

INTRODUCTION

Am I Dreaming?

As I gaze out of the window, I see a scarecrow, a tin man, a lion and dispossessed lass with a restless puppy in pursuit.

They are skipping arm-in-arm down a highway paved with golden bricks, while chanting their delight at the prospect of visiting an omnipotent magic man. Suddenly they stop to engage another character. A brief dialogue ensues, then, and as if it were a rite of passage, the stranger performs a seemingly ritualistic song-and-dance to curry favor and acceptance of the motley crew.

*My pocket wouldn't be wanting,
My future so darn daunting
My life all full of pain
I would save and be thrifty, and things would be so nifty
If I only could restrain!*

After watching the routine, the tin man approvingly injects, "Since we're on our way to get a brain, a heart, some courage, and a ride to the Midwest, why don't we bring Black America along too? Maybe the wizard can give it some spending restraint." The group concurs, and now with its newest recruit in tow, in unison they trumpet, "*wee 'rrrrre off the see the wizard...*"

Is Black America really on the road to refashioning its spending habits, or am I dreamingly clicking my heels in search of a fantasy land that only exists somewhere over the rainbow?

The magnitude of Black America's earning capacity eclipses the Gross National Product of many sovereign nations. Unfortunately, the ability of Blacks to acquire wealth is dwarfed by its spending zeal. The cheerful readiness to spend, coupled with a fanatical devotion to its continuance, causes one to wonder if an entire race of people could be under the spell of a maniacal Svengali. Hold that thought.

It goes without saying that the Black community has played, and continues to play, a pivotal role in the underpinning of the United States of America. Years of trials and tribulations have ...