

OUR VIEW

Priorities

Doubtless you've heard about the three climbers who disappeared while scaling the 11,239-foot Mount Hood, Oregon's highest peak. How could you have not? It's been all over the news. A quick recap: Three climbers have been reported missing; one was discovered dead. Two have yet to be found. End of story.

Okay, so it's not that simple. Here's a longer version: Three friends embark on a mission to scale Mount Hood. Something bad occurs. No one knows for sure what. Days go by and not a peep is heard from anyone. Then, on Monday, the body of 48-year-old Dallas resident Kelly James is discovered. Hood River County Sheriff Joe Wampler says search and rescue crews found James' body in a snow cave. CNN reports that James called his family on Dec. 10, telling them that his companions, 37-year-old Brian Hall of Dallas and 36-year-old Jerry Cooke of Brooklyn, had left him to get help. Plans are for the search and rescue mission to intensify, to use procedures similar to those employed in avalanche rescue efforts—poking the ground with rod-like instruments.

This is a tragedy. A life has been lost. Two lives remain in the balance—no one knows if Hall and Cooke are dead or alive. This is certainly a news story. But should it dominate national news?

For nearly a week, the climbers' ordeal has done just that. But why? At risk of sounding insensitive, it seems the mainstream media's priorities are skewed. These were adventurous men who knew full well the dangers of their recreational hobby. When you climb a mountain, you take your life in your own hands. Anything can happen. An avalanche. A snow storm. Equipment mishaps. Human error. You have to think that James, Hall and Cooke weighed all the possible scenarios.

This is a news story by any definition of the term. But is it a news story of national importance? You may suffer from Iraq information fatigue, but the importance of how Middle East conflicts play out can't be underestimated. If we don't win—and nearly everyone, including President Bush, has said we're not at this point—then there could be real ramifications for peace on earth as we know. That affects everyone.

Aside from stirring our human interest in the plight of other human beings, how does beating America over the head with a story about missing climbers in Oregon impact our lives? This isn't about the Oregon climbers, but about media sensibility. The Jon Benet Ramsey story didn't have national importance. Thousands of children go missing—some are murdered—each year. There are missing people in nearly every major city in America—none of whom got lost on a recreation mountain climb. Where's the media frenzy over them?

If the media is going to dictate which stories are important, the least it could do is get its priorities straight.

Kwanzaa Time

Every year about this time, the Sentinel-Voice encourages readers to reflect on Kwanzaa's seven principles.

Umoja (Unity): to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination): to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility): to build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together. Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics): to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together. Nia (Purpose): to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness. Kuumba (Creativity): to do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it. Imani (Faith): to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

This year, instead of reflecting on the seven principles, the charge is simpler: Live them all year.



Honeymoon ends for Obama

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

After peering from the cover of *Time* magazine, making the round of TV Sunday talk shows and being urged by newspaper columnists and editorial writers to make a run for president in 2008, Barack Obama's honeymoon with the media is over. Generally, overly favorable news coverage ends the moment a candidate declares for office. However, for Obama, who is still considering whether to run, the tide has already turned.

According to MediaMatters.org, a media monitoring site, Republican operatives and conservative talk show hosts launched a not-so-subtle attack on Obama's middle name — Hussein. "In late November, Republican strategist Ed Rogers began pointedly referring to 'Barack Hussein Obama,' using the senator and potential Democratic presidential candidate's middle name," MediaMatters reported. "Soon, the utterly meaningless — but eminently mockable — fact that Obama's middle name is 'Hussein' was everywhere. NBC's Mike Viqueira announced 'a man named Barack Obama, whose middle name, incidentally, is Hussein, running for president.' On the December 5 edition of Fox News' 'Special Report' with Brit Hume, Carl Cameron told viewers, 'Though he's written two books about himself already,



GEORGE E. CURRY

most people know very little about Barack Hussein Obama Jr's uncommonly privileged life.' In case you're wondering: No, 'John Sidney McCain' does not appear in any Fox News stories available on Nexis."

Chris Matthews interviewed Ed Rogers on his show and teased him about mocking Obama's middle name on the program while the regular host was away.

Matthews: Ed, you made some news here the other night. Let's take a look at the tape of what you said.

Rogers: Oh, come on. Matthews: No, no — of what you said in my absence. When the cat's away, the mouse will play.

Rogers: Where were you? Where were you?

Matthews: Let's take a look at what you said.

Rogers: [video clip] Held me down as somebody that underestimates Barack Hussein Obama, please.

Matthews: Well, you know in American life, the only time we start using three names for a person is when they're an assassin — you know, John Henry—

Rogers: There's some truth to that.

Matthews: Lee Harvey Oswald. Why did you invoke the middle name of Barack Obama out of nowhere? What are you up to, sir?

Rogers: Mostly teasing him as a lightweight and somebody that's just not ready... But I hope he runs. I want him to run. There's more—

Yes, there is more. Matthews, a former Republican staffer, pretended that Rogers "made some news" in his absence when it was Matthews who had been the culprit.

According to the monitoring group, "On the November 7 edition of *Hardball* — three full weeks before Rogers' comment — Matthews said: 'You know, it's interesting that Barack Obama's middle name is Hussein. That will be interesting down the road, won't it?'"

CNN's Jeff Greenfield was no better than his con-

servative counterparts.

Referring to Obama, the journalist said: "...He may be walking around with a sartorial time bomb. Ask yourself: Is there any other major public figure who dresses the way he does? Why, yes. It is Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who, unlike most of his predecessors, seem to have skipped through enough copies of *GQ* to find the jacket-and-no-tie look agreeable. And maybe that's not the comparison a possible presidential contender really wants to evoke."

Since when did not wearing a tie with a suit equate to being a terrorist sympathizer?

But Greenfield did not stop there. "Now, it is one thing to have a last name that sounds like Osama and a middle name, Hussein, that is probably less than helpful. But an outfit that reminds people of a charter member of the Axis of Evil? Why, this

(See Curry, Page 9)

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.
1700 SOUTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 200

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 380-8100
Email: lvsentinelvoice@yahoo.com

<p>Contributing Writers: Frank Albano Debbie Hall Lés Pierres Streater Kanika Vann Photographer: Joseph Sawyer III</p>	<p>Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief Parker Philpot, Copy Editor Don Snook, Graphics Ed & Betty Brown, Founders</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association</p>
--	--