Baltimore Afro American

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## Lethal storage

The discovery of toxic chemicals being stored in a vacant building in a heavily populated section of West Baltimore is both frightening and puzzling

It is frightening because reports indicate that the drums being stored contain cyanide in some instances and that lethal drug is used in state executions, testimony to its potence.

Whoever stored the drums in the abandoned building on West Baltimore St. deserves to be severly prosecuted if at all possible because deadly chemical fumes could be released in any number of ways in an area that is totally unaware of the poisons being kept there.

It is puzzling that state agencies charged with protecting the environment did not see fit to clear out the drums immediately so that they could not be accidentally spilled or be spilled through acts of vandalism. State officials are quoted as saying that the drums do not present an immediate hazard, but lethal chemicals stored in an improper storage area in a residential neighborhood are always an immediate threat and the cavalier attitude displayed, most certainly would not be exhibited in neighborhoods where poeple of certain specifications of caste and class live.

In a city with as many vacant commerical properties as Baltimore Municipal government should be especially responsive to such occurrences and state agencies should be also.

## The Fate of Provident

The AFRO has tried mightily to inform the community about the crisis at Provident Hospital and the drastic changes that are taking place in the health care industry, especially concerning the hospital bed capacity of this state.

There are excess beds to be eliminated and every hospital in the state is going to be trying to protect itself from closure, merger or crippling reduction in size and service.

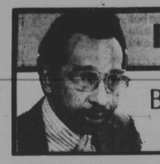
Fate or imprudent judgement on the part of various elements at Provident Hospital saw a bitter internal and pernicious fight take place at the very time that the hospital was being studied along with all others in the state for census to determine the excess capacity at the institution.

This conflict resulted in low occupancy which severely limited the income at the hospital and put it in dire financial straights. Provident has reached a critical point financially and though fundraising efforts are underway, an upsurge of community financial support is needed.

In the midst of this crisis, the AFRO has tried to encourage the community to rally in support of the hospital. We have not lost our objectivity, in the sense that we have favored personalities over facts, but we have covered the story with the realization that Provident is our community hospital and it must be saved.

If black Baltimoreans both in the medical field and every day walks of life think that the reduction in bed space and the resulting reduction in staff privileges and slots on staff at area hospitals will not adversely affect black doctors and patients who have only recently been allowed to utilize these other hospitals, then they are dangerously naive.

Either the black community rallies to Provident financially and politically and otherwise or it faces a crisis in black health care down the road when Provident is reformed in a different image. The time to act is now.



## Parren J. Mitchell

### Ban the handguns that kill the innocent

At last there is hope to stop the killing in our black communities. Maryland's highest court has effectively outlawed cheap, short barreled handguns, holding the manufacturers accountable if a criminal misuses them. What this means is that, "Saturday Night Special" manufacturers can be sued for damages. This major decision by the Maryland Court of Appeals is a significant step towards drying up the cheap gun market. In order to curb the killing and violence, we must attack its source.

The immediate effect on the ruling has been a halt in the sale of such guns in Maryland. No manufacturer, assembler or dealer wants to face the prospect of a multimillion-dollar suit filed by a handgun victim. The long-term effect, as similar cases are heard across the country and judgements in the millions are levied against handgun manufacturers, will be the bankruptcy of such manufacturers and justice for thousands of people who die each year in the United States.

However, the National Rifle Association cites that the Maryland decision will deprive poor people of the means of self-defense. Nothing could be further than the truth. We have experienced the terror in our communities caused by easily accessible handguns. Any handgun is 100 times more likely to be used in a murder, suicide, or fatal accident.

The facts on why these deadly weapons must be taken off the streets are plain and simple. They are lightweight and easily hidden. They are designed to do one thing: kill at close range. They are the weapon of choice for thousands of thugs who make a career out of intimidating people at the point of the gun. One study of 10,000 handguns used to commit crimes showed that 70 percent of them had barrels less than three inches long (Saturday Night Specials). Almost half cost less than $50.

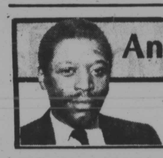
In 1980, handguns killed 77 people in Japan, 8 in Great Britain, 24 in Switzerland, 8 in Canada, 23 in Israel, 18 in Sweden, and 4 in Australia. These countries have strict handgun laws, and they're working. However, handguns in the United States account for more than 9000 murders, 1000 accidents, and 12,000 suicides each year. A large percentage of this is "Us Killing Us" violence, in our own black communities.

One would think that our legislators in the Congress would be moving quickly to adopt tougher gun laws. Wrong. Congress is heading in the opposite way. Earlier this year, the Senate voted to repeal some safeguards enacted in 1968, including a ban on the interstate sale of handguns. Currently this measure is pending committee action in the House of Representatives. If it becomes law, it will be easier for criminals to shop for guns in states with lenient laws.

Members of the House of Representatives must resist this attempt to repeal current gun laws. But much more is needed. We need federal gun registration. We need background checks and waiting periods to keep felons and psychopaths from getting guns. And we need an outright ban on the manufacture and sale of the killing machines called Saturday Night Specials.

Public support for tougher handgun laws is overwhelming with over 70 per cent of the American public supporting tough laws, and every major police organization in the nation also offering their backing.

I have received correspondence from some of you writing in support of loose handgun restrictions. I am sorry that we disagree on this issue. Those who argue against any form of gun control must realize the terror and anguish that stifles our people in day to day life. They say that guns don't kill people; people kill people. The fact is, people with guns kill people. And I would like for those who are opposed to tough handgun legislation to remember this: Guns don't die; people do...



## Anthony Armstrong

### The Coke strategy

Remember this famous interrogatory, "Sir, what did you know and when did you know it"?

You remember Watergate, don't you? There that day, before the House Judiciary Committee, when, then Senator Howard Baker, posed that now famous question. From such a simple yet powerful question, all hell broke loose. The Nixon Presidency began to unravel and with it, so too the lives and political careers of dozens of powerful, and not so powerful, people.

Warning: people will put-up with a great deal but; don't mess with their constitutional freedoms (a la Mr. Nixon), their little children, or their hard earned money! Mr. Hughes and Mr. Sachs: beware; forewarned is (or ought to be) forearmed.

Why do big "little boys" play such silly games and then add yeast to them, by playing silly games with such very important matters? In the Maryland savings and loan crisis there seems no question of what Mr. Hughes knew or when he knew it, having been warned by one of his own "trusted" consultants.

The question does arise of "why" he took no action. Was he planning to ride to our rescue, and his own, by saving the state's thrift industry and, thus, almost assuring his election to some new office?

And "guardian of the little man," Steve Sachs, what did he know, about the S and L tale? Was his motive to add another notch to his gubernatorial gun, by shooting down the Oldcourt no-interest-required gang," the "Merritt chocolate building boys," or some other, still unknown, S and L "other-peoples' money slinger"? In fairness to Mr. Sachs, it is not his job to "know first," but as attorney general of the state, he rarely knows last.

Games, games, and more games. Of course, the game of the year may still be in the formulation stage, something like what Coca Cola may have had in mind. You recall, Coke introduced the "new" Coke, after retiring the "old" Coke, only to "reintroduce" the "old" Coke with a new name, "Classic" Coke Wow, what an adroit tactical maneuver in the cola "wars," against arch enemy Pepsi. Coke managed to introduce a new, sweeter tasting, youth targeted, soft drink, that went right to the heart of Pepsi's main market.

Coke also gained the opportunity for more publicity than even its huge advertising budget can match, and free at that. They became the "old," now "Classic."

Coke drinkers idol, by giving them back the drink they grew-up on and; in the process, further cementing that group's loyalty to what must be termed, a product that had reached the "death" stage of its market cycle. They avoided what could have been a fatal blow to their corporate image and credibility and, quite possibly, legal challenges from competitors, bottlers (in fact Coke did loose a court case to a group of angry bottlers who sued to force Coke to release its secret formula to them), and consumers, over deceptive business practices.

The results of the Coke strategy have, based on recently published profit results, let the company go merrily merrily to two banks, one for "Classic" Coke, another for the "new" Coke.

We may be looking at a variation of the Coke strategy, in the recent retirement announcement of Seventh District Congressman Mitchell. Already, there are rumors of a "draft P.J." movement and "I'm retiring, I'm not retiring" strategies, though more often seen among old athletes and washed-out entertainers, are not foreign to political leaders.

The congressman, like Coke, may be feeling a need to revitalize a career that has seen him run unopposed more times than Carter has liver pills. He may, too, be testing to see who, among the would-be replacements, has what strength. This is important to the leader of a political family, that is now beginning to have questions raised about why it must be a Mitchell, in that part of the city where they have held almost saintly sway.

If we are looking at a Coke strategy, turned Mitchell strategy, does it mean that anybody can have the Seventh District seat, as long as it is another Mitchell? Is this all designed to simply lock certain people in place, to make acceptable a transfer of the seat to someone who could not, at least now, win the seat in a regular election?

I think it's interesting that a retiring congressman is introducing major new legislation to restructure the Small Business Administration's 8-A Program, a program designed to lessen competition for small weak companies. Look out Coke, others play too.

## Letters to the editor

### Advance Federal 22 years

Your October 26, 1985 editorial and cartoon on savings and loans correctly noted that Advance Federal has followed a steady path of fiscal management.

However, your cartoon and editorial simply list Advance as a savings and loan institution. You omit the important part of our name--Federal. We are Advance Federal Savings and Loan Association, founded in June 1957.

Advance Federal has had a federal charter since September 27, 1963. We are the only black-owned federally insured thrift association in the State of Maryland, with three offices in Baltimore City. The federal charter means that ALL savings and investments at Advance Federal are fully insured by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, (FSLIC), and backed to the full $100,000 insured amount by the U.S. Government.

The June, 1985 Black Enterprise list of outstanding black-owned businesses ranked Advance Federal No. 10 of the 35 most successful savings and loans in the nation. We, at Advance Federal, are proud that in the past 28 years, we have made over $45 million in mortgage loans to buy and build homes, churches and businesses in the Baltimore metropolitan area, and that we have a solid and conservative investment portfolio.

Our assets as of September 30, 1985 were in excess of $30,658,000. We have served the Baltimore community well for these past 28 years.

We solicit savings and checking accounts from AFRO readers. If they will transfer their accounts to Advance Federal, they can earn interest on both, and assist us in accomplishing socially desirable work with their money--that is grant more mortgage loans in our community.

NOTE: Advance Federal is 28 years old, has had its federal charter for 22 years.

W.O. BRYSON, JR.
President

### Sad state of teaching

The newly hired teachers who failed their functional writing test are a dismaying indictment of the city schools.

Clearly Mrs. Pinderhughes and her administrators have low expectations of their new teachers, and low expectations are bound to produce poor performance. The real victims, as ever, are black children.

Lately we have been told that the city has no choice but to hire unqualified teachers because of the teacher shortage. This assumes that second - class teachers are good enough for black children.

To this is added the perennial cry for higher salaries for city teachers, to prevent the drain of teachers to better - paying jurisdictions.

This overlooks the fact that past pay raises have obviously not produced better teachers for the city.

Better pay is not the only reason that teachers are lured away from city schools; another is the hope of finding a system that does not accept inferior standards.

The teaching profession will never persuade the public that higher salaries are part of the answer until they demand strict standards of certification and refuse to stand for any school system that hires teachers who fall below these standards.

If we truly want to improve the schools we must deliberately refuse emergency measures that only make the problem worse. If the shortage of qualified teachers means that class sizes must rise, so be it.

Overcrowded classrooms will be convincing evidence in persuading the city fathers and mothers to find the money for qualified teachers.

It is terribly dispiriting that even in a system largely run by black administrators all we ever get are apologies for how bad the schools are.

The rediscovery and reimposition of standards will be painful; as the Reverend Marion Bascom of Douglas Memorial Community Church says, "Johnny Who Couldn't Read twenty years ago is now teaching."

But a failure to face up to the pain dooms another generation of black children to second - class citizenship.

We must stop making excuses for our schools and refuse to settle for anything less than quality.

HAROLD RIEDL, JR.

## A common sense approach

By Alexander R. Jones

What happens if a member of your family becomes so anxious and distraught about something that he just babbles on and on incoherently about something you didn't and couldn't understand? Or what about that close friend who slumps into an apathetic emotional pit over some minor crisis? What do you do?

First of all, don't make the tragic mistake of seeking so-called professional psychiatric help. Perhaps, some people are helped by psychiatrists, but the vast majority simply get worst. Just walk into the nearest mental institution and see how many people are improving.

I've read too many affidavits of sincere people who have regretted ever sending a close family member to a mental institution where patients are routinely beaten, raped, forced to take drugs or given brutal electroshock "treatment".

So the question remains, "What do you do?" The Citizens Commission on Human Rights has put out a booklet that has some sane, common sense suggestions. The key underlying point in all of this is understanding and love.

First, get the person into a SAFE ENVIRONMENT. Get them into a quiet room where they can rest or relax undisturbed by children, dogs or antagonistic people. The second point is DIET. Make sure the person eats well. Give them vegetables, fruit, protein and other healthy foods.

The next vital point is COMMUNICATION. According to the booklet you should "gently discourage the person from speaking about his problem as he/she will not be sufficiently aware enough to resolve the situation at this stage."

The person should be provided with COMPANIONSHIP. People who care about the person should stay with him or her until the person is ready to take part in life again. One of the most fascinating suggestions in the booklet is the natural tranquilizer called CALMAG developed by L. Ron Hubbard.

## Samuel L. Banks

### Morgan revisited: Time for assessment, action

Now that Dr. Earl Richardson has been officially installed as president of Morgan State University, amid considerable pomp, fanfare and grandiloquent oratory, the time has come for straight talking and directness in terms of Morgan's present state and future direction. One fact that remains incontrovertible in regard to Morgan whether measured by statistical or empirical data is that it remains in crisis and its central mission mired in ambiguity and unsettling ambivalence.

The preservation, development and progress of Morgan State University transcend turf battles, opposing and disparate personalities and ceremonial ministrations. What is palpably clear and unsettling at present is that Morgan is not cohesive and at peace with itself. It is to be hoped that President Richardson will be able to mobilize the human and monetary resources necessary to unify and move Morgan forward. However, the apprehensions and disquiet of significant groups of faculty, staff, student and alumni do not augur favorably for Morgan.

The central focus of this column is not directed toward personalities, but rather toward principles the writer deems as pivotal for Morgan's survival and progress. Personalities are not important, but Morgan's institutional survival is paramount.

What, then, are major and urgent elements which must be addressed forthrightly if Morgan is to reverse its present course of decline and deterioration? The present downspin of Morgan is not occurring because of the quality of its faculty, staff or ability of its students to learn, but a fundamental disinclination and failure of the Free State to provide requisite human and monetary resources.

This lamentable situation has prevailed before and after Morgan achieved university status in 1975. The impotence and lack of clout of Morgan's Board of Regents, and the stultifying silence of its alumni exacerbated the problem.

Morgan, in my opinion, cannot and will not survive unless the following elements are given forthright, realistic and creative attention:

MORGAN'S MISSION

What is Morgan's institutional mission? What, in fact, is an urban-centered university? The fact of the matter, as has been historically true, a university is a place or setting in which scholars in association with their peers, students and significant others seek truth and understanding through serious inquiry and research. Morgan's mission, I believe, needs to be stated with clarity, precision, believability and power.

To date, unfortunately, Morgan's central mission is poorly understood by the broader community. How will Morgan's institutional mission benefit its chief clientele—its students? How, too, will the needs of the larger community be served?

WHERE IS THE LEGISLATIVE MANDATE TO REDUCE MORGAN'S FACULTY?

No point is more unsettling to faculty, students, staff, alumni and the community than the projected termination of 27 faculty members. Such a termination of 27 faculty members would have calamitous and, perhaps, irreversible consequences for Morgan. While it is true that Morgan has experienced a drop in student enrollment from a high of approximately 6100 a decade ago to approximately 4000 today, it does not follow, given historic neglect of the past and the educational disabilities of many students because of shoddy public school, that the Draconian and severe faculty cuts are justified. Moreover, such unprecedented faculty reductions would make a grand mockery of Maryland's plan for desegregation in higher education and enhancement of predominantly black institutions of higher education.

COALESCENCE OF DISPARATE GROUPS

The fear of Morgan being made an appendage of the University of Maryland is a persistent and real concern of faculty, staff, students, alumni and the larger black community. Until this critical issue is defused by Morgan's Board of Regents and the administration, it will be extremely difficult to coalesce and unify Morgan's students, staff, faculty, alumni and interested citizens to support Morgan's institutional mission.

REQUISITE HUMAN AND MONETARY RESOURCES

Since Morgan's inception in 1867, it has not had the resources necessary for concentrated and continuing high quality education. The case must now be made to the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus and the Maryland General Assembly that equity for Morgan must be addressed in full now. A retrenchment of faculty will not support this process.

I have in this initial article on Morgan set forth what I view as very critical areas. In my forthcoming article, in this two-part series, I plan to discuss recommendations for Morgan's survival and progress.

Morgan State University has a proud and illustrious history. The time has come through vigorous and serious dialogue and action to restore Morgan to its prior position of preeminence, respect and academic prowess.

## Lady Liberty

By William G. Lunsford

The Statue of Liberty has, over the years, become America's greatest patriotic symbol. Next year, on July 4, there will be a huge celebration in New York City's harbor, commemorating the completion of the statue's renovation. There will also be a major television mini-series on NBC, highlighting the statue's value to immigrants to this country. In fact a large part of that program is currently being filmed here in Baltimore.

The 151-foot statue, which will also have its centennial celebration next October, was not always the symbol it has come to be, as a documentary on PBS this past Monday pointed out.

When the statue was presented to the United States, as a gift, by France in 1884, there was a great deal of opposition to its acceptance, because of the anticipated costs for the erection and upkeep of the monument. American citizens, primarily schoolchildren, raised the money ($270,000) for the construction of the pedestal upon which the statue stands.

The statue's sculpturor, Frederick August Bartholdi, intended it to be a tribute to American democracy. However, as the influx of European immigrants to the U.S. increased, and their first sighting of America included a view of the Statue of Liberty, the meaning and symbolism of the statue changed. It is in this context that the Statue of Liberty has special meaning for most, but not all Americans.

There are two groups of Americans for whom the modern symbolism of the Statue of Liberty is totally irrelevent. Those two groups are black Americans and the native people of this continent, who we dumbly call "Indians." (We call them Indians simply because Christopher Columbus was not smart enough to look up the location and route to India in a Rand McNally World Atlas).

Tears may have streamed from the eyes of immigrants for the last 100 years, upon their first sighting of "Liberty Enlightening the World" (the statue's proper name), but few black Americans, and no native Americans, ever had the same experience as their European-ancestored fellow citizens.

Those of us in the non-immigrant category have only had the privilege of seeing Lady Liberty as a tourist attraction-the experience being no different than a visit to the Washington, Lincoln or Jefferson memorials.

Lest anyone misinterpret my meaning, in either a supportive or non-supportive fashion, this view is not a knock against the Statue of Liberty, or a political statement deriding the original or current symbolism of the statue. Instead, it is a straight-forward statement that the meaning the statue holds for the vast majority of Americans is not, and can not be, held by a significantly large segment of the American population.

The ancestors of most black Americans came to this country by ship, as did the ancestors of our European-related fellow citizens. However, whereas the Europeans may have traveled in steerage, our ancestors arrived "double and tripled stacked" in chains in the holes of the ships which transported them. Further, whereas the European-Americans were able and even encouraged to maintain elements of their native culture, (when is the last time you were in Little Italy, or Greektown, or Chinatown?), our ancestors' culture was taken from them (there are no Ghanatowns, Gambiatowns or Nigeriatowns in America).

Then there is the case of the native Americans, the so-called "Indians." Oh how they must regret the fact that they befriended, rather than massacred, those first invaders of their native land. The historical fact is that the fate of the native American, at the hand of the European conquerors, was much worst than that encountered by black Americans. Due to our economic necessity we were at least spared the horrors of systematic genocide.

To correct this situation, an effort should be undertaken both by the government of the United States and its citizenry, most particularly black and native Americans, to erect one or more monuments to symbolize the circumstance under which blacks and so-called Indians came into the fold of U.S. citizenry. The monument(s) must be as gargantuan and located on a site as visible as that occupied by the Statue of Liberty. Nothing like a brass plague honoring Kunta Kinte on the Annapolis docks or some statue hidden away in the badlands of Dakotas will suffice.

The intent of such a monument would be to remind those who find so much comfort, nostalgia and patriotic fervor in the Statue of Liberty that there are other Americans, whose ancestors were either not euphoric upon entering this country, or overjoyed at the arrival of European immigrants. And yet, the descendents of these people (non-immigrants) have been and continue to be good citizens, making greater sacrifices to the development of this nation than its European-ancestored citizens have ever been called upon to make.

With the presence of such a non-immigrant monument, then maybe, just maybe, those who look at the Statue of Liberty and recount the story of how their father or grandfather arrived at Ellis Island Penniless, but was able to make the Horatio Alger story a true-life drama, would also recognize that the "system" did not work the same for everyone. Further, maybe these "lovers of Liberty" will recognize that efforts must be made at all times to seek to perfect the "system." Then, under these circumstances, the Statue of Liberty would have an equal meaning for all Americans.

Without the erection of a tribute to America's non-immigrants, Lady Liberty will always have dirty skirts.

## —AFRO SURVEY—

### How do you feel about policemen walking the streets?

Dennis Small

Desiree Saunders

Arvell Greenwood

Sharon Logan

This week the question to the man and woman in the street is, "How do you feel about policemen walking their beats on the streets again?"

"Dennis Small, 28, "I think that it will increase better community relations."

Desiree Saunders, 24, "I think that having policemen walking the beat will stop crime. Crime begins at home."

Arvell Greenwood, 43, "I think it is a good idea. That is where they should have been all the time."

Sharon Logan, 22, "I think it is a good idea. That is, police patrolling the neighborhood would cut down on a great deal of crime."

Johnny Lott, 40, "I think that it is a good idea because the police see more, know more and have closer contacts with people.

Vivian Kesler, 43, "I feel good and safe. We need more policemen out on the streets anyway.

Charles Owens, 65, I think that they (policemen) should be back out there on the streets, and I am glad that they are."

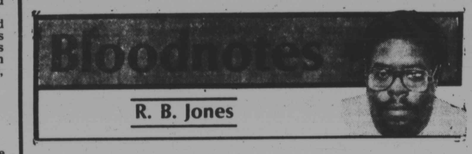
Richardo Robinson, 48, "I think that is a good idea. It gives the community a secure feeling to see the police out there walking the streets. It is long overdue."

Johnny Lott

Vivian Kesler

Charles Owens

Ricardo Robinson



## R. B. Jones

### Who cares about Provident?

Provident Hospital has stood for over 90 years in the black community, dispensing medical treatment, educational opportunities, and career options for black medical personnel.

Although many of us have either forgotten or pretend not to know, the fact is that white hospitals up to very recently did not open their doors to us, unless it was to clean their floors or cook their food.

Our health, sickness and death was of no concern unless they needed cadavers to dissect. If we were to get any hospital care, it had to come from Provident Hospital.

After the dawn of integration, when white hospitals haltingly and with great reluctance allowed some of us to enter for treatment, it suddenly became fashionable to criticize Provident Hospital as inferior.

Now that white society had decided that it was good p.r. to admit us, we could find 10,000 things wrong with our own black hospital. Racism was still rampant at white hospitals, but the mere fact that we could be under white medical care seemed to excite us.

I have witnessed incompetence and indifference at white hospitals and it was dismissed by some of us, as a problem of individual workers at the institution. At a black institution it is considered a systemic problem.

It always amused me that I heard some of my people state at one moment that whites hated blacks and were with rare exception racist. In the next breath, I would hear some criticism of Provident and a declaration that the speaker would rather go to a white hospital.

As a youngster I was puzzled, but as an adult I realize that the words were manifestations of the black self-hatred that plagues us today. That self-hatred causes us to judge black efforts unrealistically harsh or with an air of what you can expect of blacks. It is a cruel duality that cripples black institutions. As Malcolm X often said, self-hatred is a terrible thing. It curtails many worthwhile efforts in their beginning stages, and cripples many others throughout their duration.

Self-hatred and the resulting incompetence of the black bourgeoisie in this city has brought Provident hospital to the brink of distruction. I was groomed to be accepted as a member of this class by virtue of intellect and not skin color or family background, but I was never able to really stomach the class because of its rampant timidity, mediocrity, and self-hatred, seasoned with a transparent pomposity.

The black bourgeoisie proclaims its right to leadership by virtus of tradition and its ordination by a white power structure determined to keep the black masses subjugated.

When it is allowed to have its way, the usual result is a Morgan St. weakened and bitterly divided for the sake of one man and a Provident Hospital weakened and teetering on the brink of elimination because an idiotic buddy system that placed the ego gratification of one man over the fortunes of a hospital that has been saving lives for over 90 years.

Black self-determination however comes from the existence of viable black institutions, not rhetoric. As much as this paper gets criticized, much of it justified and a great deal of it not, it would be a bleak day indeed for black people in this state if the AFRO went under without an equivalent replacement.

If black people allow Provident to die, and it is a distinct possibility then other black institutions could follow. This is no hysterical delusion. State authorities who are not necessarily sensitive to the needs of the black community are insistent on eliminating what they consider to be excess bed space. They may mean closing underutilized hospitals and they may consider Provident to be underutilized.

The black bourgeoisie appears to be waiting for the benevolent white parents of the General Assembly to come forth with funds to keep Provident functioning and allow it to purchase the necessary state of the art equipment to make it competitive but it ain't likely to happen.

In an era where fiscal conservatism, except in military matters, is the order of the day and when racism is almost chic again, it will take a near miracle for Provident Hospital to get a bailout, UNLESS black people raise within the community between a million and two million dollars for Provident and declare that an attempt to close the hospital by any means will result in the black community ensuring that there will be no business as usual in Annapolis.

The top 20 black churches in this city could give Provident Hospital $100,000 each, if they had that much faith in God, Provident and themselves.

The secret societies that brag about their clout could raise money for the hospital along with the Greek Letter groups.

These groups along with the contributions of other in the community could bail out Provident, but the question arises who really cares about Provident?

From the responses witnessed by this journalist, very few people care now and once Provident is gone it will never return. It would be a tragedy of monumental proportions and a shame any conscious black Baltimorean would not want to bear.

## 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.