

## POINT OF VIEW

## Our View

## Kwanzaa time for reaffirmation of universal principles

Kwanzaa is once again upon us. And again, we at the Sentinel-Voice invite everyone to celebrate the spirit of this African-American holiday.

Kwanzaa embodies African principles — Nguzo Saba, the Seven Principles to be exact.

Umoja, unity. Kujichagulia, self-determination. Ujima, collective work and responsibility. Ujamaa, cooperative economics. Nia, purpose. Kuumba, creativity. Imani, faith. Kwanzaa is celebrated Dec. 26 through Jan. 1.

The more a person looks at these principles, the more evident it is that they are at once African and universal and thus can be celebrated by all.

When Maulana Karenga created Kwanzaa in the 1960s, he never envisioned it as a holiday to supplant Christmas in the black community. Culled from the philosophy of Kawaida — a cultural nationalist philosophy that argues that the key challenge in Black people's lives is the challenge of culture and which aims to bring forth that culture — Kwanzaa celebrates all things good, as does Christmas.

But instead of being based on a religious happening, Kwanzaa draws its roots from the agricultural celebrations of Africa, called the "first fruits" celebrations which were times of harvest, ingathering, reverence, commemoration, recommitment and celebration, according to certain Kwanzaa-related texts.

As with Christmas, those who participate in Kwanzaa are encouraged to revere the creator, commemorate the past, rededicate themselves to higher ideals and share in the joy of giving.

More than 20 million people have celebrated Kwanzaa since it was founded more than 30 years ago, including many non-Blacks which thrills Karenga, who chairs the Black studies department at Long Beach State University. He expects its popularity to continue to soar.

Local Kwanzaa activities aren't limited to but include: Umoja, 11 a.m. Saturday at the West Las Vegas Arts Center, 947 W. Lake Mead Blvd.; Kujichagulia, 3 p.m. Sunday at Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 821 N. Las Vegas Blvd.; Ujima, 2 p.m. Monday, West Las Vegas Library 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd., Ujamaa, 6 p.m. Tuesday, West Las Vegas Library 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd.; Nia, 2 p.m. Wednesday, Doolittle Senior Center, 1940 "J" St.; Kuumba, noon Thursday at the West Las Vegas Arts Center, 947 W. Lake Mead Blvd., and the West Las Vegas Library 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd.



LET'S LEAVE CALIFORNIA, YOU SAID  
I CAN'T STAND THE EARTHQUAKES, YOU SAID  
I'M TIRED OF THE TRAFFIC, YOU SAID  
I CAN'T STAND THE POLLUTION, YOU SAID  
WELL, AT LEAST CALIFORNIA ISN'T

TO BELOW ZERO!

DEKARICH MIKESMITH

## We are family, when will Americans understand?

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The most amusing result of the recent DNA proof that Founding Father Thomas Jefferson had a liaison with his slave, Sally Hemings and fathered several of her children has been the bobbing-and-weaving search for a fallback position by those who've clung to the claim that such a relationship was impossible.

But another consequence is far more serious-and positive. It has underscored that we — all Americans — are family.

Along and across the boundaries of race, ethnicity and national origin, America is a nation of distant as well as kissing cousins whose relationships have always undermined the crackpot theories of the racial supremacists, whether those theories were overt and vicious or genteel and larded with pseudo-scientific gobbledegook.


Of course, African-Americans aren't the only Americans who've had to declare that they were part of the American family, that Jefferson's self-evident truths about human beings applied to them as well.

That, too, is a history most Americans share along and across the boundaries of race, ethnicity and national origin.

But African-Americans have had to press their claims to membership in the American community in the most dramatic fashion because efforts to exclude them have been the most

## To Be Equal

By Hugh B. Price  
President  
National Urban League



extreme.

Today African-Americans continue to declare — because they have to — that we are family, too, and we have a right to help decide what goes on in the Big House.

Take that as one meaning of the surge in black voter turnout in strategically-significant electoral contests November 3.

For decades the black electorate has been dismissed as "blindly" loyal to the Democratic Party-as if they could not think politically and act pragmatically like other voters-by glib, unobservant pundits and racial propagandists.

Well, this election put a punctuation mark to the obvious: African-Americans are a "core group" of the Democrats, just as other groups, including labor unions, women, and Hispanic Americans, have been.

They recognize their interests and the larger communal interest.

They understand which candidates are sympathetic to their concerns, and which are not, and they vote

accordingly.

That means, as this election also made clear, the black electorate will vote for those Republican candidates who express interest and make pledges that are sincere. That's been evident for years in scattered local and statewide contests.

Now, perhaps the success some moderate Republicans like Governors Jeb and George W. Bush, in Florida and Texas, respectively, had in attracting respectable numbers of black and Hispanic voters will lead more of their party brethren to recognize that, yes, African-American voters are

family, too.

Perhaps they'll take more interest now of that little-noted but potentially significant finding in the recent survey by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

The think tank's poll, the most comprehensive examination of black attitudes, found that 26 percent of blacks in the 26 to 35 age group, a group which is top-heavy with college graduates, chose the GOP as their party designation.

This is by far the largest group of self-designated Republicans among African-Americans.

Not surprisingly, that age group is quite happy with its economic status: 65 percent said they were better off financially than a year ago. Only 7 percent said they were worse off.

The African-American electorate has more work to do as well. Now, its representatives and organizations must flex their

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