

NBA draft choices

Sect. II Page 4



Tax relief proposal

Sect. I Page 5



Man-sharing?

Sect. II Page 1



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"First to come is Mister Thumb; then Pointer strong and steady; then Tall Man high and just close by the feeble one doth linger; last of all, so wee and small, the baby little finger."

Danny Long and his great grandmother play a finger game that she learned as a child in Millbury, Massachusetts.

(Photo: Dan Long © 1983)

Reagan policy spurs conflict

Ronald Reagan's plans are not developing as expected in Central America.

In response to a question, Reagan waffled on his earlier statement that no U.S. troops would be sent to Central America during his news conference Tuesday. "Well, presidents never say never. I said that we have no plans to send combat troops, nor are they needed or wanted..."

When pushed, he said, "Well, you were asking a kind of hypothetical question and I gave a hypothetical answer. And it's an old saying that the president should never say never. You know, they blew up the Maine." (U.S. forces blew up the Maine in Havana harbor to give the U.S. an excuse to intervene in the Cuba-Spain war and to take possession of Cuba).

Reagan defended his Central American policy in the face of increasing public opposition: "I think there's a great lack of information on the part of the people. I do know that after I addressed the Joint Session of Congress and the people on television on that subject, there was a decided shift in favor of our position. But, I guess that proves the power of advertising."

The "contras" invading Nicaragua with U.S. support suffered a setback with the withdrawal of Eden Pastora Gomez. Pastora (called Commander Zero when he fought with the Sandinistas to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship) said he was suspending fighting because the U.S. government was refusing aid to him and was blocking aid from other nations. In a highly publicized defection, Pastora left Nicaragua a year ago to announce his opposition to the Sandinista government.

Edgar Chamorro Coronel announced that his "contra" army, located on the Honduran border, would send an invasion force of 5,000 deeper into Nicaragua in July. He told the *New York Times* that his organization regularly meets with U.S. intelligence agents and Honduran authorities. Chamorro also said it had been the goal of the Reagan administration for over a year to bring his and Pastora's groups together under a united command. Chamorro said Pastora was in Honduras in March of 1982, meeting with U.S. officials. Pastora refused to join Chamorro because his demands could not be met — "He wanted to be the head of the joint chiefs of staff. He wanted us to dress like the Sandinista army, use the Sandinista colors of red and black and sing Sandinista songs."

Pastora also made the mistake, he said, of revealing that he had met with the CIA and with General Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, head of the Honduran armed forces, while the U.S. was attempting to hide its involvement.

Chamorro said the U.S. plan, now not possible because of Pastora's withdrawal, was a three-pronged attack on Nicaragua — Miskito Indians on the east coast, Pastora on the south from Costa Rica, and Chamorro from Honduras.

Colonel John D. Waghelein, the departing commander of the U.S. Military Group in El Salvador, said if Congress cuts off military aid to that nation U.S. troops will be needed to win the three-year-old civil war. Waghelein's statement comes in the wake of increasing advances by guerrilla forces and intensified opposition by some members of Congress.

NAACP delegates face critical challenges

When the NAACP holds its national convention in New Orleans the first week in July, it will meet many serious challenges.

In a June 11th special meeting called by board chairman Margaret Bush Wilson to explain her temporary suspension of executive director Benjamin Hooks, Mrs. Wilson was stripped of all of her powers. The functions of the chairmanship were given to vice chairman Kelly Alexander, Sr. In an earlier meeting, called by board members, they had reinstated Hooks and asked Mrs. Wilson to resign.

Hooks said the board had "seen fit to put the NAACP back on the track and back into the business of civil rights."

Mrs. Wilson's report — which was rejected by most of the board members as "sour grapes" — reflected much of the conflict and confusion that has prevailed since Roy Wilkins resigned in 1977 and even earlier.

The report contained accusations that some board members say are valid. She asserted that the organization is in a serious financial crisis

and that its membership is declining. She said auditors have complained that financial records are inadequate and there are no records of revenues earned from interest and dividends so that "there is no means of determining if revenue earned has been received." Mrs. Wilson said she had suspended Hooks because she was not sure he would give priority to an audit and a financial report to the board.

Hooks responded that all work necessary for the audit had been completed before his suspension and that he had not interfered with it. He admitted that the association had not had financial reports for a "substantial period of time" but blamed Mrs. Wilson.

Mrs. Wilson also charged that Hooks' schedule of speaking engagements make him a part-time director, although his contract specifies that speaking engagements are not to interfere with NAACP work. Since he became executive director he has earned more than \$360,000 from speaking honoraria.

Hooks said his speaking engagements are made, in part, to make up

for money not received from the NAACP. His salary is about \$75,000 per year plus rent, he explained, and this year he was offered \$115,000 but accepted the \$75,000 plus rent. The NAACP has not paid his rent, which would have amounted to at least \$108,000 over the past six years, he said. "Whatever I made speaking has to be considered in the light of the NAACP not paying the \$108,000."

The NAACP, which once was financed mainly by membership dues, is now dependent on corporation and foundation funds, a fact that causes a degree of hesitancy in attacking certain issues.

There is a difference of opinion on membership, with Mrs. Wilson reporting 178,000 members. Hooks said she had counted only those who paid dues in 1982 and that there were 331,000 individual paid members in 1981 and 244,000 in 1982.

The NAACP's problems are being interpreted in several ways. Kelly says it is merely a personal problem between two individuals. Others believe it is symptomatic of a failure to adopt new national policies

to meet changes in the civil rights struggle. Some board members say the dispute is symptomatic of the politics of powerlessness — turning inward the frustrations and anger at being unable to stop the Reagan administration's assault on civil rights and social funding.

Still others say the struggle for (Please turn to Sect. II Col. 5)

Portland hosts BUF convention

The National Black United Front will hold its fourth annual convention in Portland, Ronnie Herndon, co-chairman of the Portland Chapter announced Wednesday.

Delegates from 40 cities will meet to discuss how to better address the needs of Black Americans.

Among the issues to be addressed are jobs, education, police brutality, prisons. Among the keynote speakers are: Dr. Derrick Bell, Dean of the University of Oregon Law School; Sonja Sanchez, prominent poet; Dr. Ron Karenga,

political theorist and educator; Dr. Herbert Daughtry, Chairman of the National BUF.

While earlier conventions adopted numerous resolutions, this convention will focus more on strategy, Herndon said. Many of the resolutions are idealistic and will not soon be attained. "There's nothing wrong with dreaming," he explained, "but let's move away from dreaming" to specific actions.

Among the specifics that will be addressed are the steps to a successful political campaign. Local BUFs figured prominently in the

election of Mayor Harold Washington of Chicago and in the primary victory of W. Wilson Goode in Philadelphia. Those strategies and action plans will be shared.

The Portland Chapter will share its successful campaign for obtaining jobs at Safeway and Fred Myers.

The Front is expanding rapidly, Herndon said. In 1980 there were four chapters, while now there are 25 chapters and organizations are developing in 15 additional cities. (Please turn to Sect. II Page 5)

The greatest crime is silence...

by Petty McFarlane

"You'll notice my hair is short," said Simone Wilkinson. I cut it after the blockade at Greenham Common. Why should Simone cut her hair? And where is Greenham Common?

Greenham Common is a U.S. Air Force base 70 miles west of London, in Berkshire, England. NATO plans to put the first 96 cruise missiles there in December, 1983. Women have been camped outside the base for two years, protesting the planned deployment.

The encampment began in August 1981, when 40 women and children walked 125 miles from Cardiff, Wales, to Greenham Common, to ask government officials for a public debate on the plan to deploy the missiles. They wanted to alert the

public, but they were ignored by the government and the media. They decided to stay until they were heard.

Thousands of women have since passed through the camp, staying hours, days, and in some cases a year. The camp was a center of controversy from the beginning, at first only locally, on the issue of the women's right to be on the land. How could they call national attention to the missiles? The women decided to do non-violent civil disobedience.

Nineteen women entered the base illegally and occupied a sentry box on August 27, 1982, while others lay on the road and blocked the main gate. Simone was one who went inside.

"People tell us we were very brave," she said. "You should have

seen us huddled in the corner of that box, shivering and shaking." The women were arrested and charged.

Their trial brought the national debate the women were seeking. The prosecution charged them with an act likely to cause a breach of the peace. The evidence was that the American wife of an American serviceman was delayed 20 minutes getting to the American supermarket inside the base. The prosecutor said that if she had lost her temper and hit someone, the British women would have been responsible.

The defense claimed that cruise missiles violate the British Genocide Act, which forbids destruction of any "national, ethnical, racial or religious group." And they presented expert testimony to show that living under the threat of nuclear extinction is psychologically damag-

ing the British women and their families. Twenty-four women, including Simone, were sent to jail for two weeks.

There was a sensation. Before the trial only 10 percent of Britons knew what a cruise missile was. Now 90 percent know. Before, 14-18 percent opposed deployment. Now, 61 percent of all Britons, and 65 percent of British women are opposed.

Support and criticism flooded the women of Greenham Common. The *London Daily Mail* wrote that they are all "feminist, separatist, lesbian vegetarians."

Simone Wilkinson is a housewife from Cowes, on the Isle of Wight. She has two children, ages 10 and 12. When she was pregnant with her second child a Japanese woman told her, "Even today in Hiroshima, when a woman is pregnant, no one

congratulates her. They wait nine months in silence to see if the child will be all right." Simone could not forget this.

Simone joined the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

"We had a meeting once a month, and a yearly peace march," said Simone, "and I wanted more." Two weeks after the Greenham peace camp started, Simone and some friends from Cowes went there to visit. They were inspired.

"We decided to start a peace camp of our own on the town square in Cowes, and to start talking to our neighbors about cruise missiles," said Simone. The women decided to begin before they could lose their nerve, first thing the next morning. It was raining, as usual, and they went poorly equipped.

"By the time that first day was over I knew the human race was worth saving," said Simone. "Townpeople brought us food, tents, a portable shelter, sleeping bags and blankets. The police even gave us the key to the municipal toilet." The women began a series of discussions with their neighbors that left them little time for sleep.

Simone and 23 others started serving their two weeks in jail in November, 1982. Support for these women was widespread in Britain. A demonstration was planned for a display of unity with them at Greenham Common on December 12.

An invitation was circulated, chain letter style. Each woman who received a flyer was asked to duplicate it and pass it on to 10 other women. On arriving at Greenham (Please turn to Page 4 Column 5)