

The road to D.C. is paved with green—ours

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

I can see the headline now, "Millions of Blacks Leave Millions of Green in D.C." The subhead would read, "And leave even more green on the road to D.C. as well." Remember the last Million Man March and the subsequent marches that followed? Have you ever thought about the tremendous economic boost they caused for non-Black businesses? As the presses were rolling on the evening of October 16, 1995, writing the lie about 425,000 men showing up, rather than 1 million, business owners were busy counting their cash windfall from our having made the trip.

Now we are preparing to return to D.C. Black men, women and children will come from all across the country and converge on the Mall in Washington, having gotten there by various ways and means, eating, sleeping, and basking in the glow of having pulled it off once again. We will be proud of having "come together" once again to make our collective statement and make our mark on history.

Additionally, other people will also bask, but in a different kind of glow; theirs will be the green-tinted glow of success. If we fail to plan our strategy now, if we do not start thinking about the economic side of the march, right now, the day after this next march they will again write their stories about how it wasn't "all that," as they count their profits from our travel expenses, our accommodations, our appetites and the other goods and services we will need to make the march. Having recently written one column about the next Million Man March titled, the Billion Dollar March, you can see how important this issue is for me as I now write another one so soon.

There may be others prior to October 2005, so don't be surprised. Anytime millions of Black folks do anything together you can be certain that a lot of money will be flowing in all directions, like sweet nectar from its source. The question is: Into whose pockets will it flow? I plan to keep us awake and alert

regarding the economic impact of this March.

I said in the previous article that we should start marching now, that we should march directly to Black-owned businesses, and we should start ensuring that Black made products are coming into our homes on a regular basis via the Black channel of distribution, the MATAH Network. Well, I have other recommendations. As we prepare to attend the next Million Man March, first we must understand that other business owners can't wait for the march to start. They know we will spend millions planning, traveling, eating, and staying at the march. If you think about it, the way we spend our money with everyone else (unless we change in a hurry) we could not have a Million Man March without White folks and other groups that provide most of what we need to pull it off. So let's break the mold in which we have been cast as consumers.

Consider this: In our local organizing groups, let's find ways to increase our support of Black businesses as we make our plans to go to Washington. Let's find Black venues in which to conduct our meetings and Black caterers to feed us as we meet. Contact Black churches and ask to use their buses and vans and their drivers, if need be, to get to D.C. — and pay them for their use! Find every Black-owned transportation company in your area and hire them to take you to D.C.

On a national level, let's create a list of every Black-owned gas station in the country, and make sure to plan our stops at those stations to fill up our cars and buses. Are there any Black-owned airplanes out there we can charter? Find them and hire them. Let's make sure that we have a complete list of all Black restaurants in D.C. and surrounding areas, and eat at those establishments. Let's find all the Black caterers in D.C. and make every effort to use them if we have side meetings and need food for those occasions. And if there are any Black-owned hotels, motels,



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B&B's, even homes of individuals who may want to rent rooms, let's find them and use them.

When we get there and take up money, make sure that money goes into a Black bank. Purchase advertisements in Black media, Black newspapers, especially prior to and after the march. Explore every opportunity to purchase all necessary supplies from Black vendors, for example, audio-visual equipment, trash containers and computers.

Quite frankly, it would be shameful and downright stupid for us to stage what could be the largest and most significant event in history and come away having enriched even more those who care nothing about us and

those who only want us close to them when we are spending our money in their businesses. It would be a sad commentary and a tragic moment in history for our children to read about when they are older. On top of all that, it would simply be the most outrageous, egregious, waste of money in the annals of our existence. I am sure you can think of more things we can do prior to October 2005, but the important point to remember is that we do everything within our power to ensure that millions of Black people do not go to Washington, D.C., and drop millions, maybe billions, of green into the laps of non-Black businesses. If we don't, the headline might read, "Blacks go into the red while Whites get into the green."

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GOP is hijacking public programming in America

By George E. Curry
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The Public Broadcasting System was created more than three decades ago to "provide a voice for groups in the community that may otherwise be unheard" and serve as "a forum for controversy and debate." Even though PBS has failed to fulfill its original mission,



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it is being hijacked by conservatives falsely claiming that the television network is too liberal.

If there was any doubt about PBS becoming more politicized or conservative, they should have evaporated last week with the publication of a *New York Times* story detailing heavy political interference by PBS Chairman Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, a Republican with close ties to the White House.

"Without the knowledge of his board, the chairman, Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, contracted last year with an outside consultant to keep track of the guests' political leanings on one program, 'Now with Bill Moyers.' In late March, on the recommendation of administration officials, Mr. Tomlinson hired the director of the White House Office of Global Communications as a senior staff member, corporation officials said. While she was still on the White House staff, she helped draft guidelines governing the work of two ombudsmen whom the corporation recently appointed to review the content of public radio and television broadcasts."

The coziness with the Bush White House did not end there. "Mr. Tomlinson has also occasionally worked with other White House officials on public broadcasting issues. Last year he enlisted the presidential adviser Karl Rove to help kill a legislative proposal that would change the composition of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's board by requiring the president to fill about half of the seats with people who had experience in local radio and television. The proposal was dropped after Mr. Rove and the White House criti-

cized it." Additionally, Tomlinson had made it clear that his choice for the next president and CEO of PBS is Patricia Harrison, a former co-chair of the Republican National Committee now serving as an assistant secretary of state.

Ostensibly, on a mission to bring "balance" to PBS, Tomlinson has leaned on

stations to carry "The Journal Editorial Report," hosted by Paul Gigot, the editor of the conservative *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. Tomlinson helped raise \$5 million in corporate funding for the program.

Tomlinson is correct about a lack of balance at PBS. However, he is wrong about the direction.

Professor William Hoynes of Vassar College conducted content studies of PBS in 1992 and 1998. Both studies found that PBS relied on a narrow selection of sources. For example:

- Corporate Voice: More than one-third of all on-camera sources (36.3 percent) during the two weeks studied in 1998 were representatives of business or Wall Street.

- Politics: Coverage of domestic political issues featured the views of government officials (50.2 percent), professionals, mostly journalists (31.2 percent). "Consumer, environmental or labor advocates, for example, were almost invisible."

- Economics: Seventy-five percent of sources in economic stories were from the corporate or investment world. On the other hand, labor unions (1.5 percent of sources), consumer advocates (0.4 percent), non-professional workers (1.1 percent) and the public (1.8 percent) were "virtually invisible" in 1998.

- Citizen Activists: Those involved in community, religious, health, environmental, ethnic/racial or other community-based issues accounted for only 4.5 percent of PBS sources in 1998, a decrease from 5.9 percent in 1992.

- The Public: Only 5.7 percent of total

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Lord," it doesn't mean to be afraid; it means to be so in awe of Him that obedience to Him becomes your way of life. It is this type of awe for parents that is missing today.

Awe, reverence, respect and fear, today, are just words for a great number of our young people.

They are words that have virtually no meaning to them whatsoever.

They don't respect women, so a great number of youngsters call us "b's" and "w's." Youth don't respect adults, so when they're congregated in the mall, or if you're just around a group of them anywhere, their foul language that spews forth makes you want to grab them and say, "Do you see me?" They don't respect their parents, so kids tell them what they're going to do or not going to do. Minors stay out late, sometimes all night. They don't go to school, and, if they do go, they aren't learning anything.

A great number of parents say, "I can't get them to clean their room." Their music is rife with expletives, violence, and sexual themes and they drive up and down the street with it blasting for everyone to hear. In my generation, there was no such thing as a parent not

being able to get a kid to do something; it just wasn't heard of. But, also in my generation, my parents weren't trying to be my friend, rather, they were more interested in shaping my life.

What can we do collectively to help parents turn this tide? We can help parents, family and friends of young people to instill character, perseverance and faith in our children. Parents can help their children by disciplining, instilling healthy fear and setting absolute standards, values and boundaries. It's now more imperative than it has ever been before that we go back to our roots, put on our warrior mentality, hold our youth close to our hearts and let them know that we are here for them.

But let them know we are not here just to buy them some \$250 tennis shoes but that we are here to show them how life-style decisions and long term planning are the keys to future success.

If we harness our resources, I believe in my heart-of-hearts that we can sow the seeds of change and ensure that our young people will be better equipped to be leaders in their communities and in their world.

Next week: Education in the village.