

Editorials

On The All-America City Project

If Durham is named an All-America City, the designation will not be congratulations for a job well done, but rather an incentive to make that dream come true.

We believe the three projects cited by the All-America City committee and described before competition judges in Seattle this week are all worthwhile efforts.

But we also believe that these projects reveal a sad tradition of stereotypical thinking about black people in Durham, a thinking that must be changed. And black people must inspire and lead that change.

For example, it is not enough to drive drug dealers underground in the Few Gardens area. There must also be some continuing effort to give youngsters in that neighborhood career alternatives to crime and failure.

And while we concede that the Lincoln Community Center needs a new building, we view with mixed emotions the impending destruction of the old building because more of Durham's black history dies in the dust of its destruction.

As for the economic development study that is the third project submitted by Durham's All-America City Committee to prove that citizens here work together to solve problems, we are not sure what "...jobs suited..." for poor people means, but it doesn't sound promising.

We are not critical of the supporters who are trying to sell Durham as an All-America City, as much as we are critical of the black people here whose apathy has made the committee's claims a hollow mockery.

Why, for example, doesn't the black community initiate a "Big Brothers, Big Sisters" program aimed specifically at black youngsters in areas like Few Gardens who need some positive role models to react to, rather than leaving them to be corrupted by thugs and hoodlums?

Why isn't there a project to preserve Durham's black history? See the next editorial for more on that subject.

The question of economic development, especially for those black folks who are also poor, was examined in a recent editorial in this space when we called for the establishment of the Black Community Development Fund, financed, administered and controlled by black people.

So, if Durham is named an All-America City, the black community should understand that the designation means nothing unless some black folks climb off their high horses, and some others struggle from their private hells to make it mean something — something beneficial for black folks and everyone else here.

We Must Save Our Past

The crunching blade of progress appears to almost daily shovel another symbol of black community contributions to Durham into dusty oblivion.

Hayti is gone, and as far as we know, the story of its contributions to Durham will die with the last black person in this city who saw them firsthand. There is no permanent record.

The old Lincoln Hospital where the lives of most of us both began and have been preserved over the years stands doomed to fall silently that a sea of parking pavement might forever cover its legacy to this community.

We hear of plans to widen Fayetteville Street from Umstead to Cecil, and we fear that "progress" will again bite greedily into our history, swallowing up the Stanford Warren Library, the College Inn, Page's Grocery and maybe even W.D. Hill Community Center.

And unless some preservation plans are laid now, sooner or later, Hillside will go, Whitted will crumble and other valuable artifacts of black history will die as Durham steamrolls to Progress.

But this need not be so.

Durham's leading black organizations, including The Durham Committee, the Durham Branch of the NAACP, NCCU, sororities, the fraternities, the churches and the business community should name a task force now to begin studying creative and effective ways to preserve the story of contributions that black people have made to this city over the years.

If we don't do this, then we are leaving our children a legacy of doom, because it is much easier to believe you're nothing when there's nothing around that you or your fathers have accomplished.

Things You Should Know

Rev. James W. C.
PENNINGTON...

Under General George Washington, born February 22, 1732, some 5,000 Negroes, slaves and free, fought in the Revolutionary War! When he crossed the Delaware, in 1776, two Negroes, Oliver Cromwell and Prince Whipple, were with him! J.W.C. Pennington found such facts as these as one of the first Negro historians! He had a D.D. degree from Heidelberg University and preached against slavery from New England to Europe!

Continental Features

Civil Rights Journal

Black Economic Development

By Charles E. Cobb
Executive Director
United Church of Christ
Commission For Racial Justice

The black community has a combined income of nearly 150 billion dollars per year. This translates into approximately 12.5 billion dollars per month available to the black community. Although I am not an economist, it seems to me that our banks and financial institutions might develop some mechanism whereby even a small portion of this huge dollar figure might be collected and utilized for the economic development of the black community.

Based on our diverse geographic, social and political nature, the majority of this 150 billion dollars is being spent outside of the black community. Notwithstanding this diversity of location, the majority of

blacks still continue to attend predominantly black churches. Perhaps our religious and financial leaders might jointly develop a means of recapturing what was lost following integration. Namely, the spending of black dollars within the black community. We now appear to live two lives with one foot in the black world and the other foot in the white world. Unfortunately, the majority of our dollars are flowing white.

Some of our community organizations have been calling for accountability on the part of corporate America, supported with selective buying on the part of black consumers. Now this is certainly a step in the right direction, however, it will take

more than corporate dole-outs to make a community economically viable.

In my view, it is the responsibility of black financial institutions to provide direct assistance in our economic development and growth, for that is where we will find economic expertise. As of June 1981, the nation's 46 black commercial banks had combined assets totaling 1.2 billion dollars. During the same time period, the nation's 39 black savings and loan associations represented 964 million dollars in total assets. Now certainly these professional money managers have the ability and I believe, willingness to help our community collect, use and manage our dollar resources.

To Be Equal

Jobs For All

By John E. Jacob
Executive Director, National Urban League

Unemployment can no longer be passed off as a temporary problem that will be solved when the economy rights itself. A major bar to an expanding economy is precisely the large number of workers whose skills are fast becoming outmoded as robots replace them on assembly lines and advanced electronics eliminates unskilled and semi-skilled work.

It is useless for our leaders to tell the unemployed to look at all the want ads in the newspapers — most of those are for computer programmers and other jobs for which there is shortage of people with the required skills.

The permanent unemployment settling in to our economy and affecting a large portion of the jobless violates the most precious of human rights — the right to a job.

That combination of violated human rights to productive employment and the manpower needs of the economy strongly suggest that this is the time to institute a Universal Employment and Training system that guarantees jobs and skills training to allow people to compete for the jobs that exist today.

There's plenty to do. The nation's infrastructure is decaying rapidly. Roads and bridges need to be repaired and rebuilt; rails and ports to be revitalized, homes, sewer lines and water systems

need to be built.

Such a program of national renewal would get our industries producing again. It would put people to work, paying taxes and buying consumer goods.

The immediate objection is that it would cost too much. That won't hold water. Unemployment costs too much — the burden on the U.S. Treasury is about \$30 billion for every extra point of unemployment.

So if you peg full employment as being a situation in which the jobless rate is four per cent, today's extra unemployment costs the government almost \$180 billion a year, or almost double that federal budget deficit everyone is worried about.

And while there is so much concern about the cost of a program that would get our country moving again, there is not the same concern about the tax cuts and loopholes passed last year, or about an overblown defense buildup costing one and a half trillion over the next four years.

Congress is considering a token job training program that will cost about a tenth of what the Pentagon plans to spend this year just on those weapons systems many experts say are either unnecessary or of dubious battle-worthiness.

Any nation that can indulge in such wastefulness can not only afford to invest

in its human capital and in its economic future — it cannot afford not to.

A Universal Employment and Training system would also end the permanent depression in minority communities. With our economy changing so swiftly, growing numbers of blacks are in danger of becoming locked into permanent unemployment.

It is no longer enough just to have a strong back and a willing spirit. Today's jobs demand skills and knowledge our young people don't get from inferior schools, decaying cities and insensitive governments. Most of today's minority unemployed need to be retrained for growth jobs in growth industries.

A Universal Employment and Training system needs the support of a business community that knows it needs to have skilled workers and which faces the tremendous task of retraining present employees for tomorrow's jobs.

And it is the business community that knows the free enterprise system cannot long survive a polarized society that locks increasing numbers of people into permanent joblessness.

So a partnership of government, industry and community-based groups will be necessary to get a Universal Employment and Training program off the ground and save our nation.

Business In The Black

Regression is Revolutionary
Forget the Flat Tax

By Charles E. Belle

A few weeks ago the *New York Times* had an article on the advocates of a Flat World Society. Some people have been presenting this proposition for political and social reasons. Regardless of one's political views it is certainly a good enough social reason to get people together. After all it is perfectly harmless to holler into the wind — just don't spit.

Some students of propaganda are now suggesting a stated flat income tax is just what the doctor ordered to cure the U.S. economic woes. Well it will surely suit the rich, which is any married couple filing a joint tax return with over \$85,600 of taxable income. Incidentally, in order to have that much taxable after deductions you should be well into a six figure (\$100,000) a year income bracket. Believe it or not Reaganomics recognizes you at that level to pay the current top income tax rate of 50 per cent thus reducing the taxes of those who pay less than 50 per cent, huh! Who dat?

The real median family income for black Americans was \$13,270 in 1981. Meaning half were above and half of all U.S. black American families earned more. In fact, some forty per cent plus of black American families in the U.S. earned less than \$10,000 last year. You can estimate the damage by distance from

\$13,270 up to \$23,520 for white American families or nearest to the poverty door for a family of four at \$9,287 in 1981. Black Americans were not knocking on the door of poverty last year, they were living in the house with it!

Now then, at what level shall they set this flat tax rate, considering the tax bracket for a married couple filing jointly with \$24,600 is already 25 per cent.

Many politicians know the so-called middle class, (\$35,200 to \$85,600) of taxable income (33-99 per cent) tax bracket for a married couple filing joint return are being ruined by Reaganomics ever since the super rich made out like a bandit on the last tax go round. Running around like chickens with their heads cut off are conservative Democrats and Republicans recommending tax relief for the ripped-off and the rupture group.

This mythical group of middle class dreamers will still get what they deserve — nothing. In time, a single generation or less will bodily revolt against any system which unfairly taxes the masses. The rich currently will slip by again if the middle class is successful in securing any tax relief based on a flat tax. "Toll-heads" even know the 25 per cent is less than 50 per cent. Especially on a cool million dollars a year.

What And Where Is Your Business

By Luanna C. Blagrove
Author and Business Consultant

We often hear people comment that blacks do not patronize other blacks in business and, of course, we can give a thousand excuses of why this is true that are not valid.

How often does one take into consideration the product or service that the businessowner(s) have to offer? If bars and nightclubs are not my 'thing' there is no need for me to spend money in them because a black owns and operates one. Or, if my car does not need repairing, there is no need for me to take it to the shop. Or, if I prefer to eat at home, there is no law that says I must go to a restaurant and buy a dinner because the owner is black. Or, if I do not need the service of a carpenter or plumber that I must call one anyway. In other words, the first consideration of why blacks do not patronize other blacks should be the product or service that is being offered.

I have never fully understood why many blacks expect service, get service, do not want to pay the price for the service, and then call the businessperson incompetent. Incompetence does exist in every endeavor, but I discovered many years ago that there are two sides to every story and that in most instances we only hear one side — the dissenter's. A dissenter is that customer who has become dissatisfied with work performance or service — in many instances through his own doings or refusal to pay for said service or performance.

A major problem that I have been faced with in patronizing black businessowners is that not only I, but many other blacks in the same locale, do not know who the black businessowners are and the product(s) or service(s) that they have for sale. How can one find a particular business that no one seems to know is in existence?

A rather inexpensive means for letting blacks and other potential customers in a community know what your product or service is and where you are located is to advertise in your black newspapers. Yes, I know that advertising is expensive, but by cooperative or sharing ad space with another or other businessowners, the cost could make the difference in increased sales.

Another overlooked possibility for advertising is a few lines in the classified section of your black newspaper. Your ad does not have to be oversized to be seen and let potential customers know what your product or service is and where you are located.

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