

Carl Rowan's Commentary

It is dangerous to dismiss Ross Perot as a "spoiler" a man who spent \$60 million of his own money to win 19 percent of the votes in the 1992 presidential election. It would be foolhardy to laugh him off now as just an egotistical, would-be dictator in a year when he'll have \$29.2 million of your and my tax dollars, with the right to raise \$32.8 million more from the public.



CARL ROWAN

Perot and his new Reform Party don't have a ghost of a chance of winning the presidency, but they will have a lot to say about who does. It would be folly to predict the impact of all of Perot's irreverent and screwball utterances, but my expectation is that he is going to hurt Bob Dole — and thus give us more of the status quo Perot professes to hate.

So far, the Reform Party appears to be made up of people who seem weirder than Perot — people who express alienation, disenchantment, fear regarding America and its current direction. Such people normally want change — meaning they would vote for Dole over incumbent Clinton. But since they profess to hate the two-party system, they'll skip past Dole and vote for Perot.

That prospect surely spoiled Dole's celebration of the post-convention bounce that produced a Newsweek magazine poll showing him running statistically even with Clinton. Still, Clinton could not take total comfort in the Perot candidacy given the fact that the diminutive, theatrical Texan attacked him for "doing fund-raisers in Hollywood for \$100,000 a couple."

But hoping does not erase the likelihood that Perot will get some 10 percent of the vote after he drowns us in "infomercials," those galling campaign half-truths that the Republicans and Democrats are using more and more. Even with just half the polling power he showed four years ago, Perot could control the election outcome this year.

The Republicans have already signaled that they intend to exploit their advantage in the electoral college, and will go after New York, California, Illinois, Pennsylvania — states with big electoral votes where Clinton is supposed to be strong. Perot's candidacy seems to put that GOP strategy in peril.

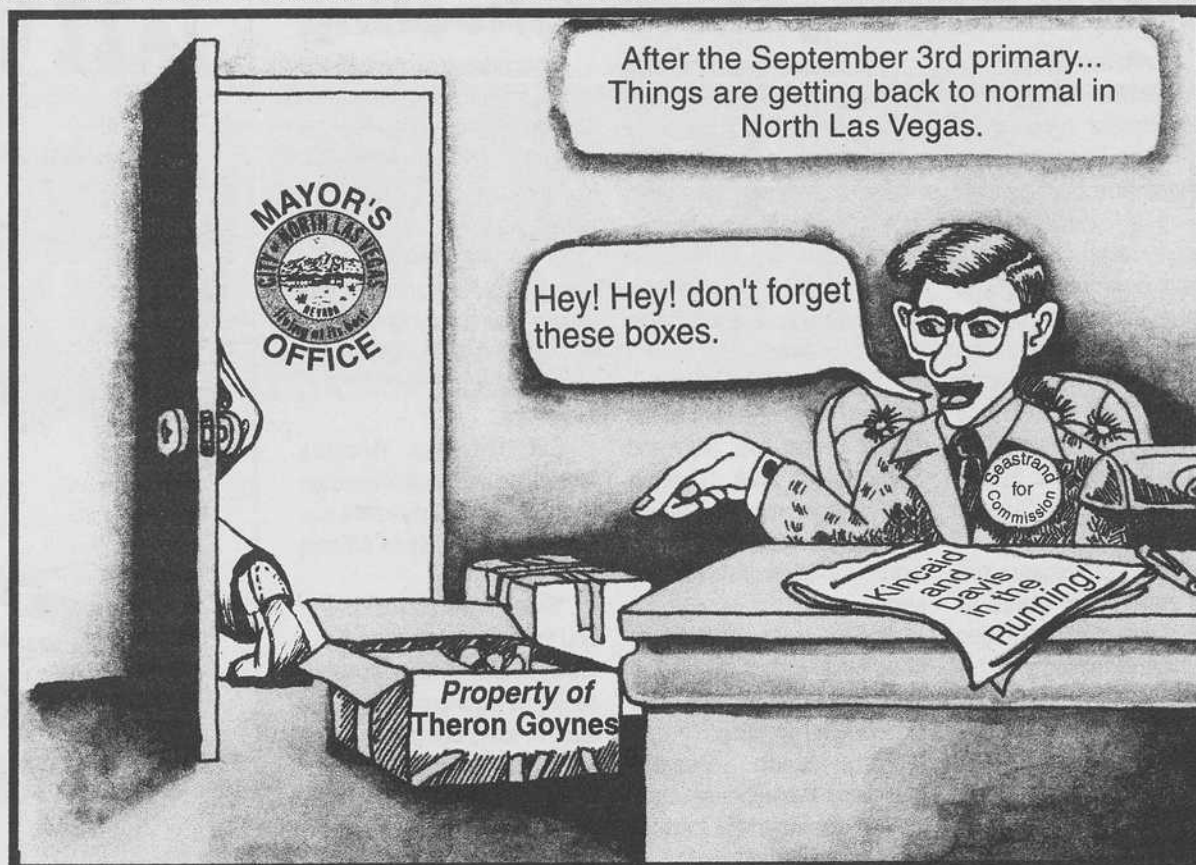
But notice that Perot has not offered specific programs regarding the emotional issues of welfare reform, affirmative action, immigration and health care. He is the master at telling us what is wrong with the nation — jobs with less purchasing power, too much national debt, a merchandise trade deficit that is "the largest of any nation in the history of man," Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security costs that "in the year 2030 will be \$3.9 trillion" and "children carrying guns to school, drug abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery and assault."

Yet, Perot offers no plausible, viable programs to wipe out the problems he cites so glibly.

Nonetheless, he will do damage to the other candidates whom he blames for the creation of these problems.

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POINT OF VIEW



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Green power in the black community

By Bernice Jackson

Vernon Johns was considered one of the foremost African American preachers in the 1940's, ranked with Howard Thurman and Mordecai Johnson. He was Martin Luther King Jr.'s predecessor at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery and one of Dr. King's mentors. He was also a fierce proponent of economic development in the black community and a visionary who saw a special role for the black church in economic development, often prodding his sometimes reluctant congregation to accept that role.



Bernice Powell Jackson

Vernon Johns' modern-day counterpart might be Dr. Henry Lyons, President of the 8.5 million member National Baptist Convention USA and Chief Executive Officer of the newly-formed Revelation Corporation of America. Revelation is the new private corporation founded by five of the largest African American denominations to provide greater access to home mortgage loans, all kinds of insurance, automobile and consumer loans, affinity credit cards and discounts for food products and durable goods to the African American community.

African Americans spend \$1 billion every day and Revelation's founders believe that putting our community's dollars together can mean new-found economic clout. "The Revelation Corporation of

America is not a call for government assistance or handouts. Revelation follows Dr. King's vision of black Americans helping themselves through the leadership of the church," said Dr. Lyons.

The five denominations which control 70 percent of the Revelation Corporation represent 20 million African Americans, nearly half of black America. Revelation is patterned after the American Association of Retired Persons, offering African Americans the opportunity to join its buyers group and receive discounted products

and services. In addition, 70 percent of all gross revenues generated by Revelation will be deposited into a National Housing Fund which is designed to build affordable homes for African Americans. The additional revenues will go to individual churches for their own use and for their pastor's pension fund.

While Revelation focuses primarily on the 43,000 congregations which belong to the five founding denominations, they are also reaching out to other African American congregations. These congregations can also benefit from the discount coupons for goods and services which will be available to Revelation users and which will generate the \$88 million which the corporate leaders expect to raise in the first two years. These dollars, in turn, will be used to provide loans to home buyers with a less than "A" credit rating.

Revelation Corporation is not without controversy, as some in the African American community have questioned the 30 percent ownership of white developer John Lowery of Memphis, TN. It was Lowery who came up with the idea for Revelation, after working with Bishop William Graves of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Memphis, where they have built 190 homes for low-income African Americans. Also controversial is Revelation's effort to reach an even broader consumer population by allying with conservative evangelist Jerry Falwell, who has said he will urge his

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How Clinton has failed black America and what can be done

Part 2

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson

At the NAACP's annual convention last July, President Clinton beamed as the mostly Black delegates enthusiastically chanted "four more years, four more years." In his speech, Clinton blasted Dole for snubbing the convention and promised to continue the fight against racism. But Clinton didn't tell the delegates how. Then again he didn't have to. Clinton has read the polls. He knows that nine out of ten Blacks like him and rate him higher than Louis Farrakhan and Jesse Jackson. The delirium of the NAACP delegates for Clinton points to several enduring political dilemmas Black voters face this election year.

*In every presidential election in the past three decades, Blacks

have given the Democratic presidential nominee more than 80 percent of their vote. They will do the same again even though Clinton is the most conservative Democrat since Grover Cleveland, and the Democratic party bears no resemblance to the Democratic party that championed New Deal, Great Society, labor and civil rights reforms.

*Clinton has spent two elections trying to out Reagan and out Bush Bush/Perot in a chase to grab back defecting White middle-class, ethnic and blue collar voters, and distance himself from "special interests" (i.e. women and minorities). He has been moderately successful. This election he may clone 15 to 20 percent of Republicans who agree with his positions, into

"Clinton Republicans."

*The Republican party has systematically rejected Blacks for three decades. The ouster of Black conservative Allan Keyes from a Republican candidate's forum in February, the Buchanan right wing's assault on Colin Powell, and Dole's refusal to address the NAACP convention this year make 1996 no different.

*There is no possibility of Blacks forming an all-Black political party to challenge the Democrats and Republicans. During this century the Afro-American Party, the Negro Political Union, the Freedom Now Party, the Black Panther Party, the National Independent Black Political Party have crashed on the hard bedrock of Black loyalty to the Republicans and Democrats, political opportunism and conservatism.

*Although some polls show that many Americans are receptive (on paper) to a third party, this is mostly due to their momentary reflexive anger and disgust with corrupt and inefficient government and politicians. Even if Americans really wanted a third party, to be credible and competitive such a party would have to raise \$40 to 50 million, build a national organization, develop a campaign strategy, project a broad vision of change, and break the corporate media's traditional freeze out from the airwaves of minor party candidates. It would also have to overcome the divine belief by Americans, Blacks included, that the two party system is the best of all political creations.

Still, if Blacks abandoned the

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