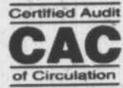
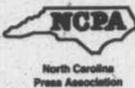


# OPINION

## Letters to the Editor:

### THE CHRONICLE

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### Black publishers to gather in New York

For the first time in 31 years the National Newspaper Publishers Association will hold its annual convention in New York City.

Expectations are for more than 200 publishers from around the country to arrive in the Big Apple by next Wednesday.

For black newspapers, New York City holds a certain significance. New York was the site of the first black newspaper printed in America. Freedom's Journal was first published at 6 Varick Street on March 16, 1827, in the Tribeca section of New York City by Samuel Cornish and John B. Russworm.

On Wednesday June 16, 1999, at 2 p.m., a group of NNPA publishers, joined by various NYC officials and community leaders, will make a pilgrimage to the site to commemorate the publication.

Plans are for a bronze plaque to be laid in the sidewalk in front of the building.

The last convention was held here in June 1968 at the McAlpine Hotel. Presiding at the time was the late John H. Sengstacke, publisher of the Chicago Defender in Chicago, Ill. In those days the presidency was usually held by one of three publishers, John Sengstacke, Garth Reeves or Carlton B. Goodlett.

The months leading up to the convention were tumultuous. On April 4, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tenn. On June 6, an assassin again struck, this time taking the life of Robert Kennedy. The Vietnam War claimed a record number of casualties.

Many cities burned as people took to the streets in an undeclared war against racism and brutality. It was also a year of political trials like the conspiracy trial of the "Chicago 8" stemming from the protests at the Democratic Convention and the trial of the "Catonsville 9" for burning draft files in Maryland.

It was also a time of intense resistance on college campuses across the nation.

More than 30 years later, black publishers face similar concerns.

This year, police brutality has dominated headlines. African Americans, both male and female, are being gunned down by police officers on the street and brutalized.

These maimings and murders were all initially classified as justified by local law enforcement.

At the forefront of the quest for justice for these murdered children and their families is the Rev. Alfred Sharpton, a serious candidate for mayor of New York City in 2000, and the National Action Network.

Twenty eight years before the 1968 meeting in New York City, John Sengstacke, then heir to the Robert S. Abbott Publishing Co., sent out a call for a meeting of Negro newspaper publishers in Chicago for Feb. 29 through March 2, 1940.

He had in mind a conference that would give major attention to advertising, editorial and news gathering problems and would substantially recognize inevitable and omnipresent racial matters.

Today there are local, regional- and state-based publisher organizations, all with similar objectives: improved products, increased revenues and greater reader interest and response.

Today, the National Newspaper Publishers Association stands as one of the most powerful black organizations in America. Under the leadership of the founding fathers, and subsequent effective leadership by the elected officials, the organization continues to grow in membership, influence and prestige.

The outgoing president, Dorothy Leavell, has lifted the organization to new heights both nationally and internationally.

To the editor:

During my half-century plus of association with Winston-Salem State University my personal identity is and hopefully forever will be linked to this great institution.

Those who know me know that I have had my fair share of agreements and disagreements as a member of the university. We faced those issues and concerns squarely, recognizing that there are no absolute answers or rules only interpretations that we as men and women must make.

In the past few weeks I have been saddened by newspaper and television reports about my beloved "Teachers College."

I think it's time to call a "time out" and make sure we're interpreting the rules correctly. I would not want to see the integrity, honor and distinguished history of WSSU be diminished because some small rams are butting heads at the expense of the Big Rams reputation.

Clarence "Big House" Gaines

To the Editor:

In the May 30 edition of the daily newspaper, Dr. Carlton A.G. Eversley, pastor of Dellabrook Presbyterian Church, was accurately quoted as saying he was not particularly interested in large numbers of homosexuals joining Dellabrook. Readers were given the impression he spoke for the church. This letter is a public correction both of Dr. Eversley's original statement and the mistaken impression that he spoke on our behalf.

On June 6, in a meeting of the session, the governing body of elders in a local Presbyterian



Church, Elder Joseph Battle made a motion restating and reaffirming Dellabrook's commitment to the membership standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which are: anyone who confesses Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and Christ is eligible. This includes all racial and ethnic groups and people of any sexual orientation. Moreover, the session directed Dr. Eversley to sign any and all documents that speak to

this openness. Finally, as a congregation striving to be A.B.C. - Afro centric, Bible centered and Christ centered - Dellabrook is always geared toward inclusion and not exclusion. We regret any pain and/or confusion Dr. Eversley's statement may have caused.

This motion passed unanimously, with the voters including Elder Dr. Denise Penn-Powell, Elder Adline Thomas, Elder Bat-

tle, Acting Clerk of Session Elder Valjeanne Smith and Dr. Eversley himself. We hope this clarifies the official position of Dellabrook Church.

Yours truly,  
 Elder Valjeanne Smith  
 Acting clerk of session  
 Dr. Carlton A.G. Eversley  
 Pastor and moderator of the session

## Blacks need to embrace first black holiday



Val Atkinson  
 Jones Street

Memorial Day is behind us. July 4 is right around the corner, and Labor Day is not far off.

These are the holidays of summer. The beaches will be teeming with sunbathers, and parks and camps will be busy.

There will be pool parties, family vacations and tons of reunions.

The thought of these days of summer celebrations is the stuff that gets us through the long winter nights and cold winter days.

But there's one celebration that doesn't seem to get its due in North Carolina - Juneteenth.

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the end-

ing of slavery. So why aren't African Americans celebrating their freedom?

The Israelis celebrate their freedom on May 14. Kenyans celebrate theirs on Dec. 12; the Nigerians, on Oct. 1; and the United States, on July 4. It seems to me that we should be celebrating two days of freedom - the freedom of our African forefathers from slavery on June 19 and the freedom of the American colonists from the rule of Great Britain on July 4.

We celebrate heartily on July 4, but for too many African Americans June 19 is just another day.

The holiday has its roots in Texas, where the news of the Emancipation Proclamation, signed on Jan. 1, 1863, didn't reach many black Texans until more than two years later. The initial celebrations of Juneteenth waned over the years until the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s.

Recently, with the surge of the use of the Internet, Juneteenth has taken on new and modern life. Juneteenth is now celebrated all over America but still doesn't enjoy the recognition it deserves.

There are still too many African Americans who'll see the caption of this column and ask, "What is Juneteenth?"

The official day of emancipation - Jan. 1, 1863 - hasn't been celebrated over the years mainly because most Africans in America didn't know about the Emancipation Proclamation. And those who had heard about the proclamation couldn't do very much about it. There were a few demonstrations in Virginia, Mississippi, Tennessee and in Raleigh.

But for the most part, Jan. 1, 1863, went uncelebrated until after the end of the Civil War in 1865. June 19 is the official Juneteenth celebration

date, but most communities celebrate Juneteenth on the weekend before or after the 19th. Juneteenth is definitely worth celebrating, and we don't need a special reason. It's our birthright to celebrate the freedom of our forefathers. We value our past, we want to protect our heritage, and in celebrating Juneteenth, we'll be passing on those parts of our culture that are crucial to the continuation of our people.

This year June 19 falls on a Saturday, and so there's absolutely no reason to avoid the celebration.

Get with your family, get with your neighbors and friends, and tell them what you're celebrating. Set a date to do it again next year, but even bigger and better.

It's the least we can do for our people and history.

Val Atkinson is a columnist for the Triangle Tribune.

## VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY...

The EastSide Cafeteria will be one of the few black-owned, sit-down eateries in the city when it opens its doors in 2000. It will join a burgeoning group of black businesses that have been springing up over the city over the last few years. We asked local African Americans whether they feel they have an obligation to support black-owned businesses.



Brandon Johnson

"As a black male, I do feel that we as a people have an obligation to support black-owned businesses because automatically when black businesses are started they are already behind the competition. I feel without our support they will not thrive. And blacks do not have much of a financial infrastructure; we rely too much on other races. That's why we need to support our own businesses and start our own businesses."



Dietrick Brockett

"I think we have an obligation to support black business because it is our own kind. You have all these other businesses out here that are being supported by their own. You got Chinese being supported by Chinese; you got white people supporting each other. As black people we have to support each other to keep everything equal."



Monica Williams

"I feel like it's more a preference than an obligation. Ultimately we do what we want to do. I do not feel like I'm obligated, but I supported 5 Star grocery store just because it's black-owned, but I don't feel like we're obligated."



Kevin White

"I feel we are responsible for black businesses, because the strides that businesses have made in the past and the ones they make today have made blacks what we are today. If we keep supporting them, we can foster unity. We have to emphasize that we should always support them and give them as much business as possible."



Alexandria Ferguson

"As a black woman I do feel that it is an obligation for me as well as the black community to support black-owned businesses. I feel that if black-owned businesses are not supported by African Americans, then they will fall and they will not prosper."