

WHOSE? Ours? Others? Everyone's?

SHAME!

...the disgraces of our neighborhood

by Ed Brown

A stroll through certain pockets of the West Las Vegas community vividly reveals that a cleanup campaign is badly needed...and now.

Just about every vacant lot is strewn with "hundreds, thousands, millions" pieces of broken glass. Take a look about 5:30 in the afternoons. The sun setting in the West gives an unsightly reflection that's not too complimentary.

Throughout the entire West Las Vegas community, one finds a need, without exaggeration, for about 20 miles of paved sidewalks. There are long stretches of this need on West Lake Mead from Losee to a few blocks West beyond Balzar; from Washington north on Highland to Cheyenne; from Losee west on Carey to a few blocks beyond the Carey Arms apartment complex...just to name a few.

For the most part, on the above streets, there's practically no street lights.

There are vacant "broken-down" houses on West Monroe, Van Buren and the surrounding areas. Some of those plots are lined with "leafless" trees. There's trash piled up on the property, broken windows, wrecked cars, half-burned mattresses, weeds and bushes getting out of hand and evidence of rodents running amok in those trash-infested areas.

The recent wind storms certainly have not been too kind to the area. Now there are pile-ups of trash strewn over many acres of vacant land.

Vacant buildings invite disaster. They are "fire traps" that beckon a flammatory situation that could cause much loss in lives and property...there's remains of a fire in some of the

buildings.

What about the people living in those areas? The LAS VEGAS SENTINEL visited with some of the residents and found a growing concern about the unsanitary deplorable condition.

"I'm trapped and not able to get out of this area," said one unemployed resident living near the vacant homes in the vicinity of Van Buren. "As you can see, this area is an invitation to drug traffic, drunks and tramps. I'm scared most of the time. My children are exposed to more than I can stand. My God! If I could only leave this area. Look at my wife... she's a nervous wreck."

This is the general sentiment expressed by the many living in some of the areas.

Several years ago, there was a concerted effort made to have a "cleanup campaign" in certain sections of West Las Vegas. Headed by some of the ministers, civic organizations and residents of the area, they called on the City Fathers to launch such a campaign and to improve the unsightly unsafe situation by also adding sidewalks and street lights. Some cleanup and area improvement activity started but disappeared just about as fast as it started.

A cleanup campaign is underway now in the North Las Vegas area.

A small group of citizens, Boy Scouts, churches and civic leaders have been waging an uphill battle against trash, junked cars and city eyesores since early spring.

Now sponsored by the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, the beautification campaign has focused not only on clean-up activities, but

also on the enforcement of city ordinances, repair of old homes and on promotion of contests and awards for school children.

Florence Poyser, campaign spokesman, has mixed emotions about the success of the overall effort. "It's a frustrating situation," she said. "As fast as we clean one area, another becomes a dumping ground."

Much of the vacant land and multiple housing as well as some of the older trailer parks are owned by absentee landlords who just don't care. The city has ordinances to cite the owners or to clean lots, but proceedings get bogged down in the chain of command," Poyser continued.

One of the positive steps taken by the North Las Vegas group is their follow-up program. The committee plans on touring "the best and the worst kept businesses and homes" in the city, distributing thank-you cards to the appropriate homes and offices.

During the weekend, there prevailed an unsightly trash pile on the vacant lot at the northeast corner of Carey and Highland. Standing about eight feet high, a pile of trash was dumped on the lot surrounded with "no dumping signs."

In the overall West Las Vegas area, there are many, many beautiful, well-kept homes and property. There are many, many blocks of "award-winning" apartment complexes and home tracts. There are a number of homes in the \$100,000 to \$250,000 class. Unfortunately, some are surrounded with these unsightly conditions.

It is evident that something needs to be done...and now.



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