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"THE PRICE OF RACISM"**

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NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS

Sentinel Voice

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 33

BROWN PUBLISHING COMPANY'S AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 9, 1992

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BOOZE IN THE HOOD

Part Two of a Three Part Series
By Victor S. Ingram

A 40-ounce bottle of malt liquor has an alarming presence in the African American community. Predominantly sold in the West Las Vegas area, 40-ounce beers have established an economic niche in a community plagued by poverty, crime, urban blight, and chronic drug abuse. In a community known for few viable economic opportunities, ten convenience stores within less than a two mile radius generate over 1-million dollars annually in beer and alcohol receipts. Called "40-ounces of terror" by some, malt liquor is sold in massive quantities and, according to police authorities, contributes to the high crime and gang violence which permeates the community. Last week the Sentinel-Voice provided expletives from Metropolitan Police Lt., Mike Ault, who commands the department's gang unit.

Ault said the department has long recognized alcohol's presence in violent behavior. He referenced an official department crackdown on teen drinking in the north east area which resulted in fewer arrests and incidents of violence. Locally, within the West Las Vegas community, opinions vary on the contribution of alcohol in the myriad of problems facing the community. Business owners refuse to cite alcohol as the exclusive agent in the clouded sphere of social issues.

"Alcohol has been around for thousands of years," says Ed McNeal, a 23-year West Las Vegas convenience store



Lewis Conner, owner of Seven Seas Restaurant and Lounge, responds to social responsibility of community businesses when selling beer and alcohol.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

owner. "The true problems are found with the consumption of drugs when mixed with alcohol." McNeal's Quick Check has been a staple source for the West Las Vegas community since many residents of the area could recall. The store, which is located on the corner of Martin Luther King and Carey carries an assortment of food and snack items.

McNeal, who served 20 plus years as an Air Force enlistedman, built the store into a successful business with the same work ethic which allowed him to parlay, at one time, ownership of two other locations within the area. McNeal refutes that alcohol and malt liquor are responsible for the current state of residents in the community. He chooses,

instead, to point to the the break down of the homogeneous family unit which was once the nucleus of our society. "You cannot divorce the home of its responsibility," said McNeal. He further stated the problems with youths today (See BOOZE, Page 11)

MAXIMUM SENTENCE GIVEN IN DENNY CASE



DAMIAN WILLIAMS

LOS ANGELES - Damian Williams received the maximum sentence of 10 years in prison Tuesday, for attacking trucker Reginald Denny and others during the opening hours of the Los Angeles riots last year.

With credit for time served (he was arrested on May 12, 1992), Williams, 20, could be released in less than four years. He was also fined \$1,000.

Denny drove into the developing riot sparked by the acquittal on state charges of four white officers in the beating of Rodney King.

Two officers were later sentenced to 30 months on federal charges.

"Mr. Williams, it is intolerable in this society to attack and maim people because of their race," said Superior Court Judge John Ouderkirk. Labeling Williams' crimes as "exceptionally violent," Ouderkirk added that though Williams had apologized to his victims, "his statement of remorse does not ring true," noting that Williams has performed a "victory dance" and had spit on Denny after throwing a brick, hitting Denny in the head.

Williams was convicted of mayhem in October for his role in the attack on Denny and of misdemeanor assaults on three Latinos and an Asian American.

"We are not bitter about the sentence...given the potential for two life sentences and 47 years," said defense lawyer Edi M.O. Faal, who will appeal. Others, however, were much angrier.

"Too harsh," said jury forewoman Carolyn Walters, in court with two other black jurors. "We thought the charges to begin with were excessive."

"It's a gross miscarriage of justice," said John Cager, First AME Church in south central Los Angeles.

Many of Williams' supporters have insisted that his sentence should, at (See Denny Case, Page 11)

CONTROVERSY FOLLOWS ELDERS' PROPOSAL OF DRUG LEGALIZATION

By Victor S. Ingram

Few imagined the political storm that would result after the United States' top doctor, Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders alluded to drug legalization during a speaking engagement at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The morally heated issue was announced Tuesday, December 7 as Elders said the issue needed further exploration to determine if it was a valid option for the United States. "We would markedly reduce our crime rate if drugs were legalized....I do feel that we need to do some studies," said Elders. Immediately the White House issued a statement refuting Elders comments as "personal" and not representative of the administration's strategy against drugs.

White House communications director Mark Gearan issued an official statement that the President has absolutely no intention of legalizing drugs nor performing any study for exploration. Elders, in turn, issued an official statement disclaiming her comments as "personal observations based on the

experiences of other countries." The statement continued to confirm that no funds were targeted for research for the issue: "there are no similar initiatives under consideration by the administration or the Public Health Service at this time."

Republicans were quick to scrutinize the administration's commitment to salvaging the U.S. drug problem. "I think President Clinton made a serious mistake when he appointed Dr. Elders as surgeon general. She should be replaced," said Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla.

Conservative groups called for an official apology or resignation. Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., provided a written statement: "Americans must be wondering if the surgeon general is hazardous to our health." Several European countries have enjoyed significant success with drug legalization, approaching the issue as a medical problem. The United States, however, has traditionally kept the issue on a morality level.



SURGEON GENERAL, JOYCELYN ELDERS

Prior to Elders' announcement, no high level cabinet official has ever suggested drug legalization. Supporters, including Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke, complimented Elders for her candor, courage, and fortitude for issuing the controversial proposal.

55 FILE FOR SEATS ON EOB BOARD

Fifty-five candidates filed for available seats on the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County, one of the largest nonprofit organizations in Nevada. EOB will elect new board members on Tuesday, December 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., in polling places throughout the valley.

Low-income residents eligible to vote may cast their ballot for one candidate representing the area they live in, at any of six polling locations:

1. EOB Administrative Office
2228 Comstock Dr., LV
2. EOB Senior Center
330 W. Washington, Suite 1, LV
3. EOB Health Clinic
750 Major St., Henderson

4. North Las Vegas Library
2300 Civic Ct. Dr., NLV
5. C. C. Young People's Library
4020 S. Maryland Pkwy, LV
6. Sunrise Library
5400 Harris, LV

The five (5) new board members to be elected by a public vote will represent the geographic areas of Clark County, City of Las Vegas, and North Las Vegas. EOB Board members are elected for a 3 year term and make up one-third of the 15 member board of directors governing the organization's overall operations. Winning candidates will become part of the EOB's board of directors beginning January 1994.