

DAWN Magazine passes its Sixth Birthday

More than 40 black newspapers are in the DAWN Magazine family, and insert the supplement in their issues each month. Each month, however, more and more readers discover DAWN Magazine. So, it is time to bring history up to date and celebrate a concept that has come of age in a mere 6 years.



Executive editor for DAWN Magazine is Robert (Bob) Matthews.

Normally, this is not a cause for celebration. Anniversaries of publications are usually trumpeted with great fanfare when they reach 10, 20 or more years of continuous publication.

But *DAWN Magazine*, we feel, is just a wee bit different.

The 6th anniversary is celebrated, because despite the dire predictions of detractors who said the publication wouldn't make it — it has.

Projections are that *DAWN Magazine* will produce sales at about two million dollars, and is expected to add \$500,000 to that base each year thereafter.

DAWN began as an idea promulgated by Kenneth O. Wilson, advertising and marketing chief of the Baltimore-based *Afro-American Newspapers*. This was in 1973.

Trying to sell the idea of the supplement presented a challenge that almost stymied the emerging magazine, with the many roadblocks thrown in the way.

There was no money available for the experiment . . . The project must be self supporting and not costly to its parent newspaper . . . There must be sufficient advertising to pay the printing costs . . . etc., etc.

Individually, each obstacle was overcome and in April, 1973, it was agreed that a quarterly test marketing series would be attempted.

Wilson believed that the national advertising community should have an opportunity to market services and products through four-color advertising, directed to audiences of local black newspapers.

The stage was set. In meeting after meeting, a nucleus of black publications was formed which would carry the fledgling supplement.

There were 37 newspapers carrying that pioneer Vol. No. 1 *DAWN Magazine* supplement.

Art Carter, whose regular position is publisher of the

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New York DAWN Magazine staff strolls with the PanAm building as a backdrop. Left to right: Lewis Barnes, Jeanne Parnell, Percell Johnson Jr. and Rayfield McGhee



Responsible for making up the pages of DAWN Magazine, is Oswald Alexander, journeyman printer originally from Kingston, Jamaica.

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Washington Afro-American's bi-weekly publications, was given the added assignment as editor of the magazine. It was to be published only once each quarter, and was not expected to materially hamper his work format.

Elson Higginbotham, now deceased, was in charge of production, and chairman of the board for the Afro-American Newspapers was Frances L. Murphy. She issued a statement which was carried in that historic first edition:

"DAWN is an extension of the former Afro-American magazine supplement. This first issue will be distributed in premier black newspapers from coast to coast.

"The national black community is more sophisticated today than

ever before in its history and we believe it has a great sensitivity to those crucial subjects that affect the lives and times of black people within a greater troubled society.

"In the months ahead, DAWN will continue to be evaluated by the best trained and experienced news people in the United States and we hope to bring to DAWN readers, challenging stories, provocative features, live photographs, editorial opinions, timely advice on addressing themselves to a new day for black Americans."

The new supplement was instantly successful. After the test period of quarterly issues, it became an 11-months a year publication in 1974.

Bynow, Bonnie Butler had been named assistant to the vice president/advertising, production coordinator. She then became the key link in getting the magazine to print.

Among the duties of her position is the establishment of a liaison between the New York, Chicago and Baltimore offices and the overall responsibility of the thousand and one details necessary to "getting the book printed."

The New York sales office is headed by Percell L. Johnson Jr. who has been a member of the New York DAWN staff since its inception.

He is aided in his pursuits by salesmen Rayfield McGhee and Lewis Barnes. Rudi Smalley serves as secretary to the busy office.

By 1977, DAWN Magazine had cause for celebration. At a luncheon noting the fourth year of the magazine's publication, John H. Murphy III, chairman of the board, said:

"DAWN Magazine at one time was considered the by-product of our business. Now it is a part of our bread and butter."

Circulation of DAWN had grown to nearly 900,000 by now, with readership calculated somewhere in the area of three million. The supplement now appeared in 33 newspapers, and for the first time, had topped the \$1 million figure in gross sales.

By 1978, DAWN Magazine had progressed to the point that a part-time editor simply could not handle the magnitude of work attendant to putting out a quality publication.

And, beginning in May 1978, Bob Matthews was brought in to handle the editorial direction of the supplement. Matthews brought in over 35 years experience in journalistic pursuits, having worked for the parent Afro-American Newspapers for 15 years before venturing into the broadcasting end of the profession.

He was news director of a local



Manning the typewriter is our own Jeanne Parnell who has been handling the Celebinit column since its inception.

radio station, reporter, then manager of a Baltimore TV station, reporter with CBS-TV News in New York, manager at NBC-TV News, New York, and finally radio bureau chief and manager for NBC Radio News, Washington.

With this edition, DAWN Magazine welcomes 5 newspapers in South Carolina, who are joining the family for the first time. The supplement will now also be available to South Carolinians in the Black Sun, Times, Voice, Post, Star and Views.

And so, DAWN Magazine is over six years old, and looking forward to serving the black community for many years. Its base is solid, its outlook perceptive, and its future — devoted to needs of its readers.



Vice presidential assistant Bonnie Butler shows staff secretary Wanda Turner that very first issue of DAWN, April, 1973.



Thomas Stockett is the veteran artist who retouches all pictures and adds his own bits of creativity with artistic renderings.



Denise Dursey is one of the staff artists, concentrating on layouts and ad composition.