

Black History Literacy Test

It's Black History Month Time. Time to start thinking about your theme for the annual February celebration of the contributions of African people to the world community.

My television theme for the entire month is called: "The Ethnic History of Black America: Questions and Answers." Looking at us from the vantage point of an ethnic group in a culturally pluralistic society, rather than a "minority" in a White-majority sea, makes Blacks an economic and political power house -- like all other ethnic groups.

My Black History Month special issue of "Tony Brown's Journal Magazine" will also carry the same theme and information. Of course, free issues are available (first come, first served until they run out), as usual, to readers of this column. You can receive 200 per box for the cost of shipping (\$20 for each box). You can order at 1501 Broadway, Suite 2014, New York, New York 10016. Send check or money order.

On television with a live audience (and our audiences are "live" -- and in living color) we will use experts on various aspects of our past to teach and quiz (if you want to join our live television audience, write us). That's right, we're going to conduct a four-part quiz on national television to see how much of the country knows about the impact of the Black Experience on America and the world.

Let's see where you are. Try these:

- (1) Why did hundreds of thousands of Blacks migrate from the South to the North between 1915 and 1940?
- (2) Name America's five Black Presidents?
- (3) Who chopped down the

cherry tree and could not tell a lie?

If you only got number three correct, you need to watch our series on public television during February and read our Black History Month special issue of Tony Brown's Journal Magazine.

The first of four topics dealt with on national TV and in the magazine is "Field to Factory." It covers the exodus of Blacks from the rural South to the urban North between 1915 - 1940 and tours the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History's exhibition. You can see the real thing now at the Smithsonian or when it goes on tour in early 1988.

We examine how this migration shaped the structure of American society and tackle the question: Was it worth it?

What gives this question such contemporary importance is the emerging awareness of the pluralistic nature of American society. The old melting pot theory is taking a back seat to a 21st Century reality. By the year 2000, one of every three Americans will be non-White and so-called "minorities" will constitute more than 50 percent of the population of 53 major American cities. Already more than 25 percent of public school students in America come from a non-White background.

That's why pride in cultural heritage is indispensable to personal or ethnic group success. Self-esteem based on cultural background has been evident in the upward mobility of European and Asian immigrants. The failure of Blacks is due largely to a lack of emphasis on ethnicity and stress on White



acceptance. This America we live in has more people of Irish ancestry than in Ireland; more Jews than in Israel; more people of Polish descent

in Detroit than in most of the leading cities in Poland; twice as many people of Italian ancestry in New York as in Venice; and more Africanized Americans than people in most African countries.

One reason there is no minority is that there is no majority. And the term "minority" itself diverts our attention from America's true ethnic heritage. There is no "White" majority and in a pluralistic society, it is suicidal for Africanized Americans to think like a minority.

Our second topic is: "Has America Had Five Black Presidents?" Enough said. For the details, see the TV series and get the magazine.

"Spirits that Sing" and "The Black American Quiz" will round out the topics for Black History Month?

TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL TV series can be seen on public television Sunday on Channel 42 at 5 p.m. It can also be seen on Channel 58, Saturday, 1:30 p.m. Please consult listings.

Unknown Will Win Presidential Race

The New Year. I can't get used to it. I am still writing "January 6, 1987." It happens every year.

Resolutions, of course, and they are already broken.

And predictions--a columnist has to make predictions.

Then--if any come true he can brag at the end of the year. Those that don't work out can be forgotten.

But I remember my predictions from last year. The results do not encourage me to go out on a limb again this year.

For instance, I predicted that the Soviets would find a way to get their troops out of Afghanistan. They didn't.

I predicted that unknowns would be challenging Gary Hart and George Bush for the Presidential nomination. How was I to know that Hart would be out, and then back, challenging the unknowns?

But there were some correct calls like "another summit with the Russians to get our minds" off the problems that President Reagan can't handle.

I was right about that one, but my overall success rate does not qualify me to be a prophet, yet. So this year I will bet my chips on one prediction. It is a real



long shot, most of you would say.

Here it is. The Democratic nominee for President, whoever that turns out to be, will win the election in November.

I can hear you. This is what you are saying: "What? How can you say that? We don't even know the names of the Democratic candidates except Jackson and Hart. They may lead the polls, but neither will be nominated. The Republicans have Bush and Dole in the lead. They are two seasoned, well-known candidates. Whichever one is nominated will have the edge over an unknown Democrat."

Maybe you are right, but listen to this.

What seems to be a disadvantage to the Democrats now may be their biggest asset in November. The Democratic nominee, who is now "unknown," will be a "fresh face" for the campaign against the Republicans. He will contrast to the well worn Bush or Dole, whoever is nominated. Neither of them, for all their good qualities, has shown the ability to generate much excitement--certainly not like the great communicator, Ronald Reagan.

That means that the Democrats' "fresh face" will have the opportunity--magnificent opportunity--to stir the country with a vision of growth, security, and well being. Meanwhile, Bush/Dole will be defending budget and trade deficits, wasteful defense spending, a valueless dollar, unaffordable health care, and every other bad thing that has happened to us recently. They are going to sound old, tired, defensive, and boring.

In that race, I will bet on the "fresh face" even though I don't know his name--yet.

Let me know what you think. Write me in care of this paper or at Box 37283, Charlotte, NC 28237.



Letters To The Post

Barneses Ask For Action, Less Talk

Dear Editor:

As we have now ended one year and are beginning another one, we, the parents of Derek Barnes, wish to personally thank you for your continued support of our efforts to share with the black community the problems we encountered with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System when we attempted to learn why our son was denied membership into the NJHS (he clearly qualified, without any question of having to lower any standards).

We can truly say the CHARLOTTE POST did not sit idle to what was happening -- instead you called out to the people of the black community for them to wake up and take charge of their children's educational experiences. You pleaded with them to give serious consideration to electing good people to the school board, and you urged them to stand together and to be heard.

The Barnes family feels rejuvenated, and we are committed to helping our son and other sons and daughters receive fair and equitable educational experiences in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. We believe that by re-electing Arthur Griffin and Sarah Stevenson to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board, we will once again be in a better position to receive the much needed support for our children. In our personal situation, Sarah Stevenson and Don Austin truly

tried to turn decisions around, with George Battle helping at times. We cannot overly stress the importance of electing dependable, open and honest school board members who will stand firm to their beliefs for the good of our children.

As all CHARLOTTE POST readers should know, the media was contacted only after numerous, unsuccessful attempts to communicate (by letters, phone calls, meetings) with the individual school and the system's administrators. We soon realized, without a doubt, that our story had to be shared with the black community, and the CHARLOTTE POST helped us to accomplish this mission.

We never expected to reap any benefits for Derek, personally. We only knew that this sort of thing had happened one time too many, and we were willing to devote our time, energy, and money to speak out against unequal and unfair treatment of our son, Derek, as well as other children in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System seems to believe that our children, for the most part, are simply not qualified, and therefore, they are either overlooked or perceived as having exceptions made just for them.

The CHARLOTTE POST helped us to say out loud, "We don't agree with you." There were many Post readers who supported our efforts as well, Mrs.

Clara Jones, Rev. Rudolph Seth, Mr. Kelly Alexander, Jr., and Mr. Arthur Griffin, to name a few. Even though we received limited actions and results, we were, and still are, "in it together." We are all committed to making sacrifices, along with the CHARLOTTE POST, in spite of the fact that there are, and probably always will be, those of us who "sell out" for personal gains, as well as too many of us who fear losing something that was never ours to begin with. We feel that we don't belong to ourselves, and as black people, we must learn and be willing to take "risks." In a situation such as Derek's, we needed "risk takers" and there were only one or two. We needed more than "sympathy" alone to help Derek, but we feel that our efforts were not in vain to help the other "Dereks" in the school system.

Thank you, CHARLOTTE POST, for helping us to wake up many sleeping parents like ourselves. There is hope for us as well as help. As black parents, we simply must get involved with our children's educational experiences and not hesitate to call on such organizations as "The Children's Law Center," where there are some very good, young attorneys who can help our children when we feel we can no longer fight the battles alone.

In 1988 we'd like to see more action and less talk from our black communities.

Richard and Mamie Barnes

On Keeping Dr. King's Dream Alive

Dear Editor:

Looking back on the year 1987 and forward to the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; the two should wake all of us up. Dr. King's birthday is the time of year many of our one-time a year leaders come alive.

In 1987, the black community's biggest lost was the defeat of our mayor and city councilman Ron Leeper. Also, we saw the Klan march here three times, Vince P. Harris was killed on a prison bus, 400 blacks were killed in Mozambique and the list goes on. As we give out the many Dr. King awards this year--as we always do--the question should be: what have you done

in the past 364 days to keep the dream alive?

The fact of the matter is we have let Dr. King down.

This year, People United For Justice will lead its annual Dr. Martin Luther King march. As always, we will have a small group. However, this year we call for unity like never before. Most of our leaders feel a walk for Dr. King is asking too much. With that in mind, a group of our leaders will have a parade wherein they will ride to a Dr. King program. However, the question is not whether to walk or ride but what do we do after his birthday?

The only thing that worries me

is the fact that ever since Dr. King died we have honored him but have never taken on any issues. I hope this year we will take on such issues as racism, apartheid, Nicaragua and others.

On Sunday, January 10, 1988 at 3 p.m. a few of us will march in honor of Dr. King. We call for leaders to stop the talk and join the walk. We pledge to work for freedom, love, justice and peace a total of 365 days a year. Anyone wanting to take a stand can join us Sunday at the corner of LaSalle St. and Beatties Ford Rd. at 3 p.m.

James E. Barnett

Americans First, Southerners Second

Dear Editor:

The "progressive wing" of the Democratic Party of our state is trying to keep North Carolina Democrats out of the mainstream of American politics. The manner in which some of our leaders have endorsed Sen. Albert Gore Jr. for the Presidency reveals more concern with the politics of geography than with the direction of the Nation.

Senator Gore, like Sen. Albert Gore Sr. before him, is a superb senator. If I could hang out my

shingle as fiddle player in Nashville, it would be swell to be represented by such an intelligent senator in Washington.

Unfortunately, the Gore Presidential Campaign's appeal for votes here in the South has been set apart from other campaigns by subtle and occasionally overt racial overtones. As a prospective candidate for Congress, I disassociate myself from endorsements on the basis of geography or race.

It would be grand to have a

Southerner on the ticket, but this effort to bind North Carolina's Democratic Party to the Gore Campaign smacks of regional selfishness at the expense of Democratic ideals.

Are we Southerners first and Americans second? Of course not! We're proud to be Southerners because we do love America and we cherish the South's place in our American heritage.

David Proctor McKnight



WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Let Us Hear Your Comments, Ideas & Opinions. Just Write:
The Charlotte Post • Letters to The Editor • P. O. Box 30144 • Charlotte, NC 28230

Name and address must accompany your comments.