

Editorials & Comments

Meeting The Challenge

by Hoyle H. Martin, Sr.
Post Editorial Writer

In an action designed to protect itself from creditors, The Charlotte Post filed a voluntary petition in a Charlotte federal court on Sept. 12. Like many other small businesses, squeezed between inflation and cash-flow problems, the Post's action is designed to meet a short term problem. Our confidence that the Post will continue meeting the challenge was evident when publisher Bill Johnson said, "To be perfectly honest...I don't see anything here that we can't handle."

We were pleased too with the level of objectivity that The Charlotte Observer (Jan. 27) exhibited in reporting on our financial problem. We make this observation because it is not often that a daily newspaper will write in an objective way about the problem of a weekly paper. This is evident by the early positive responses of support we have received from the community.

Perhaps these developments indicate that its time for Charlotte's Black community to take a serious look at the unique role the Post plays in their daily lives. We note this because without the Post there would be a media void in the coverage of news relevant to the black community.

While the Post's circulation of over 9,100 is the highest in the

paper's 60 year history, and January 1979 has been the best income month since Bill Johnson became publisher in 1974, an increase in circulation and advertising are vital to keeping the Post in business.

Ironically, but not surprisingly circulation and advertising, two of the primary functions of any newspaper operation, were presented as the "most serious" problem of the black press at the National Newspaper Publishers Association's Mid-Winter Workshop held in Memphis recently. Therefore, and to repeat, the Post's problem is neither unique nor new but is instead a problem of small business in general and the black press in particular.

As you are reading, you may be wondering how you might help. The answer is simple, purchase a \$13 annual subscription. We have made this suggestion because we believe the Post to be a newspaper of quality that this community needs and wants.

One of the few church-family oriented newspapers in the country, The Post will continue meeting the challenge as evidenced by its steady growth, quality news reporting and its commitment to the news interests of the Black community.

If you agree with our optimism and the quality of our news product, subscribe to the Post and ask a friend to do the same.



A Challenge To Black Leadership.

Business In The Black

Food Prices Moving Higher

by Charles E. Belle
Special To The Post

Even the farmers are finding fault with the Carter Administration's food price predictions for 1979. Black American consumers are already caught in the ever increasing price spiral and sinking job market. Current signs of a broad and general acceleration of economic activity portend a higher inflation rate for 1979 than 1978 and the delay and subsequent deepening and extending of the impending recession.

The recent 14.5 percent projected increase in the price of crude oil is significantly larger than anticipated by almost all earlier economic forecasts. The hike will undoubtedly accentuate previous economic accounts estimates of unemployment and inflation.

While the demand for petroleum products has in the past turned out to be very largely price-inelastic over a wide range (for gasoline, for example, from thirty cents a gallon to seventy cents), it would seem to be unwise to assume much elasticity in the incremental cost resulting from the rise in the price of crude oil. Taken by itself, the rise in the oil price represents an absorption of income whose effects will largely be felt in markets other than petroleum products. Such an increase will spill over into food prices.

Farmers who find additional cost of fertilizer and farm equipment operations will try to pass on the increased costs to consumers. Farm-state congressmen will introduce legislation which will push food prices up.

Senator Robert J. Dole (R-Kansas) ranking Republican on the Senate Agriculture

Committee, plans to introduce a new farm bill that would, as he puts it, "quickly improve farm income." The proposed legislation would, for example pay farmers to take wheat, corn and other crops out of production, while requiring beef imports when supplies are "ample." An effective design which will destroy low cost food for the consumer.

A reduction in the beef supply is already expected and sugar production is predicted at three percent below the 1977-78 crop year, according to F. O. Licit, respected commodity economist.

Worldwide weather renders a crop production forecast, including one for 1978-79 highly vulnerable. However, world population still rises at a rate of around 80 million mouths each year.

Many governments are dedicated to increasing and improving diets and living standards. China is convinced it should now eat bread and not noodles! Such demands on the U. S. food production capacity will combine to drive U. S. consumer food prices at least the earlier predicted ten percent or more this year.

Mecklenburg County Will

Receive Highway Bond Funds

RALEIGH.—For the second straight year, Mecklenburg County can look forward to benefits from 1977 highway bond funds that will be used to improve secondary roads.

Today in its monthly meeting here, the North Carolina Board of Transportation allocated \$15 million from funds authorized by the State Highway Bond Act of 1977 for improvements to the state's 59,378-mile secondary road system.

Mecklenburg County's share of the \$15 million allocation is \$85,850, based on a formula prescribed by the state legislature. According to the formula, each county receives a percentage of the total funds available, determined by the unpaved miles of secondary roads in the county in relationship to the total mileage of unpaved secondary roads in the state.

Mecklenburg County has 115

miles of unpaved roads, while the total mileage of unpaved state maintained secondary roads in North Carolina is 20,058.

Secretary of Transportation Tom Bradshaw commented, "Again, we are glad to be able to put the highway bond funds to work for the people. It was the people's overwhelming support of the 1977 bond issue at the polls that made these funds a reality. It is such continued participation and support that will enable us to make much needed improvements to our highway and transportation systems and complement Governor Jim Hunt's balanced growth and economic development program for the benefit of the entire state," he added.

In February 1978, the transportation board approved an initial allocation of \$30 million from the bond issue for secondary road improvements.

By Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

TO BE EQUAL

Snake Oil And Balanced Budgets

California's Governor Jerry Brown has embraced the new orthodoxy of balanced budgets. In his inaugural address, he's come out for a constitutional convention. The purpose: to pass an amendment to the Constitution requiring a balanced federal budget.

By so doing, Governor Brown has put the leadership of the nation's politicians on a new path. But his proposed solution is a snake oil cure for inflation - a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget is nothing more than a modern version of the old snake oil cure. Like them, it won't cure the problem. The Governor's stand misleads the public. It is bad politics, bad economics and bad leadership.

The call for a Constitutional convention is dangerous. Once assembled, such a convention could rewrite the entire Constitution, a frightening prospect in this day of single-issue interest lobbies and widespread indifference to civil rights.

But beyond the grim possibility of a convention that could run wild, the requirement for a balanced federal budget is a bad one.

First, deficit spending - the unbalanced budget - is often necessary. In times of recession, excess federal spending stimulates the economy and prevents the deep slide into massive Depression.

Second, a constitutionally required balanced budget would prevent the government from responding to crises, whether foreign or domestic. The government's flexibility would be damaged.

Third, it needlessly restricts government's ability to meet its obligations. An economic slowdown resulting in lower tax revenues would force either a reduction in federal services or a tax rise, neither of which may be feasible in a given situation.

Finally, the most likely outcome of a balanced budget amendment would be its evasion. The Governor knows full well that states that have balanced budget requirements in their own constitutions simply set up two budgets. One, for operating expenses, is kept in balance. The other, for capital expenses, is financed through borrowed funds. By those standards, the federal budget is already balanced.

If the federal government went through that little exercise, it would simply increase public distrust of government. A perfectly legitimate accounting procedure would strike many people as being an evasion of the Constitution.

The fundamental flaw in the plan mandating balanced federal budget lies in its assumption that federal deficits cause inflation. In fact, even conservative economists recognize that even a deficit as large as the President's \$30 billion target adds only a small fraction of a percentage point to the inflation rate.

Like the old snake oil merchants, proponents of a balanced budget amendment offer nothing of value. The problem of inflation would be untouched. The real problems of our economy - low productivity through unemployment and underemployment - would be worsened by the government's inflexibility.

It's a failure of leadership to manipulate symbols and to sell the public worthless ideas; instead of trying to come to grips with the real problems of our economy.

Planning Will Help Test Scores

In the debates, discussions and comments about the low competency test scores by some Charlotte-Mecklenburg School students, especially blacks, a great deal of alarm, emotion and finger pointing has occurred. Teachers, administrators, parents and students are each tending toward wanting to blame the other for the test failure rate. Such exercises will not achieve anything nor deal with the real issue involved.

We further believe that rushing head-long into massive volunteer tutor programs, student test-taking skills, the sudden ending of so-called social promotions, the raising of National Teacher Examination minimum scores and the stricter screening of applicants for teacher training programs would be premature unless instituted after a thorough analysis of why the test scores are low. Thus, clear analysis followed by a carefully planned approach to improving student academic skills appears to be the only sensible way to eventual higher test scores for our youth.

A beginning point in any meaningful understanding of why student test scores are low should be in a look at the political, social and academic climate at the time that the present 11th graders were in their primary grades.

When this year's crew of 11th graders were in their primary

grades - during years when basic foundations for learning was occurring - our community was caught-up in the emotional struggles over school desegregation and court-ordered busing. In that climate, our public schools were reduced from being citadels of learning to instruments of social change.

What we are partly seeing in the low test scores is the result of schools that were no longer considered a part of the fabric of the community, frightened children in distant strange schools following a long bus ride, and teachers hampered in their teaching skills by racial myths and stereotypes. In this atmosphere, with blacks being bused in disproportionate numbers, it was not likely that youth in most need of teacher directed development received any academic foundation. The result has been 11th grade low test scores in 1979.

Another point for consideration in this matter involves the use of volunteer tutors. Most such tutors are or will be white middle-class housewives who do not have nor need full-time jobs as most blacks do. This will mean having many black youth tutored by white females who probably have had little or no previous contact with blacks. Unless this kind of issue is faced squarely more will be lost than gained in helping to improve the academic skills of more youth.

THE CHARLOTTE POST
"THE PEOPLES NEWSPAPER"
Established 1918
Published Every Thursday
By The Charlotte Post Publishing Co., Inc.
1524 West Blvd., Charlotte, N.C. 28208
Telephones (704) 378-0496-378-0497
Circulation, 9,915

60 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE

BILL JOHNSON...Editor Publisher
BERNARD REEVES...General Manager
SHIRLEY HARVEY...Advertising Director
HENRY ALAKSA...Business Manager

Second Class Postage No. 965500 Paid At
Charlotte, N.C. under the Act of March 3, 1878

Member National Newspaper Publishers
Association

North Carolina Black Publishers Association

Deadline for all news copy and photos is 5 p.m.
Monday. All photos and copy submitted becomes
the property of the POST, and will not be returned.

National Advertising
Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
45 W. 5th Suite 1403 2400 S. Michigan Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10036 Chicago, Ill. 60616
(212) 489-1220 Calumet 5-0200

Burrell Spots Cracks In Carter's New Foundation

National Business League President Dr. Berkeley G. Burrell today declared that "the continued exclusion of blacks coupled with the increasing rate of inflation constitute the major cracks in the President's efforts to build a new foundation."

Responding to President Carter's State of the Union address, Dr. Burrell said: "Certainly the building of this new foundation should take into account the needs and interests of the nation's disadvantaged groups, and utilize the input of the minority private sector as well. From our point of view, one thing is clear - without the inclusion of minority sector participation in the American economic mainstream, the state of the union will not remain sound."

The leader of the nation's oldest business association emphasized that inflation remains the nation's most serious domestic issue. Noting that the cost of living rose by more than 9 per cent last year, he added: "If we do not arrest seemingly uncontrollable price increases, this nation of massive wealth will have poor people, including white people, eating dog food. The unemployed, underemployed and others on fixed incomes simply cannot endure

a continuation of voluntary wage and price guidelines which do not stop the rising cost of food.

Mr. Carter says that mandatory controls are unwarranted and that we should not substitute myth for common sense. Yet, common sense tells us that it is unwarranted for a nation that spends a billion and a half dollars every day to have some of her people trying to survive on dog food. The Carter Administration must exert stronger leadership to halt inflation if its new foundation is not to be built upon sand and swept away by the raging tide of the poor people trying to survive on canned dog food.

The NBL Chief continued: "The tax system is designed to gather and distribute resources. As taxpayers, the minority community is always included on the gathering side, but somehow remain excluded from the distributing side. Our call for capacity building resources underscores our intention to participate in the nation's economic benefits. This year, the white people must share our resources with us."

Burrell noted that despite the Administration's claims of austerity, the budget still comprises an unprecedented

\$532 billion. He stated: "No matter how lean you slice it, \$532 billion is still a tremendous sum of money. The minority private sector is not asking for an increase in the budget; rather, we are concerned about receiving our fair share of these resources."

The call for capacity building resources has been sounded with increasing frequency by the leaders of the minority private sector. According to Burrell: "The minority private sector should still demand its equitable share of capacity building resources from the federal government. The issue may well be one of agility and adaptability. We have to be agile enough to shift our focus to where the resources are, and from all indications, that focus will be in defense spending next year. Moreover, despite budget cuts, federal expenditures will actually increase, and the minority private sector should get its fair share of those expenditures."

Burrell explained that the overall thrust of the Administration's proposals run counter to the needs of the disadvantaged minority communities. "The President's proposals require a higher rate of unemployment to offset inflation.

Such tactics put a disproportionate burden on our disadvantaged sectors who are already losing the battle of welfare checks chasing higher prices," he said.

Recently re-elected to an unprecedented sixth three year term, Burrell is the tenth President of NBL. Headquartered in Washington, D.C.,

CEBS Schedules Three Classes

A Certified Employee Benefit Specialist Program (CEBS) has scheduled three classes to be offered at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte beginning in Feb.

Offered by UNCC's Office for Continuing Education, the CEBS program is a joint development of the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans (IFEBC) and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. It is designed for trustees, administrators, consultants, attorneys, account managers, investment managers, benefit personnel and others who are active in or interested in learning about the employee benefit field. A course on pension plans will be taught Thursdays, Feb. 22 to June 7. James M. Freeman of Meldinger and Associates of Charlotte, actuaries and employee benefit

NBL's growing membership is found in 120 chartered chapters in 37 states and the District of Columbia.

In addition, more than 50 national minority business, trade and professional associations are affiliated with the League through its National Council for Policy Review.

Want To Improve Your Handwriting?

Sponsored by the Office of Continuing Education at UNCC, the seminar will be held Tuesdays, March 6 to April 24, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the community room at the Sears and Roebuck store in the Southpark Shopping center. The instructors will be William B. Mitchell and Diane Yett English, and the cost is \$35. For more information, contact the UNCC Office of Continuing Education, telephone 597-2424.

Want To Improve Your Handwriting?

Want to improve your handwriting or penmanship? The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is offering a seminar in calligraphy for those who want to learn how to write in a beautiful or formal manner.

Sponsored by the Office of Continuing Education at UNCC, the seminar will be held Tuesdays, March 6 to April 24, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the community room at the Sears and Roebuck store in the Southpark Shopping center. The instructors will be William B. Mitchell and Diane Yett English, and the cost is \$35. For more information, contact the UNCC Office of Continuing Education, telephone 597-2424.