Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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Hughes backs down

We agree with Nathaniel Smith, president of the state's NAACP, who charges that Governor Harry Hughes is yielding to political pressure in abandoning a plan that would have placed blacks and women in three of every four high-level state job openings.

Hughes said last week that he had ordered Theodore Thornton, the Maryland chief of personnel, not to implement the program.

This bold affirmative action proposal was Thornton's concept and he is to be praised for offering such an innovative way for this state to catch up on its past and continuing inequities in hiring and staffing with a giant leap forward.

That Hughes is reluctant to give black Marylanders their due is extremely disappointing to us and to all others who have exposed the vast unfairness of Maryland state government employment as it regards minorities and women.

More than half of the state's 54,000 employees are women and 29 percent are black. Yet only 9 percent of the state's top-level jobs are filled by blacks. Women hold 14 percent of such top jobs.

This is an awful disparity.

Again we encourage Ted Thornton to stick to his guns!

As the state's first black secretary of Personnel he has shown courage in offering a program which gives Hughes and other politicians a chance to do something about a very oppressive situation.

Concerns among some white politicians that the Thornton proposal is "reverse discrimination," hogwash spouted by Prince George's County Delegate Tim Maloney or that it would establish "quotas" are red herrings thrown across the trail.

Maryland's equal opportunity record insofar as state employment goes is lousy, has always been lousy and unless the governor sees that an dramatic affirmative action plan is the only way to bridge a historic gap, will continue to be lousy.

NAACP president Smith says his executive board will be meeting forthwith to decide whether to file discrimination suit against the state of Maryland.

Given Hughes' super caution this just might be an action whose time has come.

Black contradictions

Last week we gave our enthusiastic support to the proposed "Buy In, Buy Us" economic campaign scheduled for March to get our community moving on the idea that black consumers should support black businesses.

The project is formulated by HUB, the economic-political group which has some of the city's most astute business and community leaders as members.

In going over the program, however, we noted that the big Buy Us banquet scheduled for the kick-off week will be held at the Baltimore Hilton.

This immediately struck us as a contradiction in terms. Most of the folk "Buy Us" seeks to motivate are being asked to patronize black businesses within black neighborhoods and we think the "Buy Us" planners would have been completely consistent with their stated aims had the banquet been held in a black owned or controlled setting.

We can think of several locations, while not so fancy as the Hilton, which are at least owned by blacks.

The new Soul Shack restaurant in the Lexington Market, Pascal's on Park Circle, the Ritz, Gatsby's, D'Joint, The Spot, to name several.

In an embryonic attempt to get black dollars in motion in black neighborhoods through black businesses, such as "Buy In, Buy Us" is meant to be, the choice of the Hilton is extremely inappropriate.

"Buy Us" planners explanations that the Hilton is owned by Arabs who are also a minority which justifies this site's selection are completely ludicrous. Owners of oil fields are the richest and most exclusive minority on earth. We could use their money but they don't need ours.

We fully support the "Buy Us" campaign but this kind of attitudinal contradiction must be corrected if the project is to have the kind of impact it must have to move forward.

Reagan and the Caucus

A Republican president elected by white America and overwhelmingly voted against by black America this week had his first meeting since taking office with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, all Democrats.

From all reports it seems like a reasonable meeting.

Given the fact that those assembled had been adversaries of Mr. Reagan and fearful of his philosophies, it is amazing the conference came so early or at all.

A veteran Washington journalist observed shortly thereafter that politics being politics, Mr. Reagan could hardly be expected to pass any good news along for Democrats, black or white, to announce to the world on their way out of the White House. If there was any good news.

While we characterize this first meeting as reasonable from the tone of the Caucus members individual remarks afterwards, it was also grim.

Mr Reagan says he will not cut spending at the expense of the poor but he is going to cut domestic programs just the same.

We hope the Caucus can keep contintinous lines of communication open with the new president because he needs to know just how much agony the average family is going through economically and how terrible any diminution of assistance to Americans in need would be.

The president and the Caucus will be getting together soon at which time Mr. Reagan has told he will outline specifically just what he has in mind in the way of domestic programs.

We await that conference anxiously and with fingers crossed.

Our first reaction, though, is that things do not look good and will probably get even worse if that is at all imaginable.

Our second reaction is that the economy is out of control and Mr. Reagan will only be able to do so much whether he were conservative or liberal.

Unless, of course, he were to really declare a national state of economic emergency as his advisers had been saying shortly before the inauguration and proceed to issue executive orders that would parallel the kinds of sweeping actions Franklin Roosevelt had to take in 1932, the great depression.

But that course of action is not the approach a Republican president would be expected to take.

The president is talking with black political leaders of the opposition party.

We hope it leads to something positive for all concerned.

Josephine Ora Young

The death this week of Josephine Ora Young leaves a void which the Baltimore community can hardly fill anytime soon. A joyous and ardent worker for every worthwhile civic and humanitarian cause, she had made her quiet but firm influence felt in every corner of town. The modest lady was the essence of politeness and courtesy. Purposely she made herself an example of good manners and morals and constantly preached the Golden Rule to all she met and certainly to the young people. We doubt we shall see anyone like her pass this way again but we indeed hope so in this era where decency and respect for others seem to have disappeared.

THIS IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MADELINE MURPHY

24 million hostages

Television and the print media have covered the return of the hostages, ad nauseum.

Yet the spectacle of hundreds of interviews on the three major networks, boringly the same; of newsmen stumbling over one another, thrusting microphones into the faces of stunned returnees, obfuscates the calumny of American foreign policy and diverts our attention from the economic trauma of our domestic policy.

Political hay (tied to jingoism) has been made by both the outgoing and incoming presidents, fuming with righteous indignation, inflaming the people with emotionally charged name calling, threatening to welch— as is the old American custom— on its deal with Iran.

Moreover, patriotism, the last refuge of scoundrels, shows an excessively sentimental face.

Being obsessed with what one diplomat called "petty cruelties" that robbed President Carter of his finest hour, then revelations of how the hostages were physically and mentally abused, has weakened vengefulness and conveniently dimmed memory.

We forget that through the CIA, the USA wreaked havoc upon the administration of Mossadegh, who instituted nationalization of Iran's oil industry. It was then that the US elevated the Shah to power. It supported the Shah's SAVAK in pulling out the fingernails of thousands of rebellious Iranians. SAVAK the secret police of Iran, trained by the USA-CIA, slaughtered and maimed thousands more, to put down revolution, so that the U.S. might protect its oil interests in the Persian Gulf and insure control.

Bolstering multinational corporations and David Rockefeller, the USA and the Shah's family controlled the flow of oil in Iran by ruthlessly exploiting the Iranian people.

What international laws protected them then?

We are indeed lucky, therefore, that on the heels of the many atrocities that the USA supported and committed during the reign of terror of the Shah, that the 52 hostages, some of whom have been tagged spies, walked out of that country and were not delivered in coffins.

Furthermore, the restraint that the revolutionaries showed after the April raid should help us re-evaluate people we have vilified and with whom we have dealt over these 444 days.

Yet the inordinate revulsion over the treatment of the hostages, encouraged by government spokesperson, the press and TV, only highlights the propaganda we so swiftly deplore in other nations.

We seem bent upon perpetuating the mythical image of the old WEST (beating back the savage Indians) where a John Wayne, a Lone Ranger or Superman have become symbolic of a powerful government that can solve hot only its own problems single-handedly, but the problems of the world.

Predictably the aura of the Silver Screen as illustrated by Ronald Reagan, and the "get tough" stances of his cabinet appointees indicates a determination to reinforce this image, despite freaks of failures.

For the bitter gall of stalemate over the 444 days was indeed hard to take from a country that believes itself invincible no matter what atrocities it commits.

The ugly strain of racism also reinforces this mentality.

When one viewed the arrival of the hostages in Algiers, it was interesting to note the obvious snub of the black American ambassador to Algeria and his wife. They had been the hosts of the Cristopher delegation during the interminable negotiations, but were viewed on camera as mere escorts, spectators or shadows. In Weisbaden, the white American ambassador was promptly introduced.

Moreover, put in proper perspective, despite the cathartic hysteria, during the celebrations over the freed 52 American hostages, 27 million black Americans still remain hostage in this country. Hostage, in rotten ghettos, ill-housed, overcharged, in rat-infested hovels. There are 70,000 sub-standard houses in Baltimore alone.

In addition, as long as black children can be murdered in Atlanta at an alarming rate; black men, in Buffalo; as long as Vernon Jordan can be gunned down, by a yet undiscovered madman; Angela Davis and the Wilmington 10 can be impresioned as political prisoners, black churches and black hothes bombed; the KKK and hate-mongers can threaten and kill us, NO AMERICAN IS FREE.

America must develop more humane and equitable relations with its black citizens and rid itself of the racism that endangers our lives every day and relegates us to the back waters of depression but does not encourage our journey into the mainstream of progress.

Also this nation must recognize its limitless arrogance and provincialism. Americans must disabuse themselves of the notion that every country must be weighed on the scales of U.S. values, U.S. standards, U.S. culture.

Nor can it expect that military adventurism will solve the deep seated problems of these Third World nations at the expense of American greed. With the flames of revolution burning all over the world, the USA cannot continue to support racism like that in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile, etc., etc. and expect to survive. This should be the lesson of the 444 days of Iran.

Maybe we ought to tie some red, green, and black ribbons on the telephone poles, maybe the black churches should toll funeral dirges at noon every day, in the ghettos across this land, until the time comes when we 27 million or more black hostages are released from bondages in this country.

WASHINGTON REPORT:

PARREN J. MITCHELL

The Reagan press conference

We as black people must become much more discerning and sophisticated in our reaction to public statements made by national and local leaders. On Inauguration Day, a black citizen came into my office in Washington following the formal inaugural activities. This person made brief comments on those activities but when commenting on the President's inaugural speech said: "I thought he was wonderful, he delivered the speech as a consummate actor, the right pauses, the right gestures, and the right facial expressions. It was a bravura performance. But, the substance of what he had to say should have stunned black America. In that speech, the President made it clear that we blacks can expect little if any federal support in our fight against poverty, racism and discrimination.

Acting in a charitable fashion, I evaluated the inaugural speech as perhaps merely an attempt to assuagany doubts that members of the neanderthal extreme right, the benighted moral majority, or the scummy Ku Klux Klan might have had.

Then I watched the President's first news conference and my worst fears were confirmed.

Mr. Reagan said that there were various federal programs in place which were no longer needed, and that they would be eliminated. Was he talking about affirmative action programs, following the line of muddle-headed conservatives who maintain that because of existing civil rights laws racism is ended? Remember, this is the man who claims he remembers when he never saw racial discrimination and or racial prejudice. Was he talking about the food stamp program, again following the callous line of far right conservatives who claim that private, non-governmental charitable agencies and associations would see to it that no one in America ever went hungry? Or was he referring to the repeal of the Voting Rights Act?

In another portion of his speech, Mr. Reagan said that certain federal programs may be hurting minorities more than helping us. What did he have in mind? Was he referring to federal programs designed to aid minority businesses, thus aligning himself with our enemies who argue that minority businesses should simply jump into the free enterprise system and sink or swim? Was the new President alluding to the special government programs for black institutions of higher learning, joining the chorus of those who hold that Morehouse College, like Harvard University, and Payne College, like M.I.T., and Lincoln University like Dartmouth College should be able to survive because of generous contributions from wealthy alumnae?

The message I got from the first press conference was a message of arrogant classism and obstinate racism insofar as the future of blacks and other minorities is concerned. It is indeed arrogant classism to tell blacks that programs such as C.E.T.A. and P.S.E are no longer needed. It is arrogant to suggest this when unemployment ravages our communities leaving in its wake delinquency, crime, demoralization, and depersonalization.

It is arrogant racism to suggest that the great white fathers know what is best for the black community, determining which programs designed to help us are "hurting" us. This was the arrogance of slavery which held that because of our "limitations" slavery was the best institution for blacks. This was the arrogance of segregation which said that black people could prosper better if completely separated from the rest of the society. Remember the current example of Botha in South Africa and the Transkei settlements.

We are in a difficult period. Now more than ever we must listen to what is said by the majority, analyze it, plan strategies around it, and implement them.

Can you believe it? A black person reacted to Reagan's inaugural speech by saying, "I thought he was wonderful, he delivered the speech so well that I was just thrilled."

LETTERS

Americans are racists

Dear AFRO:

We should be and are very happy that our captives from Iran are home, but people must remember Americans are great flag wavers and great racists.

The more they wave the flag, the more racist they will get. Iran is a non-white country and look what they are saying — revenge; our ex-hostages are alive.

Look at poor Japan — another non-white country they bombed Japan twice. They (America) didn't bomb white Germany.

Just beware black Americans and remember.

MRS. MYREEN SMITH

Thank God for the AFRO

Dear AFRO:

Thank God and black Baltimore for the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers.

Six months ago, I started purchasing and reading the AFRO after abandoning it for several years. What a surprise for me to find several format changes. These changes certainly make the AFRO a much more viable source of news for Baltimore, generally and black Baltimoreans, specifically.

Aside from the very necessary "socially oriented" columns, the AFRO now offers its readership real, substantial information from a black perspective.

My opinion is that if more black Baltimoreans and others will just give the AFRO a try, like we do The Sunpapers and the News-American, they'll find that there is only one newspaper in Baltimore that is addressing the special issues that affect blacks. In terms of the presentation of these issues, there is no comparison. "Black Baltimore, support your black businesses — buy the AFRO-AMERICAN" the only major newspaper in town with your interest at heart.

C. LOUIS CONEY JR.
FORMER SUNPAPERS READER

English usage

Dear AFRO:

I am an avid reader of the Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN.

Your recent article in support of encouraging our young people to learn and use standard English was of particular concern to me.

I am elated that you are in support of effective communication through use of written and spoken English.

On the other hand, I find your position contradictory, since the AFRO frequently prints "glaring" errors in standard English usage.

Perhaps your proof-readers are not trained in grammatical areas which require effective sentence development, and proper use of the relative pronoun "you".

As a standard bearer, your paper should make every effort to set an example of proficient use of standard English.

WILLIE J. WALKER

Congrats to N.W. ROTC

Dear AFRO:

All Marylanders who attended the inaugural reception at the Bayburn Building two weeks ago found themselves swelling with pride as they observed the efficiency with which the cadets of the Northwestern Senior High School R.O.T.C. carried out their various services and duties. They were the quintessence of good manners and courtesy and made everyone with whom they came in contact feel like a VIP.

I am told that they had even worked very hard to put the banquet room in readiness in addition to performing the various duties for which they had been trained. Indeed, there were those who found them to be the most delightful part of the entire affair.

Congratulations to Major Robert Dash, the commander, and to the Northwestern Senior High School Junior R.O.T.C. for a superlative job.

BARBARA J. ANDERSON

AFRO welcomes letters

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.

G. JAMES FLEMING

Reagan's hiring freeze

"Hiring freeze" is a misleading and confusing term, as some of our readers have reminded us. Some people think it is certainly better than firing"; others feel "it is "better than closing down programs;" still others admit that "there is something frightening" about what is planned.

The truth is that, if every time a man or woman in the federal service retires, no one is permitted to take his or her place, soon there will not be enough eyes and hands to keep certain programs operating adequately, or operating at all.

On good authority, this column has learned that every month each federal department loses at least 100 workers by way of retirement. If these are not replaced, what is going to happen to necessary governmental programs—from zoos backwards to airfields, with housing, disease control, hurricane warning, health and welfare and food stamps in between.

The Reagan "experts" believe that the federal system is overstaffed, that it is top-heavy, and that it takes too large a bite out of total federal revenues. As corrective, all areas of government service must slash their prospective budgets—except the Defense Department.

There is undoubtedly room for streamlining federal agencies but, it must not be overlooked that, if attrition is allowed to run wild, the day-by-day operations of the government are bound to suffer.

Some readers were also quick to remind us that, in writing of how blacks may lose jobs in Washington, we must not forget the particular plight of black civil servants in field offices and in federally supported county programs.

These blacks, who have less clout than the better politically organized big-city folks, still know what it is to be "the last hired and the first fired. These blacks still live in atmosphere of "White is right, black stand back." There are still sections of the country—north, south, east and west—where heads of government branch offices and projects pay little attention to the civil rights laws of recent years, or to the pronouncements of presidents and governors.

In some programs there is the barest of tokenism. The Border Patrol, the Park Service, the FBI and other divisions of the Justice Department, and the federal aviation agencies, to name only a thimbleful.

The farther blacks are located away from a strong branch of the NAACP, the worse off they are from getting a "fair shake" in obtaining appointment to the federal civil service.

As positions become scarcer, the more will there be the temptation to find a way to drop blacks from the security of the Civil Service and from lines which lead to promotion. There are ways and ways.

One important plus, protective of black interests, is the fact that blacks, in most states, are currently voting in ever larger numbers. This voting potential, organized and used smartly, may be the saving factor that may make the difference between the experiences of past years and the experiences of the 1980s.

In time of fears and uncertainties, what keeps a people from becoming funereal is turning to some of the attractions, the truths and the values that—in the long run—are just as important as the belly satisfactions. In this regard, it is indeed very heartwarming to learn that the world renown "Schomburg Collection" of the New York Public Library has been saved and invigorated. It has, phoenix-like, been born again.

Hundreds of thousands of people, from all parts of the world, but especially black and white Americans, have learned of the Afro-American past at "the Schomburg." Nearly every scholar in the field of black America and its ramifications with the rest of America, has done some of his and her research there. The "man in the street", in countless numbers, has found new lifeblood there, as he has been able to replace fiction with truth.

People from all parts of the country helped to save "the Schomburg, but this revered institution is still located in the heart of Harlem, a new, block-long, five-story building at 135th Street and Lenox Ave. Its new name is the Schomburg Center for Research in black culture still a memorial to Arthur A. Schomburg, the Afro-Puerto Rican and Harlem resident who, in 1926, gave his collection of 5,000 books, 3,000 manuscripts, 2,000 etchings, and thousands of pamphlets to the New York Public Library.

The collection is very much larger and more many-faceted today, and over 250 persons use it every day. More important, "the Schomberg is still as ready as ever to serve new generations of students and scholars and "the man in the street" who perfer fact to fiction.

By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

MARSHALL W. JONES JR. is chairman for the American Cancer Society Crusade, 200 E. Joppa Rd., 821-7200 and he reveals this swell project:

Two go out for the price of one!

Join the nation's largest entertainment club and receive the Entertainment '81 coupon book containing hundreds of two-for-one offers from well-known places and events in Baltimore.

If you obtain the books from your American Cancer Society you will not only save on entertainment but make a valuable contribution to the fight against cancer. your favorite restaurants, theaters, hotels, sports, concerts and shows for less all year. These bargain coupon books are available from your American Cancer Society for just $20. To order call 821-7200. NOTE: This IS a really good deal. Try it.

DR. SAMUEL L. BANKS coordinator of Social Studies, Baltimore Public Schools, has been invited by the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in Washington, D.C. to present a major paper on Sunday, Feb. 22 at 3 p.m. for National Black History Month.

Dr. Banks will address the topic, "Blacks in the Decade of the Seventies: Deferred Promises and Dreams."

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum is located at 2405 Martin Luther King Ave. in Southeast Washington. The museum is affiliated with the national Smithsonian Institution.

DR. BANKS, nationally known for his work in multiethnic education and curriculum development in social studies, earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in history and political science at Howard University.

He earned a EdD degree in educational administration at George Washington University and has been cited by Marquis' Who's Who as a result of his national leadership in social studies education.

GREATER BALTIMORE Committee announces that the International Longshoremen's Association with more than 4,000 members, has joined with them in their program to combat alcoholism within industry.

In a letter to ILA members, the Pension Trust Fund of the Steamship Trade Association and the International Longshoremen's Association reported that a new benefit service, utilizing the GAC program, is being added to the ILA employee benefits available to members and their families.

THE YMCA of Greater Baltimore officially began the 1981 Partner With Youth Campaign on Feb. 2.

The Campaign, which raises funds for needy children to attend camps and provides scholarships to YMCA facilities, is being directed by Ethan A. Stenger, Chairman of the Board of the YMCA of Greater Baltimore.

For info on how to become a Partner With Youth in your community, call 837-YMCA.

HERE'S NOTES on the new Baltimore City Delegation VP:

ISAIAH (IKE) DIXON JR., Democrat, District 34. Born in Baltimore. Attended Baltimore parochial schools, public schools and colleges; Howard University, D. C. Businessman, realtor, and insurance broker.

Veteran. Married, son.

Member of the House of Delegates since 1967.

MR. DIXON was recently elected Vice-Chairman of the Baltimore City Delegation.

By tradition, the post is held and determined by black members of the city delegation, who this term hold 12 seats in the 33-member, all-Democratic group.

HE SERVES on the Port of Maryland, Economic Matters, Alcoholic Beverages, Banking Consumer Affairs, Insurance, Labor, and Real Estate Committees.

IKE is also member of the National Council of State Legislatures, Government Operations Division.

Authorized bill to give sale driving credit to insureds in the Assigh Risk Plan.

Elected delegate 17th Congressional District to the Democratic Mini-Convention in Kansas City, Mo., 1974.

Elected delegate 7th Congressional District to the Democratic National Convention in New York City, 1976.

Member, NAACP, NAACP's ccertificate of Honor, 1970; Calverton Junior High Certificate of Merit, 1972; the Joint Center for Political Studies Certificate of Training in Management.

Ike's District office: 1607 W. North Ave., Baltimore 21217; tel. 462-3400. Annapolis office: 313 Lowe Bldg., 21401; tel. 841-3263. Call him up sometime.

FREE EATS

FROM now until Feb. 8 merchants of Harborplace are sponsoring Sample Harborplace.

Food merchants and restaurants have plenty bit-sized portions of their tasty fare for everyone to sample each afternoon from 12-2 PM and 5-7 PM.

The merchants have end-of-season specials and clearance sales.

Sample Harborplace is part of a series of promotions to bring people into the Inner Harbor.

Other promotions are Valentine Week and Magic Week.

EARL KOGER, the brilliant journalist and author, was given a great honor recently at the Awards Luncheon of the Black Insurance Brokers and Agents Association.

Ed Berraine, Maryland Insurance Commissioner, and the ABIBA members each gave him a plaque. Earl was the first black insurance broker in Md. and for years had a tiny, newsy paper, GOOD NEWS. But now it belongs to Frank Conaway. He and associates bought it but Koger will keep his column going.

THE LUNCHEON was at the Spot at Monroe and Elgin owned by Bob Matthews. The cook there fries the best chicken you ever ate.

CORDIAL HOSTS were ABIBA president Del. Conaway, Exec VP Charles Stevens, VP Terry Addison, treasurer Wayne Reed, secretary Sam Gary, financial secretary, Charles Brown Jr., and board members, Arlene Howard, Arthur Lambert, Hattie Sessoms and James Baker. What a scrumptious dinner they served.

EARL had his own company over 30 years and at the luncheon he received a lifetime brokers license from Ed Berraine and a lifetime membership in ABIBA from Del. Conaway.

WAYNE PERRY VP of North Carolina Mutual Ins., Durham, the largest black business in America, spoke on the role of black insurance agents and brokers and revealed the 10-cents a week insurance premium is no more. The least payment is monthly. How times change.

EDITOR'S NOTE - Have you noticed also passing from the American scene are the rent collector, the bill collector, the ice man and the numbers man, the coal and wood man and the pot and pan salesman?

One reason, they wouldn't dare knock on anyone's door. It's dangerous nowadays, ain't?

BACK TO ABIBA's affair, Tessa Hill, Prudential manager, introduced the women agents and brokers, Carole Cannon, Dottie Lowery, Jackie Maith, Roxanne Williams, Carrie Johnson, Arlene Howard, Thelma Parker, Paulette Watts, Deborah Hicks, Reveona Johnson and Virginia Henry.

Del Conaway gave awards to ABIBA members, Arthur Lambert, Tom Cooper, Charles Stevens, Terry Addison, Sam Young, Tessa Hill, Wayne Reed, Arlene Howard, Ted Scotten, Carole Cannon, Hattie Sessomes, George Savage, Roy Carter, G. Leon Hunt, James Baker, John Foy, Al Laws, Paulette Nutt, Carroll Smith and Frank REV. W. M. BAILEY sang, has a beautiful voice. Other guests were John Cummings, Gen. Mgr. Aetna Ins.; Harry Davis, Aetha Ins.; Harry Davis, Aetna; Mike Norton, supervisor from Aetna's Hartford, Conn. office; John Martin, VP and Thomas Strohmerger, counsel.

AFRO Street Interview

The Question: What does Black History Month mean to you?

(AFRO photo feature by Milton Williams)

Below are the answers given to this week's Street Interview question:

DR. NORMA E. BOYD — Black history to me. Well, for instance, in the beginning it was started in this city and I think black history means to keep a history of our progress and to make it known, publicize it as widely as possible the programs of the negro children. I recall when I taught school, we had two wonderful programs. In fact, I made my children in school a part of everything I did and when we had the lobby I took them to Congress with me to show how Congress worked and so they could have their influence in Congress.

Another thing I did, we did as a sorority, we got out the vote all over the country so that negroes could be included in all of the programs of the country. Black history to me means keeping a history of our progress so it will be an inspiration for the other children who come along. (Did you personally know Dr. Carter G. Woodson?)

Oh yes! Yes, I knew Carter G. Woodson. Yes, I knew Carter Woodson from the beginning. We had Black History Week and supported it all the time and I have oh so many books about black people; so it will be an inspiration to the younger people. Mary McCloud Bethune made more progress than any person that I had ever met or read about because she really came from a very, very poor background and made herself known world wide.

DR. EDNA BEULAH WINSTON — Well, black history to me carries people of all cultures and races to a better understanding that this is a group once forgotten but that has achieved all through the period of human civilization. I was surprised to come to Washington D.C. from New England 1923 and learn about many things that we had never heard of (in New England). Then after working in various parts of the south, I came back and, well, my last teaching job was in a senior high school, and I found children who had been living in Washington, D.C. all of their lives who didn't know Carter G. Woodson and it shocked me because south of Washington D.C. is part of what we learned.

It has a whole lot to do with developing appreciation of self to the young people who are exposed to it. Not only the young people but older people who knew nothing about the meaning and the contribution of black people to civilization. We have our failings as well as aspirations and the kind of thing that has built civilization to the place where it is right now, and we have something to look forward to. If these things have been done in the past, so should we be able to show what we are able to do in this period of civilization. We are a part of the whole civilization!

DR. NORMA E. BOYD

DR. EDNA BEULAH WINSTON

DR. ARNETTE LINDSAY

JOHNNIE GIFFIN

JAMES DOTSON

VIRTIS LANIER

DANIEL WYNN

DONNA COWARD

CRAIG SULLIVAN

DR. ARNETTE LINDSAY — Everything. Because Carter G. Woodson, a teacher of mine, planned the Negro History Week. Since that time it has been expanded to the Negro History Month. To me, he was one of the leaders of our nation. He was one of the leaders of our nation and I will always be loyal and faithful to him as this organization (Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History) grows and develops.

JOHNNIE GRIFFIN — Black History Month since you just asked me, I hadn't thought about what is means to me. It's a time of the year set aside to bring people into the consciousness of what black people have done, are doing and will be doing. I am not in favor of just having one month set aside when everybody can become aware of themselves.

I feel that everybody should be aware of themselves 12 months of the year. Therefore, even though I participate in some of the activities of a Black History Month, I find it sometimes to be a time of the year when people who are not so conscious of what they are all about, they can say well, I'll be more conscious of what I am all about at this particular time than I will be about other things at other times.

I think it should be about unity, but it doesn't seem to be. People get all worked up during this time of the year, then as soon as this is over, they forget. I guess at one time it was just a week, then 2 weeks, then we expanded it to a month and I think they should try to keep expanding it so that our consciousness can be on a higher level, but it's not.

JAMES DOTSON — It means a lot. It means "perservation of one's history; making sure other folks see it; see what we do have. That's about it. (How important is that to the past?) It's very important, because people without any knowledge of their own history can't go much farther. They can't learn from their mistakes or can't make future plans.

VIRTIS LANIER — Well, it means to me to be able to look back on history and see how things were, see how things have been at that particular time. Then you can make things better for the future because you can't know where you are going if you don't know where you have been.

DANIEL WYNN — Black History Month means to me the opportunity for black people to come together and rediscover their past and decide on a positive present and an even more positive future.

DONNA COWARD — Well, basically, I think it should mean that we as black Americans should remember our past history and what we have striven to become at this point; what we have evolved into from our past as Africans and our past as slaves. I think we were basically deprived of all our culture and opportunity to advance as a people and I think it is time to heighten our awareness in that regard and in those regards.

CRAIG SULLIVAN — Black History Month means to me like when you celebrate all the great blacks and the achievements that they have made.

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Too many blacks believe that if we can just engineer society to a racial tine-tune, the concept of White supremacy cannot survive in such an integrated setting.

This philosophy, of course, ignores the fact that racism is fundamentally a pathological condition — and once society has created the racist, the condition per se needs to perpetuate itself more than it needs to reverse the regressive state.

In other words, racism — or perhaps the result of racism — is a neurosis. And the neurotic needs to be sick, therefore self-destructive, more than he needs to be healthy and productive.

Take Harvard University as an example — and by implication the black people who worship it because it is the epitome of the best educational institution that white culture can produce and not because it is an excellent school that can best serve their needs. And speaking of the latter, consider the latest in a long history of a racist tradition at Harvard.

A few months ago, a racial controversy erupted there when a report by one of the president's assistants was deliberately and mysteriously "leaked," if that's the correct word for more than 30 copies, to the natio nation's major news outlets. Robert Klitgaard's report charged that Blacks were intellectually unfit for Harvard and were simply displacing good Jewish students.

"If elite universities did not compete so heavily for blacks, these students might attend slightly lesser institutions where they might compete as intellectual equals. Conceptually, one might even imagine a ripple effect, where blacks would end up academically equal to Whites at all but the very bottom institutions as a result of not being admitted at institutions where they were not equally capable," the study said of the Afro-Americans' alleged intellectual ineptitude.

Then a rumor surfaced claiming that the findings were based on analysis of test scores of Blacks and Whites which proved that Blacks did not perform academically as well as their test scores predicted and Jewish students performed better than their test scores predicted.

I investigated the entire matter for a television documentary, "Trouble in Paradise," and found that the study was fabricated. Based on the admissions office records, the overall grade performance of blacks compares with the general student body.

Klitgaard never received current data from the admissions office and, according to David Evans, senior admissions officer, Harvard doesn't even identify its Jewish students.

It appears that the report itself is a deliberate fabrication to assault the mental agility of all blacks at Harvard and elsewhere and to sow seeds of dissension between Jews and Blacks in the process. I would say that that clearly falls in line with a general attempt to create or exploit some conflict between Jews and Blacks," commented Harvard's Dr. Richard Lewonth, a world famous expert on genetics who is also Jewish.

Harvard, the mecca of white liberalism, has not tenured one black professor since 1969 and has only 13 blacks out of 669 faculty members, 7 of whom are in Black studies. This educational "paradise" has turned out to be not the collegiate utopia that its black students had hoped for, but an elusive mirage.

"I just think it's naive to assume that white people here are any different from the rest of their community. I think they've been raised that way. We come here and we somehow assume that this is some sort of fantasyland," explained Alan Jackson, an 18-year-old freshman from Chicago.

Tony Brown's Journal, the television series, is shown every Sunday on WBAL-TV, Channel 11, at 3:00 p.m.