

THE Skanner

Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now

Bernie Foster
Founder/Publisher

Bobbie Dore Foster
Executive Editor

Jerry Foster
Advertising Manager

Christen McCurdy
News Editor

Patricia Irvin
Graphic Designer

Monica J. Foster
Seattle Office Coordinator

Susan Fried
Photographer



The Skanner Newspaper, established in October 1975, is a weekly publication, published every Wednesday by IMM Publications Inc.

415 N. Killingsworth St.
P.O. Box 5455
Portland, OR 97228

Telephone (503) 285-5555
Fax: (503) 285-2900

info@theskanner.com

www.TheSkanner.com

The Skanner is a member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association.

All photos submitted become the property of The Skanner. We are not responsible for lost or damaged photos either solicited or unsolicited.

©2018 The Skanner. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission prohibited.

THE Skanner.com

- Local News
- Pacific NW News
- World News
- Opinions
- Jobs, Bids
- Entertainment
- Community Calendar

LOCAL NEWS BRIEFS

Updated daily.

SAVE THE DATE

The Skanner
Foundation
MLK
Breakfast
January 21
2019

Opinion

Black Non-Voters Spit in the Face of a Generation of Heroes

*"I'm just one vote."
"My vote won't matter."
"Them White folks gone do
what they wanna do anyway."*



Jeffrey
Boney
NNPA
Columnist

These are some of the many excuses given by some African Americans when it comes to exercising their right to vote; a right fought for by many people in this country—both Black and White—that has cost so many people so much; even their very lives.

Obtaining the right to vote was a major part of the civil rights history of African Americans in this country. However, many Black people have turned a blind eye to the struggle that it took to obtain the right to vote, flippantly taking it for granted today.

From 1880-1965, there was an all-out assault on preventing African Americans from voting by having their right to vote deemed invalid.

Those who sought to disenfranchise Black people knew the importance of voting. They knew that voting had a profound impact on representation, political outcomes and critical decisions that needed to be made concerning major issues.

Many southern states knew that the Fifteenth Amend-

ment prohibited blatant disenfranchisement on the basis of race or prior enslavement, those states came up with a slew of new and innovative alternative techniques to disenfranchise African Americans.

The traditional techniques of violence, such as with the Ku Klux Klan, and voter fraud relative to vote counting, welcomed new friends to the game as these new methods were introduced to American politics.

Poll taxes restrict the Black vote

After the ability to vote was extended to all races by the enactment of the 15th Amendment, many southern states enacted a poll tax as a means of restricting Black people from voting. A poll tax was a flat-rate tax levied on all members of a population, often as a prerequisite to voting, which often included a grandfather clause. This grandfather clause allowed any adult male whose father or grandfather

had voted in a specific year prior to the abolition of slavery to vote without paying the tax. Of course, this was problematic for Black people, because no Black person had the right to vote prior to the abolition of slavery and, therefore no Black person could qualify.

Whites used impossible literacy tests to bar Blacks from the polls

The first formal voter literacy tests were introduced in 1890. Literacy tests were used to keep Black people from voting and were administered at the discretion of the officials in charge of voter registration. Whites did not have to take the literacy test, if they could meet the alternate requirements that systematically excluded Blacks. These included demonstrating political competence in person, which Black people tried to adhere to, or falling under the Grandfather Clause. If the official wanted a person to pass, he could ask the easiest question on the test. The same official would require a Black person to answer every single question correctly, in an unrealistic timeframe, in order to pass.

Southern states abandoned the literacy test only when forced to do so by federal legislation. The Voting Rights

Act of 1965 suspended the use of literacy tests in all states in which less than 50 percent of voting-age residents were registered as of November 1, 1964, or had voted in the 1964 presidential election. After the passage of the Voting Rights Act, Black voter registration in the South increased significantly.

Much has been given

The names of individuals who lost their lives in the struggle for freedom during the modern Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968 are inscribed on the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Ala. Those unsuspecting victims became martyrs, killed because of their focus on securing voting rights and fighting for the civil rights of Black people in this country.

On August 13, 1955 in Brookhaven, Miss., Lamar Smith was shot dead on the courthouse lawn by a White man in broad daylight while dozens of people watched. The killer was never indicted, because no one would admit they saw a White man shoot a Black man. Smith had organized Blacks to vote in a recent election.

Read the rest of this commentary at
TheSkanner.com

Facebook has Failed the Black Community Too Many Times

"Mr. Zuckerberg, would you be comfortable sharing with us the name of the hotel you stayed in last night?" That was a question Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) posed to Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg's congressional hearing in which the latter responded with an awkward "no." It is likely that Mr. Zuckerberg found this question too intrusive, yet when 87 million users lost their privacy under Facebook's neglectful watch; its CEO doesn't bat an eye, offering only an insubstantial, "I'm sorry."

The Cambridge Analytica hack is just one of many transgressions by Facebook, in which an apology will simply not suffice. Facebook's laissez-faire attitude toward privacy protection is not just a betrayal and insult to its user base, but it is compounded by its lack of vigilance to protect one of the platform's most vulnerable user demographics — African Americans.

For example, late last year, Facebook hosted Russian sponsored ads that portrayed African Americans in a less than flattering light. The ads had political motives and aimed to sway viewers to vote for then-presidential candidate Donald Trump. Another example arose just this month when the news broke



Derrick
Johnson
NNPA
Interim
President &
CEO

that the largest Black Lives Matter group on the social media platform was in fact a fraudulent page, created by a White man in Australia designed to discredit the youth-

"These communities cannot be satiated with an apology

based civil rights group.

Either of the above examples is enough to seriously question the general disposition and integrity of the social media juggernaut. However, Facebook's lack of transparency, reliability, and accountability in these two situations also substantiates the increasing doubt regarding the fairness of the 2016 presidential election. Specifically, Cambridge Analytica worked with the Trump campaign, and among the data it misused were pictures, profiles, and even direct messages between users. This data

mining—which used the personal information of 87 million people without their consent — was used to develop techniques for the firm's work on the Trump campaign. This combined with the racially charged Russian ads, some of which explicitly purporting that Black Lives Matter activists were murderers, is not only wholly unscrupulous, it also carries the stench of voter manipulation. Swaying voters toward one candidate based on racially exploitative lies smacks of a type voter suppression that, while more insidious, is not unlike the voter ID laws that currently attempt to suppress the Black vote.

As a pioneer in the tech industry serving 1.4 billion users each day, Facebook has a moral and ethical obligation to protect those most vulnerable on its sites, including minors, women, and LGBT, Brown, and Black communities. As a whole, Americans are more tolerant of hate speech than others in the world; however, this does not and should not permit Facebook to turn a blind eye to the copious amounts of hate speech the Black community, and other vulnerable communities experience on Facebook. These communities cannot be satiated with an apology, but rather require a clear and thorough

plan of defensive and offensive action. More care needs to be taken by Facebook and its tech industry peers to ensure that in connecting people with one another, these connections are positive — a sentiment which Mr. Zuckerberg said his company strives to achieve.

Moving forward, companies like Facebook can take a greater stance against those who wish to use online spaces to corrupt. First, they must be on the offense, not just deleting but reporting and perhaps even fining advertisers with such ill intent. Second, they should also be more aggressive on the defensive front, removing the burden of reporting hate speech from the user and instead placing it on themselves. While Facebook has already started this approach, devoting more resources to this effort would allow for a quicker and more intelligent sweep of bad content. Additionally, these resources must include hiring more people of color across all levels of the company—an initiative that would address Silicon Valley's failure to take real steps towards embracing diversity. This is an issue brought up on Day 2 of Zuckerberg's hearing.

Read the rest of this commentary at
TheSkanner.com