Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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School Board leadership

Mayor Schaefer has an excellent opportunity facing him as regards the Board of School Commissioners.

Mark Josephs has stepped down as president of this all important body.

Dr. Beryl Williams, until the mayor decides who will replace Josephs, has been acting board president. She is more than capable and has been an educational leader in this city for many years.

The mayor need look no further for a new board prexy. He already has one. She is black and a woman and extremely capable.

Mr. Schaefer can seize this opportunity to reverse his exasperating pattern of naming white males, usually lawyers, to head a major city commission and bring the School Board and the community closer together in a dramatic and meaningful way.

Police recruitment

Why on earth are Baltimore police department recruiters off in the hinterlands of the American mid-west trying to hire new cops for our city?

This is a slap in the face to Baltimoreans.

What the department ought to do is borrow the example of other government agencies and train indigenous recruits up to a point where they can pass police academy entrance examinations and then begin regular law enforcement training.

This makes more sense than bringing in outsiders when the unemployment picture in Baltimore is so completely dismal.

Let's take care of our own first.

The influence of Marcus Garvey

Last week a bust of the Jamaican national hero, Marcus Garvey, was unveiled in the Hall of Heroes of the Organization of American States (17th and Constitution Ave.), placing the bust of Garvey among those of other national heroes such as George Washington and Simon Bolivar. To many present day observers the name Marcus Garvey means little but, that the unveiling was of special significance.

Garvey's activities as a black leader in the United States as well as other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean was of particular high interest and great concern during the 1920s and 1930s. He spent his whole life struggling toward a vision of a "free black Africa" and black freedom everywhere. His view that "Africa for Africans" was a crucial effort toward achieving political and economic freedom for black persons everywhere. It was strongly opposed by government officials in the United States and the British colonies of the West Indies.

Ironically, Garvey also was opposed by Many of the black leaders of his day. Nonetheless, Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, which he founded in 1914, attracted more than two million followers in 40 countries.

The mere mention of Garvey's name in the 1920s and 1930s stirred passions and controversy, but when the UNIA was at its height the organization and Garvey were synonymous with the struggle for racial pride among black Americans. According to Robert A. Hill, a Garvey expert and professor of history at the University of California, Los Angeles, Garvey's influence was highly visible in many black leaders who followed in his wake and in numerous African political leaders.

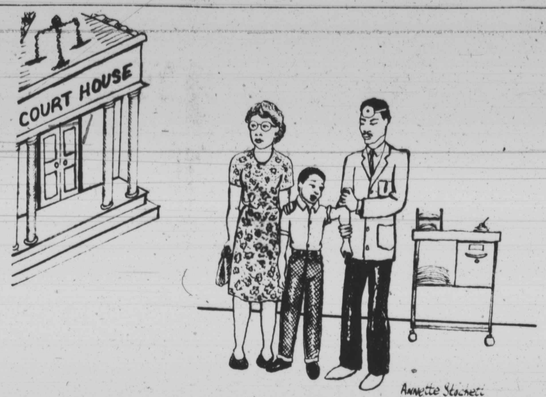
In 1965, the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said "Marcus Garvey was the first man of color in the history of the United States to lead and develop a mass movement. He was the first man, on a mass scale, to give millions of Negroes a sense of dignity and destiny, and make the Negro feel that he was somebody."

Perhaps the real trouble with Garvey's movement was that it called for "a return to Africa," where an independent black nation could be established. The movement did not get much backing, but it did create a growing black consciousness which flowered in the 1960s. Professor Hill says that during that period, "people started to say, now Africa is a force to be reckoned with in world politics. People said this was what Garvey had prophesized, so they rediscovered the tremendous political vision of Garvey."

In his day, Garvey clashed repeatedly with the contemporary black leaders who believed, then as now, that the struggle against racism should be directed toward integration but soon the animosity ebbed as they realized both were striving for the same goal.

Official harassment dogged Garvey throughout his career, and he was deported from the United States in 1927. Later black leaders seemed to realize that Garvey had played a strategic role, and as Professor Hill says, "There is no antipathy at all any longer to Garvey among any black leader I know of."

It is good to see, too, that world leaders have come to the realization that Marcus Garvey's role in the battle for freedom was significant and important. The organization of American States deserves a pat on the back for adding his bust to its historic collegeion.



MADELINE

MURPHY

Rogue elephant gone wild

Any member of the Complaint Evaluation Board" (that board which investigates cases of excessive force and discourtesy by the police department) must by now be either completely disillusioned or absolutely frustrated.

All the good intentions of the enacting legislation by the General Assembly in 1975, proves the old axiom that "no good deed goes unpunished".

According to recent interviews with its members, the board is ineffective because the police department completely ignores its findings; it is merely a rubber stamp for the Police Internal Investigation Division. And if the CEB finds in opposition to the IID, the IID prevails.

In fact this board is held in such low esteem that it didn't even have a quorum in May or June.

Historically in response to community pressure the Complaint Evaluation Board was really a compromise to the demand for a civilian review board that would include responsible citizens from the community to hear complaints against the police department.

And although the idea was spawned in the black community, police brutality and discourtesy occur across the board, especially against lower class whites. Even though there are other flagrant cases against members of the white and black academic community.

The membership of the board includes representatives from the Community Relations Commission, the State Human Relations Commission, Legal Aid, the City Solicitor's office, the police department, the State's Attorney's office and the Attorney General's office.

At present the City Council is trying to enact an ordinance that according to the city solicitor is contrary to state law since the police department is a creature of the state and therefore the City Council has no jurisdiction over the police.

However, the ordinance would set up a review board that would have powers of subpoena, would conduct hearings, would investigate complaints and would make decisions without going to the police commissioner, or relying upon the IID.

Since these hearings would have to be confidential, only the citizen members would be privy to the deliberations.

Match these areas of power against the present CEB and one finds that the CEB has no staff, no subpoena power; metes out no punishment; keeps no on - going records; has no budget; relies completely upon the findings of the police department's IID.

It should be instructive here to note that in 1968, the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders cited black outrage over police brutality as a prime cause of rioting in the inner city.

With the recent LaWin McGee case as example; with the McDuffie case and others in Miami, it becomes imperative that the undeclared war between police and minorities should cease.

In many big cities the police themselves in lowering the death toll have devised rules that limit the use of deadly force and punish patrolmen who go too far.

They also use elaborate review systems that investigate each discharge of a police gun.

It is refreshing to note that the greatest reduction of racial tension in regard to police brutality has been in Detroit and Atlanta where both mayors are black.

Mayor Coleman Young has doubled the percentage of blacks on the Detroit police force to 35 percent and instituted an effective board of civilian commissioners who examine complaints against police.

Mayor Maynard Jackson who appointed two blacks to head Atlanta's department of public safety can point to a decline in fatal shootings from 23 the year before he took office to 3 last year.

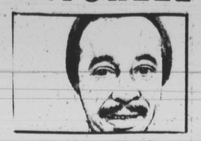
Says something about Baltimore having a black mayor next time around, doesn't it?

No matter under what aegis a new civilian review board is enacted, state or local, the evidence is clear however that so long as Police Commissioner Donald Pomerleau remains intransigent and dictatorial; and Mayor William D. Schaefer remains stubborn and insensitive to Baltimore's tinder box, our long overdue journey into the 20th century will be effective only when we adopt the sensible measure of other big cities in regard to their police department.

We must have independent power to monitor a police department that has become wilder than a rogue elephant.

PARREN

MITCHELL



July's unemployment figures

So far in 1980, the national rate of unemployment has ranged from a low of 6.0 percent in February to a high 7.8 percent in May and June.

In its monthly report to the Joint Economic Committee, on which I serve, the Department of Labor revealed data that was grim. The department's July report showed the national rate of unemployment to be 7.8 percent, but revealed also that the persistent disproportionate rates of black unemployment remained unchanged.

According to the July report, unemployment for white males ages 16-19 is 19.7 percent, but black minority males in the same age bracket are burdened with a 36.6 percent unemployment rate. It is important to remember that the Labor Department data is almost always an under estimate not because of contrivance, but because of research stumbling blocks.

White females 20 years old and over have a 6.7 percent rate of unemployment while minority females 20 and over have an 11.5 percent rate of unemployment.

White males 20 years and older had a 6.7 percent unemployment rate, but non-white males, 20 and over, show 12.7 percent unemployment.

The non-white unemployment rate in all categories remains almost twice as high as that for whites in all categories.

The "explanations" given for the high rate of unemployment (apart from the racist ones, i.e. "they just don't want to work") have surface appeal for some of our liberal friends.

One "explanation" says that black youth unemployment could be sharply reduced if employers were allowed to pay youth less than a minimum wage, because the young worker is unskilled and inexperienced.

I oppose a sub-minimum wage for youth because, among other reasons, employers would simply get rid of adult workers and hire the youth at a lesser-wage to increase their profits.

Another "explanation" given frequently for high black unemployment is the lack of education. From 1976 to 1979, the private sector, not the government, created a million new jobs annually for each of those three years. This greatly reduced the white unemployment rate.

It strains credibility to believe that those three million whites had educational attainments far beyond those of the black person seeking work. It is hard to believe that the three million persons did not get on the job training and were not given an opportunity, on the job, to improve their education. If education is the key, critical factor, then how does one explain the thousands of black college graduates who simply cannot find jobs?

Racism and high rates of black unemployment go hand in hand. To reduce black unemployment rates we must have tough, unrelenting, and skilled enforcement of the Equal Employment Opportunities provisions found in the law.

That is why we must work hard to guarantee that there will be adequate funds provided to the EEOC, and that is why we must demand from EEOC personnel at all levels, full performance and full commitment.

JUST THINKING

BIG keeps growing, but come 1981?

By Al Sweeney

Because "hope springs eternal," according to a word, one of the nation's fastest growing organizations is a group with the acronym BIG.

BIG stands for Blacks in Government. The group will hold its second annual conference at the Washington Hilton Hotel beginning Labor Day, Sept. 1.

More than 2,500 "hopeful" federal, state and county workers seeking the good life on the public payroll are expected to attend the three-day event. Why the Hilton hotels have a special lure for black conventioneers has long eluded me.

If ever a hotel employed a group of workers filled with what the folks in the ghetto call an "attitude" it is Hilton.

For instance, the leadership of the BIG was forced in February to deposit $42,000 with the management of the Hilton to guarantee that rooms would be available for the visiting delegates. This indicates the "confidence" that the hotel has in black groups that spend thousands annually at their various entities. What about the interest on the money? someone asks.

However, the fact that the group could throw around that kind of money is indicative of how the organization has caught on.

Headed by Lonis Ballard, a recent retiree from an agency of the Department of Human Services, BIG has grown from the seven chapters of a year ago to the present 40 chapters located in a range of cities located from Albany in the northeast to Miami in the southeast; to San Francisco on the West Coast. The biggest chapter is in Ft. Huachuca, Arizona with over 100 members. Old GI's can easily understand why.

The idea was born in the Garklawn Building in Rockville, Md., where several offices of the old HEW were housed. As Ballard tells it, as an Equal Employment Opportunity official, he, like many of his colleagues, was frustrated by the impediments placed in the paths of those sincerely attempting to make equal employment a reality.

EEO, as they say in the trade, has been fragmented by a maze of efforts. It seems that the government now has special programs such as Federal Women's Program, the Handicapped Program, the Native American Desk, the Hispanic Program and various ethnic groups seeking to capitalize on the euphonius-sounding employment efforts.

The fragmentation began during the 1963 arguments over the passage of an equal employment bill. It seems that opponents of the bill smelled the inevitable. The mood of the nation because of the Kennedy assassination and the determined efforts of President Lyndon Johnson favored the enactment of an equal employment opportunity measure.

However, the diehards, shrewdies such as Judge Howard Smith of Virginia, saw an opportunity to throw sand in the machinery and added the word "sex" to the litany of discriminatory classes such as "race, religion and national origin."

The Virginia legislator tossed the word "sex" in as a kind of a joke. But, to Martha Griffin, a congresswoman from Michigan, it was no joke. It became a cause, and part of the 1964 equal employment opportunity act.

A perusal of the legislative history makes it clear that when Representative Griffin was campaigning for the inclusion of women in the act she meant "white women."

She indicated that everyone else was covered except "white women." That bit of history has led to considerable discussion. It even has made the cover for the current edition of Black Enterprise to dramatize an article "Struggle For the Executive Suite: Blacks vs. White Women."

It appears that devilish intentions of Virginia's Judge Smith have come to pass. Not only has "white women" become a concern of black males in the employment arena, but many black males are critical of the rise of black women on the employment ladder at what they feel, is at their expense.

And then there is the competition among the browns, blacks, reds and yellows, which has become keener and more sensitive during this depressed economic period.

I cite all this to explain why BIG exists and is growing like a mushroom farm.

Blacks in government are basically insecure.

While the BIG conference will not cure the malady, there might be some consolation out of therapeutic qualities that go with ventilating their collective frustration.

Norman Seay is serving as general chairman for a second consecutive year.

Most of the Ballard-Seay supporting cast is new. Which may indicate that the 1979 supporting group has abdicated or purged.

For whatever reason that the original group has disappeared, the program for the upcoming event appears to be full.

Not only will the effects of the Civil Service Reform on equal employment be explored, the status of upward mobility, the criteria for adverse action, but also psychologists will discuss the stress encountered by black executives under the current pressures.

As for top speakers, secretary of the Department of Human Resources, Patricia Harris, and Congressman Parren Mitchell are confirmed.

A report has it that the GOP presidential candidate Ronald Reagan will appear, if invited, while President Carter may attend.

The first BIG conference outstripped the fondest dreams of the organization's founders. As a result, the leadership was unprepared for the unanticipated response.

This year, inconveniences encountered by the delegates will have a lower degree of tolerance.

Ballard and Seay are aware that, if BIG is to remain effective, the hopes of the thousands who register must be met.

If not, the consequences could be terrible. I am confident that like the Congressional Black Caucus, the organization called BIG will build a network of understanding government workers, who may differ on approaches, but are sincere in their question widening opportunities for blacks in government service.

LETTERS

Real candidate, not an actor!

Dear AFRO:

Well now it all comes clear. We are faced with three basic choices:

Republican Reagan, a senior, retired actor who began his political life as a reform liberal now playing another role, that of a reform conservative, reaching out to the same constituency his reform liberal Democrats reached out to 45 years ago. Same act, same actor.

Independent Anderson, maverick, opportunist "Republican" who seems rather like a plastic reproduction, glibly programmed to make correct answers to all problems punched into him. I expect him at any time to cackle, "Insufficient data for comment!" and then to repeat, repeat and repeat it until cut off.

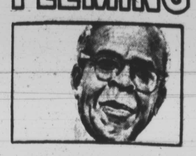
Born - again, personable, struggling, humble, conscience - ridden, experienced Democrat Jimmy Carter, unprotected target and scapegoat for all our ills — a flesh and blood, imperfect man who has confirmed Lyndon Johnson's beginning of national redemption and reconciliation among our people.

Understanding that President Carter has had failures in the economy and international affairs (what president has not?), I prefer, for me and mine, to give my support for the future to leadership by a REAL PERSON — not a performer, and not a plastic copy.

DAVID E. SLOAN

G. JAMES

FLEMING



Brooding over the United States

This column is usually optimistic. But, it is difficult to be too optimistic in these times, despite political campaign oratory, if and when one thinks of the welfare of the nation, rather the plight of the nation.

Of course, the United States has seen difficult days before. There have been depressions; there have been bank failures; there has been corruption in high places; there have been weak presidents; and there have been wars. There have also been some people, down the years, who were convinced that "the country is going to the dogs."

Most of the time, however, we Americans have been optimistic. We have believed that we could solve any problem, sooner or later. We have felt "We are the greatest." In high school a teacher could say that "The only time America has lost in any war is when one - half of America defeated the other half of America."

In a later year, in college, a teacher could claim that "There will never be another depression in the United States, with all our safeguards of unemployment insurance, social security, and the other New Deal programs."

These days, it seems, pessimism is widespread on every level of the citizenship. Optimists are in the minority. The future seems bleak for most Americans. The human problems seen beyond solution with no planning or intellectual giants in sight.

Part of the nation's problems may be that, although we are a largely capitalist society, we cannot provide and produce, at one and the same time, all the "goodies" that candidates and political parties promise and our citizens expect, as morally right as these expectations may be.

1. We cannot push technological and scientific advancement, which greatly reduce the need for powerful muscles and strong backs, and at the same time have "full employment," in the dimensions known before agriculture, manufacture, and the household arts were mechanized. Nevertheless, the politicians are forced to promise full employment.

2. With the reduction of the need for raw manpower and womanpower, it is also questionable whether there can be "equal" employment for both men and women; for blacks, whites and Hispanics and "others"; for adults and adolescents. The record confirms that there are not enough "meaningful" jobs for all of these categories.

3. With minimum wages set by law, regardless of rate of productivity, experience or skill, the private sector will not employ the underskilled, the untrained, or adolescents, if it can help it — or if it can replace humans with machines.

4. The freedom of labor unions to bargain for, and obtain, more and more, while good for unionized workers and their leaders, seems leading to the place where there may be a billing of the goose that layed the golden egg, even if the political parties feel they must always go along with organized labor.

5. Big business, with huge dividends and stock manipulations, quite often with the approval of government, must know that it is playing into the hands of dictatorship ("It can happen here!") if it continues prospering while the masses of workers are unemployed — men and women willing, anxious and able to work (Even if some corporations are also facing bankruptcy).

If all the dreams of Americans — the highest income, the most luxurious homes, "equal" employment, and world leadership — are to come true, conditions and experience seem to say that they will not come true under an absolute capitalist, so called free - enterprise system.

That is why the United States, since 1932, has been moving steadily in the direction of a "welfare state" — welfare at both ends of the economy, the masses and the upper classes, labor and management. That is why, also, the Democratic National Convention last week forced the $12 billion full employment plank into its party platform.

If this new, latest attempt to stem unemployment fails, still more government aid will be called for — until, one of these days, the fears of unemployment will be replaced with fears of loss of freedom and the Bill of Rights guarantees.

It should not be considered utterly reactionary or conservative to remind ourselves, it may just be, that we cannot have, at one and the same time, the most and the best of everything we have dreamed of, and neither can government, by fiat, always insure the Promised Land (incidentally, even Moses did not get to enter the Promised Land).

Frighteningly, we must also remember that when a people lose hope, when they become deeply pessimistic, and when they see their future continually bleak and unpromising, they will settle for any knight in shining armor, riding on a white horse — as the Germans did when they settled for, and succumbed to, Adolf Hitler.

YEAR OF THE FAMILY

End the 'put downs!'

By Marion M. Banfield

To parents whose children will be entering junior high school in September, I send a special plea that you continue or even increase your involvement with the junior high school or the middle school.

As our children approach adolescence, they have been exposed to such confusing, stimulating, destructive and constructive ideas that their minds are crammed full of thoughts unlike previous generations.

Yet, with all the exposure to feelings and ideas there often exists an underlying ignorance and innocence.

I have conducted sessions about our sexuality with parents and students and faculty. When the cards come in with questions in addition to verbal queries, we adults then discover important gaps of knowledge.

Schools are seeking parental involvement. Parents do schools and themselves a disservice by withdrawing from schools after their children leave elementary school.

Families can spend time clarifying some basic values. I would say that "putting down", "disrespecting", "de - valuing others". In short, insulting others, is the most important relationship problem with which families need to deal.

The offensive aggression, or just plain fighting so widespread among our children can be an area of concern for families. We don't put each other down in our families. We don't put each other down outside of the family.

With parents seen more in schools, children will feel the continued interest and support which they need. Parental involvement will give teachers support in establishing a school climate of respect which will allow a teaching - learning atmosphere.

Families who know that parents follow their children through the school are more apt to get their children to graduate from at least the 12th grade.

Families are our first center for learning how to love, how to respect each other.

FOR ALL WE KNOW

By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

SCHOOL DAYS AGAIN with the Aug. 21 opening of most colleges bring to mind the end of summer and autumn bowing in within just a few days.

MORGAN U held registration and orientation for freshmen on Thursday with Dr. Andrew Billingsley delivering the welcome address and doing a thousand other duties to make them welcome.

MUS new students number over 1,000 persons of all races and from every state in the union. Foreign countries are well represented including Nigeria and Iran to mention a few.

Present on the scene and ready for work are the 300 members of the faculty.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE — Registering also on Thursday welcome 13,000 to the Harbor Campus and Liberty Heights the largest projected number with over 2,000 new ones.

COPPIN STATE College expected nearly 1,000 freshmen, more or less. They're restructuring the phone system there and for results you have a new number for each department, even the cafeteria.

Each number can be had by calling the old number 383-4500 and a voice on a recorder will give you each separate department.

DR. JOHN L. CREW, superintendent, expects 130,000 in the 190 schools when registration is over. Students start Sept. 4th.

NEWEST school is Calvin Rodwell Elementary at Liberty Heights near Gwynn Oak Junction. Edward Spath Jr. is principal of the beautiful school which bears the name of the policeman who was killed while serving as a cab driver on duty that year (when the police department needed to protect the taxi passengers from robbery.)

RODWELL is from that huge Virginia family of over 3,500 members, the Shells, Blackwells, Taylors, Hicks, Sjiihs, etc. Sometime early this fall the school will be dedicated and invitations will be sent to ALL the Rodwell relatives across the nation.

AT THAT TIME the family will hold a reunion, the kind that is always slated as "The largest in the nation," and Baltimore will roll out the red carpet.

DR. REBECCA CARROLL is still in Africa and will return sometime next week from her usual most interesting journey. Last year she was in the Peoples Republic of China.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' registration is expected to be down 4 to 5,000, about the same as last year.

The birthrate decline has caught up with the registration of the primary classes. It is there that we have the largest drop in attendance. The smaller figure of drop-off is caused by citizens black and white migrating from the city and also from enrollment in private schools.

Mel de Rutledge Jr.

Urban America Housing Report

Wise home buying

DECIDING TO BUY

A home purchase is the largest investment most families undertake.

When you settle in the community of your choice, you gain a stake in its future, its plans and problems. You will develop a sense of responsibility and pride in home-ownership and, with your neighbors, will have a strong voice in determining the policies the community adopts and the direction it takes.

If you choose a home in the city, you'll enjoy close proximity to shopping areas and convenient transportation, but you may want to check on noise levels.

Life in a quiet suburb offers lots of room in peaceful surroundings, but there may be limited transportation to shopping areas and schools. Take time to weigh all the possibilities before you reach a decision to purchase a home in a particular location.

Homeownership involves pratical benefits. You can deduct interest paid on a mortgage loan from your income when you pay federal income taxes. This also is true of taxes paid on the property. These advantages give the home buyer a good inflation hedge.

If properly and cautiously handled, the home buying process can be a pleasant experience resulting in a lifetime of genuine satisfaction. If your purchase is made in a hasty and unbusinesslike manner, the result may be a regrettable or even a disastrous financial error.

ARE YOU READY TO BUY?

There are some key questions to ask when making up your mind about buying a house. To make a realistic choice you must determine how much you can spend on the property, based on your income and family expenses.

First, you must decide whether you are likely to live in the house for several years. In the early life of a mortgage, the bulk of your mortgage payment goes to interest and you are acquiring very little equity. The longer you hold the property, the more equity you acquire.

Perhaps your next consideration is the matter of paying for a new home. Here are two ways many people use to estimate ability to meet house payments.

1. The price of the home should not exceed two to two-and-one-half times your annual family income. A young couple should stay on the low side of this estimate. If income is substantial and job prospects good, the upper level can be applied.

2. A homeowner should not pay more than 25 percent of income for monthly housing expense (payment on the mortgage loans plus average cost of heat, utilities, repair and maintenance).

The buyer should have the cash necessary to meet the down-payment and other expenses at closing time, when the sale is completed.

Ask your real estate sales person or lender to provide an estimate of all closing costs you will need at the time of settlement. Quite often these expenses are more than a new home purchaser expects.

Congress passed the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 as amended in 1975 (RESPA) regulating lending practices and closing and settlement procedures to eliminate unnecessary costs and difficulties in the purchase of a home you've seen. Questionable charges can be looked into by HUD.

The home buyer who "gets in over his head" faces not only disappointment when he cannot meet monthly payments and is forced to vacate his new home.

He also may have damaged his future chances to buy a house by acquiring a poor credit rating. So don't overlook the additional expenses for upkeep and repair to maintain your home in a comfortable, attractive condition that will be a credit ot your neighborhood.

Many people in recent years have purchased townhouses and condominium units, due to the advantages of less upkeep and time required in maintenance of the property.

To avoid unpleasant surprises, estimate how much money you will have available for monthly mortgage and utility payments and property maintenance by subtracting monthly living expenses from monthly income.

The real estate sales person or lender will provide figures on typical monthly payments for homes in your price range and can probably give you some tips on estimating maintenance costs.

Do not fail to survey your financial situation completely before you are committed to purchase.

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT HOUSE

There are various ways to shop for the house that is right for your family. Houses are sold chiefly through real estate advertising and real estate brokers. Sometimes they can be purchased directly from the owner.

Peruse the advertisements in real estate sections of local newspapers.

Tell your friends and neighbors that you are house hunting. Then take your time in shopping the market. Don't quit until you have a clear idea of the cost and quality of homes currently offered for sale.

Take a Sunday afternoon drive or walk through neighborhoods you find attractive. You may locate houses that are offered for sale and model homes on display.

Don't trust to memory when you find an appealing house, but keep a record listing the asking price, owner's name, location, number of bedrooms, taxes, heating bills, and any special features.

An inexpensive notebook is all you need to avoid ending your search with a blurred impression of houses and neighborhoods you've seen.

WHAT REAL ESTATE BROKERS DO

Many homeseekers ask, "Should I use the services of a real estate broker?"

In most cases using a real estate broker will be to your advantage. A good real estate broker provides a clearing center for marketable houses and his screening process will save you many a wild goose chase.

Multiple list services offered by a broker will give a better understanding of housing areas and price ranges.

A good broker will give you general information about a community and specific information about schools, churches and stores. He may be able to help you get financing and may know how to eliminate much red tape.

The broker's commission is usually 6-7 percent of the sales price but may range up to 10 percent. This commission is paid by the party or parties who engaged the broker.

To find a good real estate broker, ask your friends or call the mortgage officers of local banks and savings-and-loan associations.

Notice which brokers run the most newspaper advertisements for houses in the neighborhoods you prefer. Often brokers will specialize in a particular neighborhood.

One bit of cautious advice; do not rely too heavily on oral promises principally for a seller, not a buyer.

NEW HOUSE OR USED

Statistics show that two out of every three buyers select a used house. The one person out of three who buys a new house is likely to purchase one that is already built rather than to build his own house or have one built.

This is a choice each home buyer must make for himself. Usually one of the biggest advantages that an older house offers is more space for the money. The lot may have been planted with trees and shrubs by previous owners and therefore presents relatively few landscaping problems.

In an established neighborhood taxes are usually stable. And, don't fail to weigh the possibility of shorter commuting times and distances from older neighborhoods to schools, offices and other frequent destinations.

Future road contruction also could affect the value of a home, so you may wish to check plans for construction with local authorities.

Many older houses are located in the neighborhoods that have started to deteriorate, although many such neighborhoods are undergoing improvement today.

Before purchasing a house in an older neighborhood, be sure that you check on any future plans for neighborhood improvement, urban renewal or land appropriation for new highways or other projects.

Many older homes have ample bedroom space and this is an important factor in choosing a house. Observe how the floor space has been used by the builder.

Most buyers will prefer a house containing fewer rooms that are spacious and livable to a house with a larger number of small cell-like rooms.

Once you've found a house you like, evaluate it carefully. You are buying the property "as is" and you must literally live in as well as with your mistakes.

WEIGHT, DIET AND HEALTH

Are you baffled by conflicting "expert" opinion on the significance of weight on survivorship, or on the value of dietary restriction of saturated fats and of cholesterol? If you are, don't worry. So are millions of Americans.

For many years we have been taught that lean is best. Where do we get this belief? In laboratory studies using rats, restriction of caloric intake early in life increased length of life in these animals. Such restriction initiated later in life reduced longevity. In other words, such restriction later in life does not increase length of life. Additional evidence comes from the study by the Society of Actuaries released in 1959. In this study the relevant major findings were as follows:

It is quite clear that among men at ages 30 and over, the lowest mortality ratios are consistently associated with underweight often of appreciable degree.

Among women of ages 20 and over, the lowest mortality ratios are quite uniformly associated with weights below the average.

Recently, however, in what were called longitudinal studies, one conducted here in Baltimore and the other in Massachusetts the advantage of longer life derived from being underweight was not demonstrated. In fact, maintaining average weight or a weight up to 10 percent above average weight seems to be the best way to assure long life.

In all studies, there is confirmation that obesity, weight more than 20 percent above average, is likely to reduce the length of life.

Now what about the issue of saturated fats and cholesterol? In men aged 50-69, high levels of blood cholesterol carry an increased risk of coronary heart disease. What accounts for high blood cholesterol?

Inherited predisposition accounts for the fact that one percent of the population has elevated serum cholesterol. Dietary and other factors account for the fact that up to 20 percent of the population has high blood cholesterol.

Aside from diet, other factors include sex and age, exercise patterns, smoking and strangely perhaps, the emotional levels of the adult male. However, it is clear that as many as 70 percent of the adult population has no evidence of high blood cholesterol.

In respect to diet, the weight of evidence suggests that the use of polyunsaturated fat, the substitution of vegetable protein for meat protein and the use of moderate amounts of dietary fiber seems to have a blood cholesterol lowering effect.

A recent report of the National Academy of Science suggests that Americans, healthy in such characteristics as blood pressure, blood cholesterol and having none of the other known characteristics associated with coronary heart disease need not be concerned with radical changes in fat and cholesterol intake.

This seems to contradict the prevalent advice, recommended by organizations such as the American Heart Association, which, briefly stated, recommends reduction in current intake of total fat, saturated fat and of cholesterol for the U.S. population as a whole.

What does this mean for the average older adult?

In respect to weight, try to achieve what is known as optimal weight, that is the weight you had when you were 25 years of age. In respect to diet, the use of poultry and fish to replace fat-rich meats is good overall strategy.

For the individual with no significant risk factors in respect to heart disease, pursue this advice in a relaxed way. If risk factors are present try to follow this advice with determination. Overall the historic principle of a balanced varied diet with attention to fresh, vegetables and use of fruits in season is a difficult one on which to improve.

STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT AGING

Ulcers are aged-related

What can I tell you about ulcers that you do not already know?

They are the special plague of chronic worriers and hard-driving executives, right?

And of hard-drinkers, too. And of people who eat lots of cucumbers or anchovy pizzas. Right?

Wrong. Studies conducted to look for precisely those relationships have come up with results that are equivocal at best — enough to put those above-mentioned ulcer "causes" into the same folkloric category as wart-producing toads.

Now here's a generally-held notion about ulcers that is true: they are age-related. In fact, according to the Digestive Diseases Information Center in Bethesda, the age of patients hospitalized for ulcer has been increasing so steadily that now about one-third of those hospitalized with duodenal ulcers and about one-half of those hospitalized with gastric ulcers are over 60.

Of the 10,000 people discharged from hospital in 1978 for ulcers, approximately 10 percent were aged 15-44, approximately 30 percent were 45-59 years old and the balance were over 60.

But before going on with a few more truths about ulcers, let us consider a couple of definitions.

The kind of ulcers that most people are talking about when they talk about them at all are peptic ulcers.

Peptic ulcers get their name because they are holes (ulcers) in a portion of the lining of one of those parts of the gastrointestinal tract that is bathed by a digestion-aiding enzyme called pepsin.

When peptic ulcers occur in the stomach proper, they are called gastric ulcers; when they occur in the uppermost part of the intestine, in that area where the stomach discharges its contents, they are called duodenal ulcers. The latter are more common than the former.

What are the causes of peptic ulcers?

Well, there is the rub. Such causes have not been precisely identified. It is known, however, that it is possible for a person to inherit a susceptibility to ulcers (a three-fold risk if you have a parent or sibling with one) and that there are several environmental factors which seem to play casual roles.

Two environmental factors which have been clearly linked to ulcers are cigarette smoking and use of aspirin. Smokers are twice as likely as non-smokers to get an ulcer, and eaths from ulcers are more common among smokers. Ulcers also heal more slowly among smokers.

As far as aspirin is concerned, people who use it regularly — arthritis sufferers, for instance — show an increased incidence of gastric ulcer. It is not yet known whether the new aspirin substitutes carry the same risk.

Symptoms caused by ulcers — "burning" pains in the upper abdomen being the most frequently cited — are not always definitive. Instead of relying exclusively on a patient's description of his symptoms, physicians turn to barium-x-rays or to the use of an endoscope, a device consisting of flexible glass fibers carrying a tiny light and a viewing "eye."

Once diagnosed, most peptic ulcers can be effectively treated with antacids, with drugs, or by surgery.

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