

Editorials & Comments

Preserving Black Communities

By Hoyle H. Martin, Sr.
Post Editorial Editor

The story on page one concerning a petition of 762 names opposing the construction of a county vehicle maintenance garage near Beatties Ford and Hoskins Roads is one of millions in America that remind us that the U.S. Riot Commission Report of 1967 continues to be a fact to the extent that "our nation (remains) two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."

When, for example, a black family seeks better housing that happens to be in a white neighborhood, whites flee in panic, often selling their homes at a loss to unethical real estate speculators who promote segregated housing and then engage in blockbusting practices that result in underpayment to the panicking whites and overcharges to blacks moving in. Here in our city, Hidden Valley was some years ago all white, now it is more than 65 percent black. Was blockbusting a factor?

The request to build a garage in a black neighborhood reminds us too that even when blacks live in separate neighborhoods there are institutionalized forces that tend to destroy developed, well preserved black communities. Studies show that roadways which cut through or block-in communities often contribute to their eventual decline.

What effect, in the long run, will be boxing-in and slicing up or north-west Charlotte by I-85, I-77 and Highway 16 have on the retention and up-keep of three of the most impressive black communities in Charlotte? Add to that the danger of jet aircrafts flying low overhead to and from Douglas airport.

These facts about black community life are well known to blacks but little understood by whites whose knowledge of black neighborhoods is too often limited by the quick observations made as they drive hurriedly in their air-conditioned automobiles through overcrowded low-income housing areas that ring the center city. How many whites in Charlotte have seen a black neighborhood other than Earl Village or Fairview Homes? How many whites have seen, or gotten out of their automobiles long enough to visit someone, in the neighborhoods that may be affected by the proposed

garage at Beatties Ford and Hoskins Roads? How many of our County Commissioners have seen these neighborhoods?

Black neighborhoods have carried the burden of most low-income housing units, of most crosstown "busing" for younger school children, of less police protection, of less ambulance service, of no hospital, of less fire protection, and of instances of higher prices for inferior quality food items in chain stores. Have not the black neighborhoods been asked and-or given enough of the city and county's burdens without adding a garage?

The Northwood Estates Community Affairs Association and its supporters favor establishing a park on the site for the proposed garage. However, since Commission Chairman "Liz" Hair has said, based on a Park and Recreation Study, that "the area appears to be fairly well served with parks", it seems unlikely that the Commissioners will approve the idea of a park. Nevertheless, the POST believes that the Commissioners should look beyond the park report to the human situation. As the report says, three of the parks are each within a 1½ mile distance from the Beatties Ford and Hoskins Road intersection, however, the report does not point out that children going to such play areas would have to cross the overpasses at I-85 and I-77 and streets with heavy traffic, some with possibly no sidewalks. The other park is four miles away without sidewalks on the main route. How many parents anywhere would permit younger children to travel such great and hazardous distances to reach a play area?

The POST strongly urges the Mecklenburg County Commissioners to reject any proposal to build a garage on the site at Beatties Ford and Hoskins Roads and that they seek a more suitable location away from any residential area. Furthermore, the POST suggests that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission seek more creative and complementary uses for public lands in or near residential areas. We think, for example, that a park would be ideal for the Beatties Ford-Hoskins Road intersection. Let us endeavor to preserve our communities, not destroy them.

Blacks, Bicentennial And Priorities

As we approach the 200th birthday of our nation some debate exists over whether black Americans should participate in the Bicentennial which, at its worst, is a reminder of black enslavement in 1776, the abandonment of reconstruction in 1876, and the continued existence of social and economic discrimination against blacks in 1976.

At its best, the Bicentennial celebration offers us the opportunity to enlighten the nation and to educate our children to the extraordinary role that black people have played in

building America. We applaud, for example, the newly formed Concerned Black Citizens for a Better Bicentennial, however, before pressing to rename Beatties Ford Road "Martin Luther King Boulevard," we believe that the road should be worthy of such a great American's name.

Blacks need to concern themselves with the high crime rate, high insurance rates for businesses, traffic congestion and the current effort to locate a county motor vehicles maintenance garage on Beatties Ford Road.

RETURNING TO BUILD A BETTER BLACK COMMUNITY.



Blacks' Destiny In Own Hands

REPORT FROM Washington

Bicentennial Washington

JIM MARTIN, 9th District Congressman

There will be many exciting opportunities this year to take part in your Bicentennial celebration. A visit to our Nation's Capital would be a memorable way to do so.

Two hundred years ago, there was no such city as Washington, but today it is one of the prime points of Bicentennial interest, a living symbol of our heritage. This week I want to use this time to offer some observations and suggestions to make your visit easier and more rewarding.

Every part of Washington has made special plans for the Bicentennial, from the popular Smithsonian Institution, which has 23 separate Bicentennial projects, to the U.S. Capitol. There are many new developments, such as Constitution Gardens, a beautiful park and rest area near the Lincoln Memorial. The National Zoo has been completely renovated.

The crowds started arriving a month ago so if you plan to come in the next three months, be sure you have confirmed reservations. Also, you should plan to come on a weekend when business and convention trade is lightest. If the hot weather is discouraging you, why not wait until Autumn, one of the choice times of the year to visit Washington. October is usually a dry and mild month. You will spend less time waiting in

lines, find better accommodations and get more personal attention.

When you make your plans to vacation in Washington, let me know. I'll send you a packet of useful literature and a good map of the city. You might want to circle the places on the map that you want to visit. When you get here, drop by my office for passes to the House and Senate galleries.

My advice is to forget about driving in Washington. Traffic in the downtown area is confusing enough for those of us who work here, much less the visitor. To make it easy on yourself, try taking one of the fringe-parking shuttle-buses being operated from huge parking lots at R.F.K. Memorial Stadium or the Pentagon. The bus ties in with the regular bus system called Metrobus. Beefed-up bus service is planned for the bicentennial, so visitors will be able to park their cars at large shopping centers, or leave them at their motel and ride Metro. The National Park Service sponsors an open-bus service that offers the ideal solution to seeing the favorite sights in the city. This Tourmobile service allows you to get off and on at will, at your own pace, for a nominal fee. The Tourmobile is one of the bargains of Washington, and I recommend it to everyone who spends a few days here. If you are short on time, there are charter bus and limousine ser-

vices available as well as taxis for hire. If you enjoy bike riding, at least a dozen bike-ways wind over 50 miles through beautiful parks along the Potomac River.

If your feet tire quickly, there are some sit-down sights in Washington, including the Supreme Court, congressional committees or the House and Senate sessions. And while you are here, take time to view the Capitol as not only the seat of the greatest legislative body on earth, but as mammoth museum of history and art.

The question often arises, "What about crime in Washington? Is it safe?" Despite the general assumptions to the contrary, it is safe to visit in Washington, a lot safer than years ago. Lighting is much better and there are more police. Yes, you can get mugged, robbed or have your car stolen if you're careless, but if you use common sense and stay alert, nothing will happen to you. Lock your doors. Don't wander into neighborhoods you know nothing about. In other words, don't do things you would not do in any other large city.

Thousands of people come to Washington each year to visit historic places, explore galleries and museums, take in exhibits and cultural events. If you take part in these rewarding experiences as others do, in all likelihood you will be as safe here as at home.

TO BE EQUAL



VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

Replacing The Welfare System

Given George McGovern's experience of having his 1972 presidential campaign run aground over his plan for an income maintenance system, it's unlikely that welfare reform will play much of a role in the current campaign.

But whether a Republican or a Democrat is elected in November, one of the first orders of business will have to be a plan to replace the present welfare system.

Part of the reason is that welfare costs are rising sharply, straining federal and local budgets, without however, providing adequate assistance to all in need.

Last year welfare costs rose by over 21 percent, largely because of the rise in unemployment that left many families without resources. Continued high unemployment will mean increasing numbers of people forced onto the welfare rolls.

The impact of these costs has already led to calls for federalization of welfare as states and cities, already strapped financially, face the need to find money for welfare benefits to the victims of our economy. Four big-state governors have come out for federal take-over of welfare costs and many others would look favorably on such a development.

As an interim measure, federal take-over makes sense. It would relieve local budgets, impose fair national standards, and provide assistance to the most hard-pressed cities and states.

But it could only be an interim solution because the present welfare system, even with a federal take-over of costs, would remain an inefficient, degrading system that grudgingly aids some while ignoring the needs of others. There would still be a means test to separate "us" from "them", and the program would remain political football, a vehicle for condemning the poor and circulating myths and stereotypes.

It would be best to start from scratch and devise a system that recognizes the existence of poverty, the necessity to insure minimum living standards for all, and the need for a universal system designed to aid, not punish, people on the margins of a shaky economy that cannot now provide jobs for all.

Some twelve million people are now on the welfare rolls, nearly all of them too old or too young to work. That's only about half the people officially designated as poor, and if you take into account the way the official poverty level has lagged behind inflation, there may be as many as 40 million people who are actually poor. By constructing a system that aids only those who manage to hurdle the barriers of stringent welfare system requirements, aid is denied to other people who are poor and to the millions just above the poverty line but who are also in need. It also creates conflicts between those who work for salaries not much above the welfare allotments and welfare recipients.

The answer to the welfare dilemma is a new income maintenance plan that would consist of a universal refundable credit income tax. It would work this way: Everyone would get a basic cash grant. The poor would keep it all, the near-poor would keep some of it, and middle and upper income families would have the grant taxed away.

as i see it

Pride Lacking Among Blacks

By Gerald O. Johnson
Post Staff Writer

I have noticed a lack in black professionalism in Black business in Charlotte. Those businesses catering to a Black clientele seems to be non-chalant about how they present their product to the customer. Let me give you an example. When I first moved to Charlotte I bought a house. I wanted the sun room on the house remodeled. I called a black construction company to give me an estimate. The owner came out looked over what I wanted done and said he would write up an estimate and get back in contact with me. Three years and one room addition later and I haven't heard from him yet. I called a white remodeling agency that came in and did the job. Ironically enough the white agency subcontracted the job to a black carpenter who did an excellent job. The point here is that Blacks are undoubtedly qualified to do a professional job, yet they lack the professional diplomacy to contract

jobs. It is inexcusable for any business to ignore a potential customer.

My wife started seeing a black gynecologist for her medical services, but switched after feeling that the doctor was insensitive. She wasn't the only defector. Over hearing conversations my wife would have with friends it became apparent that many felt the same way.

Again professional diplomacy, overshadowed professional ability.

Clubs, restaurants, insurance agencies, and the like all lack the professional aire. Therefore the mood of skepticism about doing business with Blacks is real.

But how real is it? As Blacks needing services rendered we help add to the unprofessionalism of Black Businesses. It is a fact we as black customers give black businesses a hard way to go. Black workers produce less when working for blacks. Black customers are less willing to pay black col-



lectors, black customers are less willing to pay a black company for services rendered the same price that they would pay to a white company for the same services. Taking all this in consideration and realizing that a Black businessman's primary clientele is the black public where as the White businessman's clientele knows no color, the black business is hurting.

Moreover, jealousy plays a dominate role in black business, black customer relationships. A lot of blacks refrain from helping black businesses because they don't want blacks to get ahead. In other words there are those who purposely anchor black businesses. The reason for this is my theory of "Failure Rationalization". It works like this; These blacks can rationalize their failings simply by using race as the reason. By saying that whites have had all the opportunities, they can relax with their shortcomings. But as more Blacks succeed in business it begins to put the reasons for failure where it belongs; in the lap of the individual.

It is obvious that black capitalism suffers because of the skepticism between black business and black customer. With a limited customer base a black business has to be understaffed. The necessary revenue is not forth coming.

This causes a situation whereby the owner of the business is likely to be the sales man, the worker, the bookkeeper and etc. This obviously limits a person's ability at diplomacy. All small businesses lack professionalism for this reason.

As members of the black community we all should try to help build pride and professionalism in our community.

As businessmen we should not use the lack of personnel as an excuse for not giving customers the very best service we can offer.

As black laborers for black businesses we should do our jobs the best we know how and not try to take advantage of the business because it is black.

As consumers of services rendered by black businesses we should try to give our support. We should understand the shortcomings and handicaps of the black businessman and realize that with

our support most of these shortcomings can be overcome.

Remember, North Carolina Mutual, Johnson and Johnson, and Johnson Publishing Company, didn't start out as large corporations. All of these companies started as one man operations much the same way as small businesses are in Charlotte now.

With support, hard work, and pride in ourselves as a community we could turn mountains.

NEWS FOR YOU!

Do you have a topic that you would like my opinion on? Write to "As You See It" in care of The Charlotte Post. You may include an opinion of your own if you like for printing along with my opinion. I will give you my honest and candid opinion on any topic. Just think of it, you get my opinion for exactly what my opinion is worth! Absolutely nothing.

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