Baltimore Afro-American

Founded August 1892 by John H. Murphy Sr., 1840-1922. Published every Tuesday and Saturday by the AFRO-AMERICAN CO. of Baltimore City, Inc. Carl Murphy (1889-1967) Editor-Publisher (1922-1967).

The Elkton Five

The recent acquittal of the Elkton Five for the alleged rape of a white woman in that city indicates that despite the progress that has been made in the area of race relations and civil rights the accusation of rape made by a white woman against black men still brings to the surface racially based hysteria.

The parallels between this case and the Scottsboro Case were disturbing and familiar. The actions of the authorities in the case implied that the five youths were dangerous by the bail amounts and statements made to the press. In the final analysis the case of the prosecution was very weak with witnesses contradicting their own testimony.

The black community rallied around the young men and was vigilant to make sure that the railroading that took place in the Scottsboro case 54 years ago was not repeated in Elkton.

For once justice was served.

The General Assembly Session

First Session Summary

With the opening of the Maryland General Assembly this week, the legislators of Maryland face a daunting litany of pressing issues. The savings and loan crisis threatens to drag on with millions of dollars of depositors' money lost to either theft or poor management. With millions of dollars more tied up in accounts at troubled savings and loan institutions, angry depositors will be a constant feature in Annapolis.

The crisis necessitated a special session of the General Assembly this past year and quite possibly dimmed hopes for Governor Hughes' suspected senatorial campaign. Resolution of the crisis will dig deeply into the state coffers. On top of all this the legislators will be forced to write regulations that will prevent the state from going through a third savings and loan crisis.

The assembly must also wrestle with the issue of health care cost containment and the reduction of hospital bed space in the state. That issue will generate endless controversy and all kinds of political maneuvering as hospitals try to minimize the impact of the excess bed reductions.

Another pressing issue to be faced by the General Assembly is housing for the poor. With the withdrawal of the federal government from the field of housing for the poor, the state remains the next level of government capable of taking up part of the burden.

This was to be a priority issue for the legislature this session but with the aggravating savings and loan scandals and the attendant resolution costs, there might not be much money left for state aid to housing for the poor.

This General Assembly faces some monumental tasks that will tax its endurance and savy, but that is what being a public servant is supposed to be about.

As political strategist and other observers eagerly await the second session of the 99th Congress to convene, it seems an appropriate time to look back on legislative accomplishments and/or blunders of the first session. Due to the yearlong obsession with budget deficits, however, Congress pushed aside many other important issues which will have to be dealt with during the upcoming session.

Beginning with blunders, Congress enacted the most radical overhaul of the budget process ever when it passed the Gramm - Rudman - Hollings amendment which requires a balanced budget within five years. This is to be accomplished by means of automatic and mandatory cuts in selected programs by the President if Congress fails to meet annual deficit-reduction targets. Hours after the signing of the Gramm - Rudman legislation, a suit was filed challenging the constitutionality of a prominent feature of the measure which clearly and improperly delegates legislative authority to the Executive branch of the Federal government.

Although the 1985 session of Congress was extended, the House and Senate was still unable to come to terms on a three-year $74 billion budget reconciliation deficit - reduction package. One provision of the bill, passed by the Senate, which would have required manufacturers to pay a new excise tax to help pay for the "superfund" toxic-waste cleanup program presented the roadblock which prevented a final vote.

One of the last acts of the first session of Congress, also happened to be one of the most historic, when the House passed legislation to revise the federal income tax system. While the tax bill faces an uncertain future in the Senate, it contains some very laudable provisions which include the exclusion of roughly 6 million low-income workers from income taxation, and imposes a minimum tax which insures that all corporations pay their fair share of the tax burden.

On the foreign policy front, Congress passed, for the first time since 1981, a full-scale authorization bill for foreign aid programs. In general, the measure encompasses overall policy guidelines and a total of $12.8 billion in authorizations for military, development and economic aid programs in fiscal years 1986 and 1987. Additionally, due to a well publicized and badly timed trip to Moscow by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega seeking financial aid for his regime, the sentiment changed in the House as it reversed an earlier position and voted to supply $27 million for the guerrilla forces in Nicaragua.

As a result of increased public attention focused on the racist government of South Africa, and the passage in both chambers of Congress of legislation that would have imposed economic sanctions, President Reagan signed an executive order on September 9 imposing his own set of sanctions. While the executive order prempted more stringent Congressional action, mounting pressure implicitly rejecting the policy of "constructive engagement," forced Reagan to yield to the demand for a ban on sales of South African gold coins in the U.S. and the barring of new bank loans to that government.

Continued attempts by the President to eliminate the Small Business Administration (SBA) failed again when Congress voted to preserve the agency by reauthorizing the SBA for three years, but at sharply reduced funding levels. Unfortunately, the reauthorization was contained in the budget reconciliation bill which Congress has yet to give final approval.

White House/Senate negotiations stalled on a housing authorization bill to expand existing programs or start new ones, a fiscal year 1986 appropriations bill has been enacted which provides for 97,000 new units. Additionally, Congress rejected the President's proposal to abolish several community development programs by reauthorizing funding for the major programs in this category including the Economic Development Administration, Urban Development Action Grants, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Reagan's proposal to abolish general revenue sharing, which channels funds to some 39,000 local governments, was postponed by Congress until fiscal year 1987.

After weeks of heated debate, Congress finally approved a 3.1 percent fiscal year 1986 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for disabled veterans. The House wanted to provide a higher COLA since disabled veterans received less than Social Security recipients last year, but the Senate insisted on the lower figure and amended the House bill to provide the 3.1 percent increase and included a one-year authorization of a job training program for Vietnam-era veterans.

Congress voted to expand food stamp eligibility and benefits, and welfare benefits for the unemployed, but was unable to complete action on either bill. Despite strong opposition, legislation to phase out special assistance for the long-term unemployed was signed by Reagan on April 4, which means no new beneficiaries can qualify for the supplemental compensation program. This program provided up to 14 weeks of additional financial aid when an individual had exhausted regular unemployment benefits. To somewhat soften the effect of this harsh measure, the bill allows people already on the rolls to draw their remaining benefits.

Much remains to be done in the second session, and in light of the 22 Republican Senate seats at stake in the 1986 elections, and more social issues coming to a vote, the new session of Congress should be particularly interesting and equally disingenuous.

Letters to the editor

Should schools close Jan. 15?

Dir Sir:

I have been following the argument of the Baltimore County NAACP concerning the fact that the Baltimore County Schools are not closing in observance of the commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday on the 20th of January, 1986.

I believe that a very important segment of Dr. King's philosophy was the education of young minds.

It is more important to have students remain in school with meaningful programs and assemblies dedicated to the significant achievements, ideals and dreams of Dr. King than to have these youngsters out of school with just another holiday with no understanding of what it is about.

This dedication could take the form of essays, seminars, guest speakers, lectures by visiting dignitaries, etc. Perhaps the Baltimore Co. Chapter of the NAACP should re-think their action, and, rather than emphasizing petty issues such as school closings, use this opportunity to visit these schools to talk about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., his achievements, ideal and dream.

CELESTINE T. REDD
(Member, NAACP)

Baltimore City Schools

Again this year, the Baltimore City Public Schools will celebrate the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 15, Dr. King's actual birthday. On January 14, 1986, all schools will engage in activities designed to foster students' understanding of the work and philosophy of the slain civil rights leader.

Commemorative events have been planned for children in all grades, elementary through senior high schools.

JACQUELYN HARDY

Baltimore County Schools

"We invite all citizens to join with us as we celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the dreams he awakened in all of us," said Dr. Robert Y. Dubel, Superintendent of the Baltimore County Public Schools, as he discussed the extensive activities scheduled in the Baltimore County Public Schools for Wednesday, January 15.

On that day, each of the 147 Baltimore County schools will honor Dr. King in ways which will contribute to students' knowledge of the civil rights leader's life and work.

As part of its efforts, the school system has produced an original videotape, Goodbye Jim Crow, which will be aired on Channel 36, the Baltimore County Public Schools' education channel. The tape will be made available for community meetings.

After much recent discussion, the Board of Education of Baltimore County decided to continue the long - standing practice of celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday within the schools rather than by giving students a day off.

It was decided that celebrations in each school would provide the most comprehensive and effective method of assuring that 80,000 students would benefit from organized programs and discussions about the life of this great American.

This is consistent with the pattern followed in the Baltimore County Public Schools to honor other famous Americans, such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

Likewise, Baltimore County students are given the opportunity to learn more about their American heritage on Columbus Day and Veterans Day with special programs instead of having days off from school.

"We are pleased that many elected officials, PTA leaders, and advisory council members have indicated that they will join us in this celebration. We hope that other members of school communities will visit us on January 15 and help us honor the tremendous achievements of Dr. King who has been a source of inspiration to us," said the superintendent.

Anthony Now listen carefully boys

Now, before you turn your nose up and say, "not again," consider all the issues at hand.

You, that means all the "God's gifts to women," all you second most handsome men in the world, you studs and heart breakers and, those of you who are just living off the numerical fat-of-the-land, stop!

That girl cannot and does not get pregnant all by herself. Believe it or not, Mr. Wonderful, you have a major role, fifty percent to be exact, in not only creating life but, more importantly, in sustaining that life, once it is here.

Now, let me help all you "men," if you'll let me. The initial thing you need to understand is that sex, making love, as so many of you want to call your often irresponsible acts, is everything and, at the same time, nothing.

It is everything because in your mind you want to make it so. It is nothing because, at best, the whole thing only lasts about the time it takes to watch the eleven o'clock news and, most of you usually can't go even that long.

So many of you see the entire affair as really a conquest. You get your thrill and, if lucky, the female receives an orgasm. If she does, you believe you have done your job well; you beam with pride over thinking that you've caused the female to have the time of her life. You poor arrogant fool.

You know what, fella, you think that sex is something that you cannot enjoy without ejaculating inside your partner. This act, if you'll remember, is the first step in creating the children, that you so willingly walk away from nine months or a year later.

You ought to consider whether the act is even necessary to your enjoyment of sex. If it is you might want to ask yourself just who you're trying to please; you should ask if you are just looking to please you or to share something, that should be beautiful, with another that you care about.

If you must reach your climax, inside, then your next consideration ought to be, "should I wear a condom?" I know most of you never stop to ask or think about such considerations, because you expect the female to always be the one to worry about getting pregnant.

It is the female that you men are looking to for protection. This strategy is like leaving hungry wolves to watch chickens. Also, you think, "it don't feel the same with a condom on."

Fact is, if you turn off the light the girl wouldn't know if you were using a condom or not and, other than the fact that you put it on yourself, you wouldn't know either.

Those of you who simply won't wear a condom might want to consider stopping before the point of ejaculation. This is really asking too much of many of you; if you were that responsible in the first place, many of the problems resulting from sex, sex, and more sex would not be problems at all.

Some of you guys ought to be considering the question of abstinence, in other words, not having sex, at least for a while. Cooling - out would give you some time to think about yourself, the girl, what responsibilities you want and when and, about the whole issue of the role of sex in life.

If you don't want to stop, you don't want to use a condom, you don't want to practice interruption, then what are you doing to control the number of unwanted pregnancies, in our city?

It's your responsibility too, even though, now, the girl has to carry all the weight. What is it you think you ought to be doing? If your answer is just having sex then you're more dangerous, to the whole community, than a crazy man with a loaded gun.

Your weapon is an organ of the body, your bullets the sperm that you shoot forth. The crime you commit is against the girl, against the possible child, against yourself and, against the whole society, who must often take care of your off-spring because you can't or won't.

Just remember, boy, eighteen years is 6570 days. On average that means 30,420 baby feedings, over the same time period. It also means loving and caring without reservation and without conditions.

It means no more Summers that are free, it means no more spending your money exactly as you want to. It means so much that you simply have not thought about. Now, listen carefully boys.

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.

Samuel L. Banks

Forging a black ideology of hope and action in 1986

In terms of socio - economic indices, 1985 was a lacerating and lamentable year for a majority of black Americans. The forecast for 1986, given the recent passage of the Gramm - Rudman - Hollings legislation and other reactionary legislation does not bode favorably for 38 million black and poor Americans.

Although black, Hispanic and poor Americans did not create the monstrous deficits, in excess of $200 billion a year, the Reagan administration, with the support of the Congress, is determined to break the deficits on the backs of the dispossessed and excluded.

This legislative direction represents a cruel and painful reality and not a theoretical philosophical discourse.

The time clearly is at hand for us as black Americans to get serious about substantive issues revolving around education, economic and political power and charting our future within the American body politic.

We cannot and will not achieve educational, political and economic parity with a boogey - down mentality and nonsensical, infantile approach to the weighty socio - economic issues which confront us as a collective people.

If we do nothing else in 1986, we must dare to come together and structure concrete action plans for relief and progress.

Paradoxically, the mean - spirited programs of the Reagan administration may serve as the necessary catalyst for us to act in our own behalf. Black scholars and academicians, professionals and skilled workers must be in the forefront, in concert with the masses of our people, to provide leadership by example and not empty rhetoric.

What, if you have a proclivity for annual resolutions, have you resolved to do this year to enhance yourself and others? To what extent, if at all, will 1986 be a repetition of 1985 and prior years which reflected stultification, melancholy and waiting for an earthly savior to help you "get over."

The lessons of history are crystal clear in this matter: You (we) must be our own savior here on earth. The acquisition or sharing of power will not come through pie in the sky exercises, daily genuflections and reckless fantasizing, but through planning and action.

This is precisely what Frederick Douglass meant when he declared over 100 years ago: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never shall." We as a people must learn this fundamental truth and act accordingly.

As we prepare to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday on January 15th and January 20th, we have a glorious opportunity to fashion educational, political and economic initiatives that will serve our interests and move us forward.

The chief thrust of our action must be local and state levels. It should be noted, too, that Dr. King enjoyed phenomenal success against entrenched overt racism because he not only conceptualized about societal problems, but he had a plan of action.

Where we constitute majorities in cities, towns, hamlets and counties, it is not necessary to ask people for political power, but to seize it and exercise it through the democratic process.

This, of course, is the essence of majoritarian politics practiced and venerated by other ethnic, religious and racial groups in their rise to power in the United States.

We must not only elect people to office of our choosing, but, too, must hold them accountable! Accountability is an essential element of politics and social interaction. Politicians are accountable to and responsive to those who elect them to office.

However, if you have no plan or sense of where you are headed, it is most unlikely that you will be able to hold your elected officials accountable or have your basic needs met.

The central point that I am addressing in this column is that it is very unlikely that the socio - economic storms will abate for a majority of 38 million black Americans and the poor in 1986 or in the foreseeable future unless we take substantive actions with a plan.

We, then, must use our intelligence and resources to survive the storms and move forward. There are some simple and direct things that we can do now:

1. Support the AFRO - AMERICAN and other black organizations of protest and advocacy for equality of opportunity. The AFRO - AMERICAN, as the principal communicator and disseminator of black activities, deserves the support of the black community.

2. Support black - owned businesses within the community. The fact that the dollar turns over only one time in the black community and several times in the majority white community supports and fosters black dependency and impotence."

3. Demand high quality and demonstrable educational excellence for your children now. Insist on the necessary funding to achieve high quality education.

4. Register to vote and encourage others to do so in order that you will cease to be voiceless. A voiceless person is a voiceless person.

5. Support candidates for local and statewide offices who will be responsive to your needs and interests. Now is the time to plan and act as to your choice for mayor, attorney general and governor of the Free State.

6. Support the Baltimore Urban League, the NAACP, the Welfare Rights Organization and other organizations committed to human uplift, equality of opportunity and social justice.

7. Attend Jubilee Day on Sunday, January 12, 1986 at 4 p.m. at the Brown Memorial Baptist Church. The NAACP needs your presence and support.

Support and encourage able and effective persons to seek elective office. The quality of life in a community, to a large degree, is determined by the quality, commitment and integrity of the leadership.

Yopu possess the power to make 1986 a distinctive and significant year for yourself and posterity if you will take the leap of faith and act now. There are many who look to you, at a crucial juncture in our life and history, to make a happy difference.

Just Thinking

By Al Sweeney

Best of '85; hopes for '86

This is when the producers of trivia utilize their allotted space to take a cursory examination of the best and worst of 1985.

Meanwhile project some observations about 1986.

One of the saddest performances of the major media both the daily and electronic segments was the lack of coverage of the ceremonies for Brig. Gen. West A. Hamilton, whose burial was held during the holiday weekend.

If you'll pardon the self-serving comment, your AFRO did front page spread on the colorful full military rites accorded the late General Hamilton.

Loved by the men who served under him, General Hamilton was fully involved in the community organizations.

As a conservative member of the D.C. board of education, he was the target of criticism from many progressive community leaders because of his lack of mimilitance on racial questions.

As a young columnist, I took many shots at his positions but never felt any malice towards the always genial general, who took the barbs in stride.

Year after year, he recruited my membership for the Twelfth Street YMCA. He was 99 when he died and hoped to see his hundredth birthday.

* * *

What in the world is going on with the National NAACP's headquarters in Baltimore?

Hard working NAACP volunteers such as Clara Oliver in Annapolis is working feverishly collecting life memberships for the building campaign. She has been reassured the building campaigned is progressing smoothly.

This column hears that Ben Hooks, who appeared to assume a new image at the NAACP's Dallas convention and has relapsed to what his critics call "ego tripping self."

Meanwhile, unless someone gets interested, am told an NAACP tragedy is in the offing.

Bill Pollard are you listening?

On the upside, Althea Simmons, the NAACP's congressional watchdog in D.C., has been doing an outstanding job of staying on top of racial issues involving the legislative branch of government.

Unfortunately, since the Denver incident on June 29, 1981 when the NAACP's, deposed leader, Margaret Bush startled the world with her controversial introduction of President Reagan to an NAACP convention, the executive branch is not receptive to NAACP petitions.

It's unfortunate, but the NAACP is the black people's organization. It is nonpartisan and will remain that way when black critics get involved and make the necessary changes from the inside as members not on the outside as carpers.

It will survive Hooks or Bush. It stumbles along since, DuBois, Walter White and Roy Wilkins have passed. Better times are near.

Discussing established Black organizations, the crises facing the organization founded by the creator of Black History Week, Dr. Carter Woodson, is disturbing.

The economic facing the Association or the Study of Afro-American Life History is another example of the few the Black Americans' repository of its wrecking an institution that should be the Black Americans repository of its historical contributions to all facets of national life.

AFRO SURVEY

How should the Martin Luther King holiday be celebrated?

Robert Colbert

Althea Sippline

Daneast Hatchat

Joanne Jackson

This week the question to the man and woman in the street is "How do you think the King holiday should be celebrated?"

Robert Colbert, 62, projectionist, "I don't know except I feel that all schools should be closed. And I also feel that it should be a time for reflection. I think it should be held with the same reverence as that of Washington, Lincoln, etc."

Althea Sippline, 30, salescheck, "I think schools should be closed and there should be church celebrations. I believe a parade would be nice. He should be treated like any other American hero. I think we should reflect on what we've done and how MLK has helped us get to where we are and if he were alive where we would be."

Daneast Hatchat, 34, sales, "I think we should teach our children, 'This is how far we've gotten with his help.' This shouldn't be just one day. I don't think we should celebrate it with sales. In fact, we should boycott the stores that day."

Joanne Jackson, 33, distribution clerk, "I think all schools should be closed. And I think everyone should be paid for that day. Not just federal employees, but private employers also. It should be a day to show what he has done for blacks. It should just be his day. Show how Jesse Jackson got where he is because of MLK."

James Faison, 41, carpenter help, "We should have events to tell about what and who he is. There should be programs directed toward school kids to make sure his memory doesn't die. I think a stamp should be issued in his name. I know they won't do this, but maybe have a coin with his face on it. That way everyohe would come in contact."

Anthony Hamlin, 25, produce worker, "I think most people should respect him. People should take the time to know him. Take time and learn from him, not to hate him. Since I believe he was chosen by Christ, we should take time to learn about Christ. Also, I feel we shouldn't shop on that day."

James Ovzts, 20, seafood worker, "I think it should be a day off for everyone except for emergency. It should be big parade for him. Television should dedicate a certain amount of time to honor him. I think it should be a time to look back at what he has done."

Lovonez Pridger, 29, housewife, "I think there should be seminars. With his speeches. There should be reflections on how far we've come since his death. There should be film festivals of his speeches to show young people who he was and what he was about, because most of the children know very little about him. I think there should be candlelight services in memoriam of his death."

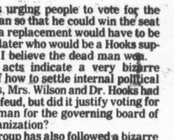
Anthony Hamlin

James Faison

James Ovzts

Lovonez Pridger

Bloomers



R. B. Jones

Welcome National NAACP

Now that the move of the NAACP to Baltimore is settled and the group will soon take up residence in Baltimore, the question that must be raised is how much significance will this move have for the organization and for the city?

I have not been able to discover much anticipation, excitement or even interest on the part of many members of the black community. To many of the people I query about the organization, the NAACP is very much like the Washington Monument on Charles St. something that one is aware of but hardly notices in any substantive way.

This is surprising since the NAACP is the oldest organization in this country that has worked for the progress of black people in this country in a full time capacity. It was founded in 1909 by a combination of members of the Niagara Movement, an all black civil rights agitation group founded by W.E.B. Dubois and William Monroe Trotter the militant editor of the Boston Guardian, and a group of white reformers.

The newly formed NAACP took a different approach. It concentrated on using the court system to fight for black rights. It also engaged in lobbying efforts in the Congress and tried for many years to get a federal anti-lynching law passed.

It was the legal strategy used by the NAACP that resulted in the historic Brown Decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954 declaring segregation illegal. This decision overturned an earlier court decision in 1896 that declared and defended the concept of racially separate, but equal facilities did not violate black people's constitutional rights.

The Brown Decision is considered the NAACP's greatest victory. That is indicative of the contradictory nature of the group and its mission. The NAACP is a group supposedly dedicated to freeing black people within the context of American society, yet it has no economic program after 76 years. It is supposed to be a mass-based organization yet its leadership and program remain locked into a style of middle-class mediocrity.

The very reason that the national office is moving to Baltimore is because it could no longer afford the high rents in New York. It is very strange that an organization that has worked 76 year to bring the black race into full equal citizenship in America has not learned the simple economic principle that it is better to own than to rent.

It is embarrassing to the race for its oldest civil rights organization to continually be without a stable source of income. About ten years ago the NAACP was the defendant in a lawsuit filed by some merchants in Mississippi who were the objects of an NAACP lead boycott.

The judge in the case required that a bond of roughly $1 million be posted and the NAACP was unable to raise the money on its own. I believe it was the AFL-CIO that gave the NAACP the necessary funds to post the bond and stave off extinction.

As people went around with cans collecting monies for the survival of the NAACP, I reflected on how weak the group actually was. It had no endowment or cash reserve or assets that it could call upon in this situation yet the group had had the benefit of a multitude of learned black minds. Since the situation persists to this day, the NAACP had to move out of New York because it couldn't pay the rent.

Not only is the NAACP in bad financial shape, it is finding itself increasingly cut off from the masses in terms of active support and impact on society. This problem stems from the origins of the group and its relentlessly middle brow view of struggle.

From 1909 to the present the leadership has primarily been made up of people who had a stake in a stable society undergoing mild reforms. DuBois, Barnett and the whites who formed the group such as Mary White Ovington and William English Walling were for the most part middle-class reformers with DuBois and Barnett more on the radical end of the spectrum.

This middle-class, polite orientation has always made the NAACP willing to accept the most meager gains. Only the advent of SCLC, CORE, and SNCC forced the NAACP to go into the streets in the 1960s. Their entrance into nonviolent direct action was not easy or voluntary after decades of depending primarily on litigation.

Since the heady days of the 1960s, the NAACP has not been able to call out any sizeable number of troops. It has many paper members, but in terms of being able to call out the masses of black people the organization cannot do it.

I did an informal survey with young people in my neighborhood and they knew little or nothing about the group. I talked to young adults about the group and they knew next to nothing. The NAACP is locked into being a church oriented, older generation group with few ties to the broader black community.

Because of its lack of a mass basis and its inflexibility in terms of strategy and tactics, a kind of clique mentality affects the group. National, the group suffered the embarrassment of voting a dead man onto the national board in December of 1984 because the Benjamin Hooks supporters did not want Margaret Bush Wilson to win a seat.

There were nine candidates and eight seats. I will never forget local NAACP officials urging people to vote for the dead man so that he could win the seat so that a replacement would have to be named later who would be a Hooks supporter. I believe the dead man won.

Such acts indicate a very bizarre sense of how to settle internal political conflicts, Mrs. Wilson and Dr. Hooks had a bitter feud, but did it justify voting for a dead man for the governing board of the organization?

The group has also followed a bizarre series of twists and turns of policy over the years. In 1925 when Dr. Ossian Sweet, a black man bought a house in a white section of Detroit, mobs surrounded the house and attacked it. Dr. Sweet and his brother shot at the attackers and killed a white man. He was put on trial for murder and the NAACP hired Clarence Darrow to defend him. The NAACP affirmed the right of armed self-defense.

Thirty years later when Robert Williams of the Monroe, NC branch of the NAACP organized a self-defense force to protect the black community, he was suspended as president of that NAACP branch and denounced by the organization's leadership. It seemed that armed self-defense was no longer acceptable to the organization.

The NAACP very heroically objected to the placing of Japanese Americans in concentration camps at the beginning of America's entry into World War II when the rest of society was approving of the act in race motivated hysteria. Yet the same organization during the McCarthy Era expelled known communists from the organization in a policy that was the opposite of the one that the group held in the case of the Japanese concentration camps.

In recent years the group has suffered along with other civil rights groups a malaise caused by declining support for civil rights causes and a drift to the right in national policy dialogue.

It is highly ironic that the most recent president to even pay lip service to civil rights goals, Jimmy Carter, began a massive budgetary attack on many programs supported by the NAACP that were products of the civil rights movement.

Continually the NAACP is faced with the choice between the two evils on the ballot. It has been surpassed in popular support by The Jesse Jackson Rainbow Coalition-Presidential Campaign and the emergence of Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. It has no issue it can call its own and no leader charismatic enough to stir large numbers of people to action.

I have yet to see an NAACP economic, social or political plan for black progress in the last few years of the 20th century. I have seen reaction to events and political officials but no long range planning.

Still I am glad the organization exists. Its efforts illustrate vividly that one can not use one's way to freedom or as Jole one's way to freedom. Its existence give wellmeaning middle-class folks a way to feel that they are contributing to black liberation. Finally, the existence of the NAACP dilutes the number of FBI agents available to spy on and harass other black groups.

Welcome to Baltimore NAACP. I hope you've learned something on your trip down the coastline.

JAN 1986