EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

The AFRO wishlist

New Year's resolutions are the things you resolve to do in the coming year which are quickly forgotten. Wishlists, like checklists, usually contain items for action. It is a list that can be referred to during the year to keep one fighting for the things one knows are our human rights.

Our wishlist is a reflection of the times we live in. It is a reminder that the fight for freedom is not over.

INTERNATIONAL

We wish for:

1. Freedom for blacks in South Africa — How long, O Lord, must millions of our people stay in bondage? When can we take down the signs, "Free South Africa?"
2. Broader minds in the Middle East who understand that peace is more important than pompous posturing.
3. Government officials who can hear evil, see evil and smell evil when they deal with the international drug traffic. In this way, drug deals would be curtailed, thus leading to a reduction in crime, especially brutal murders.
4. A cure for AIDS and a prayer that no other strange disease will be introduced into our country. Epidemics do not know the difference between races, creeds and colors.
5. That the Japanese would take a second look at our history and our contributions so that a mutual respect could be developed between the two peoples.

NATIONAL

We wish for:

1. Good health for Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall so that his cranky voice can keep this new administration on its toes and for Justice William Brennen, whose liberal voice we need.
2. A curb on skinheads and other groups like the Klu Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis who make the world think we are still all "ugly Americans".
3. A strong Congressional Black Caucus which will listen to all 24 members and discuss their differences behind closed doors away from the public glare.
4. Support for our black institutions like the NAACP, Urban League, National Council of Negro Women, colleges and the press.
5. More families like the Bill Cosbys, who understand that it is better to circulate their money in their own community than it is to keep it in the bank where it is taxed.
6. Homes for the homeless under the guiding hand of former N.Y. Cong. Jack Kemp, the proposed secretary of HUD, who, some New Yorkers say ,may be the best thing to happen to the Administration of President-elect George Bush.
7. A halt to the witch hunt involving black leaders including the hush hush series now being planned by many daily newspapers.
8. A fair trial for Judge Alcee Hastings whose impeachment hearings will set the standard for justice for blacks in America.
9. An affordable standard of living so that senior citizens on fixed incomes won't be priced out of their ways of life.

URBAN WISH LIST

We wish for:

1. The continued push by city mayors —like Marion Barry of DC, Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore and Wilson Goode of Philadelphia— to put a lie to rest that we can't run our own cities. If the white press had spent half as much time focusing on white mayors the country would not be in the shape it is now. Or don't they know where the term "white collar crime" came from?
2. A closer look at statistics released by the various agencies which put a black face on anything negative. Without the black press, the public wouldn't know that in actual numbers there are more white people on welfare; more babies born to unmarried white teenagers; more whites on Social Security and more whites who are homeless.
3. The return to basics in education where children not only get the 3Rs but some culture — music, art, geography and history — especially black history so they can have pride in themselves. And, please bring back gym so that children can learn how to play games again and turn off those VCRs, TVs, and "boom boxes."
4. More males, who understand the need for men to teach in elementary schools. Our children need strong masculine role models at an early age.
5. A plan to keep our school and college faculties from turning all white. On many college campuses today, even black schools no longer look black — especially the medical and dental schools.

Yes, this is our partial wishlist. It gives us food for thought and a chance to say to all...for a really Happy Year, make plans to rattle the trees and fight, fight, fight.

What we believe

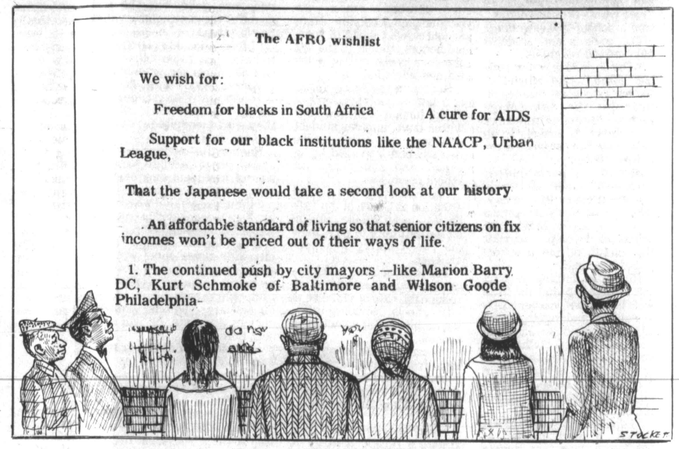
A newspaper suceeds because its management believes in itself, in God and in the present generation. It must always ask itself:

[illegible] the common people.

[illegible] represent [illegible]

Whether it is fighting to get rid of slums to provide jobs for everybody. Whether it stays out of politics except to expose corruptions and condemns injustices and prejudices or compromise.

JOHN H. MURPHY, SR. 1920



Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

A day to fast and pray

We should all constantly assess ourselves, through introspection and through a self-evaluation. When I go through that process, from time to time, I see weaknesses. One of them is sometimes I lack the discipline to do something I really want to do. Let me give you an illustration.

Many years ago, I became totally disenchanted with the climate that has now built up around the celebration of the Birth of Christ. I'm weary of the commercialism; the Christmas sales; the endless round of Christmas parties; the facade of brotherhood; the mass media events that are now a part of Christmas (special Christmas wrestling match featuring the Hulk and Mr. Dynamo); and so forth.

So for years, I had thought about and planned for a day of fasting and prayer to celebrate Christmas. There is a monastery not far from my home, and I thought I would ask those in charge whether I could spend 29 hours at the monastery fasting and praying. But to date, I have lacked the discipline to follow through on this.

Some of you may think I have lost my mind to even contemplate such an idea, but if you think deeply on it, you will find it has merit.

While fasting, I could think about those slowly starving to death in parts of Africa. The children with bloated stomachs; the old, emaciated Africans in the starvation areas, some of whom are too weak to ask for food, and seek it through slow hand gestures, rubbing their stomachs or their mouths.

While fasting, I could think about those in America for whom hunger is a constant companion. Most of them will get a good meal on Christmas Day because of the compassion of church groups; community groups; organized charities and individual citizens.

But what about the other days of the year? What about those days when "Our Daily Bread;" the soup kitchen at St. John's Church; the pantry of another church have simply runout of food? While fasting, I could think about the tons of food thrown into America's garbage cans each day. The restaurants that serve you more food than is needed, more food than you can eat, so half the salad, half the vegetables; half the meat or fish is thrown into the garbage can.

While praying, I could contemplate the tragedy that is a part of my life and is a part of yours, whether you realize it or not. Just stop and think. For all of my life (and for all of yours), that there has never been a single day, not one single day, when a war was not being fought, when men were not killing men because of nationalism; or religion; or tribalism; or for territory . . . Ethiopia and Chad; Sikh and Hindu, Israelis and Palestinians, Russia and Afghanistan and on and on.

It is a chilling thought to remember for all your lifetime, be it one year or 100 years, there has never been a single 24-hour period without war and killing taking place on this globe on which we dwell.

In praying, I could ponder over the theory that, despite the fact the Christmas celebration is, or should be centered on one who preached that all men are equal in God's sight, irrational racial prejudices; bigotry; and racial hatred are so much a part of the lives of millions of people.

Americans will crowd the churches for a Christmas service. They will take their bigotry into the church with them and will bring it out with them after the service. While the star shines over Bethlehem, the corrosive acid that is racism dwells within the heart.

Fasting and Prayer. Do you really think my idea makes no sense?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Morgan grad defends school against attack

Dear Editor:

This letter is in reference to the two articles which appeared in the Evening Sun concerning Morgan State University's recent rating — a matter of great concern to all fair-minded citizens of Maryland.

The first article appeared in the November 21 edition and the second article appeared in the December 1 edition. As a proud Alumnus and supporter of Morgan, I take issue with the tone and innuendoes of both articles.

As a Morgan student during the 1961 to 1965 academic years, I remember the condition of the physical plant facilities at Towson, Bowie, Coppin, University of Baltimore, and University of Maryland during that time period.

A mere 27 years later, the increase in and quality of the physical plant facilities at these campus locations are obvious. Clearly, the State of Maryland invested heavily in these campus locations. The improvements made at Towson alone ran into the millions.

Morgan, on the other hand, was not so fortunate when it came to funds for physical plant improvements. Even when new facilities were built, the buildings were of poor quality and incomplete as evidenced by the "new gym."

The shortcomings regarding poor quality and/or unfinished buildings does not rest with Morgan. That is the responsibility of the agency which overseas the construction of State-owned facilities and has construction management oversight and expertise — the Department of General Services.

While the Sunpapers should be congratulated for bringing these problems to the public's attention, it should, also, lay the blame at the proper "doorstep." Yes, the audit rating was poor, however, how could Morgan be held accountable when other parties controlled the financial and construction management resources?

In addition, Morgan was the last institution to be rated yet it was the first to be reported as having received a "poor" rating. This does seem just a bit strange. Of course, the Sunpapers is not alone in its criticism. The Greater Baltimore Committee, the State auditors and others have been generous in their misplaced criticisms as well.

Finally, the Maryland Higher Education Commission should be advised that Morgan became a State institution in 1939 not 1900. Perhaps the Sunpapers should investigate who got this alleged money between 1900 to 1938. Perhaps the Commission is trying to justify that which can not be justified.

Morgan is, and has always been, a great institution. Many of Baltimore's best Black talent has its "academic roots" at Morgan. This talent has distinguished itself in government, education, business, finance, religion, politics and other phases of Baltimore life.

In recent years, Morgan has experienced an increase of 135 points in SAT scores, a fund raising increase from $64,000 per year to over a million dollars per year, an increase in the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees and the emergence of dynamic leadership in the person of Dr. Earl Richardson, the president of Morgan. Not bad for an institution that has received only $1.3% of available funding. If Morgan had gotten its fair share, no telling what it could have accomplished.

Morgan is entitled to its fair share of funding and deserves the support due a great institution of higher learning. It has given this community its 1.3% investment by a million fold. It does not deserve unfounded criticism.

Morgan has an important role to play in the life of the Baitimore community. It has been a benefit to the community in the past and present. It will have a strong role to play in the future. It, clearly, deserves better treatment.

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Les Payne

Solving the problem of black miseducation

Just when Willie Horton had been sold to the world as the model for the modern, black American male by the next leader of the free world, a genuine contender, Bill Cosby, committed an act as full of hope as George Bush's racist slander was empty of truth.

In contributing $20 million to Spelman College, Cosby and his wife, Camille, struck a much-needed blow for black education. Although this act of philanthropy got far less exposure than Willie Horton, the rapist murderer, it did make the front page of the New York Times.

Cosby is a quiet man in personal matters. Many of charitable activities go unnoticed, as would this one save for the magnitude of the gift given at a weekend dinner on the Spelman campus.

This was not Cosby's first large gift to higher education. When Fisk University was hemorrhaging a few years ago he contributed some $2 million to reverse the death throes of this venerable Nashville school. In targeting Spelman this time, the millionaire entertainer came not to salvage but to enrich a famed black university.

The broader lesson in Cosby's contribution is that wealthy black Americans should aggressively invest some of their millions in the causes and institutions so vital to the survival and liberation of their people.

Unfortunately, all too many have contributed their disposal income to Rolls Royce Ltd., Leyland Motors, and the gross national product of Columbia.

Sports and entertainment are fields where African-Americans have mined their richest veins of gold. This has much less to do with their ambitions and talent than America's success at barring blacks from professions, crafts and a share of the ownership of the means of production.

Some entertainers have achieved great success and in some cases respectability against great success and in some cases respectability against great hostility from a narrow-minded band of bigoted opinion shapers. These success stories in popular entertainment, of course, have not been achieved without immense civil-rights struggles over long periods of time.

Among the top 40 money-makers in the lucrative entertainment business, 10 blacks comprise 25 percent over the last two years, according to Forbes magazine.

"Nowhere else, with the possible exception of Wall Street, are so many making so much," said the Forbes article. "No longer are steel mills or auto factories or oil wells the principal source of great wealth. In the post-industrial society, the once despised entertainment industry has usurped that role."

At the top of that money-making heap for the last two years is Michael Jackson, earning $97 million, followed by Bill Cosby at $92 million.

The other African-American in the top five, along with Steven Spielberg and Sylvester Stallone, is comedian Eddie Murphy, who earned $62 million.

Other blacks on the top 40 list are: Mike Tyson, $55 million; Oprah Winfrey, $37 million; Whitney Houston, $30 million; Sugar Ray Leonard, $27 million; Tina Turner, $25 million; Prince, $24 million; and Michael Spinks, who at $17 million is one spot ahead of Frank Sinatra.

These talented, hard-working entertainers have individually scaled the Gibraltar of racism in achieving their piece of the Rock. One astute social critic wondered aloud about an oppressed group whose popular success models earned their living by dancing, playing guitar, swearing on stage and punching men in the face.

It is true, of course, that an oppressed people is liberated by its scholars, artists and warriors and not by its shortstops, linebackers and song-and-dance men.

However, black entertainers, given their be economic status, could well help secure those institutions so vital to that broader liberation. To date, Cosby, alone among the entertainers, has demonstrated an enlightened interest in survival.

With a Ph.D. in education, Cosby has long devoted a good share of his time and energy to the field. With some success he has demanded that his own children attend historically black colleges. Whether to send one's children to black colleges is a question that middle-class black parents opt for predominantly white schools Cosby disagrees. He has put his money where his expectations are.

The Cosbys' philanthropic act fortunately comes at a time when George Bush is ascending to the throne. Who knows what will happen to traditional funds to black colleges, since in the present such contributions would be considered a crime of liberalism.

Hopefully the Spelman endowment will spur others, especially successful blacks, to take a greater interest in their own institutions. Consider what would happen, for instance,, if the top 10 black entertainers, with a combined income of $466 million, would pool and direct some of their resources toward solving the problems of black miseducation.

The dominant U.S. society will never on its own adress this dirty little secret of education. The expectation is to force blacks to continue to exist as a permanently depressed, unskilled underclass. Education — genuine education — would allow African-Americans to escape their oppression.

Bill Cosby has $20 million down payment.

(c) 1988, Newsday, Inc. Distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

Gus Hawkins:

Say 'No' burn Keysville, Ga.:

The term NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) accurately describes the resentment and fears of communities toward the building of waste-to-energy incinerators, hazardous incinerators, and landfills in cities and towns.

The environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently approved a permit for a commercial waste incinerator in Vernon, California, the first commercial hazardous waste incinerator in the state.

It's an incinerator Los Angeles and California, with the worst clean air non-attainment are in the country can do without.

This toxic waste burner will release fumes over a nearby church, school, and homes. One school in the Los Angeles area closed last year, because of complaints from students and school workers about toxic emissions from factories.

Three toxic chemical spills occurred at the school, two of which forced the evacuation of the 600 student body.

The risk remains too great for accidents caused by hazardous waste incinerators despite assurances from the EPA and industry officials contending the plant's safety.

The safety of a hazardous waste incinerator must be questions, when residents in local communities will be exposed to tons of unincinerated hazardous waste every year. Environmental tests indicate that most incinerators emit dioxin fumes, a cancer causing agent.

Unfortunately, low-income and minority areas have been targeted by these waste companies for construction and operation of their incinerators.

Why should these areas be singled out to suffer from hazardous waste generated from these dangerous plants? Mainly because these communities often do not have the manpower and resources to defeat such proposed waste projects.

Last year the defeat of the LANCER waste-to-energy plant, which was proposed for the South Central Los Angeles area, demonstrated the strength of neighborhood coalitions and public officials working in cohesion.

Although one battle to prevent an incinerator in a highly populated urban area was won, however, another somewhere else is lost.

And if our country continues producing voluminous amounts of household garbage and toxic wastes, we will perpetually grapple with the question: Where do we put the garbage when the landfills reach their capacity?

This complex question has some realistic and economically feasible answers: recycling and source reduction. My resolution, P.L. 100-332, proclaimed June 1988 as National Recycling Month.

National Recycling Month served to educate the public and local municipalities about alternatives to landfilling and trash incinerating.

Several European and Asian countries have started ambitious recycling programs. Japan recycles over 60% of its garbage. Cities in California have similar high recycling rates.

Recycling requires the least amount of capital, and is the most flexible system for handling our nation's waste.

Four thousand recycling programs across the country recycle the entire gamut of waste from bottles and newspapers, to gold extracted from industrial wastes.

Solvents and paints, two of the toxic wastes to be incinerated by the Vernon facility, and recyclable.

All the waste generated by our country cannot be recycled, but we can cut down at the source, leaving less hazardous and household waste to be incinerated.

Over 96 percent of the residents in South Central opposed LANCER, according to my 1987 questionnaire results. The City Philadelphia residents opted to recycle.

The potential benefits of recycling for Los Angeles have not been fully explored. Eventually, we will be forced to alter out disposal habits, if less waste is produced , the demand for incinerators will decrease.

Low-income and minority communities should not have to suffer from the bad habits and over indulgences of everyone.

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

Keysville, Ga.: good news still

Earlier in the year we reported the victory of the African American community in gaining political control of the town of Keysville, Georgia.

Mrs. Emma Gresham who was elected Mayor of Keysville has been struggling to insure that this political victory will now lead to the socioeconomic development of the African American community.

Prior to Gresham's election the majority African American population of Keysville had been subjected to a kind of American apartheid where all aspects of social and institutional life of the town was exclusively controlled by the minority white community.

It's good to hear that progress is still being made in Keysville toward the development and improvement of all the citizens in Keysville, without restriction to race and social status.

Too often in some places where an African American or another racial and ethnic person has acquired the political reigns of a municipality, the socioeconomic state of the African American community has not always changed for the better.

Keysville, Georgia, with its success, becomes a model movement for empowerment where the energy of the people who want justice and a better way of life did not stop after election day.

It is a real tribute to the leadership of Mayor Gresham and to all of the people of Keysville, who continue to work for economic justice; that recently the town opened its first Day Care Center and hosted its first Health Fair. In addition, a new Fire Station has been opened.

In less than one year's time the town of Keysville has literally been transformed from a city of racial hatred and exploitation to a community of racial progress and empowerment.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the sacrifices necessitated in the political struggle against the local forces of racism.

To challenge and fight against racism successfully requires determination, forebearance and the courage to take risks.

In the case of Keysville, Georgia this successful struggle has also required the leadership of a very capable African American woman who dared not only to say no to racism in her community, but who also stood up in a manner that gave inspiration to hundreds of others.

When the rest of the nation celebrates Martin Luther King's birthday in the next several weeks, Keysville, Georgia will be renaming its major "Martin Luther King Road."

Dr. King would certainly be proud of the accomplishments of this community.

At a time when there appears to be a lull in the "Freedom Movement" in the United States, it is indeed refreshing to hear that Mayor Gresham and the African American community of Keysville, Georgia are still victoriously on the road to freedom.

Norman Hill:

Thinking of the poor at Holiday season

The December holiday season is the time of year when people think most about the poor. The various movie versions of Charles Dickens' **A Christmas Carol** help to remind us that there are many Bob Cratchets out there.

Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, give money to sidewalk Santa Clauses. Countless others mail contributions to their favorite charities.

Unfortunately, in recent years concern about the poor has been especially appropriate, and the same is true this year.

People living in our largest cities (and many of our medium — and smaller-sized ones) see the number of homeless swelling to alarming proportions.

So urbanites don't need scholars or statisticians to tell them that something is wrong. But data gathered by experts can tell us more precisely and comprehensively what is happening — and why it is happening, as well.

The State of Working America (1988), a report by the Economic Policy Institute, found that real family income has been stagnant since 1979. And that's the good news.

The bad news is that the families that maintained their income over the 1979-87 period had to work more hours and send more of their members into the work force.

Those families that didn't send another member into the job market suffered income declines from 4 percent to 6.5 percent during those years.

The study also found that the income gap between the rich and poor has grown in this decade. The upper 20 percent, and especially the top 5 percent of families, experienced significant income gains after 1979.

But the bottom 40 percent, and especially those at the very bottom, saw their incomes fall after that year. A major reason for this is that in recent years income has shifted from labor to property.

Property income (rents, dividends, and interest) interest by nation, black communities are hit worst. **Still Far From the Dream: Recent Developments in Black Income, Employment and Poverty** (October, 1988), issued by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, provide the details.

Both black and white poverty rates were higher in 1987 than at a comparable stage of the economic recovery of the late 1970s. But the black poverty rate has grown more. 49.9 percent between 1979 and 1987, while labor income grew by a mere 16.7 percent.

(Real wages and salaries actually fell, but growth in the work force and in the number of hours worked by the average worker created a net gain in total labor income.)

As usual, when bad news hits the Furthermore, the black poverty rate grew from 31.1 percent in 1986 to 33.1 percent in 1987, while the white rate declined from 11 percent to 10.5 percent. Perhaps most alarming, the poverty rate for black children under 6 jumped from 45.6 percent in 1986 to 49 percent in 1987.

A report of the Senate Budget Committee, **Wages of American Workers in the 1980s** (September 1988), provides an important reason for declining income and increasing poverty.

The very first sentence of the report's summary states the matter cogently: "The dominant trend in job creation during the 1980s has been for low-paying jobs to replace those which provided a middle-class standard of living."

In 1979, 64 percent of all American jobs paid middle-level wages (between $11,612 and $46,444). Of all new jobs created from 1979, only 38 percent was at this middle-wage level.

More than 50 percent of the employment increase was in low-wage jobs ($11,611 and below). The remaining 12 percent of new jobs were at the high-wage level ($46,445 and above).

So people are correct when they sense that, beneath the relatively low unemployment and inflation figures flaunted by the Administration, something is awry.

What is the answer? So long as poverty exists, there will be a place in every decent society for private generosity. Charity is good for the giver as well as the recipient.

But charity alone has never been enough to lift the poor out of poverty, and it certainly cannot deal with the structural economic defects that create poverty.

Much as some people hate to hear it, the public sector — government — has a key role to play in ensuring a decent standard of living for all.

Norman Hill is President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.