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FCC
COMMISSIONER



Black people in this age stand at a particular and peculiar junction. We face unprecedented possibilities on the one hand and unparalleled peril on the other.

The fervor and sweep of the civil rights struggle of the 1950's and 60's culminated in great victories. Most of the obvious signs of segregation have been removed: segregated restrooms, colored drinking fountains, no rooms at the so-called white hotels, back of the bus seating restrictions (public accommodations), a rigidly segregated school system (by law), even laws that restrict the vote or tell citizens whom they may or may not marry.

And there are laws now on the books that forbid racial discrimination in housing, health and employment.

However, as we have scraped away the upper layer of blatant segregation and bias, we have discovered a much more sophisticated and calcified form of discrimination laying underneath.

So as we integrate the school system through the courts, white flight to sanitized suburbs (taking with them industries and department stores) is of such proportion that in many of our giant cities the school population is becoming increasingly Black -- 70, 80, even 90 percent Black, defeating the original purpose.

Inequitable distribution of tax monies was one of the prime reasons Blacks wanted school integration in the first place. Separate but equal laws have always worked to our detriment. But white industry-business flight to the suburbs is eroding an already shaky tax base in urban areas.

Because whites control the best paying jobs thus own bigger and better homes, their flight from the cities leaves behind a disproportionate number of poor, ill-housed folks who do not have the wherewithal to take up the tax burden of our schools.

Fleeing department stores and factories take additional tax revenue with them. That is one pressing problem facing Black people and the cities of our nation today. It is racism of the worst order and how we can deal with it will be the theme of several future columns.

Let us face up with candor to another troubling aspect of our lives. It is a fact that much earlier business progress was made in Black communities because the white man refused to serve us in certain areas: Two prominent examples come to mind:

The mortuary and insurance businesses. With the removal of most obvious forms of segregation, white insurance companies are singing their siren songs. And what does this portend for Blacks?

The National Insurance Association (NIA) a Black consortium of 39 insurance firms, revealed at its recent convention that while these companies are moving ahead (they have combined assets of over one billion dollars and more than seven billion dollars worth of insurance in force, according to NIA executive director Charles Davis) the amount is piddling compared to white insurance companies.

According to American Life Insurance Association, figures (1973), this white consortium of 1,800 members, has a combined \$252 billion in assets, and a staggering \$1.76 trillion worth of insurance in force.

Obviously we Blacks are way behind in this area. And to add insult to injury, white insurance companies today are aggressively selling insurance and recruiting salesmen in Black communities, causing Black insurance companies a number of headaches.

According to Robert Miller of Chicago, executive secretary of the Black National Funeral Directors and Morticians, white funeral homes average \$1,600 per funeral, while Black funeral homes average between \$700 and \$800 per burial. Operating overhead for Black morticians is 60 percent higher and a whopping 48 percent of his organizations' annual funerals are welfare cases.

One need not be a mathematician to be able to calculate where Blacks come out here. The funeral business, because of its social stigma (whites simply boycotted white funeral homes that buried Blacks in many areas), has remained largely segregated.

There are moves now being made, I understand, by large white funeral consortiums in some parts of the country, particularly the South, to take over the Black burial trade. This is being done, according to my information, by whites who set up a funeral parlor next door to an operating Black one, if the Black firm refuses to permit the white takeover. The new funeral parlor of course is fronted by Blacks, but owned by whites.

PTA plans carnival workshop

A carnival workshop is being sponsored by the Las Vegas Area Council Parent-Teacher Association at Red Rock Elementary Saturday, September 27, according to Council President Judy Ward.

Merchandisers of prizes, games and food for fund-raising carnivals will be on hand with displays and catalogs, and representatives of PTA'S AT Red Rock, Rex Bell, Ruth Fyfe and Lewis E. Rowe will answer questions on how to run successful school carnivals.

The workshop is open to all PTA units and all other interested groups, according to Mrs. Ward. Hours will be 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

One-day school carnivals are a primary fund-raising technique for most, if not all, PTA units in Clark County.

New Women's Group Formed

Femmes Alone, a travel and entertainment activities club for solo women, was organized recently by several Las Vegas residents. Primarily designed to serve as an exchange for any unattached women (single, divorced, widowed, or even marrieds with stay at home husbands), the club is planning a Travel and Activities Program for members who usually have to restrict their entertainment plans because they have no one with whom to "buddy-up."

According to the group, solo women are hampered when they go out in the world -- even in these liberated

days. Most restricting is the cost of travel which is almost doubled by the addition of a single supplement charge. Another popular entertainment choice which women alone find closed to them are Strip Shows in Las Vegas. However, the new club most emphatically states that this is not a "lonely hearts club" or escort service; but an exchange medium for solo women to find other women with common interests and plans.

The group invites any solo gal who is interested in such a program to join them. For further information call, 739-8454.

Year-in-prison gun law

Massachusetts has a unique gun abuse law -- designed to stop people from carrying unlicensed firearms. It imposes a mandatory jail sentence of one to five years on anyone who is found with an unlicensed gun of any kind, loaded or unloaded, away from his home or business. No plea bargaining, no continuances, speedy trial, and no furlough or parole for at least one year.

The law does not apply to the drug-store owner, the gas station employee, the people who work late at night and have been the targets of prowlers and thieves. It does not apply to sportsmen or to target shooters or antique gun collectors. All they need do is get the necessary licenses or permits from their local police.

Only the person who carries a gun without legal authority will face the certainty that if he is caught he will certainly be punished. This law, says its author, Judge J. John Fox, "is not a gun control bill, but a crime control bill involving gun abuse." It makes the saying, "It is not the severity of the sentence, but the certainty of sentence," truly meaningful.

Pollution ban suspended during annual clean-up

Nevada's air pollution ban on open burning will be suspended from October 18 through the 26 in all areas of the State except Washoe and Clark counties, Richard Serdoz, environmental protection air quality officer, stated recently.

However, Serdoz warned that local laws may forbid open burning of material even though it is permitted by state regulations during the nine-day period of the state's annual fall clean-up.

Residents should inform their local fire departments prior to the burning of the nature of the material, and the date, time and place of the disposal fire. Serdoz said the rubber and petroleum products such as asphalt

shingles, tar paper, insulation, tires and oil should never be burned.

CCSD security books juveniles for arson

Two male juveniles, 13 and 16 years old have been booked by Clark County School District security officers and charged with arson in connection with a fire at Madison Sixth Grade Center July 7.

Chief of Security Bill Scherkenbach refused to release details leading up to apprehension of the two boys.

The early morning fire gutted the Madison office and teacher workroom area, causing \$88,000 in damages. School opened normally this fall with reconstruction work continuing.

Scherkenbach said his department was still investigating a fire that destroyed one classroom at Lewis E. Rowe Elementary in mid-August.

Human Resources plan completed

Roger Trounday, Director of the Nevada Department of Human Resources, announced recently that the Final Comprehensive Annual Services Program Plan for the State of Nevada has been completed.

The plan describes eligibility criteria and available funds Expansion of Nevada's final service program plan has been brought about through further development

of services provided by the Department of Human Resources, Trounday said.

The Final Program Plan will be available for public review Oct. 1, at all Nevada State Welfare Division offices. The Plan will also be available for public review in the Nevada State Library in Carson City, and in the County Clerk offices of: Minden, Goldfield, Eureka and Virginia City.

U.S. Customs promotes first Black woman to GS-14 position

Mrs. Dorothy M. Pleasant of Oxon Hill, Md., has become the first black woman to achieve an executive level position at the U.S. Customs Service with her recent promotion to Senior Operations Officer.

A graduate of Spelman College in her home city of Atlanta, Ga., Mrs. Pleasant joined Customs positions, she rose rapidly to her present status in a predominantly male field.

As Program Manager for Operational Acceptance Testing, she will head a team of seven men and one woman testing Customs' Automated Merchandise Processing system (AMPS). The system uses modern computer technology to process merchandise through Customs in minimum time.

Mrs. Pleasant's husband, James, an Operations Assistant, who she met at U.S. Customs, helped to design the system that his wife will test. The couple has seven children, five of them Mr. Pleasant's by a former marriage.

An avid seamstress, Mrs. Pleasant makes her own clothes. She enjoys cooking, dancing, and interior decorating when not traveling for business.

She intends to start work on a Master's Degree in Business Administration in January with an eye toward becoming a District Director for Customs some day. Mrs. Pleasant says she'd aim for Regional Commissioner, but time might prevent her from reaching that goal before retirement. She's certain neither her sex nor color would interfere. "I'm fortunate to be with Customs," she says.



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