

Entertainment

BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

N'YORK CITY:—The Black press is the voice in the wilderness which attempts to keep democracy honest. Though too few are aware of it, March is "Black Press Month." In the words of Patricia O. Flynn, historic president of the National Newspaper Publishers' Association, "The glory of the Constitution of the nation is the power of the Black Press to be ever vigilant in its defense of freedom." The late Sherman Briscoe, NNPA's executive director emeritus, once pointed up the differences between the minority and majority press, and we quote:—"As some authorities have stated, the White

Press does not provide America with enough constructive opinion leadership, and is not sufficiently aroused when the basic principles of human liberty and progress are at stake. It is too self-centered and mainly concerned with its own freedom and cash register."

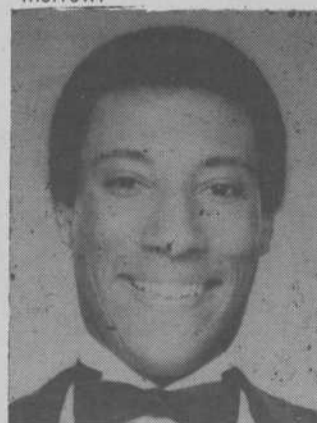
Out of neglect and racial chaos, and to emphasize the deadly problem of lynching and slavery's denial of human freedom, the Black Press was born. The fearless and dedicated Rev. Samuel E. Cornish and John B. Russwurm were the parents. Out of their commitment for change, the first Black Newspaper, "Freedom Jour-

nal" came alive March 16, 1827, in lower Manhattan. Face to face with its hundred and sixty first anniversary, Colonel (Ret.) Steve Davis, executive director, The NNPA extolled the Black Press for its relentless crusade for democracy to shower all Americans with its promise. "The fight is as fresh today and as meaningful today as it was in the beginning," said Dr. Carlton Goodlett, publisher of some nine West Coast publications and interest in others in the North and South. "Despite the odds they face on a daily basis," stated John Sengstacke, publisher of the Chicago Daily Defender and a similar weekly chain and founder of the NNPA, "Black publishers have established their marks on the face of America. Their Civil Rights battles have freed peoples all over the world. Their newspapers have charted a course for all who thirst for freedom, and humanity has benefited throughout the universe."

As Black Press Month, March '88, draws to a close, the thoughts of words from Howard B. Woods, former vice president of the NNPA and publisher of the St. Louis Sentinel, come to mind. "No one can deny the critical role the Black Press has played in the shaping of social change in this country. Long before the turbulent sixties, when many believed the revolution started, the Black pioneers of journalism were blazing trails with little more than a paste pot, knobby pencils and just plain raw courage. It was in this tradition that the real soul of the Black Press was born. Conceived in the womb of adversity, nurtured in the stress of overt bigotry that dogged the footsteps of its maternal guardian, it reached a kind of maturity in the mainstreets of the asphalt jungles we call urban America. The Black Press in its relentless crusade for freedom, has never failed to answer the clarion call of the needs of the nation. Sometimes voluntarily and too often in chains Afro-American men and women have left their uneraseable marks upon the acres of the country. As this press vigorously protested poll taxes and lynching, floggings and burnings, its readers were distinguishing themselves in other ways. Some were in

the boat when Washington crossed the Delaware; one was present and affixed his signature to the Constitution and others stood on the bloody decks at Pearl Harbor proving their mettle and their worth. Throughout this time, *Freedom Journal*, the *North Star* and those that followed were attempting to tell America the error of its ways."

"The Black Press has always recognized the urgent need for its readers to participate and share in the vast resources of this country. This with the full knowledge that Black sweat, suffering and sacrifice sustain the soil upon which America grows its grain and raises the steel towers of its urban centers. It comes with the full knowledge that Black hands and minds were used to create much of what we enjoy today. The paltry sum of the advertising dollar that finds its way into the Black Press annually is a travesty on the economic intelligence of the marketing experts. Black Americans can prosper as other Americans only when true parity is spread among the totality of the American people. This will not come as a gift or through paternalistic acts or programs. It will be achieved when all persons share and share alike in the goodness of this country. That story must be told, over and over again. Only the Black Press can tell it effectively and objectively." Those are some of the words of our distinguished publishers, some dating back 10 yrs. However, they are as fresh as the agenda for the Black Press today and tomorrow.



Byron Allen

NEWSY NOTES:—"Byron Allen does it all. This young standup comic will soon star in his own TV movie." That's a headline story about a young fella the late George Rhodes and this scribe used to make the walk from tee to

Original Drifters At Four Queens



Bill Pinkney & The Original Drifters will be appearing in the French Quarter at the fabulous Four Queens Hotel & Casino March 22 through April 10. One of the most successful rhythm and blues groups of the 1950's, their music is a refreshing change from today's rock-n-roll sounds. The Drifters have a

solid base of hits to their credit, such as "Money Honey," "Ruby Baby," "White Christmas," "Fools Fall In Love," "Honey Love," "Such a Night," and "Steamboat."

Performance times are 9:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. with special shows at 12:30 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

green with laughing all the way, not because he was tunny on the green acres, but the way he played them. You should remember him as a co-star of the TeeVee series "Real People" on which he appeared for five years. His other credit for fame was that he wrote a lot of Jimmie Walker's laugh getters. The flick he's going to do was also written by himself which he will also co-produce. Now he can take some serious tee-ball lessons . . . We are flattered by our column quotes appearance in Michael Joseph's soft back, "How to Avoid AIDS Nutritionally." However the truth is that what he considered repeating was from a type-hitting chore by our Nancy Hite . . . Phil Davis, corp. veep, General Foods USA, hosted a contingent of co-workers to lunch marking the 10th ann'y of Ralph McNeil as president of G.F.'s minority lending arm, North Street Capital. The soft spoken, though decisions maker, savored the occasion . . . Sallie Nix didn't spend all of her time in the Florida sun. In the shade she mastered a course in manicure and ped-

icure . . . Marian Rogers, daughter of the late Marian and Raymond Rogers, "promised to honor and love Brian Phillip Croak." The coupling was in Rutgers U's Second Reformed Church, New Brunswick, N.J. . . Much is expected from the reunion of award winning director Lloyd Richards and playwright August Williams, the '87 Pulitzer Prize winner for "Fences." the new work "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" is a look-forward-to event by theatregoers. Another good thing about this latest effort is that Vy Higgenen is a producer associate with Elliot Martin and Ken Wydo and the Yale Repertory Theatre which Lloyd Richards has nurtured into a viable and artistic organization . . . Word is that two Black femme firms put the Boston Globe in the Black for history month. They were APR and K, Powell Associates. Their dramatic ads hi-lited Crispus Attacks thru Ronald McNair . . . REMEMBER! JESSE JACKSON IS THE GOLD AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW . . . STAY LOOSE. BILLY ROWE IS A SYNDICATED COLUMNIST.



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