

LAS VEGAS

Sentinel Voice

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 14

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

August 7, 1997

"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

(Right photo) Ramblin' Rec coordinator Rhoshina De Santis and a young girl take a rest from the day's activities. Ramblin' Rex (the dog) nods his approval. (Bottom photo) An eager young girl really gets into her work Tuesday inside a site at the Gerson Park Housing complex.

Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy



Ramblin' Rec entertains city youth

By Damon Hodge
Sentinel-Voice

Unlike most pooches, Ramblin' Rex prefers smiles to barks.

Though only a painting, the dust-colored, shade-wearing character along the side of the van, has legions of admirers.

"The children love Rex," said Rhoshina DeSantis, Rex's "owner."

DeSantis coordinates the Ramblin' Rec program for the City of Las Vegas' Department of Parks and Leisure Activities. A three-van "mobile recreation unit," the Ramblin' Rec visits Las Vegas Housing Authority (LVHA) complexes, offering recreation to the children housed there.

"You name it, we do it," DeSantis said.

"Football, basketball, arts and crafts, baseball, hockey, water sports, face paints, etc. When the children see us coming, they run to the vans."

The Ramblin' Rec grew out of a 1994 Parks and Leisure Activities empowerment initiative for youth in LVHA facilities. The program is funded by a grant from the LVHA and City of Las Vegas. The City of Las Vegas gives \$8 for every dollar from the LVHA.

The vans service 37 LVHA sites 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday - and two sites on the weekends. The units spend two-and-a-half hours at each site where part-time adult supervisors and junior recreation assistants create site-specific activities.

The program runs year-round, and the vans visit 400 to 500 children weekly.

"I like working with the kids," part-time adult supervisor Mario McKeever said.

The 10 junior recreation assistants drive the program. The assistants, ages 14 to 18, are paid employees that serve as role models and play with the children.

"The assistants are city employees and they are treated as such," Youth Activities Coordinator Rickey Watts said. Department staff interview and select assistants who work as professionals. They write and receive memos, check their files and complete time cards, Watts said.

As city employees, they also undergo evaluations every three months, DeSantis said. Most of the assistants come to the

(See Ramblin', Page 16)

Williams' claims refuted

By Damon Hodge
Sentinel-Voice

A state lawmaker should not have feared losing his job if he voted for legislation opposed by the City of Las Vegas and gaming interests, according to the city's spokeswoman and the former Las Vegas councilman accused of making the threats.

Cathy Hanson, the city's communications director and former KTNV-Channel 13 reporter, called the situation a "misunderstanding."

"I never threatened anybody," Hanson said. She declined further comment citing a pending investigation into the allegations by Education Committee Chairman Wendell Williams.

Williams, D-Las Vegas, said Hanson and former Las Vegas Councilman Matthew Callister told him that three of five council members supported firing him if he voted for a redevelopment bill. The bill would have curtailed the city's power of eminent domain - used to take over private property for public use. City officials and the gaming industry contended that the bill



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would hamper redevelopment efforts statewide.

The bill passed in the Government Affairs Committee but failed in the full Assembly, 15-26.

Williams reportedly said he would not pursue charges unless future action warranted it. He could not be reached for comment.

Williams earns \$53,000-a-year as a city senior management analyst for the Office of Business Development. He takes a six-month, unpaid leave every other year to serve in the Assembly.

Callister refuted the allegations. "It's utter nonsense," Callister was quoted as saying in an July 25 article in the Review-Journal.

In other news involving the legislator, Williams has more time to come up with the \$52,694 he owes in back child support.

A story in the Aug. 1 Review-Journal reported that Williams had only \$35,000 and that he asked Undersheriff Richard Winget to postpone the sherriff's auction on his two homes until he could come with the rest of the money. The auction was scheduled for Wednesday.

A Las Vegas police spokesman said Williams has more time to come up with the money, but that the attorneys in the case have the specifics. Williams' could not be reached for comment.

In April, Williams was ordered to pay \$50,000 in unpaid child support to ex-wife Debra Gray for the two children they had. Williams' wages are garnished \$550 a month to pay child support for his daughter.

Accused child killer may face death

By Damon Hodge
Sentinel-Voice

Prosecutors with the Clark County District Attorney's Office will decide today if Jeremy Strohmeyer, indicted for the murder, sexual assault and kidnapping of a 7-year-old Los Angeles girl, will face the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole, as possible sentences if convicted.

The 18-year-old Long Beach, Calif., man appeared briefly Wednesday in the courtroom of District Judge Don Chairez.

Strohmeyer's arraignment is set for Aug. 25

because his attorney, Richard Wright, said he had not received a copy of the grand jury transcripts.

Last Friday, a Clark County grand jury indicted Strohmeyer for the May 25 attack inside an arcade restroom at the Primm hotel, 43 miles south of Las Vegas.

Strohmeyer waived his right to appear in court Aug. 14 when Wright argues to continue keeping grand jury proceedings secret and to extend the gag order - issued by Goodsprings Justice of the Peace Janet Smith.

Clad in a blue prison uniform, a weary-

looking Strohmeyer sat separated from the other inmates. His only words, "Yes your honor," when asked by Chairez if he had waived his right to appear for the Aug. 14 rulings.

Strohmeyer is being held without bail on the first-degree murder charge. He also faces charges of first-degree kidnapping and two counts of sexual assault with a minor.

David Cash Jr., of La Palma, Calif., appeared at the courthouse last Thursday. Cash, 18, witnessed part of the crime but was absolved of any wrongdoing by Las Vegas police and the District Attorney's Office.