Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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Baptist Ministers Conference

We congratulate the Rev. William E. Johnson upon his installation as president of the Baptist Ministers Conference of Baltimore and vicinity.

We take heart in Rev. Mr. Johnson's declaration that "black people are doing a lot of good things and we only keep hearing about the negative things."

Johnson's remarks are accurate. We would like to add that while too much of what we all perceive about our community is negative, the even larger reality is this is a time also when so many negative things are being done to us.

As the new conference president says, it "people are turning to the church now because of Reaganomics."

Johnson, therefore, is urging the Conference to take initiatives in minority economic development and the stress on black consumers patronizing black businesses.

"I believe the holy spirit is here to see to it that the church and prophets become more creative and vital in its worth and work in witnessing for the Lord," Rev. Johnson said upon assuming office.

This is a positive attitude in a negative time.

The Conference always has been strong and unswerving in its support of its collective parishioners. We sense Rev. Johnson speaks for the body he heads when he says Baptists are going to do more than go the extra mile for our community.

Our best wishes to the Conference and its new leadership.

A new threat to needy students

Is there to be no end? Now the Reagan administration is eliminating Social Security benefits for students, who had hoped to use such aid to help finance their college educations.

Some 100,000 to 150,000 high school seniors, whose parents are dead, disabled, or retired can save themselves from being cut-off only if they can register in a college by the May 1 deadline.

The impact of this latest assault of low and middle income families is devastating.

We go along with a Baltimore City school official who said, hearing of the benefit cut-offs, that this seems a calculated plan on the part of the Administration to make college training a luxury only the children of the wealthy can afford.

This latest stab in the back to low and moderate income Americans by the Reaganites is to be resisted at all costs.

It is a budget slash inhumane beyond belief.

Dead postal workers

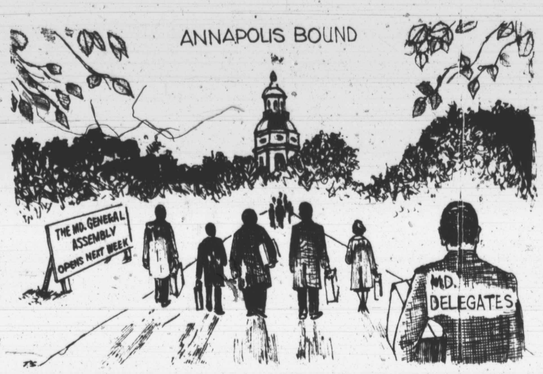
Postal employees are right to be concerned about the recent deaths of two of their co-workers while working in the main Post Office building downtown.

Two men suffered fatal heart attacks while on the job within a recent nine-day span.

Their work-mates are critical of the response time of ambulances in both situations. They seek more or improved on-site medical services and cite the pressures of getting the mail out as a contributing factor to such tragedies.

We can see a more comprehensive system by the Postal Service, whereby workers can be given more than regular checkups for heart disease or the hint of heart trouble. Fair-warned is fair-warned.

The Postal Service must do whatever needs to be done so that workers can be protected.



PARREN

MITCHELL Double Jeopardy

People who are out of work suffer. Unemployment compensation benefits were designed to ease that suffering until persons regained employment.

The Congress, at the urging of President Ronald Reagan, has reduced the number of weeks a person can draw unemployment and plans are being studied to tighten eligibility thus, reducing the number of persons who can draw unemployment benefits.

Our situation in Maryland especially is tough on the unemployed. Although Maryland is considered a wealthy state, it ranks poorly in the maximum weekly benefit paid to the unemployed.

The District of Columbia pays its unemployed a maximum weekly benefit of $196.00; West Virginia has a maximum weekly benefit of $184.00; Pennsylvania, $183.00; but Maryland has a maximum of $140.00 for weekly benefits.

The Maryland State and D.C. AFL-CIO have launched a campaign to increase the weekly benefit. The leaders of this campaign point out there is sufficient money to increase the benefits without increasing taxes.

In their flyer, they charge that "The fund for paying benefits in Maryland stands at over $400 million (an all time record), more than enough to pay decent benefits in this state.

"The fund has gone so high that the employer on the average has received a 50 percent TAX CUT in the past two years.

"Right now, one third of the employers in Maryland, including wealthy corporations like U.S.F.&G. and Baltimore Gas and Electric, are paying into Unemployment Insurance Fund, as little has $6.00 per year for each full time employee.

"Instead of using the fund to help the unemployed, who are in desparate need, the legislature has chosen to use it to cut taxes of corporations who don't need it

I hope our community will support the AFL-CIO in this effort. If you have a family of four, how much is your weekly grocery bill?

How much is your monthly heating bill ... your gas and electric bill? Certainly, $140.00 a week will not sustain a family of four persons.

The AFL-CIO campaign seeks to increase the maximum benefit to $170.00 a week; to increase the time period or eligibility from 26 weeks to 39 weeks; and to end the mass disqualification of applicants on unfair grounds.

They report 60,000 persons unfairly were disqualified last year.

The black community is hardest hit by unemployment. I am almost certain blacks are disproportionately disqualified when we seek unemployment benefits.

Therefore, our community has a real stake in this fight being waged by the AFL-CIO. I join with the union in urging you write your Representatives in the Maryland General Assembly urging them to support significant improvements in the Maryland Unemployment Insurance Law.

I also urge you write Governor Harry Hughes in Annapolis asking him for his support to increase unemployment benefits, and to extend the duration of those benefits to 39 weeks.

In our community, every church, every club, every neighborhood association should undertake a massive letter-writing campaign to support this effort.

Some of Reagan's economists now are predicting unemployment may hit 12 million people this year. How in the world can their families survive in Maryland on a paltry $140.00 a week, for 26 weeks if indeed they are lucky enough not to be unfairly disqualified.

This fight deserves your support.

MADELINE MURPHY Diehard segregationists

During the Fifties, after the Supreme Court school desegregation decision, one could find many books which excerpted so-called proof texts in the Bible, claiming blacks were less than human; were unfit to be considered human; that "mongrelization" - race mixing - would be the downfall of civilization, the ultimate consequence of desegregation.

In emotionally charged diatribes, they shouted "less than" human beings should not live with whites, go to school with whites. The cry going forth then was:

"How would you like one of them to marry your sister?"

The move to put creationism into the schools as science harks back to that era.

It would seem once a religious concept as portrayed in Genesis like creation received equal footing with the science of evolution as taught in the public schools, the door would be opened to bring back prayer in school.

To also outlaw bussing, kill affirmative action, using the Bible with selected "proof texts" as basis for changing or reverting to a society of slave and slave holder, carrying with it the overt racism of inferior and superior beings.

You see, these diehard segregationists know rather than a source of society's ills, evolution teaches the roots of man stem from black Africa. They also would have to admit many of the fathers of the early Christian church were black. Jesus, even?

This year, Congress will be ruling on measures to outlaw bussing; of reintroducing prayer in school as a means of continuing the myth of white Anglo-Saxon superiority.

It is here we must be vigilant about the separation of church and state, because once the fundamentalist Moral Majority seeks supremacy in setting standards and guidelines based upon its perverted interpretations, its anti-black, anti-liberal, pro-supremacist mentality might well abridge the rights and privileges of a large segment of the population in all areas of civil liberties.

Especially with anti-Semitism on the rise, this might well be a swifter move toward facism similar to Nazi Germany.

During the depression, emotionally reeding upon despair, upon uncertainty, the cut of control inflationary, unemployment spiral, these power hungry demagogs are using their tax exempt status by any means to propagate these ignorant racist elements in our society, rallying them with a perverted interpretation of Christianity.

It is this immoral, dishonesty that makes one realize the dangers of the Moral Majority, which neither is moral nor a majority.

How much better it would be if all churches used their darkened buildings during the week by petitioning for released time for religious education that would help their students understand the depth and meaning of prayer.

In school, it more likely is an attention getting device, learned by rote which excludes that portion of the population which is neither Christian nor holds any religious belief whatsoever.

This is their right in a pluralistic, democratic society. This is the basic meaning of church and state separation.

When the recent Arkansas creation-science law was struck down as unconstitutional, Federal Judge William R. Overton labeled it a religious crusade

Consequently, we need to look more at the historical abuses of religiosity, especially in the founding of this country, as well as the Spanish Inquisition, the Crusades, but realize religionists are not without their corruption, especially in their zeal to narrow religious interpretations to suit their power hungry mad designs for supremacy.

Finally, we must watch closely this session of the General Assembly to see this poisonous doctrine does not seep into the laws of the State of Maryland.

LETTERS

'Ragtime': A moving, disturbing film

Dear AFRO

I was very enthusiastic about viewing the movie, starring Baltimore's own, Howard Rollins, "Ragtime."

In my enthusiasm I was extremely disappointed in the shallowness of the plot. Howard Rollins played a fantastic role even though the stereotypical Afro - American man came to pass as he abandoned his girlfriend and the precious baby boy.

Thank God for the vindication or redeeming quality when he returned to care of both of them.

How could Debbie Allen stoop so low to disgrace the intelligence of the Afro-American in any era of time by accepting a role in which she totally was to be ignorant and without thought.

She did not have any preconceived notion of relevancy whatsoever. She would do something right to start with, but then she would ruin it with some left field type of action.

Why would Ms. Allen go to a rally for the VICE-president and call out, "Mr. President, Mr. President," continue to be rowdy after measures are taken to quiet her and risk her life and limb as it justifiably cost her.

I enjoyed the episodes surrounding the plot. The crazy man with the show girl wife, the cantankerous mother-in-law, and the German artist and his daughter.

These people helped to divert one's attention from the emptiness left by the protagonist's plight. After viewing the movie, I concluded the black man cannot win.

The producers built pride and vengeance around something that was very shallow and can be overlooked considering the other problems we as a people were experiencing at the time.

To have that much rage and hatred because of the trapping of his automobile and the finding of excrement on the seat upon his return to the scene virtually is unheard of.

But then it brings up another stereotypical aspect of Afro-American life - men are crazy about their cars and will do anything when the cars are tampered with.

I was pleased with the mentality Walker was allowed to portray to his his charismatic vices made him easy on the eye and easy to identify and empathize with.

Walker's, Rollins' character in the movie, gains were next to nothing. He lost his fiance, still, the fire effect he perpetuated the situation remained, his love for the piano and his self-determination was ended and could not be instilled or passed on with integrity and pride to that precious baby boy.

And he died without dignity.

In conclusion, Ragtime, was a moving but disturbing movie. I can only assume my interpretation of what the movie was to be about, the depth it should have contained, and the outcome in the end was not representative or even close to what the makers of this classical piece of cinematics had in mind.

To Mr. Rollins, my hat goes off to him, because in spite of the shallowness in which he was assigned to perform, his ability to act and to be convincing to the theme rang through from beginning to end.

To the movie, Ragtime, I say excellent try them and understanding they it attempted to display, but shame on the solution and the depth of events that were portrayed to achieve this comprehension.

LISA E. WHITE

Protest 'justice' in Cambridge

Dear AFRO:

Someday in this nation, there will be a criminal justice system that treats everyone the same, regardless of race or amount of wealth one has accumulated

It clearly is evident black people do continue to receive the blind side of justice. A most recent example of this is the Scott Mears trial just concluded last week.

Examples, such as this make a mockery of our highly touted judicial system. It appears there is no equal justice for blacks under the laws governing this country.

The system has to be changed in order that blacks and other minorities receive equal protection under the law.

Admittedly, Mr. Mears cannot be tried twice for the same crime without new evidence to warrant such a trial. Blacks feel there was ample evidence to convict Mr. Mears.

However, the jury saw it differently. In the eyes and minds of a great many blacks in Cambridge, Mr. Mears is guilty. To reinstate Mr. Mears is a cold slap in the face of the community in general and to blacks in particular.

The signers of this letter and the black community feel Mr. Mears represents a clear and present danger to the black community.

To out Mr. Mears back on the police force would greatly imperil his own safety and well-being. We feel this time a preventive measure needs to be taken.

We feel it would be wise and prudent and in the best interest of the community to permanently remove Mr. Mears from the police force.

The City of Cambridge has suffered enough notoriety and negative race relations in the 60's and now in the 80's.

When are decent, rational and upstanding white people going to take a stand and say "Enough!" We cannot continue to treat blacks as second class citizens and expect them to just roll over and play dead.

Mr. Mears must be removed from the police force to prevent already sweltering temper's from getting any hotter.

He should be asked to resign his post with all do assistance rendered to relocate him. Taking this step now will prevent trouble down the road.

HERSCHEL JOHNSON
Dorchester Co. NAACP
EDWIN L. ELLIS
ELAINE S. BENNET
REV. KENNETH R. WHITE
MARY E. ASHANTI
JAMES CAMPER
Post 87 Amer. Legion
SAUNDERS MARSHAL
E. SIDRUD-DIN SHAKOOR
LEMUEL CHESTER
LINDA H. WATKINS

Young protests treatment of Haitians

Dear AFRO:

In a letter to U.S. Attorney General William French Smith I said the following about Haitian refugees.

Dear Attorney General Smith:

I am writing in regards to the Haitian refugee situation.

As a representative of the black community, I am appalled by the treatment of Haitian refugees by U.S. immigration officials.

Whereas persons fleeing communist dominated countries routinely are granted asylum, black Haitians fleeing the most impoverished and repressive regime in the Western Hemisphere are summarily denied.

I object to the double standard and ask the U.S. government to cease interdiction and the gross violation of Haitian due process rights. The U.S. government:

1. Pressure the Haitian leadership to undertake drastic economic reform; and

2. Formulate a more equitable and human immigration-refugee policy.

In closing, I hope you will reexamine the entire Haitian refugee question.

DEL. LARRY YOUNG, (D-38)

G. JAMES FLEMING 1982: An unpredictable year

There are few years that will be as unpredictable as 1982.

No one can give assurance whether 1982 will be a year of war or a year of peace, so far as the United States is concerned. No one can be sure whether or not the nation shall descend deep into a depression - the economists are divided into two or three camps.

Views on inflation are optimistic one week — sometimes one day — and pessimistic the next. No one in authority is willing to say what is going to happen to most of the unemployed.

The experts and the non-experts stand equal in one respect. Each and both are equally unsure, equally ignorant, equally confused of what the future holds.

A stranger from Mars easily could decide Earth men believe their total future can be explained as purely "acts of God."

Indeed, as this column has said in the past, there is no geiger counter or computer system which can guide mankind absolutely as to what is around the corner — sociologically, politically, in the area of economics, or as to war and peace.

All of this is true. Nevertheless, amid unpredictability — amid the heavy curtain separating the present from the future — there are certain indicators, certain indices, certain hints throwing light on what to expect in the future — in the long run or the short run.

— —

Morals aside for a moment, history tells us nations which prepare seriously for war, usually sooner or later, resort to war.

If not actual killing, then to a situation where they overwhelmingly dominate other nations, or other peoples, who cave in rather than dare oppose the more heavily armed enemy.

There are countless evidences the superpowers of 1982 are in a race to build up, and maintain, their armaments at the highest peak possible — their death-dealing weapons of mass destruction and mass murder.

Although no one can give the date, it is difficult not to feel war is "just around the corner," despite all the warnings that World War III will mean the end of humankind as we now know it.

Economically, there also are enough data indicating there is no way in which a modern, capitalistic country can avoid high pockets of unemployment — unless in time of war.

Technical advancement on every front — from farms, to households, to factories — already have shown the masses of workers are no longer needed in peacetime, competitive industry.

This is true, it now increasingly appears, not only regarding back-breaking labor, but also as to some of the most highly trained men and women who also are being replaced by computers and other electronic devices.

Inflation also seems to be here to stay, in spite of the best brains of the USA, Great Britain, Japan and West Germany. Unpredictable as to the future? No.

The manipulators of government and the private sector of money securities and fiscal policy, together, have taken the "un" out of unpredictability. Such kinds of manipulation assures inflation of other economic disruption, according to some "experts."

There also is little real unpredictability as one considers the future fortunes of the poor. From all the verdict at hand, the pendulum has swung where most of the American people feel just as the "Rev. Ike," radio preacher, once said:

"The best way to help the poor is not to be one of them." Certainly, Reagan economics do not promise much hope for those lowest down.

Unpredictability can be claimed, more or less surely, only in respect to how American fighting men and women — and their kinfolks — will behave at the next compulsory call to arms.

Pretty general erosion of the national spirit and of trust in the successors to the Founding Fathers have affected abiding loyalty and patriotism. But, on this point, the ongoing months will confirm or not confirm.

By Elizabeth M. Oliver City Editor

MARTIN LUTHER KING'S "I Have A Dream" is the most quoted of any speech ever made in the USA.

However, his writings contain soooo much more wisdom. The man was a genius, a Harvard Ph. D it's true, but so lustely endowed with views on every phase of life that he is still years ahead of his time.

He spent 21 years in school without a break and earned the Ph. D. degree in 1953.

AS AN AFRO reporter I traveled with Dr. King all through the Montgomery and Tallahassee bus boycott years, saw him in and out of jail, in the historic church freedom rallys throughout the South and finally in death in Memphis and had to rest in Atlanta.

HISTORY is hard to judge when you are up to your neck in it. Today we enjoy the fruit of agony suffered by MLK and his freedom fighters and never look back to remember or to see how it came about.

DR. KING saw it all from the beginning and wrote about it in "Stride Toward Freedom," his own book, which should be required reading for every citizen, student, child, adult, regardless of color.

DR. KING began the Preface by saying, "This book is an account of a few years that changed the life of a Southern community." And, he states he knew the 1955 fight would change the world.

IN FACT, the book reveals through the year long Montgomery Bus Boycott, how the South was filled with inhuman racial segregation how the drama unfolded, a drama on how 50,000 black persons who took to heart the principles of nonviolence, learned to fight for their rights with the weapon of love and in the process as MLK says, "acquired a new estimate of their own human worth."

WHO REMEMBERS the date when the great MLK movement began? Or why? The MLK book states it began in Montgomery when black people came to see that it is ultimately more honorable to walk the streets in dignity than to ride the buses in humiliation.

WHO TODAY remembers segregated buses, trains, street cars, where black persons had to move back to allow whites to sit? White men sat while black women stood. No blacks were allowed to ride if the bus was filled with whites. Defiance brought arrest and jail.

THE GUIDING LIGHT in King's life was, "He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helped perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it."

For all we know

WE CAN NOT repeat the entire book, "Stride Toward Freedom."

You read it, digest it, remember the agony of erasing segregation and pass all of it on down to your children.

HERE WE WILL pick out highlights, the wisdom of Dr. King and other items which I think surpass "I Have A Dream."

Put "The Dream" and all this together and you have the historic event that changed the South, the entire United States, the world forever. That's the MLK Story.

MLK THEORY

MLK advocated that oppressed people rise up and move forward.

In an oppressed society there is no justice, no Christianity. MLK termed it "negatives."

Freedom is bought at great price.

DESCRIBING The bus situation in Montgomery before freedom, MLK says it was not uncommon to hear Negro passengers referred to as niggers, black cows and black apes. Frequently black persons paid their fares and were forced to get off and reboard the bus at the rear. Often the bus pulled off with the person's dime in the box before he had time to reach the rear door.

READ in "Stride Toward Freedom" how a black man was electrocuted for rape of a white woman, a rape he had not committed, while white men guilty of rape of black women went free.

READ how a black woman who could hardly read took part in the boycott, walked miles rather than board the bus and said, "My feets is tired but my soul is no ways near tired."

MLK says in his book, "We had a feeling that something remarkable was unfolding in the South and we wanted to be on hand to witness it. The region had marvelous possibilities and once it came to itself and removed the blight of racial segregation, it would experience a moral, political and economical boom hardly paralleled by any other section of the country."

MLK SAW the South we have today where there are now mayors, city councilmen, senators and members of the Houses of Delegates.

AFTER HARVARD, in 1954, he moved back to Montgomery with hope of playing a part in the changes he knew on the horizon, but, as he says, "Without any notion of how the changes would come about, the changes that would alter the South forever and have repercussions throughout the world."

REVOLTING against the idea of a church being a "big folks church" he says, "I was convinced that worship is a social experience with people of all levels of life coming together to realize their oneness and unity under God.

"Whenever the church caters to one class it loses the spiritual force of the "whosoever will, let him come" doctrine and is in danger of becoming little more than a social club with a thin veneer of religiosity."

MLK revitalized Dexter Avenue Church, turned it around for the good of all and to his surprise found great acceptance.

HIS FAMILY

MLK tells us in his book, his mother, the daughter of a successful minister, grew up in comparative comfort, was sent to the best school and college and had protection from the worst of discrimination.

HIS FATHER, a sharecropper's son, met its brutalities first hand, but began to strike back at an early age with fearless honesty and his robust dynamic presence commanded attention.

He recalls as a child he and his father went to buy shoes, were told to go to the back to get waited on, refused to move and walked out the store.

His father said, "I don't care how long I have to live with this system, I will never accept it."

As a child, riding with his father, MLK recalls they went past a stop sign. A policeman who pulled the car over called his father "boy." MLK's father said until you call me a man, I will not listen to you."

The officer wrote the ticket in astonishment and left the scene as fast as he could.

As pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, the elder Rev. King wielded great influence and "won grudging respect of whites."

BLACK CURTAIN

With that heritage, MLK as a child leared to abhor segregation and morally unjustifiable. The first time he sat behind the "black curtain" in a train dining car he said he felt a curtain had been dropped on his selfhood.

He said the experience of going to a movie and sitting in a filthy peanut gallery was so obnoxious he could not enjoy the picture.

He said he never could adjust to separate waiting rooms, eating places, rest rooms, partly because they were always unequal and partly because it did something to his sense of dignity and self respect.

ABOUT CORETTA

INTERESTING is MLK's account of how he met his wife, Coretta. He loved in Marion, Ala. Her father, Obie Scott, had a trucking business, a filling station - grocery store and a chicken farm.

Coretta lived there until she went to Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Having inherited a music talent from her mother, Bernice Scott, and a quiet determination, she went on a scholarship to work her way through the New England Conservatory in Boston. There she and Martin fell in love. They were married in Marion by her father on June 18, 1953 on the spacious lawns of her home.

CORETTA began to fight beside MLK when they moved to Montgomery to the Dexter Avenue parsonage and she got a good look at the home, black persons corralled in the back of the bus and suffering as domestic servants.

The immortal 'La' Baker lives on in film

By Carmen Carter

Black artists have often opted to leave America to practice their craft. This week the chance to see one such expatriate, the immortal Josephine Baker come to life again came with the showing of her 1934 film musical, "Zouzou."

Zouzou is one of the highlights of a festival of vintage French films sponsored by the American Film Institute and the French Embassy at Washington's Kennedy Center. Even casual students of black culture are well advised to see the "toast of Paris," one of "La" Baker's many sobriquets.

Born in St. Louis in 1907, Baker took Paris by storm when she arrived in 1925 with an all black revue. She became the toast of the Folies Bergere and Casino de Paris when she seductively danced and sang in a belt of bananas and feathers.

The idol of the 1920s and 1930s who falls in love with a womanizing Frenchman and the things she does for love.

There are some similarities between Zouzou and American musicals, although it quickly becomes apparent from the sloppy chorus lines and incoherent dance routines the film musical is an art form at which Americans excel.

In 1937, she became a French citizen and later joined the Air Force during World War II. The high military honors she received for intelligence work during the war were placed by her casket which was draped in the French flag. When she died in April 1975, that year marked her 50th anniversary in show business and she was in a new show in Paris when she was stricken by a heart attack.

European audiences marveled for decades and now at the AFI festival this week, Americans saw her eloquence, as she danced, sang, joked and shined throughout Zouzou.

In this film she starred opposite Jean Gabin, a sort of French version of Clark Gable during the Thirties.

The plot is largely about Zouzou, a girl from Martinique who falls in love with a womanizing Frenchman and the things she does for love.

There are some similarities between Zouzou and American

"La" Baker with the great civil rights activist, Mary Church Terrell, in Washington, DC, 1954.

(AFRO file photos)

Josephine Baker as she looked in the 1934 French musical, "Zouzou."

But in 1934 that is not what audiences went to see. They wanted Josephine.

The film clearly is a showcase for her talents. She belts out her famous rendition of "Pour moi, il n'y a qu'un homme dans Paris." (For me, there's only one man in Paris), flanked by handsome Frenchmen in tuxedos on a long winding staircase.

Then we see Josephine, the song bird, singing in a gilded cage, sexily perched on a swing, wearing an enticing version of her famous banana belt and crooning in a lilting soprano, "Haiti."

The fact Josephine Baker, a black woman, became a sex symbol in France, sharply contrasts with the still prevailing Hollywood requirements of blonde hair, blue eyes and big breasts.

While the chorus numbers slouch and the thin plot probably is not appealing to black American audiences, the film is a "must see," for those of us too young to have seen Josephine and those of us old enough to have loved her.

Tony Brown's comments

Homosexual diseases

Part One

In one of those typical after-work happy hour discussions, the subject got around to a recent report in the New England Journal of Medicine which described a spate of diseases, some new and terrifying among homosexual men.

The general reaction of the affluent and Afro-American parley was a kind of relief "they" are the benefactors of this nasty epidemic of rare and lethal cancer, offbeat viruses, numerous venereal diseases, intestinal disruptions (gay bowel syndrome) usually seen in the tropics, mononucleosis and a particularly virulent form of pneumonia.

These health problems of the last five years join some longstanding disorders common to homosexual men. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports Hepatitis B already is at runaway levels among them and nearly 50 percent of men with active syphilis are homosexual.

That already is alarming when you consider only about four percent of all men are homosexuals. However, that statistic pales against the numerical facts if you live in New York, Los Angeles or San Francisco, where the alarming toll of diseases among male homosexuals now is concerned.

The aforementioned medical journal report also describes another disease among this group:

"PCP or pneumocystis pneumonia, a deadly lung infection, occurring mostly among those using "poppers," drugs such as amyl nitrate and butyl nitrate — in the body, these drugs produce nitrosamines which are known carcinogenic substances — which are said to enhance orgasm.

What we know for sure, however, is 85 percent of the homosexual patients with cancer or a parasitic lung infection that kills 80 percent of its victims in the CDC's study admitted to inhaling these drugs.

Promiscuous sexual behavior among this group definitely is a factor also. Doctors believe the immune system is suppressed in these cases because it is beseiged by a large number of exposures, such as bacteria, fungi and off-beat viruses — a physiological condition caused by a lifestyle — and becomes overtaxed and ceases to perform.

And the danger of this nationwide epidemic is exacerbated by the distinct possibility bisexuals will transmit diseases, now seen only in this sexually active country among men homosexuals, to the mainstream heterosexual community.

The human herpes infections already are a shared burden of both groups. And because this parasitic virus is most opportunistic when the immune system is weak, it suggests that caution about sexual or social contact should especially be exercised during a period of a cold or other bacterial or viral attack.

Homosexuals are not alone in terms of new and frightening venereal diseases. There also is the epidemic proportions of the appearance and contagion of Penicillinase-producing Neisseria Gonorrhoea (PPNG).

This new strain is completely resistant to penicillin and has escalated in the last 11 months by more than 350 percent in New York City alone.

Chalmydia, the most common venereal disease in the nation and much more common in black women than white women, strikes as many as four million men and women each year.

A leading cause of infertility, Chalmydia was found in 23 percent of a group of pregnant black women, most of whom were unaware they had it.

Just as my all-male, black barroom friends were wrong about homosexual diseases not affecting the rest of us, their belief herpes is a mostly "white" disease infecting only a small number of people equally was inaccurate.

Few Americans escape herpes infections at some time in their lives. Between 50 and 150 million people in this country are infected with herpes simplex I, a non - venereal herpes, and herpes simplex II, the venereal type.

The CDC estimates one in 10 adults now is a carrier of the venereal herpes which is spreading so rapidly there are 500,000 new cases each year, with 35 percent of the U.S. population being exposed at some time.

Herpes II is recurrent among about five million; herpes I among about 50 million.

Once inside the body, the virus never leaves and it can be passed on without sexual contact. There is no cure and even control is difficult.

Even Caesarian sections have increased to reduce the risks of infection and or blindness to babies. All of which are reasons why all of us should be involved in anti-herpes dietary habits.

Next Week: Fighting back against herpes.

TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL, the national television series, will move to public television (PBS) on Feb. 6, 1982. Watch this newspaper for details and check with your local public television station.

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