

LAS VEGAS

# Sentinel Voice

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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"



Sentinel-Voice photo by Isadore Washington

During the legislative workshop of the National Coalition for Fairness in Africa Policy, on Friday, members, far left, Assemblyman Wendell Williams (D-Nev.), Rev. Maurice Dawkins, 2nd from the right, and Rev. James Rogers, right, welcome National Newspaper Publishers Association Vice President Hardy Brown, to the conference at Bally's Hotel and Casino.

## NAACP tackles unfair U.S. foreign policies

By John T. Stephens  
Sentinel-Voice

Buoyed by what they see as the unfair treatment to Nigeria by the U.S. government, a national group lobbying for African interest recently joined the local NAACP in deriding U.S. policy toward the oil-rich African nation.

"We feel U.S. policy is unfair to African nations," the Rev. Maurice Dawkin, chair of the National Coalition for Fairness in African Policy told attendants Nov. 21 at Bally's Hotel. The coalition seeks fair foreign policy agreements for African commonwealths.

The coalition was formed after members of the black press visited Nigeria to witness General

Sani Abacha, who seized control of the country on Nov. 17, 1993, handing the reigns of leadership to the people.

Since Oct. 1, 1995, Nigeria has implemented a democratic form of government and held local non-party elections in 773 municipalities with at least 7,000 polling places in 36 states.

The change in government, though democratic, has not appeased the White House, which continues to enforce sanctions on the country.

The Rev. James Rogers, president of the Las Vegas branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, thinks the

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"We're a big family. All my children know my number. They know they can call me anytime."

— Aramentel Austin

## Dance group spices city's culture

By Sonya Douglass  
Sentinel-Voice

Unlike the hordes of Las Vegas newcomers who chide the city for its apparent lack of culture, Aramentel Austin is working to jazz up the city's entertainment landscape.

"I was not impressed with the activity that was going on," said the 65-year-old Austin, who moved to Las Vegas from New York four years ago to retire.

Uncomfortable with what she termed "bed dancing," a sensual type of dance popular among youth and young adults, she decided Las Vegas needed a viable outlet for youth to learn disciplined dance. Thus, she birthed the Austin Dancers.

The group, which now consists of nearly 30 performers ranging, ages 6 to 24, perform various dance styles including African, jazz and tap. The group also includes a live band made up of a keyboard player, drummer, bass player and percussionist.

Respect keys Austin's philosophy. Before she teaches her pupils dance, she schools them in the finer aspects of respect. The boys take off their hats before entering a building, open doors for young ladies and greet individuals whenever they enter a room.

"I insist on that," she said. "They know

there are certain things I don't go for and they must have that respect for everyone."

Austin demands similar respect from parents. "If you have a problem with me disciplining your child, take your child," Austin said. "I love them and you love them, but if you don't like me to reprimand them when they do something wrong, then you take them."

Despite her no-nonsense attitude and tough love approach, Austin's pupils feel loved. Many parents have welcomed her as part of their extended family, marveling at how she knocked on doors in the city's housing projects to recruit dancers for the program as well as at the transformation they have seen in their children.

Austin has become a safety net for many parents, especially when they cannot get a message across to their children.

Besides learning dance, members get education reinforcement. Austin implemented a tutoring program after she discovered many of her students had trouble reading. They must show her their report cards.

Though the program is running strong, it still has not found a permanent place to practice, bouncing from the Moulin Rouge to

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## Feds document racism at GM

By Linn Washington Jr.  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Racist employment practices pervade the Montgomery, Ala., office of GM's auto credit financing arm, GMAC, according to findings released this summer by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

"Blacks as a class were discriminated against in terms of conditions of employment, training and promotions," stated the EEOC investigative findings in the cases of four former black employees of the Montgomery GMAC office.

The EEOC findings have an ominous dimension because these four black employees testified at the 1995 trial of a black GM dealer in Tuskegee, Ala., who presented evidence of deliberate acts of financial sabotage by top GM officials that drove him out of business.

This dealer, Charles Bell, won a \$26 million jury verdict against GM in 1995. Trial evidence included presenting a sophisticated computer analysis of 200,681 GMAC credit transactions documenting how Bell's customers were

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Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy  
Getting personal instructions from Chef Springer and support from Nevada's Congressional team, Senators Harry Reid and Richard Bryan, in the background, Labor Secretary Alexis Herman tests her skills at making French Toast, during her on-going Welfare-to-Work tour visit in Las Vegas at the Culinary Union Training Center on Saturday.

## Labor secretary impressed by Welfare-to-Work

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Impressed with the way labor unions and casino operators are partnering to provide welfare recipients jobs, Labor Secretary Alexis Herman said she will tell President Clinton that welfare-to-work initiatives are working.

Herman, in town Saturday, listened to the stories of dozens of welfare recipients turned workers at the Culinary Union Training Center, 707 E. Fremont St. She walked away from the meeting impressed and promised to tell Clinton of the program's success in Las Vegas.

Congress adopted the welfare-to-work program last year. Businesses who hire welfare workers can obtain federal income tax credits up to \$8,500 for each welfare worker they hire.

Herman delivered some good news of her own during the trip.

In January, she said the federal government will send Nevada \$3.5 million in funding for child care training welfare recipients.