Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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No day care cuts

Few of the state's welfare and social assistance programs have sufficient operating budgets to begin with and in the Department of Human Resources, to now be actively contemplating slashes in day care center monies just compounds the original felony as it were.

Early childhood development, most experts concur, is an important ingredient in citizens reaching their full positive productivity.

The earlier children can experience a good school situation the better their chances.

The federal Head Start program begun in the Sixties as a component of community action programs throughout the nation recognizes this essential point.

Particularly rewarding for low-income children, day care centers, such as Head Start represented, assured pre-school age youngsters a stable, organized learning situation with hot, wholesome meals.

Day care centers enable mothers to enter the world of work, thus increasing family income, they bring relief to single parents for much the same reasons.

But most importantly, they allow children to learn and receive positive information at an earlier age.

Understand that we are not talking about tot "park my kids" facilities where pre-schoolers are just dumped until parents are ready to pick them up.

We are concerned with fully-licensed day care and other pre-school centers which operate under strict local and Federal guidelines with professional staff, proper food services, adequate play and learning space with sensible curriculum.

To consider closing any of these state-funded facilities for the excuse of insufficient money, to us, is inexcusable.

Low income and or single parent families with pre-school age children want and need day care.

If the human resources overloads must make cuts, let them be made in other areas. Administrative salaries might not be a bad place to begin.

But no day care center closings or cutbacks.

The state's low income children, black or white, should not have to suffer because state officials are either unwilling or unable to re-allocate monies so that 'people' and file membership.

The hospital strike

The majority of the striking hospital employees in Baltimore are black women.

These are the workers that make hospitals great institutions of service.

Doctors, administrators, nurses, and technicians are glamour cream of the hospital work teams, but the workers presently on strike are the unsung heroines and heroes who work in the trenches.

Striking union members want more money. That is understandable. They make less than other staff members.

They want their benefit fund left intact and, if possible, improved.

Hospital administrators, however, say the benefit fund builds the union's general economic power but does not really do all that much for the rank and file membership.

For the record, the union's benefit fund is administered nationally by 10 trustees representing hospital management and 10 representing union membership.

These, 20 responsible trustees have previously approved terms of the benefit fund.

Therefore we do not see why local hospital administrators are harping on a fund and its provisions already agreed upon by both sides.

This obscures the issue, we feel.

The hospital workers want more money.

The hospitals do not want to pay and most likely would rather have no union to deal with.

This is what the current negotiations are all about.

We do not intend to be tracked by the obfuscations on both sides about the benefit fund.

Some 2,000 hospital workers are in their second week of protest. Most of them are black women with families to care for.

They are valuable people.

We pray for a speedy resolution to this wage dispute—for the hospitals, the workers and the patients.

John Lennon

The tragic death of John Lennon, "the brains of the Beatles," cuts across all cultural and racial avenues.

Lennon was a masterful tunesmith. He and Paul McCartney gave the world songs to sing in the Sixties that were comparable to what Gershwin, Eubie Blake, Ellington and other popular composers had given earlier decades.

Lennon and his fellow Beatles had the added advantage of a global communications system not in place when composers such as mentioned above were in their prime.

The Beatles were the first, perhaps the only great TV-induced or produced musical group. Elvis Presley was the first great TV-created individual artist.

Both, incidentally, were introduced to America and thereby to the world, on the Ed Sullivan "talk of the town" show.

Both Presley and the Beatles, but not so coincidentally, had such tremendous impact on America (therefore the world) because the origins of their art came from black music.

The Beatles, as their millions piled up, always gave full credit to "Little Richard," Chuck Berry, "Bo" Diddley as being their influences in the beginning.

Less likely an influence, but as we believe in fairness above all else, perhaps the Beatles first "real" inspiration were the Everly Brothers, Phil and Don, a southern white group of the Fifties.

We do not recall Lennon and company ever giving the Everlys their proper due, but it was much more exciting, if you were as publicity-shrewd as the Beatles, to say you were turned on by black creators rather than by a couple of blond kids from the Ozarks.

We do not intend to ramble.

But death is always a time for reflection.

John Lennon helped shape a generation of pop music partisans.

Lennon fought for some good causes. He worked for third world forces. He lived out his beliefs about love and universality. And he made good music.

This week Europeans are expressing outrage about Lennon's assassination and what it continues to reveal about the American "sickness."

What black Americans understand about Lennon's death is that the "sickness" that smote him in one way or another is something we have endured since 1619.

"Eleanor Rigby," one of the Beatles' best songs, has a particularly haunting, perhaps prophetic refrain:

"Oh life lonely people,
"Oh the lonely people,
Where do they all come from?"

The answer came Monday, Dec. 9, 1980 for John Lennon, poet, philosopher, musician.

LETTERS

Dear AFRO:

The AFRO, over many decades, has served the black community better than any agency or person with which and whom I am aware. We are better for the AFRO's service.

But there is a nook that has received only scant attention: the black inmates of Maryland. We can understand neglect from the white media, they've little interest in free blacks, save when one of us grabs a purse—but not the black media.

But we are-or should be-an integral part of the black community. Alas, gellaters (white) are hawking their nefarious wares again, i.e. reporting that blacks are adopting the spoon-fed white line against black welfare "shirkers" and as for us, "threw away the keys on those..." I am saddened by this reactionally, pseudo Moral Majority barometer.

The AFRO should counter-attack on an on-going basis, not solely on "sensational" occurances. We need you, and there may come a time when blacks need us.

Nathaniel Johnson

A child, somewhere, needs you

MADELINE MURPHY

From pancakes to judge

By Madeline W. Murphy

It's funny when you look back, well, maybe a bit poignant too.

He was a snaggle - toothed kid wearing glasses, hair all awry and never in place even then. Grandmother used to call him a "ferret" because at no time was he still, always busy, - looking for something to do, to find, to ask questions about.

Food had little meaning to him and the old expression, "Eat, it's good for you" became a common expression said without thought at most mealtimes. The nagging kept him away from the table until the last minute.

Later . . . "Why do you cook carrots anyway" Don't you know they are better for you raw?"

Piano lessons were mastered by memory and ear. It took a little time to discover that note reading was lost in the process. As pieces became more difficult, interest flagged and then there were no more lessons until the marching band.

The marching band at Poly was without a drummer until one day when the music teacher looked at the only black in the class and said, "You must have rhythm, how would you like to be the bass drummer?"

But not an early riser at all, a night owl in fact, the novelty soon wore off when the school bands were in a contest at the University of Maryland one cold Saturday, from 6 a.m. until? That did it! But the desire to beat the drums went on through college and into money-making gigs that helped to support the growing family. He really did have rhythm!

Perhaps he got it from his grandfather, because without completing music lessons he had nearly nearly perfect pitch and could play the same jazz refrain out of his head on the piano, ad nauseum.

Life could not be lived easily, in college, in marriage, in public life. Swirls of controversy kept one on tinder hooks waiting for the next bombshell.

To be bright, to be miles ahead in thought, had its problems. Conversations were rarely on the subject that started them and one-upmanship became the rule rather than the exception. So much so that siblings became either antagonistic or withdrawn.

Except for the last sister, some twelve years his junior, who wondered on a summer trip if in fact he was her surrogate father.

By then at a little over ten, she had become an aunt with some of those babysitting chores becoming obligatory rather than by choice.

When she found out she didn't have to be so obedient, so unquestioning one Mother's Day before all the family she declared her independence in very forceful language, and has been a respected individual ever since.

Because like most first children he had become the center of attention in good deed as well as bad, the example to follow or not depending upon whether harsh punishment had been meted out, or praise had been lavished upon him.

There is an expression that goes, "The first child, like the first pancake, should be thrown away."

It is the experiment, the repository of all the hesitance, the anxiety, the travail, of leniency, or too strict punishment, that is part of learning to sail in the uncharted waters of the new strange ship of parenthood.

It is exemplified for the other children by the sing - song expression of the older sister, who from birth always before taking anything, would archly look at the giver and ask, "Some for Billy?"

But this first pancake, thank God, has not been thrown away.

Much has to be learned, much has to be tempered, much has to be controlled, cherished and remembered . . . other things forgotten.

Also, much will be gained in this new experience that will mellow, guide, and mature the quick mind, the impatient heart, the quixotic nature.

Therefore, when people ask, "How does it feel being the mother of a judge?" the answer is loaded with unflagging mother love, yet with all the childhood memories, the mistakes, the apprehensions, the need to know how much of what he has been taught will stand him in good stead when the going gets tough — overwhelming pride and gratitude that with all his faults, that spark of tenderness, that love for people will continue to shine through.

The spoken answer is heartfelt and should be understood, it is "The same."

For as long as one grows with one's children, the longer one sees the tunnel, hoping for the light, the more they become the lingering ache on your heart, you know that it has only just begun. You cannot help but be cautious and wonder "what next?"

However, the prayer in your heart is that Billy Murphy will BE a great judge.

PARREN MITCHELL

A tribute to Sister Rosa Parks

December is the month of Christmas. Many of us are trying to focus on the true meaning of this season by continuing the spirit of good will, and the promotion of fairness, equitability, human rights, and world peace. We hold fast to these ideas because we know the realities. We live on a daily basis with the hostage situation, spiraling interest rates and damaging inflation.

It is easy to succumb to these symbols of discouragement. However, last week, as I went to the floor of the House of Representatives to pay tribute to that brave trooper — Sister Rosa Parks — I was filled with pride and hope. December 1 of this very month marks the twenty - fifth anniversary of Mrs. Parks' heroic stance against racial discrimination and bigotry.

As I joined with other Members of the Congressional Black Caucus in honoring this brave black woman, her strength in the face of 1955 Montgomery, Alabama racism, gave this month an even more significant meaning. I am very proud to share my remarks to the Members of the House of Representatives with you:

"Countless times I've asked myself, 'Where would we be if on that fateful day in 1955 Sister Rosa Parks had given up her seat and moved to the back of the bus?' No resistance. No boycott. No subsequent civil - rights movement. I chagrin at the possibilities.

"Within Rosa Parks there is something I call the 'indomitable spirit.' It is something that refuses to hide, something that refuses to die. This 'spirit to struggle and power to prevail' is in all of us. Its origin can be traced as far back as our fore - parents in their indigenous lands. Yet, its destiny leaps much farther into the future than any of us could imagine. Thank God Rosa Parks decided to 'struggle that day.'

"Active in grassroots politics, Mrs. Parks had no knowledge that a boycott involving thousands would ensue. She didn't know she was providing the scenario to a lesson that time could perpetuate.

"Physically, it must have been an awful experience for the young and particularly for the old, reaching every destination by foot. Somehow, I cannot help but believe that the indomitable spirit somehow prevailed, thus making the task substantially lighter. The boycotters in Montgomery, Alabama believed in what they were doing. They were right and they knew it.

"Their strategy, whether intentional or not, proved to be magnetic, nonviolent and ultimately effective. Magnetic in the sense that it drew world - wide attention. Watchdogs of human rights throughout the international scene recognized Montgomery as the 'American cause - celibre.'

"The non - vilent approach was a timely strategy. Although subjected to critical scrutiny at times, it maintained its moral fibre of peaceful perseverance.

"Thousands of dollars and trodden miles later, the issue was settled. The walkers prevailed; their strategy ultimately provided effective.

"Considering the continuing injustices heaped upon the backs of minorities at the hands of institutional manipulators, a sophisticated and well - concerted effort similar to the Montgomery bus boycott may have to occur. Such an effort may be in order because institutional racism continues to run rampant throughout our society. Quite simply, minorities have yet to gain social, political, and economic parity in this country.

"I am honored to submit this statement in behalf of Rosa Parks and others like her. Her rigid stance on December 1, 1955, against second - class treatment is indicative of the massive dissatisfaction with double standards (which were recognizable then and are still providing impediments to real progress in many arenas.)"

Rosa Parks left a legacy of strength, commitment, and self respect. As we move forward in the struggle, let these be at the core of our efforts.

G. JAMES FLEMING

By G. James Fleming

Enjoy your Christmas!

All of us ordinary Americans, especially blacks, had better enjoy this coming Christmas to the hill. What the headline say speaks even louder than the greetings of "Merry Christmas," and even more loudly than our "Happy New Year."

The immediate future does not look promising, although we caution ourselves not to "view with alarm" the days ahead — days which are still not here. Indeed, the world has seemed to be "going to the dogs" to some peoples in all generations. There are also some groups in every country for whom fortunes and conditions always appear to be worse rather than better. To be honest, large numbers of people everywhere are always poor and disadvantaged while others are rich or better off.

In the realm of domestic affairs in the United States, each change of the national administration (this year on January 20) seats some and unseats others, rewards some and sends others into bankruptcy; subsidizes the rich or panders to the poor.

From everything promised during the Reagan campaign, from the echoes and leaks of his various task forces, and from the threats of the so-called "Moral Majority, 1981 through 1984 will in no ways be anything like the years of the New Deal or Fair Deal, the years of John F. Kennedy or Lyndon Johnson, or the four years of Jimmy Carter. This is certainly true where the spirit, attitude and heart of an administration are considered, especially so far as blacks and other minorities are concerned.

Merry Christmas? The drive to outlaw the expenditures of federal funds to enforce court-decreed school busing is an outstanding and fearsome signal of the mood that is taking hold of the Congress. This mood will be greatly augmented come next year when the Reagan - oriented new members of the Senate and the House are sworn in.

As has been mentioned in past weeks, the major threat to civil rights and to the other rights and opportunities for the poor comes from the coalition of reactionaries who feel they own president-elect Reagan lock, stock and barrel — and who also have shown that they have the clout to win what they want.

Of course, wonders never cease and, as some moderate Republicans believe, Reagan and his administration will not allow themselves to be enslaved by the extreme right. They may be manipulated from time to time, but not enslaved.

If school busing to bring about desegregation is repealed, and if federal laws against discrimination in employment, in housing, in voting, and in granting contracts are also knocked out, civil rights in this country (indeed, human rights) will have been set back a century. The march towards equal first-class citizenship for all will be put in retreat.

Such retreat is the goal of much of the new power structure which supported Mr. Reagan and, in a recall of the Hayes-Tildan Compromise, these power-wielders are demanding their reward — a stop to black advancement.

In the response to the rather solid front of the Moral Majority (a misnomer, of course) there is room for all the old-fashioned pressures which blacks and other minorities have been accustomed to let loose in the direction of the White House and the Congress. But these are different times; most of the people in the White House and in the Congress will not be listening. The Reagan years call for new strategies and new tactics. Just marching and "speechifying" will not be enough.

Those on the short end of the Reagan list of priorities need to commit themselves to coalition — coalition of spirit and in practice with all those groups which see and understand the commitment of the reactionaries. Anything short of such coalition will, sooner or later, confirm the maxim that those who do not hang together will be hung separately.

Next to coalition, especially for blacks, is the discovery, support, and programming of the race's brightest and most inventive and innovative minds — minds which have the maximum potentials for producing a blueprint — perhaps THE blueprint — for the race's survival, with other free peoples, in a land of opportunity, with equality and justice to all.

"Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year? And many more? These bright minds (and stout hearts) must show they can spend endless non-televised hours at desks, at computers and in laboratories and libraries, devising and designing the methods and tools for self-development, competition and, again, survival. Tools, too, for overcoming.

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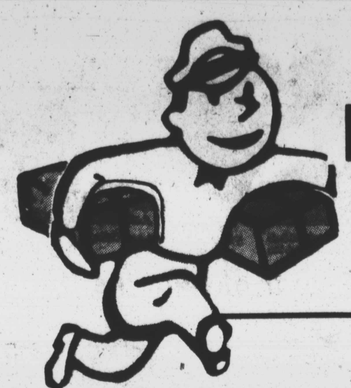

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