

# U.S. would have poor volunteer for slavery

By George Wilson  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER  
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Recently, four U.S. presidents joined retired Gen. Colin Powell in Philadelphia for a Summit on Volunteerism. The central theme of the gathering was that Americans should pitch in and do what is necessary to improve their communities. On the surface, it all seemed good. The pictures of volunteers cleaning up graffiti-filled walls and trash-laden areas were impressive. However, those who have long been doing all types of things in communities across the nation weren't the subject of this gigantic photo opportunity.

Many members of Congress attended the Philadelphia event.

These lawmakers felt so inspired that they returned to Capitol Hill to put their feelings into motion. After a few good speeches on the floor of the House of Representatives, they launched into debate of the Housing Opportunity Responsibility Act of 1997.

This bill would dramatically alter public housing in ways that won't necessarily make it better for tenants. It calls for housing authorities to only rent to those who can afford to pay higher rents. The reason for this proposal is that Congress has to cut the operating funds for housing authorities. Because of the cuts, the only way to keep public housing from becoming extinct is to rent more units to those who can afford to pay. Those without

resources would be forced to consider life with relatives, friends, or in a dwindling number of homeless shelters. Those who drafted this legislation apparently have a very low opinion



Powell

of the poor.

This contempt for the less fortunate is shown in the bill which requires tenants sign and adhere to a personal improvement contract. The first question that arises is how will personal improvement be monitored? To implement this section of the legisla-

tion, a new industry would be needed. For lack of another name, we'll just call this group "the improvement police." Perhaps, the most onerous of all the bill's proposals is the requirement that those who receive federal housing assistance perform eight months of community service per month. A failure on the part of any tenant who isn't elderly or disabled to do so, would result in eviction from public housing. I wasn't present during the time of chattel slavery, but the debate on the floor of the House sounded like something that slave masters might have said as they were deciding what to do with their captive work force. To his credit, Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.) has been leading the fight against the bill.

Jackson says forcing volunteer work on poor people is a form of slavery. He has a point. Webster's dictionary describes volunteering as follows: "To enter into or offer oneself for any service of one's own free will, without solicitation or compulsion."

To make it mandatory for someone to perform some yet to be defined public service or face the threat of eviction or losing one's welfare benefits would hardly fit into the definition of volunteerism — unless it is the same type of "volunteerism" that our ancestors practiced in cotton and sugar fields from dawn to dusk with no compensation.

GEORGE WILSON is a 16-year Capitol Hill correspondent for the American Urban Radio Network.

## Letters to The Post



Bill Simms resigned from Transamerica Insurance after lying about his academic and athletic history.

## Charlotte's behind you, Bill Simms

Bill (Simms), I truly believe the city of Charlotte will rally around you, for since you've been here, you have definitely rallied around Charlotte.

The deception you started and continued was wrong. I think those of us who have worked in the corporate arena realize the pressures put upon us (especially being black), and having to work and perform way better than the average white person to even hopefully get recognized for our achievements, are put in possibly the position of making ourselves promotable and end up stretching it a little bit. In your struggle for those better positions, more money (which we all want), you did stretch it, Bill, and you did it without actually having that college degree. It shows us that good common sense and drive can bring you a long way if you dedicate yourself to achievement.

I know when working for "Big Blue," forms would be passed out from personnel every so often for individuals to update their personal file jackets to see if they took/completed any formal education courses. If one wanted to, they could easily say "I attended/graduated from XYZ school." As long as you projected the image "they" liked, you were smart, well-spoken, etc., you were on your way.

Bill, you are a living example that you can obtain great things without that piece of paper. But I know you continually stress to our youth the importance of having an education and you will continue to do so. You truly have so much to offer to them and anyone who struggles with trying to succeed. Give this back to your community, don't let this stop you with the goals you had and now hopefully will continue to keep. Keep your faith and commitments. We continue to love you and admire you — good, bad or indifferent.

Barbara Morris  
Charlotte

## Throwing support behind you, Bill



Daniels

It is quite conceivable that a list could be compiled bearing the names of persons here in Charlotte and elsewhere that are the recipients not only of Bill Simms' largesse but also his warm smile and overall loving demeanor.

These persons believed in Bill prior to the recent revelation and can be depended upon to befriend him during this developmental opportunity as he searches within himself for the far too elusive reality that all he will ever really need already exists within him. My name would be proudly displayed on such a list.

Ahmad Daniels  
Charlotte

## What's on your mind?

Let us know. Write Letters to The Post, P.O. Box 30144, Charlotte, N.C., 28230. You can also fax us at (704) 342-2160 or e-mail charpost@clt.mindspring.com

# Race, sex and two men named Simpson

By Robber Makins  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Delmar Simpson, a career military man of African descent, was found guilty of raping six Caucasian women. The claim is that he used his position as a drill instructor to force these women to submit.

Don't believe it, it's a set-up. Sgt. Simpson was a fall guy, the sacrificial lamb, God knows that we have had enough of our young men sacrificed lately, by these Caucasians. They are so calculating, that they went after another Simpson. They are not finished with O.J. Simpson yet. Needless to say Sgt. Simpson was used to send a message to all African Americans that are in the military. The message is loud and clear: yes we are going to use our women to come and get you.

The use of their women to justify the lynching of our men is nothing new, even though for a while it was not quite so blatant. My great uncle would tell me tales of how the Caucasians would lynch African American men for looking at a Caucasian woman, or simply because of one

of them pointed at in an African American man, while they were lined up going in to our African American mothers and sisters.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that both these men are innocent. We know that the news media will interview several hundred African Americans until they find an idiot that will say what they want to hear, and that is, "yes I believe all these men are guilty. If they look long enough they will find one. My brothers beware, always have an alibi, and when you travel, always have someone with you, as you can see the beast is on the prowl."

With all of the racism and discrimination in the military, an African American has to be well disciplined to be a drill sergeant and a career man. This is a man that knows his place. It is absurd to even suggest that these men used their power to seduce those women. Some think these men are being framed simply because of their positions, but it is much more complicated than that. O.J. Simpson was used to set this whole thing up. His wife and friend

were murdered to say that we are murderers and rapists to build it up, and bring a lot of attention to it. This is not new for the Caucasians. When they wanted to wipe out the so-called Indians, they called them uncivilized and said that they don't deserve the land that God had given them. When the U.S. government wanted to attack Iraq, they coerced them into going into Kuwait. Kuwait and Iraq were one nation until the Europeans went in with their guns and divided them.

They then devised their conspiracy into the military. A Caucasian individual can look at the pattern by the U.S. government, and those of authority, and can conclude that it is OK to shoot down an African American couple. Industry is OK to job discrimination; the all Caucasian juries are finding African Americans guilty and finding Caucasians innocent.

ROBBER MAKINS lives in Charlotte.

# Tiger Woods' success breaks all boundaries

By Joseph Lowery  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The unprecedented public excitement around the remarkable achievement of Eldrick "Tiger" Woods in golf offers the nation opportunity to ponder the long journey of progress on the long, long journey to understanding that there's only one race — human race. It's a long and perilous journey and one must negotiate treacherous curves and a plethora of pitfalls.

When Tiger titled himself "cablinasian," he expresses an admirable desire to swim in all the genetic streams that flow in his ancestry. In so many ways, this intelligent and talented young man is a "tiger." In dealing with the vagaries of the political jungle, however, he is still a growing "cub." Even so, he sends a positive message that we are not genetic (nor cultural) purists and we should celebrate the pluralistic character of the human species.

However, there are obvious distinctions between Tiger's noble self-definition and how he is perceived through the eyes of the majority. Irrespective of the

multigenetic and multicultural factors, the fellow golfer who is a jokester engaged his jocularity only in the terms of the black in "Cablinasian." The suggested menu did not include chicken chow mein, just chicken. This is one of the political realities that young Tiger must face — while holding fast to his wholistic approach to his heritage.

Other realities include the fact that non-whites, particularly African Americans, are engaged in a continuing struggle to level the playing field across the bunkers and hazards on the national course of life in America. Black folks have been intentionally and systematically excluded from rights and opportunities enjoyed by whites. Whenever a person is identified as African-American, he or she is targeted for discrimination in education, housing, economic opportunities, politics, and in the criminal justice system.

In south Alabama in the early fifties during the time I served as pastor in Mobile, Ala., a multi-racial lad was denied admission to a "white" public school because he was judged to be 1-12th black. (Does this mean black blood is 12 times more powerful than white

blood even though they are both red?)

It has not mattered how multi-racial you might be, if you were identified as black, you had to ride on the back of the bus, use "colored" rest rooms, drink from "colored" water fountains, and you were denied the right to vote. You are stigmatized and considered inferior to whites.

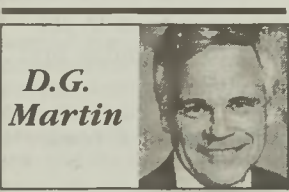
(Incidentally, the Augusta Golf Club that hosts the Masters tournament excluded blacks from membership until SCLC's confrontation with Shoals Creek Club in Birmingham and the PGA just a few years ago.)

Blacks are still the targets of discrimination and jokes. Neither is funny. Tiger is learning to master that reality on the fairways of life.

Naturally, black folks take pride in breakthroughs and accomplishments that emasculate the "inferior" falsehood, and why we resist attempts to demean the achiever or diminish the achievement.

Tiger scored a "hole in one" when he accepted Fuzzy Zoeller's apology. Zoeller's poor taste is sympathetic of a more comprehensive and insidious insensitiv-

# Great graduation speeches require hard work



D.G. Martin

What is the hardest job in the world? Making a good graduation speech.

You have to face a group of prospective graduates and their families — every one of whom came for some other reason than to hear you speak.

They are ready to celebrate and reminisce and say good-bye. You and your speech are in the way.

I get to go to a lot of university graduations as a part of my job. On a week-end earlier this month I heard three great ones — ones that made the graduates

forget for a moment their degrees and celebrations.

Why did these speakers win their audiences to them when so many others fail?

Each of them rejected all temptation to make a "change-the-world" speech. Instead they tried to put themselves in the graduates' seats. They talked directly about the graduates' worries and concerns. They talked briefly and from the heart.

Nothing earth-shaking. Nothing impressive or authoritative. Just good heart-to-heart talk from somebody who has been there and cares.

Just in case you are curious, here is a brief summary of what each of them said. They were aiming straight at the graduates, but much of what they were also meant for me.

First, at East Carolina

University, the speech of Sandra Mims Rowe's speech was "passion matters." Rowe, an ECU graduate, is editor of the Oregonian, the major daily paper in Portland.

What does she mean by "passion"?

Rowe interviews every prospective news department employee before hired. And, she says, she never offers the job until she finds out whether or not the prospect has passion for something. She asks each one of them what, outside their care and family, do they really care about. Anyone who doesn't show a passionate concern for something is not the kind of person she trusts to work at her paper.

At UNC-Chapel Hill, Erskine Bowles, President Clinton's top assistant, shared several of his rules for success and happiness.

"They're all short and sweet,

simple and even trite, but they've helped me enormously along the way, and I hope that you will take home at least a few of them and perhaps find them useful in the exciting days you have ahead of you."

1. Don't over-promise.
2. Do the little things.
3. Always do quality.
4. You simply can't say thanks too much.
5. Encourage creativity and embrace change.
6. Take time to "add to the woodpile." Help fellow citizens.
7. His last and most important piece of advice: Save time for your family.

Finally, at the UNC Medical School, my friend and morning jogging buddy, Dr. Robert Bashford, gave the graduation speech for the second year in a row. (I don't remember ever hearing of another graduation speak-

er who got invited back the very next year.)

His good advice to this multitude of brand new doctors facing a lifetime of changing and pressure-filled profession: Care about your patients. You won't care about them unless you get to know them. And you won't get to know them unless you take the time to find out something good about them.

How to answer the question of what one ought to do in life? Bashford passed on a quote from Henry James who responded by saying that three things in life were important.

"The first is to be kind, the second is to be kind and the third is to be kind."

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