

# FORUM

## For the Love of Money

Money is the oil that lubricates the wheels of politics. A well-placed contribution or two can get one a favorable response to a question or persuade a lawmaker to slant a rule toward a particular point of view. The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee has been conducting hearings on campaign fundraising and how money can influence certain political decisions. On the surface, it would appear that taxpayer's money shouldn't be spent to find out the obvious. However, Senate investigators have stumbled into an area which should cause at least some to raise an eyebrow.

Investigators are trying to determine if a reasonably hefty contribution from the chairman of Chiquita Brands could help crush the economies of several Caribbean nations who depend on bananas for their economic survival.

A visit to your local supermarket will show that the fruit section generally has bananas that carry the name of Chiquita or Dole. These companies control over 90 percent of the world market for the nutritious fruit. The remaining 10 percent is the province of several Caribbean nations. Apparently, Carl Linder, chairman of Chiquita, feels that 10 percent of the market is too much for Caribbean nations to have. After his donations to Democrats and Republicans, it seems he convinced them that a policy should be pursued through the World Trade

Organization that would effectively block Caribbean nations from selling their products to the European market.

What does this mean in practical terms? Hazel Ross-Robinson, who represents the Caribbean Banana Exporters Association, says that some of the countries are so dependent on the revenue from the sale of their



### A Voice from the Hill

George Wilson

bananas, that a loss of market would threaten their very existence.

"In a place like Dominica, 70 percent of all foreign exchange earnings come from bananas. If Chiquita and the United States manage to shut a place like Dominica out of the European banana market, the result will be widespread suffering."

If this misguided policy is implemented, what does Chiquita have to gain? The answer is millions of dollars. You don't need a master's degree in business administration to know that to spend less than a million dol-

lars with policy makers in exchange for millions in increased profits, is as good as betting on the Harlem globetrotters to beat your local high school team.

When Caribbean nations that have pursued the recommended course of democracy find themselves unable to participate in the world economy, they will have to find some other way of filling the gap. If you can't grow bananas, then perhaps marijuana might present itself as an option? While Chiquita is looking at its profit and loss statement, the Clinton Administration and the World Trade Organization are saying to Caribbeans, "Don't Worry, Be Happy."

The Congressional Black Caucus and the Caribbean Banana Exporters Association are fighting to keep the Caribbean nations from facing economic ruin. They need all of the help they can muster. The decision is currently under appeal and the results will soon be known. If loyal allies of the United States can be sacrificed at the altar of campaign contributions, words like "morality" and "trust" have no meaning. Even if the decision goes against Caribbean nations, the U.S. still has the option of not implementing the policy. Let's hope that righteousness will prevail.

(George Wilson is a 16-year Capitol Hill correspondent for the American Urban Radio Network.)

## Making the Music of Life Much Sweeter for Young People

On this particular Saturday afternoon, jazz saxophonist Davey Yarborough has just finished a three-hour trek to Levittown, Pa., from Washington, D.C., to give a free music lesson to an aspiring 16-year-old trumpeter named Craig Stargell Jr. Davey has heard that Craig is bright, ambitious, and hungry to learn but has no music program at his suburban Philadelphia school.

Davey, who founded the jazz studies program more than a decade ago at this mostly black public high school for talented students, required band members to make the honor roll. The trip to Europe will be reward for a job well done. After a nationwide audition, Ellington was the only high school band chosen to perform at the prestigious festival. Davey had promised that if they proved themselves in the classroom, as well as on their instruments, he would raise the \$50,000 needed to finance the trip.

"When kids show a desire to learn," says Davey, "we adults have a responsibility to be there for them, and sometimes that means going a little bit out of our way. All a lot of young people need is somebody to believe in them, somebody to take the time to show them that they care."

The lessons Davey teaches his young proteges are both many and profound. Like how to face the tragic loss of a fellow band member to cancer — only days before a recent performance. And how their ancestors created jazz, America's only original classical music. He regularly arranges for his students to meet the world's most renowned jazz musicians; Roy Hargrove, Wynton Marsalis, Shirley Scott, Stanley Turrentine, and Ed Wiley Jr. are among the many jazz greats who have visited the Duke Ellington School this year alone to pass on the lega-

cy. Through music, Davey helps his students understand the kind of dedication needed to become successful in life, even if they choose another career. "Passing something useful along is what it's all about," Davey says. "When these renowned jazz greats come in to work with the kids, it challenges my students to do the same thing when they become successful in their field, whatever that might be."

That's what Davey had in mind when he created an afterschool mentoring program. When his students tutor children from neighborhood junior high schools, they are not only serving as needed role models and helping develop a new crop of Ellington hopefuls, but they're also learning to appreciate the importance of giving back to their communities, Davey explains.

And his students love him for it. At a downtown Washington, D.C., restaurant, a pianist with the touch of a young Oscar Peterson can see far into her own promising future. "Mr. Yarborough has taught me so much," says Janell Gill, 17, one of Davey's students, who plans to attend Howard University.

(Marian Wright Edelman is the president of the Children's Defense Fund, and a leader of the Black Community Crusade for Children (BCCC), whose mission is to leave no child behind.)



### Child Watch

Marian Wright Edelman

Earlier that week Davey, the jazz studies director at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, spent virtually every minute he wasn't teaching his regular full course load preparing the school's 25-piece jazz orchestra for an upcoming concert and raising funds to send them to the Netherlands to perform at the North Sea Jazz Festival, the world's largest indoor jazz festival.

## Embattled minister returns to forgiving congregation

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — The Rev. Henry J. Lyons, already forgiven by the National Baptist Convention USA members who met last week in Denver, returned to an equally forgiving congregation here. "What the media calls tricks, it's not tricks to us. It's prayer," Lyons said Sunday, preaching at Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church, where he is pastor. "When all is said and done, either the Lord delivers you or he don't."

A near-capacity crowd embraced Lyons at his homecoming. With his presidency of the 8.5-million member church group secure, Lyons presided over the service with enthusiasm. He said he would no longer waste his time responding to reports about his financial dealings.

Reporters were kept out of the church. A St. Petersburg Times reporter was escorted from the sanctuary midway through the service. Lyons' troubles began in July, when his wife was charged with arson, accused of setting fire to a \$700,000 waterfront house he owns with another woman. Deputies said Deborah Lyons told them she set the fires because she believed her husband was having an affair with the woman, Bernice Edwards.

Edwards, a convicted embezzler, had been hired by Lyons as the convention's corporate public relations director. The Times reported the pair collected hundreds of thousands of dollars from convention deals that convention members were unaware of and may have used convention money to make lavish personal purchases. The financial dealings are under investigation by the Pinellas-Pasco state attorney's office and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Tampa.



(AP Photo/Joe Mahoney)

National Baptist Convention USA president the Rev. Henry Lyons holds a portrait of himself before his speech to the group's annual meeting in Denver on Thursday, Sept. 4.

### NOTE TO GREENSBORO AND HIGH POINT READERS:

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