

# The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

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## OPINIONS

# No profit to shortchanging students of an education

By Richard K. Hanners Ed. D.  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Most people do not associate our public schools with "profit," at least other than the beneficial effects for an educated society. However, schools in the state of North Carolina perform for profit.

There are cash prizes for higher test scores and lower dropout numbers. Strong combinations of these "products" receive designations of Schools of Excellence or Schools of Distinction with monetary awards for all faculty and administrators. These rewards, in themselves are positive and if success is obtained fairly and honestly, well deserved.

Additionally, administrators receive "glowing evaluations" and professional enhancement of their reputations and, if scores appear significantly better than other schools, promotion for their success. This makes excellent public relations, even if the successes cannot legitimately be replicated in other schools. The Charlotte Observer has recently published articles lamenting the sorry state of dropout rates in our schools.

In August 2006, The Charlotte Post reported a story of school administrators at highly regarded Myers Park High School coercing marginal students, likely to perform at low levels on state testing, to leave school. In order to cover up this practice without increasing the dropout rate, reasons for these marginal students leaving Myers Park were misrepresented as transferring to "private schools" or "out of state" and other alibis. In fairness, it should be stated that the majority of these dropout students are African American and that the stated purpose of The Charlotte Post is to serve the African American community. No other members of the media in Charlotte, CMS, African American community, or school board reacted to this reporting by the Charlotte Post. Now it appears that CMS for the past eight months has been conducting an "internal investigation" of this alleged practice at Myers Park.

There has been no public awareness of this "internal investigation" or of its results. There has been neither comment nor corrective action, if appropriate, on the part of our new superintendent, Dr. Peter Gorman. The principal of Myers Park High during the time in question was Dr. Bill Anderson, rewarded for the success rate at Myers Park by promotion downtown as an assistant superintendent. More recently, Dr. Anderson has assumed the position as executive director of Communities in Schools, responsible for helping at-risk students.

It is not enough that the Charlotte Observer publishes changes to help our dropout problem with reassuring comments from Dr. Anderson and Ann Clark, who oversees CMS high schools. What we need is fair treatment to all our students and honest reporting of their progress. Perhaps an external investigation is needed. Do not the people of Charlotte have a right to know if there are such reported practices by our administrators? Perhaps the Observer did not go deep enough in their investigations of student dropouts reported in the past week. I would like to challenge the Observer, and CMS to respond and account for their silence.

RICHARD K. HANNERS is a retired Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools counselor.

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### FROM THE IN BOX

## Instead of horse stables, try a crowd control strategy

The writer is president of the Oaklawn Park Community Improvement Organization.

I was taken aback when I saw on TV that the Greenville community is a possible site for horse stables. Thanks to Pop Sadler for speaking to Council regarding this. Do we really need horses to control crowds? It appears that this proposal came about due to the chaos at the Fourth of July celebration. The question is whether proper controls were set up for the celebration in the first place. If it is necessary to build horse stables, please look elsewhere. The westside has too many negative holdings already.

Anna Hood  
Charlotte.

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DON'T CROSS THE BORDER WITHOUT IT...



# International respect for our struggle

TORINO, Italy - A tour guide assisting SCLC President Charles L. Steele Jr. and his delegation smiled broadly as he led them to a middle school named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "We name our schools after international heroes," he said, beaming with pride.



GEORGE E. CURRY

Christian Leadership Conference recently traveled here to lay the groundwork for an international effort aimed at establishing programs and perhaps institutions dedicated to bringing about world peace. Steele plans to link students in the King school here with another one SCLC has adopted in New Orleans.

When our guide declared that Dr. King was an international hero, my mind drifted back to a story I had written for *Emerge* magazine in 1999 attempting to explain why Jesse Jackson has been successful getting political prisoners turned over to him around the world.

Rev. William Howard accompanied Jackson on some of those trips. He put it this way: "We underestimate the power of the African-

American image in the world," he explained. "The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s still looms larger than any other information that has circulated abroad about us. Quite apart from the image, we also take a sensitivity to situations of human conflict and alienation that allows us to speak about situations of human conflict with an authenticity that most Americans could not use."

Frank E. Watkins, a former Jackson aide, explained the Jackson phenomenon.

"People identify with him as someone who has come from a suffering people and has personally suffered himself," Watkins told me at the time. "They see him as a person who identifies with the underdog. Every place he has been successful was an underdog situation."

"Syria was an underdog to Israel. Cuba is an underdog to the United States; Iraq was an underdog. And the last trip was to the Appalachia of Europe. The leadership [of other countries] has not identified him with unfairness, the imperialism and, in some instances, the racism of the United States."

Steele likes to point out that both Dr. King and Jesse Jackson got their national start with SCLC.

And he, too, has a story about how the international community views African-Americans. At last year's SCLC convention in Dayton, Ohio, he recounted a conver-

sation he had in December 2004 with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his chief of staff.

"I was in Israel talking with the chief of staff and [the chief of staff] said, 'You all can bring about world peace. You all have been through the Trans-Atlantic African slave trade and you got lynched, you were murdered, your women were raped and killed, but you didn't turn out to be terrorists. You didn't strap yourselves with a bomb, you don't have any blood on your hands.'"

"I said, 'What are you saying Mr. Chief of Staff to the prime minister?' He said, 'Charles, what I am saying is you can stop the war.'"

Steele said representatives of Hamas have gotten in touch with him, urging SCLC to help diffuse tension in the Middle East and he plans to become involved in the Middle East at some point.

Like Jackson, Steele feels he can be more effective in bringing about world peace than high-ranking government officials. He told delegates to the SCLC convention: "We have the vision. We're the only one in the world with the moral authority to bring about resolutions to problems and conflicts and the fact that people really don't understand how to get along."

He added, "We're the organization that Dr. King so often talked about. We're the organization that when peo-

ple think of world peace, they think of Dr. King, Dr. Abernathy and other [SCLC] civil rights leaders."

Steele continued: "I'm sorry to disappoint y'all but President Bush can't do it. Condoleezza Rice can't do it. And I know I'm going to upset some Negroes now: Bill Clinton can't do it."

The audience loved it.

"It's going to take a moral authority to bring about world peace," Steele continued. "That's what SCLC is doing. We're the answer."

While it is unclear whether anyone has the answer to the Middle East conflict, former South African President Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu have publicly acknowledged that they drew strength and inspiration from the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

This is my Black History Month question: Are we doing anything today that oppressed people around the world will be eager to emulate? If not, we need to get busy.

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).



Jackson

# NAACP limbo: How low can it go?

Since writing "Black Organizations for Sale," which dealt with the Cincinnati Chapter of the NAACP, I have received many e-mails and phone calls informing me of similar issues plaguing other chapters, i.e., corrupt officials, "fixed" elections, fraud, deceit, misuse of funds, and the one common thread of corporate control via sponsorship of NAACP events. It is a shame that black people cannot, or will not take a collective stand against this kind of behavior inside the NAACP.



JAMES CLINGMAN

What we saw on the national level 15 years ago and since must have been just the tip of the iceberg. Money being misused, hanky-panky among staff members, and other things we heard about the national office seem to have filtered down to the local level, at least in the cases with which I am familiar.

Before you get too bent out of shape, let me say that I am absolutely certain that an overwhelming majority of NAACP members are doing the right things and working very hard for the organization. So please don't take this as an indictment of

everyone therein. However, we need to clean house, get rid of the corruption, jettison the refuse, and take a stand against the misdeeds within the NAACP, that is, if we want it and other black organizations to survive and thrive.

With that said, let me give you an update on the Cincinnati NAACP Chapter. (By the way, I was one of the vote counters and have firsthand knowledge of what took place.) It's been eight weeks since our election, and despite incontrovertible evidence of violations by the current officers and obvious collusion by NAACP state officials, despite that evidence being sent by an attorney to the national office for resolution, despite literally hundreds of phone calls, e-mails, and written communications to state, regional, and national NAACP officials, and despite the 30-day response period in their own by-laws, it has been 60 days and still the Cincinnati chapter is in limbo.

We have not sworn in the president, which should have been done the first week of January, after our election on October 28, 2006. We are stuck in a quagmire replete with so-called meetings in which no more than five or six people from the old administration, three of whom are "preachers," make every effort to control the 200 or so other members

who stand behind the obvious winner of the presidential election. We need to get him installed and get on with the business at hand; and Lord knows black folks have a lot of business at hand in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Our December meeting, the first 10 minutes or so chaired by the former president who refuses to concede the election, and her cronies, all five of them, was orchestrated to adjourn without voting on anything. That's right, I said anything. They came in with a plan so elementary, if it were not so sad, it would be hilarious. The former president first informed us that she did not have a roster, so there could be no voting at the official meeting of the NAACP. She then started to threaten to adjourn the meeting because people were upset, and rightfully so, at the fact she had no roster. Ten minutes later, she said she would accept a motion to adjourn which, by design, was immediately offered by one of her "preachers." Then, all five or six of them walked out of the meeting. The 200 of the rest of us carried on with our meeting.

Think that was bad? You ain't heard nothin' yet! The January meeting was highlighted by the parliamentary, also a "preacher" and part of the cabal of the past administration. He began to make motions and "substi-

tute" motions to approve the 10 minutes of minutes from the previous meeting, rather than the minutes from the entire meeting that took place after they left. Of course his motion, when finally voted upon, was overwhelmingly defeated.

Then, the "preacher" who is also the chaplain of the local chapter, after giving the opening prayer, stood up and had to be restrained as he threatened to "pull out my gun" and start shooting some folks. His threat was against a sister, no less, the same as it was against a female, during the previous meeting. The sister called the police to take the "preacher" out of the meeting. Can you believe that? First we pray and then we shoot. How low can they go?

Even more distressing is the fact that our national office has not intervened in this fiasco we have in Cincinnati, the site of its 2008 national convention. It is also insulting, if you ask me. It quite graphically shows their interest is not in the people of this chapter as much as it is in the convention perks they will receive. As I always say, peel back enough layers on these kinds of issues and you will find money.

JAMES E. CLINGMAN, an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati, is former editor of the *Cincinnati Herald*.