



BLACK PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION

Politics of Delay

Unwittingly, the Forsyth County Board of Health has revealed that its motives regarding the operation of Reynolds Health Center had little to do with whether the county's citizens receive the best possible health care. By introducing tactics of delay and confusion at the recent county commissioner's briefing, the board's members let it be known that they wanted the center placed under their control no matter what the consequences.

Four different speakers from the board had the chance to state their arguments against the county's latest health organization plan, submitted by senior assistant to the county manager Ed Jones.

Yet, once their arguments had been heard, the board members protested that they still needed more time to give detailed information about their misgivings on the Jones proposal.

Then, they brought up the subject of X-ray services as an argument against the plan. There was general agreement among all concerned with the health center that the X-ray department, jointly manned by public health and RHC personnel, is a model of cooperation.

The health board made the argument that if the entire department is placed under the center, that the commitment of the employees would be lessened towards X-rays required by the public health department.

However, that rationale ignored the fact that all the employees in the department handle X-rays from both public health and the center. The assumption seemed to be that receipt of a public health paycheck imbues the

receiver with a magical affinity for public health X-rays. Yet, there is a case to be made for leaving the X-ray department as is, since there are currently no problems among the staff there. Such a change in the Jones proposal could be made without throwing out the entire plan, as the health board suggests.

Another tactic used by the health board was to call for an opinion from the state attorney general as to whether the Board of Health should by law run the health center.

The center is a unique hybrid, the result of the county's willingness to continue to provide the medical care needs of its population where there had formerly been a hospital. We suspect no provision in state law would cover this situation.

Yet, the resort to legal maneuver has a touch of hypocrisy. Two days before the commissioner's briefing, the Board of Health held a secret meeting without notifying the press, as the state and county open meetings laws provide. Where was the board's concern for the spirit of the law then?

We remain convinced that the county proposal to keep Reynolds Health Center and the public Health Department separate with coordination by a member of the county manager's staff is the proper way to resolve the conflicts between the two agencies. The plan deserves a chance to work, and we urge interested citizens to attend this Monday's public hearing on Reynolds Health Center. It begins at 6 p.m. in the commissioners' meeting room.

NAACP's New Leaders

The Winston-Salem branch of the NAACP has nominated a new slate of officers for the coming year, headed by current president Patrick Hairston.

We wish them well in what will be both a trying and an exciting period in the history of the nation's oldest civil rights organization.

On the trying side, there is the epidemic spread of social conservatism which threatens the gains of the last few decades and makes the phrase, "a Second Reconstruction" more than just an idle threat.

No less an authority than Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall made the point last weekend at Howard University that anti-black forces "in every phase of American life are still laying traps for us."

His statement carries much more force because he has refrained for more than a decade from making public remarks on racial issues which might come before the Supreme Court.

Locally, we have the spread of S.T.O.P. and the Ku Klux Klan in the schools.

On the exciting side, NAACP officers and members can be proud of the new and professional staff that dynamic executive secretary Benjamin L. Hooks has assembled.

NAACP experts are in a position to take stand on any of the pressing issues facing blacks and the nation and the world in general.

Plus, the national office is making a supreme effort to relay the accumulated knowledge of its professional staff

to the grass roots levels of the branches. Guidelines for surveys and other information which laymen can use in fighting through the thickets of racism are available.

However, it is not enough to have this group of NAACP officers who are willing to serve. We have watched the courage, determination and commitment of Patrick Hairston as he has, many times, single-handedly fought discrimination at his own expense.

Some times we wonder how he is able to earn a living given the amount of time he spends on NAACP work.

Pat needs help in the continuing struggle for freedom. That help can consist of members who are willing to attend meetings and pay dues, professionals who are willing to operate on the "inside" of the NAACP's behalf and just plain encouragement.

We as a black community can do ourselves no better favor than to assure the continued growth and success of the local branch of the NAACP.

Getting Along

Dr. James P. Comer Dr. Alvin F. Poussaint

[Alvin F. Poussaint and James P. Comer are psychiatrists and the authors of the book, "Black Child Care." Dr. Poussaint is associate professor of psychiatry and associate professor of psychiatry and associate dean for student affairs at Yale University School of Medicine.]

Dear Doctors: I'm a black student. I just began college as a freshman at a good, predominantly white college a few months ago, and I'm on a football scholarship. I'm playing freshman football, but I really want to become a lawyer.

Because I'm not super smart, I don't think I can play football and still get good enough grades to get into law school. On the other hand, if I give up football, I won't have the financial aid I need to attend college. I really feel stuck.

P.W.

Dear P.W.: Don't give up your ambition to become a lawyer. Speak to the Dean of Students and/or an available black counselor about your dilemma. If they are truly interested in your future and you are a good student, they may be able to get your financial help from another source.

Also, investigate black sorority and fraternity groups which often give scholarships to promising blacks. Meanwhile, keep your academic work as a top priority while playing freshman football until you rearrange your program. Good luck!

Dear Doctors: I'm a white woman and I'm dating a black man. When we're out, people stare at us and give us ugly looks. The strange thing is I'm beginning to enjoy it. It makes me feel more defiant and proud because I feel we're right and the people with the disapproving stares are wrong and narrow-minded. Am I queer to be getting a kick out of all of this?

A.S.: Dear A.S.: You are not queer. In fact, your reaction is a common one reported by couples interracially dating, particularly by the white partner. If the white person feels he has broken through the prejudice barrier by dating a black, he may feel proud, self-righteous and self-congratulatory.

The hostile stares from others make you feel that you are indeed doing something unique, courageous and perhaps dangerous. This combination of emotions may make you feel part of a CAUSE and you are, therefore, exhilarated.

You should be careful that your motivation for dating a black is not merely social defiance or an attempt to be "holier-than-thou."

While dating, you should try as much as possible to ignore the stares of others and concentrate on the relationship with your partner.

Dear Doctors: Believe it or not, I have an older friend who is still unwilling to eat watermelon because he feels it is a "Negro stereotype." Is there any way he can be cured?

W.S.

Dear W.S.: Possibly he can be cured. I remember a similar case of a successful black man who wouldn't eat watermelon while it was in the rind. He had images of the sambo-type pictures of little boys with big eyes, biting into a piece of juicy watermelon right there in the cotton field. That image embarrassed him.

But to everyone's surprise, if the watermelon was cut into small pieces from the rind and served in a dish, he would devour it.

Try serving your friend pieces of rindless watermelon in a dish with a knife, fork, and perhaps a spoon.

Dr. Poussaint
If you have any questions for the doctors, send your letter to "Getting Along," care of this newspaper.)

Speaking Out

Eddie N. Williams

In less than two years the Census Bureau will be conducting the 1980 Decennial Census of Population and Housing. As mentioned in a previous issue of FOCUS (June-July 1978), the statistical data obtained from this census will be used to determine both the level and availability of billions of dollars in federal funds to states and localities. Currently, about 130 federal grant programs use census data wholly or partially to allocate funds.

Whether the minority community reaps the maximum benefits from these federal programs will depend largely on the Census Bureau's ability to reduce the undercount of minorities in the 1980 census. Only if this undercount is reduced will federal funds be distributed on an equitable basis throughout the nation as a whole. As a member of the Bureau's Advisory Committee on the Black Population, I have been watching with great interest the various programs designed by census technicians to improve the population coverage of minority citizens. Based upon my observation of these programs, I would like to highlight one component of the Bureau's overall minority statistics effort: The Community Services Program.

The Community Services Program is a crucial element in the Bureau's minority coverage strategy. The objective of this program is to develop a two-way communications network between the Bureau and minority groups in an effort to (1) win the confidence and active cooperation of these groups; (2) convince them of the confidentiality of information furnished to the census; (3) make them aware of the advantages of being included in the census; and (4) obtain first-hand recommendations for improving the coverage and quality of the census.

For 1980, the Bureau plans to hire approximately 200 Community Services Specialists whose sole responsibility will be to make inroads into the minority community. These individuals will be assigned to the Bureau's 12 regional offices. Some already have begun soliciting the active participation of mayors and city council members in the campaign to motivate interest in the census. For the first time, these individuals will also attempt to establish communications with hard-to-enumerate segments of the population, including street gangs and patrons of pool halls, bars, etc. In addition, census programs will be developed in schools and churches.

There are four major components of the Community Services Program:

Community Awareness: By designing an advertising campaign that is directed specifically toward minority communities, the Bureau hopes to encourage a better understanding of the availability and uses of census data.

Community Education: By working through local school systems, including adult educational programs, the Bureau will underscore the nation's need for a thorough and complete decennial census.

Community Involvement: By working with community groups, the Bureau believes that it will enhance the chances of an improved census count.

Community Participation: Participation by community leaders and elected officials will bring about the trust and cooperation that are essential to a successful census.

I applaud this effort by the Census Bureau and encourage all minority leaders to take full advantage of this opportunity to get involved in assuring a correct count in 1980. For more detailed information on this program, contact Samuel Johnson, Coordinator, Community Services Program, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

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Chronicle Letters ' P. O.
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The Winston-Salem Chronicle
Founded 1974

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Editor & Publisher

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Chronicle Camera

The Equal Rights Amendment, which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, is still an unresolved issue. One politician stated that he opposed the ERA Amendment because women were already equal to men by North Carolina law. In order to see if women would agree with this point of view, the Chronicle Camera visited Ervin's Modern Ways to Beauty at 3217 N. Patterson Avenue to collect opinions.

Here are some of the responses:

Juanita Archie: "If a woman is qualified to do a job, she should be given equal pay regardless. Some companies do discriminate in a way. When salaries are kept secret, a woman might not know if she's getting paid the same as her male counterparts."

Sharon Taylor: "Yes, I think women are treated equally. They can do about the same things men do. Do I work? No."

Sharon James: "North Carolina is a woman's state. I don't like the equal rights amendment. I think women should stick to feminine type jobs."

Olivia Neely: "Women are capable of doing an

Archie

equal job to men-- and if only given a chance we could do a better job. Behind every successful man there is a good woman."

Taylor

Neely

Abbott

Ervin

"I don't believe women should do some types of jobs-- like climbing up on telephone poles. But I think if a woman and a man are doing the same job, they should be paid the same. You should not discriminate on the basis of race or sex."

Jackson