

The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

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OUR VIEW

Republicans put Democrats on notice for votes

The Republican Party, smelling blood in the water as it relates to black voters' disconnect with Democrats, are going for the gusto.

The GOP, led by national party Chairman Ken Mehlman, is touring the country to convince African Americans that the Party of Lincoln is their party, too, if they'll just give it a chance. That approach isn't likely to touch off a mass migration to the Republican ledger, but that's not the plan.

Figuring the Democrats are on the edge of collapsing at the national level, Mehlman and party are banking that just a sliver of extra black support in key battleground states will put the Republicans in the political driver's seat. It worked in Ohio, where president Bush got an Election Day 2004 bounce of 5 percent among African Americans, enough to deliver the state, and re-election.

Mehlman, who has spoken to black groups across the country since Bush's re-election, is touting the Republicans as the party most likely to get government off Americans' backs when it comes to tax relief, business regulation and homeownership, among other issues. Democrats, of course, counter that the GOP historically has tried to hold black aspirations down, whether through campaigns to dismantle welfare or snuffing voting rights. Those things may have been true, but there is now a critical mass of middle- and upper-class blacks who are more interested in their checking account than history. And young people? Don't even go there, primarily because they're more likely to buy into the Republican agenda, than their elders, according to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington, D.C., think tank.

Will the GOP campaign work? It's too early to tell. Perhaps as an alternative, we should also look to the young, who are also more likely to declare themselves independent of either party. That, ultimately, could be the hammer black voters need to wield political clout on both sides of the ideological aisle.

Testing vs. busing: Neither a panacea

Judge Howard Manning is right when he shot down the idea of busing as a cure for Charlotte-Mecklenburg's struggling high schools.

Neither will testing students until we're all blue in the face.

In the past, busing allowed CMS to essentially hide its failure to educate low-income kids on suburban campuses under the guise of diversity. But CMS is also failing now when it comes to No Child Left Behind criteria that inner-city schools aren't measuring up to. The only way to fix what's wrong with inner-city schools is to make substantial investments in people. That means putting more experienced teachers in classrooms, bringing facilities and materials up to date, and ensure discipline on those campuses.

Everybody talks about education equity, but very few are willing to discuss the sacrifices required to get it. For inner city parents, that means working with CMS as stakeholders, not as a baby-sitting service until students are freed in the afternoon. For suburban parents, it means recognizing that their goal of attendance zones close to home will likely carry a price if Manning forces the state to pump more money into failing schools. For taxpayers, well, we already know what that means. But in the end, a poorly-educated populace means a much-poorer state for all North Carolinians.

Work on immigration as well as enforcement

U.S. Rep. Sue Myrick's announcement Monday that drunk driving should be made a deportable offense is a curious pronouncement. We understand why Rep. Myrick is frustrated, but whether the end justifies the means is debatable.

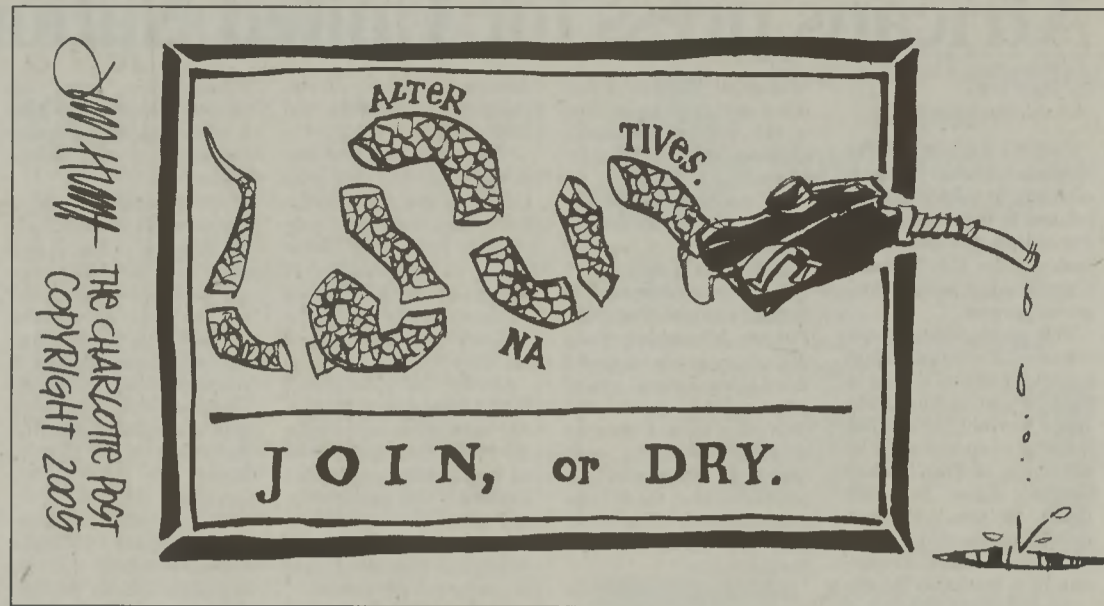
Scott Gardner of Mount Holly was killed last month when his car was struck by a truck driven by Ramiro Gallegos, an undocumented immigrant from Mexico. Mr. Gallegos was driving drunk. Rep. Myrick said she plans to introduce legislation that would enter every defendant's legal status, failure to appear for trial and DWI into a national crime database. In addition, she proposes to put eight immigration and deportation officers in North Carolina, up from the current one. There are an estimated 300,000 illegal immigrants in the state.

Without the people necessary to effectively regulate legal immigration to the U.S., millions of illegals will continue to cross the borders. With only one immigration officer covering the entire state, overwhelmed doesn't do North Carolina's plight much justice. Then again, economic realities suggest that as long as American businesses and individuals can benefit from cheap labor, they will continue to do so, regardless of what the law says.

Also, it's hard to predict how federal, state and local officers will mesh in terms of carrying out federal law. As it is, the three sides aren't communicating, which led to Mr. Gallegos' staying in the U.S. despite five previous DWI arrests.

So, it is incumbent upon us to come up with sensible solutions that recognize that reality. If the law calls for illegals to be processed and if necessary, deported, so be it. But most of the undocumented foreigners aren't here to maim or kill - they're here for economic survival.

We don't believe getting into America should be nearly impossible for individuals looking to access the dream most of us take for granted. Should it be better managed and enforced? Absolutely.



MATTERS OF OPINION

Putting John Johnson in perspective

GEORGE E. CURRY



When someone dies, especially if they are well known, there is a tendency to exaggerate his or her contributions. Such was the case with John H. Johnson, the late publisher of Ebony and Jet magazines.

Without a doubt, Johnson's contributions to journalism and improving the lives of African-Americans are exceptional and need no embellishment. There is no question that when Johnson launched Ebony in 1945, he altered the face of the magazine industry for good. Six years later, he built on that foundation by starting Jet. Perhaps more than anyone else, Johnson forced major corporations to advertise with black publications and insisted that they use black models and advertising agencies. As lawyers like to say, I'll stipulate the foregoing.

Where I part company with the revisionists is when they proclaim - incorrectly - that Ebony magazine was the first publication to reflect black America in its full complexity. That's simply untrue. That honor belongs to black newspapers. The first one, Freedom's Journal, was started in 1827 - more than a

century before the first issue of Ebony was published.

Like the NAACP, black newspapers bravely conducted anti-lynching campaigns. The office of - Ida B. Wells Barnett - was torched in Memphis, forcing her to leave town. The famous W.E.B. DuBois-Booker T.

Washington debate had its seeds in the black press. Contrary to population impressions, DuBois did not object to industrial education; he objected when it was advocated to the exclusion of black economic, political and social rights. In fact, Washington offered DuBois a job at what is now Tuskegee University in Alabama, but DuBois had already accepted a teaching position at Wilberforce University in Ohio.

William Monroe Trotter, editor of the Boston Guardian, was far more critical of Washington than DuBois. In fact, upon learning that Booker T. would be speaking in Boston, he planted a stink bomb in the church. When Trotter was roundly excoriated by blacks, DuBois sprung to his defense.

As noted above, black newspapers were aggressively defending the rights of African-Americans before John H. Johnson was born. black newspapers chronicled the modern Civil Rights Movement, which began in 1955 with the slaying of 14-year-old Emmett Till for allegedly whistling at a

White woman. Jet published that unforgettable photo of Till's mutilated body. But black newspapers covered his accusers' trial and conducted their own investigation into the murder.

This is no attempt to denigrate John H. Johnson. Rather, it's an attempt to set the record straight.

African-Americans have a bad habit of spending more time looking at life through the rear view mirror than the windshield of the future. Instead of only celebrating Johnson's accomplishments, let's see if there are lessons we can learn from his life.

One of the things I admired about John H. Johnson was his refusal to sell to the highest bidder and, in the process, claim he was acting as any businessperson would. That can't be said of the sellouts of today. Whether in publishing or broadcasting, we see example after example of black entrepreneurs asking to be carried on certain cable systems or given certain ads because African-American consumers deserve to be treated with respect. However, once large sums of money are waved in front of them, they sell out the community, usually saying it's not about black or white - it's about green. They neglect to acknowledge that the green they're amassing is a direct result of their having pimped our blackness.

We've already witnessed

the sale of Motown, Johnson hair care products, BET, Essence, BlackVoices.com and Africana.com to whites. The New York Times plans to start a 'black' newspaper in Gainesville, Fla. Given the recent population shifts, you can expect this trend to continue.

My issue is not whether we should help swell the ranks of black millionaires. My real concern is the decrease in the number of legitimate sources of news and information for and by people of color. There are more than 18,821 magazines in the U.S., according to the Magazine Publishers Association. Yet, we can name the number of substantive national black magazines on one hand and still have a finger or two left over.

Considering today's Right-wing assault on human rights, we need strong black publications more than ever. We need to preserve and expand what we have. In the end, it won't matter if we create profitable black businesses if all we do is sellout and leave our community devoid of outlets.

John H. Johnson proved that one can be a millionaire and have integrity at the same time.

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Southern Strategy isn't easy to quit

"The chairman of the Republican Party (Ken Mehlman) wants to renounce the GOP's racially polarizing 'Southern strategy' of the late 1960s, under which Richard M. Nixon used such issues as desegregation and forced busing of school children to woo white southern voters and win the presidency." This statement is not totally accurate; Nixon did use



the busing issue and other racially spiked issues to woo white voters and win the presidency, but the Southern Strategy didn't start in the '60s. Actually there have been nine Southern Strategies and the first one began in 1619.

The first Southern Strategy was slavery, where white men enslaved whole black families. This, the granddaddy of Southern Strategies, was entered into for profit. The degradation of the entirety of the black race came later.

The second Southern Strategy occurred when the close presidential race of 1876 between Tilden and Hayes gave Hayes a 1-vote advantage in the Electoral

College (185-184). The compromise was that Tilden would stand down and not further protest the election and allow Hayes to ascend to the presidency. Hayes in return agreed to remove all of the Federal troops from the South. This gave rise to Jim Crow, the Klan and the Black Codes.

The third occurred in 1898 when southern whites were openly encouraged to vote the white supremacy ticket. Blacks all over the South were voted out of office (and it wasn't all legal).

The fourth happened in 1948 when a young Strom Thurmond ran for president as a states' rights Democrat. And even though he only got 5.3 percent of the vote he carried the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and South Carolina. This was the beginning of the modern south's battle cry of "States Rights". What states rights really meant, and still means, is: allow states to do as they please; even if their actions and laws contradict the Constitution of the United States. Advocates of States Rights felt that if a state wanted to deny suffrage to women, and people of color, that's just fine. Even that "peculiar institution" would have been tolerable.

The fifth happened in 1966

when North Carolina U.S. Sen. Sam Ervin lead a group of southern senators from South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana to form a movement called the "Southern Manifesto," a segregationist movement created to counter Brown v Board of Education.

The sixth southern strategy was the first organized GOP Southern Strategy. Prior to 1964 the cries of states rights came from the Democratic camp. In 1964 when Goldwater ran for the presidency he embraced a States Rights platform and vowed to fight against the implementation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The GOP knew that the '64 and '65 Acts wouldn't play well among white southerners and they went all out to let the south know that they had a new friend in the GOP.

In 1968 Richard Nixon, with the help of Lee Atwater, seized upon an already ripe situation started by Barry Goldwater and completed the job by infusing the lexicon of "code words" into the southern political discourse. Nixon's message in subtle non verbal languages was highly effective. His implicit position on States Rights and race relations was ... "we're for States Rights and against

street riots, welfare cheats, busing, forced integration, and practically everything in the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act".

The eighth and most prolific of all the Southern Strategy happened in 1980. One of Ronald Reagan's first campaign stops was in Philadelphia, Miss., (the site of the murder of three civil rights workers. Trent Lott escorted Ronald Reagan to speak before the WCC (White Citizens Council). At this meeting Reagan told the crowd that he supported states rights and would fight to end school busing and affirmative action.

The ninth was the Florida debacle in 2000 when tens of thousands of African Americans were denied the right to have their votes counted. The strategy was set long before Election Day. Bush and Karl Rove even had a strategy to go to the courts if they won the popular vote and Al Gore won the Electoral College vote. Of course it came out just the opposite, but you can't say they didn't have a plan.

I wonder if those who concocted the refrain "The South Shall Rise Again" ever imagined the south rising again as the Republican base.

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Myrick