

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

PONCHITTA ON ROCKY GOSSIP TRAIL

Gossip circles are coming up with all manner of theories about the hows and whys of the involvement of lovely and brainy Ponchitta Pierce in the circumstances surrounding the death of former Vice Pres. Nelson Rockefeller. Much of what is being said isn't fit for a family newspaper, and is unbecoming those who are advancing them. . .Honi Coles' profound statement, "The Negro Actors Guild never had \$120,000," is sadly correct. A disagreeing group of executive board members have charged his administration with misappropriating that amount. This infighting could spell finis to the already floundering org. founded by the late Bill Robinson, and nurtured by the late Noble Sissle and Leigh Whipper. . .Richard Clark, who heads a highly successful exec. head hunting agency, is a strange replacement, for veteran actor and theatrical union head, Fred O'Neal on the N.Y. State Council on the Arts. Named by Gov. Hugh Carey, Clark's term runs thru March '81. This is not a beef, 'cause Dick is a jolly good person. But it is a lament, because behind that the good Gov. named that marvelous actor, James Earl Jones, to a panel to determine the best type of operation for gambling casinos in N'York. . .Henry Porter's brush and pen works are attracting cash attention in Macy's and Abraham & Strauss' art dept. These are among a very few stores exhibiting "Black Art," of which Henry's about the best, for sale. Love the title of the AMAS Repertory Theatre's continuing '78-'79 musical seasibm "It's So Nice to Be Civilized." The write work is out of the genius of Micki Grant.

WRITE FACTS AND FICTION

Alleged informed sources would have you believe that Vernon Jordan, prexy of the Nat'l Urban League, was a front runner, among the many called, but not chosen to be president of The Ford Foundation. The mouthers said he was greatly disappointed, but highly pleased Frank Thomas was given the precedent breaking position. . .Tin Pan Alley's sound-off as to the reasons lovely Freda Payne's spouse started his divorce proceedings, isn't above a whisper. It's said that she was the last to know, and as shocked as those who suddenly privy to the facts. . . "Positively Black" finally came up with a worthwhile dialogue. Its "Mood of the 96th. Congress" was befitting the time and guests, Senators Patrick Moynihan, Jacob Javits, Bill Bradley, and Cong'persons Shirley Chisholm, Peter Rodino and Charles Rangel. . .Nielsen figured that some 40 mil folks eyed-and-eared Olivia Cole, Leslie Uggams, Louis Gossett, Jr., Robert Hooks, Paul Winfield and the others who gave believable life to NBC-TV's version of Lillian Rogers Parks book, "My 30-Yrs. Backstairs at the White House." The entertaining and knowledge implanting miniseries should win a number of awards. . .Sammy Davis, busy shooting a new flick, "Disco-Man," in film land, has been propositioned to lead a special Easter Parade in Atlantic City It just might be one he cannot refuse. . .Molly Moon insists on having something for everybody at the annual mid-March "Beaux-Arts" ball at the Waldorf. . .Duncan Divins was discharged from the hosp. just in time for his Dorothy's welcome to the Virgin Islands" bash for Evelyn Holt and our Izzy. Natch they added an extra wk. to their stay when that big snow hit last wk.

WRITE WITH THE NEWS

Kayatana Harrison, a L.A. dental assistant, would love to build a legal bridge to Flip Wilson's bank and collect half of his accumulated assets as a reward for allegedly being his "Live-in-companion" for 4-yrs. T'is said she plans to prove that "Geraldine," in the comic's case is just an act and in noway the femme of Gerald Catherine Basie left all that Freeport sun to join her piano super star for more of the same in summer blessed Australia. She's making her first tour in ages with the Count because it's their ann'y. She asked me not to count. Get it? With so many fund raising affairs running day and date, supporters of various organizations are in a dilemma. The Nat'l Urban League and the United Negro College Fund are head-on March 8th. On March 3rd. Mel Patrick's Delegate Mag. will do its thing with Friends of the Community Ass'n, East Harlem, in honor of that sectors dynamo, Alice Kornegay. On the same date a committee of Who's Who will be honoring the long deserved Civil Rights activate, James Farmer in

DeeCee. Comes March 6th. The Joint Center for Political Studies will honor the astute educator Dr. Ken Clark. Then to further tax your dwindling funds, and loyalty, the NAACP will host a 68th. b'day dinner for the long deserving "101st Senator" Clarence Mitchell, Jr, in DeeCee March 14th. . .Hey somebody, I gotta get a rise! . .No wondah Baltimore's sausage king Henry Parks is denying his rumored secret marriage to educator Alice Pinderhuges. . . "The Evening, is a new upscheduled Village Gate production that will star the lovely Carol Cass. She's the talent I keep writing home about. By the by, she, and her musically endowed spouse have struck a sour note.

WRITE TO THE END

Billy Taylor, an incumbent, and Quincy Jones are among a slate of musical greats nominated for election to ASCAP's board of directors. . .Word is that Her Majesty's Theatre in London's West End is already a sellout for the March 22nd. opening of the international version of, "Ain't Misbehavin'," the B'way his musical born out of tunes composed and played by the immortal Fats Waller. . .In another case the folks in London have no aversions to Bad Company. The announcement of that group's tour of the Untied Kingdom was followed by an instant sell-out. . . "The American Dream" has been scheduled among several pilots being considered for the new season by ABC-TV. The opus is about a middle class white family living in a black neighborhood. . .Eleanor Howard, who rode a lot of political bandwagons in DeeCee, has giving it all up for a spell to seek a doctorate at a N'York City university. . .George Wein is sure that Sarah Vaughan's three concert cycle at Carnegie Hall withing a 10-day period, will be historic. Each has been programmed to represent a totally different facet of the "Wonderful" Vaughan's art and repertoire. . .HANG LOOSE.



The BLACKSIDE of Washington By Sherman Briscoe NNPA

CAN BARRY CHANGE D.C.?

In this last colony of continental America, we have a new black mayor--Marion Barry--a Mississippi born, Beale-Street raised civil rights activist who has promised some innovations. Can he, will he deliver?

Sofar, the Metro buses are as slow as ever, round-the-clock, unchanging traffic light scheduling (same at 4 a.m. as during the 4 p.m. rush hour) is still exasperating motorists, while rigid traffic ticketing continues to kill downtown. Cas-and-carry dope sales are still wide open, and prostitutes continue to conduct their business on 14th Street.

But Mayor Barry is providing housing with dignity for the street people, moving to make the Human Resources Department manageable, and improving his administration by cleaning out corners that are long overdue. Give him a little time, and I believe he'll make the difference for Washington's 700,000 mostly black citizens.

CHISHOLM PASSED OVER

Captial news people are asking why the Congressional Black Caucus passed over Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm of New York for the chair after her excellent service as vice chairperson?

The official explanation seems to be that it was time for Illinois to be represented in the chair, and so the post went to able Rep. Cardiss Collins. Rep. Charles Rangel, sources said, had represented New York only two chairmanships ago.

Unofficially, some are saying the caucus passed over Shirley because she jumped the in 1972 and ran for the Democratic Presidential nomination after it had been agreed that the Caucus would select the candidate and control the garnered votes at the convention. I thought it was the elephant that had the long memory, not the donkey.

AG STILL ON TAIL END

By any measure, agriculture owes Black Americans

more than any other career field. We carried it on our ragged, sweaty backs as slaves and sharecroppers for more than 300 years, or until chemistry took the hoe away, and the mechanical harvester made jobless our cotton-picking hands, and sent us to the welfare rolls of the city ghetto.

Yet despite our enormous contribution to American agriculture, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture has had a decent job to offer, we have been largely passed over. Even in the Carter administration, Agriculture is last in the employment of blacks in positions in the \$50,000 range.

The Joint Center for Political Studies has developed a list of nearly 200 blacks in the \$50,000-a-year category. Agriculture has only one -- Dr. Joan Wallace Assistant Secretary for Administration. Commerce has 15; HEW, 15; HUD 15, with last week's addition of Sterling Tucker as Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing.

State has 13; Labor and Transportation, 10 each; Defense, 7; Interior and Treasury, 6 each; Justice, 4; and Energy 3. And these are just the Cabinet level agencies. Outside the Cabinet, a dozen independent agencies can count more than 50 in the \$50,000 range. But again, Agriculture has only ONE.

Don't swallow whole everything you read or hear, CHEW it awhile.

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