

## Osman

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to call the adults on their behavior. Second, he is excited about the young man who showed his leadership ability by speaking up.

"We've got to allow the kids to empower themselves," he said. Which is why a vital link to NYA is peer mentoring where youth help youth.

"We are trying to bridge kids to kids," said Osman, "because kids listen to kids and the kids know the answers."

"They have to be street-wise and street-smart. We have to support them and let them go," he said.

NYA formed last year as people with common attitudes began to talk about their mutual

concern for Nevada's youth.

There wasn't an ad run in the newspaper, nor on television. Instead, during informal conversations, phone numbers, fax machine numbers and e-mail addresses were exchanged. The network was born and has since bloomed.

Facilitators include Mercedes Samaniego, education; Dr. Ben Zvenia, law and justice; Dale Woods, a Boulder City police DARE officer; Osman, business; and Kathie Ambrosio, community and health.

The core group of facilitators decided to take their ideas and reach out into the community. They solicited responses from all agencies

dealing with youth and began to work on their mission.

They toured and looked at local youth agencies. They did not want to duplicate services, they wanted to help fix problems.

They began asking, "How can we help? What can we do?"

One of NYA's projects is a crisis management hotline for teen-agers.

There are already crisis agencies like HELP of Southern Nevada, Suicide Hotline, Westcare, and even an 800 number Dr. Lois Lee of California who works with teenage prostitutes. There are many talents already in place that need to be combined and made available to the young people who need them, the organizers said.

A Symposium on Violence, sponsored by NYA took place last September at the Riviera Hotel. Hundreds of young people and adults spent the weekend discussing and working on a variety of issues affected by or relating to violence.

The public is invited to the next NYA workshop, "Mentoring Above and Beyond," a program designed for "mentors and mentees" and anyone considering mentoring. The event will take place April 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the YMCA.

A Youth Success Symposium is also being planned for Sept. 27 and 28.

According to Osman, "It's time for change because the way it's going just isn't working. Youth are losing services, time and attention. And we are losing youth."

"These children are ours. We are all members of the community and the community is a family which means all of us are responsible for these children," he said.

For more information about the Nevada Youth Alliance contact David Osman at 661-3067 or by fax at 243-2488. The NYA e-mail address is nvoyouthall@juno.com



NNPA President Dorothy R. Leavell with the Association's 1996 Newsmakers of the Year: from left, Joe Madison, Rep. Maxine Waters, Dick Gregory. At right is Washington Informer Publisher Denise Rolark-Barnes, chair of Black Press Week. Photo by Dazine Kent

## Urban

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who are living in communities where blacks don't own the businesses. Asians, Koreans, whites and others own the businesses.

"I don't like racism, but we need to be using our energy to learn and understand the rules of economics and capitalism," he said.

"We want the social benefits, but we can't really get those benefits unless we understand how the economic system works and the system in this country is capitalism," he said. At this point, the focus of the black community is not on economic development and economic development is the only thing it needs to focus on, he said. That focus also includes mentoring and guiding youth to be business

owners and developers.

"Through ownership, investment and participation in ownership, the benefits go to me. It is morally right and it is the basics of capitalism," he said.

Smith said he is not opposed to social programs, on the contrary, he feels that the purpose of wealth is to help others, but social benefits are the direct result of success, he said.

Social programs come after forming a strong foundation. They happen because there's a base to draw from, he added. To create that base, instead of turning to the government, the black community needs to become the developers, the investors, the business owners, the job providers, the entrepreneurs.

Since 1984, Smith's MAXIMA has been listed among the top 100 black-owned firms in the United States. It has also been listed among the top 500 privately-held firms by Inc. Magazine and is one of the top 100 contractors to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Smith has received five honorary degrees for his work in education and entrepreneurship.



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## Honorees salute black press

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Congresswoman Maxine Waters, comedian Dick Gregory and talk show host Joe Madison saluted the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) for its support, after receiving the organization's 1996 Newsmakers of the Year award in a gala dinner, March 20, 1997 in Washington, D.C.

The three were selected by NNPA's 200-plus member publishers for their "courage and commitment in exposing the horrors of the CIA/Contra/crack cocaine scandal," said NNPA President Dorothy Leavell. "We must honor those who lift us up ... on the road to freedom. These three people had truly led with the torch."

In accepting her award, Waters, who has pushed for legislative hearings as well as federal investigations into the matter, said she had become involved with the CIA/crack issue because "we are sick and tired of having people play with us."

"I wanna thank you for carrying the story," said Waters, whose Los Angeles district has been severely affected by the crack epidemic.

Co-awardee Gregory, who has been on a fast for over four months to force the

government to declassify material relating to the CIA's involvement in the deadly proliferation of crack in urban America, was also grateful for the role the black press has played in keeping the issue in the public eye.

"What a beautiful feeling to be among peers, to be validated by your peers," he said.

"We have come here to tell you thanks ... God made you the keeper of the flame," Mr. Gregory told audience members.

He and others were arrested outside the Langley, VA facility last year while attempting to deliver a copy of articles from the California-based San Jose Mercury News. According to the newspaper CIA-backed operatives pumped \$1 billion worth of crack cocaine into black neighborhoods, in Watts, Compton and South-Central Los Angeles during the 1980s. The profits from the sales were used to buy arms for Nicaraguan Contra rebels, the investigative articles allege.

In addition, Gregory described a long-term plan which would include the commercial boycott of Thanksgiving and Christmas, if documents relating to the

CIA's role in the matter are not released by July 4.

Madison, who has used his Washington, D.C.-based talk show to publicize the issue, encouraged the black press to "stay on the story and editorialize about the issue ... We have to rattle these cages," he said.

The second annual Newsmaker of the Year Dinner attracted some of the nation's top officials, including Rep. Shelia Jackson-Lee (D-TX); Rep. Donna M. Christian (D-Virgin Islands); Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry; Dr. Henry J. Lyons, president of the 8.5 million member National Baptist Convention, USA Inc.; Patrick Ayendi from the Nigerian Embassy; Washington, D.C. Council members Sandy Allen, (D-Ward 8) and Hilda Mason (S-At-large); D.C. Shadow Representative Sabrina Sojourner; D.C. Shadow Senator Paul Strauss; C. Delores Tucker, national chair of the National Political Congress of Black Women and Archbishop George Stallings, head of The African-American Catholic Congregation.

NNPA President Dorothy Leavell reminded attendees that the black press is just as relevant today as when John Russwurm and Sam Cornish established the nation's first African-American newspaper, The Freedom's Journal in 1827.

"There is still a need for the black press in America. We've got the power, and we've got to use it," she said.

The NNPA Newsmaker of the Year, which is in its second year, recognizes African Americans who have most influenced issues of concern to black America and who have made significant strides in bringing about positive change. Last year, the Nation of Islam's Minister Louis Farrakhan was named 1995 Newsmaker of the Year for his spearheading of the Million Man March in October, 1995.

## Power

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economic power is the next civil rights frontier is the National Urban League's focus for this year, and the theme of our annual conference, to be held in Washington August 3 to 6.

We harbor no illusions that we can achieve greater economic strength simply by working "by ourselves." That is not the way it's worked for white Americans, whether of Anglo-Saxon or other ethnic stock. Each contributed to the growth of the American economy — and, taking advantage of both the political process and the economic forces of the marketplace, took for itself a share of the resources. So it must be for African-Americans, and other people of color.

The frontier that lies before us is vast. But the vastness of that space shouldn't deter us, it should energize us. For one thing, American businesses have discovered both painlessly and painfully in recent years that the inclusion of African-Americans and other people of color is good for business — both in terms of the expanded pool of talent these corporations are able to draw workers from and the new markets they can more effectively pursue.

Still, we've got a lot of ground to cover. Let's get started.