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An Obvious Choice

We hope our children are not using the city-county school board as a model of democracy in action.

The board already has shunned economic and educational viability -- and lost most of our respect -- in its justifiably criticized reorganization plan which bowed to political pressures and blatantly slapped the black community in its face.

It still worries us that those who have so much control over the education of our young seem so willing to put obvious and educationally sound solutions on the back burner in favor of shrewd and not-so-shrewd maneuvers that buy votes and appease vocal special interests.

Now there is a new controversy. The board can't agree on who should chair it and is split straight down the middle on whether present chairman Marvin Calloway should continue in that capacity or whether Dr. William F. Sheppard should assume the post.

Predictably, John Holleman, Beaufort Bailey and John Wood are in the pro-Sheppard camp while Margaret Plemmons, Mary Margaret Lohr and Garlene Grogan have cast their lot with Calloway.

One of them will have to change his or her vote to end the deadlock.

Were we the counsel for the board member deciding what to do, we would advise him to shelve the politics for at least the moment and make the obvious choice.

Sheppard has impressed us time and again with his candor and sincerity. While other board members seem preoccupied with playing politics and preserving their political careers, Sheppard generally says what is on his mind, whether it is the popular thing to say or not.

His, for instance, was the one voice in the wilderness calling for fairness in the board's reorganization plan as well as pointing out the impracticality of creating an eighth high school in Kernersville.

Sheppard, who is serving his last term on the board and cannot run for re-election, also is eloquent and routinely informed sufficiently to know whereof he speaks before he opens his mouth.

The school board has too many tasks ahead to create yet another one by prolonging the leadership void the standoff creates. It still must implement its four-year high school plan, handle the hot potato the NAACP may throw its way if it decides to take the board to court over the plan, and deal with other educational needs that have been put on hold while the reorganization was planned, debated, settled upon and now must be implemented.

Those tasks require the kind of leadership that Bill Sheppard can provide.

Gratitude

Though most of you apparently are quite busy making local merchants happy by shopping in droves for Christmas presents, we hope you'll take the time to submit your nominees for our second annual Man and Woman of the Year.

Since some of the most effective workers in our community often work quietly and even go to considerable lengths to avoid publicity, your input is especially important.

More than anything, we created the Man and Woman of the Year awards last year to give credit where credit is due and to offer a heartfelt thank you to at least two of the many people who have worked hard to make life better for us all.

Please join us in expressing that gratitude by filling out and submitting the form that appears on Page B3 this issue.

The winners will be chosen by our staff and advisory board and will be announced in our Jan. 26 special issue.

Crosswinds

What A Celebration!

From the (Cleveland) Call and Post.

So quickly, it seems, 1983 is almost behind us. And we have seen, and are still seeing, obvious and subtle changes take place inside and around us. Have the changes been mostly good, mostly bad, or mixed? Have they been of your doing or at your expense?

One of the remarkable certainties of life is that it is ever changing. With Thanksgiving behind us, we all know you celebrate it in American tradition or with Kwanza, or some other way. We hope you do so with enthusiasm and with family and friends.

As you look back on what you have and have not achieved in 1983, you can certainly delight in knowing the upcoming holiday will be as joyous as you make it. Planning for success or failure will determine your fate. You've heard it many times: If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

We hope you are caring enough to plan. All the stress, tension, pain, agony and disgust that some of the changes of

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HOW CAN YOU DOUBT MY CONCERN ABOUT CIVIL RIGHTS?

JUST LOOK AT THE RECORD OF MY JUSTICE DEPARTMENT --



IT'S BEEN INVOLVED IN HUNDREDS OF CIVIL RIGHTS CASES

ON WHICH SIDE?



The Moral Majority And Politics

By JOHN JACOB
Syndicated Columnist

When Sen. Edward Kennedy spoke at the Moral Majority's Liberty Baptist College, he eloquently expressed the importance of tolerance and the necessary limits of religion and politics.

I don't know if he changed many minds among his audience, but the very fact that he was invited is a hopeful sign that what we think of as the "far right" may edge toward the American mainstream.

Sen. Kennedy attacked head-on the connection made by the Moral Majority and other religiously-oriented right wing groups between morality and specific political issues.

For years we've been hearing that backing the equal rights amendment, establishing a federal Department of Education and majority rule in South Africa are "immoral."

The senator pointed out the absurdity of this, and of the danger of turning honest political differences into religious conflicts.

In this, he follows a long line of prominent citizens who have spoken forcefully against efforts of the far right to impose its version of "ayatollah" rule -- fitting almost every private and public issue into moral judgments based on its own particular religiously-inspired viewpoints.

One of the first was the elder

statesman of American conservatives, Senator Barry Goldwater, who charged that the Moral Majority and similar groups "are trying to force government leaders into following their positions 100 percent."

Like Kennedy, Goldwater warned of the threat to the integrity of the political process and objected to what he called "the threats of every religious group that thinks it has some God-granted right to control my vote on every roll call in the Senate." As Goldwater rightly pointed out, "the use of God's name on one's behalf should be used sparingly."

"As (Sen. Barry) Goldwater rightly pointed out, 'the use of God's name on one's behalf should be used sparingly.'"

That is so when the issues are purely economic, such as whether the federal budget ought to be balanced. And it is even more true when some extremist groups twist the central traditions of our major faiths to put forth the ridiculous proposition that racial equality is "immoral."

As Kennedy pointed out, religious values have a place in public debate, and our history is full of religious leaders who have reminded the nation of the needs of morality and ethics -- including many of the early abolitionists, and, in our own time, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who awakened the nation to the evil of racism.

But none of those leaders sought to portray their opponents as agents of the Devil, as today's extremists routinely do.

In a pluralistic society such as ours, public debate is harmed by such intolerance of opposing views. We got an ugly sampling of that recently in Jesse Helms' reckless charges of communism in the debate over the King holiday.

Opposing the designation of a national holiday honoring Dr. King is, I believe, wrong. Wrong -- not immoral or ungodly -- just mistaken. But to drag the reputation of a great leader and symbol of ethical conduct

in the mud in such a vile manner is typical of the intolerance and downright obscenity against which Sens. Goldwater and Kennedy, among many others, warned.

People can disagree about what national, social and economic policies to follow, but it is mistaken to suggest that a government role in, for example, assisting the poor, is barred by religious precepts. Nothing could be farther from the truth. As Sen. Kennedy said: "I believe that the prophecy -- 'the poor you have always with you' -- is an indictment, not a commandment."

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'Unfinished Business': Part One

By DR. MANNING MARABLE
Guest Columnist

The debate around a black presidential candidate for 1984 has split the black community largely, but not exclusively, on class lines. Poor people, blue-collar and low- to middle-income workers overwhelmingly endorse a black revolt within the Democratic Party.

Most black middle-class leaders of the NAACP and Urban League, on the other hand, have denounced the idea as a "hoax" and a "fraud." The majority of black elected officials, and particularly the mayors of major cities, have already jumped aboard Mondale's bandwagon, along with the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. Even Atlanta mayor Andrew Young, one of Jesse's closet friends, states that "blacks ought to be in any campaign where the candidate is likely to be elected president."

The immediate cause for debate revolves around Jesse Jackson's strengths and weaknesses as a candidate. But the more fundamental issue -- which no one is discussing -- is the fact that the black community is nowhere nearly as culturally, economically or socially cohesive as it was during the period of Jim Crow 30 years ago. A handful of blacks view the civil rights movement as having accomplished most, if not all, of its

major goals. But for the black majority, the struggle for equality has barely begun.

One viewpoint on our recent history is that blacks have achieved a tremendous degree of success. Undeniably, massive changes in race relations have occurred. In Birmingham, Ala., only 20 years ago, Police Chief "Bull" Connor unleashed dogs and levied clubs and firehoses against passive black protesters. Today, the mayor of Birmingham is a black progressive, Richard Arrington. In September 1968, Andrew

dominated National Negro Labor Council. For almost a decade, he has been the mayor of Detroit and has pursued a close and cordial relationship with local corporate leaders and Henry Ford II. Marion Barry, currently mayor of Washington, D.C., first became involved in politics two decades ago as a militant leader of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. The defiant youths of the "Black Power" generation have now reached middle age, and many are ensconced in higher education, government and trade union leader-

"Superficially, the sheer numbers of blacks moving into positions of political and economic power seem to validate the myth of American cultural pluralism and democracy."

Young was arrested for blocking sanitation trucks during a strike of black garbage workers. Four years later he was elected to Congress, and today he is the mayor of Atlanta. Less than a decade ago, Howard Fuller was leader of the revolutionary Malcolm X college in North Carolina. Late last year, Fuller became a cabinet member and top black administrator to the governor of Wisconsin.

During the Cold War, Coleman Young was the racial executive secretary of the communist-

ship. Superficially, the sheer numbers of blacks moving into positions of political and economic power seem to validate the myth of American cultural pluralism and democracy. The number of black elected officials nationwide jumped from 103 in 1964 to 5,003 in 1980. The number of blacks in Congress increased from five in 1964 to 21 in 1983. A generation ago, the "black bourgeoisie" consisted primarily of school teachers, postal workers and skilled

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I'M MAKING A LIST...



I'M CHECKING IT TWICE...



IT SHOWS IF YOU'VE BEEN NAUGHTY OR NICE



GENDER GAP IS COMING TO TOWN



Jackson-itis

And My Baby

CLIFTON GRAVES
Chronicle Columnist

"People always told me be careful of what you do, and don't go around breaking young girl's hearts..."

-- From Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean"

As virtually everyone in the Western World knows, Michael Jackson, formally of the Jackson Five singing group, is without a doubt the premier male recording star on the planet Earth. A young man of considerable skills and talents, Michael is making an unprecedented impact on the recording industry, and will certainly be a force in show business for years to come.

But, while I have known of Michael's talents for some 15 years -- first, as a teen-age fan, then observing his impact on my younger sisters and brother -- I honestly did not realize the marked influence Jackson has until recently, an influence which transcends race, class and age.

Ah, yes, age. For, after careful deliberation and observation, I have come to the conclusion that my daughter, Thema -- age 2 -- is "in love" with Michael Jackson, or perhaps, "obsessed" is the more appropriate term.

How else can one explain a 2-year-old

knowing practically verbatim all of Michael's songs from his current "Thriller" album with accompanying dance steps?

requesting -- no, demanding -- that her parents play the hit song "Beat It" at least 10 times daily?

becoming mesmerized whenever Jackson's "Beat It" or "Billie Jean" videos appear on television? begging to take Michael Jackson's "Thriller" album cover to bed with her?

Before child psychologists begin writing me with therapeutic advice, let me assure you that may wife and I have the situation under control (somewhat) by providing Thema with a steady diet of educational and cultural activities to counter-balance Michael Jackson's grip.

Nonetheless, as a father, the situation concerns me, for, if Thema wants to sleep with Michael Jackson's picture at age 2, what is in store for me when my baby turns 10? Or 15?

On second thought, maybe you had better send that advice, or better still, pray for me.

However, in the meantime, I offer this warning to Jackson on behalf of all parents whose daughters have Michael Jackson-itis:

"While it may be human nature for young girls to love you, Michael; if you Wanna Be Startin' Something around here, you had better Beat It. Because for now, this Pretty Young Thing named Thema is a main Lady In My Life -- and she is much too young to be another Billie Jean.

Amen.

Chronicle Letters

A Good Choice

To The Editor:

I was elated to read in the Dec. 8 issue of the Chronicle that Mrs. Earline Parmon will seek the chairmanship of the Democratic Party of Forsyth County.

Mrs. Parmon has demonstrated many times over that she has the ability to perform in a leadership capacity.

I have watched her grow and progress in the party. She has been a member of her local precinct committee (Forest Park), precinct chairman, secretary of the party's Executive Committee, 1st vice chairman of the party, a delegate

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