

# Pinpointing achievements, grass roots work key to campaigning

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

**Q. Dear Regina:** As a political activist who is running for county office, I want to do more than the typical "elbow rubbing" and "hand shaking."

While most of my district is aware of my many contributions and active history in politics, I would like to run a campaign that openly publicizes my strengths and accomplishments and my future achievements. How do I execute a campaign that captures my individuality in a political environment that will grow as we approach election day?

**A:** Unfortunately, political campaigns have become a lot like Christmas: overly commercialized, with a spirit of purpose that gets lost in all the hoopla.

The answers are varied. Host well-orchestrated press conferences on-site at facilities or areas where you have produced results or have proven results.

Have you worked extensively with senior citizens, the homeless, AIDS victims, or for causes that bear your signature of sweat? If so, host your campaign fund-raisers at actual sites where you are working on special programs, executing necessary



change or fighting for a particular cause. Split the funds between the campaign and the cause. Consistently luring the voters to locations where they wouldn't have otherwise ventured gives a more realistic picture of your platform than inviting them to hob-knob in hotel ballrooms.

A grass roots campaign that touches the heart of your district will more accurately capture the genuine essence of your integrity. If you pinpoint your greatest achievements, you will find the central theme of your campaign.

**Q. Dear Regina:** I recently relocated from the West Coast to the South. In Los Angeles, I was a top interior decorator with a six-figure income and a clientele in the city's most elite neighborhoods. How might I quickly publicize my efforts as the new kid on the block?

**A:** Many creative types elect to roll up their sleeves and build a business the hard way — through grueling, painstaking hard work and investment of time. I notice that you used a word I love — quickly.

For those of us who lack patience, don't wallow in the dim shadows of obscurity by waiting for customers to knock on your door. Shine above the crowd by advertising profusely, investing in spectacular marketing tools that reflect your area of expertise. Mass mailing materials to your target market and saturating decor magazines with press releases together with exquisite pictorial layouts of local homes that you have decorated are good ploy.

Advertise, promote, and market on a consistent basis and your name will quickly become a household word.

Call Regina Lynch-Hudson at (770) 717-7020.

## Real Estate Perspective

By Loretta Arrington



## Home inspection

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

After you've found a home you're interested in, it's time to learn what it's worth. This can be done by conducting a detailed inspection. A good inspection will help you protect yourself against current and future problems.

Sometimes before closing, you need a detailed inspection of the home. It is my opinion that you should also have the property appraised to make sure the asking price is in the right range. Many buyers skip this important step because the lender, usually the bank, will also inspect, appraise and survey the property. The lender's inspection and appraisal, however, don't protect you, because the law doesn't require them to be comprehensive.

Several good guides and manuals are available (at local libraries) that itemize what you should look for when you inspect the house. They will alert you to where and how to look, and in some cases how to interpret what you find. If you're buying a home that is more than ten years old and expect to live in it for several years, you should consider hiring a professional inspector or at least consult with someone whose judgment you trust, who has inspected homes in the past and knows what to look for. I would not recommend you conduct your own inspection. Consult a professional you have interviewed. Ask for recommendations and check qualifications and professional affiliations. Members of the American Society of Home Inspectors, for example, must pass a comprehensive entrance examination, agree to participate in continuing education classes, and either complete one thousand paid inspections or meet additional education requirements and complete four hundred paid inspections. A list of inspectors can be found in your telephone directory, typically under building or home inspection services.

The inspection will usually take one to two hours. If you are buying an older home or one that is being bought "as is," the inspection may take as long as five or six hours. Standard charges range from \$100 to \$200, almost always paid by the buyer. Many inspectors encourage buyers to go through the home with them. You should do this and take notes. Many of the inspection services routinely include in their price a written report and a binder that describes the home's systems. But you should also ask for a written report on major structural elements. Some of the items to look for are: The capacity of the heating and cooling systems and their normal life expectancy. The condition and adequacy of the electrical wiring and plumbing. Notes on appliances and water heater. Repairs and additions that may be needed soon. The condition of the basement, crawl spaces and attic, with attention to moisture, ventilation, insulation and construction. The condition of the roof, gutters, drainage, siding, caulking and paint, and the extent of impending structural repairs, just to name a few items to look for.

You need not bother too much with an inspection for termites. Most home purchase contracts require the seller to order and pay for that. A good inspection will help you decide whether the house is a definite "no" or a definite "yes."

## NPCA calls for action on Underground Railroad bill

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The House Resources Committee has approved for passage The National Underground Railroad to Freedom bill (H.R. 1635), a measure that would link over 400 sites identified as part of the Underground Railroad with community organizations, educational institutions, museums and other facilities to create an interpretive network. A similar Senate bill has also been approved in committee, and both bills are eligible for a final vote.

Spokesperson Iantha Gantt-Wright, Cultural Outreach Manager of the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), is calling for swift action from Congress in view of the pending summer recess; so near the end of a congressional session, she warns, even a popular bill can be defeated if "someone decides to attach unrelated, extraneous amendments." "This effort is widely supported and uncontroversial," she added.

150 representatives and 29 senators have cosponsored the

bill. Officials in many states including New York, Ohio, New Jersey and Michigan are working on complementary legislation that would enhance the national initiative. "We have the opportunity to create a visible and identifiable commemoration that can engender the spirit of freedom and national reconciliation," said Gantt-Wright. "We should treat this opportunity with the status it deserves."

Many of the sites are already part of the National Park System. The bill would create a vehicle for educating the

public about the ways in which individual sites comprised a system of "stations, conductors and railways" that helped move hundreds of thousands of slaves to freedom.

According to Gantt-Wright, "This network will provide our youth with a better understanding of the institution of slavery, the progress we have made as a country, and more importantly, the opportunity to visit a time in our history when many of us put aside our differences and awakened to the fact that if one of us was enslaved, we were all enslaved."

## Glory

(Continued from Page 5) what "black business success" is all about.

Founded in 1989 by three former co-workers who had an idea to create down-home taste in Southern foods, the Columbus, Ohio-based company began distributing its full line of pre-seasoned, heat-and-eat canned Southern-style vegetables nationally in 1992. The company adopted its name from the film about black soldiers.

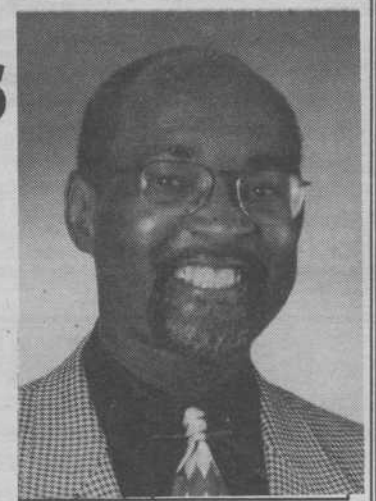
Glory products are available in more than 6,000 stores in 28 states and "Glory Greens" are provided in selected fast-food restaurants.

In 1996, Glory was named "Company of the Year" by *Black Enterprise* magazine. The multi-million dollar company gained a broad reputation in agriculture through its cooperative business ventures with black farmers in the South.

With its new frozen food line, Glory Foods gains full membership in *Black Enterprise's* Top 100 Black-Owned Companies and in conjunction with black-owned Siveza will employ hundreds of people.

Samples of the Southern Selections include Chicken and Dumplings, Ham and Sausage Jambalaya, Turkey and Gravy, and 11 other entrees and side dishes.

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