

LETTERS TO THE POST

Ability Won't Sew Up Promotion

It is not uncommon to hear fans, coaches and TV commentators refer to sports as a model of equal opportunity. But one must come to grips with the fact that sports teams are set up in such a way that whites are less likely to be threatened by the presence and the achievements of blacks than they would be in other settings, such as the Fortune 500 clubs.



Swilley

First of all, superior performances by athletes do not lead to promotions in the organizational structure of sports. Nor do they put a person in a position of control over fellow players. In short, superior performance does not lead to power and authority over co-workers. Case in point: when the Dallas Cowboys took the field against the Buffalo Bills, there were 40 black players and 10 white. But in Dallas management, there were 70 whites and 4 blacks.

Secondly, the success of sports teams does not depend on teammates being friends with one another. This means that interracial relationships do not have to be carried over to off-the-field social situations like they do in many work organizations where social obligations and race mixing are an accepted part of the job.

Finally, the organizational structure of a sports team is set up so that athletes have little power or authority. This means that being an athlete is therefore consistent with the powerless status of blacks in the rest of society and athletic involvement is not seen as a threat to the status quo.

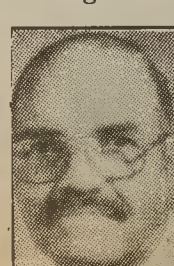
RUSSELL SWILLEY
Charlotte

Support Bond Referendum

The writer is a member of Charlotte City Council.

With the primaries behind us, it is time to begin thinking seriously about the November 2 general elections.

Equal to, if not more important than anything else on the ballot will be the school bonds because they will impact upon the present and future needs of our children. Furthermore, how we vote on this issue will send a strong message in terms of the quality of education we want for our children. Therefore, it is troublesome to hear of those who, somewhat prematurely, are declaring opposition to the school bonds.



Martin

Some are suggesting opposition to the bonds because of discontent with the salary increase and benefits awarded to Superintendent John Murphy and the circumstances involved. Others such as Frank Barnes, President of Citizens For Effective Government (CFEG), said his organization voted to oppose the school bonds because of a lack of confidence in the school board to use the taxpayers money wisely.

Opposing the school bonds because of the salary issue is to suggest that not providing the capital needs of our children will somehow hurt the school board and John Murphy. This is ludicrous because within the next five years we will probably have a new school board, and yet another superintendent, and we will have an even greater need for the things that bonds will pay for. Let's be realistic, the salary controversy is simply not a good reason for opposing the needs of our children.

I nevertheless agree with many who have a lack of full confidence in the school board. However, Barnes' arguments for opposing the bonds are not based on facts. First, he says the bond package proposes to spend too much money on bricks and mortar. Yet, the massive number of current mobile classrooms on our school campuses confirms our need for more bricks and mortar (buildings) and what goes in them to teach our children.

Similarly, Barnes says, our school enrollment was the same in 1992 as it was in 1982. The fact is official school records show an enrollment growth rate of 14 percent over this 10-year period. Furthermore, a survey in a recent issue of City and State magazine reports that Mecklenburg County is one of 25 of the nation's fastest growing counties of 100,000 population or more.

Lastly and equally significant, Barnes appears to have a great concern about the responsible use of taxpayers money as I am sure we all do. Nevertheless, at a time when many members of the state legislature have been critical of university budgets, I have to wonder why Barnes and CFEG have taken a neutral position on the state bonds mostly for the universities and community colleges.

As a faculty member at UNC Charlotte, is it for some possible personal gain that Barnes has not opposed the state bonds; or is it out of fear of opposing the university system President C. D. Spangler's strong request for student and faculty bond support?

Thus, while Barnes has been quick to lead CFEG in opposing the local school bonds, he lacks the courage to challenge Spangler's orders for the state bonds. As one author has said, "courage...is the capacity to sacrifice, to suffer, to stand alone, to go against the tide in defense of a principle." While the board of the Arts and Science Council had the courage to endorse the school bonds in the face of possible controversy, Frank Barnes and CFEG lack a similar courage of their so-called convictions to oppose the state bonds. Thus, who can have confidence in CFEG?

HOYLE MARTIN
Charlotte

FAMU Programs Prove Black Achievement

At a time when Florida's image is being tarnished by highway crime and a gangster culture taking the lives of innocent people, it is also being illuminated by its ability to train young blacks for productive lives.

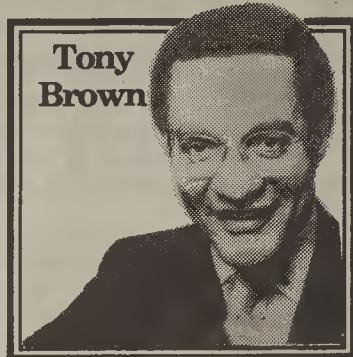
You've heard of or seen Florida A&M University's famous Marching 100 Band, under the direction of the legendary band master William Foster, but did you know that the school has attracted the most National Achievement Scholars of any school in the nation?

Florida A&M University (FAMU), a black university in Tallahassee, attracted more of the nation's top black high school seniors this year than any other university in the nation - surpassing Harvard for the first time.

Here's the score: Yale 18; MIT 18; Duke 23; University of Oklahoma 27; Stanford 28; Harvard 49; Florida A&M 73.

FAMU is also a center of achievement in architecture and agriculture, among other disciplines. The School of Pharmacy, for example, recently set a national record for colleges which awarded doctoral degrees in biomedical research.

I report on this academic miracle on Tony Brown's *Journal* on PBS in October between Oct. 8 and 14 (check



Tony Brown

your local PBS station for exact date and time). Ironically, the program was precipitated by a phone call from a white man who believed that no business school with a black population existed.

It is a very amusing anecdote. I received a call from a man who identified himself as Russell Wickett from Norwalk, Connecticut. He wanted to support a top business school with a black population, but none were listed in any of the publications of top business schools.

The publishers obviously don't know about FAMU's School of Business and Industry (SBI).

Take a look at what you have to do to get in - or should I say to get out of SBI. In addition to business courses, students must also take calculus, physics, systems theory, engineering, statistics, etc.

Within a university of ex-

cellence, the School of Business has the largest pool of exceptionally talented black students in any single educational program in America. SBI has the largest number of black Ph.D.s of any business school faculty in the country.

The freshman class isn't called "The Fortunate 400" for nothing.

"The best prepared business graduates in the nation," said Newsweek magazine. "The Marine Corps of Business Schools," one author calls SBI. "Tallahassee's Go-Get-Em B-School," Fortune magazine named SBI.

It's no accident that the job placement rate of SBI graduates is 100%.

And speaking of graduates, people like Bernard Kinsey, co-chair of the Rebuild LA Committee, came from FAMU and Kinsey's son will go to FAMU. But here's the best part of the FAMU success story.

All of this achievement is maintained without sacrificing a commitment to the disadvantaged. FAMU is still a gateway from poverty to professional careers for black students. FAMU is indeed a tribute to the state of Florida and the nation.

TONY BROWN is a syndicated columnist and host of "Tony Brown's Journal" Sundays at 5 p.m. on WTVI (channel 42).

United Nations, U.S. Aggressors In Somalia

By James Strong
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Someone once said whenever you begin a sentence with the words "I believe," you should end it with "I'm not sure." That's how I feel about the U.S./U.N. mission to Somalia right now.

Launched by former president George Bush just before he left office, U.S. officials touted the mission as a humanitarian campaign to protect international aid workers from attack by Somali gangs and to ensure the distribution of food to the country's starving masses.

But ever since the killing of 25 Pakistani soldiers by guerrillas loyal to Somali General Mohammed Farah Aided and the subsequent intense manhunt for him by U.S.-led U.N. forces, doubts have infiltrated not only my mind, but the minds of many Americans, including many African experts, about the wisdom of the intervention.

Now after reports that U.S. helicopter gunships massacred as many as 150 Somali men, women and children, and wounded another 300, in a September 9 battle with Aided's militia, my doubts have stiffened, becoming as rigid as steel pipes.

Senior American and U.N. officials defended the slaughter, accusing Aided of causing heavy civilian casualties through his tactic of using women and children as human shields in combat.

U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali said he "deeply regrets the loss of life," but that because of Aided's human-shield strategy, "responsibility from civilian casualties must lie with those who carried out the ambush."

The pathetic thing about Boutros-Ghali's comment is that it legitimizes an act of terrorism.

Indeed, Italian Defense Minister Fabio Fabbri condemned the attack furiously. "To shoot women and children is the antithesis of a humanitarian mission," he said. In fact, Italy has accused the United Nations for several weeks now of turning the entire peace-keeping mission into a military campaign against Aided.

The accusation sounds plausible once you realize that since Aided began a relatively successful guerrilla war against U.S./U.N. forces, his popularity among Somalis has spread far beyond the Habr Gedir clan he heads.

That's because Somalis are intensely nationalistic and patriotic. They would rather bathe in the bubble bath of a Somali dictator than wash in the polluted stream of U.N. dictators.

The U.S./U.N. axis, miscalculating such sentiment, thought they could manipulate the Somalis as though they were children without arms or legs. Aided recognized this error and seized the moment. At first he, along with many other Somalis, saw the brutality of the Pakistanis, French, British and Americans against even innocent Somali children, much like the Israeli terrorist campaign during the intifada against innocent Pales-

tinian children, he realized he was being used. By submitting himself to U.N. authority, like a general of a defeated army, he would have been considered equal to his conquerors. But as a conqueror, he and other Somalis would have been actually the slaves of foreign dictators. Neither he nor his people could accept such humiliation.

Like any prudent strategic planner, he took advantage of the situation. He saw his country being overrun by U.S./U.N. encroachment.

If you think about it, what else could he do? Indeed, what is anyone worth who is not ready and willing to sacrifice himself for the benefit of his people?

Aided seized this sentiment and forced not only Somalis, but millions worldwide to question the humanitarian intentions of the U.S./U.N. interventionists.

Generally, humanitarian activities do not consist of unhumanitarian actions. That's why the September 9 U.S. massacre of women and children throwing rocks at U.N. soldiers threatens to confuse the difference between humanitarianism and terrorism.

Some may conclude that humanitarianism is terrorism and terrorism is humanitarianism. Under such circumstances, when humanitarian efforts are no longer as clear and distinct as a spoon or the sun, it's time to follow a time-honored practice: When you're sure, sit; when in doubt, leave.

JAMES STRONG is a syndicated columnist.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

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Child Care Dilemma For Family

By Angela Owens
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I'm a black female, 29-years-old, single-parent of two, and on this disgusting welfare. I'm not happy nor satisfied with it and want a change.

Not only do I want a change but am currently striving hard to make a change, the only thing is I don't have any support except for the day care paid for by the Mecklenburg JOBS program. Since being in the program, we participants were given a handbook for reference for any questions or requirements concerning the rules, etc. of the program, and nowhere in the handbook is there a requirement for emergency child-care backup. I now seem to be in danger of having my case closed if I don't have (as my worker tells me) emergency child care backup.

I've done very well in the JOBS program and feel that this reason is not good enough to close my program. I know what it is to work. I've done so since 14 on up to 26 years old. Why did I quit? Well being that I'm not perfect, I happened to meet the wrong individual in life to father my two boys and he took me on a trip that I'll never forget but refuse to ever go on again.

No I do not care to be on AFDC. I feel humiliated and miserable being on it, and it's a constant reminder of my own mother, who also was a recipient all her life except for a few housekeeping jobs on the side. I was and presently am determined not to end up on government assistance the rest of my life. I have two wonderful boys whom I love dearly and want the best for them like any other parent. I am totally on my own. I have been faithful to myself which in turn has made me faithful to the JOBS program. But with 87 hours hanging over my head a month this will and/or maybe jeopardize my future in the program.

I have no transportation of my own so I have to catch the city bus to go everywhere I have to go, and that's six to eight buses a day Monday-Friday. I awake at 5:45 a.m. every morning to get my boys ready for day care, and when we finally arrive back to our apartment it's 6 p.m. I have a full load and schedule, yet I am still determined to get off this system by any means necessary! I am trying the best that I humanly and mentally can, but there needs to be some reasonable changes here.

I received a letter of probation on July 21 because I missed four days of STEPS because my two boys caught the chicken-pox, and I had to care for them. Prior to the letter, I had discussed this with my JOBS worker and she said the days missed would be "no big deal," she would intercede on my behalf and I wouldn't be sent a letter.

I hope that in the near future I will have emergency child-care, but what about now? The only solution I see is less hours. Is this truly a JOBS opportunity for all, or for only those with support?

ANGELA OWENS of Charlotte is a participant of the Mecklenburg JOBS program.

Miss America Pageant Sees The Beauty In Being Black

By James Alsbrook
SPECIAL TO THE POST

What message should black people and others get from the surprising fact that another panel of almost totally white judges selected a young black woman as Miss America for the fifth time in 11 years?

Witnesses of the pageant were confronted with these and other questions as talented, attractive, and com-

munity-oriented Kimberly Clarice Aiken, 18, of South Carolina won the title in the annual pageant at Atlantic City, N.J. Other black women among the 10 finalists were Miss Ohio, the 20-year-old Tiltalayo Adedokun of Cincinnati, and Miss Alabama, the 22-year-old Kalyn Chapman, an attractive psychology major and talented dancer.

Various reasons are being given for blacks' great recent success in the pageant.

Which, if any, do you think are correct:

- The judges are trying to strike blows against race prejudice and show that beauty is more than skin deep.
- The sponsors are trying to show that the "Miss Black America" pageant that features black women only, is divisive, irrelevant and redundant.
- White people generally are beginning to understand that "Black is beautiful."
- White judges are implicitly apologizing for prior mistreatment of black people and for discouraging black women from entering the Miss America Pageant in many past years.
- Damaging stereotypes like those projected by Butterfly McQueen, Hattie McDaniel and Louise Beavers are out of date and should be out of mind, and a new day of social equality among races has arrived and should be respected.

Gone are the days when Miss America victories were determined by whether the girl's figure was "less than Greek," or by mythical, grandmotherly "Gone With the Wind" femininity values, or by canned "goody two-shoes" responses to bland, obvious and "leading" questions. Today's winner must have thought and acted in terms of helping other people.

JAMES ALSBROOK is a syndicated columnist.