

## ... If I Were In Your Place

Do we need a guide book for speakers at interracial gatherings? Should a white speaker use the words "Negro," "colored," "you," "your place," "have patience," "don't overshoot the mark"?

By JOHN JASPER

Phillip Wagner, editor of the Baltimore Sun, spoke on the race question at Morgan State College Founders' Day recently.

He said President Martin D. Jenkins couldn't remember what any previous Founders' Day speakers had said.

He added, "How could I ramble on about the founders themselves, because I don't know very much about them."

The Morning Sun says it is 242 years old and the Evening Sun 96 (volume numbers carried on page 1).

MORGAN HAS two sets of founders. Those Methodists who established the college as a church school and those who constitute its original trustees, when it became a state college in 1937.

Action of the state legislature was necessary in both cases and the names of the founders, etc. are in annotated code in Mr. Wagner's office.

Moreover it's not likely that a college like Morgan could be established in Baltimore, develop into an institution worth millions of dollars and then become a state institution, costing several more millions, without having all this recorded in the news columns of the city's leading newspaper.

If Mr. Wagner had consulted the Sun's own library and files, he would have found adequate sources, upon which to base a Morgan Founders' Day address.

"AS NEGRO leaders of the future" says Mr. Wagner. Morgan State College, we hope, is training American leaders of the future.

Its faculty is interracial; there are a few white students now. There will be more.

Forty per cent of the former colored West Virginia State College is white. This has happened in less than ten years.

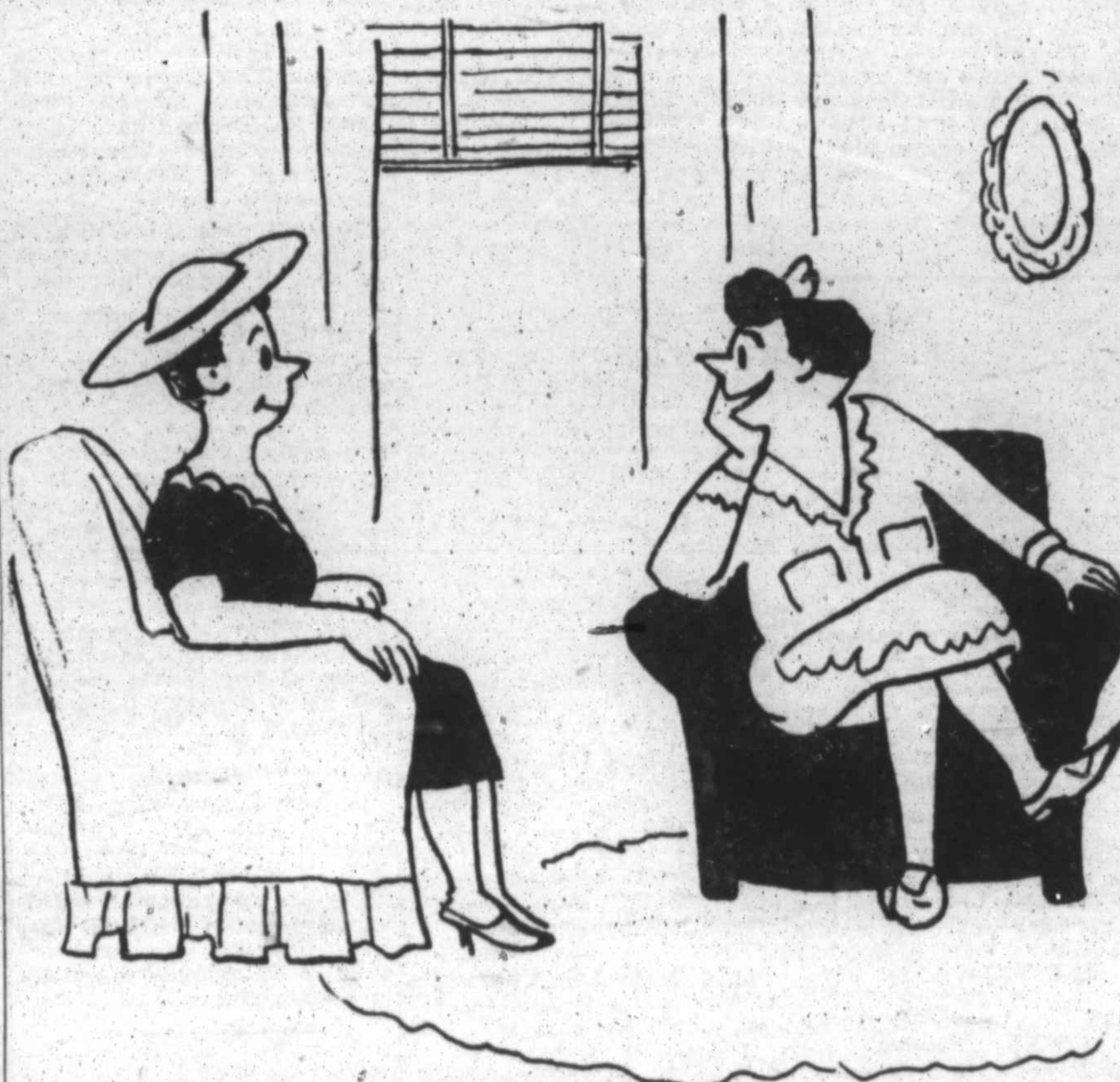
Perhaps what we need is a book of etiquette, an Emily Post, as a guide for speakers at interracial gatherings.

WE CAN OFFER two or three suggestions:

Frederick Douglass said 50 years ago, "I am an American (not 'Negro')."

There isn't a single African nation which calls itself "Negro."

Of course there are exceptions, but the great national bodies in the U.S. which refer to themselves racially are: The African Methodist Episcopal Church, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.



Phillip Wagner addresses Morgan State College Founders Day assembly.

The one-time National Negro Publishers Association has become the National Newspaper Publishers Association. The Colored Methodist Church has become the Christian Methodist Church. The former National Negro Medical Association is now the National Medical Association.

THERE ISN'T A SINGLE American weekly newspaper, college or religious denomination, which uses the word "Negro" in its title.

The reason, the average Southerner's pronunciation of the word has made it repulsive.

Only the Communists insist on using "Negro." But they add the word people, thus "The Negro people" and speak the whole phrase with a flourish and impressive dignity.

As irrepressible Mildred put it recently, speakers at interracial gatherings, to be safe, should forget about "you" and "you people," and talk "we."

"I NEVER cease to marvel at the length of the road we

have come (in Baltimore in 27 years)" declares Mr. Wagner. We have made progress in destroying racial segregation

and discrimination in Baltimore in 27 years, but not near enough. The great Catholic Church

calls segregation "sin." We like to think of jim crow as a disease.

No one brags about the fact that he still has a little syphilis or a little cancer.

To make another comparison:

It is small consolation for America to stop and consider, how far we have come in missile development, when the Reds already have two sputniks flying over our heads, and ours sputters out before leaving the launcher.

"CIVIL EQUALITY is not the right to eat a ham sandwich in a chain drugstore or to enter a movie," Mr. Wagner asserts.

The U.S. Constitution, 14th Amendment, is designed to grant every citizen equal protection of the law.

It is basically an affirmative command to supply the protection of the laws. This is its primary character. Its negative on governmental action is secondary.

Failure of government to supply equal protection by law is a denial of the requirement of the 14th Amendment, quite as much as a state law singling out a particular group for abusive treatment.

Therefore, if restaurants, hotels and inns are licensed to serve the public and refuse to do so, it is the duty of the state to pass laws giving all citizens equal protection.

A metropolitan city like Baltimore, in which only certain people can eat a piece of pie or drink a cup of coffee downtown casts a serious reflection upon our religion, our form of government and our civic intelligence.

"AND IF I were in your position," says Mr. Wagner.

Mr. Wagner is not in our position.

If he were, he'd do just what we are doing: rely upon pressure politics, legislation and on judicial decisions to compel a backward city to obey and enforce the law of the land.

That is what any sensible minority does.

What Mr. Wagner forgets is, that two colored fellows came over with the Ark and the Dove, which brought the first settlers to Maryland. One of the two navigated the ships.

Seven hundred and fifty of the 3,600 Marylanders who fought in the War of Independence were colored. That was 180 years ago.

We colonists were excited then, because the British taxed our tea. George III of England probably regarded the stamp tax as a trivial matter then.

We shouldn't make the same mistake in Maryland now, Mr.

### Mr. Wagner Said...

- (1) ... I don't know much about the founders of Morgan ...
- (2) ... As Negro leaders of the future ...
- (3) I never cease to marvel at the length of the road we have come (in Baltimore in 27 years).
- (4) Civil equality is (not) the right to eat a ham sandwich in a chain drugstore or to enter a ... movie ...
- (5) "... will this increase (in colored registered voters) merely build 'another' pressure group?"
- (6) "If I were in your position ..."
- (7) "One of my sons, drafted in the Army, took his training in the Deep South. ... his company in that Georgia training camp had been equal part Negro and white ... It hadn't struck him as being particularly worthy of mention."

Wagner, and regard the demands of American citizens to drink a cup of tea in a public restaurant as "impatience" with "social evolution," or "overshooting marks set by traditional patterns."

"... WILL THIS increase in (colored registered voters) merely build 'another' pressure group?" Mr. Wagner asks.

Does Mr. Wagner infer that Catholics, Jews and foreign born are pressure groups now, and that colored people should not be equally vocal in politics?

Is it not a pressure group, which has made it impossible for the city to have a Jewish mayor or a colored member on the Supreme Bench?

"There was a little girl who became a fine tennis player before she owned a good racket (Althea Gibson). There is a great diplomat, who, somehow, found himself not too greatly handicapped by the shade of his skin (Ralph Bunche). There is a great singer whose environment was extremely modest (Marian Anderson)."

Mr. Wagner discussed the point, that "the status of any group does not depend upon (restrictive) laws."

We think he is in error. Not a single one of the three persons he mentioned is the product of a jim crow community.

Althea Gibson learned her tennis in New York;

Ralph Bunche was educated in California, at a time when Hopkins and the University of Maryland were closed to colored students.

Marian Anderson developed her art in Philadelphia.

Mr. Wagner might have men-

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### NUTS!

(Editorial in Morgan College Spokesman, Student Publication)

"We shall be very brief.

"The address by Mr. Phillip Wagner, editor of the Baltimore Sun, on Founders' Day was insolent.

"Courtesy dictates on such an occasion that the speaker regard his audience with respect.

"Mr. Wagner was extremely amiss.

"Though 'the right to eat a ham sandwich' is not important to him, and 'If I were in your position,' which he is not, and although the rest of his 1890 philosophy detained us from more important tasks, we can all join hands and forget apathy for as long as it takes to say NUTS."