

## No longer allowed to state the obvious

In his weekend announcement that he was now a candidate to become the mayor of Vancouver, city councillor Raymond Louie played his own race card.

The Vancouver-born son of Chinese immigrants, the 43-year-old Louie would be the city's first Chinese-Canadian mayor and he thinks that's a real plus. "Me being Chinese happens to be a circumstance I obviously find myself in," he said, speaking at his opening campaign speech at a Chinese restaurant, "but I would say it's a positive thing and I think I can bring that experience, being from an ethnic community, to the equation..."

At last reports, none of his opponents - or for that matter, anybody else - is jumping up and down and hurling accusations at Louie that he is somehow trying to divide voters along racial lines.

Nor should they. Al Louie has done is state the obvious. He is Chinese. So are many Vancouver voters. And there is an argument to be made that his life experiences working in his parents bakery and growing up as part of an ethnic minority - which not that long ago was treated rather shabbily by Canada's mainstream culture - would bring a different perspective to city hall.

All of which, of course, brings us to the phony outrage launched in the U.S. by Democratic presidential hopeful Senator Barack Obama and his supporters against the 1984 Democratic vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro, currently a supporter of Obama's opponent Senator Hillary Clinton.

This is the same Obama who for years - until it recently became a public controversy - has remained silent while his minister, a man Obama described as his "spiritual mentor," preached a fiery brand of anti-white, anti-American paranoia to his huge Chicago congregation, going so far as to buying into the 9/11 conspiracy theory that it was all set up by the Bush administration.

As you likely know, Ferraro gave an interview to a small California newspaper and had the audacity to say that, "If Obama was a white man, he would not be in this position. And if was a woman (of any color) he would not be in this position. He happens to be very lucky to be who he is. And the country is caught up with the concept."

This doesn't mean - and Ferraro certainly didn't imply it - that Obama's only political asset is the color of his skin. Far from it.

Anybody who has watched this man give a speech knows how good he is on his feet.

Yet it seems absolutely obvious that a rookie, white male senator would not have been chosen to give the keynote address at the 2004 Democratic convention and that a white candidate would not have received 91 per cent of the black vote in the Mississippi primary last week, just as it is equally obvious, as Ferraro herself says, she would not have been chosen on Walter Mondale's 1984 presidential ticket had she not been a woman.

"In 1984 if my name had been Gerald Ferraro, not Geraldine, I would never have gotten nominated," she said.

Her gender, she argues, wasn't her only asset. She was qualified for the job, as is Obama, but so were many other more traditional, i.e. white male, candidates. The deal breaker was he gender, plain and simple.

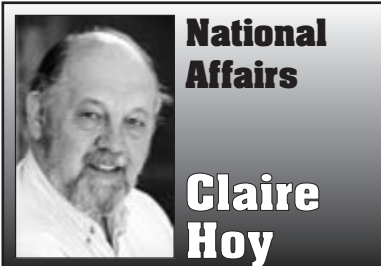
She says the same thing is true of Obama's candidacy. "Why is his candidacy historic? Can you give me another reason why it is an historic campaign? Why are we afraid to say this? I am absolutely stunned by this whole thing. I'm not saying he isn't qualified, never did I say that. ..."

Yet, because of the politically staged uproar, Ferraro stepped down from Clinton's finance committee and Clinton herself felt compelled to apologize. Apologize for what, pray tell? That would be akin to Clinton who, quite legitimately, uses her gender his the same way that Obama has legitimately used his race to argue that her election would also be "historic."

And it would. In Clinton's case, she'd be the first female president. In Obama's case, he'd be the first black president. They both campaign openly on these truths, seeing them as a political positive, so how does it become "racist" when somebody such as Ferraro - who is not a racist, and everybody knows it - makes the same point?

This whole controversy over Ferraro's comments is yet another example of a world in which we're no longer allowed to state the obvious without it being twisted for selfish reasons and turned completely upside down.

All you have to do is scream "racist" or "sexist" and hat ends the debate. In the meantime, those who are overtly touting their race and/or sex to their own advantage go merrily along on their way to glory.



National Affairs

Claire Hoy

## Being judgemental doesn't help

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Through my work, I have met over the years hundreds of people who hold high positions, bear great public trusts or who are highly thought of in their respective communities. I have great respect for many of these people, but I am not so naive as to think they are perfect.

Some of these people have ended up in scandals, and in some case, it has been demonstrated they did nothing wrong. The opposite has held in some other cases.

I have seen people I respect do things that have angered me, and while my image of them has been tarnished, I can still admire and look up to them for the entire

body of goodness I think they represent.

In Spitzer's case, the fact is he should have known better.

For one thing, he held elected office. Anyone in such a situation knows, or should know, there are some people who would like to see them out of office, and would be prepared to resort to underhanded tactics to see that happen. I have seen such tactics tried a lot of times in my years in this business, with varying levels of success. And the higher the office one holds, usually the more people who want that person out.

Spitzer also got into office with an image he had evidently built over his

career, as a squeaky-clean crusader against things that are shady or corrupt. Didn't he know the reckoning that he would have to face if his fooling around ever came to light?

The fact that the truth might some day come out should have occurred to him, and that people would be ready to jump on it when it did.

Like I stated before, he should have known better.

Sex scandals don't have to mean political oblivion. Bill Clinton was able to survive his woes, although his position in history will undoubtedly be compromised. He survived, I think, because the public was prepared to forgive. I remember

news commentators at the time weighing the possibilities that he would be forced to leave office. I well recall one prominent local commentator using the word "dead" to describe Clinton's administration. Yet a couple of days later, opinion polls were released, stating Clinton's numbers were holding (they may have been up a little). I remember hearing that and thinking, "The guy's going to get through this," and he did.

He might still end up becoming whatever the male equivalent of a First Lady is called in the United States.

I feel for Spitzer, I feel for his friends, I feel for his family. But he has no one to blame but himself.

## Waste management information guide coming to homes

During March, the 2008/2009 Waste Management Guide will be delivered to Peel households that receive curbside waste collection services.

A separate guide, customized to the waste disposal needs of apartments and condominiums, will also be delivered in March.

Both guides contain important information about the Region's waste collection programs, as well as the services offered at Peel's network of Community Recycling Centres.

"Residents are encour-

aged to hang on to their guide for easy reference throughout the year," commented Dave Gordon, manager of Waste Planning for the Region of Peel. "The information contained in the guide will serve as the first source of information on the Region's waste management programs and services."

Contents of the guide include:

- Curbside collection services — Everything you need to know about the Region's curbside waste collection services, including a holiday and exemption period sched-

ule, green bin and blue box tips, yard waste information and other collection guidelines.

- Multi-residential collection services — Essential program information for residents living in apartments and condominiums, including specialty collection services and important recycling information.

- Recycling Guide — A chart listing acceptable and not acceptable blue box items.

- Garbage tag, blue box and green bin pick-up locations — A complete listing of the distribution outlets through-

out Peel offering garbage tags for purchase. The list also includes locations where residents can purchase or exchange recycling boxes, green bins and kitchen containers.

- Community Recycling Centres — This section provides a detailed look at the services and disposal options offered at Peel's network of Community Recycling Centres.

Residents who do not receive their guide by the end of March should call the Region at (905) 791-9499 to obtain a copy.



## BOLTON YOUTH DONATES BIRTHDAY MONEY TO FTP

Jacob LaBrier, 11, was joined by his birthday buddies at a special presentation at Empire Theatres in Bolton, where he was given a "thank you" gift from the company, which is partnering with Family Transition Place for its fund-raising film festival Reel Cinema for Real Cause this week. LaBrier asked that his friends give him a small donation for FTP instead of birthday presents. His parents offered to match whatever he raised and together, they've donated \$1,000 to FTP. It will be used to support the Raise Respect campaign, which has a goal of raising \$1 million for FTP's violence prevention programs. Seen here are violence prevention educator Travis Greenley, Tyler Vander Doelen, Lucas LaBrier, Jamie Sheridan, Nicholas Airdrie, Mitchell Strong, Alastair Wilson, Jordan Milton, Devin Jones. (Bottom row) Jared Bowland, Jacob LaBrier, Sean Nottle, violence prevention educator Tracy King and the marketing, communications and resource manager for FTP, Sue Buckle.

Photo by Jon Yanoff