

GRITS AND GREENS

By Roosevelt Fitzgerald

"Everytime I get to the end, the end has moved". A principal at a high school where I once taught always would make the statement at faculty meetings. It appears that that is true for me.

It seems that my problem began with a survey I conducted several weeks ago to determine the accuracy of a statement made by a person at a meeting of

the Downtown Progress Association. The comment was that people are afraid of Black people. I found that difficult to believe especially if a single non-Black person is unafraid of a single Black person, then such an all-inclusive comment would be invalid.

My survey was conducted in a very low key manner. I did not "accost tourists" on

Fremont Street as has been reported. Surveys are conducted whenever anyone is interested in a matter of concern. Such was done concerning the possible MX, airport expansion, freeway construction, complex erections, Colorado River usage and an array of other such topics. I did nothing more than that. Part of my dilemma is caused by the fact that I do not "sound off" without first ac-

cumulating sufficient data upon which to base an opinion. I could not have merely said that people are not afraid of Black people because I did not know of any body of data which would support such a statement. My making such an unfounded statement would have been as improper as its converse.

To clear up the "accosting tourists" issue, let me briefly explain how the survey

was conducted. I am certain that some of you have gone out to dinner, stood in line for movies, athletic events, shows, DMV, health departments, or any number of other such places. You have probably become involved in conversations with total strangers who would make small talk on certain aspects of the circumstances in which you both find yourselves. Cordial conversations do not take place between people if either or both are afraid. My survey took place with that kind of format and no one was "accosted".

So much for that, I hope.

I have been involved in social movements in my lifetime but I do not define my activity in the aforementioned scenario or in the Dr. Claude Perkins "shaft job" as being that of a social activist. I am certain that if I were to make a blanket statement that people who own businesses are crooks or that lawyers are shysters or any other kinds of slanderous statements about any number of other groups, that they would take issue with it especially if there is an environment in which such statements might have general qualities of believability. I did nothing more than that. What if I were to say that people are afraid of Italians, Irishmen, Greeks, Mormons, Germans? The first thing that one would have to conclude is that I do not consider those groups to be people — because people are afraid of them or, maybe they are also afraid of themselves.

I think I need to assure you that I am by no stretch of the imagination a "self-anointed expert on everything from greens to grits". I, unlike others, am not an expert on anything. If I were to appoint myself as such, you can be sure that I would give my self a wider range than the less than one-hundred items listed, in the dictionary between greens and grits. While I am quite fond of both, I actually know very little about them except, perhaps, that one rarely

eat the two together. I should be thankful that I was not accused of being an expert on everything from artichokes to zucchini. But then, I am not a journalist.

There are several misrepresentations of the letter, as introduced to the public, by Mr. Day. An example is a statement previously made in the September 11, 1981 issue of his column and again in the October 2, 1981 issue. "Fitzgerald got on my nerves, however, when he implied in a widely distributed letter that school Superintendent Claude Perkins had been forced from office because, in part, of a racist media conspiracy".

First, I should apologize for having gotten on Mr. Day's nerves. However, it was not of my doing. I did not send a copy of the letter to Mr. Day at the Valley Times. Actually, while I felt that his reporting of those events was somewhat slanted, he had given some data pertaining to possible causes of Dr. Perkins' crisis. Mr. Day secured a copy of the letter from another source. Second, the letter was not widely distributed. It was hand delivered by me to three people and it was not intended to be an expose or to make any charges of racism as Mr. Day reported. I merely raised ten questions regarding the coverage of the developing crisis of Dr. Perkins. Third, I neither stated nor implied that Dr. Perkins "had been forced from office...". My letter preceeded that event so I could not have said that Dr. Perkins had been forced from office before the fact. Fourth, the comment that I accused someone of being involved in a "racist media conspiracy" could not possibly have been derived from anything in my letter. Rather, I stated, in effect, that in the absence of any substantial charges against Dr. Perkins, especially in light of the fact that he had consistently received commendable evaluations, that an atmosphere was being created in which charges of racism could

GIANT PARKING LOT SALE

2 ACRES

NEW FURNITURE

Corner Main and Bonanza

HURRY!
HURRY!

All Prices Way Below Retail

9 a.m. to 6 p.m.