

# After Millions More—What comes next?

By George E. Curry  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Thousands of people left Washington, D.C., after Saturday's Millions More Movement Rally — many by buses, planes, trains and cars — and headed back home while still pondering the question that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. posed in the title of one of his books: "Where do we go from here: Chaos or Community?"

That was an apt question when Dr. King posed it 38 years ago, and it's apt now.

It's easy to stand on the sidelines, as many do, and point to the shortcomings of the march organizers and to second-guess their agenda. However, if one does not propose and act on an alternative vision, their comments should fall on deaf ears. After all, opinions are like behinds — everyone has one.

One of the most frequent criticisms of Saturday's march was that it did not have the same energy or numbers as the Million Man March. That's true. It's also an unfair comparison. We shouldn't expect to replicate that historic event. It was a unique moment, organized around a narrow and emotional issue and participants will have a special memory to cherish for the rest of their lives. Those who passed up the event, for whatever reason, will just have to accept the fact that

they missed out on a once in a lifetime experience.

It should be remembered that Black men came to the National Mall 10 years ago, in large part, as an act of defiance. Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League launched a relentless public assault on Minister Louis Farrakhan. The more Foxman attacked Farrakhan, the more African-American men rallied around the Nation of Islam leader. The fact that the NAACP, the National Urban League, Colin Powell and Bill Clinton had all denounced the march was of no consequence. Someone needed to stand up for Black men and Farrakhan led that charge.

This time, a broad range of issues were placed on the table. And as necessary as that was, it did not and cannot provide the same force of a single issue, i.e. Black males.

I was interviewed for a segment of "Good Morning America" that aired Saturday morning. I said what Farrakhan and other leaders would say at the rally — the measure of success is not how many people attended the rally or what was said. The test is what happens after people have gone home.



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In a real sense, Minister Farrakhan, Rev. Willie Williams and other organizers have done their part: they brought us together to focus on important issues that continue to plague our community. The responsibility for what happens next shifts to us, individually and collectively.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is not coming back. We should not look for one national figure to lead us. We should realize that we never had one leader, even in King's heyday. Dr. King was successful because he was able to build on the work of local leaders. Once an issue became hot, then Dr. King was invited in to raise the visibility. But make no mistake about it: the work of local leaders and everyday people provided the backbone for the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

One person can have an enormous impact on improving our community. There are so many ways to contribute — volunteering at a non-profit organization, starting a Scout troop, mentoring teens, helping out at school, visiting the elderly, helping reduce illiteracy, establishing computer labs at church and creating Saturday School to tutor students. The

list of possibilities is endless.

Millions More Movement leaders plan to further address many of the issues raised Saturday in articles to be written for and published in Black newspapers. At the top of the agenda is how African-Americans can flex their economic clout. According to the University of Georgia Selig Center for Economic Growth, annual Black buying power will grow from \$318 billion in 1990 to \$921 billion in 2008.

Fortunately, Saturday's rally was not the only event planned. In 2006, there will be a National Black Peoples Unity Convention in Gary, Ind., on March 9-12 that will address economic and political issues facing Black America. Some of the Millions More organizers — such as University of Maryland Political Science Professor Ron Walters — are also involved in putting on the Gary convention. Perhaps between the two national events, a comprehensive Black Agenda will emerge. In the meantime, there is plenty that can be done. If we take nothing else away from the Millions More Movement, we should know that we have a responsibility to look beyond ourselves. When we do, our entire community benefits.

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

## Blacks still having difficulty with Democrats

By Ron Walters  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

To the puzzlement of a lot of people, in an important Senate vote on the nomination of Judge John Roberts to the Supreme Court, 22 Democrats voted "yes" for this long-time conservative, while 22 said "no." This is but the most recent example of a poorly kept secret in Washington: Democrats are often equal to or worse than Republicans in their treatment of Black issues in the Congress. Why? At least two things account for this.

First, many Senate Democrats, especially in states where the vote is often influenced by who is running for president, are now afraid of the power of conservative voters. If you look at the 22 Democratic senators who voted for the Roberts nomination, nine of them were in states handily won from 52 percent to 60 percent by George Bush in 2004.

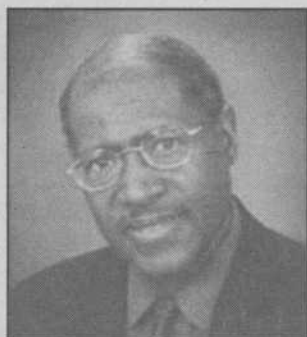
Another group of Democratic senators were from four states won by Kerry, but only narrowly. So they were cautious in risking that their vote against Roberts would come back to bite them in a subsequent election. This means that in addition to the 55 Republican votes in the Senate, many more Demo-

crats are vulnerable where high-profile votes are concerned that touch on the senator's ideology. This is what creates the "conservative consensus" in that body.

Despite this, there were four other Democrats from Connecticut, Delaware, Vermont and Washington (states with small or non-existent Black and Hispanic populations) who apparently felt free enough to vote for Roberts. I consider these to have been seduced by his charm, his high level education, his intelligence and his ability to persuade them that he would consider each issue on the merits, that he was not a right-wing ideologue and that he considered *Roe v. Wade* to be settled law. Why Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, the Democratic Minority Leader of the Judiciary Committee felt this way is inexplicable, since he is an old hand and knows that nominees will say such things to get confirmed. As the leading Democrat on that committee, he stared the consistent right-wing record of Roberts in the face, then abdicated the leadership of his party to his own faith. It was a decidedly weak historical move.

The second problem with Democrats is their philosophical confusion. This, too, is created, in part, by the fact that there is a conservative consensus on issues that especially touch Black life. Thus, issue such as affirmative action in higher education and contracting, whether government should do more to help the poor, and also housing, welfare and crime issues, are all issues that are unpopular with Whites, regardless of party.

Recently, two former Clinton White House staffers, Dr. William Galston and Dr. Elaine Kamarck wrote a report for The Third Way, an organization that was influential in shaping the Clinton approach to governing. While the Third Way postures itself as a "pro-



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gressive" organization, it is directed toward the "middle class" a term that in the political parlance has been code for the White middle class. In this, it has supported issues little different from those of the Democratic Leadership Council, the right wing of the Democratic Party.

For example, this report argues that Democrats can't win the White House by relying on improving the turnout of their base to win elections; that they need to appeal to swing voters instead. They report that the Hispanic vote is increasing slowly and also swung toward Republicans in 2004; women did not come back to the Democratic party even though married women were targeted; and Blacks would add little even if their turnout improved 4 or 5 percent. Their conclusion, then, is that Democrats shouldn't concentrate on their liberal base — and by extension, liberal issues — they need to become more tolerant of conservative values such those that

put George Bush into office in the last election.

The question I would raise is, since this is a recipe for further dismissing the interests of Blacks, Hispanics and women, the base of the party, then how does a "swing vote party" operate to give confidence to its base that it will honor their concerns. In other words, if they can win without appealing to the base, then why do they need to cater to them when they get into the White House? This is the key to the difficulty that Blacks have with Democrats in this era of history. When Democrats win the White House, we receive little in the way of public policy, and as the minority, when they vote with the Republicans in the House and Senate, we don't hold them accountable.

Drs. Kamarck and Galston are calling for more of the same, and I guess Black leaders will buy it by not challenging this political strategy. Where is our integrity? It is hidden inside the genie bottle of Independent politics.

Ron Walters is the director of the African-American Leadership Institute.

## Nazi

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stop them.

Navarre said the riots escalated because members of the National Socialist Movement took their protest to the neighborhood, which is predominantly Black, instead of a neutral place. "If this march had occurred in downtown Toledo, we wouldn't have had the unrest," he said.

The neo-Nazi group, known as "America's Nazi Party," said they came to the city because of a dispute between neighbors, one White and the other Black.

Police began receiving word midweek from officers on the street that gangs were going to descend on the neighborhood in protest, the police chief said. The disturbances were confined to a 1-square-mile area, but

the crowd swelled to about 600 people, overwhelming police.

The crowds were eventually dispersed by police in riot gear after about four hours, and the mayor declared a state of emergency that remained in effect through the weekend.

About 200 officers patrolled the neighborhood overnight after the riot, Navarre said. Police reported no problems Sunday, but an 8 p.m. curfew was in effect for a second night.

Neighbors were divided about the city allowing the march.

"They don't have the right to bring hate to my front yard," said Terrance Anderson, who lives near a bar that was destroyed.

Other neighbors said the group had a right to have their say. "Too bad the people couldn't ignore them," said Dee Huntley.

## LaGrande

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congressperson or a senator what have they done for Black folks in their district and all they can tell you is they signed some legislation to honor Rosa Parks or they gave so and so a job, or gave two or three thousand dollars to some social organization, or made a person or two a member of the Democratic or Republican Party so that they can appear to be pro-Black, are they really doing anything to promote Black folks or to empower them? Are they subtly promoting White supremacy and Black inferiority? You be the judge, and after you judge then decide what you're going to do.