# POLITICAL PERISCOPE

## Last week-COPE—this week, RAC

By James M. Abraham
AFRO Staff Writer

Sociologists say that black people are "crisis-oriented", that is, we have a tendency to mobilize our forces and unite only when faced with a clear and present danger.

This phenomenon may have been at work during the Sixties, when large numbers of us took to the streets to protest disenfranchisement and political inequality.

And it certainly was at work during the recent presidential elections, when the black vote turned out in record numbers in a vain attempt to unseat the Ronald Reagan express.

In light of the Reagan election, an increasingly large number of blacks have begun raising the possibility of joint political action with a racial base.

Although organizations such as "COPE as may attempt to downplay the racial significance of their efforts, (the group's theme song is 'The Color of Your Skin Makes No Difference'), it is obvious that blacks, both in Baltimore and nation-wide, are responding to the restless, right-wing mood of the nation by turning inward towards ourselves.

Two weeks ago, a national black political convention was held in Philadelphia, Pa. At the conference, more than 1300 blacks of varying political hues gathered to attempt to formulate a program for the creation and maintenance of an all-black political organization.

Despite the success or failure of the gathering, the fact that so many blacks gave up their weekend to go to Philadelphia for such an undertaking is, in itself, a positive sign of the times.

To review the local picture, a younger group of would-be politicians called RAC, which includes former mayoral candidate Clarence Davis and Morgan State University activist Leonard Jackson, have formulated a plan they call "The Greater Baltimore Firefighting Plan."

The document takes a novel approach to the question of black political representation in Baltimore, urging as it does a city-wide convention which would select a slate of candidates.

The formula would entail a convention of delegates from various black neighborhoods of the city, who would meet before the city's primaries to select the candidates they feel are most palatable to the entire community and most likely to win.

Following the selection of the slate of candidates, the efforts of the entire black community will be targeted toward the successful campaigns of the black standard-bearers.

Some observers may be asking at this point, what is the difference between this plan and COPE 83?

The difference is a major one, and one which should be explored.

At the Philadelphia convention, the steering committee arrived with a pre-packaged agenda which required only the yes votes of those assembled.

But the delegates rejected this program, and before the convention was over, the chairman of the steering committee had lost his seat and most of the power of the organization had been taken by the delegates.

COPE members plan on forming a "selection committee" which will be responsible for picking the candidates for the various city-wide offices.

The community is expected to rubber-stamp these choices, and place themselves squarely behind the wisdom of the elders who predominate the COPE membership.

But who's kidding whom? One member of COPE who will probably be picked by that group to run for the comptroller's seat in 1983 is Del. John Douglass, a two-time loser in the race for that seat.

He was rejected twice by city voters, so how sage is his selection as a candidate?

Our purpose here is not to denigrate Douglass, who has proven himself to be a capable financial expert, and who may be extremely qualified for the position of comptroller, but rather to question a selection process for a new political order which is implemented behind closed doors.

Will city voters accept such a formula, or is RAC's plan more feasible?

That question, for members of COPE and the larger community as well is the $500,000 question.

## Budget cut won't lower welfare payments

A $1.2 million state budget cut won't force reduction in welfare payments, a state official says.

Kalman Hettleman, the secretary of the State Department of Human Resources, said this week the Department cut its budget because of projections that revenues will decrease.

But Hettleman said the cuts will come in what he called "discretionary programs," such as day care, legal services, public housing and the battered spouse program.

He said he would not cut any program that would result in loss of matching federal funds or welfare payments, which critics say already are too low. But Hettleman said the effects of dropping some programs eventually will be felt.

"These programs are of crucial services but, for the most part, are of a preventive nature and we will eventually pay a higher price for their reduction," he said.

## Harford County NAACP protests teacher firings

A Maryland NAACP leader said his organization may picket and boycott Harford County Schools as a result of what he calls the board of education's harassment of black teachers.

"There is an apparent conspiracy to harass and fire black teachers," Emmett Burns, NAACP Regional Director, said Friday.

"The NAACP does not intend to stand idly by while black teachers are mistreated. We will seek an immediate emergency meeting with Harford County school officials to review the status of their affirmative action plan," he said.

He cited five instances in the last three years, the latest involving Pearlie Freeman, a North Harford Middle School teacher fired "for no good reason" in June 1980.

Burns said Mrs. Freeman, whom he called "an articulate, highly qualified black educator with a long and distinguished teaching career, "will file a discrimination suit with the State Human Relations Commission."

He listed seven "intolerable conditions" in the Harford County school system, including lack of support from white administrators who pay more attention to white students or their parents in disputes involving black teachers and excessive evaluations "to build a record so black teachers can be fired."

Burns said 10 percent of the Harford County students population is 15 black and 7 percent of the teachers is black.


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## City fire department attracts black applicants

About 1,000 of the more than 1,500 people who have applied to take the Jan. 31 Baltimore firefighter test are black — the largest number in the department's history, city fire officials say.

Fire Capt. Patrick Flynn said this week that applications postmarked no later than midnight Monday will be accepted for the test. The total number of applications is expected to reach 2,300, Flynn said.

He said applications received so far include 1,109 from black men, 362 from white men and 103 from women.

"That is the largest number of blacks to ever apply," Flynn said.

He said the city fire department had made a concerted effort to try to attract minorities.

The Department now has 2,055 firefighters, about 18 percent are black.

To help applicants prepare for the Jan. 31 test, the fire department will begin tutoring sessions Dec. 8.

### UMBC student charged with drug sales

A University of Maryland - Baltimore County student has been convicted of selling amphetamines to an undercover state police officer, but said he made the sale only because the officer insisted.

Brian Craft, 20, was convicted this week of distributing amphetamines for the sale Aug. 4 to Trooper Frank J. Rose. Rose had made repeated telephone calls to Craft seeking possible drug purchases.

Craft told Baltimore County Circuit Judge Cullen Holmes he agreed to the sale only because Rose had been calling him so frequently.

Craft also said he has been using drugs for six years and is enrolled in a treatment program.


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## If you ask me

By Bettye Moss

### N.C. Mutual Open House

Open House at N.C. Mutual Life Insurance Co.'s new Baltimore District office at 407 W. Franklin St., attracted over 400 persons Sunday afternoon.

The Franklin Street headquarters formerly housed the Mutual Benefit Society, recently acquired by N.C. Mutual.

Here from the company's home office in Durham were, W. J. Kennedy 3rd, chairman of the board and chief executive; and Maceo A. Sloan, executive vice president.

Dillard T. Massey, district sales manager, presided. Also there, Mrs. Massey (Lorene), and their two sons, Brian, 7 and Dillard Jr., 9.

The Massey boys assisted in the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Ribbon was cut by 88-year-old Mrs. Viola Owens, one of the oldest policyholders.

Mr. Kennedy thanked Baltimore area residents for their support, observing that the local Bernard L. Berkowitz, president of the Baltimore Economic Development Corp., represented Mayor Schaefer.

Harry O. Wilson Jr., longtime president of Mutual Benefit, gave the history of that firm.

### $ Billion

N.C. Mutual is no small outfit. It has total insurance in force of over $5 billion (Billion is right!). Billion!!

It has ranked number one of the top 100 black-owned insurance firms in the Black Enterprise Magazine list for several years.

At its main office and those in it states and D.C., it employs over 1300 persons.

N.C. Mutual has total assets of over $184 million, and has paid to policyholders over $351 million!!

### Who was there...

Two carloads of D.C., and N.J. N.C. Mutual execs came, led by Marvin Dyson of Washington, and Collins Banks and James Jeffries of the Newark office.

Also here from D.C., F. F. Phipps. From Philly, A.U. Arrington, George Stevens, the regional agency director, was here from Durham.

So was longtime employee, Rufus Hackett, a native of Baltimore (By the way, Mrs. Hacket (Charlotte) has been ailing.)

Congressman Parren J. Mitchell was there. Also, Dr. W.O. Bryson, president of Advance Federal, and Mrs. Bryson. Dr. Bryson is the only Marylander serving on N.C. Mutual board of directors.

More faces in the crowd: Judge William H. Murphy, Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin Quarles, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Stith, Mrs. Datie Russell, Mrs. Emma Gilkes;

Also, Mrs. Catherine Young, Rufus Walker, Mrs. Myrtle Strong, Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor, Marshall Jones, Mrs. Barbara Harris, Mrs. Edith Bannister, Mrs. Ida Moore.

And, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brooks, Rev. B. L. Matthews, Mr. and Mrs. James Joyner. Mrs. Ruth B. Lewis, Ms. Josephine DeLane, Mrs. Sara Taylor, Harold Bennett, Mrs. Velma Tripps.

Among Baltimore office's 45 employees are: Milton Branch, associate district manager; Ms. Doris McCoy, office manager; and sales managers, Robert Stinson, Michael Hendricks, Hilton Randall, P. A. Robinson and Michael McArthur.

### AGNN Affair

The Bobby Felder orchestra mentioned above, had a big day in Baltimore on Saturday.

Before playing for the Continentals, they played for the AGNN's elegant luncheon and dance at Blue Crest North.

It was like old home week, with guests coming from N.Y., N.J., Del., W. Va. and D.C.

This group of women was organized over 30 years ago in high school. They have the know-how to put together outstanding afairs for themselves and friends.

Charter members of the group Theresa Brown of D.C., who is president, Hermione Weaver, Pauline Blackwell, Alice Pinderhughes, Gwen Seaborne and Bernardine Harrison.

Other active members: Ruth Dorsey, Maxine Higginbotham, Bertha Fortie, Mary Smalley of N.Y.; Anne Johnson, Helena Edmonds, Thelma Moore of Bel Air, Elsie Clark, Laura Robinson.

Among out-of-towners here: From D.C. the Simeon Bookers, Raymond Weirs, James Taylors and Evelyn Wortman and Lavoha Vails.

Down from N.Y., the George Callenders. From Wilmington, the James Gilliams, from Charleston, W. Va., the Payne Taylors. From Philly, the Clarence Walkers. Gordon and Dimples Boyd were here from Arundel on the Bay, and the Richard Wallaces from Silver Spring.

### Continentals

One of the nicest affairs this town has witnessed in many a day was the 25th anniversary celebration of the Baltimore chapter of the Continental Societies Inc.

The black tie affair was Saturday at Martin's West, and attracted over 600 persons.

Most impressive: The keynote address by Patricia Ann Russell, the Federal Communications Commission attorney. She captured the audience. In fact, you could hear a pin drop as she told of the need for us to, "call the locksmith," and change the key on our priorities if we would survive in the Eighties.

Continentals maintain chapters throughout the United States and abroad. Their funds go to support needy and deserving children.

Equally impressive: The in memoriam citation to Helen Mae Chamberlain, a charter member of the group who died this year, and the unsung heroine award to member, Phyllis Thompson, for going beyond the extra mile, obtaining scholarships and shoes for deserving students.

Also the Helen O. Gattis Memorial Award, honoring the club's founder, which went to YMCA associate director-emeritus A. P. Moss, for over 45 years of helping young people.

Other participants: Zelma C. Brown, anniversary & chair, presided with dignity.

Mrs. Rose Stanback Continentals National President

### Others Shine

Member, Margaret Turner, was effective in giving the occasion. So were president, Constance E. Butler, who gave the tribute to Mrs. Chamberlain; and Helen Quarles, the Gattis Award.

National Continental president, Rose Stanback, came from Columbus, Ga., with hubby, Oscar. She presented the Baltimore chapter with handsome gold plaque for its outstanding and dedicated service to children.

Rev. Marion C. Bascom, Douglas Memorial minister, said the prayers. His Camp Farthest Out was presented a $1,500 contribution.

A large number of Washington chapter Continentals attended, led by president, Carvella Beavers, and former national president, Mabs Kemp.

The D.C. chapter sponsored the Baltimore group when it was inducted back in 1955.)

Cuff notes: Perfectly beautiful was the "Impossible Dream" rendition by Morgan State University student, Gretchen Starks. She has a tremendous soprano voice.

The audience gave her and the guest speaker resounding appaluse and cheers.

Mrs. Zelma Jones presented the speaker a bouquet of roses from her Alpha Kappa Alpha sorors in Baltimore.

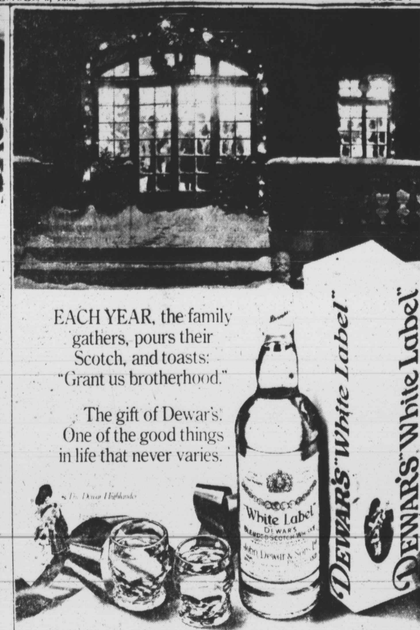
The presence of Malcolm Chamberlain and Clifton Gattis was appropriately acknowledged.

Outstanding was the souvenir booklet given each guest. She will probably die when she reads this, but the book was the work of member, Odessa Dyson. It contains an in-depth article, telling how the group organized in 1955. It details the club's contributions through the years. Very well done!

(Continued on Page 31)



Mrs. Constance Butler President, Baltimore Chapter of Continentals.



### Baltimore Branch NAACP Election

Who—Officers and Executive Committee Members
When—Dec. 16, 1980 from 2 P.M. to 8 P.M.
Where—NAACP Office—2127 Maryland Ave.
Who Can Vote—All members whose memberships were paid by Nov. 16, 1980 or were transferred from the National Office by Nov. 16, 1980

Voter Identification
Bring Your Membership Card

## BY THE WAY...

By Joe Black

"Sometimes you can't see the forest for the trees" is an oft-quoted phrase, and there are times when we, Black people, are our own worst enemy. For years and years, Black people suffered the indignity of being governed by signs that read "For Colored Only" in many cities, places, and even at water fountains. The mores of our society even dictated our selection of courses of study in college—Blacks were heavily oriented toward teaching, preaching, and social work. But then came 1955 and Mrs. Rosa Parks' acclamation that she was too tired to move to the back of the bus.

Under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the civil/social revolution of the decades of the '50s and '60s brought about some real changes. This nation was made to recognize that all components of its "melting pot" were not being accorded the rights and justice that were guaranteed by the constitution. James Brown had us singing "I'm Black and I'm proud"; through song, the Impressions told us that "we're movin' on up"; and Reverend Jesse Jackson had us proclaiming "I may be poor, but I am somebody."

But today there is a silent movement that is threatening to strip many Black Americans of their pride and dignity. No, I am not talking about a new pitfall from White America, but rather I am alluding to those Black persons who have brainwashed Black families into believing that they should accept the welfare syndrome as a way of life. And so today, we find too many Black families allowing the welfare system to rob them of their responsibility, their dignity, and their pride. And the tragedy is the fact that this loss of initiative and ambition is being passed down to their children.

Black America, I ask you if receiving something for nothing is really worth risking the loss of some potential future leaders of our community and this nation? Let us recognize that welfare should be temporary assistance and not a way of life.

Joe Black
Vice President
The Greyhound Corporation

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