Baltimore Afro-American

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Protecting cabbies

The current plague of cab driver robberies and murders should galvanize the community to action to diminish this problem. In all urban areas there are going to be crime problems. That is where the money and anonymity exist to make it profitable to stage a series of robberies.

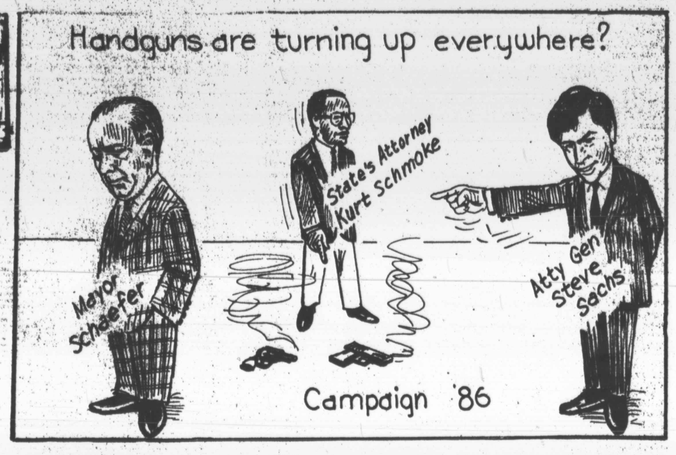
A certain amount of crime is unavoidable, but taxicab drivers are extremely vulnerable because their job requires that they take any orderly, sober person to any city location he or she requests. As vulnerable as they are, they are equally valuable public servants.

Taxis provide transportation to places not served or not served well by the bus routes and the fledgling and miniscule subway system. Cabs transport many elderly and disabled persons to medical appointments and sometimes deliver blood and other vital packages to various locations.

For a city its size, Baltimore has a relatively large taxi fleet, but those ranks will diminish significantly unless the rash of killings and robberies decrease. There are many parttime drivers who will stop driving if something is not done and that will diminish weekend taxi service.

The police department has already instituted proceedings to put more police officers on duty on the weekends and eventually the police will probably place undercover police officers in the cabs as they did a few years ago to end a similar rash of holdups and killings.

Citizens can help also by reporting any suspicious incidents or abandoned looking cabs to the police right away. The only way the police can put a stop to many of these incidents is with help from the general population.



Parren J. Mitchell

Epilogue to the war on poverty

Gun control and Campaign '86

It seems that the volatile issue of handguns has caught up with Mayor Schaefer, the undeclared candidate for governor who has been acting like a candidate. Until very recently the mayor has been enjoying the best of both worlds, campaigning without the burden and scrutiny of being an official contender.

However, Schaefer was drawn out on the issue of gun control this week by his chief rival Attorney General Stephen Sachs. Sachs has been trying to draw Schaefer out to expose him to scrutiny and attack and the current City Council and General Assembly bills concerning the issue of handgun control gave Sachs ammunition.

Baltimore City is suffering under a reign of terror because of the availability of handguns to people who do not hesitate to use them. As mayor of a city that is figuratively, if not literally under siege, it is Schaefer's duty to speak out forcefully and early for handgun control measures.

It is a life and death issue that transcends race and class because the thugs who rob and shoot people are only interested in personal gain. The mayor promises to unveil a program dealing with the problem of handguns.

Many citizens hope that it will be a well thought out program that will have some effect on this terrifying phenomenon and not just "politicking" which the mayor accused some of his critics of doing.

At the present time there are too many guns in trigger-happy hands.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy began an era which sought to modify the role of the Federal government to include compassion for the unfortunate, most assailable members of our society, the handicapped, the elderly and the poor.

In his welfare message to Congress, he explained that the goals of his public welfare program would be positive and constructive to better strengthen and protect the vulnerable.

In 1964, Kennedy's successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson told Congress that he was declaring "unconditional war" on poverty.

President Reagan, during his first year in the oval office, destroyed any remnants of Kennedy's dream and Johnson's poverty fighter programs by assembling support for massive cuts in the welfare budget and by declaring his own war.

Within five years of taking office, this president had effectively curbed the American appetite for compassion and has brought back the once popular assumption that individuals, and not the government, are responsible for the condition in which they find themselves.

This year in his State of the Union address, President Reagan spoke of welfare as a narcotic, and warned that it is time for this country to abandon the war on poverty.

This president has brought back the notion that Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) is being exploited by black mothers.

This president has regenerated the image of a black family on the dole with four, five, or more children reared at government expense, while the statistics clearly show that whites have always been the largest single group of AFDC recipients.

The Kennedy approach was to shift the focus of welfare toward escape from the dole with a continuing responsibility of the federal government to help Americans help themselves.

The essence of this approach was captured by the popular slogan, "Give a hand, not a handout." Kennedy's legacy to Johnson was not a new system, but merely a new set of expectations of the Federal government.

Within President Johnson's first nine months in office, he won popular support in Congress for the Economic Opportunity Act which provided job training, parttime jobs for teenagers and college students;

Community antipoverty programs; loans to low-income farmers and businessmen; and established a domestic Peace Corps, later to become part of ACTION. No handouts could be found in any of these programs.

The Reagan war is being waged directly on those very programs meant to give Americans hope. In addition to those programs mentioned above, Reagan engineered support for cuts in other so-called antipoverty programs such as:

Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Food Stamps, Housing Assistance, AFDC, Supplemental Security Income, General Employment and Training, Compensatory Education for Disadvantaged Students, Nutrition for Children, Low-income Energy Assistance, and the list goes on.

When this President talks about "preparing for a decade of economic growth," he does not discuss a plan to address the 14.7 percent or a total 33.7 million Americans are living below the poverty level, or the 1.3 million blacks that have joined the poverty ranks since he took office.

To bring this figure home, 22.9 percent or a total of 176,500 Baltimoreans were known to be living below the poverty level in 1980 according to the Census Bureau. That figure is undoubtedly higher now.

When President Reagan talks in glowing terms about preservation of the safety net, he neglects to mention that the cuts he proposed over the last four years caused nearly one million food stamp recipients to have their benefits terminated and nearly all others to have their benefits reduced.

When the President says that he intends to improve the quality and efficiency of Federal spending, he fails to mention that 500,000 low-income female heads of households have had their AFDC benefits terminated as a result of the quality and efficiency of his plan.

When this President talks about reducing the "intrusion of government," he omits the fact that an estimated 700,000 children lost Medicaid coverage as a result of less intrusion.

When the President talks about "fulfilling essential federal responsibilities to . . . the truly less fortunate," he obscures the truth that his views on federal responsibility means an unequivocal end to the war on poverty..

It saddens me to realize that a President can be aware of these statistics and still say to the American people that he is working "to make the American Dream real for all," but it disturbs and even confounds me that the American people believe him.

Letter to the editor

NAACP effectiveness listed

The article written by Lamont Curry which appeared in the Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN newspaper February 22, 1986 is a misnomer. It fails to address the effectiveness of the NAACP.

The ignorance of its author regarding the topic proposedly under discussion was portrayed by a number of half - truths and untruths.

Instead of presenting well established facts, he presented accusations made by two dissidents who were former employees who have been relieved of their jobs.

Despite efforts on the part of racists, bigots, Uncle Tom's and neophytes to discredit our association's amazing civil rights track record and to promote division internally, we will let the facts speak for themselves while we continue programs of proven value and initiate programs with new thrusts.

Our voter registration/education/get-out-the-vote program is placing us in the political mainstream. We are able to elect both black and non-black candidates of our choice.

In 1983 and 1984, we registered 1.75 million unregistered citizens. We have encouraged many other groups to become politically functional.

Our Youth and College Division is one of the largest secular youth groups in the nation. They are learning by doing. Our Act-So Project is attracting and inspiring our youth to achieve in the academic, scientific and cultural life of our society.

Thousands of our young people from over 500 cities participated in 1985. Our Back-to-School/Stay-in-School Pilot Project is decreasing truancy and drop-out rates.

Our 32 Fair Share agreements with national and regional corporations which were negotiated during the last two or three years, have netted us thousands of new jobs, promotions, places and policy making boards and black entrepreneurship support.

Our GEEP project is doing the same thing in the arena of government. Our Incubator Project is helping black business to be successful.

Our Agnes Jones Jackson and Roy Wilkins Scholarship Plans, our Prison Program, our Washington Bureau through its annual legislative mobilization conference and network, our cooperation with the National Urban League and others in improving the Black Family, our cooperation with the Free South Africa and other coalitions are providing viable services to all citizens who are in need.

Furthermore, thousands of citizens call upon our 2,200 branches for advice or assistance with their problems of discrimination in housing, education and employment.

Despite an unwholesome residue of racism, an unhealthy amount of apathy, a vindictive motive on the part of failures, and negative criticism on the part of "would-be" leaders, we, the unpaid volunteers, will spread the truth and do the work which is essential for the advancement of colored and all other people.

We prefer to remain in the battle for justice, opportunity, and freedom, even though we are shot at and sometimes killed by our "brothers," we shall not sit on the sidelines and criticize the general in control and the soldiers in the battle.

Ben Hooks is employed by the NAACP to implement our policies and programs. He is doing just that and we are happy. The strength of the NAACP is in the local branches. The National Board of Directors is responsible to them. Ben Hooks is responsible to the National Board.

If you examine the facts you will agree that Ben Hooks is a good general, not the enemy! Are you?

ENOLIA P. MCMILLAN, President
NAACP
26 W. 25th Street

Tuskegee alumni association

The Baltimore - Tuskegee Alumni Association especially appreciates the coverage of the Fourth Annual Carver-Washington Scholarship Awards Breakfast as reported in the February 15, 1986 edition. Coverage by the AFRO-AMERICAN helped to exemplify the significance and success of the occasion.

However, there was a major omission in the article, which is presumed to be an oversight by the writer. While all other club officials and chairpersons were pictured and listed, the chairperson of the Carver-Washington Breakfast was not mentioned.

The chairperson is Dr. Anne O. Emery who also presided as mistress-of-ceremony. This is considered a significant omission because the concept for the Carver-Washington Breakfast was conceived by Dr. Emery.

Under her chairmanship, the breakfast not only has been a successful annual event, but has contiqued to grow and expand each year.

Patricia Fields

Anthony Armstrong

Chapter II

This is a story about being too successful. It's a story of innovation and persistence but, also, and somewhat sadly, a story of growth that outstripped the available resources of a young company.

Competitive hardball and simple human greed come into play to reduce a once brilliant start-up effort to a crippling state, causing confusion, frustration, and anger.

We won't reveal the name of the enterprise, for to do so would only add more salt to wounds that now must be healed. In addition, the crush of Chapter 11 proceedings are bad enough in reality and; the mention of such a situation is usually met with a response that make the phrase, "the rumors of my death are premature," quite appropriate.

Chapter 11 is one of a number of conditions a business can adopt to give itself breathing room and time, usually to restructure itself and to develop plans for paying creditors.

Creditors are legally held at bay, the company continues to operate and, hopefully time, money, and good management will return such a company to health, ending its Chapter 11 bankruptcy situation.

Although the word bankruptcy is to a business like someone shouting fire in a crowded theater, a Chapter 11 filing does not automatically mean that the business is on its way down the tubes.

Some of America's biggest corporate names have, at one time or another, found the provisions of the federal bankruptcy laws to be temporary solution for some particularly wrenching and unforeseen situation.

Wickes Corporation, huge West Coast retailer, used the provision to give it time to restructure its hobbled operations — successfully too. International Harvester, the truck and farm equipment maker (now the Navistar Corporation), used Chapter 11, in a last ditch effort to save itself, also successfully.

Texaco Oil is threatening a Chapter 11 filing, in its billion dollar fight with the Pennzoil Corporation.

So the fact that a small, but successful, fast food operation's management decided to file for Chapter 11 is not cause to don funeral black.

What brought on the crisis, for this business we'll call Kessy's, is a drama of business in the trenches but; more than just that, this is a story of some individuals determined to stop Kessy's because of what it came to symbolize.

Ultimately, the struggle that would follow became a real life acting-out of perhaps the single most troublesome confrontational issue in America.

That issue can be framed this way: "give them their civil rights, better housing, and some political representation but; no matter what the cost, do not ever let them make any money — real big corporate money, that is."

"Let their drug profits mushroom; all of that money will come back to us, in cash for big cars, in expensive jewelry (made even more expensive for the drug dealer), in upper six figure legal fees, and fancy furs for their women."

Never, but never, let them make any real and clean corporate money, not now, not ever.

Kessy's, in just five years, had become one of the fastest growing fast food operations in its chosen marketing areas. The firm had beat the entire industry to the punch on a number of menu items and, had been the first fast food company to offer hot, made on the spot, biscuits.

Also, Kessy's had been able to achieve something few black-owned businesses had — a large and growing base of white customers. Why, if you didn't know Kessy's was owned and operated by blacks you would think that it was a white business.

This is not to say that blacks can't operate truly competitive businesses, it is to say, however, that the public's perception is often that they can't. Well, Kessy's did!

A business can grow faster, believe it or not, than is good for it. The growth can quickly outstrip a young company's ability to finance that growth. When this occurs the business is forced to do one of two things: either limit its own growth, a tricky strategy demanding very adroit corporate moves or, resort to outside financing to get the needed money to fuel its quickening expansion.

Outside dollars always come with strings and; sometimes those string are just enough to strangle you. Kessy's had tried going to the investment banking market before but found that meant give-up too much, in exchange for the financial help.

In this instance the investment bankers "smelled blood" and were eager to provide money, to what was a business they knew couldn't miss. The idea is simple: lend the money, place all kinds of restrictions on it.

When the borrower, in this case Kessy's, found itself unable to repay the money, the investment banker takes the business.

Enter Chapter 11.

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.

G. James Fleming

Alice Parham, patron saint of Morgan State

Morgan State University honored one of its own last week Tuesday (Feb. 18) when, happily, it named the stately ballroom in McKeldin Student Union after Alice May Warner Parham — the beloved "Miss Parham."

"Happily" because, for a moment, the 200 people present could forget Haiti and its fleeing ex-president, the terrorism against some South Africans by other South Africans, and forget, too, all the pros and cons about teenage pregnancies.

It was a celebration — and it could not have happened to a person more deserving. A native of Mt. Airy, Md., and now a bright and sprightly 81, she was "reared by Morgan," to use her words and finished its academy (high school) in 1924 and its college in 1928. Then, her work life began.

First it was as Girls Reserve secretary of the Norfolk, Va. YWCA; then the Youngstown, Ohio, YWCA, first as Girls Reserve secretary; then as executive secretary; later, the Warren, Ohio, YWCA and the Warren Urban League, the latter while her husband was in the Army during World War II.

The war over, she and her husband headed for Maryland and Cherry Hill where Mrs. Parham was director of the Cherry Hill Community Center, a unit of the city's Bureau of Recreation. She remained for a very successful ten years, until she returned to Morgan as director of its student union.

But "director" was only her payroll title. She was mother, auntie, friend, teacher, counsellor and a "Mother Theresa" to thousands of students — especially the commuters who had no dormitory haven on campus.

She was of the "old school" in morals but none of her boys and girls thought of her as "old." They never dodged being in her company, but sought her out.

Never one to lecture, sermonize or brow-beat, yet her influence was boundless; her caring and love ever broader. One speaker called her "the patron saint of Morgan State University."

There is a gap between black men and women that never seems to close. It is deep and wide, roughly hewed out by centuries of selfhate doctrines, oppressions too cruel for human understanding, and feelings of inadequacy.

There are bridges of love that often precariously connect the two sides of the chasm, but these are individual structures, they do not create a group understanding between black men and women.

This gap was illustrated painfully on Sunday, Feb. 23 at Enoch Pratt Library when a packed audience discussed the movie and the book, "The Color Purple." Emotions ran high and the resentment and anger that many black men and women feel toward each other was evident.

As I sat there and listened to the many heartfelt comments provoked by the movie, I felt out of place and embarrassed at the same time. I felt out of place because I remember vividly the black nationalist movement's attempts to wrestle with the question of male-female relations in the late 1960s and 1970s which did not seem to have much lasting impact on the problem and I was embarrassed because so many people seemed to have such scant knowledge of black history.

It is the lack of historical insight that contributes to the gap between black men and women. If we don't know who we are and how we got to be who we are, we will never be able to know who we hope to become. Without historical perspective we will continually be set against each other by external forces...

The relationships between black men and women were first distorted by slavery. The purpose of slavery was to turn a cultured, sophisticated African into a thing. All the complex spiritual, economic, political and familiar relationships and institutions that Africans created while Europe was a collection of barbarians, were disrupted.

The men were no longer able to protect their women and children from external threats and the women no longer had control of their labor or their bodies. Children who were considered gifts from the gods in Africa were turned into profitable commodities during slavery.

Slavemasters intentionally tried to divide black men and women. They knew their swagger, bluster, whips and chains were merely things to mask their fear of a united slave community. Their overriding fear up to this day has been the black presence among them.

Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey and Prophet Nat turner lead slave rebellions and conspiracies that included black men and women together. Often the rebels' wives fought alongside their men and served a variety of other functions.

Black history is full of examples of runaway slave groups consisting of families. It is full of examples of free blacks purchasing their wives and children.

Immediately after the Civil War whites would often comment on the seemingly aimless wandering of many of the newly freed slaves. What the whites did not understand was that most of these people were testing their new freedom and looking for family members who had been sold away from them. The feelings of love was that strong.

Black men and women despite the brutalization that both have suffered at the hands of whites and the violence that they have blindly inflicted on each other, love each other fiercely. Often they take up arms against each other and then fall into each other's arms.

There is one certainty that must be faced if the rift between black women and men is to be healed. The more black men and women assimilate the values of the dominant white culture the more problems they will have loving each other.

R. B. Jones

Healing

Fighting allergies

Floyd J. Malveaux, M.D., Ph.D.

In my last article it was pointed out that household and microscopic, spider-like insects found in dust may be responsible for many allergic symptoms including sneezing, stuffy nose, itchy nose or eyes, tearing, coughing or tightness in the chest. Many of these problems are worse during the winter when the furnace stirs up dust throughout the house.

Dust-proofing measures can be particularly effective especially when applied to the bedroom and can result in substanial benefits to allergic patients.

Dust can be reduced in your home when objects that collect dust are removed from the bedroom. That is, smooth, uncluttered, and easily cleaned surfaces are recommended. Bare floors and walls are suggested.

Books should not be stored in the bedroom. If carpeting is unavoidable, low pile types are recommended. The mattresses, box springs, and pillows should be enclosed with airtight plastic or fabric encasings that can be zippered and removed.

The floors should be either vacuumed or damp mopped. Remove chenille spreads and avoid stuffed items such as quilts and comforters. Do not use feather or down pillows and replace synthetic pillows every three years.

In homes that have forced air systems, electronic filters may be used on the central unit. Some precipitators, however, may generate irritating levels of ozone during prolonged operation. Freed-standing filter units are probably of value.

These antidust measures, along with dehumidifiers in the basement, will help minimize the growth of mites and molds in the home.

Condensation of surfaces and seepage of ground water should be restricted. Avoid moldy firewood, hay, and dried plants. For mold sensitive patients, boiler type vaporizers at room level may be preferable if humidification is considered essential.

Respiratory irritants should be avoided. These would include cigarette smoke, powders, such as, laundry detergents, shoe polish, cleaning products, and scented cosmetics. If they are used, the area should be well ventilated.

Finally, patients with animal allergies should seriously consider finding another home for these pets. Since many of us are obviously attached to pets, this avoidance measure should not be taken casually.

Specific sensitivity to pets should be clearly demonstrated and the results of a trial separation should be considered before a pet is totally removed from the home.

ASALH needs more p.r.

I recently saw in the local newspapers that the Association for the Study of Afro American Life and History was successful in raising enough money to satisfy creditors. As a black, I am extremely happy and proud that it will remain in business and that the black community and progressive whites were so forthcoming.

My concern, however, is that a similiar crisis will occur again unless the organization takes action now. For some reason, few blacks even knew about the organization before the financial crisis developed.

I am fairly active in the black community (attending a large black church in Northwest, Washington, D.C.), a mason; and a member of two fraternities, and several social groups, but I had not heard much about the organization.

The institution must be preserved—a generation of black children should grow up just as familiar with Dr. Woodson as they are with Thomas Jefferson or Martin L. King. But unless, someone from the group goes around to the largest churches, fraternities, sororities and meets with media people, it just won't happen. Black conventions in D.C. happen every year. Many people would love to buy the books.

JOHN WILSON
Temple Hill, Maryland

—AFRO SURVEY—

Is 'rap music' a phase or is it here to stay?

Garfield Griffith

Cynthia Bryant

Ferron Cawthorne

Danielle Fears

This week the question to the man and woman in the street is, "Do you think that rap music is a phase or is it here to stay?"

Garfield Griffith, 33, heavy equipment operator, "It's just a phase. Not too many people are really into rap music. It's a young music. I don't go for it. My music has to have meaning, music that can speak for me."

Cynthia Bryant, 37, housewife, "I pray that it is a phase. I have too many kids to have it stay around. All that boiling bull — I get tired of that noise. I have taken all plugs out and disconnected the speakers to keep from listening to that stuff."

Ferron Cawthorne, 37, trucker, "I think it is just a phase. You don't have that many musicians in that particular field, so it will probably die out."

Danielle Fears, 9, student, "Rap music is a phase. Rap music is fun, but it is a phase. I think it will last until I am about ten, after that it'll be something else."

Lonzie Arthur, 25, construction worker, "It is like anything else, nothing here to stay. You just listen to what is up at that time. It comes with each new generation—something else comes in."

Arnold Collins, 31, contractor, "It is just a phase, but if they could get it into mainstream music it could be more appreciated. The older generation won't listen to it in rap form. It is just day to day experience said to a beat. To old people it is just some bum music."

Linda Holland, 31, typist, "It is just a phase. It is like when we were into the Supremes, The Four Tops, etc. We all had dance steps to it, etc. But this rap music is just like saying a rhyme line. The boy he ran my man ain't worth a damn. Stopped broke my back, I got his jacket. That's all. It don't say anything to me. I'm sentimental. I have to have music that says something."

Darrell Ford, 20, unemployed, "I think rap music started with people like James Brown, Dino Giovanni, Gil Scott music from the sixties. It just has been modified somewhat. It'll die out, but it will come back when someone else comes in with something to add to it."

Lonezie Arthur

Arnold Collins

Linda Holland

Darrell Ford

Divorce and the children

In recent days we have heard and read a good deal about several bills before the Maryland Legislature concerning the protection of our children from abuse, neglect and those responsible for these atrocious misdeeds on our poor, innocent children.

There are, however, two other bills currently before the House Judiciary Committee, which also deal with the welfare of our children that are being all but ignored in the local press. These are House Bills 810 and 884.

These bills, because they do not deal overtly with the well being of the children, are considered by many not to be children's issues but domestic issues which should not be discussed in public and are not considered as important to anyone other than those directly affected.

House Bill 810 and 884 attempt to bring about somewhat of a greater degree of stability and sense of being wanted to the children of divorce.

These bills are to establish provisions for the enactment of and provide guidelines and parameters for establishing various types of joint custody in cases where the court feels that it would be in the best interest of the children, and where the court has been able to establish that it will be a viable and workable situation.

House Bill 884 does in its proposed form establish certain guidelines to help safeguard the children from those parents whose extended involvement could be detrimental to the welfare of the children.

It also lists those parents, who because of their current or previous behavior or attitudes would not be eligible for joint custody until they can prove they would be acceptable parents.

In any program there will be those that "get by," and no system is totally foolproof, but we still must move ahead. We each leave our homes daily without knowing which if any, of the many calamities of life may befall us that day.

Why is it that once parents divorce the general well-being of their children falls under the heading of "Domestic Relations" while if the parents are together, it is a totally different issue? Which of you know of a single case of a parent divorcing the children?

Let us not discriminate against the children who have already been victimized and are, in many cases, persecuted even by their own parents and families.

By supporting House Bill 884 and 810 you will give many children back their missing parent and take away the feelings of rejection that they feel.

"Help SAVE the children from at least some of the horrors and effects of divorce."

JACOB ROTH, President
Fathers United for Equal Rights
and Second Wives Coalition

MAR 1986