More than headlines are needed in fight against crime

G. JAMES FLEMING

Sensational headlines alone are not enough to win the battle against crime in our urban areas. Neither are stinging charges and counter charges.

To say black lawmakers are "soft on criminals" is one of those accusations whose greatest value is keeping the name of the accuser on the front pages and in the headlines.

No serious investigation would find such a charge to be valid. There certainly is a difference between explaining why crime increases where a 40 percent unemployment rate exists in a community - as among black youth in Baltimore City - a difference between such explanation and being "soft on criminals" or condoning crime.

Furthermore, because blacks have been compelled, throughd the years, to campaign against "police brutality" does not mean the black leadership encourages criminal activity or, to repeat, is "soft on criminals."

The record is rife showing, in nearly every jurisdiction, North, South, East and West—until recently—brutalization was the rule, rather than the exception, whenever blacks found themselves in the hands of the police or in penal institutions.

Brutalization existed to force confessions, often for crimes never committed, and brutalization to "cow" uppity black prisoners.

The chain gang, as experienced in southern states—even at its most humaneness—was conceived as an instrument of brutality.

For a very long time, too, there were "Negro-did-it" crimes. They were crimes committed by white men, but charged to blacks, or suspected of blacks and for which blacks were frequently imprisoned or worse.

In some jurisdictions, a black man would be manipulated into settling for a sentence of 20 years to life, in order to escape the electric chair—for a crime he did not commit.

Against all of these excesses, committed against blacks by the law enforcement system, black people and their organizations have had to fight. But it is either dishonest or begging to the question to label such protest as being "soft" on criminals.

Any serious community organization to rid the streets of crime is, nevertheless, to be applauded. Indeed, any demonstration by urban dwellers that they love their neighbors and their neighborhoods should be supported.

Beyond the preachments and the headlines, however, most go program-more program than rhetoric. Some questions that need specific answers are the following, suggestive but not exhaustive:

1. Are most adolescents, who commit violent crimes, persons willing and able to work? Are they those who have tried to find work but still find themselves among the unemployed?

2. What proportion of those arrested and convicted are from the poorest and the least-schooled backgrounds?

3. To what extent are drugs the source of violent crimes?

4. Who are the "respectable" people or combinations of persons who are behind criminal activity?

5. To what extent does white-collar crime - "crime in high places" - set the example for the less fortunate economically to also engage in crime?

6. Are the courts - in Maryland, for instance - too easy on criminals ("too soft")?

7. How may the penal system be re-tooled to become a constructive experience for most of those who pass through jails and prisons?

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$10-$90 off any power or upright vac in stock.

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OUR WORLD

★ PARTYLINE ★ PACESETTERS ★ PEOPLE

Sigmas' 'Autumn Evening' - a resounding success

By Pattie Hodges, AFRO Women's Editor

'An Autumn Evening with Sigma' hosted by the Zeta Alpha Sigma Chapter, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Saturday, Oct. 17 was a resounding success.

GETTIN' DOWN with some serious dancing during the Sigma's Autumn Evening held at the Tawes Center (Coppin State College) Saturday, Oct. 17 are Ray Hendricks, (a Sigma from Houston, TX) and Ms. Denise Holland.

AFRO Photos by Roman Hankewycz

Held at the Tawes Center, Coppin State College, the fun - filled affair was attended by nearly 700 people.

The decor was Autumn - like, with the theme 'Welcome Aboard'.

As Sigmas and their guests entered they walked a mock ship plank to the main deck (first floor), where they were greeted by a flowing champagne fountain and the lively sounds of a Reggae Band.

For munchies there were assorted cheeses, fruit and Carribean (Jamaican) food . . . oooh, delicious.

On the same level, for the enjoyment of jazz buffs, there were the dulcet sounds of Lionel Jiggetts 'Infinite Experience' Band.

The lower deck (bottom floor) was done up with two rooms in night club style and it was here that there was a 'Salute to Diana Ross, featuring local songstress Denise Banks, doing Diana Ross tunes and a 'Salute to Stevie Wonder, with Michael Thompson doing the songs.

On the same level there was a games room, which got a lot of action as guests tried their luck at the Roulette Wheel, Black Jack and other card games.

There was open bar and scrumptuous food on all three levels.

On the third deck (floor) there was lots of disco dancing, featuring

Don - Dee - Ka, disco artist, spinning the tunes and making with the lights.

And that wasn't all. On the main and upper decks, there were two fashion shows — one done by the all - male Mantazia Modeling troupe the other by Flair Studio, with Wilia Bland as commentator.

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THE MONEY WHEEL — Watching the wheel spin and hoping for a win are these Sigma Scene fun-lovers.

SIGMAS AND SIGMA WIVES (L to R) are: Mrs. Brenda Johnson, Mrs. Sinia Person, Franklin Young, Mrs. Jackie Hayman, Mrs. Phylliss Nelson and Cliff Felton, founder of the Zeta Alpha Sigma Chapter.

Chesapeake Club hosts Open House Week

CHESAPEAKE CLUB MEMBER George Brown (standing left) poses with his guests during the 'Night at the Races' hosted at the Chesapeake Clubhouse Saturday, Oct. 17 as the culminating activity for the Chesapeake Club's Open House Week which ran from Sunday, Oct. 11 through Saturday, Oct. 17.

By Pattie Hodges, AFRO Staff Writer

The Chesapeake Club, founded in 1950 under the leadership of the late Dr. Bernard Harris, is on the move again.

During the week of Oct. 11 through the 17, Club members held 'Open House' at the clubhouse, 2216 Eutaw Place.

It was a week filled with interesting activities.

On Sunday, Oct. 11, the club members, their families and guests worshipped together at Ames United Memorial Methodist Church, Carey and Baker Sts., where the Rev. St. Clair Franklin is pastor.

Monday, Oct. 12 was Senior Citizens Day as members entertained senior citizens royally and served them refreshments.

Tuesday was 'Pinochle Night' and those attending enjoyed all kinds of pinochle.

Wednesday was 'Ladie's Night' and the ladies, who came out got the red carpet treatment.

Thursday was 'Games Night' and lots of fun for everyone, with a variety of games offered — backgammon, checkers, monopoly and chess, to name a few.

Friday night was 'Club Night' — for members and their guests and all enjoyed lively party patter, good food and disco dancing.

Saturday the members offered a 'Night at the Races', their culminating activity, during which members and their guests viewed films of horse races on which they could bet and win money. Many also won door prizes.

A fantastic art exhibit, done by inmates at the Maryland House of Corrections, was on display all week.

During the entire week there was disco music for those who wanted to try their latest steps and continuous open buffet.

On Saturday, guests were treated to a soul - food cuisine. All food was prepared by Cornelius Royster.

It was a fun - filled week for all, proving that the Chesapeake Club is alive and moving onward and upward.

Club officers are: Leon Brown, president; John Widgeon, vice president; Norman Woingust, secretary; Frederick D. Williams, financial secretary; Andrew Cato, treasurer; William Dorsey, historian; Cornelius Royster, house chairman; Francis Bennett, sergeant - at - arms and the Rev. St. Clair Franklin, club chaplain.

CHECKING OUT THE ACTION and enjoying the scene during the 'Saturday Night at he Races' festivities are these Chesapeake Club guests.

DOOR PRIZE WIN — Club member Thomas Sommerville (right) presents door prize money to happy winner Mrs. Ervin Ford.

Partyline — Midtown Tennis Club hosts 'Annual Fall Classic'

By Pattie Hodges, AFRO Women's Editor

A FABULOUS AFFAIR INDEED WAS THE 'Annual Fall Classic' hosted by the Midtown Tennis Club, Saturday, Oct. 24.

Held at the Greenspring Racquet Club, Falls Road, the event attracted more than 300 people.

It was the kind of evening that had something to offer everyone.

Eight tennis courts were kept filled with tennis buffs who enthusiastically played, stopped to check out other activities and then played again.

The racquet ball buffs got their chance to enjoy that sport, too.

Many visited the whirlpool, while others played cards and watched exciting movies on the wide screened television sets.

And, the food. What a spread. There was fruit salad, various lunch meats, assorted cheeses and munchies, delicious, home - prepared Swedish meat balls and green beans, a raw bar with a simply scrumptuous dip to accompany it, delectable home - made cakes (including one that was decorated with an icing shaped like a tennis racket), beer and wine.

For those who wanted to dance, the Sounds of Woody's disco tunes in the disco room kept the floor teeming with folks. There was even a 50 - 50 raffle which generated much excitement.

It was a thoroughly lively and entertaining evening as guests, sipped, supped, played games, rapped and danced the night away from 9 p.m. until 3 a.m.

And just what is the Midtown Tennis Club? It is a black contemporary action organization in which the members truly get involved, not just in sports, but in helping others.

Each year they sponsor a Midtown Youth program, during which, for seven weeks during the summer, they train 50 young people from all over Baltimore to play tennis, and as a culminating activity, take them to Washington for a picnic outing.

And they are not funded. They raise the monies for their endeavors through activities such as their 'Annual Fall Classic.'

On the committee for Saturday's affair were: Carolyn Bell, chairperson; Joyce Brown, Gloria Lee, Veronica Freeman, Joyce Streater, Susan Wyche, Brenda Moore, Willard Wright, William Wells, Earl Henderson, Leroy White, Ron Cobb, Robert Barnes, William Grant and Gary Cole.

Officers are Gary Cole, president; Carolyn Bell, vice president; Gloria Lee, corresponding secretary; Joyce Streater, recording secretary; Margaret Faulkner, treasurer; William Blackmore, parliamentarian and Willaim Grant, sergeant - at - arms.

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