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).

Amtrak safety

The worst train accident in Amtrak railway history in this country was a terrifying and hopefully sobering tragedy. At a time when the Reagan Administration is anxious to wash its hands of the federally owned Amtrak Northeastern corridor or at the very least cut out federal subsidy for the line, this accident has shown that passenger rail service is in need of more money, not less.

The northeastern segment between Boston and Washington, D.C. is the most heavily traveled rail line in the U.S. The Metroliner, and trains such as the ill-fated Colonial that wrecked Sunday, provided many travelers with an attractive alternative to driving along the East Coast.

Because of the heavy traffic along eastern rail lines and the near bankrupt condition of many of the railroads that were bought by Amtrak, the agency has had to try to maintain and improve the service at the same time with limited funds.

Investigators believe that if the most modern and advanced technology had been in operation last Sunday there might have been a derailed freight engine, but not a tragedy of the magnitude that ensued when the Colonial plowed into the back of the Conrail locomotive.

The technology is in place in Europe and Japan and with proper funding it could have been in place in Baltimore County. It is most fortunate that the wreck did not happen a few miles further down the line on the Gunpowder River Bridge.

Marylanders responded well to the train wreck while the eyes of the nation were on this state. Residents near the track responded quickly and compassionately, providing aid and comfort, opening their homes and their hearts to the victims of the derailment.

Maryland medical and rescue personnel acquitted themselves in an outstanding manner. The injured were cared for swiftly and University Hospital's pioneering Shock Trauma showed during the crisis why it is the leader in emergency medicine.

Still, the object is to prevent wrecks from happening and to provide the best service possible. It is imperative that Amtrak funding be increased, not eliminated. There are a number of projects that need to be acted on such as widening tunnels in the Baltimore area, a potential bottleneck that could stop train traffic completely along the eastern seaboard.

With the number of people riding the rails increasing, it is of the utmost importance that the most thorough and modern safety equipment be installed as soon as possible.

Winnie Mandela in Baltimore

When the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. commemoration for Johns Hopkins Hospital was in the planning stages for 1987 there must have been a nagging suspicion in the planners' minds that Winnie Mandela would not be allowed to come to Baltimore to be the keynote speaker.

Still their ability to get Nobel prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu for their celebration last year probably added to their optimism. Winnie Mandela is a different story, however.

She and her husband, imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela symbolize the suffering and the militance of the black masses of South Africa.

Both of the Mandelas are uncompromising in their calls for majority rule and unwavering in their demands that the African National Congress be unbanned and allowed to operate above ground.

Nelson Mandela has refused proposals that he be released after condemning certain ANC actions. Winnie Mandela has suffered internal exile, deprivation and attacks on her home. She has been separated from her husband for about 22 years, yet she perseveres in the struggle.

Perhaps it is a kind turn of fate that she will not be allowed to come to Baltimore for the commemoration. Far too many aspects of black life in Baltimore would remind her of the troubles in South Africa such as segregated housing, a high infant mortality rate, intra - group crime and violence, and inadequate nutrition and health care for far too many people.

The recent racial violence in New York, with one incident featuring a white South African, would probably be reminiscent of her homeland.

It would have been nice to meet Winnie Mandela in person and hear her words of defiance and inspiration, but the realization that many of the problems that she faces in South Africa exist here in modified form would have put a damper on the festivities.

LETTERS

Devastation and frustration

Gentlemen:

Where can a family turn when its house catches fire? Our home did — just before Christmas. Our Daddy tried calling the fire department before the fire spread out of control. He almost died while the telephone operator tried desperately to reach the fire department. She never did get through. Several of our neighbors tried 911. They were put on hold. Some waited. Others tried hanging up and calling again. They never got through.

Daddy remembers almost collapsing from smoke inhalation while holding the phone. The thin layer of air between the floor and the smoke saved him. He crawled down the basement stairs, cut off the electricity, and somehow got out the cellar door.

Minutes after he got out, a police car happened to be cruising by. Neighbors flagged the car down and the officer called in the emergency on his two-way radio. The police officer and neighbors had to restrain Daddy from going back into the house to save the family Bible, and the history of our family here in Maryland dating back before 1700 that Daddy had spent years collecting. Miraculously the family Bible given to him by his parents, Dr. and Mrs. John E. T. Camper, survived unharmed.

Finally, the fire trucks arrived. By then it was too late. What the fire didn't finish, the water did. I can only remember seeing Daddy cry one other time.

And where can a family turn for help when all that remains of its home is a burned out shell? Not to the City of Baltimore. Oh yes. The City "helped" us.

We got a personal visit the next day — from some official serving us with a notice that our house now violated the zoning ordinance, the building code, and the fire code, and giving us three days to board up the house and clean up the debris.

After that, we would be fined $500 per day — and the work would be done by the city and charged to us — both as a lien against the building and as a personal debt. We had already boarded up the house and started cleaning up the debris.

Later that day we had another personal visit from the city! This man said his work crew had been assigned to board up the house. He left obviously upset and disappointed; we had already done the job.

The next day we got a certified letter too — a copy of the notice that had been personally served on us the previous morning. There is a joke that ends with the line, "if you see me fighting a bear, help the bear." That's the way we felt about the "help" offered by the City of Baltimore.

My father felt that somehow he had to begin the rebuilding of our home. Daddy went downtown to find out whether there were any city programs that would enable him to get cutrate building materials or help in getting the essential wiring, plumbing, new beams and joists for structural support.

Those are the programs of urban homesteading that helped bring national fame to Baltimore as "the city that works." Those programs are ended! The City tells us they are getting ready to start a new loan program. It is months away from processing the first loan.

But they also let us know that Daddy probably wouldn't qualify anyway. He just turned 60 and his contractor's business will just break even this year for the first time after years of struggling.

Daddy called the Episcopal Diocese because that is how we were raised. But they said: "They didn't have anyway of helping us to rebuild our home."

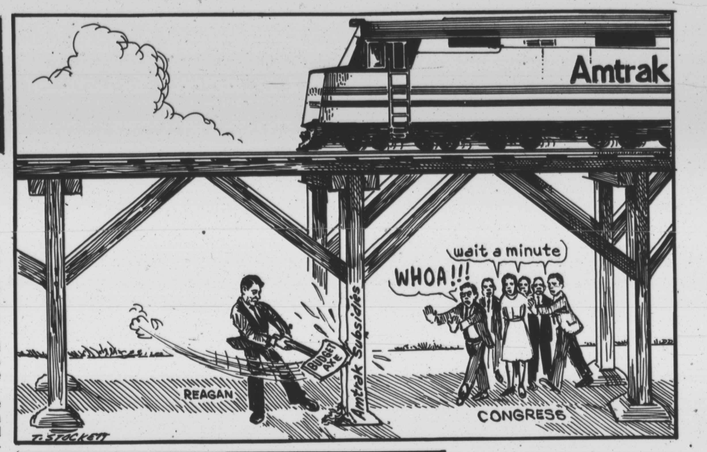
We are determined to rebuild our home; it holds over 25 years of precious memories for the five children and two grandchildren that my father raised, strictly but lovingly, as a single parent. We had no insurance. Daddy, a minority contractor, had let the policy lapse in order to keep his business alive and meet obligations to his creditors.

The family is rallying to do what it can. Friends are chipping in to help replace the children's clothing. With two brothers in military service, this was to have been the first Christmas in five years we would have spent under the same roof. One had flown in from Germany with his wife and daughter. Christmas was joyous anyway; we were all alive.

But where in this community is there a sense of outrage that a family can be made homeless by the repeated failure and inadequacy of the city's emergency notification system (both the 911 system and the fire department's own lines), then slapped with a notice of housing code violations, then faced with a huge service charge if it cannot move faster than the city to board up the house and clean up the rubble — only to be told, when it turns to the city for help in rebuilding that all the programs have ended?

Where are the institutions in the city that demonstrate that Baltimore has something better than a cash register for a heart? We want to know!

JOYCE A. A. CAMPER



Anthony Armstrong

Education: Japanese style

I'm not amazed about the quality of Japanese primary and secondary education, mainly because most of the ideas being implemented in Japan are ones that we black Americans employed in educating our young. The key word here is "employed" — past tense. Where these ideas are still being used, the education of students tends to be positive and effective.

Remember in the old days (before the advent of public school integration), black students lived by the axiom, "we've got to be better than the best." The concept of excellence permeated our thinking about most endeavors — our jobs, our family lives, our personal hygiene etc.

In no area of black life, however, did the concept of excellence, and the attainment of it, attract more concern than in the area of education. Blacks understood very clearly that if we were to ever pull ourselves up, bootstraps or no, we would have to do it through education.

This feeling was, "you'd better get it now, and get it good, because you're going to see this information again."

So, the idea of excellence in education is an old idea among black Americans. In the last two decades or so, however, the concept of excellence, like so many of the valuable things we disregarded in the wake of integration, has been reduced in importance to the point of nonexistence.

About 20 years ago the rage in education became freewheeling, open classrooms, "let-the-student" decide his or her fate.

Today, the pendulum has swung back; now the cry is structure, return to basics, higher standards, more rigorous curriculums. Both philosophies have some merits, as far as each goes; however, both are but styles of educating.

It is the level of quality, of excellence, with which either style is implemented that really makes the difference. Herein lies the Japanese advantage. That advantage seems to lie in the degree, the completeness, the quality of the implementation of Japanese primary and secondary schooling.

Japanese education policy is rooted in a very simple philosophy. Yet, even the philosophy is not new. At Harvard University, for example, the admissions policy has long been based on the philosophy of, "if you're good enough to excell and, to graduate."

The Japanese have applied the same philosophy to their entire primary and secondary school population. They truly believe that every Japanese kid is "good enough," and that all Japanese students can and will learn.

The same philosophical concept is used in some public schools in Baltimore. At a school like Poly, the idea is if you can get in, everything necessary will be done to try to insure your success.

Our system of public education falls on its face, all too often, because the emphasis on quality is not a system-wide emphasis. I don't care what they say; what they do, shows that depending on what public school your child attends, he or she may or may not get the same systematic concern and implementation that "you're good enough" philosophy.

Usually, in fact, the schools that need the most help, because that school's students need the most help, are the schools that tend to get the least help.

This, unlike the Japanese, the Harvard the Poly model does not adhere to the basic premise of American public education, that every student should have as much opportunity as his or her brain — not social status or specific school's alumni clout — can absorb.

Instead, what we're starting to see in American public education (I'm including Baltimore, too) is something more closely resembling the Indian caste system; where no matter how much education one can absorb, one is relegated to that position he or she was born into.

In other words, if your daddy was a garbage collector, you, his child, can never become more than a garbage collector.

This particularization, this unevenness, has its roots, in America, in racism, and then in economic status. In short, American public education appears bent on the philosophy that every kid is not "good enough." Blacks and the poor are the people relegated to the "you're not good enough" philosophy. There's nothing new in this except — and it's a major exception — that in years past, black Americans took pride in shouting this philosophy to hell.

We did it using the "we must be better than" approach that was the single most important weapon in our philosophical arsenal. Now, sadly, that's gone.

In its place we've substituted greasy hair products, so that our hair will have bounce; the acceptance of another culture's attitudes about sex, where we now view sex more as nutrition than as the expression of love; and fighting among ourselves, for the few spaces allotted us in the better public schools.

In the Japanese system there are no best schools and worse schools; so Japanese parents don't have to fight each other. The idea, among them, is not new either — it's, in fact, the old American idea about public education. It's the idea that all public education in America ought to be the best education possible, for everyone!

The new reality in America is dreadfully plain to see: America's white population is saying loud and clear, "We are not going to fund the education of black kids, so that those kids can compete with our kids."

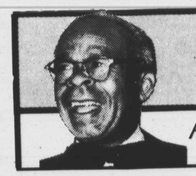
Through their "house slave" allies, whom they give a few crumbs as rewards for being Judases; white America keeps us fighting us, while they take the public education system and turn it into something resembling the elitism of England.

If you go-in assuming that students (mostly black students) can't or won't learn, the tendency is to fulfill that assumption. If you go in placing stratifications throughout the system, then people are forced to scrabble in attempts to get the best of what is offered.

If the powers-that-be (most importantly parents) don't insist and act to implement the highest quality, the result will be the lowest quality.

Most significantly, if black America wishes to throw its attitude of "being better than" away; what we'll get in its place is exactly what we now have — failure, impotence, anger, self degradation.

We could learn much from the Japanese; among those things, we could learn, again, to practice the same things they borrowed from us. Education: that has become "Japanese style," can, again, become "we've got to be better than the best."



G. James Fleming

About the next mayor

Many, many congratulations to Clarence "Du" Burns who begins the New Year as mayor of Baltimore City, with all the rights, privileges, powers and responsibilities appertaining to that high and prestigious office.

By hard work and accident--mostly hard work--he has earned the opportunity to complete the unexpired term of William Donald Schaefer, moving up, by authority of the City Charter, from being president of the City Council.

Amiable and politically smart, it is natural that Mayor Burns should want to continue in office for a full 4-year term. Whether this comes to pass will depend on a number of factors, among them how well he does in the several months preceding the mayoral primary.

"How well" will be measured, not only by his amiability, his jollity and his loyalty to his predecessor, but also by the decisions he makes, by the calibre of the men and women he appoints and by how he uses his mayoral influence.

Whether "Du" Burns outlives 1987 will also depend on the opposition he will have to face. Not necessarily opposition against Mayor Burns, per se, but by entrants in the Democratic primary who would be contestants even if the incumbent mayor was someone else.

* * *

If the opposition includes, as is expected, Kurt Schmoke, state's attorney, and Robert Embry, former housing commissioner, it will have two serious, competent and hardworking aspirants who have had their eyes on the mayoral office for several years.

This being a free country, it is most difficult (well nigh impossible) to say who should withdraw from any political race, in order to insure the election of another candidate.

Should Mayor Burns give up seeking a full term and leave Messrs. Schmoke and Embry to fight it out?

Should Schmoke gallantly withdraw because he is relatively young (just 37) and leave the race to Burns and Embry?

How about Embry chivalrously deciding not to run, thus, possibly, insuring one black or the other being elected mayor?

If anyone of the above threesome should withdraw, who can guarantee that some yet unknown candidate will not enter the race, for better or worse?

Those who are contending that Kurt Schmoke should withdraw, thus leaving one black--Mayor Burns--unopposed, cannot be sure that such a gesture on Schmoke's part would absolutely lead to a Burns' victory (In the 1970 mayoral election, William Donald Schaefer, the victor, would have won, even if only one black had opposed him, instead of two).

* * *

The king pin in the coming mayoral primary is not even a candidate for that office. He is Governor Schaefer.

Presently, His Honor is pledged to support Mayor Burns, but will his support continue down to the primary? Some political insiders hold that, although he may continue to pay lip support to Burns, in other very substantial ways, the governor will be backing some other candidate, say, a Robert Embry.

Of only one factor is there certainty. Schaefer is wholeheartedly opposed to Kurt Schmoke in any and every capacity. He probably would not even support Schmoke if he ran for dog-catcher.

Schmoke's vigorous backing of Stephen Sachs, in the recent gubernatorial campaign, only sealed his status with the now governor. He is just not Mr. Schaefer's cup of tea.

This solid opposition of Schaefer, tied to the governor's official and non-official influence, and his easy access to money, should and must give Kurt Schmoke second thoughts--not enough, however, to force him out of the mayoral race.

Alas, the last word has not been heard about the next multi-candidate race for mayor.

Continued on page5

Bloodnotes

R. B. Jones

Paranoid paranoia part II

Falling empires can not face reality and look it in the eye and so as this country staggers like a drunken warrior leaking both blood and wine from its wounds, America looks for comforting images.

Images are very important. In the 1970s after America lost its second war of the post World War II era and its president started talking about human rights in world affairs and other, un-American, wimp-like concepts. The empire saw itself as collapsing.

American confidence was shaken and so out of nowhere came an articulate, profound filmmaker, Sylvester Stallone who produced an Oscar winning film in 1976 "Rocky."

In it an Italian Stallion fights to a draw with a rich, brash, loud-mouthed black champion who is a caricature of Muhammad Ali.

White people all over America cheered in the theaters for Rocky Balboa against what one of the white characters called "a jig clown."

In the second "Rocky" film Balboa defeats the black champion Apollo Creed, ironically around the time that the Supreme Court's Bakke Decision weakened the national commitment to affirmative action--there I go being paranoid again! The two things are unrelated.

The third "Rocky" film pitted Balboa against a brutish Mr. T. whose character was named Clubber Lang. He was the fearsome presence who came out of the ghetto and mugged the, now wealthy and comfortable Rocky Balboa.

To defeat the bad ghetto black man Rocky accepts aid from his former foe Appollo Creed, now retired Rocky's Jewish trainer died at the first Clubber Lang fight, signalling I suppose the demise of the liberal Jew-black coalition.

Appollo Creed's alliance with Rocky, which oddly enough took place around the time of the emergence of the black conservative movement, symbolizes a class split in the black community that has slowed down the equality movement and sent it into retreat.

Forgive me, my paranoia is finding parallels between cinematic images and U.S. politics.

The Rocky-Appollo alliance against the ghetto bully who dared to proposition Rocky's wife in public ends with Mr. T on the canvas. After effectively disposing of affirmative action and black intra-group unity, the great white hope could turn to his greatest challenge defeating those nasty Russians.

He defeats Drago, a soviet fighter big enough to intimidate King Kong in Rocky IV.

American paranoia about the Soviet Union is so deep-seated and absurd at the same time that it is a source of amusement. The U.S.S.R. is a poor country with long hostile borders. It has been attacked suddenly twice in this century, 1905 by Japan and 1941 by Germany. It has been invaded twice in this century by Germany (1971, 1941) and attacked during World War I by allied troops when the Bolshevik government took Russia out of the war on the side of the Allies.

A tense state of affairs with China has caused that long border to experience numerous battles after the ideological split between the two communist nations in the 1960s.

In addition to armed clashes with China, the Soviet Union has been engaged in a costly and futile arms race with the U.S.

Although the U.S. media portrays the Soviets as cruel warmongers waiting to pounce on America in any weak moment, it must always be kept in mind that the U.S. is the only country in history to use nuclear weapons.

Despite these facts it is the Americans who are paranoid about world communism, the Soviets and their allies.

No invader has set foot on American soil since the War of 1812.

No Soviet soldier has been sent around the world to fight wars of dubious purpose, the way American troops went to fight in Vietnam and Lebanon.

They fight in countries that border on the Soviet Union.

Despite a lack of evidence to justify American celluloid fantasies about invasion, they abound. Chuck Norris' movie "Invasion USA" John Milius" "Red Dawn" and the upcoming television 12 hour miniseries "Amerika" portray America's paranoia about an invasion.

There had been similar films during the Red Scare that scarred this nation in the 1950s. Those films portrayed a Russian military force occupying America.

During these days of fear about Nicaraguan Revolution the invaders are Cubans and other Hispanic people with Central America under Soviet and East German direction.

In "Invasion USA" Latino terrorists land in Florida on a beachhead and proceed to slaughter Americans at random in shopping malls, in bars, on the street and heaven forbid in their single family homes while celebrating Christmas.

There is no objective other than killing and no supplies come ashore with the terrorists who use ammo as if they have their own arms manufacturing company.

Chuck Norris dispose of several hundred of the terrorists single-handedly and leaves the rest to the army to slaughter in an ambush.

"Red Dawn" features mid-western Americans in a small town who are attacked by Cuban and other Latino troops at the command of the Soviets.

Most Americans acquiesce after years of prosperity and softening by liberal ideas, but a band of high school kids become Wolverines, a guerilla band that starts to win the resistance war against the Soviet surrogates.

How an invasion is launched without the U.S. military being alerted is never explained, but then those diabolical communists can do anything that's why their missiles are bigger than U.S. missiles. Or was that just a case of projectile envy?

The debut of "Amerika" on ABC Television should surpass its two cinematic predecessors in paranoia. The mini-series is about a bloodless takeover of the U.S. by Central American troops and Soviet and Eastern European troops.

The idea that the United Nations would direct such a takeover of America, has so upset that body that it is suing to remove its name and logo from the production.

The Soviet Union lodged a very strong protest with ABC over the premise of the mini-series. Some form of retaliation may be forthcoming.

ABC was forced to make the mini-series after rightwingers fell down and chewed carpets across the country in 1983 because the network showed "The Day After" a tv movie about the effect of an atomic war on Lawrence, Kansas.

Rightwingers said such movies would weaken the country's resolve to resist communism. ABC decided to make "Amerika" to pacify the conservatives so "Amerika" shows a spineless America occupied without a shot being fired.

If Americans can't wait to slaughter each other over love triangles, tennis shoes, gold chains, inheritances, trespassing, unpopular racial and ethnic backgrounds and profit-making in general, they would be frantic to go out and shoot some Russian or Cuban invaders. It would be like having deer-hunting year round.

Only America's paranoia and guilt about its many invasions and atrocities could prevent something like "Amerika" from being ridiculed out of existence.

The big bad American empire stands trembling before shadows, a athletic sight indeed.

—Devastation and frustration

Continued from page 4

—AFRO SURVEY—

What do you know about Dr. Martin Luther King?

Resheena Phinazee

Bernita Henderson

Kenneth Reese

Reginald McCray

Shawn Fore

This week the AFRO took its Man in the Street survey to Booker T. Washington Middle School. The question to the group of sixth graders was, "What do you know about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?"

Resheena Phinazee, "I know he's a famous black man. He accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for trying to make peace. He had a wife and children. He was a preacher. He didn't like violence. He made his 'I Had a Dream' speech at the Washington Monument. At a church he said, 'I saw the light and I'll get there but not with you.' He died on the balcony of his motel."

Bernita Henderson, "He was a famous black person. He fought for his rights. He fought for black people to not have to give up seats to white people on the buses. He always made speeches in churches and on the streets. He was assassinated by a white man on the balcony of his motel. He was born in Montgomery, AL.

Kenneth Reese, "He was born in Montgomery, Al in 1929. He marched on Washington. He won a Nobel Peace Prize. He went to jail. He was assassinated by a white man. He gave us freedom."

Reginald McCray, "Dr. Martin Luther King was born in Montgomery, AL in 1929. He was known for his Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. Martin Luther King was also famous for his speech, 'I Have a Dream.' He was assassinated on a balcony at his motel in 1968. Dr. Martin Luther King's last words were, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty we're free at last.' "

Shawn Fore, "He wa born in 1929 in Montgomery, AL. He had a famous speech. 'I Have a Dream.' He said that speech in front of the Washington Monument. He won a Nobel Peace Prize for his speech. He was assassinated on the balcony of a motel. He got locked up in jail because he stood up for his rights."

John Watkins, "What I know about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is that he was born in Montgomery, AL in 1929. He had a wife and children. He fought for blacks, whites, protestants and Jews. He won a Nobel Peace Prize. He marched and fought for his rights and helped other people. He got thrown in jail. He made his important speech in Alabama. He said, 'I have a dream today that some day all people will be free to do whatever they want.' His last words were, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty we're free at last.' And, he was assassinated on the balcony of his hotel. He ignored violence and he and his group marched and got wet-up by water hoses and chased by dogs."

Cornell Vincent, "I know he was a born leader. He was non-violent and believed in sharing with others and not being selfish. He had to go to jail several times. He led a march in Montgomery AL. He was a minister and preached in front of the Washington Monument and in Montgomery. He won a Nobel Peace Prize. His dream in his 'I Have a Dream' speech was for everyone to be free at last. He wanted people on buses to sit where they wanted, to drink from water fountains, walk where they wanted, and get the same opportunities in the same places they wanted."

Nicole Holly, "Martin Luther King was born in Montgomery on January 15, 1929. He helped black people and white people so that we should eat in the same restaurants, ride on the same buses, and sit where we pleased. He marched to the White House and he went to jail several times. He had a speech at the Washington Monument. He had a speech, 'I Have a Dream.' "

Swanza Clayton, "I know that Dr. Martin Luther King was married to Coretta Scott King. He had two sons and three daughters. He was born in Montgomery, AL on January 15, 1929. He preached in front of the Washington Monument. On Jan. 15, he would have been 58. He also boycotted stores.' "

John Watkins

Cornell Vincent

Nicole Holly

Swanza Clayton

By Arthur W. Murphy

Who shall be mayor in 1987?

Part 2

After examining every city wide contest since 1962, there is no evidence of the black vote being split between two black candidates. Not one. Not even close to one.

When faced with the choice between two black candidates, black voters invariably decide that one black candidate is superior to the other. And they vote that way.

In 1987, you will find that the first polls will reveal that there will be a high level of indecision among black and white voters. The closer we get to the election, the less undecided the electorate will become.

Nothing new. Most elections go that way.

The high probability is that black voters will ultimately decide to go with the person for whom they have had the most confidence. That person is clearly not Clarence "Du" Burns.

The figures, the history, and the dynamics favor the election of Kurt Schmoke in the upcoming mayoral contest in which he is expected to be squared off between Clarence "Du" Burns and Robert Embry.

Contrary to what some politicians and media people are saying, maybe even hoping, there is every reason to believe that in a three way contest involving two blacks and one white candidate — Kurt Schmoke can and will win.

Information available to this writer, the dynamics which may change during the course of the campaign, indicate that were the election to be held now, Schmoke would draw no less than 70-75 percent of the black vote, "Du" Burns would get less than 15 percent (at best) and Embry would get less than 10 percent.

On the other hand, the white vote would split 20 percent for Schmoke and 10-15 percent for "Du" Burns with Embry flailing away with the balance.

The only other missing factor in this equation is the turn out. No matter how we look at the figures at this point, unless something totally unexpected occurs, the white voter turn out should not significantly exceed that of blacks.

The bottom line is Kurt Schmoke would be mayor if the election were held today.

Blacks comprise 65 percent of the Democratic registered voters in Baltimore City. If black and white voter turn out are the same, as it was in Kurt Schmoke's victory in 1982, Schmoke, no matter who the opposition may be, should be able to waltz in a comfortable victory in September, 1987.

The best Clarence "Du" Burns could be is a spoiler for Schmoke. Why? It is very clear.

Past performance is the better index of future behavior. What you did yesterday is a good yard stick for what you can and will do today and tomorrow.

In 1982 Kurt Schmoke convinced 88 percent and more of the black population of Baltimore that he was the better person to represent Baltimore's criminal justice system as State's Attorney.

In 1983, Clarence "Du" Burns was able to convince less than 55 percent of the black voters he was the better candidate for President of the City Council. Clarence "Du" Burns ran against the same person and others that Kurt Schmoke ran against.

Kurt Schmoke soundly defeated his opponent in black neighborhoods. Clarence "Du" Burns did not. Hmmm?

It would appear to any reasonable person that Kurt Schmoke is more popular than Clarence "Du" Burns — by at least 33 points.

Clarence "Du" Burns, at this stage of the campaign, can only be perceived as a spoiler. He lacks the overwhelming support of blacks as had Robert B. Watts (1966, 1970); Clarence Mitchell, III (1967);

Joseph Howard (1968), Archie D. Williams (1968), Parren J. Mitchell (1968, 1970, 1972, 1984); Milton B. Allen (1970, 1974, 1978); Harry A. Cole (1970);

George L. Russell, Jr. (1971), Paul Chester (1974), John W. Douglass (1975, 1979), A. Dwight Petit (1978), William H. Murphy, Jr. (1980), Robert Bell (1980), Sandra Banks (1982), Georgia Goslee (1982), Jesse L. Jackson (1984), Kweisi Mfume (1984), and most of all Kurt Schmoke (1980).

All of these candidates exceeded the black voter support levels of Clarence "Du" Burns. Most received support in excess of 2/3 of the votes cast in all black neighborhoods.

In fact Kurt Schmoke exceeded the level of black voter support of every candidate listed! He is in fact, without dispute, the most popular candidate among blacks in Baltimore City history. No contest.

At issue is, can Clarence "Du" Burns win? The answer is probably not — unless "Du" Burns can pull off the swindle of the century.

He will first have to convince black voters that he is the best person for the job. After that, he will have to convince voters that Kurt Schmoke is not.

There may be, however, an alternative path to victory for Clarence "Du" Burns. He will have to convince a majority of non-black voters in Baltimore that he will rule fairer and better than Schmoke.

It hasn't been done before. Whites generally don't vote for blacks in large numbers.

There has not been a black candidate, in Baltimore's recent city-wide electoral history, that has been able to convince a majority of non-black voters to cast a ballot in his or her favor. Not one for the past 25 years. None. Zero. Nada. Zip.

Clarence "Du" Burns will also have to convince a significant number of blacks (not a majority) that his program fits their dreams and expectations for the year 2000.

Clarence "Du" Burns is an extraordinary person. His life, like that of Kurt Schmoke's, is an American success story. There are few that we know, will know, or who we will ever know, who will be able to point to the accomplishments of this great man.

But this goal — winning the 1987 Mayoral — is clearly beyond his reach.

There is no doubt that he will be the first Black Mayor of Baltimore.

He will be the last first.

No other city in the United States, with a population of greater than 100,000 and whose black population is a majority has been without a black mayor. None other than Baltimore.

His position in history is secure.

His name will go into the record books.

Children all over Baltimore will memorize his name.

His picture will be in the Pratt library.

The Almanac, and various encyclopedias will devote a couple of paragraphs to him.

A school will be named after him. Probably even a street.

Most people would want to have such a legacy and not have it tarnished by an electoral loss of the magnitude that will probably occur in 1987. Most people.

Politics is not a rational process.

Politicians, even in the face of overwhelming odds, forge forward — into brick walls. Jacob Javits. Harry Hughes. St. George Crosse, Clarence Mitchell, III. Ted Kennedy. Unfortunately, "Du" Burns' name may be added to this list.

Ego and pride. The stuff of politicians.

A selfless, honorable Clarence "Du" Burns would say, "Thank you Baltimore. You have treated me well. It's time for a change. I'll pass the mantle to the next generation."

But politics is not a rational nor selfless process.