EDITORIALS

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The Jackson candidacy

Four years ago, Jesse Jackson was an angry outsider at the Democratic National Convention. He had just 466 convention delegates, and although a vocal force, was ineffective in trying to deal from a weak political base.

This time around is a different story. Jackson will enter the convention with more than 1,100 delegates committed and an image of an energetic motivator, vote getter. He garnered over 7 million votes during the course of the primaries.

Jackson claims to have registered more Democrats than any other Democrat alive — there is no reason to doubt this claim. This then, is the plus factor of the Jackson candidacy. In motivating blacks and other minorities to register and vote, the face of the political power base has changed.

In many southern cities and towns, blacks were the majority in population, yet various subterfuges were employed to keep them out of office. This is no longer the rule. Black elected officials have proliferated since the Jackson push for the nomination began nearly five years ago.

That the politicians are aware of this shift in political balance, is evident when some of the die-hard conservatives have had to moderate their far right approach.

For years, blacks have been exhorted to get out and vote, with the explanation that change is possible through the ballot box. This then, is what the Jackson candidacy means — an awakening to the possibilities of blacks taking control of their destiny.

It is only a beginning — but Jackson has pointed the way.

Ruth Jenkins

SOB SISTER

No sleeping in church

We envy folks who can sleep in Sunday church. We can't no matter how great the inducements.

Like a boring speaker. Dreary weather. Heavy eyelids. Longwinded announcements. Silent meditation moments. Soothing background music. Inertia.

When these factors gang up, they make for a truly droning service. But we stay awake. Aided and abetted by hard benches, fidgety neighbors, noisy kiddies, late arrivals, bustling ushers, clock-watching, too-close-to-home-preachments and really trying to keep awake. Oh yes, and memories of childhood scoldings when we were inattentive in church.

So that old joke can never be directed at us. The one where the minister interrupts his sermon to whisper to an assistant "Please go nudge Deacon Jones. He's snoring." And the aide responds "Well now, sir, you wake him up. You're the one who put him to sleep."

So we don't doze in church; more often, we muse instead.

Say for instance that the choir is singing "What A Friend We Have In Jesus." We nod "Yes, and we know that He is nearby. We Philadelphians are lucky. Our state motto is "You've Got A Friend in Pennsylvania."

Congregational singing of the hymn 'We'll Understand It Better By and By' provides much opportunity for musings.

Opening line is 'We are often tossed and driven on the restless sea of time ...' That reminds us that instead of being driven, we took the train for a recent visit to Richmond.

And was flabbergasted that on trains from Washington to points south, the public address system makes this announcement to passengers: When they leave their seats, not only should they carry their tickets, but "Please have your shoes on at all times." Well, gee whiz.

Another line in the hymn laments that "Temptations, hidden snares often take us unawares ..." So we reflect that temptation certainly snared two young men into Pennsylvania's latest state lottery scam.

Bright boys had manufactured a bogus lottery ticket and tried to cash it in for a $15.2 million jackpot. Suspicious officials verified the ticket as a fake after giving one of the slicksters a check for the first $469,989 installment of the prize money.

Tsk, tsk. Well, that's how the wheel of fortune spins. The state lottery giveth, and the state lottery taketh away.

Still another line in the hymn refers to "Want of food and want of shelter, thirsty hills and barren lands..." In the food line, Raisin Bran is listed fourth among the nation's top-selling cold cereals. Demand is 405,280 boxes daily.

Leading the pack are Corn Flakes, selling 594,411 boxes daily; Frosted Flakes, 520,384; and Cheerios, 441,305. In fifth place is Shredded Wheat which sells 369,224 boxes a day.

The raisin cereal probably could top the totem pole . . . if consumers really dig the Fantastic Dried Fruit Follies — TV commercial of dancers in a chorus line where wrinkles are the norm.

Last line in the hymn concedes that "And we wonder why the test when we try to do our best ..." Thinking of tests, we were fascinated by the rating of subjects students usually forget within a year of their lessons.

With botany, 79% of students forget; psychology, 76% forget; zoology, 61% forget; chemistry, 53% forget; and algebra, 44% forget.

They say that elephants never forget. But maybe that refers only to zoology, seeing as how they are akin to that species. But how would they test out on those other scientific subjects?

Suddenly an idea strikes us. How how come churchgoers let their minds wander so far and so often during services? It's because they cannot participate as fully as they would like.

They don't know the words to the hymns, beyond the first verse and the refrain, and they can't keep up with the assigned readings. They are not accustomed to the fine print of the hymnbooks and the bibles ... leastwise not at the normal reading distance. And it's embarrassing to hold the books up closer.

So we've got a brainstorm. Church services should have a teleprompter. Like those used for stage and TV performances. And for community-sing programs. Somebody or something up front showing the words in big lettering. Readable even from the balcony. Then everybody could get into the act.

Meanwhile, once more we muse. How come travel station announcers never speak clearly and distinctly enough for passengers to understand what they are saying? Well, as the hymn promises, maybe 'We'll Understand It Better By and By."

If churches used teleprompters
All could join and then,
They'd feel so great,
the collection plate
Would reflect fervent Amen.

Les Payne

Tyson's win and Jackson's code name

It is hard to keep one's mind on business when people are streaming away for another long holiday.

I am not much given to holidays. In fact, I have cursed most of the official ones in this space and have drawn return fire. It is difficult to dampen the holiday spirit, however. Most revelers don't give a damn about what atrocity called the celebration into existence.

To them it's a Monday off, a time to imbide heavily, eat a slaughtered turkey, watch the Indianapolis 500 or dodge firecrackers in the streets. I have never damned the Fourth of July in print — chiefly because Frederick Douglass so properly analyzed the holiday that a dissenter would be foolish to mount another effort.

Before fleeing to a family reunion under my mother's orders, I have pushed back several weightier problems to comment on the two that follow.

* * *

It won't register much on the Richter scale of history, but let the record show that there were some sports experts, so called, who picked Michael Spinks to defeat Mike Tyson.

What is unforgivable is not that these "experts" were wrong, but that they were wrongheaded. What hope they held out for Spinks seemed to rest with the personal turmoil in Tyson's life. This turmoil, which the media shaped into a weapon, was wielded against him at all the pre-fight interviews.

Repeatedly the champion was asked how he was dealing with the money conflict between his manager, Bill Cayton, on the one hand, and his wife, Robin Givens, and her mother on the other. On one level, it was merely the media's siding with Cayton's blatant attempt to keep his hands on most of the millions Tyson would earn.

On another level, it was part of the pre-fight hype.

There wasn't much of a fight to stir the public interest. So, appealing to the media's lowest instincts, the promoters dominated the magazine covers with Tyson's personal affairs.

Tyson was portrayed as a champion weakened by the allure of a young, designing wife. One story depicted her as brazen enough to slap Tyson's face while he was driving his Bentley. NBC News even compared Tyson to King Kong, brought down not by airplanes but by his love for a woman.

The effect was to create the delusion that the indestructible Tyson, softened up by his wife, was Spinks' for the taking. It kept the betting line alive, however. Some "experts," in picking Spinks, took to believing their own propaganda.

Spinks was not taken in. He concluded that he was done for long before he took that final walk to meet the inevitable. Those foolish enough to bet on Spinks must have feared for their money when they saw Tyson warming up just before the fight. The sight recalled Sonny Liston's line when Howard Cosell asked him at what point during the fight did he realize that he had Floyd Patterson beaten.

"I knew I had him when I saw him coming down the aisle," said the baleful Liston.

Despite both gladiators' undefeated records, the Tyson-Spinks fight was one of the most lopsided, ballyhooed heavyweight championship fights since Jack Dempsey met Georges Carpentier in 1921. Thanks to the Cayton-Givens hype, it was also a zillion dollars more profitable than any other fight in history.

Therein, I suspect, lay the problem.

All the high-voltage publicity about Tyson and his family distracted attention from the poorly matched opponents. Were it not for the hype, the "experts" would have told us that the 31-year old Spinks was too old and too slight of punch and footwork ever to defeat Tyson.

Tyson was as immune to Spinks' punches, which never came, as he was to media attempts to soften him up with attacks on his family.

* * *

I am forever intrigued by otherwise intelligent people insisting on reasoning falsely. Consider the recent account of the code name the Secret Service assigned the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"Pontiac" was the moniker, which sounds harmless enough until one does some checking. Folklorist Alan Dundes disclosed that the name has racial overtones as a slur in a series of jokes. Those of us who are ignorant of the jokes, upon hearing the word, think of a city in Michigan, an Ottawa Indian chief or a body-by-Fisher car.

In the joke, Pontiac is an acronym for "Poor old n....r thinks it's a Cadillac," according to Dundes, who says there are a half-dozen versions of the 10-year-old jokes. Instead of admitting that someone sneaked a fast one by them, the Secret Service first said that it clearly wasn't racist since Jackson, who have never heard of the jokes, said he had no problems with its use.

Compounding the insult, the Secret Service then said that all their code names are chosen randomly. This is highly unlikely, since most of the code names suggest recognizable traits about the subject.

Could the born-again Jimmy Carter have been randomly given the Secret Service code name "Deacon?" Or President Reagan "Rawhide?" Or his resplendently dressed wife "Rainbow?"

Why other than the racial slur would the Reagan administration's Secret Service assign Jackson the name Pontiac?

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John Jacob

TO BE EQUAL

Making schools work

The Census Bureau recently reported that black high school graduation rates rose between 1975 and 1985.

That's good news — but it's hardly ground for complacency. Black graduation rates still lag behind white rates, and significant numbers of black high school students are still in school at age 18 or more.

And while black high school graduation rates are up, black college attendance is down — fewer graduates are going on to college at a time when more jobs require a college degree.

Nor is there any guarantee that the rates will continue to improve. Reform laws in many states are setting higher standards for graduation and that may lead to higher dropout rates among kids who have poor preparation.

The pressure needs to be kept on the schools to close the black-white gap in student outcomes. If anything, the Census Bureau report suggests we need to increase the pressure, not slacken it.

In many inner city schools dropout rates are extraordinarily high — up to half of minority youth never graduate. Many administrators and teachers still say that kids who come to school from poor families or who have inadequate preparation can't make it.

That's not true. They're being failed by schools that don't take them seriously and don't believe they can be educated.

And the schools can get away with that because there's so little accountability built into the system. So one way to ensure that teachers and administrators take poor kids seriously is to have them judged by how well their students do.

A strong statement along those lines was made by Dr. Jerome Harris, the new superintendent of Atlanta's schools. He says:

"There's a willingness of people ... to think that the schools cannot overcome the culture of the home and the environment. I don't believe that. The school is the strongest force on a kid. We have a child for 6 hours and 40 minutes. We have him without his mother, without junkies, without the neighborhood. We have him in an ideal situation and we can do something and we've proven that."

That is the attitude required to turn the schools around. Everyone involved in education, from superintendents and principals down to classroom teachers and aides, has to believe in the educability of their charges and be willing to be held accountable for their performance.

Parents have to be involved, too, by becoming active in parents' associations and in the school itself, as well as by insisting that junior does his homework and making sure he knows that school is the most important thing in his life.

Community groups can play a big part by getting involved in policy issues at the district level, running after-school tutoring programs and giving prizes to achievers, among other things.

We've got to make success in school not something to be ashamed of but something to be proud of. We've got to instill in our kids the conviction that they can do the work demanded of them by schools that hold them to high standards. Otherwise, they can't possibly make it in a world where good education is the prerequisite for a decent quality of life.

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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Ethel Payne

BEHIND THE SCENES

Of tyrants, terrorists and traitors

Jonas Savimbi came again with outstretched palms to Ronald Reagan, the great giver of money and arms support for the tyrants who purport to be the enemies of communism. Paradoxically, the foremost leader of socialism, Mikhail Gorbachev, is now Reagan's best buddy among the statesmen of the world. The Russian Bear and the American Eagle have made an accommodation under "Glasnost" and "Perestroika."

Savimbi is the card shark who is a master at the con game of convincing the dealer that he is playing straight. It is psychological brain washing; but since the other fellow is in the business of fooling the American people, it is useful to have an opportunist to play the end man in the minstrel show.

Each knows the other has his own agenda, not including a particular passion for the issue itself, but rather to maintain his own personal interests. The last time he was here, two years ago, he collected $15 million dollars and flew home in a jet aircraft supplied by the Reagan Administration.

With the help of slick public relations operators and the conservative think tank, The Heritage Foundation, he was back to try and deflect the growing opposition to his U.S.-South African backed guerrilla forces.

This time around, the PR pros who incidentally fatten their coffers through African country contracts, chose to focus on a richer target, the black churches of the South with their solid-based congregations. Old fashion Christian virtues was the appeal and Jonas Savimbi rose to the occasion.

He played upon the naivete, the fervor and the simplicity of grass roots folks. Savimbi was chaperoned by a well-known professional black agent of right wing conservative, Clarence McKee, a former Washington lawyer and a staff member of the Federal Communications Commission.

He is now the front man for a Florida telecommunications network that is owned by whites who got the license through a minority enterprise contract. McKee is reported to be paid $1 million for his role in facilitating the deal.

Another black, self-described conservative who is a registered lobbyist for UNITA is Maurice Dawkins who has not fared well since he was nominated by the Republican State Party of Virginia to run against former Governor Charles Robb for the U.S. Senate.

Dawkins has been plagued by a series of errors in his profile that has proved an embarrassment to his long-shot candidacy.

Once upon a time Jonas Savimbi was a Maoist Marxist who was trained in China but switched to more lucrative Capitalist anti-Communist sources. He convinced his new associates that he alone could bring peace to Angola, and to prove his point, he made a compact with the South African military forces.

Among his admirers are P.W. Botha, the State President of the Republic and the notorious General Johan Coetzee, head of the security branch of South African police. He was the one who was in charge with Stephen Biko was captured and tortured to death in September, 1977.

In his book, "Move Your Shadow," Joseph Lelyveld, correspondent for the New York Times, who was stationed in South Africa for several years, described Coetzee this way. He has been portrayed as the man who oversees the battle against "terrorists" and "dangerous dissidents."

He once said to the writer during an interview that he wished South Africa was a police state so that he could have more influence to bolster the defenses of the government and specifically its security forces.

Two weeks ago, the Democratic Platform Committee submitted a draft that will be presented to the National Convention in which it called South Africa a "terrorist state."

In Washington last week, Jonas Savimbi was received at the White House by President Reagan. He was accompanied by an "odd couple," Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, who was once the closest associate of that Man of Peace, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Charles Evers, the Mayor of Fayetteville, Mississippi who awarded Savimbi the "Medgar Evers Peace Prize," in honor of his martyred brother who must be weeping with Martin at the treachery of traitors to the causes for which they gave their lives.

He was born Joseph Desiree Mobutu. His rise to power began when he was a 27-year-old secretary to Patrice Lumumba, the first president of the newly independent Congo. When the revolutionary leader became too hot to handle by the western powers, Mobutu pulled off a coup and seized power with the help of the CIA.

As Zaire has sunk deeper into debt and the standard of living is among the lowest, Mobutu lives on a lavish scale that matches that of the once ruling class of rajahs in India.

He has villas in France and Switzerland. When visiting foreign dignitaries arrive in Kinshasha, they are put up in the most expensive hotels where only a few feet away the wretched natives who barely have rags enough to cover their nakedness mutely hold out their hands for alms.

Mobutu keeps a yacht with a helicopter pad where guests are treated to a cruise down the Zaire River and then lifted back to the capital by the chopper.

In 1976, Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State paid an official visit to Zaire where he received the royal treatment. He came down with a grand case of diarrhea after dining on the local cuisine aboard the yacht.

His illness gave the press party traveling with him a bonus of a day's rest from the hectic schedule. During this time, however, Kissinger received the second snub of his African foray. Ghana sent word that it did not wish to receive him, joining Nigeria in turning down a visit from the American Secretary of State.

African diplomats in Washington were often ignored by the State Department and with the exception of Heads of State such as Mobutu, few new ambassadors or other African leaders were treated as other dignitaries.

During the recent conference called by the World Bank to discuss the crisis in Third World debts, the wry comment was that Mobutu could pay off the Zaire debt out of his own pocket and still have a few billions left over. He was complaining about attempts to cut back on U.S. Aid to his country.

In Korea, the situation is so volatile that there is doubt about the safety of athletes expected to participate in the Olympic Games this September.

In Hawaii, the deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos dreams and plots of going back to the Philippines and ruling again. Haiti after Duvalier is no better off with coup after another by yet more dictators hungry for power.

Somalia is threatened by a potential coup to topple the 20-year rule of the dictatorial President Siad Barre. And Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi has come under fire from Amnesty Internation because of alleged human rights abuses.

A sweeping change in U.S. foreign policy is urgent. The U.S. is no longer the dominant power that can tell small countries to toe the line according to the whims of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. and the desires of Foggy Bottom.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Time to stop Jonas Savimbi

The racist apartheid regime of South Africa has increased its attempts to cover up its military connection with the United States through the direct support of Jonas Savimbi and the UNITA bandits. Unfortunately, too many people here in the United States remain unaware of the continuing massacres of African people in Angola and in Namibia at the direction of the South African Army and Defense Forces.

Especially in Angola, these brutal acts of genocide are masked as being the consequences of a so-called rebel uprising by the group of terrorists known as UNITA and led by Jonas Savimbi.

As an African-American and as a person committed to the freedom and liberation of all oppressed peoples, I am outraged that once again the South African government, along with its covert and overt supporters in the United States, decided to sponsor a public relations tour for Jonas Savimbi.

Savimbi scheduled speeches in New York, Washington, D.C., and in a number of cities in the southern region of the country. Letters were sent out to African-American church leaders and even to some civil rights leaders, soliciting support for Savimbi's excursion. This is no time for the African-American community to become confused or persuaded by the disinformation campaign of the South African government.

During a recent trip to Angola I saw with my own eyes the devastation of South Africa's war on Angola. I also talked to many persons who had witnessed the vicious murders of innocent women and children at the hands of South Africa's chief military client, Jonas Savimbi. Jonas Savimbi is a brutal "buzzard" who preys upon the blood of his own people. Although the Reagan administration continues to pump millions of dollars into UNITA's death machine, the heroic people of Angola and the government of the Peoples Republic of Angola are fighting back with all of their strength and spirit.

It is no mere coincidence that South Africa wanted Savimbi in the United States during the current debate in Congress on the Dellums-Cranston bill which calls for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. Although President Reagan has indicated that he might veto this bill, there is a growing momentum in Congress to override such a veto. Thus, public pressure and expression are very important during this period of time in calling for stronger economic sanctions against South Africa.

The truth of Angola, the truth of Namibia and the truth of South Africa should never be hidden from the world community. Therefore, as Savimbi returns to the eagle's nest in Washington for resupply, let us increase our voices in protest.

Stop Savimbi and stop Botha now and forevermore. Stop South Africa and stop all forms of racism and imperialist oppression.

Walter E. Williams

MINORITY VIEWPOINT

Illegal drugs and arrogance

Alcohol, prostitution, gambling, and drug usage are human frailties that have plagued man since Biblical times. Wars, crackdowns, and campaigns against these frailties are being waged somewhere in the world at all times. We've had our anti-drug, alcohol, gambling, and prostitution laws and campaigns and as a result, failure of the first magnitude.

Now we're led to believe that with just a little more social commitment and money the Reagan administration, or at the very latest, the Dukakis or Bush administration, will succeed in doing what mankind has failed to do.

If campaign talk makes us feel better, that's one thing, but let's not be deceived.

Drug usage is a serious problem. Its attendant activities — burglary, murder, political corruption, and the loss of productive individuals — exact a high price on all of us. For that reason, we must be cautious about panaceas offered by political charlatans and assorted hustlers seeking our votes and our money.

I would discourage anybody contemplating drug usage simply because I care about people and don't want them doing something that has a high probability of destroying their productivity, their morals, and their lives.

Beyond persuasion I am not quite sure as to the appropriate course of action. This doubt doesn't stem from reservations about the well-documented dangers of drug usage; it stems from my training as an economist.

When an economist is told about a benefit, he'll always ask: What's the cost and the probability of success? Drug trafficking and usage can be virtually eliminated. This is a benefit. We could do as the Chinese communists do: arrest, convict, and summarily execute drug dealers. But the cost — a police state — would probably be offensive to most Americans.

What about making drugs more difficult to obtain through military interdiction (by the way I'm glad the liberals have finally found a use for the military)?

All the evidence shows that our attempts at interdiction are a failure, and to the extent they succeed, drug prices are merely driven up. While we might be gleeful about druggies paying higher prices, let's ask about concealed costs.

The average habit costs $50 to $100 per day ($18,000 to $36,000 a year). Users must either put in a lot of overtime on their jobs, sell to other people, or rob and steal. What do you think addicts do as drug prices rise? Work overtime? You've got to be kidding. They try to increase their sales and they rob and steal from more people.

We might ask: How compassionate is it to make a person, set on destroying his own life, destroy other innocent lives in the process? Do we want the addict, facing higher prices, plying his wares in elementary school yards, snatching purses and burglarizing our homes?

Of course people on a crusade, blinded by the siren song of benefits, tend to ignore these costs. Moreover, these costs don't show up in the drug fighter's budget. Do I have a solution for America's drug problem?

The simple answer is: No. While we may not have answers, we're dutybound to carefully examine the trade-offs. In other words, we must carefully examine the costs and benefits of our responses. Our guiding question should be: How can we minimize the drug problem in a way that does the least damage to society, including our constitutional values and protections?

While we're wrestling with that question, we need to revitalize society's institutions — churches, civic clubs, and families — that used to play an effective role in promoting moral values.

Congressman Augustus Hawkins:

Will fair housing become a reality?

The Congress will pass a major civil rights bill designed to protect minorities against discrimination in housing.

It is, indeed, sad that such legislation had to be enacted twenty years after the law banning racial discrimination in the sale or renting of homes became effective.

I travel extensively, and it is patently obvious that fair housing laws have had no appreciable impact on segregation in housing in America. Though in some suburban areas, close to major cities, integrated housing has been accomplished, for the most part, suburban America remains white.

In some instances, where blacks moved to the suburbs, white flight took place and, as a result, you have black enclaves in suburbia. In our major cities, housing still remains segregated by race. The glowing promise of equal access to housing failed and almost became irrelevant for the nation.

The Fair Housing Act of 20 years ago lacked any real enforcement power. Red-lining continued; steering of blacks to predominately black areas continued; and it became very clear that the victims of racial discrimination in housing could not afford to take their protest to the courts, and, further that the agencies of government were loathe to act on behalf of those victims.

In the City of Baltimore, a private group, Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc. (BNI), continued to press throughout the years for the achievement of fair housing. Using white and black testers, they were able to document racial discrimination in the sale or rental of housing units.

In more recent years, Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc. took the cases to the court and, acting on behalf of the victims of bias, won substantial damage suits for those victims. Some companies made financial settlements out of court.

However, despite the heroic efforts on the part of BNI, housing remained segregated in Baltimore and in the counties contiguous to the city.

Under the new housing law, which Reagan says he will sign, the burden for enforcement would no longer fall on the parties who had been discriminated against.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will be empowered to take enforcement action in cases of racial discrimination in sales and rentals. The injured party, of course, would still have the right to initiate legal action through the courts if he or she desires.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development in the past could only attempt to persuade the offenders to stop discriminating. The Department was not very successful in doing so.

This new housing law is a significant gain for fair housing. However, I do not expect any major, tangible results this year because (1) these are the waning days of the Reagan Administration and (2) it will take some time for HUD to set up the structure for enforcement, i.e., Administrative Law Judges; procedures to be followed, etc.