

EDITORIALS/COMMENTARY



By Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Newt Gingrich is playing racial politics and he is playing to win. First he says that black children should get jobs as janitors (why not suggest they get the same consulting contract he did at Freddie Mac – I'm with Mitt Romney here, what did Gingrich tell Freddie Mac that was worth more than a million dollars). Then he says that he wants to tell the NAACP that we should demand jobs, not food stamps. He so



By Cheryl Pearson-McNeil
NNPA Columnist

Awards Show season is here! The whirlwind season honoring the best of what and who we watch onscreen (both large and small) officially kicked off with the Golden Globes. Even if Awards Shows aren't your thing, you can't deny that you didn't feel pride when you heard or read (if you didn't watch) that the fabulous Octavia Spencer won a golden statuette for Best Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture for *The Help*, and gave the most



By Mignon Clyburn
Federal Communications Commission

While the obstacles confronting us today may differ in some ways from the ones faced by Civil Rights icons such as The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we still find ourselves fighting for equality and equity in far too many of our nation's communities. Stark disparities remain within the workplace, in education, health care, advanced technologies, and civic engagement.



By Marc H. Morial
NNPA Columnist

"We hope what youngsters get out of the story is that under some dire circumstances we prevailed. We performed successfully and we opened doors that they don't have to fight to." Col. Charles McGee, "Red Tails" technical consultant and surviving member of the Tuskegee Airmen

Last week, I attended the

bristles at Fox commentator Juan Williams that he gets a standing O in South Carolina. And he has repeatedly described President Barack Obama as a "food stamp" President. It's race baiting, pure and simple, and few have called him on it.

The true food stamp story goes something like this. In 2006 just 26.5 million Americans received food stamps. By 2011 the number had spiked to more than 45 million people. This has been the result of the Great Recession that has left at least 13 million people officially unemployed for an average of 40 weeks. Those are the official numbers, but they may be twice as high when we consider the people who have part time work and want full time work and those who have dropped out of the labor market because it costs too much to look for work. President Obama is not a food

moving acceptance speech of the evening, paraphrasing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Chances are you didn't watch Octavia's victory (by the way, she rocked a gorgeous Tadashi Shoji lavender chiffon draped V-neck gown with jewel details) because according to Nielsen, the Golden Globes does not rank in the top 10 of Awards Programs viewed by African-Americans.

The top three 2011 shows were the Grammy Awards, BET Awards and Academy Awards, which attracted 4.1 million, 3.9 million and 2.5 million Black viewers respectively. The research validates the very common sense fact that we are more inclined to watch TV shows and movies that most heavily include people who look like us.

Case-in-point: African-American viewership for the 2010 Academy Awards was up

stamps president; he is a president who inherited an economic crisis. Newt is being extremely disingenuous and extraordinarily racist in his food stamps rap.

While about 14 percent of all of us – one in seven – gets food stamps, in some states the number is as high as one in five. In South Carolina, for example, poverty is greater than it is in the nation and 18.2 percent of South Carolinians get food stamps. The number in Maine is 18.6 percent, in Louisiana 19.2 percent, in Michigan 19.7 percent, in Oregon 20.1 percent, and in Mississippi 20.7 percent. Given the racial dynamics in South Carolina, did Newt decide to show out in a state where there is more poverty than elsewhere, and when the racial resentments (remember I said Confederate flag waving) don't

a whopping 43% over the previous year. We represented 11% of the 26.8 million Americans who tuned in. That's because we had major representation in 2010 and therefore a vested interest in participating in Hollywood's biggest night vicariously from our living rooms. 2010, of course, was the year of *Precious*, giving Mo'Nique a Best Supporting Actress Oscar.

Newcomer Gabourey Sidibe was nominated for Best Actress. Morgan Freeman (who was honored at this year's Golden Globes with the prestigious Cecil B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award from none other than Sidney Poitier) walked away with a golden statue for Best Actor in *Invictus*.

This year's season could be comparable to the 2010 season. If Oscar buzz is on point, both Viola Davis and Spencer will receive Oscar nominations for their

American news and information radio station, WBOK (AM), after it was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

As a newspaper publisher for some 14 years, I have a deep felt respect for newspaper publishers. And last year, I was thrilled to learn that Danny Bakewell was elected chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

Since the first African American newspaper was published in 1827, the Black Press has had a great impact on societal, political and civic thought and engagement. In the '60s, '70s and '80s, however, African American publications faced severe obstacles, and in many cases were forced to lay off employees and cut out sections. The recent eco-

"Red Tails" Shoots Down Stereotypes

years to get major studio financing. "I showed it to all of them," he said, "and they said no, we don't know how to market a movie like this." He wound up pouring \$58 million of his own money into the project.

The second reason I am excited about this film is that recent comments by political candidates denigrating the African American community and reviving outdated stereotypes, make it more important than ever to spotlight the historic contributions and public service of black Americans.

In just the last few weeks, two presidential candidates, Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich, have perpetuated false and de-

Who Gets Food Stamps?

need much fuel to turn to fire. He got a standing O by pandering to racial stereotypes. And that pandering may well have propelled him into victory.

Newt has managed to paint food stamps as a black program, partly by describing our president as a "food stamps" president, and partly by putting food stamps in context with the NAACP. But Mr. Gingrich, oft-touted for his intelligence, must be bright enough to know that most food stamp recipients are not African American. Indeed, according to the Associated Press, 49 percent of food stamp recipients are white, 26 percent are African American, and 20 percent are Hispanic. Indeed, some of the folks who gave Newt a standing O are food stamp recipients, but they chose to bond

And the Award Goes To...

roles in *The Help* as best Actress and Best Supporting Actress at this year's Academy Awards. I'm going to be glued to the screen to see how well our girls do and which designers they'll be wearing (wouldn't it be great if they each rocked a Black designer's gown)? Given our viewing trends, I suspect more of us would be even more inclined to watch this year if Eddie Murphy hadn't dropped out as the host. But we'll see come February 26.

The movie industry generates approximately \$12 billion in annual revenue in theaters. African-Americans account for 11% of moviegoers. The most frequent moviegoers in our community are 12-17 year-olds and 45-54 year-olds. Blacks are more likely to prefer Action Adventure flicks, followed by Comedies.

Red Tails, the powerful George Lucas film about the cou-

rageous Tuskegee Airmen recently opened. Did you exercise your consumer power and rush to see it? Opening weekend it claimed the #2 spot at the Box Office bringing in more than \$19 million according to the Hollywood Reporter. Kudos to George Lucas for telling one of our stories!

Dealing with Hollywood isn't rocket science people. We whine and complain about not having enough movies that reflect us. But we know that whining and complaining amongst ourselves doesn't cut it. If we want to prove our clout we have to show up and put our money where our complaining mouths are, because Hollywood speaks fluent "Green"- as in mulah, cash or money. Both advertising and marketing dollars, as well as film distribution, are based on the early performance of each release, which explains why some films

are here today, gone tomorrow. Ticket sales data is released based on the Friday (starting at 12:01 a.m.) through Saturday sales and Sunday estimates. We hear/read about the "top five" rated movies on Monday. A notable exception to that rule was *The Help*, which opened in the #2 spot last August; then shot to #1 – thanks to word of mouth and the controversy surrounding the film – then stayed there for three weeks, grossing \$169,585,995. POWER!

Lastly, I have the honor once again, of being a member of the Selection Committee for the 42nd NAACP Image Awards (the 41st Image Awards ranked #8 on the top 10 of Awards Programs for African-Americans in 2011), which airs on a new network this year on February 17. Hmmm. What to wear and how to style my hair? Decisions, decisions. For all of us,

significantly lower when compared to the overall population, putting many of our communities in further jeopardy. The Internet is liberating in a variety of ways, and by embracing broadband technologies through NNPA and Black Press USA, Bakewell is helping to bring equality to all.

Bakewell's dedication to bringing communities together, strengthening civic engagement, creating stronger communities and building equity in minority communities, will have a tremendous impact for years to come. Although his work is far from over, his legacy is already secured. Our nation is greater because of his thoughtful vision and steadfast dedication. For that, and so much more, thank you, Danny Bakewell.

trained at Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University in Alabama. Despite discrimination, during World War II, these brilliant airmen fought fascism abroad and returned to fight racism back home.

Lucas teamed with black co-executive producer, Charles Floyd Johnson, and black director, Anthony Hemingway to create a film they all hope will inspire a new generation of African American youth. The message of the movie...the lesson of the Tuskegee Airmen is clear: We have the power to overcome any barrier to serve our nation and achieve our dreams. One movie won't solve the problem, but we think it's an important step in the right direction.

to 45 million Americans!

Most food stamp recipients are people who used to work, and they would, frankly, rather be working than receiving assistance. But they have downsized their lifestyles, their dreams, and their expectations. They are waiting for the job market to roar back. Half of the 45 million are white, and some of them stood to applaud Gingrich. Do they really think that a man who disdains the poor will provide them with a lifeline? Do they really believe that a man who is selling wolf tickets to the NAACP is really concerned with the well being of the least and the left out. The poverty that too many Americans experience is repugnant. The extent to which politicians trivialize such poverty is character revealing. Who will put American back to work? Who will alleviate poverty?

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