

Editorials

Casting The First Stone

Three important developments occurred last week that appear to put the Bob Walton issue in an arrested state, at least until the 1988 elections.

First, Bob Walton said publicly that he intends to retain his seat on the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners. A postscript to that announcement was echoed by Post Co-publisher Gerald O. Johnson last week when he wrote in his column on this page, "There is little that can be done to change the outcome of this decision."

More significantly, and this is the second occurrence worthy of note, Mr. Johnson said further, "It would appear that the most rational thing to do for all concerned is to work with that decision. We must put this episode behind us and focus on the issues facing the community. This means the other commissioners must do what they were elected to do and allow Bob to do what he was elected to do. It means the Democratic Party, and the Black Political Caucus must alleviate the political pressure they have been asserting so that Bob can function. It means District 2 must come to grips with this issue and put it on the back burner, so that Bob can begin to resolve community issues instead of personal issues." After all, to do anything less

would only add to the hurt, division, and pre-occupation that has already cost District 2 a loss of valuable and needed public representation.

The third occurrence of last week, identical to the central issues surrounding Bob Walton, trust and public confidence, was the published reports that Walton's most vocal critic, Melvin Whitley, was fired from his job last summer for diverting over \$2,600 of his employees' funds to his personal use. Whitley, executive director of the Charlotte Organizing Project until his forced resignation, reportedly plans to continue to pursue efforts to oust Walton from his Commission seat.

With the Charlotte Organizing Project being a social action agency supported by the Catholic Church, we would assume that Mr. Whitley is familiar with the Bible verse (John 8:7) in which Jesus says, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone..." (in this case, at Bob Walton). As we reflect on Gerald Johnson's meaningful statement, we should also remind ourselves about our own sins and shortcomings. In fact, it will only be with such reminders that we can put in proper perspective the full value and practicality of Mr. Johnson's words and Bob Walton's decision.

Welfare Reform Omits Human Dignity

In his sixth State of the Union address to the 100th Congress and the American people on January 28, President Reagan began, as might be expected, on foreign affairs. Not unexpectedly, he talked about the failure in the Iran arms initiative, continued aid to the Nicaraguan contras and defense against the Soviet Union.

The President then shifted his focus to a "search for excellence" in domestic policy said to be coming from economic prosperity, job formation and training, and competitiveness. However, while Mr. Reagan's proposals contained few if any details, he indicated clearly that inconsistency in comments on "excellence" and "new domestic frontiers."

For example, as part of the goal of making the nation more competitive, Reagan said, "Preparing for the future must begin, as always, with our children." He called for more rigorous education and drug-free goals. Nevertheless, he omitted any mention of his requests for major cuts in both education and drug abuse funding for states and local governments.

Subsequently, while supposedly focusing "new domestic frontiers" in his address, Reagan stressed his strong desire for major increases in spending for defense and foreign aid which would be financed in part by cuts in all domestic programs.

In the President's weekly radio address last Saturday, he talked about his administration's proposed domestic program to allow states to consolidate up to 99 welfare programs into local systems of cash grants, vouchers and work requirements. The proposed consolidation called "demonstration projects," are designed to discover innovative ways to move people off welfare rolls and into jobs.

We find some serious weaknesses in the "demonstration projects" draft, again offered without details. Nevertheless, the sketchy details that are known would appear to undercut human dignity for welfare recipients as well as for those eligible for veterans' pensions and college student loans.

The worst features of the proposed welfare reform legislation are that the recipients' legal rights would be restricted and would allow state governments to make arbitrary decisions about the type or form of benefits, with the recipient having no voice in the matter. This means too that a recipient would not be able to appeal a state's decision in any state or federal court.

Furthermore, the proposed bill would give states and the federal Low Income Opportunity Office freedom to disregard program laws in implementing the demonstration projects.



Black's Destiny In Own Hands

As I See It:

"...And They Are Off!"

By Gerald O. Johnson

On February 9, 1986 one hundred seventy State Legislators were sworn in office to begin the long session of the 1987-88 General Assembly. Among those sworn in were Jim Richardson, C. E. Barnhill, and "Pete" Cunningham. These three gentlemen represent predominantly Black

Districts in Mecklenburg County. Mecklenburg County has twelve representatives in all serving our local needs at the State level.

February 9th also marked a new direction for the Charlotte Post. It was the kickoff of our commitment to bring you more of the political news that will directly affect your lives. I intend to highlight political issues both from the local and state levels. I will let you know about those issues that are hot and those representatives who are not. I will show you how your representative voted on issues and how his vote may impact your life. I will on occasion compare the voting patterns of the legislators from the predominantly Black districts with those from the



Gerald

total Mecklenburg delegation. I will let you hear firsthand from your representative on why they voted the way they did. Finally, I will use the Post to communicate your concerns back to your representatives.

I feel that this type of coverage is important for several reasons. First, it will allow you to see what these people you have elected are doing. Moreover, it will tell you why they are doing it. Moreover, it will help educate you to the political process. Finally, it is our hope that it will make you get more involved with the political process.

The three State representatives that I talked to agreed wholeheartedly to help us with this process. They all seemed eager to do whatever is necessary to get more people involved. Jim Richardson pointed out the difficulty in getting legislation passed that will help Black people, when Blacks rarely come out in numbers to show their support.

The accountability of our elected officials is only as good as the accountability of the electorate. The electorate is accountable for making these officials answer to you. Write them, call them, go visit them, they work for you. But they can't be effective if they don't know what you want.

The Charlotte Post will do its part in providing the vehicle for communication between the elected and the electorate. I feel Richardson, Barnhill, and Cunningham will do their part in responding effectively to the issues facing the community. The question is, will you do your part by getting involved?

After all, the life you help may be your own.

Miller Says:

Black Pioneers Endured Trials, Tribulations

By Sherman N. Miller
Special To The Post

Black History Month becomes a time for Black Americans to take pride in their successes. Everyone takes great pride in pointing out the significant inventions by blacks, or they call attention to ones who broke racial barriers. Yet we hear very little of the trials and tribulations these black pioneers had to endure.

I once had an opportunity to tote the pioneer's burden. I was the first black graduate student in the Department of Physics at the University of Delaware. I later learned that I was also the first black physics major at the university.

This added burden meant I had to succeed. I quickly learned that the University of Delaware was also very interested in my success. My professors were always very willing to offer their help.

Although the physics graduate courses and research work were challenging, I also found the psychological stress from racial isolation to be comparable in difficulty.

Since there were some extremely gifted black undergraduate science and pre-medical students at the University of Delaware, I often discussed science issues with them. One of these chaps is currently our family physician. All the black graduate students I had met at the university were in business, history or education.

I felt a need to make friends amongst my peers in the Physics Department. My quest to gain acceptance was akin to re-pledging into the undergraduate chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity at Delaware State College. Once I demonstrated to everyone that I was willing to work hard they let



Sherman

me become one of the "good ol' boys."

I also became close friends with some professors one of whom I later helped to become the first Chinese American Lt. Governor in the history of the U.S. Another chap currently reviews many of my national columns.

My experience at the University of Delaware trained me to function freely in predominantly white settings. Most predominantly white universities are microcosms of Mainstream America. Thus this type association would allow black American attendees to become educated in the modus operandi of the economic mainstream.

I left the University of Delaware hoping someday to walk into a room full of black scientists who used their skills to run their own business. I was lost for words when my dream was finally realized. Communications Electronic International, Inc. (CEI) of Orlando, FL, is owned and operated

by a group of black, young scientists and engineers.

The Invisible Marchers

Dear Editor:

As we observe Black History Month, our attention often focuses on news clips of those who marched and those who wield power from the podium. Truly the clock of progress would have been turned even slower were it not for those who stood on the frontlines, a group of people brave enough to be seen and heard. The Jacksons and Kings have another group of people who didn't lead in front of cameras and microphones. Instead, this group of people stood in the shadows and trudged onward without any thanks or pat on the back. This group of people worked in the fields, mopped floors, and got an education when they could.

At my age, I really can't say I've experienced the back of the bus, "Colored Only," or days missed from school because I had to work. I thank Rosa Parks for not giving up her seat on the bus, but I also thank those blacks who never got to ride the bus. I'm thankful for the laws that got rid of "Colored Only," but I'm also thankful to those who had the patience to endure such humiliating treatment. Along those same lines, a minister's wife once told me how they drove all night through southern states on their way to Texas, simply because it wasn't safe to stop. I certainly thank them, because I can check-in whenever I please. But probably the ones I thank the most are those blacks, living and passed on, who worked in the fields and homes while being deprived of an education.

Black youths of a bygone era didn't labor because they needed

the extra money to buy a few luxuries. No, they worked to provide the luxuries of food and clothing. Black education was forced to be secondary. All these people were the invisible marchers; the ones who didn't make the news. With the observance of Black History Month there will be a number of television shows reflecting our past.

Recently, I came across a program on the history of the early Civil Rights Movement. At first glance, I found it sad and changed the channel. However, I was drawn back and endured the entire program. Again I became depressed and then I became angry. I was sad because people I never knew died so that I could have a fair chance in life. I was angry because people had to forfeit their education so they could eat. My sadness and anger forced me to think about things I have begun to take for granted. I'll be certain to get a videotape on the Civil Rights Movement and show it to my children as soon as they can understand. Sometimes there's nothing wrong with being sad or being angry.

Thank you,
Ronald Mattison

AARP To Meet

The Mecklenburg Chapter #197 of the American Association of Retired Persons will have its regular monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, February 19, in the Fellowship Hall of the Little Church on the Lane, 528 Moravian Lane.



Statement by John E. Jacob, president, National Urban League:

"The National Urban League is relocating its Western Regional Assembly meeting, planned for Phoenix, Arizona, to Denver, Colorado.

"We will not hold any National Urban League meetings in Arizona until the state decides to return to the Union by restoring recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

"By rescinding the state's observance of that important holiday, the Governor has insulted black Americans and all people who believe in racial equality. His action stokes the fires of racism and erects a high barrier between his state and the rest of the nation. We strongly urge all national and regional groups to refuse to hold conferences, meetings, and other activities in Arizona until such time as Martin Luther King Jr. Day is honored there.

"Our quarrel is not with the people and businesses in Arizona, but with a governor whose action has stained the reputation of the fine citizens of his state."

A statement by Herman Bolton, convener of the Western Regional Assembly, National Urban League:

"We strongly support the decision to move the National Urban League's Western Regional Assembly meeting out of our state."

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