John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board Publisher
Frances M. Draper
President
Jack L. Hodge
Assistant to the Publisher

Editorial Page

The Afro-American

"There are two prescriptions for success — Faith and Industry"

John H. Murphy
1840-1922

Let's hear it for 1988

According to many seers and soothsayers, mankind was not expected to last long enough to usher in 1988.

1984, 1900, 1066, all were once said to be the last year of humanity.

Now as we welcome 1988, there are still those among us who claim we are living in the last days and times. They point to the threat of nuclear war, the spiralling population, increased poverty and degradation, as proof positive of the on-rushing end of man.

But while the prophets may have their place, one must question the apocalytpic nature of their predictions. Many times they are reminiscent of Cassandra, the Trojan woman cursed to only predict bad things.

We can't literally look into the future, but the handiest item to use in judging the future is history. And a look at the past year reveals some very positive news for next year.

The top story, of course, was the inauguration of a new mayor. Kurt Schmoke is the leading edge of a new generation of leadership. He represents a break with the past and the beginning of an exciting future.

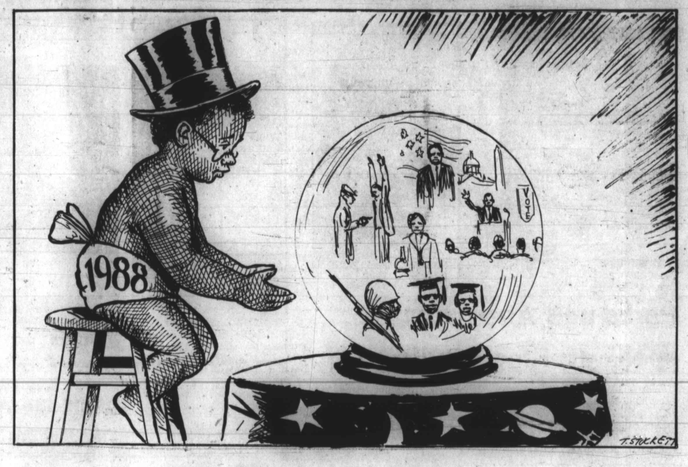
His commitment to education promises great things for the youth of our city, which will indirectly benefit us all.

In other news, the sense of caring emphasized by the increased agitation for homeless shelters, treatment and prevention of AIDS, and spiritual renewal all are good signs for the future.

Although some may say these are perilous times we live in, we must remember that the history of men and women has been dotted with low points and high.

It is easy to stand in the valley and believe there are no heights, or to live in the mountains and ignore the depths. But judging history solely from the low points or from the heights always give one a clear picture.

Instead, in analyzing both the good and the bad that we have seen, we can only give thanks for our survival and hope for the best the new year can bring us.



She bridged the gap

Alice Pinderhughes is an outstanding example of the men and women of our community with the courage and training to lead the city through the limbo of segregation into the sunshine of equal access.

She was trained at black schools, and spent her early career in those schools, the only place where a teacher of her race could teach in Maryland.

But when the Supreme Court outlawed separate but equal accommodations, people such as Pinderhughes were ready to bridge the gap. Baltimore was not wracked by the strife which accompanied school integration in many other cities, primarily because the city already had a trained core of black professionals such as Pinderhughes.

Almost three decades later, when the city school system was wallowing in despair, and a controversial search for a new superintendent was on the rocks, Pinderhughes was tapped to bring leadership to the system.

She has done more than that. While many major school systems appear to put much of their resources into mere survival, Pinderhughes has attempted to substantially improve both physical plants and what goes on inside them.

Her FOIL program, the affiliation with the Fund for Educational Excellence, and her willingness to work with professionals from outside the district indicate her breadth of view.

Pinderhughes has been criticized for fostering cronyism in her administration and failing to halt the tide of dropouts. But she merits praise for her successful efforts to not only keep the system viable, but innovative. We look forward to a new superintendent, but she will be missed.

Our Readers Write

Why Blacks Test Low

Our school system is 80 percent Afro-American. Most blacks attend public schools out of economic necessity. Some of our schools do not have the necessary textbooks for students.

How can a student receive an education without textbooks? Will a student ever realize the importance of an education without textbooks? How can a student ever become a proficient reader, let alone a successful test taker?

This is only one reason our students test low.

Some of our schools do not have the necessary supplies and equipment. Some of our schools have no libraries. Some of our schools have no art or music teachers. Some of our students do not have regular teachers, they receive a revolving door of substitutes or teacher's aids.

There is no continuity in instruction when you have different people, some qualified and some not so qualified. They are fractioning the meager education that our children already receive. But there is still more.

Their is an incongruity in what our children receive at each level of education. This causes a child to be promoted to a new level (grade), but missing some of the necessary skills to compete.

Some of our teachers are indifferent to their students; or they reflect the prejudice and racism of the majority population — even though some are black themselves.

Jerry Lin Davis
Baltimore

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. Write
The AFRO-AMERICAN
628 N. Eutaw Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Vote Republican

Black or white, our children's needs are the same. If parents are given a choice in education, they will send their children to a school that gives them a quality education. Where do your black leaders send their children to school?

I think, in most instances, they send them to a private school where they get a quality education. Don't the children of their constituents deserve as much? Vote against the National Education Association. Vote Republican.

An outraged grandfather of eight angels and veteran of World War II.

Cornelius U. Morgan
Baltimore

It was a beautiful story

The front page story on Mrs. Patricia Schmoke was beautifully done. It was both positive and inspirational.

It was given emphasis by its front page position, and all of us could rejoice that we have a black press which counteracts the negatives of the white press.

May the AFRO family have a Merry Christmas — and continue to hold true to the founder's promises to our community, made many years ago.

Yours always for freedom,
Juanita Jackson Mitchell
Baltimore

A friend to man

For most of us, the Christmas season is a favorite time of year. It's a time of extravagance complete with lots of gifts, holiday feasts and feastive trimmings.

But for those in financial and emotional despair, Christmas spirit is in short supply and even the smallest amenity is impossible.

The Salvation Army, perhaps more than any other organization, has come to be associated with helping those individuals. Last year, the number of men, women and children served by The Salvation Army exceeded more than 9 million. The need continues to be great.

For more than a century The Salvation Army has been a loyal friend to the less fortunate. It has sought out those who require its spiritual and material aid and swiftly and efficiently provided relief and comfort.

We urge you to remember that the good deeds of The Salvation Army are funded by contributions from the public. At this, the most extravagant time of year, a generous gift to The Salvation Army might just help someone in need of life's necessities.

Cynthia A. Eddy
Baltimore

HODGE-PODGE

By Jack L. Hodge

Assistant to the Publisher

What goes around comes around

Retirement, especially early retirement, isn't always what it's cracked up to be. It's a great life, but too often you get the feeling that you could be doing something more productive with your life.

I began my career with the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers, rose through the ranks to assistant managing editor before joining The Baltimore News American, where I remained until its demise in may, 1986.

One thing I learned during retirement—just who your friends are. The "fair weather" friends are the first to disappear. Also, you suddenly have "friends" who never gave you the slightest time of day. The "friends" who delight in knowing that you are no longer among the gainful employed. These are the "friends," like scavengers, who eagerly await you to fall so they can pounce on you in glee.

Then there are the "true friends" who wish you well, who offer encouragement, who offer suggestions and genuinely show concern for your well-being.

It was the genuine concern of one such friend which is responsible for my return to the AFRO after an absence of nearly 25 years.

During my short retirement I lived the life that would have been the envy of a half dozen characters of my youth.

Yet, unlike these characters, I'd like to think my time in retirement was a fun time, yet educational — and a boost to the economy.

These characters of my youth never held gainful employment; all were shiftless. In fact, at the first sign of Fall, each packed a knapsack and hopped the first freight train South for the winter.

There have been other interesting people along the way.

For instance, at one time I lived in a rooming house. Two of the occupants, I later learned, were big-time professional thieves. The two would disappear for weeks.

Blame it on youth. Blame it on naivete. ignorance or stupidity. Who would want to believe he or she lives among crooks? They were such nice people. And when the bubble burst, I found that these nice people were the kind who stole and sold the entire store. These nice people were the kind who stole high priced automobiles for resale in Cuba.

Later, there was Willie, the body and fender repairman, who stirred his gin with a greasy screw driver, and Ron, the mechanic and would-be race car driver. Ron could tune an engine quick as a flash — and guarantee the tuneup for 10,000 miles.

And then there was Ed. He loved to fish and hunt. Ed, when I met him, was a service station attendant. He had held jobs from milkman to bus driver. The last time I saw him, Ed owned a service station.

Ed was, at heart, a hunter and a fisherman. He'd rather do either than work — and often did.

He knew where the fish were. He could find fish quicker than an electronic fish-finder. He often acted as a guide on hunting and fishing parties.

Ed had the magic touch. Regardless of what he put on the hook, the fish took the bait. He had the same magic touch when it came to the opposite sex. Strange women approached him as if he were a long-lost lover.

He survived the Big War, World War II. The Japanese sunk two of the ships on which he served. Yet he lived to fight another day.

And he survived work, always managing to get out of it just in the nick of time. Yet, Ed always had a job when he needed or wanted one.

The characters of my youth, though shiftless, were true to their friends and neighbors. I found out by accident that my friends in the boarding house were professional thieves. They were friends. I later learned I was "under their protection." There were places I ventured alone where I learned that I would have been in harm's way if the two had not put out the word.

Every car owner needs to know a Willie and a Ron. And an Ed is indeed an asset. He had connections in both high and low places, particularly if you like hunting and fishing.

And as 1988 gets underway, best wishes for a happy new year to all my friends in AFRO land.

Page Opposite

Benjamin L.
Cardin

Social Security is secure

I would like to make one thing clear to anyone who is worried about the financial health and stability of our Social Security system. The Social Security trust fund is projected to be financially secure through 2051.

While some adjustments may be necessary in about 50 years, the long-term projections carry us securely through 2051.

In fact, the Social Security trust fund is so secure that the Federal government regularly uses it to offset our budget deficit. What that means is the Federal government borrows from this trust fund to make our budget deficit appear smaller than it actually is — this is also known as "smoke and mirrors" budgeting.

I know in this presidential election year many of you will probably hear charges that the Social Security system is part of the budget deficit problem, but don't believe it.

In FY 1988, Social Security tax income generated $246 billion in revenues, while the Social Security trust fund paid out a total of $219 billion in benefits and administrative costs. This $27 billion surplus between what was taken in and what was outlayed was used to offset our $150 billion budget deficit.

While this transfer of money to offset the deficit does nothing to threaten future benefits, the temptation to use these dollars to make the deficit look smaller is one we should resist. For this reason, I supported removing the Social Security trust fund from the unified budget.

Because the Social Security system is sound, I also strongly opposed the effort made during this Congress to cap or limit the cost-of-living adjustments to Social Security as part of a solution to reduce the Federal budget deficitg. Part of the reason the Social Security system is financially secure now is because in 1983 Congress passed amendments to the Social Security Act, which restored the financial health of the system.

It was necessary at that time to increase Social Security payroll taxes (the FICA portion of your pay stub) and to delay COLAs for six months in order to ensure the long-term stability of our Social Security system. Our nation's senior citizens were asked to make that sacrifice then in order to make the trust funds secure. They should not be asked to make it again now to balance the budget.

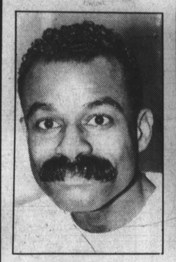
It is also important to remember than the majority of Social Security families are not rich. In 1986, 34 percent of families in which a member received Social Security had gross incomes of less than $10,000. Of the aged — those 65 or over — receiving Social Security, 13 percent are dependent on it for 100 percent of their income while 22 percent depend on Social Security for at least 90 percent of their income.

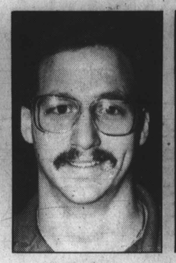
In fact, over the past three decades, Social Security has been chiefly responsible for a sharp reduction in the number of senior citizens living below the poverty line. In 1959, 35 percent of Americans over the age of 65 lived in poverty. By 1985, that number had been reduced to 12.6 percent. We haven't eliminated poverty among the elderly, but we have made tremendous progress, and Social Security and the COLAs deserve most of the credit.

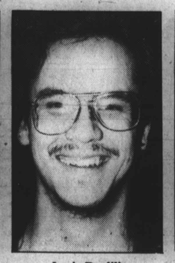
So in this election year, when you hear a lot of slogans being tossed around about deficit reduction measures, remember; Social Security and COLAs are not the reason for our soaring budget deficit. They are the reason millions of elderly Americans can afford a decent retirement. Let's leave them alone.

Congressman Cardin represents Maryland's Third Congressional District.

AFRO SURVEY


Al Johnson


Brian E. Beddow


Louis Panlilio

Lisa Allender

What are your New Year's resolutions?

This week's question to the man on the street was: "What are your New Year's resolutions?"

Al Johnson, 32, fitness program designer and instructor: "My New Year's Resolution will be to create more different types of workout programs for my clients, so that they get the best results that they strive for."

Gregory Amante, 25, production assistant: "To get a job in Los Angeles TV and convince Tracy Lambros to move out to California!"

Brian E. Beddow, 23, fitness program designer: "Start to travel and see the country. Start to climb the corporate ladder."

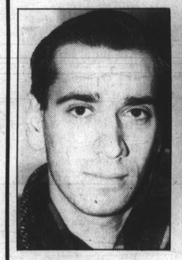
Louis Panlilio, 21, student: "To kick over the corporate ladder when I finish school, work out more, read more, make sure I do everything I set out to do until it's complete."

Lisa Allender, 26, director of corporate program services, midtown YMCA. "My New Year's resolution should be to not procrastinate. However, I'm not going to resolve to do anything, so hopefully everything will be done."

Della McCaskill, 24, "My New Year's resolution is to be good to me, by eating right and exercising more, so that I will be well for the spring and fit for the summer."

Benjamin Amante, 29, Los Angeles District Sales Manager, Nissan Motors Corp.: "Make my first step towards earning my first million!"

Wanda A. Bell, 21, writer: "My New Year's resolution is to read; double the amount of books I read in '87. My personality and person has been enhanced by the many books I've read so far. I would recommend it for everyone."


Gregory Amante

Della McCaskill

Bemjamin Amante

Wanda A. Bell

G. James
Fleming

Education should be Job No. 1

In big cities throughout the country the major emphasis in 1988 will be on improving the state of public education.

"Return to the basics" is being heard from all corners. In Baltimore, Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke has taken the leadership in a spirited campaign to make Baltimore "a city that reads."

Others point to the need for just as much concern about mathematics and science. The complaints and the prescriptions for change roll on.

Apart from the demands to produce better and more highly trained students, other demands are aimed more directly at those who teach.

"We need a higher quality of teachers," go the arguments, in summary; "more highly achieving, more competent in handling the English language, who themselves are fond of books, and who are proud of being teachers."

"Accountability" on the part of teachers is another demand, raised by those who believe that teachers ought to be judged by their products. If most graduates of public schools are failing most national tests, if they cannot fill out an application, if they cannot speak a correct English sentence, it is their teachers, also, who are to be blamed and who should be held responsible.

More "accountability" may be expected of Baltimore teachers under the new president of the Board of School Commissioners. Meldon B. Hollis Jr. has already made known that he will not only be looking at failing students, but he will be looking at their teachers.

Teachers, on the other hand, are saying that there is nothing wrong with the Baltimore City public school system that cannot be corrected by paying teachers higher salaries, at least as high as the nearby counties.

There is hope of smaller classes, more adequate supply of necessary materials, opportunity for teachers to obtain refresher and supplementary training, and recruitment of more top-level personnel. If these goals are attained, Baltimore public schools, during the next several years, should be experiencing, what it means when quality of education is given first priority by any government, by any society.

Political Consultant

Anthony
Armstrong

Politics by pressure groups

Like so many tightly wound strands of hair on the head of a "beady-headed" boy, American political pressure groups are beginning to standout in ways that add nothing much of value to the total political appearance of their individual interest, or that of the country as a whole.

Through sophisticated communications networks, expert fund solicitation operations, almost total command of every legal and regulatory factory involved, and a congress unable to focus its lens on the national scene, such pressure groups have gone beyond their traditional roles in American politics, to almost the Apha and Omega of American politics.

There is no more talk of what is good for the nation, only what is good and or profitable (which are usually one and the same) for the group making the effort.

In contrast, the Kennedy years, those of the Eisenhower administration, and even up to the Carter debacle, through highly partisan times, were not so totally characterized by groups prepared to practice the ole artillery of the "means justifying the ends", no matter the consequences to the national political fabric.

During this same period the major exception, ironically, was the Nixon years, where the interests of special groupings were, almost in the manner of two businessmen working out a deal, given the special attention that, until then, was reserved only for issues and matters of broad national impact.

Yet, even the Nixon style of satisfying competing interests and the various groups advancing them didn't focus as much on the parochial as it attempted to weave a national mosaic.

Mr. Nixon's intent was a broadening of the very narrow base of the Republican party; and, though not the most positive causal factor, the method did operate to bring about some positive effects.

For example (and some of you will disagree) during the years of Nixon's White House tenure the tide of black entrepreneurialship turned for the better, precisely because Mr. Nixon took a national focus.

This allowed truly worthwhile business ventures some chances of success, success most would never have had the chance to demonstrate if the minority enterprise environment had been so constricted by the effects of trying to fit square pegs into round holes-which is so often the result of trying to please special interest and pressure groups.

The negative effects of the individualizing of almost every aspect of American political activity is that a dangerous, almost, fee-for-service mentality rises to take the place of doing the thing that best serves a generalized or serious national purpose.

Local politics has always built its real value to movers and shakers on the premise that the politician could deliver something specific, often tangible. The national political scene, however, is best made useful to the whole population when it consciously attempts to find the least common denominator.

The problem, then, is that our national leaders are spending most of their time being essentially local politicians who just happen to have responsibility for national issues. It's not so much that national politicians are trying to fix every pothole; the problem is that truly national issues, like the deficit, are being handled from the point of view of only the very special interest, who don't think nationally, but think in terms of only what is good for their group.

The result is halfway, iffy, neutral non-solutions that only add weight to problems. The interest of pressure groups gets served, and, in due course, so do those politicians that aided and abetted the wet nursing process.

There are the gay rights groups, the right to life groups, the tobacco lobbies, the milk lobbies, insurance, defense, Arab, Jewish, religious, welfare, bird, even rat lobbyists.

All these groups, and thousands more, charge the U.S. congress with spears in their hands; and usually, not wanting ever to be speared, the congress ducks.

With their heads' down and their eyes closed, the congress might raise its collective hand to vote "yea" or "nay", but seldom to halt the tearing-up of the national fabric to give to every Tom, Dick, and Harry who have a piece of it.

The results become tattered problems left to hang in the wind, and to be made even more ragged because so little is tied to them that is of national substance. After the specific group gets finished wiping its nose on the rags, the rest of America is left to wash out the mess.

This kind of governing is the result of too many people trying to preserve so much of what they've already amassed. The pot can only hold so much, and when it's filled to the brim with the status quo, the promise of the future has to suffer.

The status quo demands that little or nothing new goes on. The fear of forward progress, on a national basis, brings out all the guns of "them that got", and the result is that national needs don't get addressed. The American landscape has been so fertile over the last few decades; and so the nation has been able to do well in spite of the baggage we've placed on the national back. That's all changing.

It shocks us to even think that something fundamental will change in America, before each of us has our chance to get our individual piece.

Perhaps if we admit that the dull knife surgery is even occurring, we would be able to, at the least, manage the bleeding. Yet, managing the bleeding is only clocking the inevitable. The bleeding must instead, be stopped. The way to do it is to stop responding to so much special interest group pressure, and to begin to explore for solutions that do the nation's bidding, and not just this group's or that.

JAN 1988