

Our common humanity

Thousands of black men carry a sense of hope, energy back to their communities

I am an invisible man.

No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids -- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination -- indeed, everything and anything except me.

from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

Although these words were written in 1947 to describe the common experience of American blacks, they resonate as powerfully today as they did nearly 50 years ago.

Racial differences still alienate us from each other, and stereotypes are still used to erase the humanity of others -- to make them invisible.

When whites and blacks look at each other, we tend to see skin color first while the person beneath the exterior is rarely seen at all.

Thus, we have black people and white people

Holly Edwards



worshiping in separate churches, eating in separate restaurants, attending separate social events, and leading separate lives.

Rarely does anyone stop to question why this separateness continues to exist and flourish, and in the absence of any meaningful communication little progress has been made to improve race relations.

During last week's Million Man March in Washington, DC, it occurred to me that one indisputable positive outcome of the event is that it allowed black men, if only for a day, to be visible to white society rather than invisible.

While I view Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan as a demagogue and a hate-monger, I think his message to black men last week was a good one -- go home and love your family, meet your children's teachers, help your children with their homework and sign their report cards.

The peaceful and spiritual tone of the event

also showed us white folks that black men can congregate in huge numbers without killing each other. It allowed the truck drivers, doctors, hospital workers, lawyers and professors who gathered together in brotherhood to be seen as human beings, who experience tragedy and love their families just like everyone else.

The televised images of black men embracing with tears streaming down their faces reminded us all of our common humanity.

Even black men who did not attend the event were asked to make themselves visible by not attending work or school and spending the day in prayer and atonement for their sins.

When Ellison wrote his classic novel, his stated purpose was to defeat our tendency to deny the common humanity shared by black people and white people, and to "reveal the human complexity which stereotypes are intended to conceal."

More than any event in recent history, the Million Man March brought Ellison's ideal closer to reality.

Farrakhan repeatedly said that the march served to "validate" the black male -- it confirmed the black man's existence and reaffirmed his strength.

"My people have validated me, I don't need you to validate me," Farrakhan proclaimed to all of white society during his two-and-a-half-hour speech.

Farrakhan's hateful beliefs may have tainted the march, but they did not diminish the renewed sense of hope and energy that hundreds of thousands of black men carried back to their communities last week.

It's nothing to sneeze at

Sherman's army had marched across my chest, laying everything to waste

It is Monday at this writing -- one week to the day that I first noticed something was wrong.

The longer one inhabits it, the more one becomes tuned in to one's body. Mine was sending me signals. Smoke signals.

By 2 p.m. last Monday I had begun to feel like a fire-breathing dragon. My throat, scratchy at first, had turned into a Szechuan wok. Steam billowed from my ears and a chain gang of little men started driving railroad spikes into my sinuses.

I had contracted what is jokingly called the common cold. This must be a horrible practical joke of a name, because there is nothing common about it. In fact, I was becoming uncommonly uncomfortable.

Colds stink. On the list of things I'd rather have than a cold, I'd have to include root canal, psoriasis, jock itch and a pulled hamstring. I'd rather submit to minor surgery -- say, a frontal lobotomy -- than have a cold. But, a cold is what I got.

Tuesday morning I awakened to find Sherman's army had marched across my chest during the night, burning and laying to waste everything in its path. The congestion that had been confined to my head the afternoon before had sunk deep into my bronchioles, an event which prompted severe fits of coughing.

By Tuesday noon I was feverish, coughing my head off. I ached from head to toe and would have traded everything I owned for a cyanide capsule.

Next, my body thoroughly invaded by whatever nasty little organism it is that brings on a cold, my thermostat broke. Yeah. That mechanism inside the body -- I think it's somewhere between the medulla oblongata and the ileum -- that regulates the way you react to hot and cold, just flat broke. At one moment I would be freezing, literally shaking. The next minute, I'd break out in a steamy sweat.

By Wednesday, approaching 48 hours into my uncommon cold experience, my chest had become a virtual swimming pool for the little cold bugs. I would become light-headed at the least exertion. I couldn't get enough O₂ through the nasal passages, into the lungs, into the little blood vessels and up into the brain.

I was, in a word, miserable. And not much fun to be with, I might add.

Richard Nubel



This wasn't supposed to happen. No, not this year.

For the first time ever this year I was prudent. Only a week prior I had gotten a flu shot.

I know what you're saying: "Well, a flu shot won't stave off a cold."

That's what I thought, too. But the reason I went ahead and got a flu shot for the first time this year is because of something I read in *U.S. News and World Report*. The article said people who get flu shots have 46 percent fewer colds, miss 39 percent fewer days of work and make 43 percent fewer trips to the doctor.

Bull. I'm switching to *Newsweek*.

Did I say doctor?

One to whom I turn for advice in health matters urged me to see my doctor.

"You need an antibiotic," I was told.

Now, if you're like me, you know doctors are busy guys and are in much greater need by folks who have real illnesses like cancer, congestive heart failure and hemorrhoids, for instance. I wouldn't dare bother a doctor with a common cold. It's going to go away anyhow. Isn't it?

Instead, I ran out to the discount drugstore and bought everything they had for the common cold. I bought the powder you pour into hot liquid. I bought the syrup that comes with its own little shot glass on top. I bought capsules that were filled with powder and capsules that were filled with gel.

I even bought Vick's Vapo Rub, the smell of which endeared me to those around me almost as much as my constant honking into a Kleenex.

I'm here to tell you, there is no over-the-counter cold medicine that is worth the price you pay. None of them works. At least none worked for me.

I don't feel as bad today as I did three days, four days or five days ago. But, I still don't feel as well as I should. I guess this cold is just going to have to run its nasty little course and it will continue to be my lot in life to wheeze and bear it.

It's been 26 years since man first walked on the moon. Scientists today can clone rats in a laboratory. Why can't they make me feel better?



Time and Tide

60 years ago

There was a front-page picture and feature story about Capt. Tommie St. George in our edition of October 23, 1935. The career of this colorful member of the Cape Fear Pilots Association extended from the days of the sailing vessels to the modern era. W. Claude Gore had been named chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Education, succeeding U. L. Rourk, who resigned.

The first anniversary of the establishment of the CCC Camp at Southport was celebrated on the previous Saturday; Gov. J. C. B. Ehringhaus had ordered a special term of Superior Court; and postmaster L. T. Yaskell had been advised by the Administration of Veterans Affairs that burial flags were available through the post office for use of veterans who held an honorable discharge from service.

50 years ago

A truckload of baked beans went up in smoke in a fire following a wreck on Highway 17 near Shallotte. This was reported in the *Pilot* for October 24, 1945; Miss Annie May Woodside had been re-elected chairman of the Brunswick County chapter of the American Red Cross; Lassiter Harvell, former Japanese prison, had returned home to Bolivia; and chief of police Otto Hickman had killed a nine-point buck.

A party of Southport and Wilmington fishermen had reported unusually good luck casting for drum in the surf of Bald Head Island; and the county agent was making an effort to get Brunswick County farmers interested in grape growing.

40 years ago

Dedication of Sunny Point Army Terminal was slated for Saturday, October 29, and three days earlier the *Pilot* had a special section in recognition of this momentous occasion. This was in 1955. Included among the special events were to be train rides for visitors, who would have an opportunity to see this vast installation in a style to which they were completely unaccustomed.

The first frost of the season had shown up the day the *Pilot* came out that week; two prisoners had escaped -- but only temporarily -- from the local jail and had drawn additional time; and king mackerel catches were making news on the fishing front.

30 years ago

Our edition for October 27, 1965, was playing up an election of a different kind -- a bond election for better roads. Once more the editor was urging support of the proposition before the people. Jeanne Brown had been elected homecoming queen at Southport High School and her picture was on the front page.

Charter night for the Supply Lions Club had been held and we had a front-page picture of deputy district governor Kirby Sullivan installing H. L. Beckham as the first president of that organization. On the entertainment front there was news that Jerry Lee Lewis was coming to the Ebb Tide Restaurant at Holden Beach for a performance.

20 years ago

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies had been held at Keziah Memorial Park in Southport and the *Pilot* in its October 22, 1975, edition had a front-page photo of mayor E. B. Tomlinson cutting the ribbon. This had been a project of the Southport Garden Club. The park included the famous Indian Trail Tree.

The county board of commissioners had voted to use the Bolivia location as the site for the new government center; the 20th anniversary of Sunny Point Army Terminal had been observed with suitable ceremonies on the base; and property owners attending a weekend social at Bald Head Island had experienced the thrill of a close encounter with a tornado.

15 years ago

King mackerel had come to play, according to the *Pilot* of October 27, 1980, as all charter boats were having good catches and Long Beach Pier reported 20 fish over the past weekend and Ocean Crest Pier reported 25; Capt. Leroy Potter, on the preceding Saturday, had netted seven in his shrimp trawl.

Three Brunswick County men were among 21 arraigned after a seizure of marijuana at the Brunswick County Airport; our "Waterfront" writer reported that Bald Head Island marina and electrical power projects were both underway; and revival services were being planned for the First Baptist Church of Boiling Spring Lakes.

10 years ago

On the front page of the *Pilot* for October 23, 1985, was a story announcing that Cogentrix, a steam-generating corporation, would build a plant near the Pfizer plant at Southport. Colonial days had been observed at Brunswick Town State Historic Site during the past weekend and we had a picture page of local people in period costumes.

The Boy Scout Camporee held during the previous weekend had drawn a crowd of 800 and had been pronounced a success, both from the point of view of participation and from good conduct; Lisa Johnson had been crowned homecoming queen at the football game between South Brunswick and Fairmont on the previous Friday night; and to make the occasion a happy one for everybody, the Cougars won 13-12.

5 years ago

It was October 24, 1990, and plans were progressing for the first Robert Ruark Festival the coming week. The two-day event was to feature an arts and crafts fair, food booths, entertainment and a performance by the Brunswick Players. Winner of the short-story writing contest was to be announced. Boiling Spring Lakes emergency medical personnel had participated in the South Brunswick High School Health Fair, and that week we carried a photograph of the occasion; Long Beach was making preparations for more sidewalk paving; and the cruise ship *Meridian* had been a recent passer-by on an excursion to Bermuda.

Sunny Point employees, retirees and their families were to celebrate the 35th anniversary of that installation on Friday; the Southport Cemetery Commission was having a cleanup day and was calling for volunteer help; and Caswell Beach had joined Long Beach and Yaupon Beach to oppose a proposal that sand be dredged off Jaybird Shoal for renourishment of Carolina Beach and Kure Beach strands.

How can we help you . . .

**In Case of Emergency
DIAL 911**

TOWN HALLS

Southport.....457-7900
Boiling Spring Lakes.....845-2614
Bald Head Island.....457-9700
Caswell Beach.....278-5471
Yaupon Beach.....278-5024
Long Beach.....278-5011

Government

Congressman Charles G. Rose III
2230 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515, (202) 225-2731
Rep. E. David Redwine
Rm. 632 Legislative Building
General Assembly, Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 733-5806
Rep. Dewey Hill
Rm. 1305 Legislative Building
General Assembly, Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 733-5823
Sen. E.C. Sales
Rm. 2009 Legislative Building
General Assembly, Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 733-5963

**Southport-Fort Fisher Toll Ferry
WINTER SCHEDULE**
(October 31-March 30)

SOUTHPORT	FORT FISHER
8:00 a.m.	8:50 a.m.
9:40 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
11:20 a.m.	12:10 p.m.
1:00 p.m.	1:50 p.m.
2:40 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
4:20 p.m.	5:10 p.m.
6:00 p.m.	6:50 p.m.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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In State \$16.47 • Senior Citizens \$14.47
Out of State \$19.00 • Senior Citizens \$17.00

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