

Letter to Clinton: You now belong to the 'Zipper Club'

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice
Dear President Clinton,
I am deeply troubled by how my profession is easily manipulated as was evident last week when the GOP launched a withering attack on John Kerry. Rough-and-tumble politics don't bother me. In fact, if the Democrats were rougher, they wouldn't tumble as far as they usually do Election Day.

I was embarrassed last week to see the national media serve as little more than political stenographers. Not only was the public treated to a well-orchestrated production characterized by lie after lie, re-runs were featured all night on C-SPAN. The complete texts of speeches were

available online within hours and even computer illiterates could read the transcripts in the following day's newspapers.

To be fair, the Democratic National Convention in Boston was accorded the same saturation. The difference, however, was that the Democrats were so intent on showcasing a "positive" image that they neglected to vigorously attack Bush's record.

It was not so much how Republicans attacked Kerry but the level of deceit they deployed to tarnish him. And that's where the media failed miserably. Sure there were the obligatory stories contrasting rhetoric with reality, but in the main stories, the media were accomplices in

the hijacking of truth. They were weapons of mass destruction.

My plan was to expose the lies.

For example, Vice President Dick Cheney said of Kerry: "He declared at the Democratic Convention that he will forcefully defend America after we have been attacked...."

Kerry said no such thing. Rather, he said the only justification for going to war is "to protect the American people, fundamental American values from a threat that was real and imminent."

Even George Bush knows that imminent does not mean afterwards.

Sen. Zell Miller, a Republican in everything but name,

said: "Kerry has made it clear that he would use military force only if approved by the United Nations."

This is what Kerry actually said: "I will never hesitate to use force when it is required. Any attack will be met with a swift and certain response. I will never give any nation or international institution a veto over our national security."

My plan to expose these brazen lies changed after I learned that on Monday of this week, you were undergoing a quadruple bypass. That's when I decided to forgo recounting the Republicans transgressions and instead write you this letter.

Seven years ago, I underwent a triple-bypass opera-

tion. It was a shock to learn that my coronary arteries were clogged. After all, I was a former college athlete and I didn't drink or smoke. That didn't prevent my chest from being cut open from neck to breastbone so that my rib cage could be parted for the surgery.

You had the same operation and I am writing to let you know how fortunate you are. Yes, fortunate. You're only 18 months older than I am, we're both Southerners and enjoyed anything but model diets.

We're blessed to be alive. Reginald Henderson, one of my first-grade classmates back in Tuscaloosa, Ala., died several years ago of a heart attack. Other schoolmates and friends have died of heart attacks, strokes and other disorders, all before reaching the age of 60. And if I hadn't gone to the hospital after experiencing chest pains — just as you did — I might not be around to write you this letter.

Talks with doctors can be overwhelming and sometimes you may need to talk to a lay person who has gone through the surgery and recovery period. Joseph Boyce,

a former writer and editor for the Wall Street Journal, served that role for me. Joe assured me that my life would be better after the surgery because my heart would be receiving more blood and oxygen than in its corroded state.

Joe told me about the recovery period — it will be a while before you will regain your strength — and how imperative it will be to exercise on a regular basis and quit eating all of those foods that were never good for us anyway.

I'll close by telling you what Joe Boyce told me — your recovery will be just fine. You're not going to have a speedy recovery, so I won't waste time wishing you one. Those of us who have been where you are now look at our chests and see the zipper-like marks that serve as perpetual reminders of our surgery.

So, we welcome you into the Zipper Club. It's a unique organization. Membership is limited. And God has given every member a second chance at life.

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service.

Despite ban, gun makers push assault weapons

WASHINGTON (AP) - With the federal ban on assault weapons set to expire next Monday, gun manufacturers are marketing military-style firearms and are ready to sell them as soon as Sept. 14, a consumer group said Tuesday.

"The gun industry is champing at the bit for the ban to expire," said Susan Peschin, firearms project director at the Consumer Federation of America, a non-profit association of 300 consumer groups that released the study.

The consumer group interviewed gun industry experts and marketing representatives and surveyed manufacturers' catalogs and Web sites.

For example, ArmaLite Inc., a gun manufacturer in Geneseo, Ill., is advertising a "Post-PostBan Rifle Program," offering consumers

attachments to convert their firearms to their pre-ban configuration, with shipping available Sept. 14. The company is offering a nonrefundable prepayment option to those who wish to get a jumpstart.

"The program offers customers a way to avoid the risk of delay, yet also have the benefits of a change in law," the company says on its Web site.

The 1994 law, signed by President Clinton, banned 19 types of assault weapons but included a "sunset" clause that said it would automatically expire in 10 years if Congress did not renew it.

President Bush has said he supports the ban, but a number of attempts to extend it in Congress have failed.

The Consumer Federation of America predicted that manufacturers will introduce new models of popular weap-

ons banned under the 1994 law, such as AK-47s, TEC-9s and Uzis.

Manufacturers will also be able to circumvent a ban on the import of "non-sporting" assault weapons by combining foreign-made components with U.S.-made parts, the study said.

It said it also expects more U.S. gun companies will stockpile imported firearms in "custom bonded warehouses" in the United States to be disassembled and reconfigured into legal weapons.

In April, Florida-based Century International Arms Inc., an importer-exporter, was linked to a cache of 7,500 AK-47s and other assault weapons seized in Italy en route to the United States.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said the weapons were cleared for the United

States because they were bound for a custom-bonded warehouse to be reconfigured.

Gun-control advocates are calling for an extension of the ban and also want to expand background checks on gun purchasers to include sales by private collectors at gun shows and flea markets. Opponents say both measures are unneeded.

Urban League

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"We will have three or four vice presidents," Shropshire said. "We will be providing jobs for a hundred people. No one has been hired yet. We will begin staffing in October." The local affiliate, which has been chartered by the state of Nevada, will have a 501c3 tax status. "We are going about doing everything the right way,"

said Shropshire, who in 47 years has many fond memories of the Urban League.

"My mother was an Urban Leaguer," she said. "I was raised in an Urban League community center. The Urban League got me my first job. It got my (late) husband his first job."

For further information, call Shropshire at (702) 525-2886.


Menopause

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The fourth step has to do with managing moods, whether that means stress, anger, depression or merely "The Blues." The following chapter tackles the subject of sex, discussing myths about African-American women while suggesting ways to avoid playing "roles which feed into negative stereotypes that impede our growth and development."


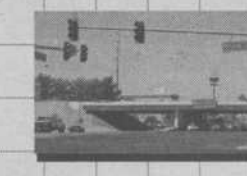


Other areas of concern include cultural

heritage, alternative therapies and the emotional benefits of sharing what you're experiencing with other sisters. The book is also chock full of snippets of sage advice from role models, as well as invaluable insights about nutrition, exercise and positive thinking. My guess is that women of any age or color who follow the practical path proposed therein will, as the authors contend, be successfully setting the stage for living their dreams.



TRANSPORTATION NOTICE

A Public Information Meeting regarding proposed improvements to the I-15 corridor from Sahara Avenue to the US 95 "Spaghetti Bowl," also known as **PROJECT NEON**.

Purpose of Meeting

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the City of Las Vegas, is conducting a Public Information Meeting to provide project information and receive public comments on the project alternatives that focus on:

- I-15 freeway improvements
- Local access improvements to the Las Vegas downtown redevelopment area
- Operational improvements of the I-15 Charleston Boulevard Interchange
- Connecting Industrial Road and Martin Luther King Boulevard
- Grade separating the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and Oakey Boulevard/Wyoming Avenue

When and Where

Thursday, September 30, 2004 - 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Clark County Government Center
Community Room (Pyramid-shaped building)
500 S. Grand Central Parkway
Accessible via Citizen Area Transit routes 105 and 207.


Where You Come In

Members of the public are invited to attend the meeting at their convenience between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to submit comments verbally to a court reporter or in writing on a comment sheet provided at the meeting. A formal presentation will not be held as this open format increases the opportunity to submit public comments while providing a venue for one-on-one discussions with project staff.

In addition to any comments received at the Public Information Meeting, written comments also will be accepted until 5 p.m., Friday, October 15, 2004. Please submit your comments to: Tamra Ryan, PROJECT NEON Project Office, 1640 Alta Drive, Suite 11, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89106. Comments also may be submitted via the web at www.ndotprojectneon.com.

Right-of-Way: The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970 will govern the acquisition of any right-of-way necessary for this project. More detailed information on right-of-way acquisition and relocation assistance can be obtained by calling the NDOT right-of-way contracting agency Universal Field Services at (702) 310-7171, or by visiting the PROJECT NEON Project Office.

General information about the project and meeting can be obtained from the PROJECT NEON Project Office or by calling Tamra Ryan toll-free at (888) 411-NEON. Certain project materials are available in alternative formats upon request.



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