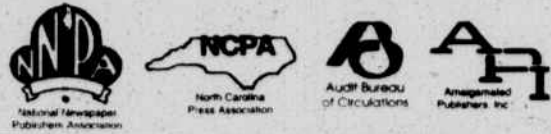


# OPINION

## THE CHRONICLE

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### Candidate Watch

We urge every voter to vote in the Nov. 4 election. We also urge each voter to vote for the most qualified and proven candidates. Preference should be given to those candidates who are able to bolster the economic, social, and educational health of the African-American community and this city, which is now rapidly reaching a modern apex in its development potential.

When choosing a candidate, voters are urged to avoid the past failure of African-American politics of being herded in a flock of mindless predictability. Our modern society and the issues that affect our lives are constantly changing. Modernity comes with complexities, and there are no single approaches to deal with them.

Heretofore in our efforts to affect change, we have often chosen diatribe over dialogue, quick fixes over proven solutions, tokenism over substance, and the politics of gesture over genuine and comprehensive solutions. We have accepted the empty rhetoric of politicians such as "empowerment" and "inclusion" over market-oriented approaches to improve our lives. We have clapped our hands to the chorus of "Climbing Jacob's Ladder" and licked our fingers on fried chicken and fish while listening to the molded promises of a good "bye an' bye." That was then — this is now. The politics of the past no longer works, and any politician or candidate who thinks they can continue in those old ways will do so at their peril.

We, as an informed electorate, have come to know that investment and economic growth trigger home ownership and job creation, which stabilize our community and have positive effects on schools, crime and our overall health and wellbeing. Our political maturity has informed us that even political foes of strong communities are forced to reckon with the fact that a stable community will mobilize in opposition or support in more meaningful ways than anemic, disenfranchised communities. Consequently, they are forced to negotiate with each other as equals.

African Americans need more stable communities and more politicians with the mindset to create the requisite synergy among community, government and the private sector. What we do not need is more empty rhetoric from unproductive politicians. Additionally, the community demands and needs public policy that enhances its ability to further stabilize itself.

In view of these considerations, The Chronicle will endorse certain candidates whom we feel will best serve the needs of the African-American community during their tenure these next four years. Our choices will be completely independent and not based upon partisanship, but rather, citizenship. Historically this paper has established an unrivaled reputation for political independence, forthrightness, and objectivity in reporting news and events in the African-American community. We honor this tradition implicitly, and it is our pledge to continue to do so.

Our endorsements are not to be construed in any manner to bolster or disparage the person or the lives of one candidate over the other. Our choices in some instances may not coincide with those of individual choices in the community. However, we view our goals to be consonant with those of the community in its willingness to face the ravaging challenges of urban crime, financial and economic under-investment, the insidiousness of racism, and the long term effects of educational mediocrity.

We urge voters, as we are doing, to look at the records of each candidate to determine if it imposes a liability on their future. Any candidate's record, and certainly the record of a candidate who has previously held office, should be scrutinized. If any liability is uncovered and is accurately cited, it should be recognized. That is not mud-slinging; instead it raises the valid issues of character, trustworthiness, respect for public office and fitness to serve in a position of public trust.

### Enfield Chance

Voters in Enfield have a golden opportunity. On Nov. 4, they alone can do what others — including Mayor Kai Hardaway III and commissioners James Sledge and Bud Whitaker — have been unable to accomplish.

The voting public can ensure that every resident of this town is afforded the sanitary living conditions most people take for granted. Voters can make it clear that promises made to black residents must be fulfilled.

Hardaway and the other two black members of the town board have tried to work within the system. They have tried to negotiate and reason with their white counterparts, who continue to renege on a 1989 pledge to extend sewer lines to the wood frame houses on Plant Street occupied primarily by individuals and families living well below the poverty line.

It is unconscionable that children anywhere in this state would be condemned to run and play in soil contaminated by the raw sewage around their homes. The situation in Enfield is made worse by the apparent lack of concern by some elected officials. You have to wonder how Maurice Barnhill, Larry Sorie and Harold Sullivan can live with themselves. In any case, voters don't have to tolerate the trio much longer. Sullivan faces reelection next month, as do Sledge and Hardaway.

If residents of Enfield, white and black, are committed to equality and racial justice, Sullivan will not be reelected. Because Sullivan and the two other commissioners who would deny poor black families the decency of indoor plumbing are white, it's understandable that African Americans in Enfield feel powerless. But they are not. African Americans are in the majority, and they can significantly influence what happens next.

For the past month, Hardaway, Sledge and Whitaker have been working hard to register black voters for the upcoming municipal election. This does not have to be a contest between black and white factions. It is, however, a fight against senseless discrimination. And black voters have the ability to eradicate it in Enfield. To do that, they must come out in full force and make their voices heard.

If Sullivan is reelected, every eligible black voter who does not cast a ballot against him must shoulder the responsibility for the perpetuation of the racist policies he represents.



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. To ensure the authenticity of the letter, you must include the name, address and telephone number of the writer. 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, NC 27102. E-mail address: wschron@netunlimited.net

### Partisan Politics is self-defeat

To the Editor:

As a graduate student, former journalist, and former history teacher, it is with great interest that I have watched the developments in the campaign finance reform investigation. I decided to write because I represent a large percentage of the population who have become disgusted with the arrogant and bipartisan nature of the Senate and House of Representatives. With the help of C-SPAN, I have seen the constant bickering between majority and minority representatives. And I have concluded that this is not an investigation of campaign finance abuses. It is instead an investigation to discredit the president and vice president of the United States as well as the Democratic Party.

Although I understand the structure of our government and can appreciate the nature of checks and balances, I fail to see how any Congressional member can say the attorney general of the United States lacks the objectivity to fulfill her duties since she is a presidential appointee. If that is indeed the charge, as I believe Representative Hutchinson so eloquently stated, then the integrity and objectivity of every presidential appointee, including Supreme Court justices, is called into question. Since Congress confirmed Attorney General Reno, I fail to see why her objectivity is in question now. Unless, of course, it is because she has failed to bend to Republican pressure to appoint an independent counsel to investigate the president.

Ultimately, I am tired. I know, as well as most of the American public, that elected officials have abused campaign financing. We know that many congressional, gubernatorial, and presidential candidates solicit millions of dollars for campaigns, and much of this money is questionable. But it's not questionable because of who or where it originates. It's questionable because it exists. I struggle daily to pay bills and volunteer with the United Way as a Big Sister. As a teacher, I saw poverty on a daily basis. I am tired of arrogant, wealthy white men deciding how the public should feel. I am tired of listening to a Congress that votes for its own pay raises and investigates itself, attack other people



and question their objectivity. I wish I could vote for my own pay raise. Why don't we, the American people, start a committee to investigate congressional committees? Perhaps we could suggest a pay decrease for our senators and representatives and donate the money to ourselves as payment for years of their violations of our trust.

As an African-American female, I have never possessed much faith in the American system of government. So, it would be ludicrous for anyone to suggest that I (as suggested by the polls) have lost faith in the system. I can't lose faith I never had. So how do we reform the system? Easy, eliminate political parties altogether. They were never a part of the Constitution and never would the founding fathers and mothers have imagined the United States of America dividing over issues such as campaign financing.

And I dare Congress to again shut down governmental offices because they run out of time to balance the budget. Rather than waste so much time trying to discredit the president and vice president, Congress should work on reforming health care, education, welfare, jobs and protecting social security. But since congressional representatives are, for the most part, wealthy white men, I realize they will spend more time vying for political control than discussing real issues, unless they get shot by a crack addict on the floor of the Senate.

**Donyell Lakishka Phillips**  
History Graduate Student  
Wake Forest University

### Man died because he didn't fit?

To the Editor:

My heartfelt sympathy goes out to the Gearhart family in the loss of their loved one. There was an eerie silence from the community surrounding the demise of Mr. Gearhart. I know and understand that the SBI is still investigating the case, and after they have finished, the Winston-Salem Police Department will conduct an investigation.

Nonetheless, I am still disturbed by the fact that a human being could lose his life because he had a suspicious look about himself. Was his suspicion due to the fact that he had a dishevel look about his person and was dressed in dirty clothes? Was it because he did not fit into the upscale community in which he was walking? Was there no outcry because this man appeared to be homeless and had no status station in life because of our human standards? Only God knows exactly what happened that day, but in my mind that incident should have never happened and certainly the loss life was a very high price to pay under these circumstances.

**Nelson Malloy Jr.**  
Alderman for the North Ward

### Reelect Martha Wood

To the Editor:  
Violent crime is of utmost concern to all citizens and espe-

cially to me, a women in the construction business. Since 1993 murder has gone down 22.2 percent, rape 27 percent, robbery 17.3 percent and aggravated assault 20 percent. All this combined means violent crime in Winston-Salem is down 19.7 percent from 1993 to 1996, during Mayor Martha Woods term.

As you know, this doesn't just happen! It takes excellent leadership: leadership from Mayor Martha Wood; concerned citizens appointed by the Mayor; Chief Sweat, and the Winston-Salem Police Department all involved and working together to resolve important crime issues. It also takes effective programs such as the Mayor's Violence Reduction Task Force, a program that received a national award for crime prevention. Another program, the Police Review Board, assures police of continued citizen support and also provides each of us a voice in crime prevention.

Because of this, I feel better going on my jobs during the day and closing my business at night. I feel better knowing my children and family live in a safer city as a result of the work and dedication of Mayor Wood.

Hopefully, you too will consider these facts that affect you, your family and your friends. It is obvious this partnership is working for you and for me. Let's continue to work together with Mayor Martha Wood to keep the violent crime rate at its lowest.

Your vote will make a difference. Reelect Mayor Martha Wood on November 4.

Lida Hayes-Calvert



**FAMOUS QUOTATION**

"What you want to defeat is the idea that says your individuality doesn't count — that all you are is black. You want to say, 'But I'm a person. Not a political entity.'"

— Jamaica Kincaid