

OUR VIEW

Media Access

Say what you want about the media, but the Fourth Estate is a vital, indispensable part of American life. The same media that gets blamed for facilitating the attack on America's morals—by the television shows it carries, the newspapers and magazines it publishes, the websites and blogs it hosts, the radio programs it broadcasts, et al—is the same media that brought you Watergate, convincing a nation that a president isn't above skullduggery. It's the same media that brought you the Rodney King beating, showing a nation that there are, indeed, crooked cops. It's the same media that brought you the tragicomedy that was/is the Iraq war, revealing the ugly underbelly of American imperialism and capitalism.

Say what you want about the media: It's racist. It sensationalizes things. It makes mountains out of molehills. It fanned the flames of the East Coast-West Coast rap beef that left Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls dead. It's the enemy. Well, that same media has brought you heartwarming stories of triumph over tragedy—families braving death to find relatives after Hurricane Katrina—compelling mini-series ("Roots"), seminal sports events (Super Bowl, the Olympics), 24-hour news (CNN), cultural programming (BET, TV One, Radio One, Univision, etc.), even wedding announcements and Boy Scout awards. The media means different things to different people: It's all in how you use it.

Which is why this Saturday's Media Access Seminar, put on by the Las Vegas Association of Black Journalists, is so important. Too few people know how the media works. They don't know how media outlets make decisions. They don't know how to submit story ideas or how to get their voices heard. They don't know why it's paramount, when pitching a story, to have a clear idea of what it is you want. (You can't say—"I have this great story about this new technology that cures razor bumps on Black men. How much for an ad?")

The purpose of the Media Access Seminar is to educate and empower the community on how new works. By culling together the decision-makers in news, broadcast and public relations, participants will learn first-hand about the machinations of the Fourth Estate, knowledge they hopefully will use to get off the sidelines and into this game we call life.

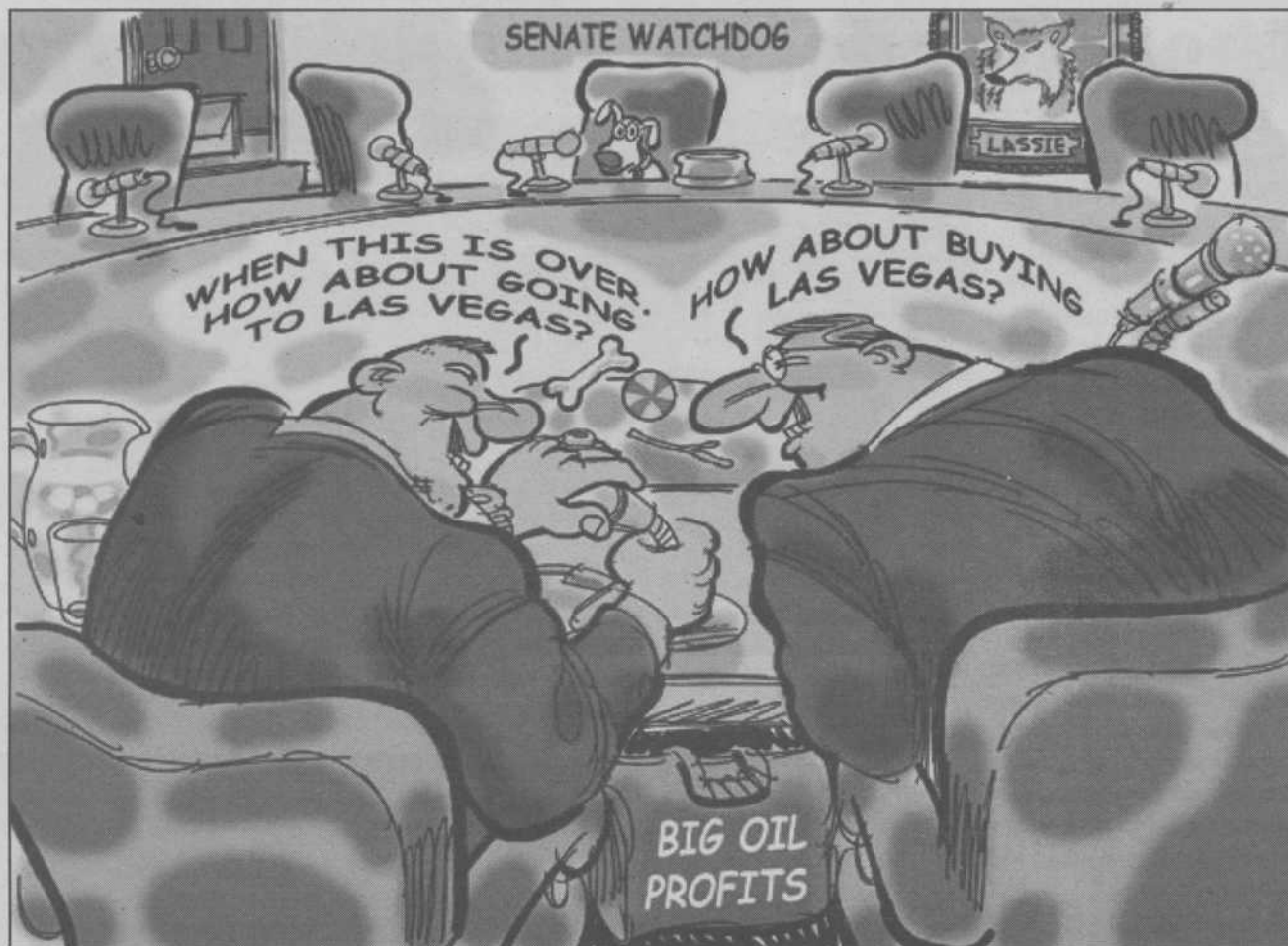
Adoption Option

Black adoption rates have suffered from a supply-demand problem for decades. On the supply side: throngs of African-American children nationwide who need homes. On the demand side: For some reason, Black adults don't adopt Black youth with enough frequency.

With little hope of living in a household with people who look like them and reflect their culture and heritage, Black youth often languish in foster care. Then, when White families adopt them, we want to scream in outrage, or worse. The National Association of Black Social Workers has called interracial adoption a form of genocide, claiming it stunts the development of Black children into healthy Black people."

According to an article on www.adoption.com, "The Colors of Adoption: Black vs. White," interracial adoptions tripled during the Civil Rights Movement, from 733 cases in 1968 to 2,574 cases in 1971. There are currently 6,500 cases a year. The NABSW condemned the trend in 1972 and "a debate has raged ever since about the benefits and hazards of placing children with parents of different races. The few available academic studies have shown that the adopted children grow up well adjusted and comfortable with their ethnic identity."

Of the estimated 500,000 children in the U.S. foster home system, more than half are minorities, the article notes. Of those available for adoption, 40 percent are Black, although Blacks represent 13 percent of the population. The article also notes 67 percent of hard-to-place children are Black, 26 percent are White; while 67 percent of the families waiting to adopt are White, 31 percent are Black. Black America, if we're so against other people raising our children, we must raise them ourselves.



Democrats vs. GOP: Myth vs. Fact

By Dora LaGrande
Sentinel-Voice

In America, for the most part, people believe that you can't be Black and Republican without being a sell-out. Most Black voters believe that Blacks who are Republicans don't support their race on issues such as education and affirmative action. This perception is so strongly ingrained in the Black psyche that a Black online commentator referred to Mike Steele, a Maryland Republican vying to become that state's first Black senator, calling him a "Simple Sambo."

Steele has been labeled an "Uncle Tom," an "Oreo," "Steppin' Fetchit" and, reportedly, a newspaper editorial previously said that he brings nothing to the table other than his "skin color." These terms and this attitude toward Black Republicans have a long history in America.

But there is a distinct parallel between a Black Republican and a Black Democrat. While the term Republican itself connotes extremely conservative views, the fact of the matter is that Black elected officials, as a whole, are dealing with a whole lot more political diversity than anybody wants to acknowledge—regardless of which political affiliation they represent. There are Black Republicans who are just as invested in the battle for "Black equality and empowerment" as much as anyone else. They have as hard a time with the lambs and lions on their side



ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

of the fence as most Black Democrats do. We present this issue as if the Democratic Party is a perfect party and is a party of the people, our people.

It wasn't the Democrats who fought to end civil rights; it was the hardcore Republicans who, in 1865, believed that the federal government should intervene in protecting the lives of enslaved Africans to the point of establishing a permanent bureau to protect their interests. Don't take my word for it; go to the Internet or to the library and find out for yourself the role the Republican Party played from 1865 until the passing of the civil rights legislation in 1964.

The political, cultural and economic context in which the Republican Party exists has taken a significant adversarial shift, without question, especially with politicians like Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms. Nevertheless, do we actually believe that all Democrats have our best interest at heart? If that is truly the case, we have had Democratic presidents just as we have had Republican presidents, and we haven't continued to prosper at the rate of other ethnic groups under either structure. So, why are we so

beholden and faithful to one party when nobody can delineate what they have done that's worthy of the loyalty that we have to them?

So, why are we so gullible to believe that just because politicians are Democrats they're all right? Let's discuss two very important programs, which were set up specifically for Blacks under the Nixon and Reagan administrations, that the Clinton administration came in and eliminated one, then decreased funding for the other.

He cut funding for the Minority Business Development Agency in half. The Minority Business Development Agency is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA is the only federal agency instituted spe-

cifically to promote the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in America. MBDA is focused on entrepreneurial and innovative programs committed to creating wealth in minority communities. The agency actively promotes the growth and competition of large, medium and small minority business enterprises, or MBEs.

Clinton's administration got rid of the Rule of 2. The rule was legislation introduced by the Reagan administration that stated that when the Department of Defense issued bidding requests on contracts. If the DOD could find any two minorities that could perform work under that contract, there was to be a set-aside for minorities.

Furthermore, I'm sure few Blacks knew or paid attention that Clinton signed these orders, because we get so hung up on the Democrat vs. Republican issue—the superficial, insignificant stuff—we fail to deal with or pay (See LaGrande, Page 11)

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