

OPINION/LETTERS

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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Loan Review Board

The folks at NationsBank appear to be taking bold steps in seeking to right many of the wrongs that have been perpetrated on the African-American community over the years by majority lending institutions. NationsBank has recently developed two novel approaches to helping the historically disenfranchised get a slice of the economic pie: It developed the Small Business Community Education Program and offered training to the NAACP Community Development Resource Center staff.

And just this week, a program was launched that should positively impact on two areas where African Americans have routinely been left out: home-ownership loans and small-business loans.

NationsBank has teamed with the National Urban League to create a Community Loan Review Board here and in Charlotte. The new concept is likely to get Grade "A" results. This program enables NationsBank customers whose home-purchase or home-improvement mortgage are declined for whatever reason to receive a "second look" from the Loan Review Board. The board here consists of three bank underwriters, the local Urban League president and three community members, including city employee Ritchie Brooks as chairman of the board.

We give NationsBank credit for putting programs in place to help African Americans realize the American dream of home ownership. We also applaud its efforts in other areas, too, including contributing \$277,000 to the Winston-Salem Tandem Loan Pool, which fosters neighborhood revitalization through acquisition and rehabilitation and provides mortgage funding for low- and moderate-income families. NationsBank also has made hundreds of calls to small and minority-owned businesses to solicit new banking relationships in minority communities. Not all of those calls created loan opportunities, but NationsBank executives were able to do a needs assessment and determine what is lacking in the community. That is a first step, we hope, in addressing what in fact is lacking, which is capital.

We need more majority lending institutions to be as forward thinking as NationsBank. And we ask that African Americans take advantage of this welcomed opportunity.

Stem the Violent Tide

We were glad to see that the Police Department's recent gun buy-back program was an overwhelming success. This is especially true in light of a recent Justice Department report that crimes committed by pistols are setting records across the nation.

In 1992, there were 13,200 pistol-related deaths in the United States. No group was hit harder than young African-American males. Black males between the ages 16 to 19 were four times as likely to be victims as white males their age. Black men ages 20 to 24 were three times as likely as white men to be victims.

Locally, of the 17 homicides in Winston-Salem this year, 11 of the victims have been African-American males and 10 of those died from gun-shot wounds. Two of the three African-American females killed were by guns.

While many claim to keep a gun for self-protection, guns in fact make you far less safe and you have a greater chance of endangering your love ones. According to a recent study, a gun in the home increases the likelihood of homicide threefold. A gun in the home is also 43 times more likely to be used to commit homicide, suicide or an accidental killing than it is to be used for self-defense. Some people believe that more prisons will stop the violence — evident by jails being built across the country. Nothing is farther from the truth.

During the 1980s, the U.S. prison population nearly tripled while the violent crime rate continued to rise. Most gun violence occurs in the course of an argument and not other criminal behavior, often is not premeditated and therefore not subject to criminal deterrence.

There is a workable solution, however. Violence is a complex problem resulting from the sum total of other social ills, including poverty, joblessness, poor schools, disintegrating families and communities, a history of family violence and easy access to guns.

The solution to violence will have to be equally multifaceted and long-term. Gun buy-backs — removing a few more guns from the streets and from homes — are a start.

Student Says How to Reduce Violence in Schools

To the Editor:

What would I like to do to stop violence in our schools? We have a lot of problems in our schools, and if we as a whole could get together and discuss what we could do to make it better, there would be a great change in our schools. At this time, violence is increasing at a very high rate.

For example, statistics show that there has been a 21 percent increase on violence in our system than there was in 1993. We are rated lowest in education and highest in violence.

This should somehow make us see what the problem is. In order to stop violence in our schools; I would call for group mediation sessions, appeal to school representatives and better school safety.

First, I would appeal to counselors and teachers to start mediation classes.

We need a weekly session that consists of all students in our schools who would like to participate in discussing what is happening in our schools. Two other groups that I would like to form would be an all-male group that would meet once a week and discuss the problems that they are having in school and the problem that they have out of school. We also need an all-female group that will meet once a week to teach them how to get along with each other, and show the students how to handle conflicts.

Second, I would write to representatives. I would write to mem-



Clarence and Clara Gaines

William Turner's Column was Stimulating

To the Editor:

The column "Clara Lucille Berry Gaines: The Virtuous Woman," written by William H. Turner's "Lift Every Voice" in the May 19 edition, was stimulating and exhibited excellence from the writer. Readings of this nature can be appreciated because we as blacks need not only glorify those whom are in our limelight, but also those whom are our shadows. The writer mentioned the importance of the family and the roles in which we must all take on and the need to fulfill them.

To the writer, I say thank you for your excellent work. You have once again proven that we as a black race can avoid extensive self-servicing and the reluctance lies upon male-female, father-mother and brother-sister in order to achieve the unity in which we so desperately need.

Vickie R. Nelson

weapon on school property, and if they see anyone with a weapon on school property they report it to a school administrator.

The Security Committee will

reduce the violence that occurs in our schools.

Danyetta Jackson
West Forsyth High

Thanks for Support

To the Editor:

On May 4 at Miller Park, over 200 hearing-impaired students ranging from Pre-K to high school from North Carolina schools participated in activities developed and designed for competition, fellowship, making new friends and renewing old acquaintances in an environment of total communication. We would like to thank all who helped to make this event — The Third Annual N.C. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Track & Field Day — a complete success.

We also thank our guest speaker, 1985 Deaf Olympian Silver medalist Steve Rash; the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools, principals, teachers, interpreters and parents all of the hard-working volunteers.

We thank the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing; the Winston-Salem Parks and Recreation Department; the Chamber of Commerce and the 7 Days in Winston-Salem photographers; Allman Humphrey & Spry PA; Corn Products; Sam's Club; Skidmore's; Wachovia; Pepsi Cola Corp.; Lowes Foods; McDonald's; Burger King; and many others who helped support this event.

Sharon Agnew & Ellen Loomis
Event coordinators

CHRONICLE MAILBAG Our Readers Speak Out

bers of our school board and Congress. I would let our school board members know that we need their help, and also let them know the problems we are having. I would write a letter to Congress letting them know what we are in need of, and what we want from them to help us to stop violence in our schools.

Last, I would try and make schools safer. A way that I would accomplish that would be to form two committees. They would be known as the Security Committee and the Crime Stoppers Committee. The Security Committee would make sure that no one conceals a

also be responsible for putting up private cameras in the hallways, bathrooms, and locker rooms, so we can stop violence in our schools. The Crime Stoppers Committee will consist of students from all grades that agree to keep all information about violence among group members only. But, they would have the authority to release any information on any violence that occurs or looks to as if it will occur to the administrator of our schools.

These things I have mentioned in the above paragraphs are what I'd like to do to stop violence in our schools. Everywhere. If everyone would do these things, maybe it will

About letters...

The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. The letter must also include the name, address and telephone number of the writer to ensure the authenticity of the letter. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to

Chronicle Mailbag, P.O. Box 1636
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102

HBCUs are being Challenged to Prove their Value

No one alive today experienced slavery. We only know what it was like through the stories passed down from generation to generation and from the books and speeches written by abolitionists and writers of the day. We know that it was illegal to educate slaves — even illegal to teach them to read the Bible.

In spite of such laws in the South, there were colleges founded in the North to educate blacks — including Cheyney State College and Lincoln University, both in Pennsylvania and Wilberforce University in Ohio.

These were among the first Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), which grew to include a number of institutions serving the black community in the South, since most Southern colleges and universities did not admit black students.

Today, the more than 100 HBCUs are under attack on several fronts. Some of them are facing loss of state funds or are actually being phased out in an effort to integrate state higher-education institutions. Some of them are facing charges that their students are anti-white or anti-Semitic. All of them are being challenged to prove their value in the present-day world.

For example, recently the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People sponsored a national march on Jackson, Miss., to support equal funding of all state-supported HBCUs. HBCUs generally receive a disproportionately lower funding than their white counterparts. The state of Mississippi is proposing that Jackson State be downsized, Alcorn State be merged and Mississippi Valley State be closed.

At the same time, the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), which raises funds for 41 black colleges, has been receiving letters accusing students at black colleges of being racists because of the recent publicity surrounding the speech of a Nation of Islam speaker at Howard University. The irony is that Howard is not a member of the

UNCF, that all press reports have indicated that only a small number of students actually attended the speech and that the majority of students at Howard do not agree with that speaker. In addition, only three of 55 Nation of Islam speakers have appeared at black colleges; the others have been at white educational institutions. Nevertheless, the UNCF is fearful that its fund-raising efforts will be dampened by these false accusations.

The Historically Black Colleges and Universities do have a unique and critical mandate and role to play in the multi-racial society in which we live. These institutions have become havens for able students who were deprived and rejected elsewhere.

Often they are able to provide the remedial education, self-esteem building and mentoring that determine the success of their students. Indeed, it is no accident that 70 percent of African-American elected officials, 80 percent of African-American lawyers and 85 percent of all African-American professionals are graduates of HBCUs. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Thurgood Marshall and the writer, Zora Hurston, are just three of the more well-known graduates of HBCUs.

While virtually all Historically Black Colleges do have non-black students (including foreign students), their principal mission is the education of African Americans. Most of these institutions also have non-black faculty and staff members as well — about one-third of most black-college faculty members are black, according to the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education.

As the African-American community continues to face a crisis threatening its very survival, it

would seem that historically black colleges have a special role to play in the revitalization of our communities. With over a 100 years of history of designing curricula and programs focussing on developing self-esteem, raising basic skills needed for academic success and establishing role modeling and mentoring relationships, HBCUs have a proven track record of working with African-American youth.

At a time when there are said to be more African-American men in prison than in college, HBCUs can play a pivotal role in the lives of our youth. Just a new elementary and secondary programs are focussing on serving young African-American males. HBCUs are in an unique place

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By BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

to provide higher education for African American men.

But they need the support of all of us to survive and to find new ways of serving our communities. Several years ago Bill and Camille Cosby donated \$20 million to Spelman College, one of the better-known HBCUs. Most of us can't do that, but we can give what we can to the UNCF or directly to the college of our choice. And we can work to make sure that HBCUs receive equal funding from federal or state governments so critical to their survival.

We need the Historically Black Colleges and Universities — and they need us.

(Bernice Powell-Jackson is Executive Director for the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice.)