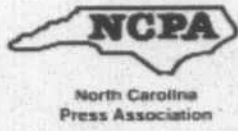


OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Time for black votes to be counted

The presidential primary contests in Iowa and New Hampshire get a lot of attention because of where they fall on the calendar.

Every four years, the states get more than their share of the spotlight as their residents become the first citizens in the nation to weigh-in on the presidential race. Seemingly, after the Iowa Caucuses and the New Hampshire primary, the two states become invisible again – that's until the next presidential contest.

To politicians trying to win the highest office in the land, a vote is a vote. But candidates and the nation should not lose sight of the fact that Iowa and New Hampshire are far from representative of today's United States, a nation that is becoming increasingly black and brown.

Iowa is 91 percent white, a fact that makes Sen. Barack Obama's recent victory in the Democratic Caucus even more astounding. And nearly 94 percent of New Hampshire's 1,315,000 residents are white.

In all the hype over the early presidential jockeying, it's easy to forget that the nation's burgeoning, non-white population has yet to voice its opinion. Today, all the candidates are in South Carolina, the state that will be the first to give voice to people of color in this presidential election year.

Later this month, the state will hold separate primaries for Democrats and Republicans. About 30 percent of SC residents are African American, and an astounding 50 percent of the registered Democrats there are black. Later, contests in Florida and Nevada will allow Hispanic voters to be heard.

In the eyes of some, the SC primary is the true beginning of the presidential race, especially for Democrats, because it will provide a truer picture of which way the real America is leaning.

Walking the walk on diversity

We have to give the city props when it comes to diversity. A lot of towns talk the talk, but it is clear that Winston-Salem has put its actions where its mouth is. The appointment of new City Attorney Angela Carmon is the latest example.

Carmon made history earlier this week when she was appointed the city's first black and first female city attorney. The appointment of this well-qualified legal professional is the latest example that our Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, City Council and the administrators that serve them are progressive and forward-thinking. The city has already given us our first black police chief and the most diverse administrative staff ever.

Our hats are off to the city. It is showing young people that Winston-Salem is a city where there are no glass ceilings – not in city government, at least.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for supporting event

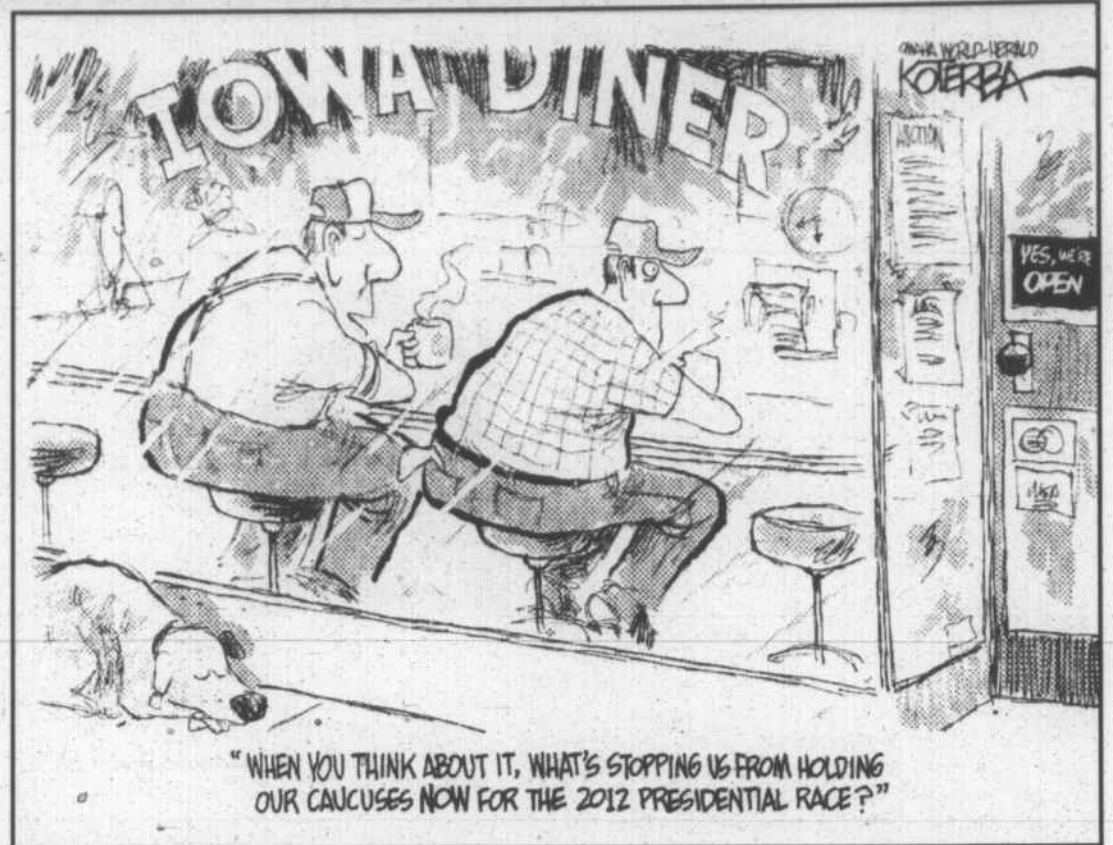
To the Editor:

The recent Emancipation celebration sponsored by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Emancipation Association on Tuesday, Jan. 1 at Union Chapel Baptist Church was certainly one of the best in over 25 years of those that I have witnessed.

I have been involved in the musical entertaining portion of several celebrations, a member of the board, chairperson of the scholarship, publicity and constitution and by-laws committees and vice president. This was truly a well-planned and implemented event. Many thanks to our contributors, members, board members and others who supported and/or attended the event.

Special thanks goes to The Chronicle for its excellent coverage before, during and after the event. The large turnout and the very descriptive reporting of the entire program (write-ups and pictures) can be greatly attributed to the general public's awareness of our existence and efforts.

The four \$1,000 scholarship winners and the four \$100 award finalists are to be commended for their academic records and achievements. We will continue accepting contri-



butions for the scholarship fund.

We do not know of other cities or counties in North Carolina that have such celebrations, but it is my vision that there will be others organizing and celebrating the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln (January 1, 1863) in the very near future. Local leaders will be happy to assist in starting the annual celebration in other parts

of the state.

President Bush recently signed into law a bill designating the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center's great hall as "Emancipation Hall." The bill was co-sponsored by U.S. Rep. Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (D-Ill) and U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.) who stated that: "Emancipation Hall will stand as a memorial to our nation's struggle and progression from

slavery to freedom."

This should be another motivating factor for participating in the celebrations.

Make plans to give greater support and attend the 2009 Emancipation Celebration!!

Sincerely,
 Rudolph V. (Rudy) Boone
 Sr., president of the W-S/FC
 Emancipation Association

Kick the habit



Sasha Brown
 Guest Columnist

As a representative of the Youth Advisory Council, a local youth group working to prevent teens from using tobacco, I wanted to share a piece of information that could be important to everyone during this holiday season.

Many tobacco users are looking to the start of a new year as a great time to stop smoking. We know that smoking is deadly to smokers and non-smokers alike. Nearly 1200 Americans die every day in the United States, from tobacco related illness.

If you are looking for a



way out, here is your chance. Put that cigarette down and call 1-800-quit-now. This line

is not another telemarketing scheme. The quit-line is a free and confidential quit

smoking counseling service, available 7 days a week, 8 a.m. to midnight. Counselors at the quit-line, care about people.

The proof of how the quit-line works has been researched. Your chances of quitting will double if you make that call.

Many ex-smokers have already tried the quit-line and recommend it to others. If you call 1-800-784-8669, you will only get the answers to the questions you ask. What better way to start your new year than by quitting tobacco or taking the steps to quit.

Put that first call behind you. Everyone has to start somewhere. Take your place out of the 1200 Americans that will die from tobacco today and tomorrow. Become a non-smoker.

Sasha Brown, 18, is a student at Forsyth Technical Community College.

Kenya is breaking my heart



Harry Alford
 Guest Columnist

I have been to Kenya three times and each time my love for this land and its people grows stronger and stronger.

The lush green highlands and the robust savannahs have no rival. The view of Fern Valley from the mountainsides is absolutely astonishing. One can get "high" from watching a sunset before Mount Kilimanjaro.

Millions of animals in their natural habitat replete with the stoic Masai warriors walking amongst the wildlife with no fear at all. The city of Nairobi with its impressive skyline is indeed cosmopolitan. The people have the friendliest and most genuine smiles. They are good folks.

The current state of affairs of this nation cannot be considered a shock to me because I have been watching it "brew" for some time. The rioting on television brings back the memory of the Rwanda Horror. Hopefully, it will cease soon but the possibility is causing me to lose sleep. I have made good friends and we have great plans for the future. Right now, my main concern is their safety.

Kenya is in its third presidential regime. The first was led by their liberator Jomo Kenyatta. His term was long but necessary as they transitioned from colonialism to revolution to democracy. Arap Moi was an interesting leader as he led by tribal coalition versus the Kikuyu dominance of the Kenyatta regime. The current president is Kibaki who is Kikuyu but is constantly reminded that the other tribes, especially the Luo, have their place in government and power as well. Personally, I feel the fault of Kibaki's leadership is not tribal based but due to downright personal greed. Whenever I note a conflict of interest in commercial matters there appears to be a direct relative of the President involved. It's not coincidental and of course any relative of Kibaki would have to be Kikuyu. One should not get the impression that there is an official tribal conspiracy.

We once spent a lovely evening with a cabinet member enjoying libation while looking out over his personal farm – palatial estate. He told us that President Kibaki had recently sent a military helicopter over his land to assess its beauty and value. Later, the President informed him that he was considering annexing (eminent domain) his land. I asked, "How did you respond?" He retorted, "I told him if he tried I will personally kill him". Confrontation between a President and a cabinet member can become very serious hard ball.

Such disputes and mysterious deaths (often reported by the press) becomes a way of life in Kenyan politics and it makes us appreciate our style of democracy.

Another indicator that something bad was about to happen was the recent elections held by the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry. We learned that our first contact and good friend, Laban, had won the vote. We later learned that he could not be inaugurated because the incumbent was refusing to relinquish the office. It was going to court and that may take years. Laban is Luo and his rival is Kikuyu and the opposing sides were starting to assemble in like fashion. Such is the case in the current national presidential elections. They (Kikuyu's) want to tie it up in court which would give Kibaki years of continued reign. The courts in Kenya move at a snail's pace. Thus, there is conflict in the streets.

In Kenya, one would think the tribal deal was all over by now. Every Kenyan is fluent in three languages. English is taught in the schools; each has his own tribal tongue (37 tribal dialects); and finally Swahili are the three forms of communication. Swahili is a regional language developed

for commercial communication over 1,000 years ago. It is spoken from the Congo, Uganda and Southern Sudan down through Tanzania and Malawi. It is truly a "Lingua Franca".

Basically, the Kenyans are united. They tolerate many religions and honor all cultures. It is this political/power thing that is causing the friction. It doesn't help that the United States and Britain, the colonial oppressor for over a century, have been rather silent on this election issue. The US is always poking its "nose" in foreign elections but, for some reason Jimmy Carter and others weren't around for this last election.

President Kibaki is letting his lust for money (by way of power) get in the way of the democratic process. I say to him: It is time to go to Switzerland and count all the money you already have. The "party" has come to an end.

In the name of Jomo Kenyatta, let freedom ring loud in your great nation. Allow an accurate, transparent and honest vote tally to occur. Kenya is greater than you and freedom has no patience.

My beloved Kenya, I pray for your safety and peace.

Harry Alford is the co-founder, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. Website: www.nationalbcc.org.

Email questions, comments or concerns to the Chronicle newsroom

news@wschronicle.com