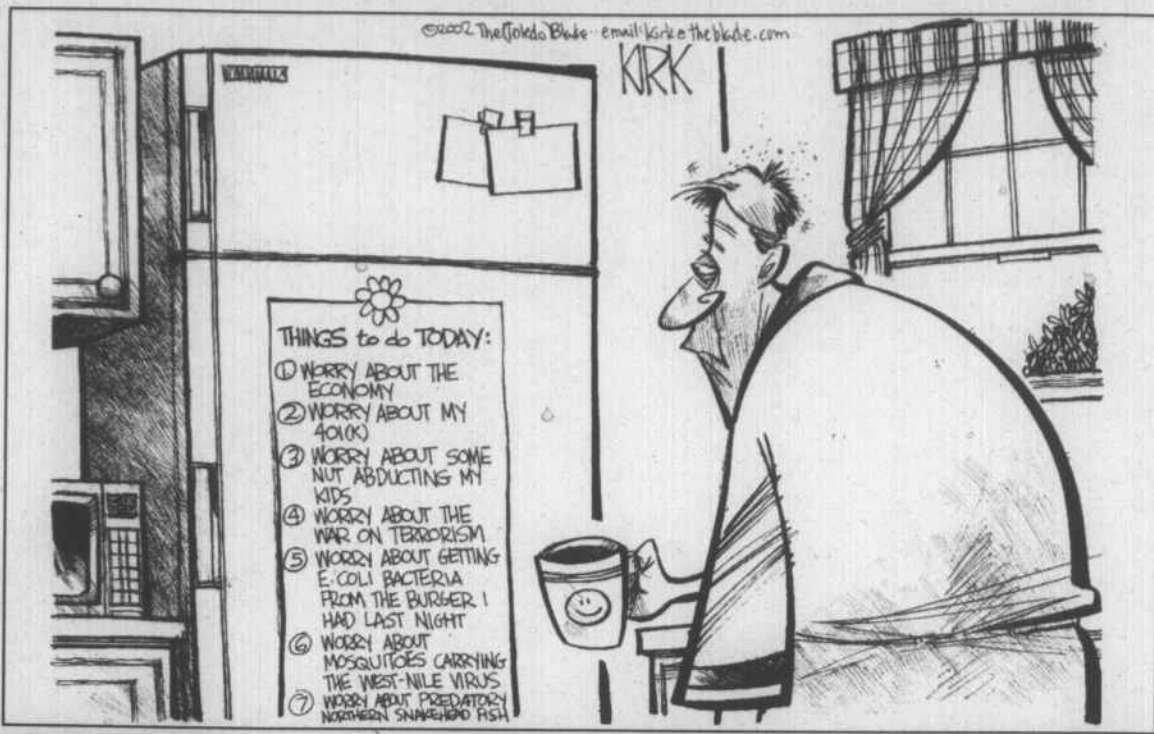


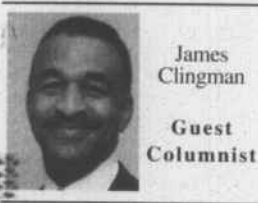
# OPINION

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## No deposit, no return



Why do some of our people continue to believe that we can achieve our collective economic freedom without doing the things necessary to obtain that freedom? We seem to think it will come to us simply because we want it, or simply because we march and demonstrate, or simply because we hold a conference and come away from that gathering feeling good about what we heard. Why don't we realize and accept the fact that if we do not follow through and act upon the information we receive, and the threats we make during our marches and demonstrations, we will never achieve economic freedom? These are not rhetorical questions. Please answer them for yourself.

I have answered them for myself, and I act upon the information I have by following through on the solutions to our problems rather than merely going home and waiting for the next crisis, or refusing to contribute to the solution. What is the solution? The solution is grounded in actions we can take - right now - to relieve our people of the horrendous economic conditions in which we have been, especially for the past 39 years. The solution can be found in what we are willing to do after the marches, after the speeches, after the rallies and after the forums.

Aren't you tired of just talking? Aren't you exhausted after all of the marching? Don't you need to see some real change, some real return for your actions and your outrage? What is the solution? The solution is right in our pockets, right now. We may not be able to control very much in this land we call home, but we can certainly control what is in our pockets and purses. We can certainly control our money.

So what do we do with our money? Well, we all know that if we go to the bank expecting to make a withdrawal, we had better have made a deposit first. As often as we complain about not being treated fairly by the banks that hold our money, we should be searching for alternatives for our dollars. We should be looking for repositories that will give us something in return for our dollars - and I am not talking about the stock market.

We should also understand that we cannot move forward economically without individual sacrifices in favor of the collective. That is, we must make deposits into our own economic accounts, so to speak, if we expect to get something out of them. Our black institutions, organizations, banks, clubs, businesses, and of course, the

MATAH Network, the only black-owned and-operated consumer packaged goods distribution channel in this country, can do much more for our people and would be much better off if we would support it more.

I cannot tell you how great I felt when I attended a MATAH Conference a couple of years ago and noticed the sponsoring banners on the walls. They were all black; the conference was paid for with money from black folks. Black deposit, black return. With as much money as we have in our control - albeit for a short while because it leaves our neighborhoods so fast - we could fund our own conferences and organizations, you know, just like we fund our churches. Have you ever seen a black church with a banner behind the pulpit saying, "This week's service sponsored by Toyota?"

Oh, I had better quit this line of reasoning before some preacher gets a bad idea. John Brown, investment/merchant banker and associate of the Bedford Group, Culver City, Calif., asks: "Why can't we invest in ourselves? We invest in others every day without question, always giving other businesses the opportunity to fail, with our money at stake. Why don't we invest in our own businesses and give our own brothers and sisters that same opportunity to fail as well. Who knows? They just might succeed."

Brown, in addition to his tedious workload, is also working as a board member of the MATAH Network and on his personal dream of building a \$1 billion real estate investment trust - endowed and controlled by black folks. He understands that if we don't put anything in, we can't take anything out.

Let's make some deposits into black children's accounts for their economic future. Let's understand that we cannot have anything of substance without making some kind of sacrifice. Let's invest more in one another, not just from the consumer side of things but from the black business side as well. What I mean by that is: Let's not put the entire burden on consumers to support black-owned businesses. Black businesses not only have an obligation to do what they say they will do; they must also spend as much as they can with other black businesses and give as much as they can to black organizations.

When we do that, and do it consistently, we will be able to make withdrawals from the tremendous returns we will have accumulated from our deposits in one another. Always remember: If we don't put anything in, we can't take anything out.

*James E. Clingman, an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati's African-American studies department, is former editor of the Cincinnati Herald Newspaper and founder of the Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce.*

### Vote for Beatty

**To the Editor:**  
It's time for actions. The root of our values as a state began from the faith of those who risked their lives to carry out the task that God asked them to undertake.

One only has to take a look at Annette Beatty, candidate for N.C. State House District 72, to realize what we endured for the blessings we enjoy today. If we deny that reality, the blessings will move backward as surely as they have been granted us.

Be wise! Cast your vote for Beatty, who has New Vision, New Insight and New Directions for our state and its people.

*Mildred R. Griffin  
Winston-Salem*

### Vote for Tackabery

**To the editor:**  
Jill Tackabery understands that success for all students in our public schools is critical to the future of our children and of our community.

With Tackabery's many years of hands-on involvement

in the school system, we can think of no one more qualified or well suited to serve as a new School Board member. We know that Tackabery will devote herself to helping our school system continue to make the kind of progress upon which our community depends.

Please join us in voting for Tackabery for School Board.

*Kelley and Drew Hancock*

### Support John Polite

**To the Editor:**  
Lt. John Polite of the Forsyth County Sheriff's Department is an excellent choice for sheriff. I have known Polite for almost 40 years. I coached and taught him at Paisley Junior High School. I was impressed by Polite's ability, as a football player, to lead and make quick, hard but right decisions as a quarterback.

As a deputy sheriff, Polite has had a stellar career despite the barriers African-Americans have to overcome. He has the acumen to be fair and pro-

mote only those deputy sheriffs who will carry out the laws in every community. Polite will stop the practices of racial profiling, nepotism, sexual harassment and the "good old buddy" network. He will penalize those deputy sheriffs who break laws and go beyond the call of duty to hurt victims who are arrested.

Polite will be tough on crime and reduce crime, not only in the African-American community but in the whole county.

This community needs a breath of fresh air after all the disturbances that we have had in the Forsyth County Sheriff's Department. Let us wake up, stop complaining, go to the polls and give this community a mandate by casting our votes for Polite on Sept. 10.

The time is ripe for change, and the time is now for us to put one of our own in the position of Forsyth County sheriff - one who is young enough but has the experience and ability to be sheriff. The time is ripe; vote Polite.

*Victor Johnson Jr.  
Winston-Salem*

### Polite is right

I've known Lt. John Polite about 30 years. He is a good listener, articulate, organized and leads by example. Polite has worked and is very knowledgeable of many divisions in the Sheriff's Office, and I have worked with him in two divisions, courtroom and detention.

He has performed the duties of a public servant for almost 27 years. I feel he has the ability and knowledge to perform at a higher level (sheriff of Forsyth County) if given the opportunity. If elected sheriff, I believe he will continue to use some of the policies and procedures currently in place while also implementing new ideas to enhance them.

Polite is a family man who loves God and has much concern for the Sheriff's Office, the people of Forsyth County and the officers who work under his supervision.

I am asking each of you to vote for Polite, a young man with a vision and a willingness to serve all the people in Forsyth County in a professional manner.

*Retired Maj. Garland  
A. Wallace Sr.  
Winston-Salem*

## America the soft



More and more Americans are giving themselves over to the warm decadence of victim status. Gone are this country's more Republican days, when the working class fashioned a life from the honest friction of their hands against the earth. Now we have machines to do the work for us.

We do not strive. We slump on the couch, turn on the Internet and zone out. The closest we come to feeling is dragging ourselves once a week to codependency workshops where we yell and sob at stuffed animals that are supposed to represent our wounded inner children. We are willing cripples, undulating piles of flesh, drones in a broad military industrial complex that has scooped out our sense of individual striving and filled us with warm, gelatinous goo.

In fact, if I had to pick a date, I'd say America's ethos of self-creation formally died on July 24, 2002. That's when a group of short, stubby New Yorkers filed suit against McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King and Kentucky Fried Chicken for making them fat.

"The fast-food industry has wrecked my life," said lead plaintiff Caesar Barber, his fleshy cheeks shaking with indignation. "I was conned, I was fooled, I was tricked," continued Barber.

Apparently Barber had been living in an incredibly wide cave and hadn't heard the news that fast food is bad for you. Never mind that even a cursory glance inside your typical fly pestered McDonalds franchise reveals the



clientele to be less than health conscious. Common sense falls by the wayside of Barbar's stubborn insistence that he is a victim.

Another victim of vague outside forces is the modern drug addict. Once upon a time, willingly puncturing ones veins with a needle was considered an act of self-destruction. Today, we refer to it as a disease. The disease label is misleading insofar as there is no genetic explanation or medical treatment for drug addiction.

So why do we call it a disease? For starters, the disease label takes away the onus of responsibility for the drug user. It makes him a victim. That makes it easier for the addict and loved ones to digest an ugly situation. It also helps society sympathize with - and by extension exhibit a greater willingness to suffer - the addict. It's not Joe's fault he became a junky and continues to relapse three times a week, says the tender voiced mother. He's

just a co-dependent with an addictive personality, a wounded inner child and a mean sense of entitlement. The whole family group hugs, and then curls up in the fetal position. Fade to black.

This is not to underestimate the seriousness of drug addiction. However, treating addiction like a disease (as opposed to a behavioral condition) does overlook the fact that a whole series of choices preceded the condition of addiction. Denying the importance of these personal and moral choices will only increase the rate of drug addiction because it removes terms like it removes such terms as "character" and "personal responsibility" from the cultural dialogue.

But alas, America is comfortable with that. Apparently we are all just drifting along in the currents of our own victim status. This is America's new ethos, one that was perfectly embodied by the American Disabilities Act - a

piece of legislation that makes the definition of disability so broad that people with chronic backache are now lobbying the courts for special consideration. Under the ADA, a Kentucky woman with carpal tunnel syndrome and a mean sense of entitlement successfully sued for the right to be considered disabled.

Most recently, Palm Beach resident Edward Law sued his local strip club for not providing easy wheelchair access to its lap dance booths. Never mind that the ADA was intended to help people with legitimate disabilities - such as blindness and deafness - secure equal opportunities in the workplace. Law is all like, hey if claiming disability helps me get lap dances, then that's cool.

The courts are clogged with similar cases. When it literally pays to become a victim, people will rush to adopt the mantle.

This rousing point has not been lost on our modern civil rights leaders, many of whom now make a living by convincing minorities that they are forever victims of a centuries-old crime of slavery. Because of this victim status, the logic goes, they are owed special treatment in the form of reparations, racial quotas, etc.

Whereas the civil rights movement once focused on equality, now it concerns itself with retribution. Thus, racism is transformed into a disease over which we have no control. Plainly, this kind of thinking is inherently self-limiting. After all, what needs is their for individual striving when it is plainly understood that all the difficulties that we suffer are the direct indisputable result of our shared past?

Meanwhile, our society grows ever more crippled by its apprehension toward personal responsibility. No doubt this is the clearest sign that our society is on the decline.