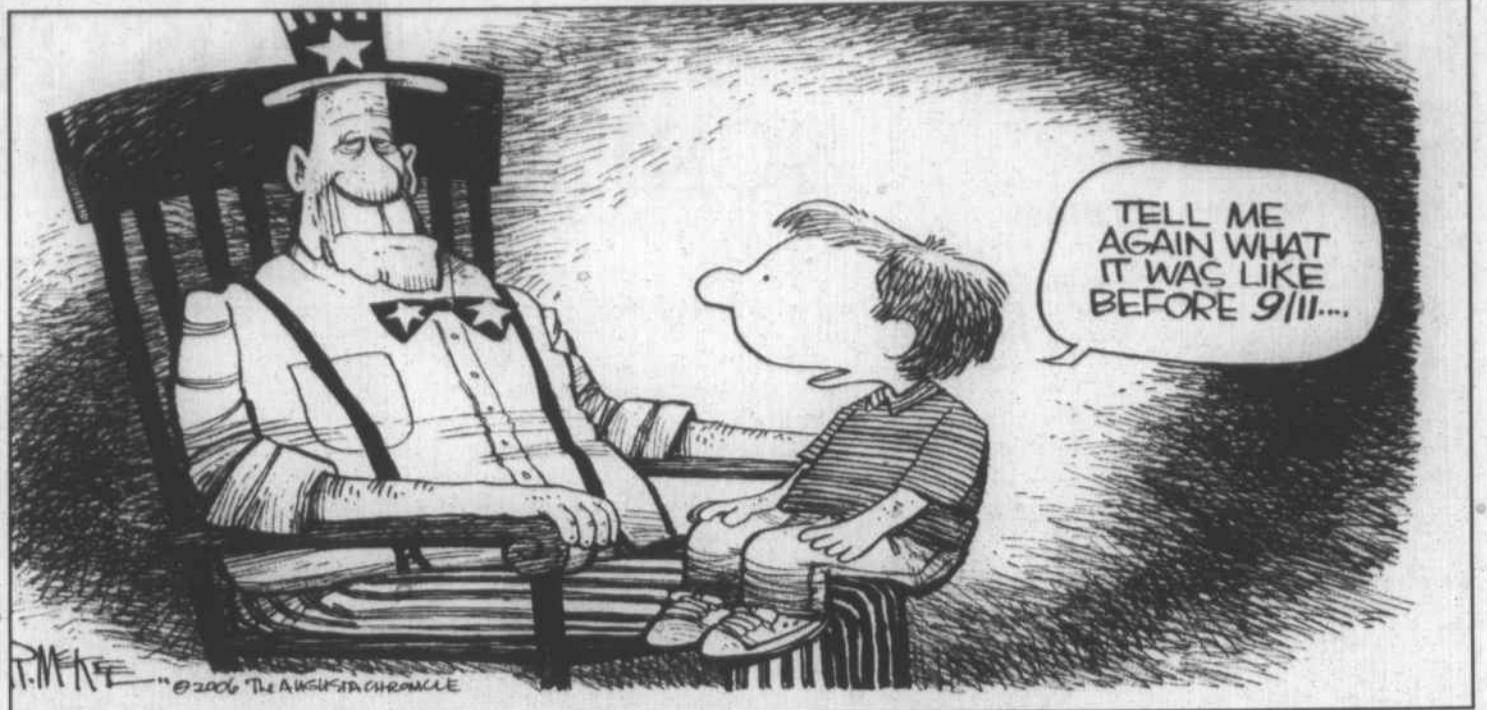
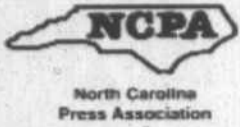


OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Democrats blowing another election

After closely monitoring presidential campaigns since 1968, I am now convinced more than ever that though the Democrats are usually masterful in the congressional politics arena, but when it comes to presidential politics, they are just slightly above amateurs.



Peter Bailey
Guest Columnist

In campaign after campaign, except the two handled and won by Bill Clinton, the Democrats have lost to Republicans who are not exactly rocket scientists. Their problems begin with the scheduling of their national

convention. For some inexplicable reason, the Democrats always hold their convention first, thus providing the Republicans with the decided advantage of closely monitoring the Democratic convention and then adjusting their convention accordingly. The 2008 convention provides a classic example of why convening last is a plus.

I am convinced that after watching how upset many of the White women were, John McCain was inspired to choose Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his potential vice-president.

If the Republicans had convened first, it is a great possibility that he would have chosen someone else, probably a man. Instead he seized the opportunity to select a White woman who has been a mayor and a governor, is a mother of five children, one with special needs, another being a 17-year old pregnant teenager, and still another off to combat in Iraq. Her selection is practically all everyone has been talking about for going on two weeks.

Gov. Palin now has a similar position to the one held by Sen. Obama in his primary campaign against Sen. Clinton.

Accusations of racism were hurled at any White person who opposed Sen. Obama, not by the candidate himself but by numerous of his campaign operatives and supporters. Now Gov. Palin's operatives and supporters are poised to hurl charges of "sexism" at anyone who opposes her right-wing ideological positions.

Many Black people have given Sen. Obama a blank check to do whatever is necessary to win; many White people are probably going to give Gov. Palin a similar blank check because they want to see a White woman as Vice-President rather than a Black man as President.

Having no faith in the intelligence of the American electorate, for over a year I have been saying that if the Democrats nominated Sen. Clinton or Sen. Obama as their 2008 presidential candidate, they were basically conceding the election to the Republicans. My position that the Democrats are about to blow another election has not changed.

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The only segments I watched of the Democratic and Republican conventions were the speeches of Michelle Obama, Sen. Clinton, Bill Clinton, Gov. Palin, and Sen. McCain. Mrs. Obama came off as eloquent, warm, and real when speaking about her family, much less so when speaking about the condition of America; Sen. Clinton's speech was not quite convincing to my ears but she did direct a profound question to her supporters who were still un-enthused about Sen. Obama:

"Were you in this campaign just for me? Or were you in it for that young Marine and others like him? Were you in it for that mom struggling with cancer while raising her-kids? Were you in it for that boy and his mom surviving on the minimum wage? Were you in it for all the people in this country who feel invisible?"

Many of her supporters have yet to be asked to answer that intriguing question by members of the traditional press.

Bill Clinton provided a well-crafted, flawless analysis of the destructiveness of the Bush administration but he spoke in such a clinical style it gave me the impression that he still does not believe that Sen. Obama is qualified to be President of the U.S.

Gov. Palin showed that she should not be underestimated because she is a skillful, ruthless political operative. The speeches by Senators Obama and McCain basically confirmed my belief that they are conventional politicians who have neither the vision nor wisdom to usher in the change they repeatedly talk about. There was not a memorable line or phrase in the presentations delivered between the two of them. They would both be an improvement over the Bush administration but that does not require very much skill.

A. Peter Bailey is a noted commentator and activist.

Media serve as sidekick to McCain

Pennsylvania Gov. Robert Casey, noting that Senator John McCain supported George W. Bush 90 percent of the time in the last session of Congress, got it right when he told delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Denver: "That's not a maverick, that's a sidekick."



George Curry
Guest Columnist

Unfortunately, the corporate media - translation: White-owned media - has decided to become an unabashed sidekick to Bush's sidekick, fawning journalists have abandoned their supposedly "objective" roles and are portraying McCain as a maverick when,

in fact, he is anything but that. The selection of Sarah Palin as McCain's running mate has fueled even more of this nonsense. A column in Sunday's San Francisco Chronicle, for example, was headlined: "GOP resurging as party of mavericks." A day after McCain announced his VP pick, a Washington Post headline proclaimed: "With Pick, McCain reclaims His Maverick Image." On "Meet the Press," Andrea Mitchell declared that McCain "has returned to the original John McCain, the maverick."

NBC host Chris Mathews accurately stated, "The press loves McCain. We're his base." As Peter Hart observes in an article in "Extra!," the publication of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), "A candidate could only get away with such an elaborate and long-running con with the media as willing accomplices."

Hart credits CBS's "60 Minutes" with elevating the myth that McCain is a maverick. In 1997, it ran a segment titled, "The Maverick from Arizona." Even crusty newscaster Mike Wallace told the Washington Post, "I'm thinking I may quit my job if he gets the nomination."

Bob Schieffer, another CBS broadcaster, called McCain "the most famous maverick of the last half of the 20th century." Not to be outdone, Time magazine characterized McCain as "a free-ranging, fence-jumping, kick-the-coral maverick."

The problem with such unceasing cheerleading - in addition to destroying any semblance of fairness - is that such bias carries over into analyzing the candidate's record. Consequently, McCain ends up getting a free ride even when he contradicts himself.

Peter Hart of FAIR noted, "For a more typical politician, McCain's myriad flip-flops would be a serious liability. But McCain mostly manages to get along just fine. Next to his turnabout on Jerry Falwell, McCain's highest-profile reversal might be on Bush's tax cuts. McCain bucked the White House by voting against both the 2001 and 2003 packages, pointing out that they were tilted in favor of the wealthy. In the 2008 campaign, McCain is running in support of extending the very same tax cuts. McCain's campaign talking point now is that he opposed the cuts because they were not accompanied by spending cuts, a boldly disingenuous argument that is rarely challenged by the press corps. (The Associated Press was one notable exception - 1/31/08.)"

Hart continued, "McCain has even managed a flip-flop on one of his signature issues - immigration policy. Though he was cheered by some pundits for co-sponsoring legislation with liberal Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), McCain would eventually distance himself from that bill. On NBC's Meet the Press (1/27/08), he tried to avoid answering a direct question about whether he would sign his very own bill as president, saying the 'bill is dead as it is written' and that 'the lesson is they want the border secured first.' The 'they' he's speaking of would seem to be the right-wing of the party, whom McCain had angered by resisting such 'security first' demands for many months."

It's interesting how the corporate media tries to cover for McCain when he can't cover for himself. Consider the following account from FAIR: "... McCain was asked - aboard the Straight Talk Express, no less - an extraordinarily straightforward question: 'Do you think contraceptives help stop the spread of HIV?'"

"McCain responded by saying, 'You've stumped me.' When the questioner offered some help ('I mean, I think you'd probably agree it probably does help stop it?'), McCain still wasn't able to offer a response: I'm not informed enough on it. Let me find out. You know, I'm sure I've taken a position on it on the past. I have to find out what my position was. Brian, would you find out what my position is on contraception - I'm sure I'm opposed to government spending on it, I'm sure I support the president's policies on it."

"McCain would go on to plead with an aide to 'get me [Sen. Tom] Coburn's thing' to figure out his position. New York Times reporter Adam Nagourney wrote on the paper's website (3/16/07) 'that this went on for a few more moments until a reporter from the Chicago Tribune broke in and asked Mr. McCain about the weight of a pig that he saw at the Iowa State Fair last year.'"

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine and the NNPA News Service, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. He can be reached through his Web site, www.georgecurry.com.

What's wrong with good news?



T. Kevin Walker
Managing Editor

The call from my big brother during the wee hours of the morning one day last week, sent my heart racing. My thoughts immediately went to my precious seven-month-old niece, Mia.

"What's wrong?" I exclaimed without the customary "hello."

"Isn't Ernie Pitt your boss?" he asked.

Relieved, I answered "yes," and since I knew his next question, I followed up with: "Yeah, he's going through some hard times right now." (Hard times is putting it lightly; he has been indicted by the feds on several charges).

"So what's up with the paper?" my bruh asked. "What are ya'll going to do?"

"The same thing that we have always done," I told him. "Nothing's changed."

If I needed proof that news of Pitt's ordeal has in fact reached every nook and cranny of the city, I got it when my brother called. While we both hover well over six-feet and share a fondness for loud music, our similarities end there. I am a natural-born news hound. My brother, on the other hand, prefers ESPN to CNN, Sports Illustrated to Newsweek.

I meant every word of my vow to my brother. The Chronicle isn't going to change what it has always done or alter its brand of community news in any way! So those of you waiting for this paper to do a feature on Pitt and his tussle with the feds, don't hold your breath.

As the person here who makes ALL editorial decisions (I really, really do), I am not avoiding the story because it involves Pitt - who I admittedly do greatly respect despite our many head-butting battles. He, in fact, wanted the paper to cover the story to show the community that he and we have nothing to hide. But the buck stops here, and I have decided that The Chronicle will not deviate from what we do each week.

Unlike area television stations (no offense), The Chronicle doesn't look to daily newspapers to figure out what news is relevant. The Winston-Salem Journal has been all over this story, of course. Like most media out-

lets, that paper follows the mantra - "If it bleeds, it leads and if it's black - attack."

We have never followed. Instead, we have played the leader in covering stories that the Journal wouldn't touch with a 24-foot pole. We pride ourselves on showing our community at its best. Yes, we are in the business of "good news," and we are proud of it.

We'll let the other paper chase the ambulances and stalk around courthouses and police stations.

Why is it strange that we would rather report about black men breaking barriers (page A12) instead breaking and entering? Is it disingenuous that we would rather profile black women empowering themselves (page B7) rather than degrading themselves? Are we biased and journalistically unethical because we prefer publishing our young people's graduation photos rather than their police mugshots? If so, those are labels that we wear proudly.

Our dedicated readers know what we are all about. You all know that you didn't see stories scrolled across our pages when a former high school principal was faced with criminal charges or when a former television anchor was tried and sent off to prison. Those weren't Chronicle stories, and neither is the one involving Ernie Pitt.

Apparently, "good news" goes a long way these days. Because of you, our readers, today, The Chronicle has its highest circulation of its 34-year history. We are grateful for that, especially since daily papers are apparently turning off readers with their bad news and experiencing plunging readership as a result.

Thank all of you for the support that you have given to The Chronicle over the years and a special thank you to those who have reached out in the last few weeks with your kind words and other signs of encouragement.

Yes, Ernie Pitt has a fight on his hand - but it is not his first and likely won't be his last. When he founded this paper more than three decades ago, he always intended for its mission to become greater than just one man, and his wish has come true.

With that said, I'll tell all of you what I told my brother, "Nothing's changed," here. Read us every Thursday for the "good news" and if you want the bad news ... well, you know where to get that too.

- KW

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