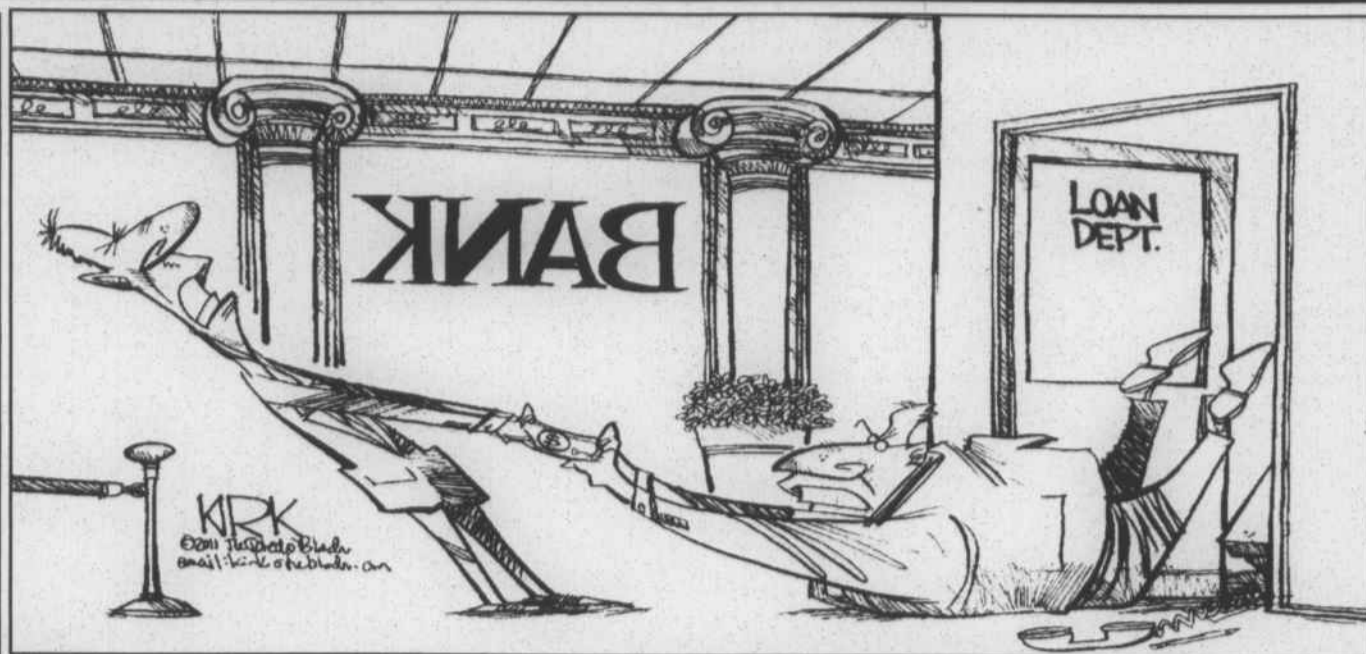
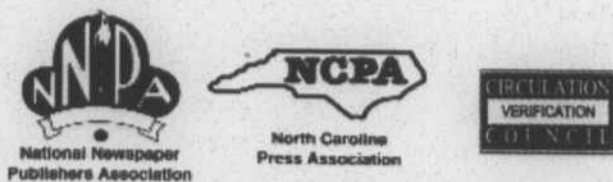


OPINION/ FORUM

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My encounter with President Obama



Augustine Joseph
Guest Columnist

I woke up on Tuesday, October 18, 2011 with a different, upbeat feeling about my day. I knew that today was going to be much different and would turn out to be one of the most memorable days of my life. I, Augustine Joseph, a senior Political Science student at North Carolina A&T State University had been invited to meet President Barack Obama.

On that day, President Barack Obama was making a stop on his bus tour in Jamestown, N.C. at the Mary Perry Ragsdale Family YMCA. This event was to take the American Jobs Act to the people and remind the Washington politicians to pass the bill.

Before the event started, I was invited with other Democratic Party officials and elected officials to go behind the stage to meet the President. Moments before meeting the President, I could feel nothing but adrenaline pumping and tried to keep calm, cool and collected.

All of the Democratic Party officials were behind stage around a barricade, facing in front of us were two United States flags. Then the moment had arrived and President Obama walked over to the two flags and began to greet people. My first reaction to this was "Wow, the President of the United States is standing right in front of me."

I was totally shocked by his mere presence. As more people in front of me began to meet him and take his picture, I continued to remind myself what I would say. I was the second to last person in the line of people he was meeting, and now I was at the front and my time had



come.

One of the President's advisors leaned over and said, "Mr. President, this is Augustine Joseph, a student at North Carolina A&T State University."

The President greeted me with a handshake and said, "Augustine how are you?" I replied to him, "I am doing great."

Then we both looked forward at the camera and took an official picture. I then turned to the President and said, "Mr. President, I have to give you something of mine. I want to give you my

A&T lapel pin." I began to remove the lapel pin from my suit and I said, "Mr. President, you have to leave here with a little bit of Aggie Pride. It is important that you have this because you will need it more than I. You will need this when you come back to North Carolina and come to speak at North Carolina A&T."

The President then chuckled, and I said "I am serious sir." The President then said "Okay" and I said, "Thank you Mr. President."

This is truly one of the moments that I will remember for the rest of my life, the opportunity to have met a sitting President. Once I had walked back to my seat moments later, a teacher was giving the introduction to the President, and the President came walking out on stage to the tune of "Hail to the Chief" in the background.

Augustine Joseph studies political science at N.C. A&T State University.



Honoring Dr. King by Fighting for Jobs

"This really means making the movement powerful enough, dramatic enough, morally appealing enough, so that people of goodwill, the churches, labor, liberals, intellectuals, students, poor people themselves begin to put pressure on congressmen to the point that they can no longer elude our demands."

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was resurrected this past weekend in Washington, D.C. The new Martin Luther King Memorial, a powerful, granite symbol of Dr. King's dream of equal opportunity and racial reconciliation, was officially dedicated on Sunday before a crowd of thousands on the National Mall. In his keynote speech, President



Marc Morial
Guest Columnist

Obama reminded the audience and the nation that even though, "We have a right to savor the slow but certain progress" Dr. King made possible, "Our work, Dr. King's work is not complete." The President called upon the nation to "draw from the strength of those earlier struggles," to

confront the crises of unemployment, poverty, inequality and division that still plague us today.

A day earlier, I served as co-chair of a rally and March for Jobs and Justice that was organized by Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network. Thousands of citizens and dozens of civil rights, human rights, and labor leaders joined us in a call for concrete action during a march from the Washington Monument to the new King Memorial. We marched for the 14 million Americans who remain out of work. We marched for a jobs bill. We marched in solidarity with citizens who feel left out by corporate interests, let down by their political leaders and left behind by the economic recovery. We marched for worker rights...for voter rights...for equal justice under the law. And we marched to the beat of a constant refrain: "What do we want? Jobs! When do we want it?" Now!"

The common thread tying together Saturday's march and Sunday's Memorial dedication is the re-emergence today of the same kind of bold, grassroots action that Dr. King so courageously used in his fight for civil rights and economic justice. With overall unemployment at 9.1 percent and the African American rate at 16 percent, it is time for the rising voices of the people -- from Wall Street to Washington -- to be heard. We should not forget that Dr. King was assassinated in 1968 while leading non-violent demonstrations to secure dignity and living wages for Black sanitation workers in Memphis. He was also planning a new nationwide campaign for jobs and opportunity that would involve citizen protests in cities and rural districts across the country and culminate with another historic march on Washington.

Like the nation's founders, Dr. King understood the power of "We, the people" to build a "More Perfect Union." He relied on groups like the National Urban League, SCLC and the NAACP to mobilize, organize and empower the foot soldiers of the movement. And he inspired us to press on in the face of barriers and setbacks.

Dr. King's life has been a guiding light in my own career in public service. While I am proud of the new Memorial on the National Mall, I can think of no better way to honor his legacy than to stand with groups like the National Action Network and millions of Americans in the ongoing struggle for jobs and justice.

Marc H. Morial is the president and CEO of the National Urban League.

Media treats Obama worse than challengers



George Curry
Guest Columnist

News media coverage of President Obama is much more negative than stories about each of his Republican challengers, netting him almost four negative stories for every positive one.

That's the conclusion of an extensive study by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. According to the report, titled "The Media Primary," Texas Gov. Rick Perry received the most coverage and was subject to the most favorable coverage until several weeks ago, when he was overtaken in that category by Herman Cain.

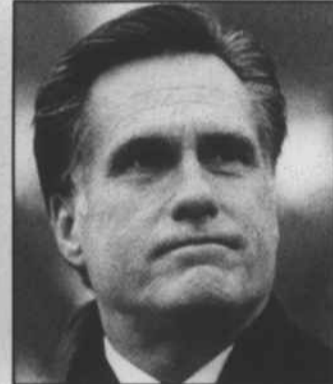
"One man running for president has suffered the most unrelenting negative treatment of all, the study found: Barack Obama. Though covered largely as president rather than a candidate, negative assessments of Obama have outweighed positive by a ratio of almost 4-1," the report stated. "Those assessments of the president have also been substantially more negative than positive every one of the 23 weeks studied. And in no week during those five months was more than 10% of the coverage about the president positive in tone."

The analysis of coverage in 11,500 news media outlets was conducted from May 2-October 9. While 57 percent of Obama's coverage was considered neutral, 9 percent was positive and 34 percent was negative. At the other end of the spectrum, 32 percent of Rick Perry's coverage was rated positive and 20 percent considered negative.

Every Republican candidate still in the race except Newt Gingrich had favorable coverage at least double that of President Obama. In the cases of Michele Bachmann and Herman Cain, it was



GOP contenders Gov. Rick Perry, Mitt Romney and Michele Bachmann.



triple the positive coverage of Obama and nearly triple for Republican front-runner Mitt Romney.

Only Gingrich had a higher percentage of negative coverage than Obama with 35 percent, just one percentage point higher than the president. However, Gingrich's favorable coverage stood at 15 percent, six points higher than Obama's.

Interestingly, although Perry did not enter the race until August — three months after the study began — he received more coverage than any other candidate. Moreover, even after poor performances in the Republican presidential debates, he received the most flattering coverage over the period studied — 32 percent positive, 20 percent negative and the remainder neutral.

Coverage of Cain was 28 percent positive — two points higher than Romney — and 23 percent negative, which was four points lower than Romney's negative coverage. Cain's recent coverage has been more positive than his overall numbers reflect because prior to his winning the Florida straw poll, he was largely ignored and received more negative coverage than in recent weeks.

The sour economy and Republican attacks are responsible for much of President Obama's negative coverage, according to the study.

"In many stories, Obama was the target of not only the whole roster of GOP presidential contenders. He was also being criticized in often

harsh terms by Republicans in Congress," the study found. "Added to that, members of his own party began criticizing him on both policy and strategy grounds, particularly as his poll numbers fell. And for much of this period, the president's coverage reflected the biggest problem on his watch — a continual flow of bad news about the U.S. economy."

Even the killing of Osama bin Laden did not reverse the president's poll numbers.

"One reason is that many of the references to his [Obama's] role in the hunt for bin Laden were matched by skepticism that he would receive any long term political benefit from it. Another was that bin Laden news was tempered with news about the nation's economy."

And that is the problem. While journalists are compelled to cover stories about political warfare and the economy, they should not attack Obama or anyone else in news stories under the guise of providing context for readers and viewers.

An Associated Press story on May 2 is a textbook example of this problem:

"A nation surly over rising gas prices, stubbornly high unemployment and nasty partisan politics poured into the streets to wildly cheer President Barack Obama's announcement that Osama bin Laden, the world's most wanted man, had been killed by U.S. forces after a decade long manhunt. The outcome could not have come at a better time for Obama,

sagging in the poll as he embarks on his re-election campaign."

The news of bin Laden's death was almost buried.

The story could have also been presented this way: "Despite former President George W. Bush's promise to capture Osama bin Laden 'dead or alive,' it was his successor who delivered on that promise in grand fashion, prompting thousands of U.S. citizens to take to the streets in noisy celebration."

Another option: "President Obama, who had his foreign policy credentials questioned repeatedly during the 2008 presidential campaign, delivered on a campaign pledge to kill Osama bin Laden if ever presented the opportunity, a surprise action that led to impromptu celebrations across the United States."

Either approach would have provided more relevant context than AP wrapping its story in the highly-charged language of his Republican challengers.

President Obama knew he would be double-teamed by GOP congressional leaders and Republican candidates hoping to unseat him. But he probably didn't expect the stealth attacks from major media outlets.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emergence 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.