

Editorials



The Charlotte Post

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Seawright's Victory Means....

Who is Toni Seawright? Answer, and surprisingly, the first Black Miss Mississippi. Toni, a 22-year old beautiful and talented native of Moss Point is a 1987 music major graduate of Mississippi University for Women. With a positive I can do attitude, Ms. Seawright says, "I plan on winning. I know that it takes a lot of intense training but I am ready for it."

In her first-ever beauty queen contest, Toni won over a field of 36 other contestants. Consistent with her positive approach, the new Miss Mississippi is expected to perform her winning rendition of "I'm Going All the Way" at the Miss America pageant on September 19 in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Upon Ms. Seawright's selection, USA TODAY said the obvious, "Black Miss America contestants from the South are as rare as black pageant winners." This statement is of course in reference to the one black Miss America Pageant winner Vanessa Williams in 1984 in the entire history of the pageant.

Toni is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Norman and Annie Seawright and is the youngest of the eight children in the family.

For those of us knowledgeable and aware of our nation's struggles to overcome racism and the hard fought civil rights gains of the 1960s, we must recognize that with all the frivolity and somewhat trivialities of beauty pageants, Ms. Seawright's victory represents a historic milestone. Why? Because any crack of shattering of the traditionally idealized white Southern Bella culture means for many white people, both north and south, intrusion into the lingering socially segregated lifestyles of our nation. Such segregation becomes all the more important because many business and economic decisions affecting the jobs and welfare of many people were and are made in such social settings - private clubs and dinner parties. Toni Seawright's victory may be at least a symbolic beginning of the end of such social separation of the races.

A "Dangerous Trend"

Three years ago, the IBM Corporation provided \$900,000 in equipment to establish and operate the local Urban League's Job Training Center. In addition, the firm loaned two staff people for a full three-year period to serve as director and teacher. Dan Bowen, vice president of programs for the Urban League, said that 85% graduation rate of 134 students and job placement of 114 out of 169 students enrolled in ten classes late 1984.

Furthermore, IBM officials state that they have been involved with a half dozen other local businesses two years ago in developing a management training program for over 300 Charlotte-Mecklenburg principals and other administrators. While all of the corporate training sounds very noble, it is indicative at least in part of a "dangerous trend", says U. S. Secretary of Labor William Brock. He added, "Millions of workers are prevented from getting jobs or moving to better jobs by their lack of basic competency in reading, writing and speaking English, by their poor math skills and by their lack of reasoning and problem-solving skills."

Brock's words are strongly supported by a recent *New York Times* article that says historically the nation's corporations "considered it the role of educators to teach young Americans the three 'R's' and to prepare them generally for life and for work." However, these firms have now come to realize that "basic education has become their business, too." Consistent with Mr. Brock's statement, the corporations claim that they have a difficult time locating employees with high school diplomas with the basic entry-level job skills. For example, and this is just one of many, the *New York Times* report states that this year the New York Telephone Company found that 84% of its applicants

failed its entry-level exams.

These efforts by the corporate community to do what public education should be doing from the University down to the secondary school level, but especially the latter, should not be surprisingly given the status of American public education. For example, here in North Carolina we can see a mirror image of the nation. In the state legislature, Republicans and Democrats alike, from Governor Jim Martin to Lt. Governor Bob Jordan -- there is more a political show of force over the source of school funds than the cost efficient merit of such sources. Locally, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board member and the County Commissioners are at odds over school construction plans, if any, and related issues. In addition, questions have been raised about the credibility of student individual scores on the California Achievement Test (CAT), and the continuing controversies over the teacher development program, school-based health clinics and whether black students are receiving equal educational encouragement and recognition.

Add to all of this, the apparent assumption that the public schools should assume more and more of the responsibility of the home and family-breakfast, meals and a wide host of social matter, in addition to the health clinics--is there any wonder that the public schools are not adequately preparing young people for entry-level jobs and life-after school generally? This kind of chaos in public education will continue until more parents assume their rightful responsibilities and then demand that the elected officials, both at the state and local level, begin to act more responsibly to the basic needs of our youth. The survival of public education demands such a move.

Welcome Habitat For Humanity

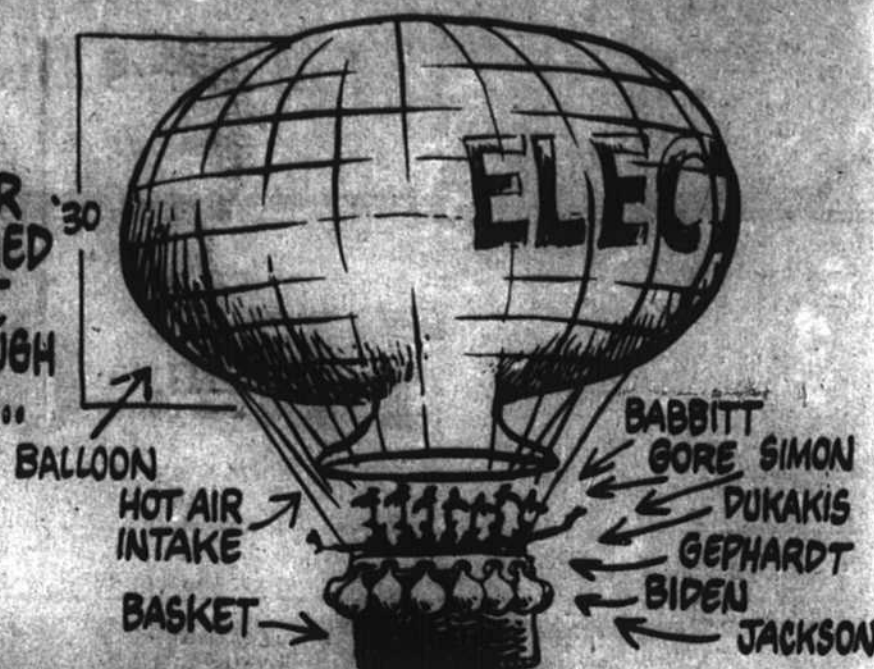
This weekend will begin the 5-day Habitat for Humanity 14-house building project headed up by the Jimmy Carter Work Camp of 300 volunteers plus hundreds of local volunteers including the low income families who will purchase and occupy the 14 homes.

We wish for Habitat President Julia Maul-

den and the host group much success in this bold venture to provide home ownership opportunities for 14 additional low income families. It is gratifying to know that while the Reagan Administration continues to dismantle federal housing programs that there are people still committed to helping those in real need.



ANOTHER RECORD
BREAKING HOT AIR
BALLOON, DESIGNED
TO STAY ALOFT,
NON-STOP THROUGH
NOVEMBER '88...



Bell South

An Investment In The Black Community

Lewis H. Latimer (1848-1928) an engineer, scientist, and inventor, patented the first incandescent electric lamp with carbon filament. Latimer also made the drawings for the first telephone for Alexander Graham Bell, and was the first chief draftsman for General Electric and Westinghouse. He, also, wrote the first textbook on the lighting system used by the Edison company.

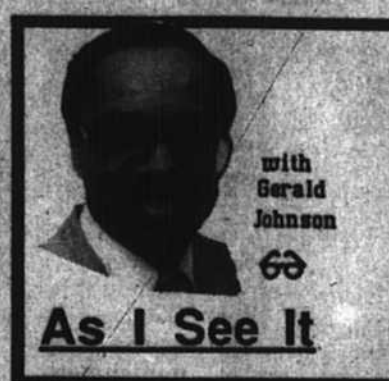
Granville T. Woods (1856-1910), inventor, developed an egg incubator, a system of telegraphing from moving trains, and improvement in electric railways and the phonograph. General Electric and Bell Telephone purchased many of his inventions, and he marketed many others through his own company.

Frederick M. Jones (1893-1961), was responsible for inventing sound on motion pictures.

Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806), an astronomer, surveyor, inventor, and mathematician, made a clock that struck on the hour. He was commissioned by Thomas Jefferson to develop the blueprints for our Nation's Capitol, Washington, D. C. Banneker published annual almanacs in 1791. He was one of the first Americans to write a learned dissertation on bees.

Elijah McCoy (1843-1929), inventor was granted over 72 patents in his lifetime, most of which related to lubricating appliances for engines. He was a pioneer in the art of steadily supplying oil to machinery from a cup which eliminated the need for constant lubrication stops. His inventions are still prevalent in today's machinery. He was so good that the term 'real McCoy' came from his inventions.

Katherine Johnson (1918-), mathematician, physicist, and Aerospace scientist pioneered space navigation. Her published works are still used in today's aerospace technology.



All of these great men and women have several things in common. They all made major contributions to our country. Their works and achievements have afforded us a lot of the comforts we experience today.

Regrettably, all of them were left out of our history books. Our school systems have neglected teaching our children about the great deeds of individuals like these.

All of them are Black. The Bell South Corporation, parent company of Southern Bell and South Central Bell, has undertaken a unique and an aggressive advertising campaign aimed at educating the Black youth about the contributions of Black Americans.

Bell South's campaign emphasizes the need for educating our youth in science and technology because our world is rapidly being controlled by technological innovations.

By using Black role models of the past, Bell South hopes that the community will be influenced to direct our youth into taking more of an interest in science and technology.

The pilot program is being run in Charlotte, N. C., Columbia, S. C., Jackson, Miss., Tuskegee, Ala., Birmingham, Ala., Jacksonville,

Fla., Nashville, Tenn., Louisville, Ky., Atlanta, Ga., New Orleans, La. The promotional radio announcements can be heard locally on WPEG.

For a major corporation to make such an investment in the Black community is indeed inspirational. It is also smart.

This promotional campaign can be mutually beneficial for everyone involved. The dollars Bell South is pouring into the Black community to promote this campaign helps Black businesses. If the campaign stirs enough community interest to push our kids into high technology education, then Bell South has a future pool of human resources to draw employees from.

Our youth will be building a future for themselves that we all can be proud of.

The country is utilizing untapped resources that otherwise could end up on some form of entitlement program.

My hat goes off to the Bell South Corporation for taking a bold step in the right direction to help our community help itself. It now becomes our responsibility to guarantee that Bell South's investment pays dividends.

We must begin to use our history to show our children what contributions were made by Black Americans. Then help them see that they can help shape and mold this country's future as well as their own through continued education.

Hopefully, the country's history books will do a better job of documenting their successes.

In doing all of this, we should not forget to call or write Southern Bell and let them know that their efforts are greatly appreciated. I hope more businesses will be influenced by the positive initiative shown by the Bell South Corporation.

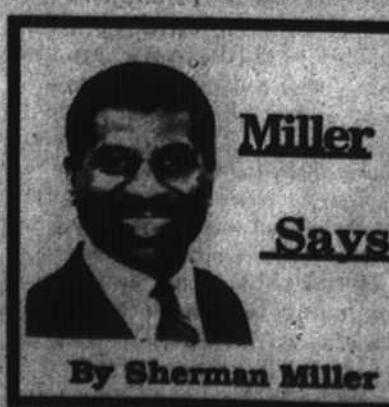
Elections Have Strategic Importance

Political pundits often bounce around the adage, "Close only counts in horseshoes". It is a motivator for their candidates. Yet, political strategists know that to maintain long-term national and statewide power or to circumvent an entrenched political party, the above adage is merely poppycock. A couple of notable examples of the long-term importance of closing campaigns can be seen in Ronald Reagan's first Presidential bid and Bob Casey's (Democrat) gubernatorial campaigns. President Reagan's battle for the Republican nomination against Former President Gerald Ford evolved into a landslide victory against former President Jimmy Carter. Pennsylvania Governor Bob Casey made several unsuccessful tries before finally landing the Governor's office.

Thus, we ought to surmise the strategic importance of the 1987 and 1988 elections. Let me do this by examining the Philadelphia, PA mayor's race which pits Mayor Wilson Goode, a popular black Democrat, against Former Mayor Frank Rizzo, Democrat turned Republican.

Although Goode should win, he will hand the Republican Party a long-term strategic boon, namely, many American cities are presently Democratic Party strong holds, but white city dwellers, unlike black Americans, no longer hold blind loyalty to the Democrats.

This kink in the Democratic Party's armor offers an opportunity for Republicans to establish a



beachhead in many Urban White communities. The recent bitter Chicago Mayoral race resulted in the defection of a powerful Democratic boss to the Republican Party. This chap has no doubt taken a large faction of the Cook County, Illinois Democrats with him.

Rizzo got many Philadelphia Democrats to change their registration to Republican to vote for him in a highly visible Republican primary. Clearly these Republicans (Soft Democrats) represent a significant tactical victory for the Republican Party. Do these new Republicans (Soft Democrats) hold blind allegiance to any Party? Earl M. Baker, Chairman of The Pennsylvania Republican Committee, partially corroborates my supposition. I asked him if Frank Rizzo will break the Democratic hold on Philadelphia.

"I think it is very possible," says Baker. "...I think that Frank will appeal across a wide front." The Democrat stranglehold on the Cities.

"I do not see it everywhere but I

certainly see it in Philadelphia."

Although Baker says he did not see a nationwide effort underway by the Republican Party to break the Democratic stranglehold in the cities, the Rizzo campaign: in the Philadelphia race can pass for a pilot program.

The Republican Party appears to have two key long range objectives. First, break the Democratic hold on large voter blocks in States with large Presidential Electoral votes to prevent the loss of The White House in a close election, second, gain parity in governorships and control of State Houses and local offices by 1990 so as to negotiate re-apportionment plans after the 1990 Census from the dominant Party position.

Baker, however, made it clear that Pennsylvania's Republican Party is not conceding Philadelphia's huge black vote to Mayor Goode.

We are not writing off any group," he declared. "...You might consider Frank Rizzo to be an inflammatory figure. I think he is a human figure and I think he has a lot of support amongst the black community."

I challenged Baker to tell whether he thinks the Republican will gain whether Frank Rizzo wins or loses?

"Yes! Yes, I do!" replied Baker. "I think we will convert many Democrats to become Republicans. I think we will attract many Democrats to vote Republican..."

Baker was encouraged to tell if similar strategies were in operation across the country to break up