

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

# Sins of the husband

Go anywhere in America during election time and you'll hear candidates toss around over-used clichés, silly puns, baseless analogies and countless "I remember the time" stories.

You'll also hear them decry the lack of leadership or accountability displayed by either the current regime or by their opponents.

A Las Vegas police drug probe into the business dealings of North Las Vegas City Councilwoman Paula Brown and her husband James, has us questioning the councilwoman's accountability.

One question begs an answer: How could the Browns not know that they profited from chemicals critical to the making of the illegal drug methamphetamine? They have owned the company for 20 years.

The situation takes a more perplexing turn when you consider that James Brown was reported to be working as an informant for the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

Though the couple has not been charged with any crime and Paula Brown is not a suspect, the councilwoman feels she is being vilified in the court of public opinion. In this case, the oft-used adage about the "Sins of the father" can be referred to as the "Sins of the husband."

Some in the community are clamoring for the councilwoman to resign, including election opponent Norman Kay, who told the council at its meeting two weeks ago. Whether Kay's motives are sincere are vindictive, he is right.

The whole situation sheds a dim light on North Las Vegas politics. Paula, regardless of whether you knew the final destination of the chemicals, you and your husband should make amends by donating funds to drug programs, visiting families destroyed by drugs and volunteering at drug treatment and counseling centers. This doesn't require that you admit guilt, but it will help you see the devastating effects drugs have wrought on our community and hopefully lead you to run a tighter ship.

As citizens, we have grown weary of endless tales of political huxterism: of racist presidents (Lyndon Johnson formed counterintelligence groups to destroy civil rights activists), governors accused of fraud (Arizona's Fife Symington), federal officials indicted for embezzlement (former House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski), etc.

But we are even more harsh on our elected leaders when it appears they err out of ignorance or unawareness.

Even if the probe absolves the couple, Paula Brown's political future and questions about her accountability will remain forever.



A VOICE FROM THE HILL

# Democracy takes a hike

By George Wilson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

While Republicans and Democrats have been rejoicing over the passage of a budget agreement, residents of the District of Columbia are left wondering where their basic rights have gone.

As part of the budget agreement, Washington D.C. Mayor Marion Barry's powers will be handed over to the federally appointed Financial Control Board.

What the Congress and President Clinton have done to the citizens of the nation's capitol is no different from what happens in other countries, when one group doesn't like how things are run and decides to take power forcefully. Just as there were those who felt that slavery wasn't such a bad idea, there are some who feel that government by committee will work just fine.

From the onset of so-called "home rule," citizens of Washington were handed keys to an automobile that had no fuel. The city is unable to tax those who use its services, working in Washington but living in one of its neighboring states.

The Congress has final say over bills passed by the elected city council, while the city is asked to carry on state functions with "city money" from the federal government. Home rule was a cruel hoax that was bound to produce the result we now see. Frankly, I saw this day coming long ago.

Congress treats Washington as if it is a playground. You need only to go back to the not-so-distant



Eleanor Holmes-Norton

past to recall a town hall meeting called by Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-Delegate-D.C.). The guest of honor at the packed session was House Speaker, Newt Gingrich (R-GA). Gingrich gave the impression that he would not favor any move that would take power away from the residents.

"We don't want to micro-manage the city," Gingrich said. The unfortunate result of Gingrich's concern, however, was the implementation of the Financial Control Board or the "out-of-control board" as some have described the group. So much for Gingrich's word.

Norton had a role to play in bringing the Control Board into existence. She assured citizens that this was the right way to go and that the Control Board would make everything better. Because of her distinguished record and her professed concern for her hometown, Norton was trusted. Now that Congress has taken over the city through its unelected Control Board, Norton says she is angered by the decision and wasn't even in the room for the decision.

Since the vote, Norton has been attempting to fend off criticism from many of her constituents who feel that they were sold. Norton is now faced with the unenviable task of trying to walk down the center of a combat zone. In such an arrangement, you get hit from both sides.

A frequent criticism of D.C. residents is that they are apathetic when it comes to dealing with issues that affect them. The congressional action has served as a wake up call.

Several hundred angry residents recently assembled

in front of the White House to voice their displeasure. The Rev. Willie Wilson of Union Temple Baptist Church was among them. He said, "The rights of the citizens of the District of Columbia have been violated. They have taken away the power of the people to rule by their votes. Their right to govern themselves has been totally disrespected."

Most residents aren't happy about this latest twist on the road to D.C.'s empowerment.

American troops have gone to various parts of the world to restore democracy. The same Congress that votes to send troops overseas, has apparently decided that democracy is something that D.C. residents can do without.

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