

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

Black History Month ending, but not work in community

Black History Month 2015 will end in a few days. All month media, organizations and businesses have given tidbits about African-Americans and their accomplishments.

Some people who have been honored are living and some are dead. Some people are well known and others are not as well known. Men and women make the lists of accomplished African-Americans.

Special programs have been presented during Black History Month. Some gave homage to African-Americans from the past. Some offered discussions about African-American life for the future.

Black History Month 2015 also is known for the movie "Selma" and how it has galvanized African-Americans across the nation to make sure young people see the movie to learn about some of their history.

The Voting Rights Act Of 1965 will be 50 years old in August. The movie, which explores the drama surrounding events that led to the signing of the Voting Rights Act, has made African-Americans realize the important accomplishments of the people behind the Civil Rights Movement. The movie also has made them realize that the work in the 1960s must be rekindled because some of the same goals of the establishment to quash the African-American vote back then have been rekindled today.

We know that Black History Month can't hold most of the many accomplishments African-Americans have made over the centuries. They can't be dwindled down to a month of recognition, really. Those accomplishments should be recognized year-round.

To that end, The Chronicle will recognize people in the Winston-Salem area in March during a Community Service Awards Banquet. The awards are intended to recognize individuals of any race in the following categories: Man of the Year, Woman of the Year, Community Service, Minority Business, Lifetime Achievement, Human Relations and Community Organizations.

Nominations for the awards are closed. The winners will be recognized at the banquet on March 21.

Work in the black community continues after Black History Month, and The Chronicle is recognizing people who are working to make the community better.



FREEDOM'S JOURNAL

The Black Press strives to serve the community

Almost 190 years ago, prominent free black men met in New York City to discuss forming a vehicle to communicate their views on issues that affect the Black community. Up to that time, Black Americans had been denied usual channels of public media.

They decided to publish Freedom's Journal, the first newspaper produced by Black Americans. Rev. Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm, who attended the meeting, became the paper's editors.

While the editors of Freedom's Journal acknowledged that white citizens sometimes defended the honor of Black Americans in public forums, they proclaimed in the first issue, "Too long have others spoken for us ... We wish to plead our own cause."

The Chronicle is proud to be a part of that legacy.

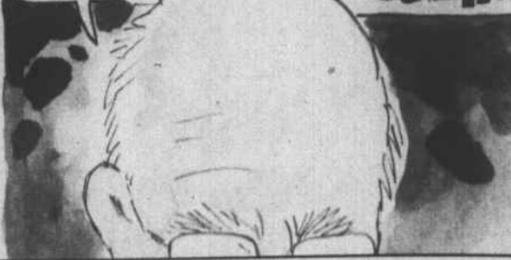
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OBAMA DOES NOT LOVE AMERICA THE WAY WE DO.



HE'S DIFFERENT FROM US...

... HE WAS RAISED BY WHITE PEOPLE. HE SAVED THE AUTO INDUSTRY. HE SAVED OUR ECONOMY, PROVIDED HEALTHCARE TO MILLIONS, GAVE TAX CUTS TO MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES, TALKING TO CUBA...



Celebrate black history all year, and include everyone



James Ewers
Guest Columnist

It has been so long that I don't actually remember when I started celebrating black history. I do recall that it started out as Black History Week.

Upon quite reflection and over time, I have come to realize that black folks created and invented a lot of things.

For example, Alexander Mills invented the elevator and Albert R. Robinson invented the electric trolley. In addition, John Love invented the pencil sharpener and John Burr invented the lawn mower.

As I grew older, a week of black history turned into an entire month. I am sure that Carter G. Woodson in 1926 didn't really think about this turn of events. Yet I suspect the contributions were so enormous that one week simply would not do.

There are some compelling questions to be asked regarding Black History Month as we know it to be now. As we know, there are those who are calling for an end to Black History Month. They argue that there ought to be a seamless transition from black history to American history. Proponents further say that Black History Month further separates and segregates our society.

It is my thinking that as long as many of the learning tools and dispensers of information give out little or partial information then Black History Month must continue.

I agree that our history should be interwoven into American history, however, at this point the rhetoric



Obama



Brooke



Rice



Chisholm

and the practice of the rhetoric don't match.

I have often mused whether talking intentionally about the contributions of black people make some people uncomfortable. I am sensitive to this comfort issue, however, sometimes folks have to feel uneasy in order to appreciate the facts.

Will the information tools tell us that Sarah Boone invented the ironing board, that Alice Parker invented the heating furnace and that George T. Samon invented the clothes dryer? We probably have to go to some extremes to acquire this information.

The celebration of Black History Month in the new millennium has special significance, especially for young students. If you are my age or a little younger, you are a product of segregated schools. You either went to an all-black school or an all-white school.

This wasn't a reflection on us as much as it was the times. Many of us lived in places where our contact with each other was quite limited.

As a result, it may have been easier to celebrate the accomplishments of black folks because there wasn't the peer pressure or the resistance. And because we had black teachers for the most part, these purveyors of the information affirmed our pride.

We now live obviously in different places and during a different time in our

history. Students now learn in integrated classes and their classmates are of different ethnicities. With all of these groups together, you have a real melting pot of ideas and learning styles. The question then boils up "How do black students feel about celebrating Black History Month"? Are they embarrassed by it? Are they afraid of being rejected? And finally do they believe there is any correlation between their success and the success of their ancestors?

In a few public settings now recently, I have shared a few analogies. For instance, there could be no Condoleezza Rice without there first being a Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American to run for president of the United States; there could be no Barack Obama without there first being an Edward Brooke, an African-American Senator from Massachusetts; and finally, there could be no Usher without there first being a Sammy Davis, Jr.

The analogies are endless, yet the point is that we all stand on the mighty shoulders of those who came before us. They were role models for us before the term became chic and fashionable. The proposition has to be made to young people that their own success is inextricably tied to the success of their ancestors.

One of the things that I have observed more with young students is that they

mix well together. Seeing black students and white students together is not the aberration that it once was. So it would stand to reason that white students would also appreciate Black History Month. It has always been my view that we can all learn things from each other. I do hope that black students/celebrate with great pride this month the many achievements that have been made through the years.

February will be gone before you know it. While I think we still need to keep February, we need to do more throughout the year. There are too many highlights to keep them confined to one month. I encourage parents, grandparents and other love providers to keep this spirit of information-sharing alive and well. Use the library and the Internet as wonderful sources for information. We have an opportunity to provide our children with a platform made up of respect, admiration and caring. We can love and care about each other everyday.

Let our children, friends and neighbors see us as the torchbearers of kindness, civility and good will. February should be a month of inclusion not exclusion. We grow more when we learn more. Celebrate black history because it is American history.

Winston-Salem native Dr. James B. Ewers is a longtime educator.

We Welcome Your Feedback

Submit letters and guest columns to letters@wschronicle.com before 5 p.m. Friday for the next week's publication date.

Letters intended for publication should be addressed "Letters to the Editor" and include your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep letters to 350 words or less.

If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself, your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep guest columns to 550 words or less. Letters and columns can also be mailed or dropped off at W-S Chronicle, 617 N. Liberty St., W-S, NC, 27101; or sent via our website,

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