# EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

## No 'Big Brother'

Why would a daily newspaper devote so much time and space trying to belittle the AFRO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS and the weekly black press?

Could it be that the Washington Post — which did this on November 14 and again on November 21 — is looking at what Editor and Publisher, the weekly trade magazine (June 18, 1988) called the "new competition"?

For years, dailies have stayed in their own backyard and weeklies have remained in theirs. No more. Weekly newspapers like the AFRO are turning out tabloids and slick magazines just like the dailies and getting advertisement to support them.

Although the E and P article refers to alternative weeklies, most daily newspapers need to squelch all competition no matter how small if they are to stay in business. And the AFRO company has two products which fall in the category of "new competition."

When AFRO chairman John "Jake" Oliver said that "In time, people are going to notice that it's not the same old ho-hum around here," he was also referring to two of the five products produced by the company — not just its newspapers.

The five products of the Afro-American Newspaper Company of Baltimore which has been in business for 97 years are:

The Baltimore Afro-American
The Washington Afro-American
The Richmond Afro-American
One free tabloid: Every Wednesday
One slick magazine: DAWN Magazine.

Every Wednesday or DAWN Magazine could be what is making the dailies sit up and take notice.

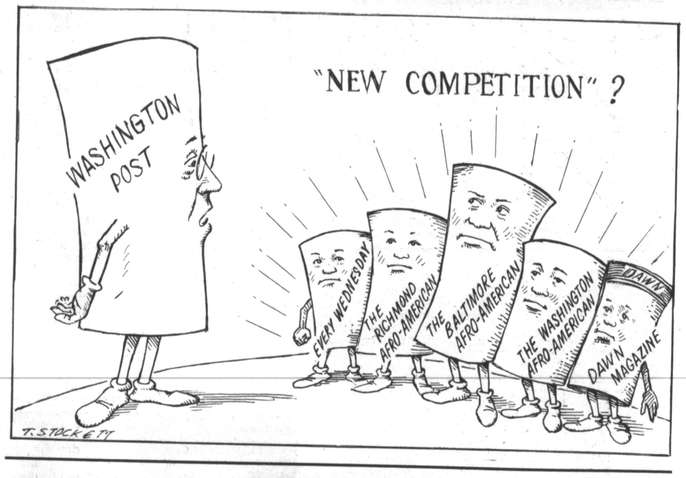
Every Wednesday is a free weekly consumer guide for the greater Washington, DC and Baltimore areas which is delivered door-to-door in selected zip code areas each Wednesday. Its circulation is 50,000.

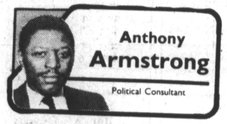
DAWN Magazine is a monthly slick magazine circulated in 43 black newspapers, giving it a circulation of 750,000. Some white dailies, which do not have black newspapers in their areas, are negotiating to have DAWN inserted into their newspapers.

The average newspaper has a readership of three persons per issue, so if you just take Every Wednesday alone, that means 150,000 persons read one product of the AFRO-AMERICAN every week.

We also want to remind many of our former reporters and editors, who now work for the white press, that it was newspapers like the AFRO which provided them with the journalistic opportunity that they could not get anywhere else.

We at the AFRO family firmly believe that blacks who have pride in themselves are those people who read products produced by the black press. And we hope the day will never come when a white daily becomes the sole outlet for disseminating information — its way — to all the people in a given area. The voices of all the people have a right to be heard through not only the black press but the Polish press, the Catholic press, the German press and the Jewish press. We refuse to succumb to the "big brother" syndrome.



Anthony Armstrong
Political Consultant

## Fatal ignorance

If black America voiced anything during eight years of Ronald Reagan it would certainly have to be that an administration can be perceived to not care about a whole segment of the American population.

It's unfortunate, but the perception of being ignored is almost as bad as the actual thing. As black America gets ready for the Bush administration, we will again have the matter of reality vs perception to deal with, and it might be helpful to look back in order to clearly see ahead.

An example is helpful here: John is a staunch union man, the UAW to be exact. He prides himself on the progress he and his wife have made over the years, progress that clearly puts them right in the middle of middle-class America.

They own two cars, both Cadillacs. Their three children have grown-up, and the family home has about fifteen monthly payments left on it.

Once paid, John and his wife will have even more disposable income to spend on their favorite hobby — travelling from place to place in one of their cars or the motorhome they rent from one of John's co-workers.

By now, John's job with General Motors is so secure, he has no doubt he will make it to retirement and a healthy pension; four years later his wife will retire from her "good" government job.

The last eight years, and especially the last four, have been boom years in the American auto industry, with wages and employment levels, both, on the upswing.

The auto industry is but one example of the robust economy that has accompanied the Reagan years; yet, for many blacks, none of the successes of the last few years are the result of Reagan policies.

That's the perception we started with and still have, as if the economics wellness we share just happened. Just as we began with an "actor," we end with an "actor;" and nothing real or perceived has worked to change our view.

It is a point of view that made us almost non-existent, or so we perceived; yet, the perception was only ours. The reality, however, has proven a very different one.

Although every black family can't point to the level of soundness that the Johns in black America can, the fact is that while we were laughing at a president, that president was building a base of economic strength, even with the deficits, that has positioned this country for the future. It is because America is relatively sound, now, that we will even be able to attack the budget deficit later.

The point is simple: if blacks go about the next four or eight years with our perceptions so far from reality, we will again find ourselves grubbling away the time we should be using to find more ways for more of us to enjoy the progress that a lot of us have now.

The reality of it all is that the problems we've had with the Reagan administration have been the problems of the perceptions we blindly borrowed from our own leadership.

They didn't like Mr. Reagan, and they successfully went about poisoning all our attitudes about the president; and all this while more blacks than ever before were (and are) benefitting from the policies of the "actor."

We are Democrats by and large, and much of the Reagan ribbing was little more than partisan politics. Yet, the result of so much of the "we hate Reagan" was to have us sleepwalking through a time when we should have been finding ways to share even more of America's bounty, even if we didn't like the architect of so much of that bounty.

Again, black leadership lead us astray, and if they attempt and succeed at it again, black America might just bungle the four years ahead of us. "We hate Republicans;" but we don't really have much basis for our "hate."

We voted against Bush, but economic issues certainly didn't justify such a vote. We stuck with Dukakis, when he didn't stick with us (we all remember the shabby treatment afforded Jesse Jackson — at least until the end of the campaign when it became clear the Democrats needed us more than we needed them).

Now, it's start-time again; this time with Bush. Perhaps what we'll do is concoct a story that he was actually a cook during World War II, and never set foot inside the cockpit of a jet fighter plane.

If we leave the perceptions to our leadership, as before, our reality will again be blurred by partisanship and plain ole political nonsense. By the time we recover probably another four years will have passed; and while we go about "hating" just for its own sake the rest of the country will be knowingly moving ahead.

I'm glad for John's success and that of his family, but I hope he doesn't sleep through the coming administration with no idea how he got what he has. This time, such ignorance could be fatal.

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

Chicago Mayor, Harold Washington, died a year ago November 25. He was beginning his second term and was 65 years old.

Like many other black men, Harold had finally moved beyond the wilderness of systemic racism to a place of power and coalition and the promise of accomplishing great deeds was finally being realized.

His untimely death still challenges us to keep in focus the dangers of health problems of African American men in the 1980s.

It appears, on the surface, that black men who have successfully overcome the barriers of skin color in America, and have achieved some measure of public responsibility, are very prone to cardiovascular diseases resulting in death.

Because of the obstacle course that racism creates fewer black men find their true place in circles of leadership. Those who do are so over-committed by the excessive demands on them that the burden and stress of responsibility is a major cause of heart attack and stroke.

The crisis in health care for men of color is grim. Statistics released last November by Governor Schaefer's "Commission on Black and Minority Health" amply illustrate the crisis in which we find ourselves.

Cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) is the leading cause of death for all minority Marylanders and one of the leading causes of premature mortality for men of African ancestry in Maryland. Hypertension, a leading controllable cause of heart disease and stroke, frequently goes unchecked and uncontrolled in black men.

As a race, we have the highest cancer incidence and mortality rates of all racial groups in both Maryland and the United States.

Our infant mortality rate as a race is almost twice as high as the infant mortality rate of white infants. Concomitantly, black women have the highest death rate for diabetes of all race/sex groups.

In Maryland, even though we comprise only 23 percent of the population, over half of all reported AIDS victims are black people, and 90 percent of these are intravenous drug users.

The facts, figures, graphs and statistical evidence continues its grim assessment of the health care crisis among African Americans. The findings are a two-edged sword.

Starting with the most complicated and costly solutions we first encounter a daunting array of problems and deterrents. A healthier population requires more health care professionals. Promotion of health care as a career goal begins at the Middle School level.

Health Education Program development needs to be carried through to the Post-Graduate level with professionals at each stage to encourage and train students.

Only after millions of dollars are spent and at least a decade has passed, will the enlarged health care professional workforce be available.

Other high cost solutions to the high infant mortality rate include providing health insurance for all infants and pregnant women with incomes at or below the poverty level.

Ultimately, health insurance should be provided to all individuals without regard to income.

An increase in the number of neighborhood clinics is needed as well as the professional personnel to staff them.

Educational programs and materials about health, nutrition, substance abuse, AIDS, pregnancy, chemical addiction (including cigarettes), stress, exercise and diseases can and should be made readily available to everyone, especially the high risk population — thoe of African ancestry

An intensive and targeted community based outreach program is also necessary to reach and educate low-income Marylanders. There must also be a public and private partnership to increase access to health services to the people that need it most.

The key conclusions of the Governor's Commissions states, "Education about healthy behaviors, health insurance coverage and improving access to comprehensive and continuous preventive and primary care services are keys to improving Black and minority health."

Some solutions though can be started today. Eating healthy foods is not expensive nor difficult to accomplish. If you smoke you can stop.

Much information is now available concerning nutrition, pre-natal care, stress, AIDS and a wide variety of other health topics.

Exercise such as walking and a low fat, low cholesterol diet can begin as soon as the next meal.

Taking advantage of the resources available to you now, while we work to find solutions to the great problems in health care, is the best first step which will end with longer and healthier lives for us all.

## Attention black men

The good news is that Maryland is a national leader in delivering better health care for all its citizens. The bad news is that this only means that in most other states the health care for minority populations is in an even more destitute condition.

The toll is too high. There are solutions to this crisis — some of which are costly, and others will cost the consumer little or nothing. Some solutions will take time while others can be implemented immediately.

Many of these require the coordination of medical service providers, health insurers and federal, state and local governments while still others are the personal responsibility of the individual and the family; a partnership not always realized.



# COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

The Afro-American
MEMBER
MDDC NNPA UPI

Ethel Payne
BEHIND THE SCENES

## Joe Dudley and Fuller concept

When I was growing up in Chicago, the name S.B. Fuller was as familiar as Kellog's Cornflakes, particularly among colored folks. To us, he and the products that were distributed door-to-door had more in common that the legendary Fuller Brush Man.

Indeed, there was a fixed belief that S.B. with his magic know-how for merchandising was really the genius behind Fuller Brush and that the white salesmen in the south were agents for the black owner. This was never substantiated; but nevertheless, Fuller Products were a staple for my generation.

To this day, I remember the fresh fragrance of "Stay Sweet" soap and wonder what became of the brand. We grew up and most of us resettled in places where opportunity had beckoned, but the nostalgia lingered on.

"Up From Poverty" should be the title of the biography of two men whose lives became intertwined. They are examples of the history and the struggles of black entrepreneurship. It began with the institutionalized segregated society in America and the admonition of Booker T. Washington to "let down your buckets where you are."

Today the struggle continues in a climate where the movement has been from de juris separation to a level where the law is on our side, but old de facto segregation still hangs around the door of equal-opportunity.

Let's start with the story of S.B. Fuller. A native of Louisiana, he left home at age 15 with a sixth grade education and moved with his family to Memphis, Tennessee.

Memphis was a bastion of segregation, and it was ruled by white political bosses who drew their sustenance from the cotton picked by black hands that were loaded onto the river boats of the mighty Mississippi.

There was not much opportunity for a black boy who dreamed of becoming independent.

The onset of the nationwide depression in the '30's, further aggravated the low status of blacks. At 23, S.B. hitchhiked his way to Chicago where he soon found out that Jim Crow had followed the Illinois Central railroad that brought thousands of blacks north in search of jobs.

In 1935 with $25 he had managed to save, Fuller purchased some soap and began selling the bars from door-to-door. From this lowly beginning, he parlayed his business into a $10 million a year venture with 600 employees.

I remember that Fuller was a generous man and a religious person, but he criticized the pendant of blacks for building million dollar churches, while neglecting to put more millions into black-owned businesses.

An ill-fated venture into newspaper publishing partially contributed to the decline of the Fuller fortune; but before that happened, the story of Joe Dudley for whom S.B. was a mentor is the other part of this two-man saga.

JOE DUDLEY

He was born in Beaufort County, N.C., one of 11 children whose home was a three-room farmhouse. Adversity stalked him in early childhood-he failed first grade, was stigmatized as mentally retarded and developed a speech impediment.

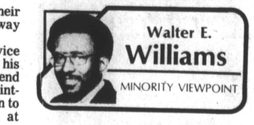
The house burned down, adding to the family woes. Still, the parents had the fortitude to encourage their children to seek education as a way out of the poverty pit.

Joe Dudley took their advice seriously. He was jolted when his best friend wooed his girl friend away from him. The disappointment in romance spurred him on to greater ambition. He enrolled at North Carolina A & T. College, majoring in poultry science.

Along the way, opportunity knocked and there came a turning point in his life. He was taking a break from his college studies in New York when he met a Fuller Products salesman, and inquired about a job. This was the branch office. Chicago was the headquarters.

The company secretary who interviewed him was Erline Scroggins who saw him as a promising go-getter. Said she, "You could be president of this company." Her prophecy came true later.

S.B.'s dream was to create 250 black millionaires through his self-sufficiency program. In 1957, Joe Dudley took his $10 Fuller Products sales kit and hit the streets of Brooklyn. In 1960, he met Eunice Mosley, a Fuller distributor. Romance blossomed anew and a business partnership was formed.



Walter E. Williams
MINORITY VIEWPOINT

## Just desserts

The 1988 elections registered one of our lowest-ever voter turnouts. Political pundits blame it on voter apathy and alienation with candidate inattention to issues and political fluff.

And here's what Williams says to his countrymen; We deserve what we get. American shortsightedness, ignorance, and immorality make it impossible for people with statesmen-like qualities to hold high political office.

American character that produced presidents like John Adams, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson is all but dead. If any one of these men had competed in the 1988 presidential campaign, he'd have been defeated

Since many of Jefferson's values are mine, let's pretend it's 1992 and Williams is his stand-in for the presidency, and it's press conference time.

Dan Rather: "Tell us why you constantly distrust government."

Williams: "The natural progress of things is for government to gain ground and for liberty to yield."

Dan Rather: "That's no answer. Obviously we need government. What do you think is good government."

Williams: "A wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government."

Peter Jennings: "You say you object to Congress' using the IRS to confiscate the bread labor has earned' to give to others. Isn't that promoting selfishness?"

Williams: "John Adams, our second president said, Property is surely a right of mankind as real as liberty.' The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, and there is no force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence."

Leslie Stahl: "Your opponent has come out in support of federal child care programs. Why are you against them?"

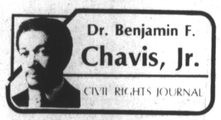
Williams: "The Constitution's framers set several specific jobs for the federal government, and nowhere among them do I see a mandate for the provision of baby-sitting services."

Leslie Stahl: "But the Supreme Court has interpreted the passage in the Constitution's Preamble provide for the general welfare' as meaning that Congress should give the citizens paid baby-sitters."

Williams: "It's a very dangerous doctrine to consider the judges as the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions. It is one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy. I might add that history has proven Alexander Hamilton dead wrong. He said the judiciary was the least dangerous branch of government."

Sam Donaldson: "During your campaign you've called for repeal of government regulations that violate the Tenth Amendment. Are you for states' rights?"

Williams: "Yes, a single consolidated government would become the most corrupt government on earth. Our government is taking so steady a course as to show it will pass to destruction, to wit: consolidation first, and then corruption, its necessary consequence."



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

## Afro Americans and G. Bush

In the wake of Vice President George Bush's victory in the Presidential election, millions of African-Americans and other racial and ethnic citizens of the United States are pondering the future.

Will the Bush administration be similar to the Reagan administration? Will the incidents of overt racial violence continue to increase? Will the ranks of the poor and the homeless continue to increase?

Will a Bush administration continue to have constructive engagement with the racist apartheid regime of South Africa? And will the future for African-Americans be any brighter during the next four years?

The answers to these questions have to be pursued by African-American leadership forthrightly. The last eight years have been devastating economically as well as politically for the African-American community.

Much of the progress of the struggle for racial justice and equality has eroded during the past decade. There are more people who are living in poverty today than in 1968.

President Reagan was successful in mortgaging the long term future of the nation with a national debt exceeding a trillion dollars.

George Bush has won the election but he has also inherited an unprecedented challenge to lead this nation in a better direction.

If more of the disenfranchised and marginalized of this society would have voted then the outcome of the election could have been different. But crying about the outcome of the presidential election will not change anything.

There is a danger that many in the African-American community will become cynical and hopeless. This is no time for this community to become disillusioned about the future.

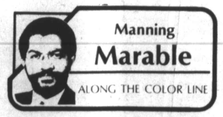
If there is to be progress in this society toward the empowerment of racially oppressed communities, then a national "Grass Roots Freedom Movement" needs to be revitalized.

Those who are victimized because of racism and economic exploitation must organize and must mobilize around a national agenda that calls for effective social change. In the absence of effective community organizing, the future of the nation will be left to the whims of the next president.

The civil rights community along with the church, organized labor, students and other concerned interests need to regroup into a viable and strategic alliance.

We must all work together more than we have in the recent past. The constituencies that we represent deserve a united voice and action toward reversing the conservative trends of this society.

In addition much of the Third World waits to see if the United States will change its foreign policies particularly in Africa and in Central America. The truth is, however, American foreign policy is directly related to domestic policy.



Manning Marable
ALONG THE COLOR LINE

## Dukakis lost, but Bush didn't win

Conventional political wisdom has declared that George Bush's massive electoral victory over Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis represents a smashing triumph for Reagan conservatism over the ideology of liberalism.

Superficially, the electoral and popular vote totals appear to validate this interpretation. Bush won 40 out of 50 states. Southern voters backed Bush by a three to two margin, and the Republican candidate held a substantial majority among voters earning $25,000 or more annually.

Nearly 60 percent of all whites supported Bush.

Although President-elect Bush indeed will be inaugurated next January, his "victory" is far less substantial than it seems. Given his monumental advantages going into the presidential campaign, as well as the election results for Congressional and gubernatorial races, it would be more accurate to assert that Dukakis lost, but Bush didn't win.

President-elect Bush had several notable advantages over his Democratic challenger. Most Americans haven't forgotten the painful period of double-digit unemployment and inflation from the late 1970s.

For better or worse, it is identified with former President Jimmy Carter and the Democratic Party. Bush scored easy points by reminding voters that the inflation rate was over 12 percent in 1980, but only 4.2 percent this year.

Joblessness in 1980 was 75 percent, and only 5.2 percent today. Never mind the fact that hundreds of thousands of working people have become "discouraged workers," and aren't even calculated in the unemployment statistics.

Or that millions of blue collar workers have experienced severe pay cuts and reduction in their families' standard of living. The Bush strategy in the general election was to promote the selective use of positive economic statistics, and to obscure or distort the bulk of the economic truth:

Fortunately for Bush, however, the country was not in the midst of an unpopular foreign war. The initiatives taken to reduce the nuclear arms race with the Soviets were widely popular, and the Reagan administration has been somewhat less bellicose on foreign affairs recently.

Bush was largely successful in projecting himself before the public as an experienced if unimaginative number two man, elitist yet sufficiently competent to reduce the national deficit and to address urban crime.

Although the selection of Dan Quayle as Vice Presidential candidate threw into question Bush's capacity for leadership, the Presidential nominee neatly distanced himself from the unpopular Indiana Senator throughout the last six weeks of the campaign.

But the election was actually a repudiation of the philosophy of Reaganism — best represented by massive military expenditures, cutbacks in social and health care programs, simplistic anti-Communism abroad and welfare for the rich at home.

In several recent presidential elections, the triumphant Republican candidate has succeeded in shifting the balance of Congressional power to the right.

Back in 1968, for instance, Richard Nixon's election produced a net gain of six GOP Senators. When Reagan defeated Carter in 1980, the Republicans gained one dozen seats in the Senate.

This November, however, the situation was reversed. The Democrats picked up seats in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Pro-labor, pro Civil Rights candidates generally did much better than Dukakis in state after state. In Ohio, liberal Democratic Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum withstood an unprincipled media attack by Republican challenger George Voinovich.

In New Jersey, Democrat Frank Lautenberg ran a successful campaign against conservative candidate Pete Dawkins. As all predicted, Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy was re-elected in a landslide.

In Nebraska, former governor Bob Kerrey trounced Reagan-Republican David Karnes, the incumbent, in the Senate race. And in almost all of the House of Representatives races, liberal and pro-labor Democrats elected in 1984 and 1986 were re-elected.

The real political question of 1988 is not why Bush won, but how Dukakis lost. A central reason was the failure of the Massachusetts Democrat to embrace progressive values and public policies which would have repudiated the legacy of the Reagan administration.

At the Atlanta Democratic convention, Dukakis mistakenly asserted that this election was not about ideology, but competency.

His image of the presidency was managerial, not executive. Any successful president must articulate a vision of where the country needs to move — an ideological road map.

He hires aides and administrators to carry out the technical decisions which fall into his general ideological approach toward public policy.

By distancing himself from the rich traditions of liberalism, populism, and social justice which are central to the democratic protest movements of American working people, Dukakis sent the wrong message to his potential friends and gave rhetorical ammunition to his opponents.

He refused to answer scurrilous and false attacks clearly and unambiguously.

He failed to make any serious overtures to the black American electorate, the most loyal Democratic constituency in terms of voting percentage, until only several weeks before the election.

Finally, in late October, Dukakis rediscovered his ideological compass. "I'm a liberal in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy," the candidate finally declared, after months of running a non-ideological campaign.

The tactic worked. In mid-October, according to a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, Bush led Dukakis by a commanding 17 point spread.

By election day, that margin was reduced to 8 percentage points. Most Americans now recognized that Bush's policies would favor the wealthy over the middle class, and would escalate poverty.

But Dukakis was too late in declaring how a progressive, liberal agenda served the interests of the vast majority of Americans.

*Dr. Manning Marable is chairperson of the Department of Black Studies, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.*