

# The Charlotte Post

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## As the NAACP turns: Enough is enough, Post

By David Howard  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

He said, she said. Then she said he said, and then he said she said. When does the story end? I feel that it is high time for someone to stand tall and question the coverage given the NAACP by The Charlotte Post.

For the last several years, the coverage has bordered that of a writing for a daily soap opera, and a bad soap opera at that. I feel that the general public and the readers of the Post have to wonder is this space could be better utilized to cover something positive in the African American community. Every day, African Americans in Charlotte are achieving great things and reaching new heights in the community and business world. However, the one newspaper that is supposed to be the voice of "Charlotte's Black community" continues to badmouth and degrade one of the most historical institutes in America. Well, as a black Charlottean and a NAACP member, I think it is high time that we question and demand the respect of the newspaper and the writers that claim to be "Our Voice."

Over time, God has blessed the world with families that produce effective, dedicated leaders. This is definitely the case with the Alexander family. From Z. Alexander Sr. to his sons Fred Alexander and Kelly M. Alexander Sr., to his grandsons Kelly M. Alexander Jr. and Alfred L. Alexander, and their mother Margaret A. Alexander, this family dedicated its time, energy and resources to helping the African American communities in Charlotte, throughout North Carolina and across America. The commitment of this family to the NAACP deserves more than the penny-ante, nit-picking reporting they receive from The Post. It would seem that any African American in Charlotte that has attended public school; became a public elected official; stayed in one of the nice hotels in downtown; has maintained a job or received a contract because of an NAACP Fair Share Agreement (NationsBank, BB&T, Flagstar, Food Lion, the Carolina Panthers); or has climbed the corporate ladder to success, would be eternally grateful to these "community architects," if you will, that assisted in the labor to build these bridges.

Whatever the case, let's talk fiction and facts. It is fiction to believe that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Branch of the NAACP is closing, however, the Aug. 1 issue of The Post included a cartoon that depicted Alexander's Funeral Home with a "closed" sign on the door. This followed a story about the closing of the North Carolina NAACP Charlotte office (which was nothing more than a desk in an office). However, this is not what this cartoon said to the public. This has led to people calling to see why the local branch office is closing when in fact it is not. This cartoon is also unfair to the owners of Alexander's Funeral Home, Charlotte's oldest minority owned business. For over 40 years, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP and the North Carolina NAACP have maintained offices (or rather office space) in Alexander's Funeral Home free of charge?

Fiction: Kelly M. Alexander, Jr. has done something wrong.

Fact: Kelly M. Alexander Jr. has been accused of things that don't make logical sense. Case in point: he has been accused of opening and maintaining a sole signature checking account, and for paying bills out of this same account with checks he co-signed with the former treasurer. In this case, how can 1 signature plus 1 signature equal a sole signature account? The answer is, it doesn't, so how can the accusation be true?

Fiction: The audit of the NAACP accounts for January 1996 to March 1996 has been held up because of new findings.

Fact: By any other name, this would be called a lie. Any CPA, accountant, bookkeeper, can tell you that an audit on two checking accounts for only a three month period, should take no more than one or two days at the very most. To date, it has been almost three months, and the audit still is not done. Even under the worst conditions, the audit should have been done long ago. Is this justice or politics at its very worst?

Fiction: Computer records and office records are missing.

Fact: I challenge anyone that says this is true to name the computer office or files that are missing. It is not possible. For one thing, this is not true. And second, how can someone that never worked in an office say that something is missing from the office? It sounds like someone is trying to make smoke where there is no fire.

I challenge the black community to make The Post more accountable for its reporting. A story is only half true when it's one-sided. The policy of The Post, and any other newspaper should be to report fair, well researched, dependable, insightful, resourceful, inspirational stories. I challenge the Post to live up to its written standard and up to its slogan as the "Voice of the Black Community."

DAVID HOWARD of Charlotte is a former part-time N.C. NAACP staffer.

# Business robs sports of fun

GERALD O. JOHNSON

## As I See It



Used to be that I was an avid sports fan. I would actually plan my schedule around being able to sit down in front of a television set just to watch football, my favorite sport.

Basketball was equally as bad, especially at the college level. Baseball? Well, I personally think the strike was the best thing that ever happened to it. Unfortunately it got lifted and they are playing again, I guess.

But something has gone terribly wrong. I can not sit through an entire game anymore. I find myself getting quite bored

before halftime. I used to love to go to Charlotte Hornets games. But that has even lost its glamour for me.

Part of this new-found indifference can be attributed to my just getting older. But most of it is due to the games becoming more of a business and less of a sport. Don't get me wrong. I think athletes, just like the rest of us, deserve to make whatever the market will bear. But the dynamics of players getting top dollar has a ripple effect which ultimately leads to fan indifference.

Television, which creates the huge cash flow for owners of sport franchises, is where this all starts. Top players see all of this cash flowing and rightfully want their fair share. Free agency gives them the right to seek what they think is their fair share from the highest bidder. The highest bidder

then wants us, the fans, to help pay for this high bid by increasing the ticket prices and demanding new coliseums to build sky boxes.

All of this is perfectly legal. More importantly, it is perfectly sound business practice from all parties involved. But for me that's the problem.

When I sit in front of a tube to watch a game, I would prefer that the statistics of the players and the teams be the news of the game. However, in today's environment, players' salaries, strikes, and coaches' firings all take headlines over the game. The game itself seems to be the least important thing about sports today.

As a fan, I gave my allegiance to teams who mirrored a personality trait that I admired. The teams' personality was made up of the chemistry among the players. When the

chemistries of two teams would be in opposition, you would have a rivalry. This is what made the Lakers-Celtics clashes, or the Cowboys and Redskins? What about the Bad Boys of Detroit, or the Purple People Eaters of the Minnesota Vikings? We have lost this team chemistry in today's environment. I am not interested in watching Michael Jordan or Shaquille O'Neal play just because they are good. The games, the teams, the rivalry, these are the things that make sport a spectator event. Sports have replaced fan interest with corporate sponsorships. As a result I have replaced sports with other meaningful activities.

Yes, Virginia there is life after sports.

Peace.

GERALD O. JOHNSON is publisher of The Post.



## Find the good in life and praise it

**Bernice P. Jackson**



I recently received a letter from Rodney Slater, administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, who wrote of visiting the grave of Alex Haley, the author of Roots. Mr. Slater recalled that on Alex Haley's tombstone are the words, "Find the good and praise it."

It's been a difficult summer already and we're only at the beginning. Churches burning across this land. More Supreme Court decisions are setting back voting rights for African Americans in the South and affirmative action for students in Texas.

But there have also been some good things which have happened and we need to praise

them. There have been some moments when human decency and love won out. We must celebrate those signs of hope in order to go on.

There were few reports about her. NBC Evening News did a focus on her, but I didn't see or hear or read other mentions of Keisha Thomas. But Keisha Thomas is an example of the good.

Maybe you saw a few seconds of footage on television news showing a scuffle between Michigan Klansmen and anti-Klan marchers a few weeks ago. It happened in Ann Arbor and the marchers soon were battling on the streets. And when the anti-Klan marchers began to pummel and kick a man who had tripped and fallen in the melee and who was dressed in a Confederate T-shirt, Keisha Thomas, an 18-year-old African American woman, threw herself over him to stop the crowd. "He was just a man," was all Keisha

could say, in explaining why she protected him. He didn't deserve to be beaten for his beliefs, even though she disagreed strongly with, she implied.

The picture of this young woman called to mind a similar picture of Archbishop Desmond Tutu a few years ago throwing himself over a man believed to be an informer by an angry crowd of South Africans. It was only Bishop Tutu's action which stopped this man from being killed.

I doubt whether the Ann Arbor crowd would have killed this Klan supporter, but they certainly could have done great injury to him. My prayer is that this man will be changed by that day and come to see African Americans in a new light and that he will never again wear a shirt with a Confederate flag on it.

The other sign of hope grows out of the church fires still being

started across this land. Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of Americans have been touched by these heinous crimes. Dollars have poured into the National Council of Churches, more than 1,000 have indicated their desire to join work camps and many of us have been deluged with requests to develop relationships with the burned churches. Some local churches have taken this as an opportunity to open discussion between the races in their communities and to join in projects at home.

Perhaps we will now begin the hard work, the difficult dialogue about race in this nation which we must do if we are to survive in the 21st century. That is my prayer and my hope

BERNICE POWELL JACKSON is executive director of the Commission for Racial Justice in Cleveland.

# The power of love vs. love of power in General Assembly



"We can do better than that." It was the last full day of a long legislative season in Raleigh.

And the good feelings that floated across the surface of cordial good-byes concealed some of the poisoned memories of partisanship, conflict, and unresolved differences of opinions that lurked inside the minds of some of our legislators.

Yet when state Rep. Jack Hunt completed his "We Can Do Better Than That" speech the members of the House of Representatives rose all together to give him a long and warm

round of applause.

Rep. Hunt is leaving the legislature this year. Unless he is called back for a special session, he has probably pressed the button that electronically records legislative votes for his last time.

Jack Hunt first came to the legislature 24 years ago. During his career he served in powerful positions, including chair of the Rules Committee and Speaker Pro Tem - and gained the respect of every legislator for his integrity, civility and sense of fair play.

When he rose to speak earlier this month, everyone listened.

He saluted all his colleagues by praising the process of representative government and assuring them that it has worked well for North Carolina.

His fellow legislators, under

attack from many other corner, were grateful for Rep. Hunt's support for their institution and for them.

He then moved toward the things he really wanted to say. He reminded his colleagues the democratic basis of their power - that it comes, not from them, but from the people who elect them.

Quoting Harry Emerson Fosdick, he said, "Democracy is based on the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people."

Then he moved to share some of his concerns about the legislature and the legislators.

1. The quality of civility among legislators. He mourned the breakdown of civil debate.

2. Time to reflect. Legislators are so busy with routine chores related to the legislative busi-

ness that they have too little time to reflect.

3. Over-reliance on lobbyists. Without criticizing lobbyists, he complained about legislators asking lobbyists to explain bills before legislative committees. (Many legislators, including Hunt, think that any member who sponsors a bill should be able to explain it to others - without help from lobbyists. If he can't explain, Jack Hunt would say, he shouldn't sponsor it).

4. One-upsmanship. Too much one-upsmanship, says Hunt, is a waste of time and energy. "Just think how much we would accomplish if we channeled this energy in a positive manner."

5. Single issues. So many people make judgments on the basis of a single issue. As a result the legislature give too

much attention to such matter.

6. Out-doing each other. "We try," he said, "to 'out-tax-cut' each other. We try to 'out-harsh-sentence' each other. And we try to 'out-religion' each other. When religion controls government, democracy disappears. When government controls religion, religious freedom perishes.

"Deeds of love, not political platforms, identify Christians."

7. Pushing to expand services and lower taxes - at the same time.

Perhaps Hunt's strongest concern was expressed to his colleagues who, at the same time, vote for more government services and less taxes.

8. Personal relations. He shared his worry that legislators don't get to know each other on a personal basis. He urged his colleagues to have a

retreat for two or three days just to get to know each other better - without political speeches.

9. Partisanship. "We think too much about what we can do to the other party and not enough about what we can do for the people.

"We can do better than that," Rep. Hunt said again and again. And his colleagues nodded their agreement.

The important thing to remember, he said, is that the "power of love" is much more important than the "love of power."

Good words for our legislators - and for all of us.

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