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OPINION

New hope for City Council

We are hopeful that the swearing - in this week of two young politicos to replace Clarence Du Burns and Nathan Irby, who have moved to higher offices will immediately strengthen a body that has been the object of scorn and cynicism for too many years.

Nathaniel McFadden and Edwin Johnson, it is our hope, will do much to help make the City Council respectful. We care not a fig that both of these young men are Eastsiders, in fact, we hope they will address themselves directly to problems affecting our community as a whole and not fall victim to the parochialism that has slowed us down politically in the past.

We think they share a broad view, that black Baltimoreans are all pretty much in the same boat politically, economically, and nothing is resolved by continuing an Eastside - Westside syndrome which is divisive and against our community's best interests.

We have a strong mayor. Too strong many will say. His strength, in measure, is derived from the fact that he deals with a weak Council.

We do not mind strong mayors but we insist that our Council-persons be just as strong. That way the checks and balances of government are preserved.

There are several strong Council - persons already in place. Kweisi Mfume, George Della, Norman Reeves come most readily to mind. With McFadden and Johnson we expect two more stand - up types to join the ranks of those in the Council who will not jump through the Mayor's hoop on every issue.

We expect much from these two energetic new - comers.

School Boss search

In all the hallabaloo surrounding the search for a new superintendent of public instruction for Baltimore's public schools; one thing seems abundantly clear to us: the Mayor and the School Board will not tolerate a truly revolutionary, community - minded educator in the mold of the late Roland Patterson.

At best we will end up with a competent, non - boat rocking administrator. At worse we will get a bureaucrat with both eyes always on City Hall.

We expect no miracle worker.

The Baltimore public school system is far from what it should be and the solutions to school problems must come from the citizens of Baltimore themselves.

That will require the same all - powered, extremely sophisticated political movement such as the one that won for Kurt Schmoke, Ken Johnson and others the election just past.

Until enough leadership is in place within the city government which is sensitive to the needs of the public schools and a climate of awareness is stimulated within our community, the question of who or what kind of school superintendent we get come January is almost irrevelant.

Our school system will improve when we vote folks in who will ensure that our educational system quickly excells.

Economic parity: still far away

A study just published by the Population Reference Bureau, Inc. says that black Americans have made some gains in the struggle for economic parity over the last two decades but they are still far behind from bridging the gap with whites.

The socioeconomic study made by Howard University professor John Reid indicates that the civil rights movement did give some blacks an economic boost. Some programs set up in the 1960's "have enabled many black Americans to move up the socioeconomic ladder compensating in part for 300 years of discrimination," Reid said.

The reference here is to a small fraction of Black America, sometimes referred to as the Black middle class.

Madeline MURPHY

The Scrooge mentality

Where is the Christmas Carol this year?

In times like these at Christmas, it is interesting to note that so far, on television, there has been no rescheduling of either the play, modern musical, or anything remotely concerned with the retelling of a Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.

This "serio-comic parable of social redemption," as Edgar Johnson phrases it in his two volume discourse on CHARLES DICKENS: HIS TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH, unquestionably puts too clear a light upon the times through which we are moving, where no social redemption is evident.

"Since the business of television is to sell products Dickens' Christmas Carol would put a damper upon any enthusiasm, so meticulously calculated to spur retail businesses' bonanza period, "out of sight, out of mind" seems to be the watchword.

Avoid the parallel, at any cost, to the times in 18th and 19th century England that would compare too closely with times we experience here and now!

The comparison between Scrooge and Ronald Reagan, with his aim to cut Social Security, with a new move toward returning the seriously physically handicapped children—the Tiny Tims of our society —to their homes because it would be cheaper and "better"; to choose to throw away money for example on the missile experimental (MX) when so many other remedies to our growing national poverty are needed, harks of a "Scrooge mentality".

The Bob Cratchits of our society, the auto workers, now laid off, the steelworkers reduced to a minimum, the farmers given the "opportunity" to buy back their excess grain, can all be capsulized by Johnson's commentary on the time during which the Christmas Carol was written:

"The theme of the Christmas Carol is, for an acquisitive society, the form that selfishness predominantly takes—monetary greed. The purpose of such a society is the protection of property rights. Its rules are created by those who have money and power, and are designed to the extent that they are consistent for the perpetuation of money and power.

"With the growing importance of commerce in the 18th and of industry in the 19th century, political economists rationalized the spirit of ruthless greed into a system claiming authority throughout society." He continues: "Services as well as goods, they said were subject only to the laws of profitable trade. There was no just price. One bought in the cheapest market and sold in the dearest. There was no just wage. The mill owner paid the mill hand what competition decreed under the determination of the "iron law of wage."

If the poor, the insufficiently aggressive, the mediocre in ability were unable to live on what they could get, they must starve—or put up with the treadmill and the workhouse—and even these institutions represented concessions to mere humanity that must be made forbidding as possible."

Ideally, no sentimental conceptions must be allowed to obstruct the workings of the law of supply and demand. 'Cash nexus' was the sole bond between man and man.

"The supreme embodiment of this social theory was that curiously fragmentary picture of human nature, "economic man", who never performed any action except at the dictates of monetary gain. And Scrooge, in the Christmas Carol, is nothing other than the personification of economic man." Reagan is the atavistic symbol of a Scrooge in the White House. Edgar Johnson sees Scrooge's entire life "limited to cashboxes, ledgers, and bills of sale."

"He inderpays and bullies and terrifies his clerk and grudges him even enough coal in his office fire to keep warm. All sentiment, kindness, generosity, tenderness, he dismisses as humbug. All imagination he regards as a species of mental indigestion.

"He feels that he has discharged his full duty to society in contributing his share of taxes that pay for prisons, workhouses, the operation of the treadmill to keep even them going.

"The out of work and the indigent sick are merely the idle and useless; they had better die and decrease the surplus population." As you can see, these descriptions of the economic man exemplify many parallels in our times. They are too numerous to detail here, yet a few might suffice. Cutting minimum wage. Allowing higher prices for natural gas, so that hundreds of thousands will either die from hypothermia, or suffer needlessly at a time when the supply of natural gas is an all time high. The attempt to tax unemployment compensation to keep the idle from scrounging on the government is a pure indication of this mindset.

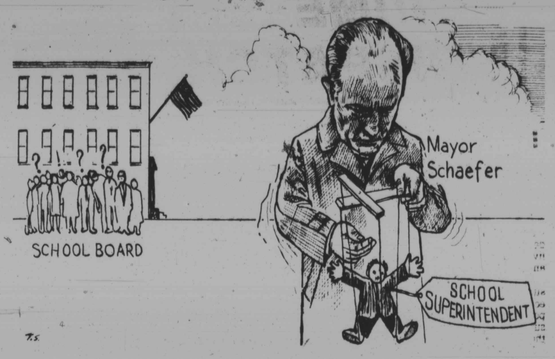
The applause heard from many quarters because a more "humane" way was devised to execute a black murderer in Texas, despite the ideal, that ethically, doctors who administer drugs should do so on the pretext of saving human lives.

Laissez faire, trickle down, let the buyer beware, supply side economics, phrases that all to easily spill from mouths of economic men in our society, do not, nor will not develop the kind of society that would give hope to our "Tiny Tims" who without the milk of human kindness, starve emotionally, physically and spiritually in this season of "Peace on Earth, Goodwill toward men."

Yet as always we the people must and will recognize these hard times as an opportunity to share what we have. We must be the socially redemptive force, changing society when it sees that 18th and 19th century rules no longer fit the 20th and 21st centuries.

We must care for our Tiny Tims, so that like him, though our story outcome remains grim, we may see, through our determination, that God might bless us all, everyone someday.

Let's hope this does not happen



Parren J. MITCHELL

Reagan's economic advisors

On Thursday, Dec. 9, Martin S. Feldstein, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, testified before the Joint Economic Committee on which I serve. I questioned him regarding economic policies. The following is a portion of the hearing:

Representative Mitchell. Mr. Feldstein, I have about four or five questions I wish you would respond to as succinctly as you can. Someone surfaced the idea of putting a tax on unemployment compensation benefits. Do you embrace this monstrous idea?

Mr. Feldstein. The President has absolutely rejected the idea so it is not an idea of the current discussion. I do not embrace the idea.

Representative Mitchell. You do not. That is good. Now someone else of "sagacity and wisdom" has surfaced the idea of perhaps taxing health benefits, and equally venal, monstrous idea. What is your position on that?

Mr. Feldstein. There is no Administration position on it.

Representative Mitchell. What is yours?

Mr. Feldstein. My thoughts about that I will reserve for our internal discussions on that.

Representative Mitchell. The President has proposed in his budget for '83 after cutting summer youth jobs severely in '82, the complete elimination of all summer youth jobs. Does that please your fancy to eliminate those jobs?

Mr. Feldstein. I do not know what the facts are on that.

Representative Mitchell. Well, I do.

Mr. Feldstein. What I understood to be true is that we now have a targeted jobs tax credit that is actually on the books.

Representative Mitchell. That has been on the books for quite some time.

Mr. Feldstein. No, a new one.

Representative Mitchell. Oh, you have a new one.

Mr. Feldstein. We all have it. I think it has been legislated. I think it is on the books. I think it provides for eligible young people. There would be an 85 percent tax credit for the employer which in effect says they can hire young people at 50 cents an hour.

Representative Mitchell. I am aware of that, but the summer youth jobs are to be eliminated. What is your position on that?

Mr. Feldstein. I do not know what the program is, but it seems to me the targeted jobs tax credit which is an open-ended opportunity for employers to hire young people at virtually no cost is a summer job program.

Representative Mitchell. We have had a targeted tax credit act on the books for a long period of time. You have some variation on it. It simply has not worked.

Mr. Feldstein. This is a very big variation. It has an 85 percent tax credit.

Representative Mitchell. I was kind of shocked when you indicated that some improvements in the retail industry and wholesale industry caused you to be rather optimistic about the timing of the recovery.

"When, as a matter of fact, over the last five months in the retail industry 150,000 people have lost their jobs and over the last five months in the wholesale industry 60,000 people have lost their jobs.

Now based on that, I am curious as to why you point to these two categories as being indicative of a recovery right around the corner —not right around the corner, but an approaching recovery.

Mr. Feldstein. I spoke just of retail rather then wholesale and I was referring to the very recent sales rather then the employment picture in that industry over the past months.

I agree with you that those industries, like so many other industries, have seen declining employment over time, over the last several months.

Representative Mitchell. Thank you. You are sure you do not want to answer the question about summer youth jobs at present?

Mr. Feldstein, I believe that—

Representative Mitchell. No, you said that you did not want to answer.

Mr. Feldstein. I believe the 85 percent wage subsidy to disadvantaged youth is a very sound approach, a very generous approach to providing an opportunity for them to work.

The one thing I would hope that you and others could do would be to help people out there, prospective employers and prospective employee groups, know that it exists so they take advantage of it.

Representative Mitchell. My answer, Mr. Feldstein, is that it obviously has not worked in the past and it is not going to work this summer.

Mr. Feldstein. It is a different program at 85 percent.

Representative Mitchell. But the mentality has not changed and the economic situations of many businesses have not changed.

The exchange between Mr. Feldstein and me went on for some time. Three inescapable conclusions derived from that exchange. First, Mr. Feldstein will simply evade the hard questions.

Second, he is typical of the Administration in that he assumes government has little, if any, responsibility to help solve social problems.

Third, Mr. Feldstein is an economic theorist who is oblivious to the problems of people, particularly the 11 million unemployed in this country.

Season of apprehension and appreciation

As Christmas approaches the political scene around Washington and probably throughout the nation doesn't take on a festive holiday aura.

For the federal workers, it isn't an inspirational time of year. While Congress in its "lame duck" session wrestles over the budget on whether it is to be spent on guns or butter, the faceless bureaucrats are wondering if they are going off the payroll during Christmas week.

Until Congress passes the pending appropriations bills there will be no funds to pay federal workers and they may be furloughed.

At the same time, federal workers are pouring over the various health benefit plans that have become so complicated that it would take two Philadelphia lawyers to figure out the contracts.

The federal workers have until December 23 to take out their health contracts that will not be renewable for at least two years. The federal share in the plans to pay the hospital bills that have zoomed into the ozone has been altered.

While federal workers are wondering about health care plans and missing paychecks to pay for Christmas presents, they have the additional worry over the reduction in force and reduction in grade processes that are underway in several agencies.

So, it isn't a pleasant state of affairs.

Meanwhile on the political front, we have the announced withdrawal of Senator Edward Kennedy from the 1984 Democratic race for presidency.

It had been forecast with Kennedy in the race the democratic presidential sweepstakes could be a very nasty competition.

With Kennedy and Fritz Mondale out in front with John Glenn and Reuben Askew and Gary Hart pursuing the battle for delegates could turn into Pier Seven brawl.

However, with Kennedy out, the next two years in the Democratic race there will be more finessing. It could be an example of politics at its best with the professionals using their polltical scapels at work.

Look for Louis Martin and the Carter crowd to be playing a lead role with Mondale. Louis Stokes, the Ohio congressman, to play an advisory role in Glenn's quest, while Publisher Garth Reeves of the Miami Times is one of the black advisers for Reuben Askew.

The big question is where Ron Brown, the top black campaigner for Kennedy and general counsel of the Democratic National Committee, will throw his support?

DC's Marion Barry wants national exposure and is looking for a place to throw his hat. Of course, Vernon Jordan, the retired National Urban League executive, will undoubtedly be aiding Mondale.

On the Republican side, if the President Ronald Reagan seeks a second term, Art Teale, the administrator of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, will be among the leaders of the quest for black votes.

Mel Bradley, the White House aide and Clarence Thomas, designated as the administration's spokesman on equal employment matters, will be influential in the Reagan campaign.

If Reagan doesn't wish to run, look for Art Fletcher and Thad Garrett to aid Vice President George Bush's desires for the top spot.

George Haley, who has been prominent in Republican campaigns, will be joining Ed Sexton in the efforts to propel Kansas Senator Robert Dole into the White House.

Haley says he has plenty of evidence to support his contention that Dole is the leading GOP leader who can find support among black voters.

When the curtain falls on the 1984 party races look for Shirley Chisholm, who leaves Congress at the end of the current term, to make a few dollars.

Unencumbered by congressional duties, Chisholm, who has campaigned in a personal presidential race, will be an invaluable aid to any of the candidates.

An engaging speaker and a loyal following, Chisholm is in a spot to demand a sizeable fee for her services. In this period, when candidates are throwing around nearly a million dollars for a congressional race, it doesn't take much imagination to conceive of the money that will be spent in the national races.

SAMUEL BANKS

The necessity of hope

Just as "Faith without works is dead," I firmly believe, too, that living without hope is deadening and pointless.

No matter what the level of suffering, denial or socio-economic denials in the body politic, a person or people that surrenders hope, in fact, yields the essence of life:

Hope and higher human possibilities.

As eyes and hearts turn to Bethlehem and its powerful universal and transcendent meaning of Jesus Christ's birth more than 2,000 years ago in a lowly manger, there exists, in the face of grievous and prodigious human suffering, an infectious spirit of hope, radiance and renewal.

The essential point of the message is: Dare to hope and you can rise above yourself.

One of the extraordinary sagas in American and world history, past and present, is the inspirational and resolute desire of black Americans to maintain faith in God and themselves in the face of mountainous and withering adversities.

In this conjunction, the current administration of President Ronald Wilson Reagan has been devastating for a disproportionate number of the 31 million black Americans in our nation.

The socio-economic programs of the Reagan Administration have sorely tested the mettle, resolve and spirit of black Americans, in particular, and the poor and aged.

The budgetary projections of Reagan in terms of $231 billion for defense and $1.6 trillion within a five year span indicate that relief is far distant for blacks and the poor in our nation.

The litany of sorrows and lamentations associated with abject failure of Reagan's supply-side economics are clear and present.

There are more than 12 million people unemployed, the highest level since the Great Depression, the Comprehensive Employment Training program has been jettisoned more than 150,000 black youngsters did not enter college in the fall because of reduced or restricted Federal loans and Pell grants, cutbacks in health care, housing, school lunch programs and support for the elderly.

In brief, the Reagan economic policies and programs, in this season of cheer and hope, have generated and sustained widespread human frustration, disarray and pain.

Paradoxically, as I have indicated previously in this column, the proliferation and spread of unemployment and despondency to the white majority society, provides a basis for hope for blacks and the poor.

The historical record is clear on this point: the holders of power in our society will not permit their own to suffer.

The recent vote of the Congress, although not impairing the MX suggest a disinclination on the part of our elected leaders to fund Reagan's defense agenda at the expense of our nation's human agenda.

Congressional support for an additional tax on gas as a means of providing jobs, albeit very limited given the magnitude of structural unemployment, is another very heartening development.

There is another salutary and hopeful development that flows from the present adversities which engulf a broad spectrum of black people.

I have reference to the fact that Reagan's economic program have caused wide unemployment and serious dislocations among blacks at all levels of the social strata and fosters black cohension.

The RIF's and reductions in rank in the federal establishment have been particularly severe for black federal workers.

Pervasive and unrelenting troubles, as in times past, have caused us to come together in a spirit of fellow-feeling, caring and sharing for our very survival.

We must work assiduously and untiringly to maintain and extend our spirit of "soul"? during the siege of Reaganomics and beyond.

It has been a tough year, but, nonetheless, through it all, one pregnant with hope and excitement. The socio-economic toll, to be sure, has been fearsome and frightful, but we have come through and our collective spirit is high and unbroken.

In my next column, I will address critical imperatives for black Americans in 1983.

As we look to Bethlehem in this season of hope and promise, the evocative affirmation of William E. B. DuBois comes to mind from his classic, The Souls of Black Folk:

"I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls.

"From out the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension.

"So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil. Is this the life you grudge us, O knightly America? Is this the life you long to change into the dull red hideousness of Georgia.

"Are you so afraid lest peering from this high Pisgah, between Philistine and Amalekite, we sight the Promised Land?"

I challenge you, amidst the troubles, disappointments and difficulties of 1982, to muster the strength, courage and power to once again, join the ancient and insistent refrain:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Bountiful and sincere wishes for a most happy Christmas, a soulful wanza and joyous and fulfilling New Year.

Tony Brown's Comments

New black youth chess dynasty emerges

About this time of year the mind turns to children. During this month, we presented on public television two very opposing views of Black children in this country.

"Black Children in Crisis" was the first and, as the title suggests, the bearer of unfortunate data. Forty to 60 percent of Black teenagers are unemployed and 60 percent of all Black high school students rank in the bottom quarter of their class.

The negative statistics go on and seem endless. But one very bright spot is the new emphasis being put on mental scholastics by an emerging new Black youth chess dynasty.

We also focus on them in an upcoming show called "The Bad Bishops And A Queen"—new Black youth heroes.

"The Bad Bishops" are young teenage boys at Vaux Junior High School in the inner city of Philadelphia and the National Junior High School Chess Champions. The typical but brilliant young men have won the national title six consecutive times; no other school has ever won the chess title twice in the same manner.

The Bishops come from "The Mighty Pawns" of Douglas Elementary in Philly. The Pawns, including one six-year-old, share some of the same glory as their Varsity troop at Vaux. They are the current National Elementary School Chess Champions.

The queen of this new chess empire is 17-year-old Baraka Shabazz of Washington, D.C., who at age 15, was the sixth highest-rated female chess player in the nation. As the United States representative, She was undefeated in a chess tournament in England. At an exhibition, she played 20 people simultaneously, some of whom were chess masters themselves. Wherever she attends college, that school will have a recognized chess team.

"I've played to four boys blindfolded. And I won all four of my games. That means that I have to memorize every move on the board," she explained.

"Every possible move?," I said in disbelief. "Every possible move, analyzing every variation there is," she explained to this writer, one who is barely able to grasp the basic rules of the game.

Speaking of playing the game blindfolded. The King of our dynasty is Howard Daniels, a 17-year-old graduate of Vaux and a high school senior. He is the youngest Black chess master ever.

At one setting, during the annual Chess Fest in Philadelphia, the brainchild of Councilwoman Augusta Clark, this remarkable young man played three opponents while blindfolded—and won all three matches.

The National Primary School Champion is old K.K. Karanja, a Harlem New Yorker who apsires to become the youngest chess master ever. K.K.'s most recent chess exploit took place at a exhibition at Madison Square Garden in New York. His task entailed playing 50 people, all of whom were adults, within a six-hour period. Result: He won all 50 games.

"Keeping Up With K.K.," headlines a recent article in Chess Life magazine on this newest and youngest chess prodigy, as are Daniels and Shabazz, who is destined to become a master. He is well on that road.

In addition to being the national champion in his division, he has played the violin since four; started algebra, geometry and chess at six; and now at the advanced age of eight, studies computer science, chemistry, biology and physics.

In a field currently represented as a European scholastic sport, these inner city chess wizards have defurted the best private schoolers that money can teach—you might say the best education that can be bought.

Whether they know it or not, these members of this new Black teen chess dynasty—The Bad Bishops, The Mighty Pawns, Baraka Shabazz, Howard Daniels and K.K. Karanja—are simply living out the legacy of their forebearers. Between 700 and 900 A.D., two Muslin groups, probably both the Moors in Spain and the Arab traders of Italy, it is believed, introduced chess to the Europeans.

An interesting debate over the rules took place in the 15th century in Europe: should the player with the white or black pieces move first. The rule had varied from country to country, prior to the game's introduction into Europe. It was there that the rule was adopted that white always move first.

In a time when most Black teenagers have been unfairly labeled as dropouts, delinquents and overall failures, it is inspiring to know that these tremendously talented American youths have carved their names in a field that history holds in the highest esteem.

The Moors demonstrated the chess wizardry of people of African descent thousands of years ago. Maybe white now moves first on the board, but "Black" has moved into first place—thanks to our African-American youth.

Tony Brown's Journal TV series can be seen on public television Friday, on channel 22 at 11 p.m.

It can also be seen on channel 67, Friday at 11 p.m. Please consult listings.

AFRO welcomes letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication.

Elizabeth M. OLIVER

FOR ALL WE KNOW

Bishop Ceaser was buried by candlelight amid songs of praise and thanksgiving

A BISHOP is buried by candle light!

This was the dramatic finale to the largest funeral in memory.

The event unfolded like a great opera almost as soon as Bishop Leo K. Ceaser died, the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, Nov. 26 in his beautiful church, Mt. Olive Freewill Baptist, 290 Fremont Ave.

THE RT. REV. MR. CEASER was head of seven churches and a congregation estimated over 5,000 souls. During the period of six days before the last rites and burial, over 8,000 persons passed by his rich ebony and silver casket to bid him goodbye.

LEROY DYETT, the mortician, arranged it all fitting Baltimore's most popular gospel minister, singer and shepherd.

BISHOP CEASER was dressed for burial in the robes of a prelate of his rank, Bishop's beretta and crimson mantel flowing to the ankles but leaving his expensive shoes in view.

Rarely has Baltimore seen an open couch casket. Usually, the dead are buried with just head, shoulders and arms in view.

DR. GEORGE A. CRAWLEY Jr. said the throng passing the bier never ceased all night long until dawn. He remarked, "It was the largest since Chic Webb's funeral."

DR. A. C. D. VAUGHN who headed some 33 bishops and pastors during the Dec. 2 funeral services said the gospel songs which attract crowds every Sunday to the bishop's church, rang out during the funeral as never before.

EVANGELIST SHIRLEY CEASER of international fame, rendered soulful gospel pieces as the opera unfolded.

AFTER the services proper finished, the casket was rolled to the vestibule so that the mourners who crowded outside the church for three blocks around could pass in review.

They marveled at the Bishop's fine regalia.

Undertaker Dyett had made sure he looked alive and well.

A MOVING SIGHT CAME when his widow, Dr. Mildred Hope Ceaser kissed her husband goodbye.

BY THE TIME all mourners had assembled in the 200 cars double parked for four blocks around, the 19 - member motorcylce police escort led the 2 - mile long procession out Rt. 140.

SIX PATROL CARS went ahead and blocked every crossing and shutdown the Beltway all the way to the Reisterstown exit. The Baltimore County police escort took over at the County line.

LEROY DYETT's gleaming hearse and the scores of flower cars in addition to the contingent of Baltimore's finest riding policemen caused thousands of persons standing and parked by the wayside to gasp in wonder. A thousand fireflies in a long, long line.

IT WAS DARK by the time the grand procession reached the ancient St. Luke's Cemetery in Reisterstown.

THE BURIAL SITE was already prepared with a concrete vault sunk deep in the ground.

AND THEN THE FINAL ACT of the opera began. "You have never seen anything like it," Dr. Vaughn remarked.

As the countless mourners filed from the 200 cars, sad songs of burial rang out with each person chanting and stepping to time. Alternate songs of triumph reached to the sky.

NOW AS FOR THE CANDLE LIGHT

A six - foot high candle made into a floral design sent a brilliant light flickering like a torch. The candle was stationed at the foot of the grave and the scores of bishops and ministers of every faith gathered around automatically as if the stage had been rehearsed for the Metropolitan Opera.

THEY SAY in age - old religious custom that candles waft the soul up to heaven.

LIKE A CARDINAL or a pope, Bishop Ceaser's ebony and silver coffin was born to the grave by the active pallbearers, nine of them, all ministers of high rank, strutting carefully and swaying to the time of the songs, you might say, of the Old South.

AS I LISTENED to Dr. Vaughn and Dr. Crawley tell me the story, I could only wish that I had been there.

There is nothing like the deep religious drama of our black funerals. No rehearsals are needed. All voices join in singing as one and the harmony is astouding.

I SAW a funeral in New Orleans once with the band in front playing "When the Saints Go Marching In" and the mourners on foot behind. Next the dancers in a thousands colors chimed in, like a mighty opera.

WE AS BLACK persons have so much deep soul. As a graduate of Fisk University, I recall the Jubilee Singers who took their spirituals all the way to England to Queen Victoria and Europe resounded with the songs of the slaves.

Then there are our magnificent poets. Paul Lawrence Dunbar. James Weldon and J. Rosemond Johnson who wrote Lift Every Voice and Sing, all singing our own sweet songs.

We are wonderous people. Indeed we are.

W. C. HANDY'S FUNERAL story appeared on the Front Page of the New York Times. It was so impressive and grand with his music, brings tears to every eye. REMEMBER?

THAT STORY ranks as one of the finest pieces of journalism of all.

MORE NEWS

OUR MAGICAL creations are on sale at the Bethel AME Church Harambee, Dec. 17, 6 - 8 p.m.; Dec. 18, 12 to 8 p.m.; Dec. 19, 2 to 5 p.m. and Dec. 20, 21, 22 - 6 to 8 p.m.

REASONABLE are the ladies fashions, shoes, gloves, scarves, handbags, homemade things, baked goods, toys, greeting cards. If your pocketbook is tight and pennies few, get your gifts there at Bethel.

DEC. 20 is the Legislative Black Caucus affair you must not miss. It is at Coppin, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. reception, good company and good food for only $10. See Sen. Clarence Blount and Del. Pete Rawlings for tickets.

CREW FETE COMING

THE INVITATIONS for the Retirement Banquet for Dr. John L. Crew are out. Tell you more later — next week.

1982 ROUNDUP

ALSO coming is FOR ALL WE KNOW's 1982 ROUNDUP with the highlights of the year's news, its joys and sorrows, and a list of the Good Guys and the Bad Guys you won't want to miss.

Calling it like it is

Chewing gum

By James E. Nichols

I believed everything my shrewd and sagacious grandfather told me. He said that when folks die, and if they go to heaven, Saint Peter (who is the personnel director up there) gives out work assignments When I check in and have my job interview, I shall ask Saint Peter to send me back to Washington, D.C. to give lectures on how to chew gum.

If you notice the folks in your office, on the bus, in your home, at school, and in all public places, you'll understand that there is a definite need for someone to enlighten people on the proper way to masticate that colloidal polysaccharide substance of plant origin which we affectionately call chewing gum. I want to be that someone.

Gum chewing, if done at all, should not be an irritant to anyone who has the misfortune to be around the chewer. If done at all, it should be an artistic display of sophistication and quietude. But what do we get? We get the Pop! Pop! Pow! sounds that obnoxiously vibrate throughout the ears and drive us anti-gum chewers up the wall, down irritability's lane, and out of our cotton-chopping minds.

Indulge me as I make a few observations about gum chewers. Some, of course, are skilled. But most are such bad chewers that they should be tried, convicted, and made to suffer by watching Richard Simmons on TV for two months.

A skilled and accomplished gum chewer only moves his or her jaws once every ten seconds and with nearly imperceptible moves. A crude gum chewer chomps his or her jaws twenty times every two seconds Their jaws are in perpetual motion. An unskilled gum chewer often chews with his mouth wide open, blows big bubbles, then unceremoniously lets the bubbles break all over his face.

A skilled gum chewer chews only the stick at a time. Indeed, a VERY skilled chewer will be satisfied with a mere HALF a stick. But a crude gum chewer is a study in greediness. He has to have an entire pack of gum in his mouth and, as its sugar content decreases, he continues to pile it in until his jaws are as full as those of a croaking frog.

Crude and unskilled gum chewers don't know how to dispose of there gum, either. When eating, for example, they put their gum on the sides of their plates They are quite unaware that this habit is offensive to many and often times spoils an onlooker's appetite.

They also stick their "used" gum under theater seats, under church pews, or drop it in the middle of the sidewalk where you and I can step on it and have to spend out precious moments peeling it off the soles of our shoes. I have even seen them "save" it by sticking it on the backs of their hands. Gross!

But a skilled gum chewer usually keeps his gum wrapper. When he finishes with his Wrigley's Spearmint or Bazooka Bubble Gum, he delicately and daintily removes it from his mouth, places it back in the wrapper, and sensibly drops the wrapper in a trash can.

AT NO time do you see the gum in the mouth of a skilled gum chewer while he is chewing. At NO time do you HEAR any irritating, exasperating or agitating sounds from a skilled gum chewer. Indeed, most times you don't even know that a very skilled gum chewer is chewing. He is subtle. In a word, a skilled gum chewer is "classy" and is the paragon of COOL.

Crude gum chewers are a caution, aren't they? Have you watched the ones who lock one end of their gum between their teeth, take the other end of the gum between their fingers, and pull it to arm's length to examine it? What a drag.

Then, there's the gum chewer who gets so engrossed in his chewing that he beats time with his foot while he's chewing. Some even chew to the beat of whatever music is playing.

And then there's the gum chewer who uses the Pop! Pow! Pop! sounds of his chewing as punctuation marks in his speech. The following is an example: "Let me tell you (Pow!) I'm really tired (Pop!) I'm going home and jump right in the bed (Pop! Pow! Pop!)" GET what I mean?

On second thought, I won't wait for Saint Peter to give me the assignment. Beginning TODAY, as often as the opportunity permits, I'm going to tell the folks that regardless of their educational background or their station in life, they are judged by the way they chew.

Fauntroy seeks probe

Rep. Walter Fauntroy (D-D.C.) has asked the Government Accounting Office to investigate whether toxic wastes are systematically being dumped in mostly minority-populated areas.

Fauntroy recently participated in a demonstration in Warren County, N.C. protesting the dumping of PCB in a mostly black area.

Fauntroy said if the GAO finds evidence of minorities bearing the brunt of such dumping, he will draft legislation to prevent such policies.

Fauntroy is chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

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