

EDITORIALS

Let's Do This Ourselves

One should not be able to determine who is in any particular neighborhood on the basis of its appearance.

With the arrival of warm weather and the expectation of a summer with many outdoor opportunities, it would be an exciting and beneficial experience for all citizens to accept the responsibility and challenge of changing the appearance of many of our neighborhoods.

With all the construction and changes which are taking place in our community should come an awareness of the need to upgrade everywhere.

Old communities can be made beautiful with some care and effort.

Poor neighborhoods can look clean and neat with some interest.

Vacant lots can look nice with a simple grass-cutting and trash-collecting.

Is there any group or organization that will assume the thankless task of identifying the areas of our community that need attention? If a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, we could "attack" the areas that drastically need attention and thereby improve the appearance throughout the community.

To improve the appearance of our neighborhoods would lift the spirits and attitudes of everyone. Dirt breeds dirt—whether physical, mental or spiritual.

Cleaner neighborhoods would lessen our need this summer to be so particular about which streets we travel on as we take and bring our relatives and friends who will be visiting with us.

Improved neighborhoods will boost property values as we rid ourselves of the negatives and depressing situations.

Even if it should take the entire summer to clean up and fix our depressed areas, it would be worth it if once cleaned we can keep them clean.

How much wisdom is there in riding through filthy streets in shiny new Mercedes-Benzes?

Why park a BMW beside a dilapidated shack?

What sense does it make to wear new suits and clean shoes—stepping over glass, trash and weeds?

This is not an impossible task. Frankly, it costs nothing, not even time, for we waste too much time as it is.

We are not calling for new construction here, nor a loan from a downtown bank, no investors, no risk. Just do something about cleaning up our neighborhoods.

We let our areas go down—and then complain that no one is interested in our side of town.

The evidence is that we are not even really interested.

It doesn't take a major developer to clean off sidewalks and pick up trash.

Let's do this for ourselves.

Sad, Sad

If there is one election result a black political candidate wishes to avoid it is the possibility of a second primary. The reason is sad.

If there is one way to generate widespread concern and involvement over an issue, it is to develop that issue into a crisis. Sad.

One aspect of nature which any candidate depending upon our vote on election day absolutely fears is the spectre of rain. How sad.

If there is to be any possibility of obtaining the remotest support from the black community—whether the candidate be black or non-black—he or she must carry the Democratic Party label. That's sad.

The steps to political prominence and achievement are in the first instance to win the support of the black community, and thereafter align yourself with other interests with the confidence that the black community is locked in forever. A sad commentary.

Oh yes, after winning the community's support initially, if the candidate should ever take a position or cast a vote opposing the interests of the community, just answer with an explanation which should include lack of information, misinformation, a breakdown in communication,

words about the "bigger picture," some comments on past relationships, and a reference to Dr. King and two or three jokes. This is sad.

A non-black candidate must enter a political meeting in the black community accompanied by his black aide. Isn't that a sad observation?

If a candidate is endorsed by an organization and you as an opposing candidate or active supporter of the opposing candidate should disagree with the endorsement, organize another group as rapidly as possible, call in some TV, radio and newspaper reporters and issue the endorsement that meets your needs. So sad.

Another approach to utilize when an office-holder or candidate does or says something seen as contrary to the interests of the black community is to be patient with the understanding that the community will forget the insult shortly, and with a few favors the matter will be over. Sad, so sad.

The most recently employed technique to keep your black support, and win the backing of interests competing with that black constituency, is to tell the blacks that you sympathize with them but can't really help them if you want to win. It's sad, but it works.

Astrology And Government

Abraham Lincoln has been recognized for his inner spiritual strength derived from the Scriptures.

The present White House occupants are being questioned about their regard for astrology.

The values of the nation are influenced by the practices of its leadership. The consequence of this latest flap will be an increasing interest in astrology by citizens—because "the president uses it."

Leadership is a mammoth responsibility, and at the national level it is made more precarious because life is within a glass house.

Senators Gary Hart and Joseph Biden were both confronted with public scrutiny and reaction to some of their personal aberrations. We put leadership by astrology in the same category.

We do have freedom of religion, and one's private life should be one's own business. But we do not believe that our president should be under the influence of

astrologers, soothsayers, palm readers and the like—be they Republican or Democrat.

A valid question is, would a presidential candidate be accepted by the voters if it were known that the candidate practices astrology?

A second question is, does the American public want decision-making by astrological signs?

And thirdly, if astrology is perceived as a valid tool for governing, should we not also apply it in Congress and at the state and local levels of government?

Hopefully, this matter was simply some two-bit conversation which was picked up by a news reporter and is just much ado about nothing. The media have been known to grasp onto anything to use as a story to sell some papers.

Lincoln's attention to the Bible is consistent with what has been the underlying foundation of the American way—"In God We Trust."

Maybe times are changing.

MILLER SAYS

BY SHERMAN N. MILLER
LOCAL BLACK MINISTERS' DECISIONS HAVE NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

As the most powerful institution in the black community, the black church's decisions are reflective of mainstream black America. Thus, church leaders' actions which potentially damage the excellent name and reputations of the black church ought to be very seriously addressed.

In North Carolina, the re-election bid of Mecklenburg County Commissioner Rev. Bob Walton will leave an indelible taint on the image of the national black church. Walton did not leave office to allow for an expungement following a serious character crisis. He then placed the Christian Ministers Fellowship Association in the awkward position of de facto compelling them to endorse his bid for re-election.

The Charlotte Post reports that Rev. Jerry White, president of the CMFA, "stressed that Walton paid his debt for his 1987 assault conviction and that as Christians, that's all the association could expect." In this article White says, "[Walton] has demonstrated the Christian teachings and belief we believe in."

If one considers that Walton is a Presbyterian minister, then he must be held to a higher standard than a layperson. I Timothy 3, in the Holy Bible, offers a code of conduct for Christian ministers. "...He must be well thought of by those outside the church, to ensure that he does not fall into disgrace..."

The actions of the Assemblies of God's national leadership in the Rev. Jimmy Swaggart scandal offer an inkling of the national significance of the black ministers' endorsement of Walton. The Assemblies of God leadership recognized that they must reconcile the dichotomy of morality and money to maintain the church's credibility. I applaud their fortitude in opting for righteousness over the money Rev. Swaggart's ministry has garnered.

The Walton endorsement is obviously a mistake by the black church of Mecklenburg County.

My only solace is that these same black ministers voted to prevent Rev. Walton from exploiting religious bigotry. I watched a Charlotte television news reporter set the stage for these black ministers to vote on making an Islamic challenger's religion an issue in the Mecklenburg County Commissioner's race. I anxiously awaited the late news.

Although I felt better after these ministers refused to legitimize religious bigotry, I shudder to think that they could have laid the scene for another Northern Ireland or Lebanon.

I hope that America's black ministers accept that their local decisions no longer only impact their own flocks. I also trust that black ministers will recognize that it is not sufficient to be right, but one's actions must also appear honorable.



MILLER



CHUCK STONE

Why Meese will go

By Chuck Stone

Just as President Reagan led the fight to get teenagers to say "no" to drugs, this same president has taken charge of the fight to get Edwin Meese to say "yes" to resignation.

This is a president with a broad-visioned capacity for action. This is a president whose warm-hearted appreciation for loyalty will tolerate error, but not ineptitude. This president doesn't wait until the White House's credibility hemorrhages into a coma, but "takes the bull by the horns," "strikes while the iron is hot" and believes you "never put off till tomorrow what you can do today."

This president ran Donald Regan out of the White House so fast that the chief of staff dashed between the rain drops and nary a one fell on him. And now, this president's intuitive brilliance recognizes that the investigation of Meese's tawdry ethics is a dangerous threat to the White House's integrity.

As a front-page story by the fastidiously reliable Wall Street Journal reported, this president "knows that Meese has to go." But forbearance is a virtue. This president will quietly—and sweetly—exert pressure until an iron will cuts off the circulation of Meese's administrative power.

Sweetly. Did I say, sweetly?

Indeed. How else to characterize this president's velvet-sheathed, gentility-fronted cussedness that can cut your political neck with a metaphorical scimitar and not leave a drop of blood.

President Nancy Reagan takes no prisoners.

Only when she has heeded the spineless and equivocating advice of her husband Ronald has she gotten into trouble. But she has an amazing resiliency. By following her shrewd instincts, she has been able to lead both herself and her favorite court jester out of the cellar of controversy.

This is not to suggest that President Nancy doesn't appreciate loyalty. She cherishes it, especially when her White House aides apply their talents to making Ronald look smarter than he really is.

What she detests are those aides who believe that personal loyalty is a political license to plunder. Just as guilty in her eyesight are those who somehow keep blurring the lines between plunderer and plundered.

George Bush shares Nancy Reagan's anxiety. But he just wants to get elected. She wants a resignation.

Granted, nobody has uncovered any "smoking gun" in the attorney general's administrative closet. Meese seems to be more the bumbling village idiot than the manipulative city slicker. But his capacity for friendship with con men, sleaze artists and deal-making hustlers casts an unethical pall over his office.

"Cleaner than a hound's tooth" was the moral criterion Dwight D. Eisenhower established for cabinet officers and top aides. The office of the nation's leading law-enforcement officer shouldn't have even a touch of plaque.

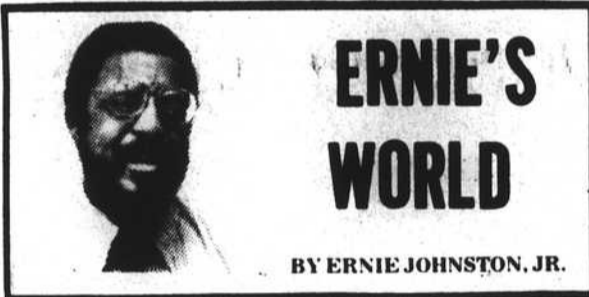
Meese's operation has become one of the dingiest in American history. But for some reason, the myopic Meese doesn't see the reputational harm allegations of conflicts of interest, suspicions of unethical conduct, investigations into unsavory alliances and reports of spousal wheeling and dealing have done to his office.

Meese will go. Not because he embarrasses Nancy's court jester or threatens to prevent George Bush's election, but because his contempt for a great American institution is clothing it with disrepute. Conscience has forced decent men who worked under him to resign. Potential replacements have declined to serve.

The journalistic inquiries won't stop. It's just a question of time before the special prosecutor's "fat lady" sings the final aria. If Meese doesn't believe it, he should ask Richard Nixon.

It won't necessarily be the end of the road for Meese. Like Nixon, he could one day become a respected elder statesman.

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BLACKS RELEGATED TO "GHETTO BROADCASTING"

OPEN ROAD, USA—As I travel the country, I get a chance to see a lot of local television shows.

Over the past several years I have seen a pattern develop and here lately it has not gotten any better and if anything it is worse.

Most of the news shows that I have watched have black females as co-anchors with white males and in almost all cases there are no black men paired with either a white male or a white woman except in a very few cases.

That is the case with television markets in New York, Texas, Virginia, North Carolina, Michigan and a few other states that I have observed.

Switching the dials of the television set in a Southern state the other week revealed at least a half-dozen black women who were co-anchors but not one black man was shown in the "big seat" although a black anchor no doubt would have been far superior to the white talent that was being presented to the television audience.

To understand just why such is happening, I have to go back to 1984 and a headline article in the newsletter of the Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists.

The headline, "Detroit TV Anchor Slots Off Limits for Black Men," could have been adapted to almost any city since the same situation exists practically nationwide and there is hardly any change since 1984—four years later.

In that article were some suggestions as to why the situation exists.

"Most stations have only two prime anchor chairs and one must be 'reserved' for a white male."

"The white male will always be in the commanding, 'take charge,' or lead anchor slot because society is still dominated by white males, and viewers have been conditioned to feel that only a white male can be an authority."

"Black men might 'conflict with' or appear to 'confront' white males on the air if they are paired."

"Television must appeal to television's mass audience which is white."

"The black female is often 'best suited' for the secondary role because it is felt she is more likely to ask questions than state an opinion. If a white female is selected, racial minorities in urban centers could charge 'racism.' If a black male is selected, women's groups could charge 'sexism.' With a black female, the concerns of both groups are addressed and protests are muted."

At the same time, according to that DCNABJ article, researchers state that viewers often see one anchor taking the lead and setting the tone and pace of a newscast. With black men, researchers say that some people would wonder who is in charge.

But just where does the black male fit into the television on-air news operation? They are in sportscasting which has become more acceptable for a black man to be in a dominant role especially since blacks are highly visible in the sports field.

Also in most of the markets (New York included), black men are slotted into weekend anchor jobs (only seen regularly on Saturdays and Sundays, or on public affairs programs) which the DCNABJ calls "the ghetto of broadcasting."

Management of television stations look upon those slots as being less important and the visibility is just not there as

(See ERNIE, P. 8)

Child Watch

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN
President, Children's Defense Fund
A QUIZ FOR CANDIDATES

How much do the people who are now running for public office know about the social realities of today's America? Every candidate should know the basic facts about our society and economy if they are to represent all Americans and protect our children. First test yourself and then test candidates with these important questions. Answers appear at the end.

1. How many Americans are poor?
2. How many children are poor?
3. Are the majority of the poor white or black?
4. Are the majority of the poor working or on welfare?
5. What is the average welfare payment in America today?
6. How many Americans are unemployed?
7. How many Americans have no health insurance?
8. What percentage of preschool children have mothers in the labor force?
9. Where does America rank among 20 industrialized nations on infant mortality rates?
10. How many American teens gave birth in 1985?
11. Were most of them black or white?
12. Which group of families is most likely to be poor: young families, families headed by those who are 40-50 years old or those headed by older Americans?
13. What was the average cost of buying a new house in 1985?
14. What did a new house cost on average 10 years earlier?
15. What was the median income of white families in America in 1986?
16. What was the median income of black families that year?

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. 32 million.
2. 13 million.
3. White.
4. Working.
5. \$4 per person per day.
6. 7 million.
7. 35 million.
8. Half.
9. Last.
10. About 500,000.
11. White.
12. Young families.
13. \$84,300.
14. \$39,300.
15. \$29,458.
16. \$17,604.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

The good news that you have been waiting to hear is here! We are being offered an option that has the greatest potential for economic growth and entrepreneurial opportunities in the Capital City of North Carolina. What makes it so timely for us is that the need for innovative redevelopment for our area of Southeast Raleigh is requiring our immediate attention and unique input. Consequently, we realize we must now get busy preparing ourselves to fulfill this important obligation.

You may be thinking: How will we do it? Simply

stated, it is so easy. All we have to do is put our heads, hands and hearts together to reach our common goal which is to develop our community economically and aesthetically. This will be our dream come true.

Members of the Business Building Society have observed the track record of the Legal Services of North Carolina in past efforts to assist the deprived and underprivileged of our people in personal legal matters and have found it very impressive. Likewise, the new bolder and broader steps they have taken to expand their involvement in community economic develop-

ment has had much merit due to the extensive research they have done to present us with a wealth of information, for the benefit of our entire community but especially Southeast Raleigh. Community Economic Development is our new wave to economic freedom for a stronger market for the business community.

So in order to expand our economic base and share this information with you, please make plans to attend a special meeting on Saturday, May 15, at St. Augustine's College in Room 012 of the Boyer

(See LETTER, P. 8)