

OPINION/LETTERS

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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Economic Initiatives

The Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce's Minority Economic Development Group, headed by Chandler Lee, is to be commended for embarking on a mission of improving business relationships between majority and minority businesses.

We firmly believe that only good can come from such an effort. Although this is not the first time it has been attempted, the ingredients this time appear to be better.

Most of our community's problems can be traced to lack of economic development — both in terms of dollars spent with minority businesses and dollars spent on bricks and mortar in the African-American community. The Minority Business Development Group's initiatives address those problems.

Crime in our neighborhoods stem from a lack of cash. Not all crimes, but many, occur simply because you have poor people who cannot change their lifestyles any other way, or so they think. Consequently, you have robberies that often turn into murders, etc.

Our community needs and deserves to share in whatever prosperity this city happens to be experiencing. It's good for everyone. Eventually, things will spill over into the entire community. Our contention is we should not wait until that happens before we address the problem. We believe the Chamber's program is a beginning in that direction.

What must happen now is majority businesses such as Baptist Hospital, Lowes Hardware, Lowes Foods, Dillard's, Belk's and the like, must commit some dollars toward utilizing minority businesses for goods and services. This is not something that can withstand lip service. As mentioned earlier, we have attempted this before. If it does not work or succeed this time, heaven only knows what the end results will be.

Minority businesses must also claim and respond positively to these initiatives, as well. We do not believe that anyone should be asked to buy less-than-quality goods and services in the name of fostering better relationships. Minority businesses must commit to improving its level of delivery. We believe that if the intent is good on both sides, it will succeed. We truly hope so.

Nixon's Legacy

Bob Halderman's diaries certainly sound like they would make for some interested reading. The details, aired this week by *Nightline's* Ted Koppel, talks about how former President Nixon's staff gave him a dog to show a humanistic side of the President. They also speak of the disdain Nixon had for Ted Kennedy, a Jewish-dominated media — and for blacks.

President Nixon, according to the memoirs, gloated whenever Ted Kennedy's sex-capades would get him into deep trouble. And Nixon particularly relished in the 1969 Chappaquiddick incident. Up until his death last month, President Nixon had a tumultuous relationship with the press.

And even before Mr. Halderman's revealing memoirs, it was no well-kept secret that Richard Milhouse Nixon thoroughly hated black people. In his memoirs, Mr. Halderman wrote that President Nixon was "fed up with blacks" and that blacks "clearly are the problem" in the United States and that there had never been a "strong black nation." He said blacks were "hopeless" and that he'd rather work with "Uncle Toms," but that they "were not much better to deal with."

Although those memoirs were recorded in 1972, the attitudes of whites toward blacks remain as smug and arrogant some 20-plus years later as those expressed by President Nixon. Whites continue to feel as though they are superior to African Americans. And it's unfortunate that some blacks fail to see the forest for the trees — allowing themselves to believe that white folks' ice is colder. What they do not seem to grasp, however, is that whites today also state — behind closed doors — that "Uncle Toms" are "not much better to deal with."

We need to wake up and realize that if we are too succeed, we have to do it ourselves. We cannot depend on token handouts from people who do not have our best interest as a concern.

Boycott of Boards Should Be Reconsidered

To the Editor:

The purpose of this letter is to appeal to you to reconsider your recommendation that blacks who serve on local volunteer boards and committees boycott those organizations. As a new resident of this community and subscriber of your newspaper, I was very disappointed and disturbed by the comments expressed in your May 5 editorial.

The on-going struggle for racial and human equality has always needed and will always require the direct sustained involvement, leadership, direction and understanding of our very best black and white men and women who step forward to lead our community. Winston-Salem — East and West — desperately needs additional black men and women who are interested and willing to commit to moving our city forward through service on boards, committees and other social-services organizations. This community needs the time, talents, brain power and financial resources that all of its community leaders bring to their volunteer board and committees. Countless good works and deeds occur in this community every day that directly and/or indirectly move us toward a better understanding of human dignity and racial equality. The pace of the struggle for better race relations within this city could be increased if more people, both black and white, step up and take a more active role on boards and committees throughout the Twin City.

In the short time that I have lived in this community, I have been encouraged by the number of truly outstanding community-based organizations, boards and committees that are hard at work, making a significant difference in the lives of individuals and families. Winston-Salem is far from being an ideal community; however, fantastic things are being accomplished. I have observed extremely important initiatives involving housing, preschool, health care, feeding programs, neighborhood improvement, the arts, culture, employment, economic development, family counseling, college admissions and scholarships, teen parents and many other programs designed to make Winston-Salem a better place to live, work and raise a family for all people.

I beg you to consider using the influence and resources of your publication to challenge and encourage black men and women to fully participate in all of the volunteer activities that help to lift our entire community. I am reminded of a quote that I read sometime ago: "A great city is that which has the greatest men and women."

Winston-Salem can become a truly great city, when its best black men and women roll up their sleeves with the city's best white men and women and work together on our appointed boards and committees. A recent visitor to Winston-Salem suggested that our entire community could be transformed into a little gold mine. I feel that he is not too far wrong. Please help the process.

Patrick Diamond

Unfair Practices

To the Editor:

In 1915, William J. Simmons, a former Methodist clergyman organized a new Ku Klux Klan in Atlanta as a patriotic, Protestant fraternal society. The Klan directed its activities against groups it considered un-American, including blacks, immigrants, Jews and particularly Roman Catholics.

Just because aldermen Hugh Wright and Robert Nordlander had support from Minister Ronnie Baity of Berean Baptist Church at the May 2 board of aldermen's meeting,

police are called to the "black" section of town more than any other section. Hear them out. Minister Baity and others have stated that it's time for people to stand up for the police department and to stop coddling criminals. It is clear in 1994 who coddles the criminal. It's lawyers, judges and politicians. Just read the state and local sections of the (daily) newspaper. You will witness the plea bargaining and the deals being made. Recently a former president died. He broke the law and Congress had time to impeach him. Did they do what was right? Hell no! They gave him time to pack his things and resign — and appoint someone who would pardon him. A criminal is a criminal. Look at what happened recently in a North Carolina eavesdropping case. Gov. Hunt's supporters got probation; the judge said he was embarrassed for them. Right is right; wrong is wrong. So until you deal with all criminals alike and treat them all the same, watch the company you keep.

Last year, I read a book about Adolf Hitler because I wanted a better understanding of his power of influence. For those people who don't understand blacks and others, you need to read to enlighten yourself and stop depending on what someone else told you.

I was very disappointed that it wasn't thousands and thousands of people out supporting a Citizens Police Review Board. There are at

least five housing projects in Winston-Salem and this is where the police spend a lot of time. Since

they are not too interested, it's time to heal the real wounds. It's no longer a black-white issue; it's what right and what's wrong. If you break the law, you owe a debt to society. And if the policeman is doing something wrong then he or she should be dealt with accordingly. The citizens have a right to know.

Finally, I would like to suggest two books to read: *The Holy Bible* and *"From Plantation to Ghetto."* Then you can see the clear picture.

Thanks for Support

To the Editor:

The Junior League of Winston-Salem wishes to thank all of the many customers who attended the 1994 Rummage Sale. We are also indebted to the numerous members of the community who donated merchandise. Because of your support, the Rummage Sale was a tremendous success!

We are thrilled to report the sale netted approximately \$80,000 which will be returned to the community through our projects and trained volunteers.

In this, our 71st anniversary year, we are most grateful for the long-term support of all of our friends in the community. Because of you, the Junior League of Winston-Salem has been able to contribute over \$1 million and hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours to improving the quality of

CHRONICLE MAILBAG

Our Readers Speak Out

life in our community. Thank you.
 Lu Anne C. Wood
 President, Junior League of Winston-Salem

About letters...
 The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. The letter must also include the name, address and telephone number of the writer to ensure the authenticity of the letter. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to
 Chronicle Mailbag, P.O. Box 1636
 Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.

Ben Chavis: The NAACP's Breath of Fresh Air

When the NAACP selected the Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis as executive director, a wave of optimism and expectancy swept black America. Black people were looking for a new direction for the NAACP. Chavis has not disappointed. He immediately set the tone for his administration by going directly to the "hood" in South Central Los Angeles to await the verdict in the second Rodney King beating trial. He has been a major inspiration for the Urban Peace Movement, which is across the nation. Indeed, the crisis of black youth has become major a focus for the NAACP. The struggle for "economic democracy" has also been intensified as Chavis scored a milestone victory by signing a \$50 million Fair Share Agreement with the Denny's corporation.

But perhaps the most important dimension of the dynamic new direction set by Chavis has been a new openness to reaching out to all sectors of the National African American Community. Given the massive crisis ripping at the very fabric of black life in our communities, Chavis has prioritized creating greater unity among the various leaders, organizations and constituencies in the black community. Black America watched with great satisfaction as Chavis participated in a nationally televised Unity Forum convened by Cong. Kwesi Mfume, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. The new executive director of NAACP stood on the same platform with Jesse Jackson, Maxine Waters and Minister Louis Farrakhan and entered in to a covenant to advance the struggle for justice for black people. And, the masses of black people beamed with enormous pride when Chavis refused to break the covenant with Minister Farrakhan over the Khalid Muhammad affair. Refusing to buckle to outside pressure (as many black leaders did), Chavis discussed an agenda and unified approach to solving the crises afflicting the black community. Chavis made it clear that Minister Farrakhan would be included in the summit.

Most recently, Chavis took another bold step in his campaign to promote unity in the black community by convening a meeting of nationalist, pan-africanist and progressive leaders. Hosted

by the 50,000 member Detroit branch of the NAACP (the largest branch in the association), among those attending this historic meeting were: Conrad Worrill, chairman of the National Black United Front; Charlene Mitchell, chairman of the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression; Maulana Karenga, chairman of the U.S. Organization and the creator of Kwanzaa; Cornel West, vice chairman, Democratic Socialist of America; Gwen Patton, director, Southern Rainbow Education Project; Adjoa Aiyetoro, director, National Conference of Black Lawyers; and Leonard Jeffries, chairman of the Black Studies Dept. at CUNY.

The meeting was an overwhelming success. It is a tribute to the leadership of Chavis that leaders who would not have come to a meeting convened by the NAACP a year ago sat around the table together to discuss ways and means of working collaboratively to cope with the crisis in the black community. Black leaders, who in some cases has serious difference with each other, agreed to set aside their differences to explore creating operational unity for the sake of the greater good of the "Black Nation."

It has been this kind of new direction and bold new leadership that has been like a breath of fresh air revitalizing our oldest and largest civil rights organization. During the last year, the membership of the NAACP dramatically increased from 490,000 to 650,000 as black people from across the nation have taken a new look at the NAACP. More than 60 percent of these new NAACP members are under 30 years old. Chavis' tenure has not been without difficulties, however. Some within the NAACP who were/are comfortable with the old NAACP have consistently resisted the new direction chartered by Chavis. And certain elements of the media, particularly The New York Times, have been severely critical of Chavis in an obvious attempt

to discredit him and his top associates. Chavis' refusal to distance himself from Farrakhan and the Detroit meeting with nationalist, pan-africanist and progressives are particularly troublesome to his detractors inside and outside of the NAACP. Joe Madison, a board member who has emerged as a major critic of Chavis, described the inclusion of Farrakhan in the call for the Summit as an "extreme move" and labeled the leaders who attended the Detroit meeting as a group of "washed-up radicals from the past." Indeed, the Detroit meeting has caused such concern among some of the board members that Chavis may be in serious jeopardy.

From my vantage point, as a lifetime mem-



VANTAGE POINT

By RON DANIELS

ber of NAACP, it's time to rally around Ben Chavis! Too many black leaders who have had the courage to stand up for black people have fallen pray to forces external to the black community and their apologists inside the black community. Black America should not forget that no less a personage than W.E.B. DuBois was run out of the NAACP. All too often the black masses apathetically watch as courageous black leaders are cut down. Ben Chavis should not become a victim of our apathy and inaction. The voice of the masses of black people needs to be heard in a ringing endorsement for the new leadership and new direction of the NAACP. Without our support, Ben Chavis and the new direction he has blazed may be in danger.

Persons interested in working to support Chavis and his new direction of NAACP should call the national office: (410) 486-9100.

(Ron Daniels is a national syndicated columnist.)

Credo of the Black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from antagonisms when it accords to every person — regardless of race or creed — full human and legal rights. Having no person, the Black Press strives to help every person, in the firm belief that all are born as long as anyone is held back.