

Across The Nation

News From Home Folks

This feature is a news compilation from more than 100 black-owned and oriented newspapers in this nation. It deals with what blacks, who are all-too-often little recognized, are doing to promote full participation in American life by black Americans. It is thus a salute from all of our readers for unsung heroes... and is designed to be a challenge for all of us to keep on doing our very best.

The Kalamazoo, Michigan, *Focus News* tells of one important way that blacks may impress upon public agencies their responsibility to support minority-owned businesses. We are grateful for this significant example which should inspire all of us for more determined and more widespread action to improve black economic life. The *Focus News* relates concerning the East Lansing, Michigan, schools:

Schools should buy more of their needed goods and services from small and minority businesses.

And they should give special encouragement to minority businesses outside of the "service" field.

These are the contentions of Edward Bivens, business enterprise specialist with the Michigan Department of Management and Budget, who addressed 40 members of the Michigan Region, National Association of Educational Buyers, meeting recently at Michigan State University.

Bivens, who is staff coordinator for Michigan's Procurement Council for Small and Minority Business, urged the school men to voluntarily patronize small business, to set their own "voluntary" goals. Voluntarism, he noted, is much longer lived than mandates.

"Many good and innovative ideas lie dormant in the minds of individuals who feel that today's world won't give them a chance," Bivens noted. "The largest businesses

started small... Favoring larger firms denies opportunity to the small business."

Bivens told the educators that patronizing small and minority businesses will benefit both school and community. He saw increased employment opportunities, motivation and occupation; decreased idleness, discouragement and crime.

"Fair procurement practices are of the greatest importance to fair and equal opportunity," he said.

Schools, because of their unique role in the community, can "lead the way in procurement practices which will have a profound impact on the future."

The Little Rock, Arkansas, *Southwestern Mediator Journal* featured a fine column on some inspiring tots and teens.

Their story should have a broad human appeal. We share their hopes and aspirations as representative of the zest with which our newest young people bring to the problems of the world. The *Journal* is to be commended for featuring the following:

Niki Battle is a 10 year old, 5th grade student. She is the daughter of Mrs. Linda Battle of 1019 Thayer, Little Rock. Niki's hobbies are baseball, softball, kickball, soccer, volleyball, keepaway, and football. Her grandparent is Mrs. Erma Daniels. Niki has three sisters: Lisa, Deidra, and Cheryln. Two brothers: Allen and Eugene. Niki wants to become a Policewoman when she grows up.

Pamela Darrough is a ten year old, 4th grade student at Woodruff Elementary School. She is the daughter of Mrs. Shirley Darrough of 921 Schiller. She has one brother, Gregory.

Pamela's hobbies are: reading, baseball, kickball, and football. She also likes to sell *The Southern Mediator Journal*. Her goals are to become a Nurse or Policewoman.

Terry Spencer is a 5th grade student at Woodruff Elementary School. She is ten years of age. Her parent is Mrs. Bertha Spencer, of 1114 Thayer, Little Rock.

Terri says her hobbies are soccer, football, basketball, baseball, kickball, and skating. One of her dreams is to become the owner of a bank.

Gregory hall, age 13 of 921 Schiller, is the son of Ms. Shirley Darrough. He is in the 7th grade and attends the Southwest School.

Gregory is active in football and basketball. He says he would like to become a Businessman who oversees people in building houses.

More power to these bright, beautiful and most promising and inspiring youth!

The St. Louis, Missouri, *Crusader's* executive editor Henry (Hank) Cockrell has editorialized courageously on a concern of vital interest to our readers across the nation. While told in a local context, his story serves as a challenge to all of our readers.

The editorial in the *St. Louis Crusader* reads:

An unprecedented case has taken place in Washington's U.S. District Court. A federal Judge John H. Pratt has ruled that a black woman who filed a sex and race discrimination suit must pay the fees of the government lawyers.

According to lawyers familiar with the growing number of discrimination cases filed in courts across the nation, this marks the first time a plaintiff in a bias case has been ordered to pay the federal government after losing a claim.

In his opinion, Judge Pratt ruled that Barbara N. Copeland, a GS-11 program specialist in the office of human rights of the community services administration, brought suit "in bad faith, with an intent to harass her supervisors and generally vex the defendant through abusive

conduct."

In dismissing the suit, filed by Copeland in June 1976, Pratt found that the allegations were "baseless and frivolous" and that they were intended to be a part of a "vendetta" against her supervisors.

This ruling is cause for alarm in that other federal judges may follow this precedent and thus thwart the filing of sex and discrimination race suits. Or the plaintiffs will have to bear the expense of filing such suits using their private attorneys.

With discrimination as prevalent as it is in the federal service, it is difficult to determine if the clerk-typist GS-5 who rose to a GS-11 did indeed have a "vendetta" against her white employers. Most promotions of blacks are brought about through court suits and legal actions. Few blacks are in positions for which they are unqualified.

The Columbus, Georgia, *Times* recently carried this "Letter to the Editor" from a black prisoner, who hopes to have a bright future and who wants a pen pal. If you write to Mr. Hines, please ask for the names of other inmates as possible pen pals.

Those interested in becoming a "Prison Pen Pal" may simply write to: "Prison Pen Pals," c/o Media Resources, Box 157, Selkirk, New York 12158. Please remember that over one half of all our nation's prisoners are black. We shall need a volunteer coordinator for this work. Are you interested?

The Columbus, Georgia, *Times* feature reads:

Dear Editor:
I am writing this letter in hopes that you will be able to help me, by printing my ad in your newspaper. I am in prison and being so I am unable to get in touch with people on the outside. Thanking you in advance for any and all consideration you can give me.



Congressional Black Caucus Reports to the People

CONGRESS CONFRONTS CRIME

Since 1968 the major Federal anti-crime program, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), has disbursed several billion dollars to State and local governments. These funds have bought wasteful hardware for police, yet have brought little peace to the neighborhoods where crime occurs; they have supported research on whether malnutrition causes crime, yet have failed to support studies of the impact of unemployment on crime.

As has happened with some other Federal programs, LEAA's original purpose to reform the criminal justice system and find lasting solutions to crime got confused with, and subordinated to, the special interests of the bureaucrats who run the program and of their clients, who have benefited from its income, contracts, and other giveaways.

The anti-crime agency has functioned by and large to shore up a criminal justice system that bears little or no relation to the problems of crime -- and its real causes -- as they are experienced on a daily basis by citizens in the communities where they live and work.

After extensive hearings early this year, a thorough going overhaul and reform of the agency was approved by the House Subcommittee on Crime. The new legislation would have required States and local governments to spend most of their anti-crime money in four priority areas -- community anti-crime programs; youth crime and juvenile justice; white collar and corporate crime (which, incidentally, involves billions of dollars and serious damage to citizens and society, that the Justice Department appears so reluctant to prosecute); and innovative programs to furnish alternatives to prosecution and incarceration.

On May 16th the House Judiciary Committee, unfortunately, overturned the major reforms proposed and opted instead for a continuation of the basic directions of LEAA as they now exist. The major exception was approval of increased funding for community anti-crime programs. The House and Senate now have to decide what to do with the anti-crime agency.

I cannot support it in its present form because it fails to come to terms with the real sources of most crime -- the economic policies that perpetuate poverty and the inequality and injustice in America that bars millions of individuals from gainful employment, decent income, and the opportunity to perform productive roles in society.

The reality of the economic roots of crime in America is most obvious as it affects young people, especially black youth, who are the most victimized by joblessness and discrimination. The National Urban League estimates that at any given time last year, three-fifths of all black teen-agers (57%) were out of jobs, and that figure is even higher in inner city areas like the South Bronx.

It is no accident that the vast majority of police arrests involve young people under the age of 25, the same group that suffers most from unemployment and who have the least reason to have hope for improvement in the future. Living in the wealthiest and most advanced society in history, yet condemned to lives without opportunity or purpose, many realize their immediate challenge is to escape degradation.

When survival is at stake, criminal activity often is viewed by the offender as an opportunity rather than a danger, a potentially profitable enterprise that is superior to an indecent existence, or of "giving in" or "giving up."

LEAA and the criminal justice system are part of the problem of crime, rather than its solution. The only real solution is to build a full employment economy and implement real income redistribution, so that all citizens who want to work are able to find jobs and everyone, regardless of the ability to work, has the resources to live decently.



Lonnie Wright our guest sports reporter next week.

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