

# The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

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EDITORIAL

## Light shines on one of N.C.'s darkest chapters

In 1898 Wilmington, white anger turned to anti-black violence

Next week, The Post will distribute a supplement that recounts one of the most shameful chapters in North Carolina history, the Wilmington race riot of 1898. The supplement will focus on a coup led by white Democrats against African American leaders in the port city in an effort to seize control of its government. While no one knows the exact number of people killed or injured, the violence changed politics and race relations across the state.

A panel of academics and historians found the violence was sparked in part by media reports that fueled white anger. To help shed light on the event of 1898, newspapers that belong to the N.C. Press Association are distributing supplements that retrace what happened in Wilmington. The Post, of course, is participating.

Newspapers are at the heart of the massacre story. The Record, Wilmington's black daily, was a force for improvement of the black condition and was vocal in its advocacy for self-determination. That position didn't set well with whites who had lost control of Wilmington's government during Reconstruction. The Record became the first casualty of violence through arson, and editor Alex Manley was marked for death, as were other prominent blacks, such as the Rev. J. Allen Kirk.

White-controlled publications in Charlotte and Raleigh also played a hand. The News & Observer of Raleigh and Charlotte's Observer set an editorial climate that emboldened whites to go wilding — 1898 style — in the streets to wreak havoc on black citizens. Once word of the horror spread, other southern cities fell victim of violent rebellions.

Much has changed over the last 108 years, but it's been a long, winding road in terms of race relations. Blacks are now major political and social players not only in North Carolina, but throughout the nation. Major dailies, for the most part, have moderated their official stances on many issues regarding people of all ethnicities and creeds. Indeed, much of the reporting you'll read was through the efforts of the N&O and The Observer, now owned by the McClatchy chain.

As a nation, however, we still haven't given ourselves and opportunity to come clean about our shared past. Blacks and whites alike have spent nearly 400 years in denial about where we've come from and where we are. African Americans, better educated and economically well-off than ever, too often want to deny the past without acknowledging what violence and segregation have done to shackle our progress. Whites are all too willing to throw out the tired "I didn't have anything to do with it" excuse, as if no one actually benefited from that legacy, or no one continues to be hurt.

Regardless of where you sit politically or socially on race in America today, next week's supplement is a long-overdue look back on those events from a historical perspective.

## Taking advantage of disadvantaged people

For each program designed to implement Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (affirmative action), there are attempts to front or commit fraud and abuse of such programs. Usually a front operation has a black acting as if he has majority ownership and management when the real operators are behind the scenes and very much Caucasian. Most of this activity happens at the local level as the penalties for committing federal fraud are certain and hard, 3-5 years in federal prison is not out of the ordinary.

However, with the coming of high-powered, very slick lobbying firms in Washington, D.C. a new era has come to be. The 8a program, which is the best federal affirmative action program in existence, has now been infiltrated. Congress, the Congressional Black Caucus included, has allowed lobbyists to get some of their high-powered Caucasian clients into the 8a program by representing themselves as Alaska Native corporations. That's right, ANC's have 8a benefits and they don't have to actually be Alaskan Natives. They don't have to be small or disadvantaged, either. In fact, most ANC's are businesses approaching a billion dollars in annual revenue. They sit back in the offices of their D.C. lobbyist and "cherry pick" federal contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars or even \$1 billion-plus. Remember, these dollars are credited as minority dollars and, in effect, are taken from the pools set aside for real minorities such as blacks, Hispanics, etc.

Keep in mind that real Native Americans still have to apply to get into the 8a program and meet stringent certification. They have to show that they live as American Indians such as on a reservation or culturally live as an Apache, Cherokee, etc. But the ANC's only have to have a subsidiary of their corporation show a paper relationship with some tribe in Alaska such as giving a small portion of the net profits to help the tribe. It is less than pennies on the dollar. What the lobbyists have created with the ANC program is a genuine license to steal federal contracts from bona fide and qualified minority businesses. They are not minority and they are not small (free to have large contracts as opposed to legitimate 8a firms).

They had me going for a while. Federal agencies began showing great increases in small and minority business contracts. The reality was they had all gotten on the ANC bandwagon.

HARRY C. ALFORD is the president/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce. Website: [www.nationalbcc.org](http://www.nationalbcc.org).

## JIM BLACK CLINGS TO A LEAD...



## Closing down a mean election season

One of the benefits of this campaign season coming to a close is that we won't continue to be bombarded with TV commercials drenched in lies and distortion. The closer it got to Tuesday's election, it seemed, the bolder the lies became.

Much has been made of the racially-tinged commercial in which a White actress claims to have met Harold Ford Jr. at a Playboy party. The ad ends with the woman, with only a necklace visible, pretending to be holding a phone, saying: "Harold, Call me."

FactCheck.org, the Web site that serves as a credible referee for all of the political charges and countercharges, provides us with other examples of false political claims in Ford's unsuccessful Senate race in Tennessee and other campaigns.

Former Chattanooga Mayor Bob Corker's campaign teamed up with the National Republican Senate Campaign to produce a TV commercial that proclaimed, "...Congressman Ford voted against reauthorizing the Patriot Act, which protects us from terrorists. He voted to cut defense spending by 16 percent. Just who does he think is going to provide our security? And get this,

Congressman Ford even voted to let liberal judges release felons from jail because of overcrowding..."

FactCheck.org noted, "It's true, as the ad says, that Ford voted in favor of an amendment proposed by the Congressional Black Caucus that would have cut defense spending by over 16 percent for fiscal 2001, directing the additional funds to education and working class family safety net programs.

"What the announcer doesn't tell us is that Ford cast the vote in 2000, before the attack on the World Trade Center or the beginning of hostilities in Iraq; the date of the vote does appear in fine print at the bottom of screen, where you can see it if you squint hard."

The watchdog site stated, "Since 9/11, Ford has supported rapid increases in defense spending for the war and national security, voting, for example, in favor of the fiscal 2006 defense spending bill as well as the 2003 emergency supplemental funding bill. The ad also doesn't mention that on the same day he voted for the amendment Corker cites, Ford voted in favor of an amendment that would have increased military spending, though only seven-tenths of a percent, which isn't enough to keep up with inflation."

The ad correctly notes that Ford voted against reauthorizing the Patriot Act, once on the House committee report and again on the conference

report. However, much of the objection to the new legislation was based on concerns over civil liberties.

"...Republican Sen. John Sununu of New Hampshire then introduced a separate bill containing civil liberties provisions on which both Democrats and Republicans could agree," FactCheck.org reported. "Ford voted for the Sununu bill, without which, it seemed clear at the time, the Patriot Act would not have been renewed."

"As for the claim that Ford voted to let liberal judges release felons from jail because of overcrowding," again the ad misstates the facts. The reference was to a bill introduced by Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas) that would have prevented judges from exercising their right to release prisoners in overcrowded state facilities back into society. "Ford, we note, did not vote to allow judges to release felons from jail, he voted against restricting their existing right to do so," the group said. The DeLay measure never made it to the Senate floor.

Perhaps the most egregious commercial was sponsored by the Republican National Committee and aired against Rep. John Murtha, a Pennsylvania Democrat who had been one of the staunchest supporters of the war in Iraq until recent months.

This is what Murtha said: "Fifty-six percent of the people in Spain think it's more

dangerous, the United States is more dangerous in Iraq than Iran is. Every one of our allies think that the United States being in Iraq is more dangerous to world stability and world peace, every one of our allies, Great Britain, every single country, they think it's, we're more dangerous to world peace than North Korea or Iran. That says something."

In the RNC ad, Murtha is made to say: "We're more dangerous to world peace than North Korea or Iran." "The monitoring group says, "...In this case the RNC manages to present Murtha as seeming to say nearly the exact opposite of what he actually said."

The commercial ran on television and appeared on the Republican National Committee's Web site.

FactCheck.org pointed out, "This is the same RNC web ad that attracted attention because of an image of Democratic party chairman Howard Dean that appeared to have been altered to give him the faint hint of a Hitler mustache."

This election went beyond the usual mudslinging. It was downright nasty.

GEORGE E. CURRY is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service and BlackPressUSA.com. To contact Curry or to book him for a speaking engagement, go to his Web site, [www.georgecurry.com](http://www.georgecurry.com).

## United Way needs your help to succeed

At your United Way, we are in danger of missing our fund-raising goal by a significant amount: About \$1 million. I thought you would appreciate knowing that in time to do something about it.

We have until November 16 to meet our goal of \$44,075,000. Right now, we have promises of \$30.1 million, or about 70 percent of what we need. If we continue collecting at our current pace, we raise approximately \$43 million.

Right away, I am reminding you that we increased our goal by 7.5 percent from last year's \$41 million. We set the bar high because our community needs are pressing and greater than they have ever been before.

Does \$1 million really make much of a difference? Yes, it does.

Without that \$1 million, fewer dollars will flow to many of the 97 non-profit agencies we fund in Mecklenburg, Union, Cabarrus and Anson Counties as well as the Mooresville/Lake Norman area.

For example: MedAssist may have to turn away more seniors who depend on low-cost prescriptions.

Crisis Assistance Ministry might not be able to serve as many families dealing with financial emergencies.

At-risk youths could miss an opportunity to participate in programs that keep them focused at organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Right Moves for Youth and Communities In Schools.

These examples may not be realities to those of us who live, work and play in this region. We celebrate success stories, and there's a simple reason why.

People in the Central Carolinas really do care about each other. People glad-

ly help friends and neighbors through a rough time. That is why our quality of life is so high here and why most newcomers praise our generosity.

Individuals give generously to the United Way because they realize that the United Way connects individuals who are more fortunate to those in need. The United Way brings together agencies, donors, volunteers and companies to help them lend a hand. It gathers gifts and prudently distributes them to the appropriate agencies.

That effort produces success stories. We share good fortune with those who need it, for the benefit of all.

Consider this: When MedAssist is running on all cylinders, the prescription medicine it gives to low-income seniors results in fewer hospital trips and not as many nursing home admissions.

More people find a way to stay warm in their homes when Crisis Assistance Ministry can meet its budget. That means fewer additions

to the 3,800 or so homeless men, women and children who live on our streets.

More teens are involved in productive activity when they connect with groups such as Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Will we raise the \$44,075,000 that community leaders have agreed is needed to properly serve the Central Carolinas?

The answer is up to each of us.

We need you to sign the pledge that saves us.

If you have already given to United Way this year, thank you. If you would like to support United Way through an individual gift you can. If your company would like to run a campaign you can.

Please call our campaign hotline today at (704) 371-7160 and give us your support.

With your gift, we can write more success stories.

GLORIA PACE KING is president of United Way of Central Carolinas.

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