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Those minor bills

Each year as the General Assembly concludes its session, a plethora of passed legislation surfaces, which was previously known well only to the bill sponsors and the slavish Assembly watchers.

Such things as those "going out of business" sales, which have been known to go on for a year in some instances, will now be illegal. These and other types of distress sales may not last longer than 60 days.

State Sen. Clarence W. Blount's bill which prohibits auto dealers from attaching their logos to your car without your permission, has passed the legislature.

If the measure is signed by the Governor and becomes law, you can make a dealer pay for allowing him to put his logo on your automobile.

While loudly trumpeted measures such as legislation concerning the S and L crisis, or the ill-fated state income tax amnesty get all the headlines, many of these so-called minor bills directly affect consumers in our state.

We applaud the diligent work of the legislative Black Caucus, who individually and collectively have successfully fought the battle for black people in many, many instances.

The new leader of the Black Caucus has been chosen, and wisely, is employing the services of caucus liminaries in key positions. This insures the continuing role of the Black Caucus in keeping the thrust toward passing key legislation of concern to black Marylanders.

Parren J. Mitchell

Save the world—stop testing

On Saturday, March 22, in a tunnel 2000 feet below the Nevada desert, the United States tested a nuclear weapon. It was the first bomb we have detonated this year.

The Energy Department warned residents of Las Vegas, 75 miles away, that the explosion might cause buildings to sway. But the diplomatic shock waves of the blast were felt much farther away — in Washington and in Moscow.

Nonetheless, the U.S. is preparing for another nuclear test, despite appeals from about 260 members of Congress, Democrats and Republicans, asking the Administration to delay the test.

They made this simple request because the Soviet Union has not exploded a nuclear weapon in months. The Soviets declared a moratorium on tests last August 6. We in the Congress want the Administration to negotiate a permanent test ban treaty.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said earlier that Moscow would not test again unless the United States exploded another nuclear device. Now the Soviets may claim that Saturday's test, and U.S. preparation for another nuclear test, is the perfect excuse to resume Soviet tests. But the true fact is that neither side should be looking for excuses to set off bombs.

The Soviets announced their moratorium on the anniversary of Hiroshima. And they declined to send observers to watch our tests and check monitoring equipment, although the United States has invited them twice.

Just last November, when President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev met in Geneva, the superpowers seemed headed for better relations. Today, things are deteriorating. The next summit meeting is in jeopardy. The President wants to meet Gorbachev in Washington in June, but so far, the two sides cannot agree on a date.

There are other sore points that have aggravated relations. To stop spies, the United States recently ordered the Soviets to cut their staff at the United Nations. To gather intelligence, our ships probed six miles off the Soviet coast.

And the arms talks are stalled again. There is no reason why relations between our two nations have to get worse. The United States and the Soviet Union don't have to like one another; we just have to live together.

An effective first step toward a safer world would be for both sides to stop setting off bombs. Examples set by nuclear-free countries like New Zealand should be considered and followed. Testing nuclear weapons makes them easier to use — and not testing them makes them harder to use.

In 1984, the nations of the nuclear club detonated 53 bombs, one a week. In 1985, the total dropped to 30. If diplomacy can triumph over destruction in 1986, there could be even fewer. In 1987 we should shoot for 0. Sensible good-faith gestures by both sides could slow ever-escalating and ever more costly arms race.

The United States should announce that it is suspending nuclear tests and invite the Soviets to sit down to negotiate a thorough, and completely verifiable ban on nuclear tests. If the superpowers can agree, other nations will ban tests too. The world needs a comprehensive, verifiable nuclear test ban treaty now.

It could be the first step toward peace on earth.

Letters

Rescue Workers mission

This is in reference to Lamont Curry's article of March 22nd on the American Rescue Workers Mission. I am concerned by the negative impression the article conveys.

Curry's article quoted only two individuals aside from the director, which is hardly a representative sample of some two dozen residents and another five or six staff persons. I believe there is an obligation on the part of all news media to present a broader picture, so that the public can draw its own conclusions.

Over the past six months, my work has put me in frequent contact with the American Rescue Workers. I've worked directly with Mr. and Mrs. Adkins, and with many of their residents and staff.

The picture I gleaned from Curry's article was radically different from my own experiences. The compassionate and cooperative people with whom I was blessed to work were not religious fanatics running a "neo-slavery operation," but rather dedicated people who believe in what they do and encourage - not force - others to join them.

In the absence of sufficient resources for some of our neediest citizens, it is counterproductive to speak ill of those who offer an option, regardless of whether or not we practice the same religion in the same ways.

There are many philosophies about caring for the homeless. Yet approximately 20,000 people slept on the streets of Central Maryland last year because our shelters were full. Philosophy alone does not house our displaced, unemployed and low-income brothers and sisters.

Uninformed criticism does not feed, shelter or rehabilitate our homeless, mentally ill, substance abusers and ex-offenders. Until we as a society are willing to commit our actions and our dollars, it serves little purpose to point fingers at the few who are trying to help.

In view of the paucity of services available to people in need, and the tremendous struggle faced by those who seek to serve, inaccurate publicity can be distracting or even damaging.

C. A. MELVIN

Politicking for House Speaker

Recent articles concerning Maryland State Delegates politicking for the position of Speaker of the House of Delegates, moves me to make some observations.

According to newspaper accounts the "front runners" are trying to secure as many votes as they possibly can. Perhaps they are soliciting votes from delegates who won't be in the legislature in 1987.

The legislature normally has a large election year turnover due to retirements, deaths, move ups and voter dissatisfaction.

I predict this year's election will produce the greatest turnover in Maryland History. The next House Speaker could very well be determined by new participants in the political process.

In any event, there appears now, to be a real horserace — a large group combining their votes with newly elected delegates could certainly control the election.

Black members of the House of Delegates could very well hold the key votes to the next speaker. If I were a Legislator, I would be trying to pull the groups together in such an effort.

Those blacks that have already aligned themselves in a singleness of purpose, should ask to be released, in order to remain unobligated, until the proper time.

The making of a speaker could be very rewarding to a delegate's constituency. After all, good Legislators are expected to know how best to get results for their Constituents.

FRANK M. CONAWAY

Black Legislative Caucus records

Congratulations to Senator Decatur W. Trotter, Delegates Larry Young, Christine Jones, Jerry Perry, and Kurt Anderson on being elected by their black legislative peers to lead the Maryland Black Legislative Caucus for the next year.

Delegate Elijah Cummings, D.-Baltimore City, deserves much thanks and appreciation for his tireless efforts and committed leadership of the Black Legislative Caucus during his tenure as chair.

As I read the account in the Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN, April 5, 1986, of the ascendence of those to leadership positions in the Black Caucus, an idea occurred to me.

Blacks are new-comers to legislative roles in modern Maryland politics. Time and experience are required to learn the know-how and intracacies of effective legislative performance. Legislators, like so many persons of action, are so caught up in day by day demands that insufficient time is allowed to reflect upon and record their achievements and abortive efforts.

Yet in becoming more knowledgeable, skillful, and effective in determining who get what, when, and how in Maryland, that cumulative black legislative experience and achievement should be recorded and assessed on a periodic basis.

This is important, in my view, to the black community for its political development and acquiring collective political wisdom. Such recording and assessment could provide a source for instructing those who come after them and some fodder upon which present black legislators may reflect and try to become more productive.

Thus, it is firstly proposed that the Black legislative Caucus commence compiling an annual report on the legislative role of each member and a summary of the role of the Black Legislative Caucus as a collectivity. It should be done in an objective and candid manner, not self - serving.

Secondly, it is proposed that the Black Legislative Caucus go back and reconstruct a record of the role of individual black legislators and of the Black legislative Caucus since its organization under the leadership of Prince George's County Delegate Arthur King in 1970.

Let us not lose this opportunity, while some former members are living, records still in existence, and memories sharp, to give historical evidence of their achievements and obstacles in modern Maryland politics.

HERBERT H. LINDSEY

Anthony Armstrong

Getting out

Watch any Saturday sporting event on T.V. and almost without fail the sports annoucer, in his play-by-play and his "color" babbling about the game, will have something to say about the rags to riches saga of one of players.

Such background tidbits are an important part of the whole business of sport in America today and, I guess, its always been and always will be. No problem.

However, the tidbits, particularly the rags to riches ones, always turn-out to be about the black athletes.

The announcer will say something like, "So and so, a poor boy from small town Georgia, started playing the game at ten years old, with the help of a coach from the local American Legion Post and a tattered glove, given to him by his day-worker mother's employer, who admired the, then unnoticed, skill of the boy, who is now one of baseball's highest paid rookies ever."

After something like that, the sports-caster might go on to say, "So and so (the star) bought his first car, a modest Buick Riviera, and a new house for his mother (never his mother and father) on the other side of town, away from the ghetto and the leaky roof." "It's the first real home the family has ever owned."

In doing so, whether consciously or not, the sportscaster is saying, to the millions of fans watching the star on their T.V. sets, that our star has arrived, has legitimized himself and his family. The implication is clear: if you're black and you get any kind of money, your old surroundings, the old neighborhood, ain't good enough anymore.

It seems that in order to be rendered legitimate, in order to have arrived, if you're black, you've got to abandon the old homestead and, move out to Doobee Doobee Lane.

Furthermore, not only must you "move", in the physical sense of packing your belongings in a moving van and going to a new address; the implication is, also, that you have to "move" your mind, your attitudes, your very perception of yourself and your people.

The pressures, on both quick-rich blacks as well as those of us who just came-up the "slow-but-steady" ladder, are very strong. What happens are two things, neither of which usually turns out to be good.

In getting out we too frequently leave the same person that got us out back there in the slums. In moving into our new world we find that we never come to the point where we truly belong.

We become like the young eager guy who wants to grow but; in trying to grow, he forgets the advice of his experienced mentor who counsels, "shoemaker stick to your last."

Now don't get me wrong, I am not saying that we shouldn't improve our lives, of course we should but; does improving one's life and the lives of your loved ones mean that you have to give-up the things that made you worthwhile, before you hit-it? The question for people has never been where you live but how you live.

Example: friends of mine, who have hit-it (meaning you can pay your bills, educate your kids, drive a car, buy food and have two dollars left- money people call the two dollars, discretionary funds) quite often made their first order of business, "to get out."

What they got into are neighborhoods and homes sold to them by whites-in-flight. Many of these friends now say to me, "Man I wish I had stayed in the city. I can't sell my house if I wanted to."

They say, "The whites, who can afford to buy my house, don't want to live in a neighborhood that has become so black and, the blacks who would buy the house can't because they don't have the money." They say, "Man I'm stuck, I bought my house at inflated prices and the damn thing is falling down."

Part of the American dream is to own your own home and, that's great! Yet, just because you think you've "made-it" (which usually means more to your ego than to your bank account and some banker) is no reason to "throw the baby out with the bath water."

In Baltimore City there are 7,000 opportunities, in the form of vacant houses, that await all of you who are now willing, ready, and able to buy a house. The opportunity presented by this fact is wonderful in itself.

The homes need renovation but, most of them are real dream houses, to people whose new found status hasn't blinded their eyes to what an opportunity really is.

There's somethign else here too, that is just as important, if not more so, than this whole business of getting out. It is this: if we continue to say, by our actions, that our thing is somehow not worth anything, then how can we be viewed as worth anything?

It's not just the fact that we move away from the old neighborhood, but; we move away from our culture, our economic base, our domestic strength and, our collective futures.

Stay; and by doing so continue to strengthen what you are, as well as what we all stand for, if anything, getting-in ought to be our goal; getting in to making every aspect of black life all the quality it is.

Forget about getting out.

The sad plight of Montrose School

I have followed with great interest the media attention given to Montrose School over the past several months. I have strived to see all sides of the argument from an objective and dispassionate point of view.

Although I agree that Montrose has some problems, some of which were not mentioned in media reports and some which were mentioned that I do not feel to be "problems," I have tried to wait calmly and give my input when asked.

And as the debate rages on and the months go by, I realize that no one other than my immediate supervisors are interested in anything I might have to say on this subject.

Various committees and delegations have visited Montrose over the past six months. I estimate the number to exceed 100 individuals. And although Montrose has been evaluated, dissected and castigated at length, not one individual has bothered to visit my classroom in session to talk with me or my students.

Not one of them has cared enough to talk to one of the front-line people who works with the students day in and day out. I have tried to get individuals to come into my classroom and spend some time with us.

The best I was able to do was to coax two members of the Grand Jury to approach, with great trepidation, as far as my doorway.

I have prided myself on being a "team player" and have always worked toward the common good. Yet, there comes a time when the individual must make his voice heard above those of the group. For me, that time has come.

I have worked at Montrose School for ten years and, like anyone who has been with one organization for a long time, I have seen many changes: philosophy, administration, policy, staff turnover, and student make-up. We have managed to adapt. Now we are being asked to adapt to the biggest change of all, the possible closing of the institution. The question begs to be asked, "How did we come to this state?"

One cannot speak of the present

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G. James Fleming

Enoch Pratt Library and the future

This is belated "Happy Birthday" to the Enoch Pratt Free Library, a great institution celebrating its 100th anniversary this year — a century in which the library has reflected the ups and downs and the griefs and joys of the larger community.

Researchers and scholars, worldwide, have already paid their compliments to the library and countless others have had nothing but the warmest acclamation and ovation for this magnificent collection of books, papers and memorabilia and the men and women who give them life and meaning for countless inquirers.

The Enoch Pratt, at this anniversary, is especially remembered for its services to its statewide clientele, as a source of information. Whether a junior or senior high school student, or a college student, preparing for a class assignment or term paper, or whether a seasoned scholar checking on some long-lost item of history — a call to the Enoch Pratt is sure to bring speedy, courteous and accurate information.

Many authors of serious books and best sellers have admitted tha they could not have completed their works if there had not been the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

So, to the majestic main building at Cathedral and Franklin, its contents and its dedicated librarians and library assistants, a toast with the finest champagne available.

But, what of the next 100 years? And what of the branch libraries (not only in Baltimore but elsewhere, also)?

The answer to both of these questions depends greatly on the public-at-large — that public which seldom gets to the main building, but uses the resources of a branch, if it uses a library at all.

This is the public that reads newspapers and magazines, withdraws a book occasionally, and attends some community programs sponsored by the branch.

It is to be hoped that as new funds are invested in the Main Building, that the scattered branches will not be forgotten, and that they will be provided with the means and the manpower and woman power to "sell" themselves and their services.

Both library stalwarts and the general public have a part to play in order that oncoming generations will have a place in their lives for books and for reading in general.

Unfortunately, in some library systems the New York Times, for example, has been removed, because enough readers are not using it; in other branches, idea journals are notable by their absence. Alas, some branches have been closed, perhaps forever.

Perhaps, these extreme measures have been necessary (that budget again!) but this is a plea to find ways, through innovative programs and community involvement, to keep libraries open and to breathe the breath of life into them.

Worse than closing branches is having branches where the spirit of librarianism has departed, as demonstrated by some of the youngish people who are found at front desks. These are probably aides without professional library training and many of them "could care less" about the opportunity they have in serving their clients, especially children.

In one Baltimore City library, a friendly patron dared to ask a librarian assistant at the desk, "What are you reading today." The reply was, "Lady, I only work here."

This is no general criticism of library personnel. Nor is there any wholesale indictment, either, when attention is called to the chatter of those young people who flock to some libraries to continue their after-school socialization and those who leave empty beverage cans and candy wrappers on window sills and on steps.

So, for the next 100 years, if the Enoch Pratt Free Library is to continue to be a great library system — a power house of information and ideas and, also, a cathedral in the adoration held for it — it must have the cooperation, support and love of all Marylanders, this year and next, year after year.

—Montrose School

(Continued from page 4)

without some understanding of the past. As an insider with ten long years of experience, under often trying circumstances, I feel that I may be able to share some insights that I have gained. I would like to emphasize that these are personal insights and that I am in no way a spokesman for the school.

Montrose School is a state run facility for criminals who have not reached the age of majority. We prefer to call them juvenile delinquents because it sounds better and we don't like to think that society could produce teen and preteen criminals. But they have broken the law and, by definition, that is what they are.

Yet, too, they are kids. They have the same adolescent aspirations and anxieties and they have the same need for nurturance and guidance that others their same age do.

Here we reach a dichotomy: they are just misguided kids who need love, understanding and guidance; they are cold-hearted, habitual criminals who need to be "put away" for the protection of society. Clearly both of these viewpoints cannot be true, or can they?

The Juvenile Services Administration, as part of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, has had to wrestle with this problem. It is my understanding that J.S.A. has decided that the "mission" of Montrose is the rehabilitation of the juvenile and should never be punishment.

Now we are faced with the dilemma of what to do under specific trying circumstances. The student with violent/aggressive social tendencies who assaults a teacher clearly needs to be rehabilitated. But what form should this rehabilitation take?

Should he/she be removed from the classroom? From the school? Surely he needs counseling, but by whom? Ever try to counsel someone who only wants to knock your teeth out? I have. Is it really punishment to isolate a violent/aggressive student to prevent possible harm of himself and others?

These are the questions we are confronted with every day and which have played on our minds since the tragic incident of a student's suicide. But why do we have certain violent, unmanageable students in the first place? Aren't there hospitals for emotionally disturbed? Couldn't they better be served elsewhere?

Ah, but now we are faced with legal ramifications. Two qualified psychiatrists must agree in writing that a student is emotionally disturbed before he/she can be hospitalized. This attaches a permanent label to the student and puts one's professional judgement on the line. One is often reluctant to do so.

So, the student languishes at Montrose, and now we hear of all the private institutions, group homes and foster placements who would just love to take care of our students, at a profit. But what of these institutions in the past? The many profiteers who are now clambering for a piece of the State pie have long been a thorn in our side.

We have had to beg them to take the cream of our crop and it is next to impossible to place our more problem students, even in those institutions which are set up for this very purpose! And after demonstrating time and again their inability and unwillingness to cope with our students, they now do their best Statue of Liberty imitation. "Give me your tried, your poor, you huddled masses... the wretched refuse... send these, the homeless, the tempest-tossed to me..."

It is discouraging to work with students, sometimes for several months, to send them to another institution, just to have them return a week or two later, discouraged and cynical about "the system." And let us not forget that many of these students have been in two or three, and sometimes as many as five or six placements, before they ever come to Montrose. We are the end of the line, yet we are expected to perform miracles.

I would like to raise another point about these private institutions. They will be located in the community at large. In many cases the students will be expected to return to public schools. Yet I know from experience that many of them have been suspended or expelled repeatedly.

One of my students brags about being expelled from every school in his district. The community has sent these students to Montrose: do they really want them back? I wonder if the public really knows of the ramifications of closing Montrose.

Despite the overcrowded conditions, the problem students, staffing problems and the like, Montrose has done, and continues to do, a service to our children.

Never do we hear about the excellent assemblies that display out students' talents, of the fine teams that play both intramural and intercommunity sports, of the three students from my one class period who all passed their G.E.D. exam on the same day last month.

These are students who, without Montrose, may have never had or taken these opportunities. We at Montrose care, and we do our damnedest to help our students.

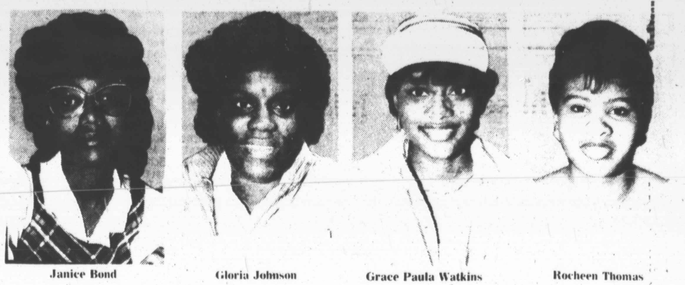
I love my job and my students! Despite being kicked, bit, attacked with a chair, cursed in every form imaginable (and some unimaginable), I still believe in society's children. Despite the years of neglect, lack of administrative and community support, and recent media attacks, I still believe in Montrose.

Perhaps Montrose's biggest problem is its prime location on over 600 acres just north of Reisterstown in Baltimore County. Many people, I feel, would love to get their hands on this prime real estate. We the dedicated professionals and the troubled youth we serve are being victimized by the profiteers in our midst. Please help us and do not allow it to happen.

DONALD A. GORDON
Teacher/Montrose School

—AFRO SURVEY—

What are your chances for success after graduation?



Janice Bond — Gloria Johnson — Grace Paula Watkins — Rocheen Thomas

This week the question to the man and woman in the street is, "What do you think your chances for success are when you graduate from college?"

Janice Bond, nursing student, "As a nursing student graduating with a Bachelor Degree, I feel that the job market for nursing positions are very good. There are positions in the immediate area and surrounding areas."

Gloria Johnson, 41, nursing student, "I plan to do very well in the job market. I will do well at Coppin. I'm going to graduate with a Bachelor Degree in Nursing."

Grace Paula Watkins, 20, management science major, "I plan to be extremely successful upon graduating from Coppin State College. I will pursue any and all job opportunities in the field of management. With my B.S. degree, I will have a better chance in the competitive job market."

Rocheen Thomas, 20, nursing major, "I will make it in the world today, because I am pursuing a good career. I have a promising future. All the studying I'm doing will pay off."

Carlotta Gough, 20, management science mayor, "I will be very successful in my major which is management science. After graduation from Coppin I would like to have my own firm and employ Coppin students."

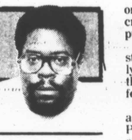
Angela Nyles, 18, "I feel that I will be very successful when I graduate from Coppin with a Masters in Management Science. With excellent curriculum at Coppin, I will make my career in the field."

Laronne Walker, 19, management science major, "I feel as though I'll be very successful after graduating from Coppin State College because my education along with my work experience will aid me in becoming successful."

Barry Freeman, 22, management Science mayor, "Definitely! I feel Coppin has given me the education along with the inter-personal relationships to be successful in all areas of life. With the climate of the business world, I know I has the aggressiveness to overcome any obstacles."

Carlotta Gough — Angela Nyles — Laronne Walker — Barry Freeman

Bloodnotes



R. B. Jones

Prison reform

While much ado is made about the governor's race and the contest that will decide who will succeed Parren J. Mitchell in the 7th Congressional district and many mediocrities are compared and sized up for whichever offices their insatiable ambitions demand, somehow, some way, the black community must force them all to state their position on the criminal justice system and the prison system.

A crisis in these two areas threatens to tear apart the fabric of the black community and society in general. All one has to do is visit the state's prisons and a disturbing fact becomes clear. The prisons are overwhelming black.

Every time I speak at one of the institutions, I see scores of young black men who should be raising families and creating businesses and providing the energy and stamina necessary for the strengthening of the black community, warehoused in penal institutions that neither rehabilitate nor punish.

They are making money for the state by providing labor at rates much lower than their brothers on the street who are unemployed or they are languishing in a state of resentment and dreams of making a big score when they hit the streets.

Some are educating themselves and others are raising their own consciousness, but the help they are receiving from the state is woefully inadequate.

Picking up paper on the side of highways may save the state a lot of money but it does not give a prisoner a marketable job skill that will provide him with a decent living on the outside. He makes enough to buy some miscellaneous items but that is all.

This is no accident. The system is not designed for the benefit of the prisoners who inhabit this nation's correctional institutions.

The prisoners who inhabit America's prisons are primarily persons who have run afoul of America's racial, class and political biases.

Blacks make up an inordinate percentage of the prison population for several reasons. Primarily, America sees black people in two roles, as servants and as captives. If we are not cooking for, waiting on or entertaining whites by tap dancing or revealing the mysteries of exotic sex then they see us as creatures in bondage who would like nothing better than to slit their throats while they sleep.

They brought us here in chains to work for them. After we escaped chattel slavery they used trumped up criminal charges to put us back in chains to work for them.

Now they are much more subtle than they were in the early days of this century when black prisoners were rented to whatever white person had the money.

For black women the system of convict labor at the turn of the century was doubly harsh because they not only had to work during the long, grueling days, they also had to bear the rape of any white man who had access to the quarters where they were chained.

Now they place blacks in a situation of poverty, poor education, inadequate health care and then incarcerate them when they emulate white society's role models who engage in various forms of criminality.

Add to the mixture racism in the court system and unequal sentencing and one has a prison system that is overwhelmingly black.

As I overheard a white clerk say in the courthouse some years ago a summation of the attitude of many of the whites in society was made, "You can look at those people and tell that they're guilty. Even if they didn't do this crime, they've done so much stuff in their life, they need to go to jail anyway."

With attitudes such as the one described above prevailing in many quarters, it is not surprising that this society will spend mountains of money to warehouse prisoners and balk at spending a fraction of that amount to teach job skills to inmates and establish a support system for them when they hit the streets.

All that one hears about is more prisons, more penalties and more time for each offense. It seems that too many people have given up the notion that some prisoners can find an alternative way of life.

We don't need more prisons, we need a new society. We need economic and political justice. We need equal treatment before the law. If we continue to have a dual system of justice then criminality will not decrease, there will only be intensified efforts to reach the criminal status where one receives no punishment or a mere slap on the wrist.

The recent example of a city official stealing a million dollars and serving only four months because of ill-health is not the kind of news that will make inmates feel the need to go straight.

Perhaps it will cause some of them to aspire to a job with the Neighborhood Progress Administration but it will not cause repentance.

As the state office elections gather momentum this spring and summer the black community must ask some very hard questions of the candidates. What are their views on alternatives to incarceration and juvenile incarceration? There is more and more pressure to treat our youths as adults.

Some of them, when they commit very heinous, premeditated crimes should be treated that way, but many times they commit crimes because of youthful stupidity or emulation of adult role models in their environment. We must do what we can to salvage their lives, not write them off while they are in their teens.

We must ask our candidates for office what they will do to assist adult inmates when they leave the penal system? We must ask the them what is their position on the death penalty?

Executions are not deterrants because they are done in seclusion and now they have lethal injections so they can kill the prisoner "humanely," so they are not tortuous enough to satisfy society's desire for vengeance.

The death penalty is reserved for those persons who are the wrong race or the wrong social class. We must ask our candidates where they stand on this issue because there are forces in this society who would use the death penalty as a cure-all for the complex issue of crime and violence in society.

When the candidates come to us and ask for our votes we must question them very closely on where they stand on all the issues. The prison system must get special attention because so many of our yound people are trapped there rather than contributing to a black community beset with a multitude of problems.

We need them. They are fathers, brothers, sons and lovers. They are mothers too. Many of them have valuable talents and many of them have sharp minds that could be put to positive use.

We must not forget them.

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.

APR 1986