

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

How do you get ready for Big March on the City?

The movie "Selma" educated many and revived memories for others about the tough times of the Civil Rights Movement. Other movies have touched on parts of the movement. The documentary "Eyes on the Prize" showed real scenes of black people who protested getting bit by police dogs and various other kinds of police action. But how did all those people know how to protest? How did they learn how to march for freedom?

Those questions are relevant today as what has been called the greatest litigation on voting rights since Selma prepares to come to Winston-Salem. On July 13, hundreds of people are expected to descend on the city as the federal lawsuit N.C. NAACP v. McCrory is heard. This is the lawsuit filed to overturn the North Carolina voter law that requires a government-issued identification card to vote and ends various voter laws.

"July the 13th, we begin the most important voting rights litigation since Selma. We're saying this is our Selma," the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, president of the N.C. NAACP, said on May 30. "On that day, we go to trial, but that evening we will have a national voting rights march and rally in support of voting rights. And we're saying that because we want everybody here to mobilize hundreds of people to come back on that day."

The N.C. NAACP is in the process of gaining commitments from people who will work toward a show of force on July 13.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People also is planning a march, this one for later in the summer. This year's "Journey for Justice" will go 850 miles, from Selma, Alabama, to Washington, D.C. — through Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia — "to highlight the need for criminal justice and voting reforms because our lives matter and our children deserve to live," says Cornell William Brooks, president/CEO of the Baltimore-based NAACP.

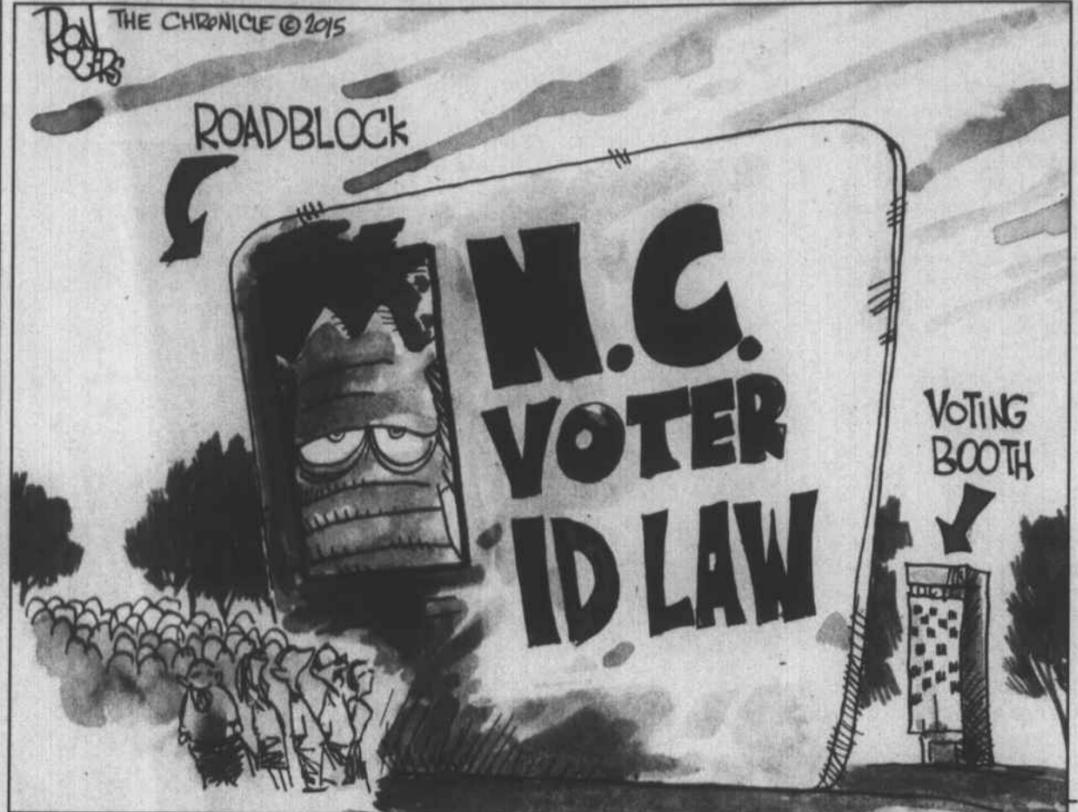
How does an organization mobilize for a march in the 21st century, a time in which we use new tools to communicate with each other? How do you reach youth who appear to have crooked necks because of all the texting they do? How do you reach the grandmothers with their iPads full of photos of grandchildren, not manifestos? How do you reach the grandfathers who would rather go fishing than stage a protest? Isn't all this protest talk passé? After all, it was 50 years ago when all the hard work was done, right?

Wrong. Fifty years ago, the Civil Rights Movement was a force because people were sick and tired of being sick and tired of the injustice heaped upon them. Black people had pride and felt they had to prove that they were just as good as white people. Back then, the Civil Rights Movement moved through a segregated society in which there were no mobile phones with text messaging or computers with email. The desire to live as human beings and be treated as such was so great that people sacrificed to gain the inalienable rights that they were supposed to have. Where is the sacrifice today? Where is the concern as those rights are being taken away? Black and white Americans died for voting rights, but many black people still don't vote. It's easy to complain when people who don't have black people's interest at heart are elected. It's hard to get them removed if you don't vote them out.

As the July 13 date approaches, black Americans in Winston-Salem should remember their history, vow never to return to those times and act with finances and other means to make sure that happens.

"July the 13th, we begin the most important voting rights litigation since Selma. We're saying this is our Selma."

—Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, president of the N.C. NAACP



Blacks not comfortable with being black: Lessons from Caitlyn Jenner



Bill Turner
Guest Columnist

Caitlyn, "the new normal" for the former Bruce Jenner's transgender experience — and the frenzied media attention given to it — sparked my rethinking about a critical mass of Black Americans who made the change from being black, in exchange for being accepted by mainstream white society and who, of their own free will, abandoned key elements of their former selves, all to feel assimilated.

Being black has nothing to do with the absurd idea of race as a biological issue. I refer to consciousness of kind and pride, the self-confident appreciation for the unique and valuable contributions of blacks to world history, and the compassionate understanding of and responsiveness to the situation of less fortunate blacks. Branded mockingly as Black Anglo Saxons, these are the blacks who want to fit in, not stand out, and they work deliberately to present themselves and talk with the right accent act more like and ingratiate themselves to the so-called dominant group. Unfortunately, this crowd of code switchers has reproduced themselves, now for two generations.

Most Southern-born and bred black Baby Boomers like me attended excellent schools; that is, up until the word "segregated," as defined by the liberal gatekeepers, came to mean that such institutions were inferior because blacks attended and managed them. Historically black colleges feel the effects now in terms of trying to enroll a generation

that has been taught "the white man's ice is colder." The educational system requires no serious study of black history and culture and any black figure to the political left of Dr. Martin Luther King is pilloried as an unpatriotic militant.

Five decades ago, being black extended not only far

didn't know personally then were of a kindred spirit. The ideas prevalent in that period and space, particularly as expressed in language, literature, music, philosophy, politics and religion were the canvas on which a new picture of America would be painted. Millions of black children

went the equivalent of becoming transraced. "We" became "I" and for many who benefitted most from the civil rights movement, "me and mine" and "personal success" hushed the earlier sounds of black solidarity. "Black Power," that signature slogan of the turbulent times — a call for economic clout and political influence — was shanghaied and made into an anti-white rant.

This surgical-like social operation — the social engineering into the equivalent of the prefrontal lobe of blacks' social and cultural souls — was complete within a decade. The platform of racial integration became the operating table on which the transformation of many blacks took place, where cultural distinctions or putting something into a racial context became politically incorrect. The blacks who should be best suited educationally to articulate and propose solutions to the major problems of blacks in the 21st century — still the problem of the color line — either don't have a clue or they are simply passing, as it were, not interested.

I have no moral judgment to pass on Bruce Jenner's decision to transition to being a woman, but I do, as a socially conscious black man, have difficulty dealing with blacks who, because they struggle with their racial identity, make it hard for the rest of us to be ourselves and to do what needs to be done. No narcissism, no vanity in that, and I am curious to see how Vanity Fair rolls this out, what with Ebony and Jet now in the closet.

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Illustration by Ron Rogers for the Chronicle

beyond the color of dark skin and dashikis and Afro hairstyles, but it also reached into the very core of most blacks' self-awareness, their spirits, and was the driver of an evolving value system. When James Brown recorded "Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud" in 1968, many blacks, fresh from attending Dr. King's funeral, were ready to spend the rest of their lives making equality, freedom and justice a reality.

All of my friends and most of the black people I

got caught up in this; they have African and Africanized names and their parents, my generation, did and said things that gave emphasis to black unity.

Then something curious happened, starting back when Bruce Jenner was an Olympic champion in 1972. This conspicuous change popularized the turn of phrase on the acronym NAACP: "Negroes Ain't Acting Like Colored People." Many blacks — now living the American Dream — under-

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