

## COMMENTARY

## Predicting things that won't happen in 2002

By Louie Overstreet  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

With all due respect to Jean Dixon, the dude from the TV show, Crossing Over; and the lady with the fake Caribbean accent, Ms. Cleo, I am also going into the prediction racket.

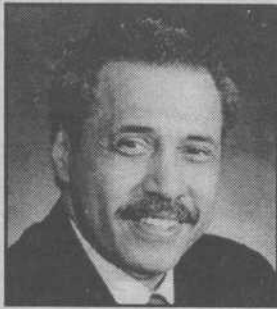
To illustrate how serious I am about this new undertaking, I did not buy my family any Christmas gifts. I spent the family's Christmas money on myself. I purchased a crystal ball, some astrology charts, a bunch of tea leaves (Lipton now loves your boy), and some oversized playing cards that will give you a hernia trying to turn them over, in an attempt to make sure my predictions are accurate.

However, unlike most of the people in the prediction racket, I will not predict what will happen. I am going to predict what will not happen in the year 2002.

To do so, I am going to steal a saying that was often used by my deceased "Uncle Applejack." As you might guess, his family nickname is based on the fact that he had a decided preference for a wine beverage with the same surname. Whenever my uncle was presented a proposition that had a low probability of occurrence, he would state with slurred speech yet with absolute clarity: "It will never happen, cap'n!"

Folks, here are some events that will never happen in 2002!

In spite of the fact that Shirley Barber has completed five years of service on the Board of Trustees of the Clark County School District, this career educator and former principal will not be elected by her



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peers to the largely ceremonial position of board president in January. It will never happen cap'n! The reason is that the females on the board that are members of the far right religious community always vote as a block.

While Nevada's congressional delegation may be successful in postponing the inevitable, they will not achieve ultimate success in stopping Yucca Mountain from being designated as the permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel. It will never happen cap'n, the reason being simple arithmetic.

Nevada's two congresspersons are only .4 of 1 percent (2/435) of the voting members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Our two senators make up only 2 percent (2/100) of the voting members of the U.S. Senate. A number of states with large congressional delegations have been storing spent nuclear fuel in close proximity to active nuclear power plants for nearly 50 years. Nuclear plants produce 20 percent of our nation's electrical power.

Thus, given that these plants are rapidly running out of on-site storage capacity- and our nation cannot afford to lose 20 percent of its electric power-producing capacity- then it should be clear to everyone that it is no longer a matter of if, it is just a matter of when.

The Reverend Al Sharpton- of "who put the poop on the girl in the dumpster" fame- will not be successful in boycotting the MGM/Mirage in January as advertised by him during a short stopover in Las Vegas.  
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## America needs national reparations march now

By Dr. Conrad W. Worrill  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

More and more African people in America support the demand for some type of remuneration from the United States government and the private institutions and corporations that benefited from more than 400 years of African slave labor.

The growing support of the reparations movement in America gained momentum at the recent United Nations World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa. African people from around the world joined in demanding that the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery be declared a crime against humanity and that reparations are owed African people.

Now the spirit, energy and momentum galvanized by the participation of the Durban 400, through the leadership of the December 12th Movement International Secretariat and the National Black United Front (NBUF), has inspired a call for a Millions For Reparations Mass Demonstration, March and Protest Rally in Washington, D.C. on Aug. 17, 2002.

It is only fitting that this march and demonstration be held on Aug. 17, the 115th

anniversary of the birth of the Honorable Marcus Garvey who, through his organizations, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and African Communities League, led one of the greatest mass movements for African redemption and liberation in this country during the 1920s.

Now more than ever African people must stand united in our demands for reparations in America. We must build upon the momentum of our organizing work that led to our successful participation in the WCAR.

Reparations Movement proponents were victorious at the WCAR when they were able to include reparations language in the Durban Declaration Plan of Action. It reads: "We acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade, including the trans-Atlantic slave trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity not only because of their abhorrent barbarism but also in terms of their magnitude, organized nature and especially their negation of the essence of the victims and further acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity."

Additionally, Ambassa-

dor Amina Muhammad of Kenya pointed out that paragraph 119 of the Durban Declaration, in fact, refers to reparations. It "calls on these states to take appropriate and effective measures to halt and reverse the lasting consequences of those practices."

The exploitation of African people in this country has taken many forms through the years. The centuries of chattel slavery laid the foundation for our relationship to America. From the sharecropping fields to the factories, African labor built the 'super power' that is the United States. In return, we have endured the terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan and lynchings, chain gangs, plantation prisons, police torture and murder, poverty, miseducation, inadequate housing, unemployment, welfare, voter discrimination, drug additions and laws, being held as political prisoners and the assassination of our leaders.

Our people still suffer from the vestiges of their enslavement and colonization. However, we're still here!

The demand for reparations for African people is just and simple. It is simply an attempt to repair, to make  
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## Bush snubs black leaders again; meeting meant to be amiable

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Congressional Black Caucus members must wonder just what it will take to convince President Bush they also have rallied behind him. With the exception of Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., they voted for his war powers resolution, and backed much of his anti-terrorism and economic stimulus bills. Despite their support and mute silence, Bush has spurned their latest request for a meeting. It was their fourth request since September.

It's easy to figure out why he refuses to meet. The Caucus members are all solid Democrats. And before the Sept. 11 terror massacre, they waged relentless political warfare against him for opposing reparations, and expanded hate crimes laws, and supporting school vouchers. They accused him of cheating Blacks out of thousands of votes in Florida and hijacking the White House. They fumed at him for picking ultra-conservative John Ashcroft as U.S. attorney general. They railed that he would appoint more Supreme Court justices such as Clarence Thomas. They were petrified that he would torpedo civil rights and gut public education programs.

Despite their past hostility toward him, Bush makes a terrible mistake in treating

Black Democrat officials as pariahs. For the past 30 years, Black officials have fought tough battles in the courts and Congress for voting rights, affirmative action, school integration, an end to housing and job discrimination and police abuse. Though polls show that many Blacks swept by patriotic zeal and anger over the Sept. 11 attacks have reversed gears and now think that he's doing a good job as president, this doesn't mean that they have forgotten or forgiven him for his past indifference and hostility to racial issues.

Blacks are still unconvinced that he'll make good his promise to remake the Republican party into a party of diversity. They privately grumble that once the crisis is past he will lash them with more social pain. If Bush were up for election today, the overwhelming majority of Blacks would still vote for whatever Democrat opposes him.

Still, he would do well to remember his promise to reach out to friends and foe alike, and that includes nearly all Black political leaders who vigorously opposed him. And when he does meet with them, and eventually he should, they will do well to remember that as long as most Americans fear more terrorist attacks, and believe that Bush is the man to stop them, he'll probably stay in the White House. If so, there are three problems that

pose mounting peril to Black communities in which Black leaders may have some chance of getting Bush's attention.

\* The HIV/AIDS crisis: On World AIDS day, Dec. 1, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported the appalling news that one in 50 African-American males and one in 160 African-American women are HIV infected. This is a health danger that ravishes many Blacks and potentially affects all Americans. Black leaders must push Bush to radically increase funding for AIDS prevention, treatment and education programs.

\* Minimum mandatory sentencing: A recent Department of Justice report on prisoner growth counts more than a million Blacks locked up in America's jails. Many are there because of the deeply flawed, racially warped drug sentencing laws that mandate long stretches for mostly Black and Latino petty drug offenders. The U.S. Sentencing Commission twice recommended that these laws be modified. Former President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno agreed. Congress didn't. Before Sept. 11, Bush expressed some concern over the disparities in drug law enforcement. Black leaders should push him to prod Congress to amend the drug sentencing laws.

\* Racial profiling: Bush and Ashcroft have

repeatedly warned against profiling American Muslims and Arab-Americans, and have demanded indictments, and prosecutions against those who commit hate crimes against them. Black leaders must prod him to keep his pre-Sept. 11 pledge to urge Congress and the Justice Department to do everything possible to eliminate racial profiling.

By continuing to snub the Congressional Black Caucus, Bush risks perpetuating the racial deep freeze of the Reagan years. In those days, Black Democrats and civil rights leaders were persona non grata at the White House, and the doors were slammed shut on them. This cost Republicans dearly. It cemented the belief among Blacks and minorities that the Republican Party is an insular, bigoted party hostile to their interests. They flocked to the Democrats in droves, helped boot George Bush the senior from the White House, despite his sky-high public approval rating following the Gulf War in 1991, and virtually deified Clinton as their savior.

There is little chance that George W. Bush will ever be seen as their savior. But Black leaders have largely heeded his call to stand united behind him in this time of crisis. Now he must do the same with them.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is an author and columnist.