

# FORUM

## What would do with an extra hour each day?



**Nigel Alston**  
Motivational Moments

"Millions long for immortality who don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon."

- Susan Erzt,  
"Anger in the Sky"

The older I get, the faster the days seem to go by. I long for just one more hour, knowing that every day has the same amount of time in it and it's how you use it that counts.

If I had just one more hour to sleep, to finish the next task, to relax, catch a breath and reflect.... Sometimes I wonder if other people feel the same way. There just does not seem to be enough time to do all the things I want to do, much less the things I need to do.

I also try - I am not always successful - to follow the advice my father gave me a long time ago: don't burn the candle at both ends. If you do,

the candle isn't the only thing that burns out; you do too.

Even when I don't burn the candle at both ends, the sun seems to rise earlier in the morning and set much too soon in the evening. "Where did the day, month, year go?" I wonder. I'm missing something. There is so much more I want to do.

Some people are more productive with their time. They keep track with time management planners, palm pilots and computer assisted reminders to get things done and measure progress by another check mark on a list.

A lesson can be learned from Enzo Gugliuzza, a UPS driver who turned his lunch hour into a creative session to restore his spirit and do something he loved.

"Like many of us with an over-busy life, he needed more time in his day," wrote Joyce Wycoff, co-founder of the Innovation Network, sharing the story in a newsletter to her creative thinking network. Gugliuzza was teaching a lesson in life management, doing

what businesses want to help all employees do: navigate work and life, enjoying the journey in the process.

He realized that if he didn't keep practicing his trumpet regularly his playing lost its spirit. That's true for most anything isn't it? What you don't use, you lose. And he didn't want to lose the spirit of playing his music, so he figured it out - lunch hour. That's where he could gain an hour, actually hours.

"I did the math: an hour a day, five hours a week, 20 hours a month - I could do so many things with that time," he said. "I could learn French. I could do anything!"

What would you do with that time? What skill could you develop, improve or not allow to diminish?

Wycoff challenged her readers this way: "What could we do with one hour a day focused solely on something that makes our spirits soar?"

What did Gugliuzza do? He played his trumpet while he sat in his UPS truck during lunch hour. That's right. He devoted

one hour a day to playing his trumpet and his spirit soared. Instead of eating lunch every day, he is getting his "groove on" 240 hours a year. That's the equivalent of a six-week sabbatical, over a year's time.

It seems impossible to find another hour in an already too busy day, especially when the hours seem to go by so quickly. Maybe it is the illusion of busyness. Wycoff suggests we could skip a lunch - most of us wouldn't miss the calories - or maybe miss an hour of the nightly news, a sitcom or the latest reality show? Our minds would probably bless this break. It's worth thinking about. Perhaps it's even worth making a commitment to try - if only for half an hour, or even 15 minutes day.

What would make your spirit soar, if you gave yourself a sabbatical in small chunks of time, over time?

Nigel Alston is a radio talk show host, columnist and motivational speaker. Visit his Web site at [www.motivationalmoments.com](http://www.motivationalmoments.com).

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## NAACP's Confederate flag obsession



**Earl Ofari Hutchinson**  
Guest Columnist

Two years ago, the NAACP galvanized a horde of politicians, college and professional athletes, black frats and sororities, hip-hop, rock and movie stars to march, rally and boycott South Carolina for flying the Confederate flag over the state capital dome. State officials capitulated and agreed to move the flag to a Confederate monument on Statehouse grounds.

This should have ended the issue. But it hasn't. The NAACP now says it will rev up the boycott again until state officials toss the flag into a museum back room.

At first glance, the NAACP's Confederate flag obsession seems comic and tiresome, and worthy of quick dismissal. But there's a method to its flag antics. The Confederate flag fight is a near textbook example of the NAACP's strategy of elevating peripheral issues to a life and death struggle for African Americans in order to grab maximum media and public visibility.

The strategy is simple: Pick the softest target possible, make a lot of fuss about it, and take minimal action on the piles of crisis issues that devastate poor and working-class black communities.

At the same moment the NAACP saber-rattles state officials over a worthless flag, it's deafeningly silent on the black poverty, school dropout, infant mortality, and victim of violence rates that are among the worst in the nation. It also barely utters a peep on the dreary plight of hundreds of black South Carolina farmers whose farms have been foreclosed on by bankers and government agencies in the past decade.

NAACP leaders employed their get-attention-quick strategy when they threatened boycotts against the TV industry, lawsuits against gun manufacturers, and squawked about the paucity of



The NAACP held this mass rally in front of the South Carolina Statehouse in 2000.

black Supreme Court clerks.

Then there's its annual overhyped Image Awards bash, which supposedly honors the best and brightest of those who uphold positive black images. Instead, it is a cheap imitation Academy Award drool over foul-mouthed rappers, comics, celebrity gadabouts, and black Hollywood box office showpieces.

This year was no exception. Denzel Washington and Halle Berry copped best actor and actress awards, and rapper Ja Rule's "Livin' It Up" grabbed top hip-hop honors. But did Washington's portrayal of a corrupt, foul-mouthed, rogue cop in "Training Day" really advance the black image? And did Berry baring her torso in "Swordfish" provide the wholesome image of black womanhood that the NAACP says it wants to promote?

Then there's Ja Rule. Last year he drew howls of protests from many blacks for using the word "nigger" in singer Jennifer Lopez's controversial hit "I'm Real." His NAACP award-winning song trashes women and butchers the English language.

The NAACP's appalling inattention to the big-ticket issues that sledgehammer the black poor is no surprise. It spent the better part of the 1990s in a monumental

retreat from visible cutting edge social activism. That retreat can be directly traced to the collapse of legal segregation in the 1960s, the class divisions that imploded within black America, and the greening of the black middle class. This is a process that has sped full throttle forward since the 1960s.

The NAACP's success has not had the remotest bearing on the lives of the black poor, who have become even poorer, and more desperate. Many of them have turned to crime, drugs, and gangs as their only way out.

But a tilt by NAACP leaders toward an aggressive activist agenda carries the deep risk of alienating the corporate donors that they have carefully cultivated the past few years. They depend on them to gain more jobs, promotions, and contracts for black professionals and business persons and to secure contributions for their fund-raising campaigns, dinners, banquets, scholarship funds and programs.

Yet, corporations such as Texaco, Coca Cola, American Airlines, Seven Up/RC Bottling, Hyundai Semiconductor in Oregon, Toyota Motors that tout their contributions to black causes, the NAACP at the top, are some of the same corporations that blacks

have waged nasty and brutal discrimination battles against in recent years. And there's a good reason. Black managers are grossly under-represented in top management echelons, are paid less, and are promoted much more slowly, if at all, than whites in much of corporate America. The NAACP's Confederate flag fight poses no threat to these corporations, and, more important, no threat to their cozy relationship with the NAACP.

With yet another boycott call of South Carolina, NAACP leaders can claim that they are striking a mortal blow against racist oppression. And since much of the public and much of the media think that only rabid, unreconstructed race baiters defend flying the Confederate flag, they'll be applauded. But the flag fight won't save black farms, improve abominable schools, stop racial profiling, fight the crime and drug plague, or help poor, malnourished mothers. The NAACP has no obsession with these fights.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is an author and columnist. Visit his news and opinion Web site: [www.thehutchinsonreport.com](http://www.thehutchinsonreport.com). He is the author of "The Crisis in Black and Black" (Middle Passage Press).

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