

OPINION/LETTERS

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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New Role, Same Goal

If you're searching for a role model in the African-American community, you need not look any further than Forsyth County Court Judge Loretta Biggs. Her advocacy for children is recognized statewide from appointments by state House Speaker Dan Blue to Gov. Hunt; from her position on numerous community-based boards and agencies that deal directly with children's welfare.

Biggs has always extended herself when it came to youths, always looking for innovative ways to serve them. That's one reason she was recognized this year as the *Chronicle's* co-woman of the year. Now it seems that her concern for stemming the tide of violent paths of today's youth has caught a national eye. And she will work toward that aim in her new post of assistant U.S. attorney. We hope that she is successful in implementing some programs that can reach some of our youth before they become involved in the criminal-justice system.

As she stated, "By the time these young people become a part of the criminal-justice system, it is too late to influence their behavior. We must reach these young people long before they become they become a part of the criminal-justice system."

We commend Attorney General Janet Reno for her vision in creating a position that will focus on crime-reduction efforts rather than the number of indictments served.

Although Judge Biggs was fair and impartial on the bench. She was tough when she had to be. She proved that in 1992 during a bitter campaign against Tori Roemer, who was backed by wealthy, GOP big whigs. Judge Biggs withstood that test and continues to move on.

Judge Biggs, we believe, will make as fine of an assistant U.S. attorney as she did Forsyth County's first black woman judge. And we wish her much success.

One Step Closer

With the unanimous endorsement of the Forsyth Tech board of directors last week, we believe the Carver Road-area branch of Forsyth Tech is a done deal. Thank you.

The board will see that placing a satellite campus in eastern Winston-Salem will be a good investment for Forsyth Tech, the residents in that area and the city of Winston-Salem as a whole.

Forsyth Tech president Bob Greene said that when the application is sent to state board of community colleges, it is all but guaranteed that both sites (The board also recommended building a branch in Kernersville near Dudley Products.) will be approved.

We urge the county commissioners and manager Graham Pervier not to throw a hitch into the plans by not agreeing to pay for the teachers' salaries the first two years of operation, until Forsyth Tech can sustain itself. The \$2 million is a small sacrifice and commitment to what will mean so much to so many, and to what clearly be a good return investment.

Pay Raising Eyebrows

The city-county school board should realize that by being elected to serve the public, some things are par the course. Among them, one of the more basic duties of a school board, which is searching for superintendent when the position becomes vacant. Now, the school board members want extra pay — \$1,500 — for the time they put into the search.

We think the county commissioners, who must OK the proposition, should scrutinize this request very carefully and vote their conscience. We hope that it's a negative vote.

According to one commissioner, it's not the first time the school board has sought a raise for carrying out a basic tenet of its duty. Mazie Woodruff said commissioners gave the school board members raises after they selected the former superintendent.

If the school board members do not have the interest in the community to willingly serve, then they should step down. Then they wouldn't spend so much time from their families or jobs. Because for these board members to make this request, it clearly signals they do not have the interest of the public at heart.

Credo of the Black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from antagonisms when it accords to every person — regardless of race or creed — full human and legal rights. Hating no person, the Black Press strives to help every person, in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

Guns Contribute to Much of the Violence in Society

To the Editor:

Lately in today's society, gunshot wounds from pistols have claimed the lives of many, and the number keeps climbing. Thirty-seven percent of homicides in Winston-Salem in 1982 died from gunshot wounds. The percentage of homicide victims killed with pistols climbed to 42 percent in 1988, 53 percent in 1992, 64 percent last year and is 72 percent in the first five months of 1994.

The majority of these homicides are caused by pistols. Today people of all ages are really protecting themselves with pistols because (1) they are easy to get, (2) there are nighttime predators out there that lust for trouble, (3) the people who start the trouble are starting it with guns.

It's not like the old days when people fought with bats, sticks, fists. Then, you were lucky just to end up with a few cuts and bruises, or you might even end up with a busted lip. Nowadays, there're guns, more guns, everybody's got them. People don't really understand the seriousness of having a gun. Some people even get guns because most of their friends have them, but mostly people get a gun cause they are just plain scared; everyday you walk out your door, you don't know if you're going back home, or what.

People are so mean these days. These people are mostly the jealous type, or just like putting on a front for the rest of their so-called friends.

These people live in areas where there are a lot of violence and then these people come into these nice quiet neighborhoods just to start trouble, but it's never the troublemaker's who go to jail for murder or assault; it's the hard-working citizens that ends up behind bars for killing one of these bullies. Then the news media blows everything all out of proportion. It's not right, the way the law is today. Right now, I'm a citizen that has worked ever since I was old enough to work, and has never been in any real trouble. Lately, I've been awaiting trial for murder in the Forsyth County Jail for accidentally killing someone. I was not lucky enough to gradually assault him, I murdered him.

most Seniors do not favor the Clinton Health Care plan.

Under the Clinton plan, senior citizens will surely face drastic cuts in Medicare coverage, loss their right to choose their own doctors, face long waiting lines, and possibly be denied life-saving medical treatment.

These matters are documented in a report, available at no charge, from the 2-million member Seniors Coalition. I urge you to contact the Coalition today at (703) 273-5449, get a copy of their report, then do stories that will alert people in our area to the real facts behind the Clinton Health Care Plan. Thank you.

Arthur Robertson Jr.

Bill I inquired about the prospects for his column being syndicated. I think that his point of view, the fruit of a lifetime of thinking, is "reader friendly" and deserving of a larger audience. Here is one reader's vote to see Bill's column more widely circulated! I believe that I am not alone in this sentiment.

A final note. The *Chronicle* was the first and only paper I subscribed to upon arriving in Winston-Salem several years ago. It remains so. I was thus dismayed to read the misquote (actually misprint) of my position on religion and politics ("apolitical") in a June 16th article. It is a minor point that several people nonetheless sought me out about. I hope that your copy

CHRONICLE MAILBAG

Our Readers Speak Out

Splendid Column

To the Editor:

Just a word of thanks for printing the splendid weekly column, "Lift Every Voice," by Dr. William H. Turner. I find it to be a breath of fresh air and more in this sterile age of "super-information" divorced from "mother wit."

In a recent conversation with

editor/proof editor will be careful in the future to safeguard the high journalistic standards of the *Chronicle*. To my mind, attention to grammar, punctuation and correct quotes are bound to make what is the best African American newspaper in the land even better.

Thanks for your many contributions to all of us.

Alton B. Pollard III
Associate Professor, WFU

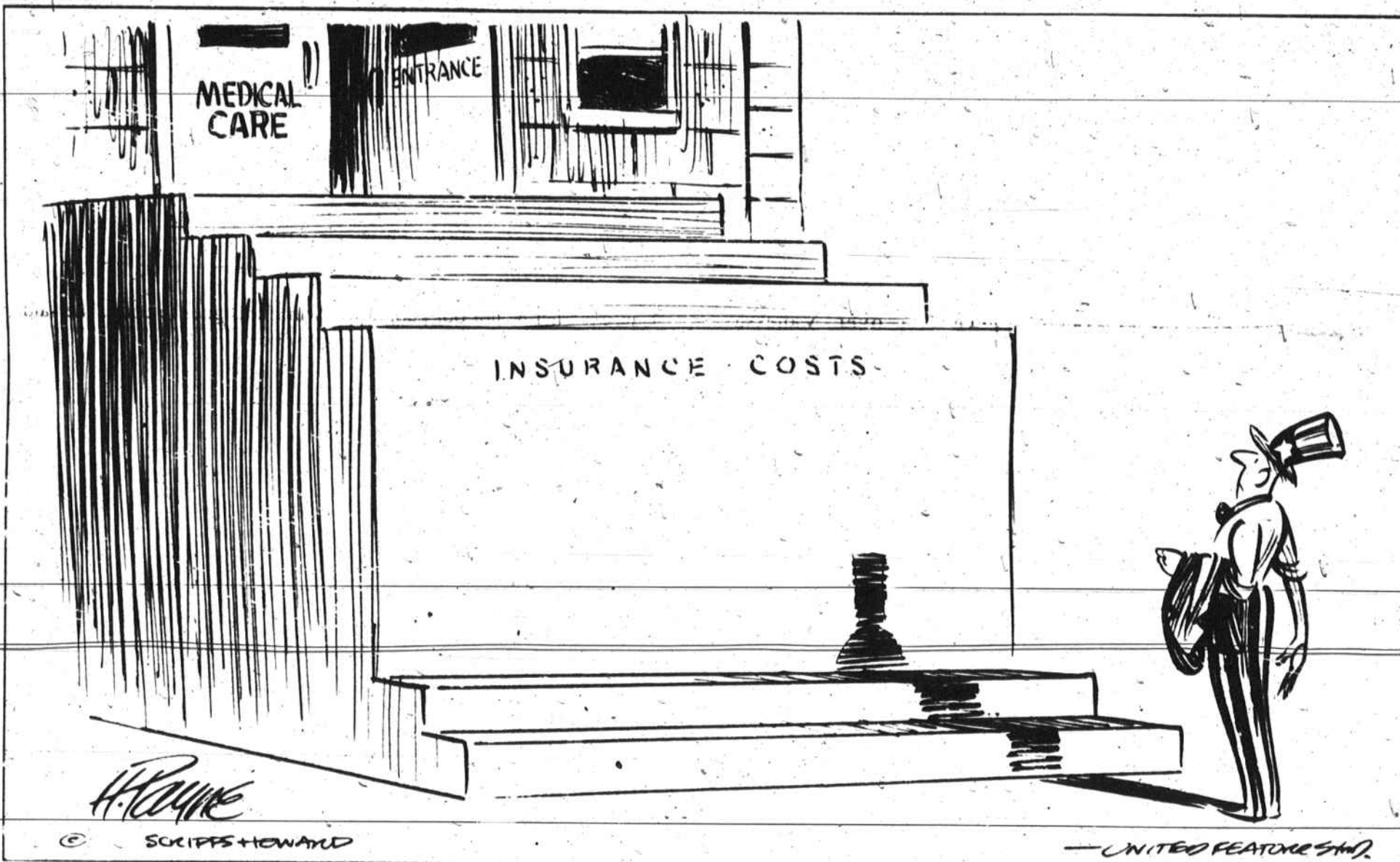
See while you're using a gun for protection or whatever, you're taking a chance and you don't know where you're gonna shoot them when it's the spare of the moment deal.

Cedric Hall

Health Care Plan

To the Editor:

As a member of the Seniors Coalition, I want you to know that



A New African-American Power Movement

Last month's Black Leadership conference in Baltimore, Md., sponsored by the NAACP, highlights the necessity for a new movement for black power in America. In the nearly thirty years since the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the number of African-American elected officials has increased dramatically, from barely one hundred to over eight thousand. The number of African-American mayors has jumped from literally zero in 1965 to more than four hundred today. We are now well represented in Clinton's presidential cabinet, and on school boards, city councils and in state houses across America. But we have failed to make the leap from representation to empowerment.

Power, in the final analysis, is the ability or capacity to realize your specific, objective interests. Power is not a "thing", but a process of utilizing existing resources, personnel and institutions for one's own objectives. Before you can exercise "power", you must first clearly understand yourself, and those whose interests you seek to empower. If our goal is to empower the African-American community, we must have a detailed understanding of who we are, and what our people want. This requires an honest and detailed analysis of where we are as a people — our genuine social problems and contradictions, our strengths and weaknesses, our internal resources and potential elements of leadership. We must actually listen to what the masses of African-American people really want, and how they truly perceive the world around them.

Programmatically, this means that the national black community needs a public opinion poll which regularly assesses the state of black America on a wide range of public issues.

Instead of looking to the white media to learn what we think, we should utilize our own networks and resources to present our own collective views. We need to initiate leadership training seminars within black institutions which identify and educate the next generation of African-American leaders.

One achieves power by building a strategy or plan of action based on reality. We must articulate a concrete analysis of concrete conditions — not a romantic, wish-list of things as we would prefer them to be. We are a people of African descent, to be sure, but the vast majority of our people will live, work and die right here in the United States. We need a plan of group development that is

grounded fundamentally in the here and now, not in ancient Egypt or in the Caribbean. Our basic struggle for power is right here in America.

We must also search for common ground — the basic unity of interests which brings together people for different backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, languages and social classes, to advance the ideals of democracy. Power comes from coalitions, not in isolation or alienation from others.

A commitment toward a new black power means that we must have the courage to revitalize our movement for freedom periodically. In South Africa in the 1940s, the African National Congress was essentially an "inclusionist" organization — it sought reforms and the symbolic representation of black people within the estab-

lished system. Then the Nationalist Party came to power and instituted apartheid. A totally new situation existed for black people, requiring new strategies and programs. New leadership arose, personified by Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu; a new program of massive resistance was launched, calling for the democratic transformation of South African society.

We have a similar situation in black America today. The masses of our people recognize that most of the issues which defined the period



ALONG THE COLOR LINE

By MANNING MARABLE

of the Civil Rights Movement no longer exist. We face an unprecedented crisis of poverty, violence, joblessness and social despair, and the old approaches are no longer sufficient or viable. We must struggle to transform our situation, to extend the principles of political democracy to economic and social relations, to create the foundations of genuine opportunity for our people. We need a bold new leadership with a democratic vision of black empowerment and equality. As Frederick Douglass reminded us more than a century ago: "Without struggle, there can be no progress."

(Manning Marable is national freelance columnist.)