

# Editorials & Comments

## Poor Don't Choose Public Housing

The recent announcement by the Housing Authority of four scattered-site housing developments in southeast Charlotte has resulted in the usual and now familiar outcry by some citizens about government fiscal irresponsibility.

Similar complaints have been expressed in the news media about the cost of rehabilitating five houses in First Ward.

In addition, there have been comments about scattered-site housing by citizens who have said, "I don't like my tax dollars being spent for people who are too damn sorry to get out and work for themselves." Or by passing motorists who yell at children, "hey nigger, you're on the wrong side of town." These observations illustrate then mayor elect Eddie Knox's statement on a three-mayor panel at the Las Vegas-based National League of Cities meeting last month when he reportedly said, "I think voters are about as uninformed and uncaring as ever before. They are uninformed about the underlying cost factors in housing and uncaring about the social and economic welfare and their fellow citizens."

For example, the Housing Authority and the city have been criticized about the density-to-cost ratio for the per acre land acquisition in connection with the proposed scattered-sites. For example, the proposal to build 49 units on Marsh Road with a density of only 3.7 units per acre has been compared unfavorably with a density of about 11 units per acre for multi-family developments which is fairly common for Charlotte's private market developments.

### Public Policy

People are grossly uninformed if they think it's possible to compare privately developed and publicly developed housing complexes. The difference is in the fact that in addition to the normal HUD regulations governing site selection for conventional public housing, Congress or HUD has also imposed numerous other statutes, regulations and orders designed to achieve desired public policy considered equally fair to all citizens. These include eleven laws, two Executive Orders and an OMB A-95 issue that covers environmental, historical, relocation, acquisition, civil rights and equal opportunity and housing assistance issues. Then you must add to this state and local ordinances such as those relating to zoning, land use, environmental protection and flooding. Do private developers have to go through all of this, plus instant verbal abuse from the citizenry?

Scattered site low density housing is a part of the city's commitment to reducing the impact of public housing on surrounding neighborhoods. Furthermore it is a recognition

of the fact that high density public housing projects tend to develop many of the ills the too often accompany high concentrations of poor people who lack positive role models.

Among these ills is the crime or the fear of it. Again, however, communities near or around public housing complexes fail to understand the nature of crime. They fail to understand that children growing up in middle and upper class neighborhood develop a sense of "entitlement" says psychiatrist Robert Coles. They identify with a wide range of expected choices about toys, entertainment, education, career and where they will reside.

Children from poor families on the other hand, usually find that they have few choices about anything, including where they live, thus public housing. Society conditions them to realize that no matter how hard they try, nothing, to paraphrase Charles Silberman, in their lives or that of their parents or friends suggests that if they really work hard at anything rewards will come.

### Scattered Site

Scattered site low density housing has been adopted as city policy in order to rectify past injustices of impact black communities with public housing as well as to comply with the intent of McKnight Memorandum of Understanding and court actions of a similar nature. Furthermore, scattered site housing is aimed at breaking the poverty-crime cycle that often accompanies the hopelessness that is characteristic of high density public housing.

Scattered site, low density public housing is also designed to reduce the impact on the area immediately around the project and thus be more accommodating to the area residents.

After observing and listening to the citizens at the neighborhood meetings and at the recent public hearing it is easy to conclude that there is no ideal or perfect site for public housing. It should also be understood that the Holy Bible's statement that "ye shall always have the poor with you" means that we will always have public housing.

Therefore, we hope that when the City Council and Planning Commission are deliberating on the scattered site issue they can rise to the maturity of setting aside political pressures, the emotional outcry of well meaning but biased citizens, the alleged petty communications problems between the Housing Authority and the Planning Commission, the arguments over high cost, the alleged impact of the site on near-by property values and certain transportation and school issues.

**BLACK AND WHITE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS MET TO ANSWER THE NEW THREATS OF THE KU KLUX-KLAN. "THE MYTHS TO BE COUNTERED ARE THAT BLACKS HAVE GOTTEN TOO MUCH AS A RESULT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND THAT BLACK PROGRESS HAS TAKEN RIGHTS AWAY FROM WHITES."**



**Letting The Klan Know**

## as i see it

### Christmas Time Again

By Gerald O. Johnson

Without looking at the calendar, or looking at the decorations I know Christmas is here. Even without hearing the joyful Christmas music on the radio I know Christmas is here. Even if Thanksgiving just hadn't passed I would still know Christmas is here. I know because I just made the last credit payment from last Christmas. That could only mean it is time to once again go in hock for another year. Yes, Christmas is here.

When you look around you might think that there isn't too much to be merry about this Christmas. Surely, this Christmas will find the Iran crisis still going on. The tension in this situation continues to mount. Without a breakthrough soon, war is inevitable. Not a merry consequence on this Christmas.

Then we have the oil crisis which continues to raise havoc on our economy. Gasoline prices will reach the \$1.25 level before next Christmas. With the oil price increase practically everything we consume as a nation will go up. We are so heavily dependent on oil (from the food we eat to the plastic cups we drink from) that this Christmas will find us heading toward a deep recession. Hard to get merry about that.

World hunger, crime in the streets, poverty, and pollution are getting worse by the hour. How can this Christmas find us merry.

Well, I will tell you how it will find me merry. My family is healthy, except for brother Bob, but of



Gerald Johnson course, he was born that way.

I have lived to see this season come once again and in lieu of the alternative, I think that is something to be merry about.

When I look around and see the tall trees, the green grass, and the blue sky I realize that God lives and is doing well. That makes this Christmas all the merrier. Being able to see Amanda Davis on TV and Sylvia Young at 'Fancy That' puts the 'M' in merry.

Finally, if one stops for a moment and remembers what this day symbolizes then one can't help but say that this Christmas like all other Christmases prior and all other Christmases to come are indeed merry ones.

So, even with the world situation of today and even with the hustle and bustle of the season, if you think about it, this is a Merry Christmas.

**CHRISTMAS BELLS**  
I head the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old familiar carols play.

and wild and sweet  
the words repeat  
of peace on earth,  
Good-will to men

-Longfellow

**NEXT WEEK:**  
The Recent Crimes in Church

Wherever God erects a house of prayer,  
The Devil always builds a chapel there;  
And 'twill be found upon examination  
The latter has the largest congregation

-Daniel Defoe

### Fires In The

### Home Increase

### In Winter

Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety, Burley B. Mitchell, Jr., issued a warning today regarding precautionary measures to prevent fires in the home.

Mitchell pointed out, "The potential of a fire in the home is greatly increased during the winter months primarily because of unnoticed problems with heating systems. We urge everyone to have their furnaces checked out thoroughly. A minor problem with a heating system can cause a major fire."

During this season of the year, Mitchell suggested people with fireplaces or wood-burning stoves should have their chimneys checked for creosote build-up. Never start fires in stove or fireplaces with combustible liquids such as gasoline or kerosene.

### From Capitol Hill

## United States Discriminates Against Haitian Refugees?

by Alfreda L. Madison  
Special To The Post

The United States has a discriminatory immigration policy. While there is great concern in both congress and the administration over the Vietnam and Cambodian refugees, the Haitian refugees concern receives opposite consideration. The Immigration and Naturalization Act defines refugees as those fleeing communist countries because of political and economic pressure. The ruthless dehumanizing treatment the Jean-Claude Duvalier dictatorship of Haiti, which is equally as harsh on the people of Haiti as those from communist countries, who flee that country and seek asylum in the United States, are given entirely different treatment. These people have been systematically denied political asylum by the United States as no other refugee group in the history of the country.

Immediately upon their arrival they have been incarcerated, and being unable to pay excessive bond,



Alfreda L. Madison they have been deported. These people have no money and the lawyers who give them legal assistance, which is funded by voluntary agencies, are faced with as many as 50 cases a day.

When the Haitians arrive on American shores they are interviewed, briefly by immigration officers, and most of them are tossed into jail to await transfer to an interment camp. The immigration officials have even intercepted the Haitian boat people and flown them back to Haiti, where

Duvalier has treated them as enemies of the government. One Haitian mother and her five children who were stoways, trying to escape the harsh oppressive rule were thrown overboard.

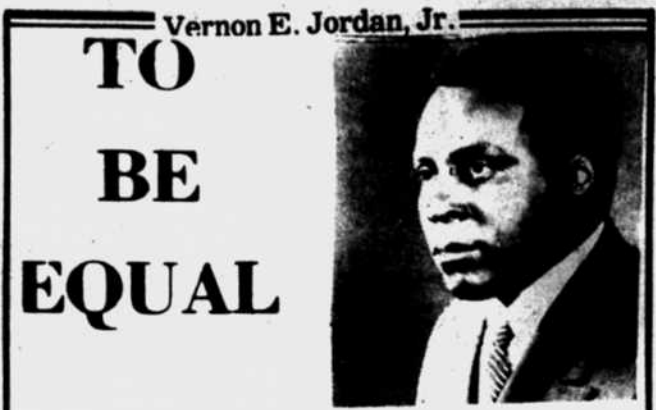
Of the 9000 Haitian refugees who have arrived in this country, only 70 have been granted political refugee status, while in the last three months of 1978, 2,200 from communist countries who applied for entry, 1800 were received by the U.S. Immigration Department. Even though the Immigration and State Departments admit that we have a double standard for communists and Haitians, both congress and the administration are reluctant to correct these wrong discriminatory doings.

Various organizations have appealed to President Carter in the name of his human rights policy to extend the same human rights treatment to Haitians as he does to Mid-East refugees. Senator Stone of Florida wrote Pre-

sident Carter a letter months ago requesting that he use his power to aid the state of Florida in handling the flood of Haitian refugees to his state. All of these requests, along with those of numerous organizations have gone unheeded by the administration.

It certainly does appear as Vernon Jordan says administration's humanitarian concern ends when it comes to black refugees from Haiti. They are, according to the Justice Department, "political" and do not merit asylum. Victims of left-wing tyrannies are, automatically, huddled masses yearning to be free." People like Haitians under a fascist bully who governs with extortion and torture can't be let in because their admission would open "flood gates" to the merely greedy.

The Immigration and Naturalization policy of voluntary turn for Haitian refugees is only tricky. Immediately, upon arrival, without any lawyer, being



## TO BE EQUAL

Christmas, the season of peace and goodwill, should be a time of rededication to the cause of human rights and justice for all.

Sadly, this Christmas finds a world still far from those ideals. One of the most visible demonstrations of that is the worldwide refugee crisis.

The tragedy afflicting Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees has received the most attention. Hundreds of thousands of our fellow human beings live in degrading conditions in temporary camps.

Starvation is rampant inside Cambodia, and the continuing war and political conditions there keep massive aid shipments out. "Boat people" still flee southeast Asia, still suffer at the hands of marauders, and still populate emergency camps.

Elsewhere in the world many hundreds of thousands of people have been uprooted by war and hunger. Ethiopia, Somalia, and other nations have large numbers of people made homeless. Zambia is facing serious problems caring for refugees generated by war in Rhodesia and Namibia.

Closer to home, America refuses to treat Haitian refugees as worthy of political asylum while allowing others to enter the country.

The International Year of the Child is drawing to a close, with little progress made in improving the conditions of the world's children. Here in America, half of all black children live in poverty but social reforms that would help them are on the back burner.

You would think that in a year set aside for securing the rights of the world's children, the richest country on earth would at least take steps to end the poverty of its young people, but that hasn't happened.

Now, with a new recession upon us, the national mood is meaner. People have been schooled by inflation and a decade of eroding faith in society's institutions, to adopt an uncaring attitude towards those less fortunate than themselves.

But this should be a time for breaking out of the prison of selfishness and committing ourselves to help others.

Often, it is poor people, who have the least to give, who share the little they have with others and for whom this is a season not only of hope, but of deeds of charity and goodwill.

I was reminded of this when I read Howard Thurman's autobiography, "With Head and Heart." Thurman, an outstanding black minister and theologian, writes of perseverance in the face of desperate poverty and discrimination.

His book has an odd dedication: "To the stranger in the railroad station in Daytona Beach who restored my broken dream sixty-five years ago." The story behind that dedication strikes me as the story behind the Christmas spirit, even if it didn't occur at Christmas.

It seems that the young Thurman had won a chance to enter one of the only three black high schools in Florida. At the train station he was told that his battered, rope-tied trunk would have to be sent express. The young man couldn't pay; his dreams of an education seemed gone - all because he didn't have the few dollars it would cost to send his belonging on.

### Xmas Is Time To Be With Family

Make Christmas a time to be with the family, not with the kitchen stove. Christmas family and company meals are more fun and festive without the last minute rush.

A little pre-planning and preparing of foods ahead of time can help you spend more of the holidays out of the kitchen, says specialists with the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service.

You can put into practice some tips and tricks which are fine for any time, but are especially good for holiday seasons.

Before Christmas week, get the whole family in on the planning. This is the time to plan for meals that the entire family will enjoy and delight in preparing. Make each member of the family responsible for cer-



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