

OPINION

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Voting is the Only Course of Action

Let your voice be heard

BY BENTLEY DEBARDELABEN

As a black man, I understand that my having my right to vote has come at a very high price. Many of my ancestors, directly and indirectly, were denied, harassed and even murdered to secure the right to vote.

Thus, I take my civic duty to be engaged in the process of equal access to the government of, by and for the people, seriously.

As a teenager, I recall how my mom participated in our community as a citizen. She canvassed our neighborhood with leaflets, served on boards and served as a poll worker. Currently at age 69, she is still active.

I realize that my political awareness was formed by my mother's modeling, teaching and her sharing stories regarding the plight of our family from Alabama. I still get chills reflecting on the first time that I registered to vote and then voted, especially when I think on how my great uncle was murdered

in the south under Jim Crow laws, which denied him that right.

Moreover, there have been moments in my life when I have considered running for public office. And who knows, I still may.

This year I am attentive to the race for the office of the President of the United States unlike any time in history. With the first African American nominated as the candidate for a major political party, no matter what outcome, I believe America has turned a corner as it relates to the issue of race and the nation's highest office. Yet, there is still much that needs to be done.

Moreover, I am aware that I must continue doing my part by writing letters to the editor, and contacting my state and national lawmakers.

What leads me to vote? It is my constitutional right. I implore you to let your voice be heard by doing the same. Vote!

Bentley deBardelaben is Minister for Communication in Justice Ministries for the United Church of Christ.



Obama has Already Made History

Campaign transcends race

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Sen. Barack Obama broke new ground when he became the first African American major-party presidential candidate. The historical significance of his candidacy has given hope to voters young and old and inspired an interest in the political process for millions of Americans from all walks of life. But Obama's campaign transcends race. His efforts to mobilize and energize voters have, literally and figuratively, changed the face of politics.

The Obama campaign raised a record \$150 million in September. Overall, the Senator and would-be president has raised an unprecedented \$600 million. This number almost equals the combined amount George Bush and John Kerry raised during the 2004 presidential campaign.

For years, political fundraising focused on expensive dinners that catered to the elite. The crowds at these shindigs were highly educated, well-connected



and, to be blunt mostly white.

Obama took a different approach to fundraising. According to his campaign, the average donation for their record-breaking September was under \$100.

He has not relied on a small contingent of wealthy donors to fund his efforts. Indeed, the campaign has several high-level, high profile donors. But it's those contributions from the average American - students, retirees, single mothers - that have fed Obama's coffers. More than three-million donors have contributed to the campaign, many of them giving just \$10 or \$15.

Most of the campaign's donations are made via the internet, another tool that Obama has used to his advantage.

While he is certainly not the first candidate to embrace the internet as a fundraising mechanism, Obama's approach - sending regular emails to subscribers, debunking rumors spread by his competition, uploading first look campaign videos, announcing his VP choice - has certainly changed the game. Much of the funds Obama has raised

has been spent on advertising. And though he has invested heavily in traditional media - television and radio ads - Obama has, once again, stepped outside of the box, buying ads in video games and on the sidelines at sporting events. This untraditional approach to ad spending has reached voters who have, in the past, been overlooked.

The election is less than a week away. And, if the polls can be trusted, it seems that Obama's innovation has paid off. He's leading his opponent in several key states and is picking up new undecided voters everyday. It appears that America is set to elect its first black president.

While the election is far from over and your support is critical during this final stretch, one thing is certain: Years from now, presidential candidates hoping to follow in his footsteps, will borrow from the Obama playbook and hope that some of his strategic brilliance rubs off on them.

Judge Greg Mathis is vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Obama for America

'A bright day will come!'

BY JUNE POTTER ACOSTA

There are only days remaining before one of the most important elections in our history.

I believe that Sen. Barack Obama is the most charismatic and superior candidate for president in many generations!

I've been volunteering at Obama headquarters in southeast Portland. The level of enthusiasm is phenomenal, both in the atmosphere of the office as well as the telephone responses.

I remember how delighted and excited I was when the Civil Rights movement began in earnest so many decades ago. African Americans were fighting back, refusing to tolerate the insults and putdowns!

So, too, I sense that same attitude among so many white people today;

now happy to support Obama, a black man of superior intelligence and achievement.

I never envisioned the joyful acceptance of a black presidential candidate, so soon! I thought perhaps, 70 or 80 years in the future a black candidate might be reluctantly supported. So I am thrilled that Obama is here and now!

In the campaign office and among us, there is a marvelous camaraderie. We smile at each spontaneously. We are bonded by mutual devotion to a new political messiah!

Consider this quote from a speech that Obama made in 2004, when Democrats so hoped that positive change would come with the last presidential election.

"The people will rise up in November - and out of this long political darkness, a bright day will come!"

It will come to pass! I do believe!

June Potter Acosta is a regular contributor to the Portland Observer.



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Portland Observer Endorsements

Nov. 4 General Election



• U.S. President:
Barack Obama



• U.S. Senator:
Jeff Merkley

- **Measure 54: Yes**
 Allows 18-year-old voters in school board elections.
- **Measure 55: Yes**
 Allows legislators to finish term in original district after redistricting.
- **Measure 56: Yes**
 Eliminates double-majority election requirement
- **Measure 57: No**
 Doesn't address root cause of crime. Costly, but better alternative to Measure 61.
- **Measure 58: No**
 Unwise mandate on bilingual education.
- **Measure 59: No**
 Unlimited federal tax deduction would reduce state budget by \$1.2 billion.
- **Measure 60: No**
 Unfair to teachers.
- **Measure 61: No**
 Way too costly. Doesn't address root cause of crime.
- **Measure 62: No**
 Takes away money from schools.
- **Measure 63: No**
 Sacrifices safety in building permit process.
- **Measure 64: No**
 Limits political rights of public employees.
- **Measure 65: No**
 Limits rights of political parties to nominate candidates.

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