Baltimore Afro-American

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Standard time

This Sunday marks the return of standard time so before one goes to sleep Saturday Night all clocks in the house should be turned back one hour. The extra hour of sleep will be welcomed.

Not everyone will observe the change however. Hawaii, Arizona, Puerto Rico, The Virgin Islands, American Samoa and part of Indiana do not change time with the rest of the country.

The changing of time was first instituted by this country during World War I to conserve energy resources by utilizing daylight as much as possible but as soon as the war was over the act was repealed.

The act was later revived because uniform train schedules were needed. Since 1966 the country has regularly alternated between Standard Time and Daylight Saving Time.

During the energy crisis of 1973-74 the country remained on Daylight Saving Time the entire year but the regular pattern returned after 1974. A new law recently passed changes the changeover dates from Standard time to Daylight Saving Time from the last Sunday in April to the first Sunday of the month.

Still the uniform Time Act is not uniformly observed. The areas of the U.S. named above are out of step with the rest of the country. If someone in Arizona has to meet with someone from New Mexico, how do they determine what time the meeting is?

Tinkering with time is a fascinating activity.

Controlling handguns

Anyone who has been a victim of a criminal wielding a handgun can testify to the terror and helpless feeling such an experience can bring. Anyone who has survived a gunshot wound can give even more elbquent testimony to the danger of handguns in the possession of criminals.

It is said that one in contact with the criminal world that is hidden to average citizens can rent or purchase a handgun for as little as $25.00. That is a very cheap price for a tool of the trade that could cost some innocent person his or her life.

A special city task force that has been meeting since January of this year issued a report this week making recommendations based on extensive study of the problem of illegal handguns and violent crime on Baltimore streets.

One recommendation was the formation of a joint federal- local task force to attack the illegal gun traffic. Another was the formation of special unit within the state's attorney's office to target repeat offenders who use handguns. Others dealt with massive community education programs and greater community input into media programming where the issue of violence is concerned.

Baltimore City police will launch a campaign to get citizens to turn in people who carry handguns illegally. Citizens are more likely to be the ones to spot someone carrying a gun than police are and so law enforcement officials are asking citizens to cooperate.

Between January and September 1986 there were 1,811 arrested and police recovered 1,451 handguns. It is obvious that there are too many handguns on the streets of Baltimore and this task force study should give all Baltimoreans ways to help combat the epidemic of handgun crimes.

Legislative Black Caucus

In the uncertainty of the Maryland General Assembly in the wake of leadership vacancies at the highest levels and a number of new faces changing the makeup of the body, it is imperative that the legislative Black Caucus be as assertive and as unified as possible.

The purpose of a caucus is to bind together a specific group to advocate for its specific interests. That advocacy cannot be effective if the membership is divided and everyone is seeking to advance separate agendas.

Disturbing reports have reached the AFRO that some members of the Caucus have expressed willingness to barter away the one committee chairmanship that blacks now hold in the General Assembly in return for some vice-chairmanships on other committees.

Some members of the Caucus declare their solidarity and support for Del. Larry Young continuing his chairmanship of the House Environmental Matters Committee, but lip service is not enough.

The black community would find it intolerable if a chairmanship were lost for the sake of a few scattered vice-chairmanships. This community will be satisfied with no less than the status quo. Black political power in this state was too long and too difficult in coming for any of the gains to be thrown away for petty personal ambitions.

Parren J. Mitchell

This dirty little war

The struggle to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua has led some American citizens to take matters into their own hands. Some are giving money to buy weapons to fight the Sandinista soldiers. Others are flying in weapons, training the anti-government "contras," and some soldiers of fortune lend their support to the frontline. But inevitably, many innocent men, women, and children will die in the struggle.

We really do not know how many American citizens are involved or how deeply they're involved. We do know that the lives of two American citizens were lost three weeks ago when their weapons-ladened plane was shot down by the Sandinistas over Nicaragua.

We know that another citizen survived the crash and will be put on trial by the Sandinistas. He has admitted to working for the Central Intelligence Agency, but our government has denied it.

We know that the man who planned weapons flights is a former CIA worker who has met with Vice President George Bush. And we know that a retired U.S. general has raised millions to arm and train the contras, and has kept the CIA informed of his progress.

We know that it has been against the law for our government to provide direct or indirect military support to overthrow the Nicaraguan government.

President Reagan recently signed into law a bill providing $100 million in military and other aid to the rebels fighting the Sandinista government. All of this should make us ask the question about where this dirty little war is leading.

Nonetheless, nobody should think that the Sandinistas are totally innocent in this matter. They flagrantly abuse human rights principles in Nicaragua by imprisoning its opponents without trial, waging war on peasants in the countryside, punishing voices of dissidents and shut down newspapers that criticize their policies.

Amnesty International issued a report on the Sandinistas' inhumane acts last week. It also reported inhumane acts by the contras.

But the question is whether the U.S. government should continue to encourage the overthrow of governments that it does not like. If so, consider what such a policy will mean. It means that the Soviet Union, Cuba, Iran, Libya, and dozens of other regimes, of the right and left, all around the world, will have to go. Just like that!

U.S. foreign policy should not encourage the military overthrow of other nations, nor should our government encourage its own citizens to fly in weapons, train revolutionaries, or participate in any foreign military conflict.

We must be aware that if our citizens wage their own private little wars in foreign places, our own free and open society is vulnerable to the same sort of attack.

Obviously, we must take a strong moral stand against oppressive dictatorships that jail political foes and suppress those who criticize such oppression. But we simply cannot afford, morally and economically, a policy that supports dirty little wars around the world.

Anthony Armstrong

Housing Baltimore

If Baltimore's housing problems indicate anything it is that peoples' attitudes about a thing are slow to change. It has been almost 20 years, now, since the Federal Government provided any meaningful help to cities, to assist in solving the problems of housing the low and moderate income citizens of this country.

Since that time, the problems of housing the poor and nearly poor have been increasingly left to state and local governments.

Many states do have the means to make significant dollar infusions into solving this problem; however, there are very few cities that have the money to do it — especially alone.

Part of the housing problem has been the perception of some that government ought to be the primary provider of housing. This is a perception that has been fostered by the government's past involvement in financing the construction of low and moderate income housing.

What people don't usually know, however, is that local governments are not the ones to finance the building of such housing.

For instance, housing projects like Murphy Homes, Lafavette Projects, Flaghouse Projects, Somerset, Douglass; and all the others were constructed with federal funds, not local monies.

All the local government ever did is collect rents that are then passed on to the feds. In the "give me, lend me, can you spare" days of the 60's and 70's there seemed to have been money coming out of the ears of our cities.

This was overwhelmingly federal money; and it was used for every manner of thing from subsidies to printing pamphlets about the social habits of ants.

Very frankly, too many people, a lot of them blacks, became accustomed to the federal freebies. There have been more than a few examples of people living in federal government built housing for rents of $18, $45, $28 per month, and even with such heavily subsidized rents the city's housing agency still sends out large numbers of eviction notices to people who don't pay.

And yes, there are people living in such housing who believe they shouldn't have to pay any rent; in effect, they believe they ought to be able to live for free. Let the government pick up the tab.

Not only has this perception been one big factor in our housing problem; worse still, it has contributed to the decreased incentive of some people to provide a way to care for themselves and their families. Again, let the government do it.

Well, the government, especially the federal government, is saying loud and clear, "we ain't payin' no more." Government certainly has a responsibility for the well being of the citizenry, however; you can get a major argument about how much, in what way, and for how long.

Even in the face of gross human need, the federal government's position is (and probably will continue to be, even if the next president is a Democrat) that housing is a major private industry and will not or should not be driven by quasi-social program dollars.

The opinion, following a broadly accepted national attitude, is that it is the private sector that should, out of the profit motive, be the sector to finance the building of low and moderate income housing. They are correct, but as is the case all too often in government, they are correct for the wrong reasons.

Yes, there is a very real problem in housing America's less solvent citizens, and Baltimore by no means has escaped from it. Yet, the problem is not going to be solved the old way — through federal government financing or rent subsidies.

The problem is going to be solved the same way Americans always solve problems, by finding the ways that private capital can make reasonable profits from building and renting such housing.

Much of that money is going to have to come from the people who benefit most by such renewed housing efforts — the people who live in the housing.

There will always be those who will say, "these people can't afford to pay." The retort to such statements, however, will increasingly be, "I'm sorry, if you can't or won't pay you just won't have the housing.

This might be considered a hard position, but hard or not, it is realistic and, I might add, fair.

Something else must be said here, and it too will be viewed by many as a harsh insensitive position. Of the 40,000 people on Baltimore's housing waiting list the vast majority are single females with minor children.

It is clear, then, that part of the housing problem in Baltimore is the direct result of having to provide two dwellings — one for that mother and her children, the other for the father and potential husband of that woman and supporter of those children.

Just think if those families were together, that would appreciably reduce the need for ever increasing numbers of dwellings. Yet, no one wishes to attack the housing problem, not even in part, from that vantage point.

Instead, officially and socially, we seem to be encouraging still more family break-ups, creating still more need for housing.

It's getting so wild, people are now demanding that the city government house their young pregnant daughters, that parents of those girl-mothers either can't or refuse to house.

Additionally, many of the newly renovated houses in Baltimore are being destroyed, by their tenants, so fast that many of those homes need major repairs just four years after the new tenants have moved into them.

The cry is often, "it ain't my house, let the city worry about it." All these things are making a bad situation even worse. What's the phrase: "It's not where you live, but how you live."

Much is changing in Baltimore, not the least of which is our leadership. The new mayor of Baltimore must face, head on, the problem of housing many of our citizens. The failure to do so will spell real political problems for that new chief executive.

However, people must know that any solutions will have to be proposed and implemented from a base of practical reality. The city simply does not have the money for complete solutions or solutions that will return us to the hey day of government subsidies.

Housing will be one of the hottest issues in Baltimore over the next several months; and every cockeyed, hair-brained thing that can be said, will be.

Most of these statements will be made by people who neither understand the real problems or have any truly workable solutions. One, however, has only to know the feeling of no place to call home to know we must find the answers to housing in Baltimore.

Letters to the Editor

Crosse affair debated enough

The St. George Crosse affair has been debated long enough for reasonable, reasoning, and open minds to reach a conclusion. Following the pronouncement of the ministers, the matter should be closed to all except the voting public, who will in that awesome, secret place allow consciences to dominate.

As the sound and the fury subside, reason should follow. The Christian ministry unquestionably is the best and greatest of the professions. Politics is a game, a power game, and those who participate often become the pawns or products of the game they play.

Winning is the keystone of politics—and what men will do to win!

If we wish to extend the concept, take the whole Seventh Congressional District Primary; sordid interests and fierce passions are ever to become intermingled with the purest of motives, and often politicians subdue them in this great game.

The Crosse affair and the Congressional race, as unfortunate as they were in themselves, have a broader consequence. Their intensity channelling public attention as it did toward one problem in a community beset with many and diverse frustration and perplexities was an effective diversion for a people accustomed to handling one crisis at a time.

Hence, an opportunity was lost to place another Black in the state legislature. In the 42nd district, a seat up for grabs could have been as it should have been, won by blacks.

Politics is an unavoidable mainline, and a complicated process by which people are governed and by which society makes progress. This seems to be the only method; therefore, there can be no bungling by the people who must be constantly on guard to protect their own rights.

Unless the public is alerted, we can lose our sitting judges, among whom are blacks, whites and a black woman. Judge Mable Hubbard brings the highest integrity and intellect to the bench for our city. To elect a black woman, it will be history for our city. Judge Mable Hubbard must be elected.

The voters should remember that the State Central Committee is a powerful body which makes rules that govern the party and can replace the candidate as well as elected officials, under certain conditions.

When it is done, it is a defiance of the voters choice and a political trick. These are methods by which selfish wills prevail.

The voter who cries foul cannot be heard when with vigilance he can prevent what he later condemns. The voter has a great responsibility in the oncoming general election.

LENA K. LEE
VERDA F. WELCOME

G. James Fleming

Iceland loss for all

It will take weeks and months, perhaps an eternity, to get over the shock and deep disappointment over the failure at the Iceland summit.

For most Americans, hope had been allowed to soar so high that no room was left for feeling that some step forward to arms control and world peace would not be concluded.

And just as agreement would have spelled movement towards peace, so failure of agreement spells a continuing period of preparation for war — and, as history reminds us — where there is serious preparation for war, war comes, sooner or later.

And super-powers' war, this time, will be nuclear and macro-nuclear. No place and no one will be an island.

Everyone will be a casualty, not only the Soviet Union and its people, nor the United States and North Americans, but all people, all over the earth.

In the years short of war, one should expect heightened anti-communist tirades and police actions wherever the U.S. finds that its' "interests" are threatened, and similar outbursts and infiltrations on the part of the USSR wherever and whenever its "interests" are involved.

Thus, no one should be surprised if there is more Grenada-type invasions in the Caribbean and more American showing of the clenched fist in places like Nicaragua. There will undoubtedly also be more Soviet "aid" to Angola and other African countries and, perhaps, even to Cuba. All heightened, all escalated.

Mistrust, on both sides, will be on the rise following all the fixing of blame for the collapse of the Reykjavik summit. This mistrust, despite later efforts at salvaging some gains from the aborted meeting. There will be some whistling in the dark.

* * *

"Plague on both your houses" may be applied to both superpower leaders and their hard-line advisers. The lay people of both nations, as well as the peoples of the world, however, do not care much about who is to blame.

What the fathers and mothers and the sons and daughters are most concerned about are the prospects of continued non-peace and war.

They tremble at the fears of another World War — worst than any war in history — snuffing out the lives of young men and women, levelling homes and cities, poisoning the atmosphere, and leaving millions maimed on their way to death.

These average people — American as well as Soviet citizens, communists and non-communists, and the non-aligned are equally anxious for the super-powers to find a way to peace, a way to dismantle the sophisticated apparatus of war, a way to build the makings of nations existing together amicably.

Reykjavik might have been a step — a tiny step — in that direction. Both President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, indeed, did lose "an historic opportunity."

* * *

In another vein, when the needs of the masses of Soviet people and the needs of the masses of Americans are taken into consideration, it is to be greatly regretted that both nations will continue to expend so large a portion of their resources on war (in the trillions of dollars) — warfare in all its forms.

So far as our country is concerned, the estimated cost of "Star Wars" (the Strategic Defense Initiative) would provide every child in America a superior education and the best of health, with many billions left over for every worthwhile project.

In the historic contest of "butter versus bullets" however, the interests of mankind line up for butter but the generals and commanders-in-chief insist on bullets.

Letters

Protest at Hagerstown Correctional

Another example of mismanagement of the Division of Correction has occurred recently. This time concerning an inmate, who is known in the Hagerstown area, who has received favortism because of his professional standing in the community prior to entering the state prison system. Even though, as in this case, the prosecutor from the Medicaid Fraud Unit of the Attorney General's Office stated that this individual would be treated no differently than any other inmate.

This particular individual was approved for work release status while at the state central reception center in Baltimore prior to transfer to Hagerstown. The reception center exceeded its authority regarding regulations governing placement on work release.

This kind of management action adds to security problems with other inmates who see "special individuals" given favored treatment. Problems are created such as resentment and hostility toward the correctional system. It also effects employee morale, who are interested in promoting a sense of fairness.

The blame for this must be fixed to the person ultimately responsible in the managerial heirarchy who allowed this to occur—Commissioner of Corrections, Arnold Hopkins. To permit this abuse is inexcusable.

This is not the type of commissioner employees want to see continue after the new governor takes office.

ROLAND SILVER
President, Chapter 10
Maryland Correctional Training Center

Forgiveness for everyone

When a man has repented of his actions he should be forgiven. Who are you to judge? These are the words of friends who support Kwiesi Mfume as 7th District candidate for the U.S. Congress. He is a charming, soft-spoken man, they say, and his behavior pattern is consistent with that of the black community.

While it is not the role of a voter to judge a man's life, it is his role to judge a man's fitness to speak out on issues affecting his District, the greatest of which is out-of-wedlock births.

In 1984 in Baltimore, 61 of every 100 children were born out-of-wedlock. This contributes to poverty, unemployment, excessive demands on the school system and property destruction. Can Mfume with his background speak out effectively against it? I think not.

Voters cannot deny that he is charming and soft-spoken. There is ample evidence of that. But is that the standard we set for our leaders? Compared to white children, black children are five times more likely to become pregnant as teenagers, four times more likely to be incarcerated between ages 15 and 19, three times more likely to die of child abuse, and twice as likely to live in substandard housing.

For black children to grow up in violent, degraded circumstances is consistent with what goes on in the community. But is this what we want? If we do not elevate the standards for our leaders how can we raise them for our children?

While St. George Crosse has to prove himself as a leader, at least he starts off with a clean slate and is not part of the problem. If he offended Mfume shouldn't we forgive him too?

MARGARET D. PAGAN

Liberality and fairness

I write to compliment this newspaper for its fairness, its balanced reporting of the news.

The AFRO-AMERICAN IS UNABASHEDLY "liberal" in its editorials and cartoons. But its punctilious publication of the views of "conservatives" merits its ranking with the nation's top newspaper, black or white.

What prompted this letter is the October 4, 1986 edition. There, while ripping President Reagan to pieces by cartoon and lead editorial on his veto of the South Africa Sanctions bill, the AFRO published on its front page the text of the President's veto message, the actual words used by the President to justify his action. Nothing, I think, could be fairer to one with opposing views.

This newspaper didn't have to be fair. Most black and white liberal newspapers didn't even try to be fair on this emotionally charge issue.

I note that the AFRO even publishes the views of a "conservative" black columnist, Professor Walter Williams.

MORDECAI C. JOHNSON

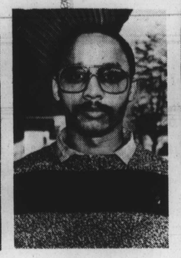
AFRO welcomes letters

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.

—AFRO SURVEY—

Are you concerned about the spread of AIDS?

Craig Taylor



Bill Boone

Denise Williams

Suzetta Wynn

Craig Taylor, 20, bagging machine operator, I thought about it last night. I was real surprised to hear it was spreading in Africa, as well. I wouldn't be too concerned about it because I am about to get married, but I'm concerned about the population at large. The more it spreads the faster they'll find a cure.

Bill Boone, 32, electrical tech, Yes I fear it. I saw a program about inmates and AIDS...all the people were dying like flies. The story was enough to open my eyes.

Denise Williams, 18, student, Yes, because it is killing our people. People aren't concerned about whom they spread it to. Drug addicts don't care about exchanging needles and sex partners aren't telling whether they have the disease or not.

Suzette Wynn, 22, model, Not anymore. I believe the actual spreading has died down. What you're going to see is people who had contracted it already coming forward.

Mrs. Rose Jones, 53, housewife, Yes I am. I'm raising young kids; I never know what might be out here for them. I hope they can find a cure for it. It's frightening...scares you from even getting blood.

Lee Williams, 53, retired, Well I would have to be because I don't want to catch it or any other disease. I think they should like all fag- up and put them on an island to themselves.

Gwen Brooks, 22, secretary, Yes I'm concerned. It's one of those things that comes up. And I'm concerned about the young people.

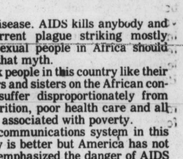
Kathleen Cherry, 55, Yes I imagine I would be. I know it's not immediately contagious but they still need to find a cure for it. I'm concerned about the population because it's going to kill off a lot of people. What hurts the most is the unborn contracting the disease.

Mrs. Rose Jones

Lee Williams

Gwen Brooks

Kathleen Cherry



Bloodnotes

R. B. Jones

AIDS

They tell me there is a benevolent god who is just and cares for all its children. They say that it is the very embodiment of love. Yet, the plight of Africa is a glaring contradiction to that theory.

The suffering of Africa has been and continues to be so monumental that it is a miracle that any of us are left. After the horror of the slave trade decimated Africa for four centuries and the colonial atrocities of the late 19th and early 20th century killed millions of Africans, it seemed that nature itself joined the conspiracy.

The past decade and a half has seen massive starvation due to drought and famine. It was not enough that hunger and hunger related disease have managed to kill millions now Africa must face the scourge of AIDS.

The disease is killing people rapidly in a number of African countries, especially in Central Africa and the death toll could reach astonomical proportions. In the U.S. with its advanced media and state of the art health care system the estimate for the number of people who are infected with the AIDS virus is about one million.

Those people will not all necessarily get the disease AIDS, but they have the potential to get it. In Africa according to world health experts there are at least five million people in Africa who have been infected already.

AIDS is a disease without a cure at the present time and so the only protection that people have against the disease is avoidance. Education can teach people how to have safe sex which lowers the risk of contracting AIDS.

Safe sex involves the avoidance of exchanging body fluids which can transmit the virus. It also involves limiting the number of sexual contacts. Although safe sex is less gratifying and more difficult to persuade people to engage in it is one safeguard.

Taking care with blood supplies and needles is another way of avoiding the disease. Unfortunately for Africa, its impoverished condition and lack of medical equipment forces African medical officials to reuse needles and prevents them from protecting their blood supplies.

The general lack of medical technology forces Africa to fight this epidemic with very little modern equipment. When one adds the underdeveloped communication and transport systems that hamper the ability of health workers to provide care and information to the general population. So the Africans are dying in large numbers.

Now officials in this country are saying that AIDS is threatening the black community in this country. Officials in Maryland are citing statistics that show that a disproportionate number of the persons who test positive for exposure to the AIDS virus in this state are black.

These officials warn that an epidemic could hit the black community because of an apathetic attitude in our community because we see AIDS as a gay white male disease. AIDS kills anybody and the current plague striking mostly heterosexual people in Africa should dispel that myth.

Black people in this country like their brothers and sisters on the African continent suffer disproportionately from malnutrition, poor health care and all the ills associated with poverty.

The communications system in this country is better but America has not really emphasized the danger of AIDS to the general population. Governmental support AIDS research has been woefully inadequate and whenever there has been a shortage in America, black people have always suffered the worst.

It is imperative that institutions in the black community take up this issue. There is a sizeable drug addict population in the black community whether we like to admit it or not and intravenous drug users are one of the very highest risk groups for contracting AIDS.

The gay population took the lead on this issue and educated itself and lobbied for government intervention to combat AIDS. There has been a drastic effort in that community to avoid that disease, but the black community has not yet aroused itself sufficiently. There are rumors about black ministers dying from the disease, but for the most part the disease is still associated with sexual preference.

Anyone who belongs to an organization of any kind should take it upon him or herself to educate that group about the disease. There is a wealth of information available from the city and state health department and private groups such as HERO. If one person from each family got the information and discussed it with that family unit it is possible the epidemic could be avoided.

When I travel this city and see the number of heroin addicts in Baltimore the prospect for an AIDS epidemic in this city does not just seem like a possibility but a probability. The time to act is now to prevent that.

New image on NAACP plaque

Recently, I visited the Douglas Memorial Christian Community Church. Because I was somewhat late for the service, I had to wait in the lobby until the ushers gave me the signal to enter.

While waiting, I noticed there was a glass case which contained memorabilia from the past. Among the mementos was a Life-Membership plaque from the NAACP.

On its surface was a picture of Abraham Lincoln, symbolizing his 'famous' actions regarding the Emancipation Proclamation (freeing of the slaves). However, it is now common knowledge that Lincoln was never genuinely interested in the freedom of slaves, but it was his desire to save the Union.

I believe it is now time to consider changing the image on those life membership plaques from Abe Lincoln to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is my opinion that this change in images would clearly let people see that the NAACP has not only moved to a new location, but also that the emphasis on freedom as articulated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was really when our true freedom began.

REV. LEON M. SHADE, SR.

OCT 1986