

Across The Nation

News From Home Folks

BLACK POETRY

This feature is a news compilation from more than 100 black-owned and operated newspapers across the nation. It deals with what blacks are doing to improve their lives and conditions in their communities. It is a black American's voice, heard from all over the country, and is designed to be a challenge for all of us to do our very best.

"becomes a political retention of someone under those conditions—and the state permits this."

The Meridian Mississippi Memo Digest recently contained a sterling example of "home town boosting," as our readers will see from the following engaging story. Are you proud of your hometown? Are you working to make it worthy or deserving of such pride. The Memo Digest notes:

This week's photos were made in Washington, D.C. at the Annual Meridianites Picnic held in Kenilworth Park. We are reprinting comments made to Henry Mitchell of the Washington Post.

"I was riding to Meridian in a plane with three white businessmen," said Matthew Louise Barnes of Maywood, Ill., a restaurateur, "and one of them said I should move back. He said that now I could go anywhere in Meridian."

"But I said, 'You want me to come back and spend my money, now that I've made it? But when I was 16, there were places I wanted to go in Meridian and I couldn't."

"If all the people here had stayed in Meridian, and been able to do there what they have done elsewhere, we'd have been a fantastic city. A city should hold on to its own, keep its own. I left in 1949, as soon as I finished high school."

Hazel Bolton of Milford, Conn., a gray-haired woman in an orange brocade dress sprigged with flowers said:

"When you're young, you don't realize you can build it (a successful life) anywhere."

Barnes said, "The opportunities were not there."

Bettye Morton of Chicago seemed typical of the young women who left Meridian. She teaches children who do not hear well, in Chicago schools. Jewel Morgan of New Haven, another young woman, works as a cost accountant at a hospital.

Margaret O'Neal of St. Paul is editor of a newsletter

for the Twin Cities chapter of Meridianites:

"All we needed was announcements of the monthly meetings," she said a trifle sheepishly, "but I always wanted to say something else, so it grew into a full-fledged newsletter."

Ocie Drake, who left Meridian in 1943, joined the Army and afterwards went to school in Minneapolis, then to New York to learn how to make false teeth and other dental prosthetics. He now lives in Detroit and observed:

"Meridian certainly is a nicer place for blacks today than Detroit. Detroit is more segregated, more hostile. Meridian is better than most of the larger cities, and children would get a better upbringing there, as far as the community itself is concerned."

A Meridian mathematics teacher, Leroy Caffey, moved to Detroit in 1962, where he now teaches at Osborn High. He goes back to Mississippi once or twice a year.

"A lot of changes there," he said, "and we have basic rights there now that should have been ours in the beginning."

C.E. Oatis of Meridian, president of the Meridianites chapter there, moved to Meridian from nearby Jackson in 1948. He was a school band director, but since school segregation ended he has become principal of Magnolia Junior High.

Dr. Hobert Kornegay, Councilman, Precinct 4, extended greetings from the city at the Annual Ball. Dr. Kornegay also welcomed Meridianites to Meridian for the 1979 Annual Picnic.

We sincerely thank W.A. Jones of Washington, D.C. for making the pictures for this week's Photo Review. —Ed.

The Lubbock, Texas, Texas Digest's editor, T.J. Paterson, has an arresting commentary on the Bakke Decision which should be read with interest by our

readers across the nation. The Texas notes:

Nixon is gone, but we have another Nixon legacy—the Supreme Court that gave the Bakke decision. We wonder if this will make you see how important your vote can be with just one more black vote in each precinct that we voted for H.H.H. We would not have had the Nixon Supreme Court with its evil decision.

Blacks need not be despairing because of the wrong Supreme Court decision in the Bakke decision. Bakke was doing what he thought he had to do to get into the school that had already denied him several times along with 37 other schools denying him admittance, but the decision of the Court was Grossly Wrong—but the Court has been wrong before.

The Court's Dred Scott decision stated that blacks were just three-fifths a person; the Plessy decision stated that separate but equal was okay; later all of this was changed by another Court.

However, when one considers the Un-Americanism and racist attitudes within the U.S.A. only 16 of 100 decisions were for all minorities, but no provision was allowed for all the other 84 slots being changed from whites advantage only; consider also that because of the past, the ratio for black doctors is only one for 6,000 compared to the national rate among whites, one doctor for every 700 residents. You can see, we have a long way to go.

Our readers may wish to send congratulatory messages and messages of encouragement to the papers which report happenings of interest or concern to us. Such messages may be sent to the publishers, editors or other persons by simply addressing them, using the name of the paper, c/o Black resources, Inc., 410 Central ark West, PH C, New York, N.Y. 10025.

NEGLECTED

I wrote a letter today that I didn't want to mail.
Love has boarded the ship that has gone under sail.
We can only blame each other for our ups and downs
When one was needing the other neither was around.
Now that love has gone I hope we can start anew.
Still so sad that I couldn't make it with you.

We met each other on a bright and sunny day,
Never one hint of the bad weather coming our way.
As I walked to the mailbox feeling second thoughts
Maybe we can still find that love we have sought.

Then remembering I haven't heard from you in quite sometime,
Realizing I was yours at the drop of a dime
Never one letter good or bad
When you receive mine you have used all the time you had.

Knowing my spirit was weak, still you found reason to roam the streets.
Don't feel I don't love you

because I'm letting go.
It's just you never found reason to let your emotions show.

So I'm sending you these thoughts I would find hard to say.

I hope you'll remember love again when it comes your way.

Goodbye and good luck in whatever you choose.
Still so sorry to this letter of my sad news.

—Arthur Clark

(Facing the end of a love affair and still hoping it's not over, the lover says that if he were given some attention and not neglected, things might be different.)

Black poets, who may wish exposure to our reading public, may send copies of their poetry—for editing and with permission to use—in groups of 12 poems or more to Media Resources, Box 157, Selkirk, N.Y. 12158. Poetry selected should normally appear within 12 to 20 weeks. Because of staff limitations, no copies are returned.

THINKING

Tho' long ago it may have been
We fought for freedom and are still
Fight'n. White man always invading others' lands,
While our so called black respectables lend in a helping hand.
And what they don't stop to think about,
Is what's going in and who's going out!

—Faith M. Turner

(Is it the color of one's skin—or the access to and abuse of too much power that makes life the crazy-quilt that it is? Here the poetess implicitly raises this problem.)



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