

EYEWITNESS

HELPING HAITIANS

For three weeks, the cutter Campbell was among the six Coast Guard vessels intercepting Haitian refugees at sea, ferrying them to the naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, then collecting others for repatriation to Haiti. U.S. News's Greg Ferguson spoke with crew members:

Chief Petty Officer Dave Macedo:
The Campbell was not the Hilton. We had 400 people living on a flight deck that was designed for a helicopter. And even that was better than the boats [the Haitians] came from. . . . On these 30-foot boats, there were anywhere from 75 to 100 Haitians. You would not think it was possible to fit that many people. . . . All they needed was 1- or 2-foot seas to sink them. On one of the boats was a 5-day-old infant with 3 or 4 inches of the umbilical cord still attached. And they had been at sea for 20 days. The mother couldn't walk.

Lt. Cmdr. Rob Parker: It was just wall-to-wall people. You had to see it to believe it, or smell it actually. . . . There were all kinds of open sores and tropical diseases that we're not used to. . . . We were trying to save them from their journey in these boats and take them to Guantanamo Bay. . . . Whether or not we agree with the practice is moot; all of the policy decisions are made so far above our pay scale.

Petty Officer Jack Goodhue: They thanked us for saving their lives. . . . We had rice and beans for them, - and Kool-Aid. And we had Bibles and magazines. . . . A few thought we were going to Miami, and they were very disappointed. . . . But they knew we were only doing

our jobs.

On hoard. A4
cutter makes
a pickup.

DATELINE

TESTING THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

POTCHEFSTROOM, SOUTH AFRICA â\200\224 There are few signs of the â\200\234newâ\200\231â\200\235â\200\235 South Africa in this sleepy West Rand town of 100,000. Despite the end of racial zoning laws and segregated schools, black families have yet to move into the townâ\200\231s leafy neighborhoods or enroll their children in its schools. Violent crime, rampant in the white suburbs of major cities, is still largely unknown here. Even drought and recession â\200\224 devastating to nearby farmers and minersâ\200\224 have barely affected the civil servants, military personnel and businessmen who are â\200\234Potchâ\200\235 society.

Yet this week the fate of the new South Africa may be decided here, as the townâ\200\231s white voters choose between National Party and Conservative Party candidates and their vastly divergent visions of the future. The stakes are highest for F. W. de Klerkâ\200\231s NP, which has held the Potch seat since 1948. After the NP lost a November election in a small mining town, de Klerk said Potchefstroom would be the true test of white support for NP reforms and a negotiated settlement with blacks. For the CP, with support estimated at nearly 50 percent, a victory in Afrikaner-dominated Potch would add to the conservativesâ\200\231 call for a white homeland.

Like the drought-stricken Mooi River that meanders through the center of town, the election divides the white community. Across from the Louis le Grange building, named for the NP parliamentarian whose death last year brought on the election, both parties have voter registration booths. One CP canvasser makes a simple case for snubbing the NP volunteers at the next stall: â\200\234I donâ\200\231t talk to traitors.â\200\235

De Klerkâ\200\231s betrayal of whites was a popular theme at a town meeting held by the ultra-right-wing World Apartheid Movement. WAM leader Koos Vermelen denounced de Klerk, and the crowd of about 100, including protesters wearing the right wingâ\200\231s distinctive brown shirts, shouted slogans such as â\200\234America is de Klerkâ\200\231s whore.â\200\235 Yet outside the hall, three white university students derided the racism of a crude mug shot of a black man above a caption that read: â\200\234Mr. AIDS.â\200\235

Indeed, the crucial swing vote lies with the nearly 4,000 eligible student voters at Potchefstroom University for Higher Christian Education (PUKKE), where the new South Africa is readily apparent. Black and white students mingle in the school commons, as Radio PUKKE blares an American speed-metal song. Sitting with supporters of both parties, one student explains why she will vote NP. â\200\234For our children, the new South Africa is going to be a better place,â\200\235 says the 20-year-old communications major. â\200\234We have to suffer, but itâ\200\231s whatâ\200\231s necessary.â\200\235

CP supporters see the situation differently. Music Prof. Hennie Coetzee says failure to create an Afrikaner homeland could provoke a second Boer War. "It isn't that we don't like the blacks," says the soft-spoken 56-year-old. "It's just that we don't want to be governed by them, overwhelmed by them." Dirk du Toit, a consultant whose grandfather, the Afrikaner poet Totius du Toit, is memorialized by a statue in the center of town, thinks a CP victory will show the world that Afrikaners aren't prepared to accept South Africa's new arrangements. Says du Toit: "If we lose, then I think they can dismantle the CP because, as Hitler said, 'we're not worthy to live on this earth.' " "Whatever happens here, it's unlike the old South Africa will disappear so easily.

LOUISE GUBB "JB PICTURES FOR USN&WR

"Potch" politics. A voter registration booth

BY ERIC RANSELL

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, FEBRUARY 24, 1992

PHOTO: (LEFT) ANDREW INNERARITY " THE MIAMI HERALD VIA POOL/AP 19

{

PEOPLE EPITAPH

EUGENE MALESKA assem- â\200\230A TURTLE ATOP A FENCE POST

bled his first crossword puzzle as a romantic Alex Haley, who died last week at 70, wrote books that illuminated for America the | overture to a woman he black experience. The â\200\234Rootsâ\200\235 author also relished that role outside his writing, as U.S. il would later marry. It Newsâ\200\231s Lewis Lord witnessed last spring during Ole Missâ\200\231s â\200\234College of Southern Studies 1 was a portent of how on the Water,â\200\235 a grits-and-egghead ride down the Mississippi : he would one day save the mentally nimble [1 down] from boredom [2 Passengers in blazers and fancy frocks welcomed Alex downl. As the New York Times cele- Haley aboard the Delta Queen at Helena, Ark. He smiled a nd brates the 50th anniversary of its shook hands, then headed below decks to meet the steam- clue and solution [1 across] puzzle, boatâ\200\231s cooks, maids and waiters. The next day, as willows on Maleska, after 49 years as a creator the levee glided by, the Orleans Room filled for Haley â\200\231s first and 15 years as its editor, can take talk. The audience soon understood his affinity for se rvants. ..-. credit for much of its â\200\234There is a saying about people who have achieved a stature. Maleska is also position,â\200\235 he said. â\200\234Anytime you see a turtle atop a fence known to toy [3 down] post, you know it had some help.â\200\235 He told how his father, |1 with clues that provide Simon Haley, a sharecropperâ\200\231s son, became the first black Authors. Shelby Foote and what he calls â\200\234an oasis male in Savannah, Tenn., to finish the eighth grade, but of humor in the Times struggled in college at North Carolina A&T. â\200\234A professor call ed Dad in and told [4 across abbr.].â\200\235 His fans him he was going to flunk because he couldnâ\200\231t k eep up. Dad couldnâ\200\231t keep up are grateful; many send valentines. because he had to work. He decided his destiny was to b e a cotton sharecropper.â\200\235 Maleska, 76, likes those who eschew But then came a summer job as a Pullman porter. One nig ht, a man riding a Buffalo- erasable pencils for puzzles in favor to-Pittsburgh train rang at 2 a.m. and asked for a gl ass of milk, which Simon of more indelible means [3 across]. provided. Weeks later, the man sent North Carolina A&T \$480 â\200\224 enough to return

EN

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE â\200\224ACROSS: 1. ANSWER, 3. PENS, 4.NYT DOWN: 1. AGILE, 2. ENNUI, 3. PLAY PHOTO: MARK STOCKWELL o o