

# Point of View

## Editorial

Jim Sartini, recently fired director of the Las Vegas Housing Authority, is an arrogant, classless buffoon. He proved this fact to us in front of approximately 500 invited guests who attended the 25th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon of the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County held in the Sahara Hotel Ballroom, Tuesday, Aug. 22.

The EOB, being the class act that it is, graciously presented Sartini and the Housing Authority with a plaque in appreciation for the cooperation and work they have performed in conjunction with the EOB through the years. This was done in site of the recent demise of the Authority's reputation due to overcharging for rents and overcharging for rents and large household appliances.

Instead of showing some class of his own by humbly accepting the award and taking his seat as other award recipients had, he pulled out a sheaf of notes, proceeded to try to defend his poor record as Housing Authority Director and then inflicted on those in attendance a 10 minute tirade as to how the media would react to the news that EOB had given him an award.

He and a few others in the audience thought he was being amusing. But not the majority of those present, many of whom were among the poor and less fortunate of our community and many more whose job it is to work for and with the needy.

What a pity that he even had the audacity of feel that he could hijack such a gathering and spiel out his ridiculous venom. Is he really that stupid or was he deliberately trying to negate the dignity and auspiciousness of the occasion?

Either way, he is a disgrace to this city and we are well rid of him -- and none too soon!

And as for our mayor, Ron Lurie, he's not much better. He was the perfect forerunner to Sartini, as he stood before this gathering and had the nerve to extoll the merits of the Housing Authority. Was that ineptness, or stupidity, or gall, or WHAT?

On Saturday, August 26, Washington, D.C. will witness an historic event -- the second Silent March of the NAACP. The first, held 72 years ago in New York City, brought to the nation's attention the plight of black Americans reeling under the impact of lynchings, segregated public facilities, housing schools. And in the South, the vote was denied to them.

The were discriminated against wherever they turned, and very little if any meaning went with the phrase "equal protection under the law." Race riots were still commonplace and they occurred in a number of cities -- Waco, Texas, Memphis, Tennessee and East St. Louis, Illinois.

Today race riots have been all but forgotten and discrimination and segregation, while still in existence, no longer are supported by laws.

The racial climate in this country has undergone a tremendous and a positive change since 1917, but we should not be lulled into complacency and fall into the trap of believing that because we have come this far, we can not go back.

This very real possibility lies behind the NAACP's decision to have a silent march in the nation's capitol. It is rightfully concerned that four recent negative decisions by a majority of the Supreme Court -- the legacy of Ronald Reagan -- threatened the progress black Americans have made. The march is meant to call the nation's attention to this concern and to prod congress into taking legislative action to reverse the court's decisions.

As NAACP Executive Director Benjamin L. Hooks said recently: "The present Supreme Court is more dangerous to the legitimate hopes and aspirations of black people in this nation than any Bull Connor with a firehouse; than any Jim Clark with a billy club; more dangerous than any Ross Barnett standing in the schoolhouse door saying, 'they shall not pass'."

Lest this concern he thought to be overstated, the French as usual have an apt phrase. "Les choses change, c'est la meme chose". The more things change, the more they stay the same.

As in 1917, we face the danger of having our just concerns ignored, unless we bring them forcefully to the forefront. The

## The Low Income Housing Shortage

by Norman Hill

Hundreds of thousands of Americans are homeless. Many of them are working people, and the fastest growing segment of the homeless consists not of mentally or physically debilitated individuals but of families with children. Millions more are on the brink of homelessness. Additional millions live in substandard or overcrowded housing.

As is usually the case with economic and social problems in America, blacks and other minorities are hardest hit. For example, while black and Hispanic households constitute 17 percent of all U.S. households, they make up 42 percent of those living in substandard housing and more than half of those living in units with holes in the floor or evidence of rat infestation. Remarkably, the proportion of non-poor black and Hispanic households living in substandard housing is actually greater than the

proportion of poor white households living in substandard housing.

The shortage of decent low income housing is largely attributable to a significant increase in the number of poor households and substantial reduction in the number of low rent housing units in the 1980's. Between 1978 and 1985, the number of poor households grew 25 percent, from 10.5 million to 13.3 million. For blacks, the increase was 34 percent, to 3.4 million. From 1970 to 1985 the number of rental units renting from \$250 per month or less declined from 9.7 million units to 7.9 million units (after accounting for inflation).

The growing number of poor people has increased the demand for low rent housing, while the supply of low rent units has declined. The result has been higher rents for the poor. For the typical black household, housing costs jumped 15 percent from 1978 to 1985 (compared to 6 percent for

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## Decent Housing Is A Human Right

By Congressman

Augustus F. Hawkins

A Congressional committee is now probing into the mismanagement at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD) during the Reagan Administration, and from the looks of it, the scandal is not a pretty picture. At the center of the controversy is the influence peddling, abuse and favoritism in HUD's administration of the Section 8 rent subsidy program to rehabilitate housing for low-income families.

It is ironic, in a sense, that the Reagan Administration almost succeeded in abolishing the Section 8 Rehab program while at the same time many former top officials profited from it. In some instances, a few minutes of conversation of talking to the "right people" yielded thousands of dollars

to consultants from these scarce housing funds. One consultant, who was a former special assistant to Secretary Pierce, received \$1.3 million in consulting fees. As Chairman of the Congressional Investigating Committee Tom Lantos stated, "the game played at HUD headquarters in Washington was 'Let's Make A Deal.'"

This scandal is particularly disturbing because it surfaces at a time when housing and homelessness are serious national problems. Low income people today face an unprecedented housing crisis due to the severe lack of affordable housing. A 1983 housing survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, found that 8.4 million renter median income of \$12,000. But just as difficult as it is to

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Silent March on 1989 is one way of doing that. If you can go to Washington on Saturday, August 26th you should. We urge widespread support for this most important effort to protect and preserve hard won civil rights gains.

## Political Points

By

Assemblyman

Wendell P. Williams

Major Gaming In West Las Vegas:

It's Time To Put Up Or Shut Up



During the 1989 session of the Nevada Legislature, Assembly Bill 845 created a new law which requires counties with populations of 400,000 or more to create gaming districts or gaming enterprise zones. In essence, the new law will allow local governments such as the City of Las Vegas to develop a redlining policy. Once the redlining district has been established, no proposals for casinos can be presented to the City Council unless your proposed site is located within the establishing gaming district.

The question that West Las Vegas must face and answer is an important one. One that regardless of the decision, will affect Las Vegas for many, many generations to come. The question is, "Should we move to or move not to be included in the City of Las Vegas' Gaming Enterprise Zone?"

Just last week the Gaming Control Board reported that Nevada Casinos earned a whopping \$4.4 billion dollars. That represents an 8.8 percent increase in gross profits. Allowing the state to collect a cool \$255.2 million in taxes, a 9.7 percent increase in tax revenue. It appears that casino gaming in Las Vegas is still the best game in town as far as business is concerned.

A few months ago there was a big controversy surrounding whether to allow the proposed Rhett Butler Casino to be located on Bonanza and Rancho Road. Also, other similar disputes have surfaced because of proposed casinos in residential communities. What the new casino district law will do is stop the fight each time a casino is proposed and allow just one fight at the time the gaming district is established by the City or County. The new state law requires as of January 1, 1990, that no state license for non-restricted gaming casinos can be issued in such a county unless the property is located in a designated gaming enterprise district.

The key issue surrounding building casinos near or in residential communities can be summed up in three words. Quality Of Life! The people that protest locating these casinos near them claim the casinos will reduce their Quality Of Life. However, the people that want these casinos claim the casinos will bring jobs and increase business activity which will in turn increase their Quality Of Life. Opponents of these proposals say the increase in people, traffic and the gaming atmosphere will damage their peaceful communities and Quality Of Life, while proponents say the increase in people, traffic, and the gaming atmosphere will bring employment and cash flow and enhance their Quality Of Life.

West Las Vegas must right now decide what Quality Of Life means to West Las Vegas.

It will be up to the Las Vegas City Council to create a gaming district map. The map has not been drawn up yet. We need to let City Hall know as soon as possible our decision and then lobby in support of our decision. Let's put up or shut up.

FOCAL POINT: For too long we have been masters of retrospect. For too long we have been shown to have 20/20 vision only in hindsight. For too long we have reacted when action should have been the first order of business. Remember, politics is the process of translating what we believe into public policy and practice. If we have a belief, about gaming and West Las Vegas, then let's go. Now!

POINT OF VIEW: Every race and nation should be judged by the best it has been able to produce, not by the worst. James Weldon Johnson.

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