

Democrats, Republicans devalue Black Press

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON(NNPA) - The Republican and Democratic National Committees each spent more than \$30 million on advertising and other media-related expenses leading up to the November presidential election. In both instances, however, the proportion they spent with the Black media appears to be less than half of their respective Black base.

According to a special computer-assisted report conducted for the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service by the Center for Responsive Politics, a Washington, D.C.-based research firm that operates OpenSecrets.org, the DNC spent approximately \$30,443,565 on media, while Republicans spent approximately \$32,597,491 for media-related expenses in the Nov. 2 election in which President Bush beat Sen. John Kerry.

According to DNC spokeswoman Daniella Gibbs Léger, the DNC spent \$3.2 million with Black media during the last election. This amounts to only 10 percent of its total media expenses,



"When you look at the Republican National Committee and the fact that they did not do any substantial advertising in the Black newspapers, I think that speaks to is the fact that we have to do a better job of building relationships with them so they understand the value of the Black Press and what it brings to the table."

— Sonny Messiah-Jiles, NNPA Chairwoman

ditures, while Black voters made up 22 percent of the Democratic base in the 2004 presidential election.

RNC spokeswoman Tara Wall repeatedly refused to reveal the exact amount of money it spent with Black-owned media or Black-owned newspapers during last year's elections. "We spent over a million dollars on ads in the Black community leading up to the election. The RNC is committed to increasing our share of the Black vote. We have an aggressive outreach effort in place, which includes town halls with our Chairman Ken Mehlman, an African-American Advisory Committee, and continued ongoing relationships with the Black Press and numerous

grassroots outreach events," Wall said in a statement.

That \$1 million, if accurate, amounted to 3 percent of the total media spending by the RNC. Voters comprised 2.6 percent of the Bush voters in 2004. Wall said in an interview that most of the money was spent on "urban radio" advertisement. However, Blacks and Whites own urban radio stations. Therefore, there is no way to determine the percentage of the Republican spending with Black media or Black newspapers.

Republican representatives, including Wall, who is Black, attended a U. S. Capitol breakfast for NNPA publishers, commemorating Black Press week, shaking hands, passing business cards

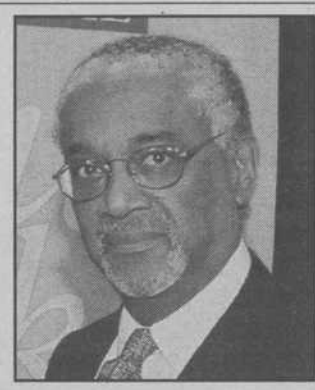
and congratulating NNPA on its 65th anniversary. But, at the breakfast, sponsored by the RNC, Wall still declined to say how much the RNC spent with Black newspapers, while noting that much of the money was allocated for urban radio, which does not necessarily mean Black-owned media. RNC Chairman Mehlman has refused to return repeated phone calls

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chase with Malchow, Schlackman, Hoppey & Cooper Inc. for media productions last July, according to the report.

The Center's numbers were compiled based on DNC and RNC reports to the Federal Elections Commission on February 27. While NNPA publishers called the DNC amount piddling, given that nine out of 10 Black



newspapers, I think what that speaks to is the fact that we have to do a better job of building relationships with them so they understand the value of the Black Press and what it brings to the table," says NNPA Chairwoman Sonny Messiah-Jiles, publisher of the *Houston Defender*.

John "Jake" Oliver Jr., publisher of the *Afro-American Newspapers* and former NNPA president, says both parties have simply failed to listen. "They're being ill-advised. They're seeking their media advice from bogus sources who attempt to hold themselves out as being experts at how to deliver an effective message to the African-American community, when time and time again has shown they don't know a thing about it," Oliver says.

"They're asking the wrong people. They're relying on the wrong people. The leadership of those parties fails to basically take the steps to figure out exactly what is the most effective way. And they fail to listen to the presentations that are being made, and [to] not only buy the Black media — par-

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Group alleges bank racism

NEW YORK (AP) - A New York-based community group on Monday accused Citigroup Inc. and Bank of America Corp. of charging higher rates on mortgage loans to Black and Hispanic home buyers than to Whites. The financial institutions countered that the data were flawed and that their loan policies are fair.

The allegations by Inner City Press-Fair Finance Watch, a consumer advocacy group, were based on the first of a series of contentious reports made public by the government under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act.

HMDA requires financial institutions to report information on home loans priced above comparable Treasury rates. First-lien loans must be reported if they exceed the Treasury rate by 3 percentage points, and second mortgages by 5 percentage points.

The Inner City Press said its analysis of data filed by Citigroup found that "African-American borrowers are more than four times more likely to receive a rate-spread loan than White borrowers." It said that Hispanic borrowers "are more than six times

more likely to receive a rate-spread loan from Citigroup than are non-Hispanic White borrowers."

The group also said members of both minority groups were turned down for loans more frequently than Whites.

"The nation's largest bank, Citigroup is also its most disparate when it comes to confining people of color to higher-cost home purchase loans," said attorney Matthew Lee, the group's executive director.

Robert Julavits, a spokesman for New York-based Citigroup, accused Lee's group of examining only a small portion of Citigroup mortgages and drawing "a reckless conclusion."

For 2004, he said, the bank reported 212,921 first-lien mortgages to Whites, 27,326 to Hispanics and 27,881 to Blacks. Based on Citigroup's data, African-Americans were about 2 1/2 times more likely than Whites to have a higher-cost loan, while Hispanics were about 1 1/2 times more likely than Whites to have a higher cost loan.

Julavits said that the HMDA data does not take

into account all the variables that a bank uses to price a loan, including FICO scores, the size of the down payment and debt-to-income ratios of buyers.

"We consider each applicant by the same objective criteria, which are blind to race, ethnicity, gender and any other prohibited factor," Julavits said.

On Bank of America loans, the Inner City Press said that Blacks are more than two times more likely than Whites to receive rate-spread loans, while Hispanics are 1.4 times more likely to get the higher-rate loans than Whites. The group said minority buyers were more than twice as likely to be denied mortgages than Whites.

Julie Davis, a spokeswoman for Bank of America, which is headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., said "the way the data is provided, you can slice it any way you want, but I don't know how they got to those figures."

She said that less than 0.5 percent of Bank of American loans exceeded the 3-point and 5-point spreads, and that they "were the result of legitimate credit factors."

Expertise Student of the Month

Cosmetology student of the month Nina Clark plans to continue training at an area salon upon graduation this June. She is also considering opening a salon of her own in 2007. "Before I open my salon I plan to attend many of the hair shows around the country so I can stay current with the latest hair trends". Inspired by her mother and God mother (who are both cosmetologists), Clark said she has loved doing hair since she was thirteen years old. "I was born to do hair — I love what I do... God gave me this talent and I don't want to do anything else." Clark chose Expertise School of Beauty because of the wealth of knowledge the instructor have and the variety of hair types, techniques and styles taught at the school.



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