CELEBRITY LOOKOUT

By JASON:

Larry Graham

Q — I recently saw "Weather Report" at the Kool Jazz Festival in New York and was surprised to see that there are more new members. What happened to bass player Alphonso Johnson? And why is Wayne Shorter pictured in the program booklet in a smaller image and behind Joe Zawinul and Jaco Pastorius? Isn't he the leader of the group?

H. Waller
Baltimore, Maryland

A — No. Keyboard-player Zawinul is Weather Report's music director and leader of record. Saxophonist Shorter, who has been a leader *musically* for the past twenty years, was co-founder of the group ten years ago. He and Zawinul have been the mainstay of Weather Report through numerous personnel changes.

Alphonso Johnson, who recorded *Mysterious Traveler* - with the group in 1974, presently records on his own. Bass-player Pastorius, who co-produced with Zawinul, the group's 1978 hit *Mr. Gone*, has made a place for himself over the past four years.

Incidentally, Zawinul, who is from Austria, has been around for as long as Shorter has, and is not to be taken lightly. Check him out as the piano player on *Nancy Wilson - Cannonball Adderley* - album, recorded twenty years ago, when he was a member of Adderley's quintet. You think the group's photo in the Kool program booklet gives Shorter unequal billing? Only the layout artist knows for sure. Weather Report's current line-up is Zawinul, Shorter, Pastorius, Peter Erskine and Robert Thomas.

Commodores

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Q — Aside from attendance by African heads-of-state, was there any black participation in the recent wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer?

H. Nelson
Washington, D.C.

A — The names of blacks on the couple's 700-plus guest list have not been widely publicized other than the black heads of former British colonies. Please pardon us as we have o'd'd on Di and Charles and could find no energy for culling black names from the guest list if we had it.

We can tell you that the most notable black *contribution* to the festivities is probably Oscar Peterson's recording of his own composition, *Royal Wedding Shite*. Peterson is a native of Canada, parts of which were once in the fold of the (then) nearly endless British Empire.

Peterson, who has been compared in the past to the greatest jazz-pianist of them all, Art Tatum, may find that great jazz pianists will be compared to *him*. His stellar tribute to the wedding of England's heir-to-the-throne is worthy of a curtsy from the future king himself.

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Q — Is it true that Lionel Richie is leaving the Commodores and that they are looking for a manager to replace Benjamin Ashburn?

C. Pugh
Kansas, Mo.

A — If it is so, the group will probably have no trouble finding one.

However, Ashburn, the seventh Commodore and manager of the group since its inception, denies both the allegations. Although it has been widely rumored that Richie will go solo and/or that the group is seeking new management Ashburn said, "If that's true, they haven't told me."

Most recently, the rumors have changed form to indicate that the group has changed its mind. Since Ashburn insists that it was never so and, at press time, is still the president of Commodores Entertainment, we must all wait and see on this one.

Q — I read in a magazine that Cicely Tyson is in her early 50s, and I can't believe it. She looks great. Just how old is she?

C. Lonesome
New York, N.Y.

A — The lady has refused to divulge her age for publication on several occasions. Neither *Who's Who In America*, nor *Who's Who in Black America* nor *The Negro Almanac* lists a date of birth for the actress. *Current Biography* - lists Tyson's date of birth at December 19, 1939 with a question mark.

We would list Tyson's age at 53? after having put the question to two long-time friends/peers of the actress, but with a question mark because we didn't get it from her.

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Q — I have been a fan of the Crusaders for the past fifteen years. Lately, I've noticed that they've been using singers on their albums, and those cuts are the biggest hits. Why don't they add a singer to the group?

P. Shelley
Chicago, Ill.

A — Reportedly, there are no plans to bring a vocalist into the Crusaders' family on a permanent basis at present.

Saxophonist Wilton Felder, drummer Nesbert "Stix" Hooper and keyboardist Joe Sample first came together as the Jazz Crusaders twenty years ago. They've shown their musical flexibility by shortening their name and expanding their musical horizons about six years ago, but have shown no inclination to overdo a good thing, e.g. per-

Cicely Tyson

forming with vocalists.

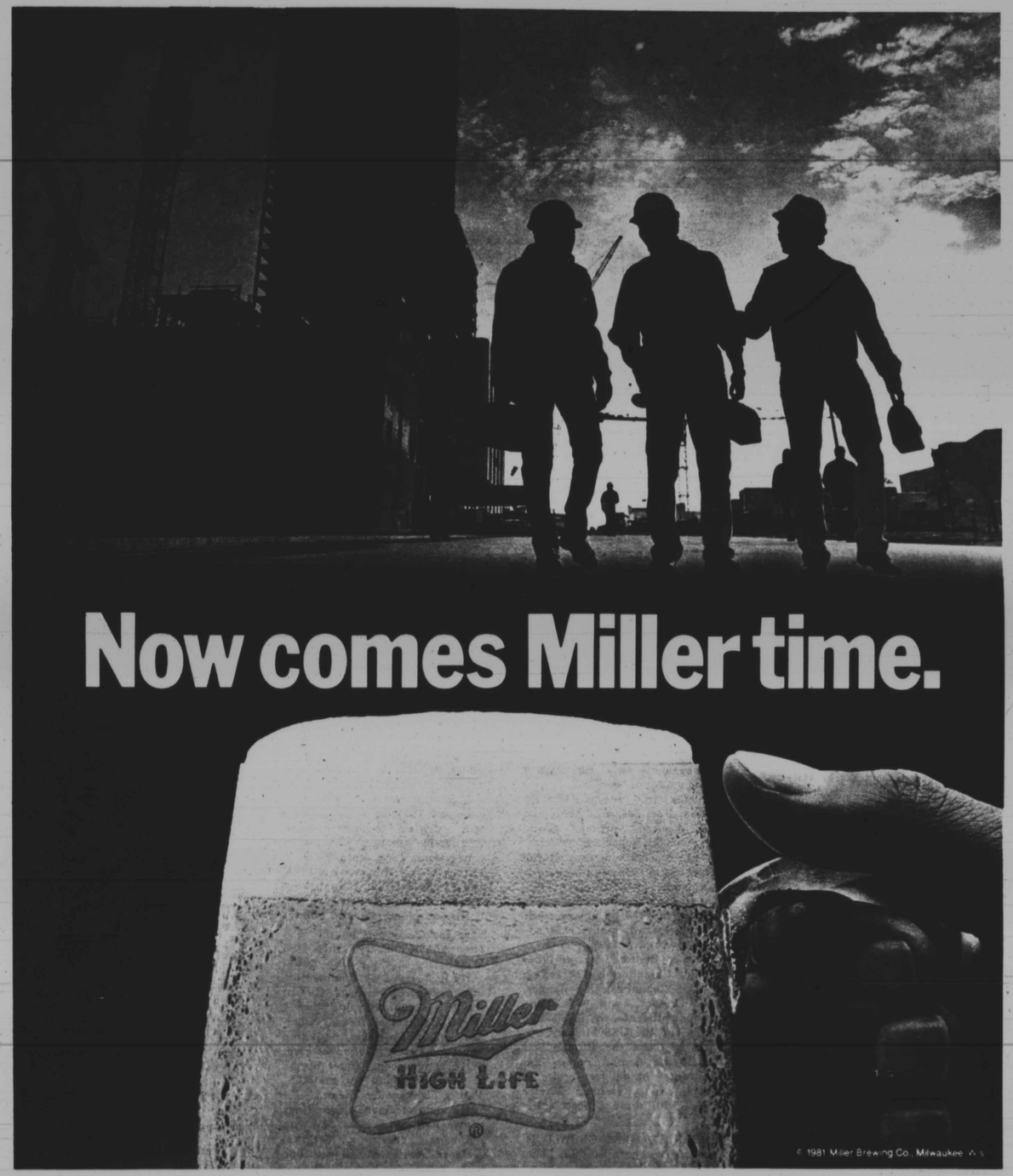
They have, however, used vocalists fequently: Bobby Womack on Wilton Felder's *Inherit the Wind*, Randy Crawford on the group's *Street Life*, and the Crusaders themselves on "Keep that same old feeling"

CORRECTIONS or Let's Get It Right

We goofed on a reader's question about Stokeley Carmichael's name change (Dawn, July, '81). We mistakenly identified Carmichael's mentor, Sekou Toure as the president of Senegal, when he is, infact, the president of Guinea. The president of Senegal is poet-philosopher Leopold Senghor, which we knew, of course. Thanks Mr. Bullock.

We are also told that our information that singer-bass player Larry Graham had been disfellowshipped from the Jehovah's Witness organization is incorrect. Graham's personal manager, Ron Nadel, told us that Larry has been and still is a member in good standing of the organization since he was baptized five years ago. We deeply regret any embarrassment that may have been caused to you, Larry.

On the same subject, Nadel told us that George Benson is not *just* studying but became a full-fledged member of the Jehovah's Witnesses with his baptism a year and a half ago.

Although our sources are generally the artists themselves, their management, or official bio's, we do manage an occasional blooper. Keep those letters and corrections coming.

All letters should be addressed to Jason, DAWN Magazine, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, Md. 21201. All questions are welcome, but while Jason cannot provide individual answers, questions of general interest will be used in this column.