

NEWS CLIPS

FORMER CHAMBER PRESIDENTS HONORED

Past presidents of the Black Chamber of Commerce were honored last week when the Urban Chamber of Commerce hosted a Tribute to Black Heritage at the West Las Vegas Cultural Arts Center. More than 200 people attended the event to applaud the efforts of the following past presidents: Sarah Ann Knight-Predy, Dr. James McMillan, Dr. William (Bob) Bailey, Lonnie Chaney, James Porter, Rev. Sam Roberson, Louis Conner, Sr., Al Oneal, Kenneth Brass, Rev. Emanuel Wasson, Ruby Pilot and John Gardner.

CREDIT UNION HOSTS GRAND OPENING

The Enterprise Community Federal Credit Union which opened its doors January 28, held its official grand opening last Friday. Mike Waller, manager of the credit union, said the credit union was established to meet the needs of the community located in the federally-designated Enterprise Zone, which includes West Las Vegas, and "...to reach to those who are disenfranchised or underserved and assist them." The credit union is located at 626 9th Street.

ASKEW NAMED NEW COUNTY MANAGER

Dale Askew has been selected as Clark County Manager. Askew, who served as assistant county manager for 12 years, was appointed by the Clark County Board of Commissioners last week. He replaces Pat Shalmy who resigned last month.

CHAVIS JOINS NATION OF ISLAM

Rev. Benjamin Chavis Muhammad, former president of the NAACP has joined the Nation of Islam. Formerly a Christian minister, Chavis said he has "worked in nearly every organization committed to advancing the cause of our people." The organizations Chavis Muhammad has served include: the Southern Leadership Conference, Congress of Racial Equality, Congress of African People, the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, the National Council of Churches, the Rainbow Coalition and the National African American Leadership Summit. Regarding rumors about the impact his presence will have in the ministry because Farrakhan is 63 and has prostate cancer, he said talk of his succeeding Farrakhan is "wild speculation." Farrakhan is "strong, healthy and vibrant. He also said that he has been embraced by all of the ministry's leadership.

SULLIVAN RECEIVES \$1 MILLION TO BUILD SCHOOLS IN AFRICA

Reverend Leon Sullivan, a Philadelphia minister and founder of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers program, recently announced that George Solos, a well-known philanthropist, has contributed \$1 million to help build 100 schools for children in Southern Africa. OIC hopes to build schools in rural areas where schools do not exist. Additionally, 1,000 teachers will be sent to Africa to assist African teachers in establishing the schools. Through the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help, another organization headed by Sullivan, millions of books, pencils, pens and other supplies are being gathered to better equip schools throughout Africa. The program, known as the "Schools for Africa Campaign," was launched with a shipment of over 300,000 books and other supplies to schools in Ethiopia. At the next African-African-American Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe, July 20-24, further plans will be announced on the project to improve education for the children of Africa. Sullivan said he is committed to increasing the literacy rate of sub-Saharan Africa because, "if you can't read, you can't lead." For more information please call (800) 835-3530.

NATIONAL MEDIA COALITION FOUNDER HONORED

Pluria Marshall, the founder and chairman of the National Black Media Coalition, was saluted for 35 years of service as a black media advocate and civil rights activist, at a tribute held recently in Houston. He was honored for his pioneering efforts to ensure that African-Americans are equally represented in newsrooms, boardrooms and throughout the communications industry. A native of Houston, Marshall founded NBMC 23 years ago, and he continues to work to increase employment, ownership and programming for Blacks. Headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, NBMC regularly makes employment opportunities available to African-Americans through its Employment Resource Center. In addition, NBMC's Ownership and Technical Assistance Program serves the interest of black entrepreneurs in broadcasting, as well as those seeking to acquire broadcast properties.

ZIMSTOCKS AMONG WORLD'S TOP-FOUR EXCHANGES

The Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, described in 1993 as the worst performer among emerging indices, was last year placed fourth among the 25 countries listed in the Economist magazine's emerging markets table. The market was only exceeded by Hungary, Russia and Venezuela. Zimbabwe's key industrial index, which this year surpassed the 10,000 mark for the first time in the history of the stock market, in 1996 rose by 121 percent. It exceeded all of the leading stock markets in the world with the exception of Japan.

City followed NAACP redistricting guidelines

By Nancy Watson
Sentinel-Voice

A national NAACP attorney was non-committal Tuesday when asked if the organization is supporting the Las Vegas branch's redistricting lawsuit against the City of Las Vegas.

The lawsuit, filed by Beatrice Turner and Alfred Gallego charges that the city based its May 1996 redistricting decisions on race. The Las Vegas branch provided \$15,000 to retain attorney, Glenn Schepps of the Leavitt Law Firm.

Both Judge Fred Kessler, who was hired as a redistricting consultant by the city, and Rev. James Rogers, president of the Las Vegas branch of the NAACP claim they have the support of the national office.

However, Dennis Hayes, the NAACP's general legal

counsel, said he does not know about the lawsuit and does not remember any discussions with the Las Vegas branch regarding the lawsuit.

As for redistricting, he said, "it is a local matter and should be handled by local people."

Redistricting realigned parts of Wards 1 into Ward 3. Ward 3 is now mainly comprised of the African American community of West Las Vegas and the primarily Hispanic area of East Las Vegas.

Although the city's redistricting was the result of growth taking place primarily in the city's northwest section, Kessler said the city also considered the issue of race because it is required by law.

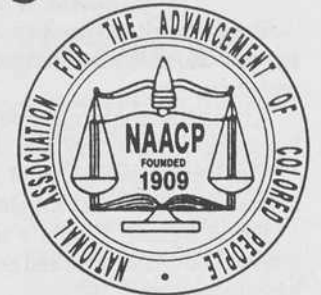
The Voting Rights Act mandates that race be an issue (but not the only issue) and that no minority be "diluted"

in redistricting, said Kessler, who also consulted the NAACP Redistricting Project Handbook.

Hayes is one of the writers of that book which gives "alternatives to follow when a majority black district cannot be drawn."

The first alternative, according to the handbook, is the "development of coalitions with other minority groups such as Hispanics to create a majority minority district." According to Kessler, this is exactly what the city did when it merged parts of Wards 1 into Ward 3. Since neither minority group was large enough to be a majority, it was hoped that the two would combine their efforts and support someone who would effectively represent both groups for City Council.

But many including Rogers,



felt that the city purposely lumped the two poorest groups together, creating one large economically-deprived ward. Rogers has stated that the local branch of the NAACP would do "whatever it takes" to fight the redistricting.

Others feel that it makes little difference since the two minority groups would be represented by a white politician regardless.

"It just means trading one white man for another white man," said one NAACP member who asked to remain anonymous.

City Councilman for Ward 1 is Michael McDonald; Councilman for Ward 3 is Gary Reese.

Last week, a preliminary injunction against the city which would have returned the two wards to their original form was denied by Judge Donald Mosley in District Court. Mosley also denied the city's motion for a summary judgement that would have ended the lawsuit.

Tim Williams, head of the Las Vegas Branch of the NAACP's Legal Redress Committee, said he was never consulted regarding the viability of the lawsuit nor the selection of an appropriate attorney, although he has practiced law in Las Vegas for 12 years. Williams said he has no experience with voting rights on redistricting legal issues.

Former Army soldier convicted of racist killings

By Nancy Watson
Sentinel-Voice

A former Army paratrooper was convicted last week in Fayetteville, North Carolina for killing a black couple.

James Burmeister, a white 21-year-old former soldier, was convicted of two counts of first-degree murder and conspiracy in the shooting deaths of Jackie Burden and Michael James on Dec. 7, 1995. Burmeister's mother sobbed as the verdict was read, but Burmeister showed no emotion.

Burmeister killed the couple on a dirt road near downtown Fayetteville so he could earn a spider web tattoo, a sign which proved to fellow skinhead racists at Fort Bragg that he had killed a black person.

The Army began investigations after the killings, but found little evidence of racist activity. Discovered in

the investigation, however, were 22 white soldiers at Fort Bragg including Burmeister and the two others charged in the killings with links to extreme racist groups.

The Army discharged the three soldiers all members of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Malcom Wright will go on trial next month for two counts of murder and conspiracy. Randy Meadows, the third soldier testified for the prosecution against Burmeister.

According to Meadows, while the three rode around drinking, Burmeister laughed and talked about earning the spider web tattoo.

had a 9 mm pistol in his belt when he and Wright got out of the car, then Meadows heard the gunshots.

In exchange for a lesser charge, Meadows pleaded

guilty for his testimony.

Testimony in the trial revealed that Wright and Burmeister were not secret about their racist points of view. They saluted a Nazi flag in the barracks, sang skinhead songs and displayed white supremacist symbols and literature. Burmeister also talked about blowing up a synagogue.

Wright, 22, appeared at the trail to display his spider web tattoo while glaring at Burmeister.

Army personnel said Fort Bragg is trying to detect soldiers with racist views. They've also begun training sessions for all new personnel.

Civil rights advocates including the NAACP, the continue to monitor the activity at the fort.

Tupac

(Continued from Page 1)

said, they were harassed by police who ignored their initial accounts of the shooting.

They are making their complaints known because they are tired of hearing Las Vegas police blame their failure to solve the Shakur murder on uncooperative members of the rapper's entourage, they said.

Police said they doubt anyone will be arrested unless a witness emerges who can identify the shooter.



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