

NEWS CLIPS

DAVIS HEADS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES

Verlia Davis, longtime Las Vegas resident, community activist and social worker, has been appointed director of the Clark County Social Service Department. She will lead the department's 208 employees and administer the \$24 million budget. Davis is the county's fifth female department head and only its second black among the 35 different divisions, earning an annual salary of \$81,317. The 29-year resident is also an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County.

AIDS TAKING HEAVY TOLL ON BLACK MEN

ATLANTA- AIDS is exacting a growing toll on blacks and is now responsible for a third of all deaths among black men ages 25 to 44, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. AIDS also accounts for about a fifth of the deaths among black women in the same age range. The CDC report is the latest to demonstrate changes in the epidemic since the first cases were reported 15 years ago among gay white men. AIDS is now like other sexually transmitted diseases, which tend to strike minorities harder than whites, said Dr. John Ward, CDC's chief of AIDS surveillance. He pointed to the link between sex and drugs as another reason for the growth of AIDS among blacks.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL UNDERGOING TESTS

NEW YORK- The 1960's black activist formerly known as Stokely Carmichael underwent tests last week after experiencing severe pain in his leg. Carmichael, 54, who now goes by the name Kwame Toure and live in the West African nation of Guinea, was in New York to recruit members for his All-African People's Revolutionary Party. He was taken to Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, where he underwent a complete checkup to determine what caused the pain, said the party's spokeswoman Mawina Kouyate. "He'll be in the hospital a week or so and after the tests are complete we should have a more definitive answer," she said. Toure, former chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and an organizer of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, wrote "Stokely Speaks" and "Black Power."

COURT HEARS CASE OF 2 COPS WHO BEAT RODNEY KING

WASHINGTON- Former Los Angeles police officers Stacey Koon and Laurence Powell watched Tuesday as the Supreme Court heard debate on a case that could send them back to prison for the 1991 videotaped beating of Rodney King. The two served 30 months in prison on federal charges of violating King's civil rights. But an appeals court said the trial judge improperly lowered their sentences in violation of federal sentencing guidelines. If the high court agrees, Koon and Powell could be sent back to prison for more than four years. The decision could have a broad effect on sentencing guidelines which have criticized by judges as too restrictive. The trial judge who reduced the sentences had said that the officers had suffered enough because of an earlier trial on state charges in which they were found not guilty as well as the loss of their jobs. Justice Department lawyer Michael Dreeben said giving judges the power to deviate from the guidelines would be a "wholesale invitation" to return to the kind of widely varying sentences that the guidelines were enacted to prevent.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON HOSTS MUSLIMS

WASHINGTON-Celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan, Hillary Rodham Clinton hosted Muslim families at a reception in the Old Executive Office Building Tuesday. Clinton called the reception a "historic and overdue occasion," the first time adherents to Islam were invited to the White House for a religious event. Among those attending were Army chaplain Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad, the first Islamic chaplain in the U.S. military.

HEAVY POT SMOKING MAY IMPAIR LEARNING

BOSTON- Heavy marijuana users have trouble paying attention and taking in new information for at least a day after last using the drug, a Journal of the American Medical Association study said. The lingering effects are subtle and may be temporary; researchers do not know the impact on school and work performance. But "this casts serious doubt on the common belief among many marijuana users that they are fine once the marijuana high wears off," said Alan Leshner, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse which funded the study. Heavy users did worse on tests that measure the ability to pay attention and learn but not on basic memory tests. Previous studies on lingering mental effects have produced inconsistent results.

Group Plans to Open Chamber of Commerce in Black Community

By Nichole Davis
Sentinel-Voice

Nearly a dozen local residents met Saturday to discuss the feasibility of realigning or restarting a chamber of commerce in the black community.

Participants debated the best way to reestablish the Black Chamber of Commerce, which officially closed last year. At issue was a substantial unpaid debt the chamber owed at its closure to a federal agency.

"The outstanding debt is in the thousands," said John Gardner, who heads the new effort. "The actual amount will be disclosed when the lawyer calls the Economic Development Authority."

The former chamber programs director said the current leadership has been working to resolve the situation, and current debt payments are \$400 a month, he said. "That is a negotiable. Because of the longevity of that debt, it may be dropped or cut in half."

Although new leaders are concerned about past debts, they are more concerned about the organization's future.

"I would hate for the momentum of the realignment or the reestablishment of the chamber in the Afro-American community to lose its' spirit because of past history," Gardner said.

He said there is a clear need for a chamber in the black community.

"The purpose in re-establishing the chamber is that there is such a valid need in a city with over one million people with a 12-14 percent Afro-American population to have fair and equal representation in the state, city and county affairs that deal with economic and business matters," Gardner said.

California Chamber of Commerce CEO Aubry Stone was the guest speaker. He began his discussion with a brief assessment of current financial trends.

"We are rapidly reaching a point in our society when we can no longer go to a company at 25 and stay there until you retire," Stone said.

He pointed out four areas on which a potential chamber should be clear: its' purpose, ability to generate income, clear communication with the public and the ability to build coalitions.

In his experience, black chambers are challenged

frequently by whites and blacks who don't feel the need for a separate chamber.

"You've got to know why you exist. In no uncertain terms you have got to be able to defend your position when someone asks, and they will," Gardner said.

A sound philosophical foundation is not enough, "You've got to be able to generate and sustain revenue," he said.

A chamber should also be able to communicate their good works to the public.

"Put out our a newsletter, newspaper, a news sheet or whatever. You just got to get the word out to the public," Stone said.

Strong coalitions with other ethnic organizations, Stone said, can make the difference in tough negotiations.

He discussed a coalition with California Asian and Hispanic chambers which resulted in the shut down of the recent Wells Fargo-First Interstate Bank merger.

Until the bank agreed to give \$45 million in loans to minority businesses over the next 10 years, they were held to a complete stop, Stone said.

"We couldn't have done that

as the black chamber alone," he said.

His advice: "Try to create as many coalitions as you can. You don't have to agree on everything."

His final point: a new chamber does not necessarily mean starting over. Sometimes it's better to take organizational structure and program models from experts, regardless of their race, than to start over.

"White people have got some good models, and if you're in the loop, you can get them," he said.

The second half of the meeting was dominated by

questions surrounding the chamber closure.

Organizers were unsure whether a name change would be enough to avoid liability for the old debt, so a potential name change was discussed.

Changes in executive board composition, structure, and elections policy would be decided by an interim committee, group member said.

"The new board may or may not make it new," said Gardner, "but under any name or any charter it will still be the chamber that represent the Afro-American business community."

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