

OUR VOICE

Put up or...

Last week, the *Sentinel-Voice* published a story asking if Blacks were expecting too much from President Obama. "I really, really, really want him to take care of the health issue, Freida Thompson of Manalapan, N.J., wrote in a letter to the editor to the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service.

"From healthcare to civil rights, jobs and equal justice, Thompson's sentiments reflect those of millions of Blacks—and other Americans—around the nation who know that Obama—arguably America's most inspirational president—will be limited in his ability to do everything," the NNPA's Hazel Trice Edney wrote last week. "Yet, many hope that because of his Black experience and identification with struggle, his priorities might distinguish him from White presidents of the past."

In this week's issue, Edney writes of the desire of the new president of the NAACP for the Obama administration to be a champion on human and civil rights issues.

"We're not simply interested in a bailout for Main Street; it's a good goal, it's a good starting point," Benjamin Todd Jealous said in a telephone press conference. "But we want a fix for Back Street. At the end of the day, we are not an organization who's here merely to celebrate any milestone too much. On Jan. 20, we celebrated Obama as the nation's first Black president and president of color. On Jan. 21, we were well aware that the simply became the 44th president of the United States and all the pressures that have worked the agenda of the presidents before him came to bear on him."

Jealous wants Obama to both ensure the participation of Blacks in jobs and contracts in the federal stimulus package and create oversight and enforcement mechanisms to investigate and punish cops involved in police profiling and brutality, something former President George Bush promised when he was in office.

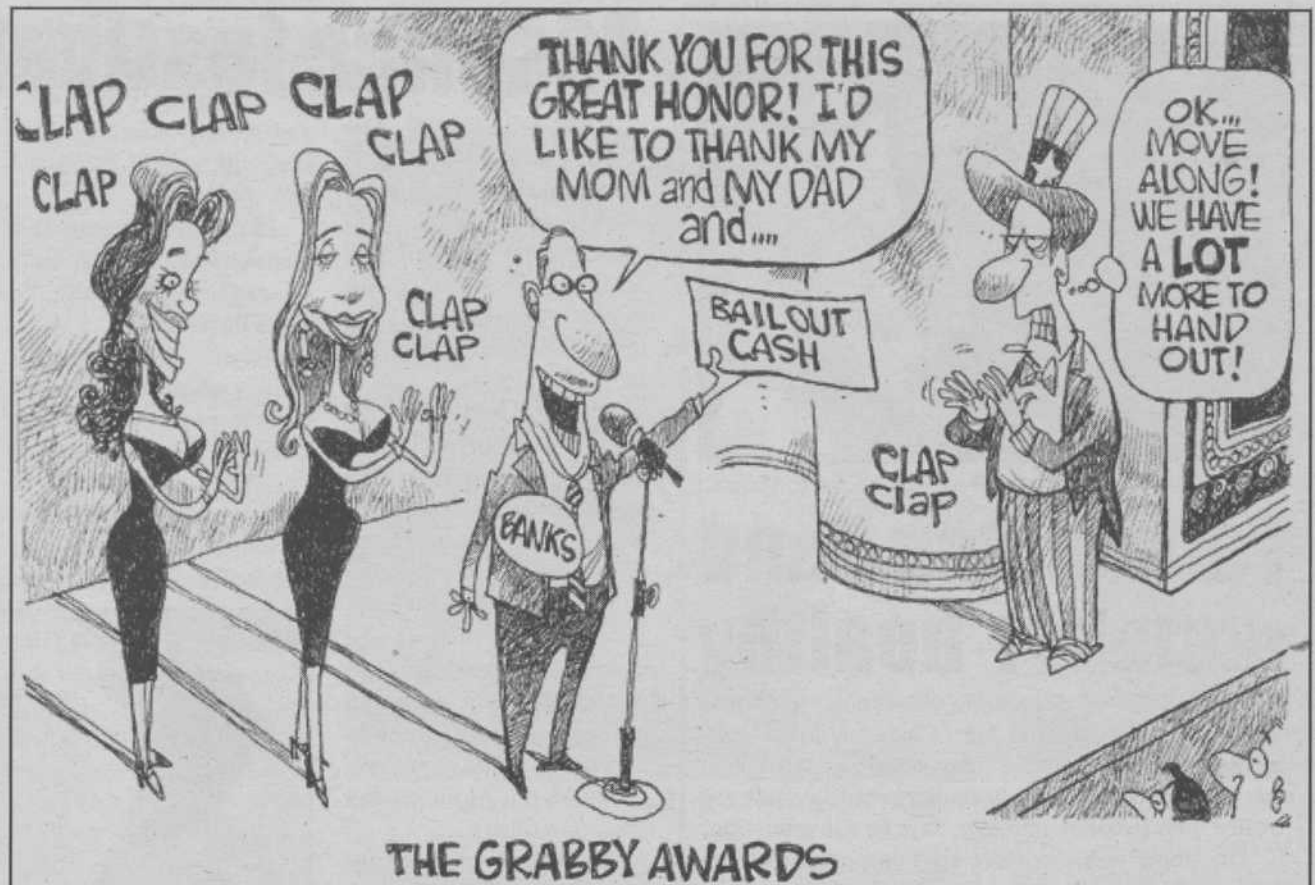
Of those demands, the most immediate, of course, is ensuring that Blacks don't get left out of the nearly \$800 billion stimulus package. While it was no doubt heartening to see President Obama get out of the White House and on the road to gin up citizen support for the stimulus package, it was a little discouraging to see him visit places like Elkhart, Ind., and Fort Meyers, Fla. Not that those cities aren't representative of the economic peril facing America—Elkhart's unemployment rate tops 15 percent and Fort Meyers has the dubious distinction of being the home foreclosure capital of America.

Had Obama wanted more heart-rending examples of the financial pain America is in, he could've gone to Gary, Ind., long one of the most violent small cities in the country, where the unemployment rate for Black men tops 20 percent. Or, while in Florida, he could've visited Miami's ultra-tough Liberty City neighborhood, where the Black unemployment rate is often four to five times higher than the 6 percent average.

Obama could've burnished his activist legacy in trying to right the wrongs of Hurricane Katrina stumping in New Orleans—and ardently fighting for a significant portion of infrastructure funding to go towards rebuilding the levees damaged by Hurricane Katrina. He could've jetted to Compton, Calif., which has one of the nation's highest murder rates (67.1 per 100,000) to talk about how economics factors into every social metric.

Clearly, as the days melt into weeks and weeks into months, Obama knows—and we know—that the honeymoon is over. The man who campaigned as a president for all the people will now have to prove that he's got the backs of all the people, especially the Black people.

On a side note, President Obama owes Las Vegas an apology for discouraging companies receiving federal bailout funds from taking junkets to Las Vegas. This city's lifeblood is tourism—people coming here for pleasure and for business. Companies shouldn't be ashamed of booking outings, meetings and conventions here. This is America's convention capital. It didn't get that way by accident. All the necessary ingredients are in place for productivity and, Mr. President, you should know. You visited nearly two dozen times. Remember?



Stimulus is for all Americans

By Harry C. Alford
Special to *Sentinel-Voice*

The first phase of the Wall St. bailout was a pure hustle. The National Black Chamber of Commerce opposed it because the writing was on the wall.

They took out all protocols for small and minority business participation. Waive this and waive that — if it was about inclusion of minority business it was waived.

They said it was for "expediency" but the real reason was "avoidance." Not one contract to a Black-owned business or a dollar invested in a minority bank plus there was not one mortgage saved and the stock market is still in the tank. We were sold out on this \$350 billion giveaway and I strongly suggest that we cancel the next \$350 billion giveaway.

It does nothing for our economy and does not reach the streets. On the other hand, we strongly support the Stimulus Bill which is formally known by the House of Representatives as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

All of the provisions for women, veteran, disabled and minority owned businesses found in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) remain in tact. There are inclusion safeguards, reporting, transparency and accountability without exception. This is not a giveaway.

It is an investment into overdue projects that will create meaningful jobs and revitalize our economy. As



HARRY C. ALFORD

the payrolls generated from this are recycled our national treasury will start turning in the right direction. We, the people, are involved at every level with this legislation.

According to Chairman Dave Obey, D - Wis., of the House Appropriations Committee the package contains targeted efforts in:

Clean, efficient, American energy; transforming our economy with science and technology; modernizing roads, bridges, transit and waterways; education for the 21st century; tax cuts to work pay and creation of jobs; lowering healthcare costs; helping workers hurt by the economy; saving public sector jobs and protect vital services. Now, if you are against this then you don't know Jesus. This is a noble goal and I say "Let's go!"

But, then Chairman Obey decides to "lob a grenade" at the Republicans. In his January 15, 2009, announcement of this bill he states, "Since 2001, as worker productivity went up, 96 percent of the income growth in this country went to the wealthiest 10 percent of society.

While they were benefiting from record high worker productivity, the remaining

90 percent of Americans were struggling to sustain their standard of living.

They sustained it by borrowing... and borrowing... and borrowing, and when they couldn't borrow anymore, the bottom fell out. This plan will strengthen the middle class, not just Wall Street CEOs and special interests in Washington."

True that, but now is not the time to say it. History will show this and the culprits should pay for at least a generation. But don't throw it up in their face in front of the whole world. That is not persuasion. You are in fact creating opposition. So, thus, there is a partisan fight over this badly needed legislation. Now is not the time to fight; it is time to legislate.

Just look at some of the features of this Stimulus Bill: \$32 billion to transform the nation's energy transmission, distribution, and production systems by allowing for a smarter and better grid and focusing investment in renewable technology; \$16 bil-

lion to repair public housing and make key energy efficiency retrofits; \$6 billion to weatherize modest-income homes; \$30 billion for highway construction; \$31 billion to modernize federal and other public infrastructure with investments that lead to long-term energy cost savings; \$19 billion for clean water, flood control, and environmental restoration investments; \$10 billion for transit and rail to reduce traffic congestion and gas consumption.

Wait, it gets better: \$126.1 billion to help workers hurt by the economy via unemployment benefits, job training, increased COBRA healthcare benefits and Medicaid funding and technology; \$6 billion for wireless and broadband grants to underserved communities so that they can compete via e-commerce, education and healthcare; \$430 million increase in SBA 7(a) loan funding (SBA loans have dropped 57 percent compared to the

(See Alford, Page 9)

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.
THE TECH SHALL SET YOU FREE

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: Parker Philpot Martine Ramos Lés Pierres Streater Sheila Thompson</p>	<p>Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief Don Snook, Graphics Ed & Betty Brown, Founders</p>
---	--

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association
and West Coast Black Publishers Association