Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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Question about Jesse

The Baltimore Baptist Clergy in Action, one of the city's religious leadership groups, invited Baltimore public school Superintendent John L. Crew to their meeting this week for some answers to questions about the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Jackson, the former aide to the Rev. Martin Luther King, was here recently to conduct his EXCEL program, a motivational effort, to help urban school children achieve to their full potential.

Jackson was here under the auspices of the Department of Education and television station WJZ-TV 13.

He delivered his usual dynamic speech to some 8,000 city students and their families. For this he was paid (and reports vary) some $13,000. Some of this money came from the school budget, some from WJZ-TV. Exactly who paid what is not clear at this writing.

In any event local clergymen wanted Dr. Crew to enlighten them on just what Project EXCEL's lasting benefits to the children of Baltimore might be, what follow-through is built into the program and other sensible inquiries that all of us should have an interest in having explained.

It may not be generally known but Jackson has encountered fierce local opposition in other cities where he has promulgated the EXCEL doctrine.

Several years ago he ran into strong negative reaction in Washington, D.C. There the issue was "why are we paying Jesse so much money to do what we should be doing ourselves."

The ministers at this Monday meeting did not spare their feelings and they candidly presented their concerns to Dr. Crew who in turn said he found the meeting most helpful.

Since much of the conversation was "not for the record," we can only report that the Baptist clergy involved clearly wanted the school administration to know that they would not be satisfied with some once-yearly razzle-dazzle from an imported leader.

Nor would they tolerate, in the words of the Rev. A.C.D. Vaughn, Clergy in Action president, any "game playing" with our children.

We are more than pleased that the head of our schools and some of our leading religious leaders brought such an issue to the table.

We are pleased that local ministers recognize the dimensions of our school problems and are committed to helping.

What the school officials and electronic mediums must both understand is that while Jesse Jackson is a definite force for good when it comes to challenging our young people to think and accomplish, to bring him or anyone else in from outside is just so much show business — if projects like EXCEL are hyped for a week and then left to die until Jesse (or whoever) comes back a year later.

The students and families who came to hear Rev. Jackson give the good word are already convinced that achievement should be a high priority.

Our question, and the ministers' question as well, is what is the school system doing about the all too many kids who are disillusioned completely with the educative process?

Jesse Jackson speaks to those already convinced.

Who will convince the kids who remain unconvinced?

Park Heights reform

All is still not well with the Park Heights Community Corporation. But things may be getting better.

A reform group of Park Heights residents is challenging the present PHCC leadership on issues affecting this northwest city neighborhood.

As we see it this is all to the good. Thus far in PHCC's history it has stood as an enclave of professionals employed to work on behalf of community improvement but very for the most part work hardest at keeping themselves employed.

This is part of the sorry heritage left by the failed War on Poverty. Community action agencies, as PHCC is supposed to be, have been relegated to little more than symbolic status.

The city controls what little money goes into such efforts and agency workers do little that rocks the boat or bites the hand that feeds them.

The community, however, is led to believe that there is this organization dedicated to their needs.

The truth is there is no money to do even a fraction of the grandiose planning spawned by creatures like PHCC.

One of the ways to get such a mechanism honest about itself and the community it supposedly serves is for concerned and articulate residents to challenge the assumptions upon which the PHCC's of the world justify their existence.

That is beginning to happen in Park Heights and this newspaper reminds all that the questions being asked by Heights residents first surfaced on these pages.

PHCC can be made to work or at least to become "real" about itself when reformers begin to look at its workings.

In the meantime we would remind all concerned that the beleaguered staff of PHCC and some of its board members are under the thumb of the paymaster, in this case the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Final examination of PHCC's role, mission and accountability must center on HCD.

In Park Heights as elsewhere in the city the strings are pulled downtown.

Crucial census

It is of crucial importance that black Americans exercise their civil responsibility and participate in the 1980 census count that begins the first of April.

According to a census bureau pamphlet, the black community is just a little over 25 million persons. But many skeptics believe the black community far exceeds that figure and it has grown in size like any other ethnic group and the figure should be thirty million if not higher.

This makes it incumbent on black leaders in all categories — politicians, economists, educators and in all other phases of our society to urge members of the black community to cooperate as fully as possible so an accurate count as possible can be made.

Census statistics are involved in determining the distribution of federal funds in such areas as housing and population shifts, to name a few areas that primarily involved the black population. Many other programs such as special education, health care and job training are also affected by the census information.

One of the most significant areas involving the census count is the electoral process that includes the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. In some instances, many states use the census statistics to gerrymander districts which relegates the black community to the lower end of the political and economic ladder.

The census publication also points out that voter participation among black persons in the mid-sixties was just over the six million mark in both congressional and presidential elections. Many black persons were systematically denied voting rights before the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and various civil rights movements which were significant in an era of strife and turmoil.

Voting is a natural right of every bona fide citizen and not a granted privilege as many unsavory politicians would have the general public believe. It is a well-documented fact that the black vote was overwhelmingly responsible for the election of many of our black public officials.

The black vote, in the main, put our seventeen black congressional members in the House of Representatives, which falls far short of what the number should be if one would accept the twenty-five million figure for the black population.

Participation in the census count should receive top priority because much of the data will be used to determine the future of black Americans for the next decade.

AFRO cartoonist Thomas Stockett is on vacation.

THE 'BUMP' IS BACK: President Carter and Ayatolla Khomeini seem to be moving toward a compromise in the hostage situation.

Madeline MURPHY

Theater of the absurd

It is particularly instructive to have all the racist slurs of Reagan, Congressman Long, occur in Black History month. It shows how far we have yet to go. It seems to be too much for them to bear to have blacks and other ethnics occupy any places of importance without ridicule, excuses or spurious reasons.

Take for example Rep. Clarence Long's recent gaff before the Baltimore County NAACP meeting.

"Superiority as in black athletic prowess in the olympics" was counterpointed with blacks not being properly trained or just plain lazy (not wanting to work). Stereotype after stereotype fell from his lips so glibly that it left rationality in a shambles. A real theater of the absurd.

How, after these statements, any sane person could have taken this incipient senility seriously had to look again when Col. James Pennington, president of the Baltimore County NAACP was to be barred from Long's office for eternity!

That's carrying things to an illogical conclusion that says: "No blacks will give me a good going over without being punished for it."

So now blacks in Baltimore County have been forewarned that Long is King and everyone knows the king can do no wrong. Consequently any punishment fits the crime. Long considers a crime. Off with their heads!

But as I read this article in the paper and the subsequent editorial, I had a severe case of deja vu that went back some 40 years.

Because the more things change, etc., etc.—fill the blanks! Neighborhoods call them ghettos could not defeat racist candidates because they were actually in the minority as is so in Baltimore County. Or else they had no alternative candidate to whip the incumbent — usually the person was more racist.

I remember when I was a teenager, my mother was very anxious, one night, to attend a political meeting at the Odd Fellows Hall on the street behind us. I overheard her tell my father that the Senator would be there to organize election day workers and that she had promised her friend who wanted to get her daughter a job that she would support her.

However my father's last words to my mother as she left the house were "Give 'em Hell Modge." (And as we shall see, so she did!)

Although Dad had given up on the local political skull duggery, he was also vicariously enjoying my mother's frequent forays into confrontation. It made good evening discussion. (No TV in those days made it possible, you see, even though you could always hear Grandpa in the background talking back to the radio.)

Only a half hour later, however, Mother stormed back into the house and told what had happened that made her fuming mad.

It seems in addressing the all black audience the Senator related in his most unctious patronizing manner (to justify his interest in blacks at election time) how he was especially proud of the fact that the "Knee-gro" had always defended the white man's flag.

Whereupon my mother jumped up pushing away the restraining hand of her friend and shouted "How many war dogs it take for our black men to die, from Crispus Attucks up to today, to have you call it an American flag that includes all of us sitting here?"

To add insult to injury, she turned to the audience of about 50 blacks and asked "How long will you sit here and be insulted by this prejudiced (the term racist was not in vogue then) man who needs our votes."

With that, everybody, except her friend and daughter followed Mother out of the hall. With the breaking up of the meeting, you know her friend's daughter didn't get the job.

But later on we learned that there weren't any jobs to be had through the Senator because he had given a powerful black woman politician the patronage money before the meeting.

Of course there's a great deal to be learned about that meeting, but central to the comparison between then and now is the idea in the Baltimore County meeting that getting angry and shouting and staying isn't nearly as effective as walking out.

We have a great tradition of that kind of action (I we remember Spiro Agnew patronizing and blaming black leaders for the riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King).

Perhaps also it's better to let the Long's vent their petit racism and hostility in situations like this, because it gives us a better opportunity to know who they are and organize against them. Not to say how educational it is to the hundreds of thousands of blacks who don't attend meetings, but read papers.

In the final outcome it might mean that we find candidates who need our margin, small though it may be—to defeat the incumbent.

There would be a greater sensitivity shown by the new Congressman, you can bet on that, because he would owe you, yet not own you.

Parren MITCHELL

Justice Department is busy

Few formal complaints about racism ever get to the Department of Justice and even fewer are formally acted on by that Department, mostly for technical reasons.

Bearing in mind that Justice Department cases represent but a small fraction of the tip of the iceberg of racism, look at a few of the cases completed by Justice in a one week period.

Jan. 9, 1980

"The Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission obtained a consent decree today requiring Lew Way Motor Freight Inc., to pay $2,740,000 in back pay to black persons and to hire more blacks and Hispanics in all job categories.

"Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti said the decree was filed in U.S. District Court in Oklahoma City, Okla., resolving an employment discrimination suit filed against the company on June 22, 1972.

"Lee Way, which is based in Oklahoma City, operates terminals throughout most of the United States and has a work force of some 4,200."

"Back pay is awarded to 82 blacks who were denied jobs. The highest award is $165,780.97. Four other persons will receive more than $100,000 each."

Jan. 10, 1980

"Two Alabama Ku Klux Klan members were indicted by a federal grand jury today on a charge of intimidating and injuring two black ministers who had been drinking coffee in a restaurant in Muscle Shoals.

"Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti said the indictment was returned in U.S. District Court in Birmingham, Ala., against Ricky L. Creekmore and Charles J. Puckett, who are industrial workers.

"The indictment charged them with intimidating and injuring Roger D. Pride and Otis Neloms on Oct. 29, 1979, because of their race while they were patronizing the Omelet Shop.

"Pride is Pastor of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church of Muscle Shoals, and Neloms is Pastor of First Baptist Church of Courtland.

"After leaving the restaurant, the ministers were attacked in a parking lot, resulting in bodily injury to Pride. He was treated at a local hospital."

Jan. 10, 1980

"The Department of Justice filed a civil suit today charging the city of Farmington, New Mexico, with discriminating against American Indians, Hispanics, and women in municipal government jobs.

"Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti said the employment discrimination suit was filed in U.S. District Court in Albuquerque, New Mexico, against the city and principal city officials.

"The suit charged the city with violating the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the State and Local Fiscal Assistance (revenue sharing) Act of 1972, and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 by discriminating against Indians, Hispanics, and women in hiring, assignment, and promotion practices."

Jan. 11, 1980

"The Department of Justice sought today to join in seven lawsuits challenging a Texas state law that requires children of illegal Mexican aliens to pay tuition to attend public schools.

"Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti said a motion to intervene as plaintiff in In Re Alien School Cases v. State of Texas and a proposed complaint in intervention were filed in U.S. District Court in Houston, Texas.

"The private suits, which the District Court has consolidated for trial on Feb. 4, involve the school districts of Houston, Dallas, Ector County, Pasadena and Goose Creek."

Jan. 16, 1980

"The Department of Justice filed a civil suit today charging the Syracuse, N.Y. police and fire departments with discriminating against blacks and women in job opportunities.

"Of course there is racism in Baltimore and Maryland. Why shouldn't our organizations make a commitment in 1980 to assiduously search out racism in our communities and seek to eliminate it? If they did, the work of the U.S. Department of Justice would be significantly increased.

LETTERS

Legislator explains rationale for MSU merger

Dear AFRO:

In light of the recent discussion of the future of Morgan State University in the higher education community, may I share with your readers a part of the conclusion of the Joint Committee on Higher Education which recently conducted a study of Higher Education.

It is not essential to the quality of the content of a regional higher education program at this time that the various public institutions in metropolitan Baltimore be merged or that the identities and traditions attaching to each institution be blended and homogenized.

Each of the institutions of higher education in the Baltimore region has something of excellence to offer and that presents a very exciting challenge and opportunity to the State Board for Higher Education to find those areas of academic excellence and coordinate them in a superior academic program for the students of the region.

Discussions of mergers of whole institutions may beg the important question and cloud the essential issues of educational quality.

The smoke and rhetoric that would be generated by the merger mechanics and politics would consume many years of important time in the life of higher education in the Baltimore region; and when the smoke has finally evaporated and the rhetoric has diminished to a mild din, it is probably, at best, that there would only be a change in the label of the educational product rather than in the quality of the product itself.

The differing traditions and emphasis of each of the various campuses can be a positive component of the higher education program in this region.

Having said that, it must also be said that the present arrangement may not be, in many respects and aspects as possible, a regional higher education program of competence and reputation; and if the State Board for Higher Education is to be faulted for talking about doing too much, the individual institutions and their governing boards could well be faulted for talking about doing too little to correct the faults.

The proposal made by the Joint Committee on Higher Education to the Legislative Policy Committee in November 1979, could suggest an appropriate accommodation and balancing of the various conflicting interests in this important debate.

This was the proposal:

"The Joint Committee is concerned that because the

governance of Baltimore region institutions is so

widely scattered that more than token or symbolic

institutional cooperation, faculty and facility

sharing, and program consolidation is impossible

without providing the State Board for Higher

Education authority to establish a metropolitan, inter-segmental institutional board or council with appropriate authority over the program and resources of these institutions to assure a coordinated metropolitan Baltimore undergraduate program, by a consolidation of the governance of the undergraduate programs of these institutions (not the institutions themselves).

"A Complimentary step to this end would be to design a consortium to include the Baltimore County campus of the University of Maryland, the institutions under the Board of Trustees of State Universities and Colleges and Morgan State University and give the inter-segmental board or council a mandate to develop a coordinated, comprehensive and serious program for the Baltimore region."

JOHN CARROLL BYRNES,
Chairman, Joint Committee on Higher Education

Some choice

Dear AFRO:

No sooner does President Jimmy Carter bring up the demand of a "draft" than the pro-draft media preempts the anti-draft arguments with the spurious "demand" that the "inevitable" draft be "equitable" — as opposed to the "traditional" American draft.

It offers the victims (our youth) the kind of "choice" that a condemned man has in choosing cotton over hemp for the rope he will be hung by.

A. ROBERT KAUFMAN

G. JAMES FLEMING

About merger and Morgan

By G. James Fleming

No merger for Morgan State University as of this moment. No one is saying, however, "No merger ever."

For the present, there is victory for the large number of people, white and black, who are opposed to the principal Sheldon Knorr Proposal: Merger of Morgan with UMBC and the University of Baltimore, with said new merged institution under the operational direction of the regents of the University of Maryland.

Would the opposition have been less united and solid if the merger was only between Morgan and Towson State University, or if Towson had been included in the Knorr plan without subordination under the University of Maryland?

Will abandonment of proposed merger affect, for better, the declining enrollment being experienced by Morgan?

Would the merger plan have been accepted by blacks if Morgan—oldest of the threatened institutions—had been made the "centerpiece" of the merger, with the University of Baltimore and the University of Maryland Baltimore County as the downtown and the county branches of Morgan, as recommended by Professor Thomas Cripps et al?

What will happen if, while Morgan remains independent, the state starves or shackles it, so that it is forced to compromise its autonomy? Or suppose guerrilla warfare against the leadership of Morgan continues and plays into the hands of those who would merge Morgan out of existence?

In other words, last week's victory against merger may be only temporary and tentative. Still to come from the state and the power structure is the real commitment, backed by the necessary support, to make Morgan a high-standard and flourishing, even though small, university.

The victory over merger will also not mean that the Baltimore area universities will be freed from the mandate to find ways to abolish, or decrease, duplication of courses and efforts, and to find ways to cut down the losses caused by failing freshmen and sophomores.

Most important, the victory over merger is not a signal to Morgan students and faculty that Morgan is a place where they can operate at a low level, or at the lowest level.

While Morgan must continue to be understanding of the heavy hand that attending the poorest schools have had on black young people, and their parents, the university must also press for "excellence"—in fact as well as in rhetoric—and for high standards, especially among those students capable of achieving the best and highest.

To too many people, including faculty and students, a merged institution has frighteningly meant a demand for higher achievement, while a predominantly black institution has meant "You can get by."

The truth is, Morgan is historically no such place, as testified to by the number of students who are dropped when they fail to meet reasonably high standards of achievement.

Unfortunately, nowhere is it as easy to get rid of teachers who consistently fail to be good and committed teachers, as it is to get rid of the poorest students.

The victory over merger still leaves behind the fact that there is consensus for higher education in Baltimore to produce a better report card than it has done in the recent past. The state colleges will be compelled to stimulate students, to push them more, and to require more of them.

Similarly, it is only fair to say that, following the pattern of other colleges nationwide, Morgan and other state colleges will have to create an atmosphere in which faculty will exact more of themselves for their main responsibility—teaching.

Tenure and "academic freedom" must be discouraged from meaning freedom NOT to teach; freedom NOT to have any time for student advising; freedom NOT to correct examination and term papers; freedom NOT to assign outside reading and the use of libraries, and freedom NOT to attempt to make any contribution to learning or to the community.

Morgan is not unique. It is a reflection of the times, as one learns from the readings of the Association of Graduate Boards, made up of board members of some 1,500 American educational institutions.

Nothing we have written here applies to all faculty or, in the case of students, to all students. This column is largely a reminder that the victory over the Sheldon Knorr merger plan still leaves problems and responsibilities, just as living has more problems than death.

SAMUEL L. BANKS

By Samuel L. Banks

The intense controversy presently surrounding Morgan State University is a matter of profound and widespread community concern.

The issues are essentially twofold in nature: (1) governance of Morgan and concomitant family disputes, and (2) the proposal which remains before the State Board for Higher Education to convert Morgan, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and the University of Baltimore into a metropolitan university.

In regard to the first point, the "family problems" of Morgan, as is true of more than 3,000 institutions of higher learning in the nation, should be resolved within the "Morgan Family" in a purview of trust and collegiality.

The public wrangling involving President Andrew Billingsley and members of the faculty does not help the institution. Morgan's board of regents, the policy-makers for the institution, should make a stronger effort to keep the broader community aware of issues confronting the university.

The board of regents will make a fatal mistake if it on the one hand seeks community support when crises develop, but, on the other hand, ignores community interest and input in more tranquil periods. Morgan belongs to all citizens of Maryland, and the citizens have a right to be kept fully informed.

Academic excellence and serious intellectual inquiry, so desperately needed at Morgan, cannot flourish amid such an atmosphere of distrust, division and discord. It is in the paramount interest of Morgan to close ranks for its most precious resource — its students.

The second point in terms of a possible merger of Morgan with UMBC and the University of Baltimore is highly irrational and nonsensical.

Morgan, after a long and tortuous struggle, was accorded university status by the Maryland General Assembly in 1975. The General Assembly knew then the projections in terms of full time enrollments and the fiscal resources that would be available for operating the state's colleges and universities.

If it is now necessary, at a time of declining student enrollments and under-utilized space and attenuated fiscal resources, to effect monetary cutbacks, fairness and equity would dictate phasing out the newest school—UMBC. The current state surplus, approaching $300 million, indicates that money is available to operate effectively the three institutions proposed for merger.

I am unequivocably opposed to the proposed merger of the three institutions for the following reasons: (1) each of the three institutions has its own unique character and mission; (2) the state has determined that Morgan should have university status; (3) the development of a hybrid metropolitan university would do little to enhance any of the institutions or result in significant savings for citizens of the Free State.

Insofar as Morgan is concerned, the overriding and central issues revolve around a long-term and continuing commitment of Gov. Harry Hughes and the General Assembly to provide a money outlay requisite for Morgan to function, in fact, as a university.

The time has come for Gov. Hughes and the General Assembly to redeem the commitment of 1975. Preachments and panegyrics are not needed; just essential human and monetary resources.

A NEW DAY BEGUN

Profound concern for MSU

FOR ALL WE KNOW

By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

LET US HOPE Spring is really here or at least nearby. The suffering of the poor, unemployed and homeless has reached an all-time high even though the Winter has been comparatively mild.

WE DO NOT KNOW how many persons have left this earth because of starvation, deprivation, exposure and just plain freezing to death on those below freezing days and nights. Many have had no heat at all this season and the evictions are at an all-time record high.

I HAVE TRIED to nail down some figures on deaths which may have been caused by freezing, neglect, deprivation, malnutrition and exposure but without success. No authority will say anything except "there are bound to be many deaths from those causes in severe weather."

BY THE WAY there are 15 and 20 deaths a day listed.

TO BE REGRETTED is the fact that legislators in Annapolis have failed to pass some kind of law which will at least keep the poor under a roof until winter passes. We are in a depression you know and times are hard.

DEL. TROY BRAILEY tried without success to pass several bills this General Assembly to prevent landlords from evicting poor people without just cause. He states that he is not surprised that the press has revealed the enormous number of evictions. The unfortunate persons are mostly black and because of the recent efforts to clamp down on rents going sky high, landlords are using unfair methods which result in evictions.

Brailey says after the newspaper article on evictions, a lady called to reveal a cruel happening all related to what we are talking about. She said she went to an auction but when she arrived she found it was an "eviction auction", auctioning off of articles of poor families who had been evicted.

THE WOMAN says she wept bitter tears when she saw what was being auctioned off: children's dresses, coats, hats, snow boots, bicycles, all kinds of toys, blankets, bed linens, dishes, rugs, TV sets and other home furnishings.

UPON INVESTIGATION Del. Brailey learned that the auctioneering company has a contract with Baltimore City's Bureau of Highways to pick up belongings of persons who are put out on the streets by landlords and store them in his warehouse.

DEL. BRAILEY further states that if these people are evicted and are unable to pay the auctioneer for removing their belongings from the street and to pay for storage space (which would amount to about $200) within 30 days, their belongings will be sold at public auction by Bureau of Highways.

BRAILEY learned that after the auction the auctioneer is paid for removing and storing by the Bureau of Highways and the rest of the money from the sale is retained by the City of Baltimore.

THIS IS THE MOST dastardly procedure I have ever heard of.

SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.

AT THIS WRITING (Thursday) I am on the way to a dinner honoring the world renowned journalist Carl C. Rowan hosted by Western Maryland College. Afterwards he will speak in Alumni Hall on the Westminster, Md. campus on "Human Rights, Civil Rights and the World Crisis". No doubt the famed and brilliant man will hit it hard on human rights and he will perhaps bring us some solution. Truly these days witness so many persons who have no concept of human dignity and rights.

PERSONS who profit on the miseries of the poor seem to be increasing in number. The gouging and pure thievery at the expense of the poor certainly has reached an all-time high and an all-time low.

DEMOCRACY ISN'T WORKING SO WELL. At least not for us as black persons. Then too, we do not care for each other.

ENOUGH TEARS and now for some pleasant things.

It was a 7-pound-8 ounce baby girl who arrived in the family of Edith Finney Dixon (Social Security) and William (Poncho) Dixon, the counselor at Lemmell Junior High. Happy grandparents are Edith (Social Security) and Sylvester Finney of the AFRO.

THE OTHER GRANDPARENTS of the pretty little newcomer (Erin Michelle) are James Dixon (with the Baltimore Police Dept.) and Bertha who is with the Navy Yard in D.C. Congratulations to the wonderful family.

ORDINATION RITES at Providence Baptist Church last Sunday evening were quite impressive as Donald Parker, Michael Johnson, Earl Williams and Michael Evans became deacons.

THE CHURCH (which will soon build America's first solar church) was packed with visiting deacons, prelates, family and friends. Among them were Mrs. Niki (Loyal Randolph), Henry Freeman, Mrs. Theopolis Silver, Rev. Mrs. Randolph Smith, Daniel Ham, Rev. Eugene Johnson, Mrs. Charles (Rose) Byrd, Mrs. Louise Johnson, Dr. Charles Saunders, Major and Mrs. Paul Brown, Rev. and Mrs. Howard Queen and Supt. and Mrs. Alexander Woodruff. Rev. Marcus Wood is pastor.

BACK TO YOUR RIGHTS as citizens, if you have any questions at all why not reach the Pratt Library's new service INFER by calling 396-5430? You will get the answers.

FOR EXAMPLE: Q- I feel I am being unfairly harassed by a creditor.

ANSWER (by INFER- 396-5430) The Maryland Commission on Consumer Credit is the licensing and regulatory agency for loan and sales financing companies. If you feel you have a just complaint against a creditor, you should submit it in writing to them at 1 South Calvert St., Room 601, 21202.

FOR MORE INFORMATION 383- 3656.

ANY PROBLEM for which you need the right answer or solution, CALL INFER - 396-5430 today. A wonderful service.

TUESDAY, FEB. 26 the Baltimore Colts will have official opening of the team's office and training complex on Bonita Avenue in Owings Mills. The 12 noon event is hosted by Colts President Robert Irsay and National Football League Commissioner Pete Rozelle and is by invitation.

THE RED CROSS officers the best service yet. Infant Care Classes will be held at Hutzlers 7-9 p.m. Eastpoint, March 5; Towson March 4 — for 5 weeks to 7 weeks straight depending on enrollment.

PREPARATION FOR PARENTHOOD, it's called, and expectant parents may get to know how to bathe, feed, diaper and handle new kids. Call 467-9905 for information. It's all FREE.

THE GATHERING OF THE PLANETS is beginning to happen and the opening of the month of March will see the occasion which happens only in a lifetime will be visible here. No doubt you have already seen Venus in line and almost as bright as the moon every evening this week ? In the Eastern sky early in the evening are Mars and Jupiter. On March 2, these two will be their closest with Mars above Jupiter. Mars is reddish in color and at sunset the two are the brightest in the sky. Mars is passing by Jupiter from left to right.

WITHIN a few weeks Mars will reverse its direction and come back toward Jupiter so Mars will stand on top Sunday March 4 - and be even closer. Then Mars will keep moving further and further away in the direction toward the East to get below Saturn.

MARS, Jupiter and Saturn are in the direct line— The Elliptic— the path the sun takes through the sky. By the way, the Star of Bethlehem the Wisemen saw was the combination of Jupiter and Saturn, not in December but in March. That conjunction will be one of the brightest this March.

THE GATHERING of the Planets which the ancients called "the gathering of the gods" will see Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, Mercury, Uranus, Pluto, and Neptune in the Eliptic with the sun and the moon.

SOME OF THEM you can not see except with a telescope. However, all of this can be experienced and explained at the Science Center which is open until 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Jim Oleary is the expert to be reached for the programing and times and the wonderous Spring Skywatch which begins March 21. This is once in a lifetime and don't miss it. Schools may call him at 685-2370 - Ext. 224.

BY THE WAY, since For All We Know first mentioned the Gathering of the Planets, the Science Center and I have received many calls. Especially since the moon early this week has had Venus following it so brilliantly. The moon is the fastest moving planet in the sky and on March first will be full and in a very bright cluster with Mars and Jupiter. Don't miss that.

—MORE LETTERS—

Paddy wagons: 'cruel, unusual punishment'

Dear AFRO:

Regretably, these thoughts will be of little comfort to the innocent victim who suffered a broken neck in a police paddy wagon. It is my sincere hope and prayer that the voices of concerned citizens and elected officials demand that some effective steps or procedures be promulgated as regards the transportation of arrested persons in police paddy wagons in the future.

The comments hereafter are excerpts taken from a formal letter of complaint, dated Sept. 16, 1978 regarding my arrest and transportation in a police paddy wagon.

This formal letter was disseminated to the Baltimore City Police Department (Complaint Board), Northwestern District, and the Baltimore City Human Relations Commission.

"...I would also like it to be known that the driver of the police paddy wagon was insensitive to my situation by driving at an imprudent rate of speed, causing me to be thrown about in the back of the wagon...

"I was the only person in the wagon and I proceeded to sit down at the rear of the vehicle, being that this was my first experience with the law and never experiencing such treatment, I really did not know what to expect after getting into the paddy wagon. After sitting down in the wagon, the driver proceeded to take off like he was in the Indy 500 race."

"I submit that the paddy wagon, unlike normal does not offer or is not equipped with any kind of restraining device to hold onto and brace yourself."

Anyone riding in this vehicle, handcuffed with their arms behind their back is in great danger of being thrown about the paddy wagon and doing serious injury to themself.

The only thing that prevented me from injuring myself was the fact that I quickly analyzed my predicament in not having anything to brace myself with or hold onto, I then decided to sit down on the floor of the vehicle - which was filthy - and I extended my legs across to the other side of the vehicle and braced my legs up against the leg of the bench.

If I had not done this, there is not any doubt in my mind that I would have done injury to my body as the driver of the vehicle was proceeding at a very fast rate of speed. I would further suggest that if this is standard operating procedure, then this area of procedure is in need of revision.

I believe that any individual until proven guilty in a court of law, by his peers, should not be subjected to undue punishment either psysically or mentally, as I believe my trip in the paddy wagon constituted such punishment. I would characterize this as cruel and unusual punishment or severe lack of compassion and sensitivity by the driver of the vehicle, knowing the conditions that the handcuffed individual is being subjected.

Upon reaching the Northwestern District Station, in one piece with no thanks to the driver after getting out of the paddy wagon, I commented to the driver in a very lighthearted manner, "That was a pretty rough ride, brother", at which he responded, "Yeah, that's what everybody says who I bring here."

"I believe this comment by the officer sums up very well the regard in which individuals being locked up or riding in the paddy wagon are held."

Incidentally, my case was dismissed.

DONALD C. OWENS

What was accomplished in Year of the Child?

Dear AFRO:

What was achieved during the International Year of the Child? Has the plight of our children measurably improved?

Will more seniors graduate from Baltimore City public schools this year? (1200 kids last year could not pass the Test)

Will all black boys in Baltimore find work now that the International Year of the Child has come and gone?

Will parents now begin washing dishes at least once a month, and stop treating their children like hired help. (I wanted to say slaves!) Some of us treat our own children worse than white folk treat n——s and that's a damn shame!

Will daddy come home? And will momma make daddy feel welcomed, or will she continue to compare him to white folk and find him lacking?

Will there be fewer young black boys in Mount Vernon Place this summer, selling their manhood for $25 and gold look-alike heavy rope chain to hang around their necks only because the homosexuals who run this ill town need a steady supply of young black playmates?

And I'll bet some of you are now trying to pretend to each other that you never knew such things go on.

Will City Council now pass a bill forbidding the sale of any candy within the city limits. (Especially important note to boys: If you eat sweet, you become sweet)

Will our judges stop offering our black boys the choice, "Either go into the army or go to court and face charges"?

Frankly I'm going to advise all my sons to opt for prison. We really can not possibly be considering allowing our sons to be taken off to some unknown place to die again. Not after the record this nation has piled up in its treatment of us!

I think we need to be warned! Our children, especially our boys, are soon going to become so disillusioned, that they will soon start striking out at the cause of their problem, and don't think they won't hurt you because you are family - You always hurt the ones you love!!!

I'd really like to suggest an "International Year of Grown-up", and let kids run that program and these crazy governments. They could not possibly do worse than what is going on right now.

AMEEN RASHEED

Long and short of it — taxing decision

Filing our income tax — the long form way — always seems so tedious even with a professional tax advisor to help, there are all those records to keep, bills, and receipts, and cancelled checks to sort out.

There are two forms on which taxpayers may file their 1979 tax return: Form 1040A (the short form) and the Form 1040 (the long form). Since the short form has fewer lines to complete, it is a tempting alternative as April 15 gets closer. You may qualify to use it.

The IRS has made the short form an even greater temptation for us this year by increasing the zero bracket amount. This year if you're single you can claim a $2,300 deduction; $3,400 if you are married and filing with your spouse. Exemptions for dependents, too, have increased this year, from $750 to $1,000.

According to the Maryland Association of Certified Public Accountants, the short tax form is handy for those who have had too much tax withheld from their pay and are required to file a return in order to get a refund.

It can also be used by those with incomes under $10,000 who owe no taxes but have an earned income credit coming to them.

The IRS will let you file the short form if your income is solely from salaries, wages and tips, with no more than $400 in dividends or interest. If your adjusted gross income is over $20,000 ($40,000 on a joint return), you cannot use the short form.

Most American taxpayers do not bother to itemize their deductions and some alternate between the short and long forms, bunching deductible expenses, such as extensive dental work, in the years they itemize.

However handy the short form appears, the question of which form to use is something you should reevaluate each year — long before April 15. Any change in your lifestyle, including one or more of the following, could warrant a reappraisal of the method of filing.

- Purchase of home. Interest and real estate taxes should almost certainly make itemizing worthwhile.

- Other large interest payments. Don't overlook interest on time-payment plans, loans, charge accounts, and credit cards as well as the interest on back taxes paid for prior years.

- Unusual state and local tax payments. Again, include payments made in 1979 which apply to earlier years as well as generally higher current taxes and perhaps pre-payments of 1980 taxes if you are a late-payer. Large purchases during the year could mean exceptionally high sales taxes to itemize.

- Unreimbursed business expenses incurred. The costs of performing your job other than commutation expenses may be deductible: uniforms, special work clothes, union dues, subscriptions to technical publications, tools and equipment, business entertainment, an educational course to help you keep up with your present job.

- Expenditures for managing investments. Subscriptions to investment publications and services, costs of traveling to and from brokers' offices, tax advice and assistance, safety deposit box if used to store investment documents—all are deductible.

- Capital losses on sale of assets. This applies only to assets purchased for investment — not to such things as home, car or boat.

- Large medical bills. Only amounts in excess of three percent of adjusted gross income are deductible, but one serious dental project could do it. Don't forget medical travel, health insurance, decide which and prosthetic devices such as eyeglasses, dentures, braces.

- Divorce. Alimony is deductible for the payer, taxable income to the recipient. (Child support is neither although it will help decide which parent can claim the dependent exemption.)