

Racist crimes increase after U.S. election

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The rise in racist incidents — from university campuses to police stations — is a sobering reminder that despite the election of Barack Obama, there are still a lot of sick people out there stuck in the Stone Age. *Editor & Publisher* magazine, the Associated Press, and local newspapers recently catalogued some of the most egregious incidents.

In addition to the garden variety types of hate crimes, such as painting racist graffiti on cars and houses, there was a particularly disturbing incident that stood out from the rest. Parents in Rexburg, Idaho contacted police after second and third graders on a school bus were heard chanting, "Assassinate Obama." I doubt that any of them could spell the word assassinate, yet they were recycling hate learned from their parents.

Some might have learned how to hate in school if what happened in Allison Park, Pa. is an indication. According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, a teacher's aide told a biracial 11th grader that Obama will be shot, the U.S. flag will be changed to the KFC flag and that the national anthem will be changed to "Movin' On Up," the theme song from "The Jeffersons" sitcom.

Students living in Morrison Hall on the campus of Baylor University in Texas walked outside and found a noose hanging from a

tree. On the campus of North Carolina State University, four students spray painted racist messages that included "Let's shoot the (n-word) and 'Hang Obama by a noose.'"

At the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, a poster of Obama was defaced and carried the message, "He'll be shot" followed by the n-word.

While there were a lot of hate crimes instigated by young people, adults proved that the youth have no monopoly on ignorance.

According to the Traverse City (Michigan) *Record-Eagle*, employees at Hampel's Key and Lockshop flew the U.S. flag upside down — an international signal for distress — the day after Obama was elected president. In an interview with the newspaper, one employee, Rod Nyland, said the flag was being flown upside down because, "...We feel our country is in distress because the n — got in."

The Associated Press reported that in a Maine convenience store, a reporter saw a sign inviting customers to participate in a pool guessing what day Obama will be assassinated. People were charged \$1 for each entry into "The Osama Obama Shotgun Pool." The pot was supposed to go to the person



GEORGE E. CURRY

picking the closest date to the attack.

"Let's hope we have a winner," the sign proclaimed.

Interracial couples and cars with Obama bumper stickers were targets.

In Pennsylvania's Apolaccon Township, an interracial couple discovered what was left of a burned cross in their front yard the day after

Obama's election. The woman, who is White, lived in the house with her husband, an African-American.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Vandals spray-painted swastikas and racial slurs on a house and several cars in Torrance that displayed campaign signs or bumper stickers for President-elect Barack Obama, authorities said Tuesday. The incidents occurred Saturday night in the Hollywood Riviera section of the city, said Sgt. Bernard Anderson. Four separate incidents were reported the next day, he said. No arrests have been made.

"At one house, the phrase 'Go Back to Africa' was spray painted across the wall, in addition to a racial epithet on the garage door, Anderson said. Several parked vehicles on the streets were spray painted with racial slurs, he said."

As usual when race comes to the forefront

on the national scene, White supremacy groups see a surge in the membership. According to AP, one White supremacy website attracted 2,000 new members the day after the election. One person posted a note to the site that said, "I want the SOB laid out in a box to see how 'messiahs' come to rest. God had has abandoned us, this country is doomed."

The real danger is when hate talk is converted to hateful acts. According to *Newsday*, two 18-year-olds were among a group of New York Whites who yelled "Obama" as they assaulted a Black teenager with a baseball bat on Staten Island the night Obama was elected president.

Also in the early hours following Obama's election, a Black church in Springfield, Mass., was destroyed by arson. The pastor of the church said the timing of the blaze causes him to believe it was a hate crime.

Some police may not be interested in prosecuting hate crimes for one obvious reason — they share those same feelings.

For example, Milwaukee officials found a poster of Obama with a bullet going through his head. They discovered the poster on a table in the police station.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of *Emerge* magazine and the *NNPA News Service*, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach.

American auto industry must sink or swim

By Harry C. Alford
Special to Sentinel-Voice

We have just witnessed one of the most daring schemes and hustles in modern history. The secretary of treasury forces Congress and the President to fork over nearly \$1 trillion dollars that we really didn't have under the perception that it was going to save millions from losing their homes.

As Congressman Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, put it, "It was simply a bait and switch game."

People in danger of losing their homes are no better off and the money went in various directions other than what Secretary Paulson claimed it would be used for.

Yes, Wall Street had a new fast stash of money and it got drunk again. Big banks took a lot and went shopping like Sarah Palin in Neiman Marcus. Bonuses were paid wherever they could quickly do it and the culprits

of the financial crisis received no bid federal contracts to clean up their own mess.

The common taxpayer was indeed exploited one more time and it appears that they will be coming back for more.

Our treasury is in the hands of incompetent, greedy and selfish individuals who don't give a damn about the common citizen or state of the future.

Such is the saga of the Bailout Crisis. It is a disaster turning into a tragedy. Now, we have another big problem to deal with. This problem has been festering for nearly forty years. It is the U.S. automobile industry. The Big 3 have had a history of paying wages that are too high; making cars that are ugly



HARRY C. ALFORD

and not economical and reacting to changes in the market way too slow.

Japanese and Korean automakers are pulling way in front of them when it comes to technology, environmental accountability. Yes, the days of Henry Ford are long gone and our auto industry is fast becoming a "dinosaur" — a very broke dinosaur.

The Big 3 (Chrysler, General Motors and Ford) want at least a \$25 billion loan from the federal government. Yes, they want their own customized bailout. Why \$25 billion? Basically, it sounds nice but they really don't know what their actual condition is. No one knows if this would actually save them or stall the inevitable — bankruptcy.

One thing is for sure: there are a lot of jobs and American families at stake here. I guess the most important issue is how can we make it right?

For too many years, we have allowed this industry to make gas-guzzling machines that break down almost as soon as they leave the lot. We have drifted to foreign-made cars at record rates and have fallen in love with their economy and efficiency. Cars like Ford (F.O.R.D. — fix or repair daily) have become a world laughing stock.

Toyota, Nissan, Honda, etc. are leading the fields in almost every category. What our auto industry needs to do now is become competitive. We must have reliability, and they must start addressing the demand for fuel efficiency.

President-elect Obama is correct in stating that if we give the auto industry this loan, they must apply it to new technology and

come out of their Neanderthal mindset. Mileage, alternative fuel and reliability must be addressed if the American auto industry is to survive and these many precious jobs are to remain under our control. Detroit must change its ways and it must do it now.

We are at a crossroads and it is time for strong leadership and courage. There must be a cleansing at the top of auto management. We need fresh leaders with new ideas and an aggressive vision for the future.

The unions, UAW, must understand that pay is way out of line and they must step back in order to save their careers. The pension demands are ridiculous and they must be adjusted.

All the technology that we have but have been too shy to introduce it must now be utilized and new, better products have to hit the road.

The Big 3 have maybe two years to turn this around and they must begin immediately.

Let's carefully give them a proper loan but the stipulations must be clear and they must be monitored at all times.

If they decide to continue this state of denial then perhaps we all have to "bite the bullet" and watch them die. American Auto Industry, it is time for you to "sink or swim"; "do or die."

You have been stalling for too long and America is suffering because of it.

Let's show the world that American ingenuity and courage have not left the scene. Let this be just another big challenge for the greatest nation on earth.

A challenge that we can brag to our grandchildren about in the near future.

Harry Alford is the co-founder, president/CEO of the *National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc.*

Malveaux

(Continued from Page 8)

recently raised money to feed two hungry families for Thanksgiving. Their efforts were mild, modest and well-meaning. I was delighted that they thought of others, even as many want to rush through these next few days before the holiday. And I know that well-meaning citizens and volunteers who embrace efforts like the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week join them.

Imagine, though, that banks relied on the well-meaning efforts of a few folk for their succor and survival. Without diminishing the impact of individual efforts, there has to be a structural way to address persistent poverty in our nation, and to address the marginal poverty that has emerged from this recession.

We can extend unemployment benefits, create jobs, offer housing subsidies, and increase our support of programs like food stamps. Are these giveaways? If they are, they are not giveaways of the magnitude of our bailout. These giveaways may yield rich returns, as the poorest of poor become both contributors and taxpayers.

The market has not yet responded to the bailout, but the poor will certainly respond to ways policy makers bail them out with policies targeted toward them. Poor families must get the same consideration from government that bankers do.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is president of *Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina.*