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The Fortland Observer

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OPINION



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Failing in Healthcare

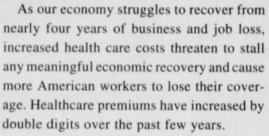
Solutions from both political parties fall short

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

As the country prepares for the national Democratic and Republican conventions this summer, 44 million uninsured Americans are undoubtedly waiting to hear of a healthcare plan that will provide medical insur-

ance for them and their families.

Unfortunately, the proposals made by both parties thus far, fall short in meeting the desperate need for major changes in our national healthcare system. In the meantime, uninsured families, small business employers, as well as corporate leaders are all holding their breath hoping that the government will intervene in what is rapidly becoming America's number one domestic crisis.



The Congressional Budget Office reports that for every 1 percent increase in healthcare cost to businesses, 200,000 workers lose healthcare coverage because their employers can no longer afford to pay the high insurance premiums. The situation has gotten so bad that even the leaders of the nations' largest corporations are now calling on the government to



Free market capitalists, such as General Motors Chairman Richard Wagoner and Bill Ford, chairman of Ford Motor Company, are both looking to the government to reform a healthcare system they say hurts corporate America's ability to compete in the global economy.

The current proposals from both major political parties and their Presidential candidates appear to fall short of meeting the healthcare and insurance needs of our citizens. President Bush's



Judge Greg Mathis

vides healthcare coverage to all U.S. citizens, as too expensive. However, emergency room treatment, which is where most of the uninsured go when they are sick, costs nearly as much as it would to provide insurance to those without coverage.

When people without insurance obtain high cost emergency care, U.S. taxpayers end up footing the bill - so we might as well pay on the front side by investing tax dollars in a program that provides access to quality preventative healthcare and treatment to all Americans.

Judge Greg Mathis is chairman of the Rainbow PUSH-Excel Board and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

proposals to help people buy insurance through tax credits and health savings accounts would have little impact for the working poor, who are the majority of the uninsured. Democratic candidate John Kerry's plan would expand healthcare coverage for more people but still falls short of an overhaul that would provide universal access to health care.

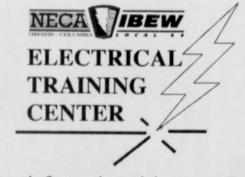
Both political parties regard universal healthcare, which pro-

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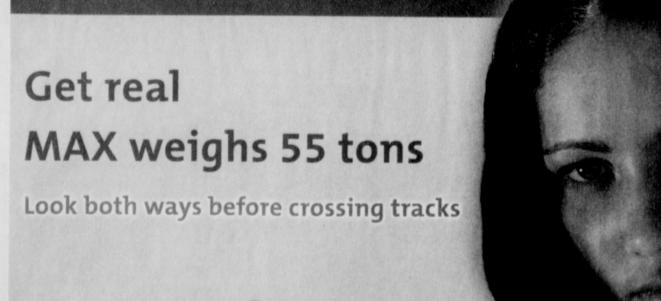
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Quiet Form of Racism Persists

BY RON WEBER

For decades I have heard mains underneath. how well African Americans are doing today in comparison better access to college grants, with earlier times. Reports tell scholarships and low interest far these days to hear about the

the surface, much racism re- racism as possible and hope

Today, minority students have pletely. of how the Civil Rights era of a loans than ever before. Lending prisoner abuse in Iraq. If our

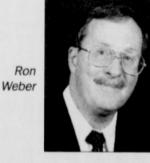
• Our job as humans is to try

possible and hope someday it

to limit as much racism as

someday it is eradicated com-

We don't have to look very



seen many positive changes on

few decades ago did so much agencies in the housing market prisoners of war had been white for black Americans. I have no longer "redline" the way they even preached this myself. How- did in the mid-20th century. Emever, a few years ago I decided ployment opportunities have to take a closer look. What I opened up for more minorities. found was that although we have Many black Americans are better off than they were decades ago.

> So things are much better entire populations keep racial now, right? Think again. Behind this façade of hypocrisy, fear and stupidity continue to lurk. While African Americans and other minorities may be free to America could be free. Asians pursue their portion of the and Native Americans have also American dream, it does not mean that they will necessarily get it. Although discrimination of all races, including Hispanic may not face us as outwardly as it once did in America, a quiet Iraq and Afghanistan fighting form of racial hatred still exists.

> admit it, but racism is there, and Whenever you have a minority situation, there will always be tributor to the Portland Obsome mistrust between major- server. He is a writer and ity and minority. Our job as hu- speaker on African-American mans is to try to limit as much history.

British or Russian soldiers, I doubt they would have been treated nearly as bad as the Iraqis. There always seems to be some kind of myths surrounding people who are different than us. Preconceived ideas of hatred alive.

Like many U.S. wars before, thousands of black soldiers helped win the peace so that fought in this country's battles. Right now, American soldiers and Middle Eastern are over in and dying for the American way. Most people do not want to It's time the "whites only" signs come down for good; even the

Ron Weber is a regular con-

is eradicated completely.

sometimes it cuts both ways. ones still in our heads.