — but on just a small part of your income.

If that's all tax bracket means, why is so much said and written about it? Because, the CPA association explains, the higher tax rate one pays applies to the last dollar of income, as well as to the last deduction or adjustment, and that's where the most important action is for a person preparing a tax return.

If you are in the 32 percent bracket, as in our example, a nearly-overlooked $10 deduction can put $3.20 in your pocket. Fifty dollars of income that can be reclassified from taxable to non-taxable is worth approximately $16 cash. A $1,000 exemption is good for nearly $300 in cash.

Similarly, tacking on a final bonus, commission, dividend or other item of taxable income can mean ringing up 32 cents of taxes for every dollar of earnings. Out on the margin, the stakes are high.

Which is a good reason, the CPA Association suggests, for doing a thorough job of checking financial records for the year to be sure you do not overlook a transaction from which your tax advisors might be able to realize a substantial tax savings.

It's the tax break you nearly miss — the one you pluck seemingly out of nowhere — that counts the most, bringing the top rate to tax savings available to someone in your tax bracket.

If the savings are big enough, they can even take you down to a lower tax bracket.

Ali 'unsuitable'

Dear AFRO:

This is the last straw! Why did President Carter select Muhammad Ali to carry the United States' message of boycotting the Olympics to the intelligent, well-educated, and influential leaders of black African nations?

While I am also an avid Ali fan, he is not suitable for this type of important mission. There are many capable and articulate black statesmen in this country who would have been more appropriate choices. Even Ali himself is beginning to see the absurdity of the whole situation.

Carter's lack of respect towards black and other Third World countries will not win him the black vote in this crucial election year. He has lost my vote.

ELAINE B. JOHNSON