

NEWS CLIPS

LAS VEGAS RESIDENTS ARE ASKED TO HELP WIPE OUT GRAFFITI

Residents of the Las Vegas community are invited to take back their own neighborhoods and help wipe out graffiti by participating in "Southern Nevada Paints the Town" this Saturday, May 30, beginning at 9 am. Sponsored by Clark County, the City of Las Vegas and the City of North Las Vegas, event staff members will give away free buckets of paint and provide technical support at four valley locations: Cashman School Park, 4622 W. Desert Inn Rd., Eldorado School Park, 1139 N. Linn Lane, Lorenzi Park, W. Washington & Twin Lakes Dr., and Paradise Park, 4770 S. Harrison Dr. Supplies and assistance will be available at all four locations until 2 pm.

JOHNNIE COCHRAN'S LAW FIRM LOSSES APPEAL

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Tuesday upheld a lower court's decision to dismiss Reginald Denny's \$40 million lawsuit against police and the city. A federal appeals court has rejected truck driver Denny's claim that racist police deliberately withdrew from the Los Angeles neighborhood where he was beaten during the 1992 riots. A victim of the April uprising in the spring of 1992, after a jury acquitted four Los Angeles policemen of brutality charges in the beating of black motorist Rodney King. Denny was pulled from his truck at the corner of Florence and Normandie avenues in South Central Los Angeles. His severe beating was filmed by television news helicopters flying overhead. The record also suggests other explanations besides racism, the court said: that police were uncertain whether more aggressive enforcement would add to the violence, that they were unsure that they had enough force at their command and that they may have suffered from poor preparation and management. Denny was joined in the lawsuit by Fidel Lopez and Takeo Hirata, who were injured in the same neighborhood. A fourth plaintiff, Wanda Harris, whose son was killed during the riots, was dismissed from the case. The plaintiffs were represented by the law firm of Johnnie Cochran Jr.

THOUSANDS OF IMMIGRANTS FACE LOSS OF MEDICAID

NEW YORK — A joint New York State and Assembly Health Conference Committee has voted to terminate Medicaid eligibility for approximately 14,000 immigrants, including 10,000 elderly immigrants. "We were shocked and dismayed that in a year where there is enough money to fund hundreds of millions of dollars of tax breaks and pork barrel projects, the Senate and Assembly Health Conference Committee would refuse to restore Medicaid for immigrants," said Margie McHugh, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, an umbrella advocacy organization for over 200 groups that work with newcomers. "Not only will immigrants be put in life-threatening situations, but they will end up in emergency rooms costing taxpayers more money," said McHugh. Committee members initially approved legislation to restore Medicaid eligibility because they supported McHugh's argument of the added cost of emergency care. However, when the committee could not come to an agreement on allocating \$10 million to fund the proposal, the recommendation was excluded. The committee did recommend over \$80 million in new health and Medicaid spending, mostly to care-providers.

HOUSE APPROVED MEEK LEARNING DISABILITY AMENDMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The House of Representatives has approved an amendment by U.S. Rep. Carrie P. Meek (D-Fla.) to help college students who have learning disabilities. Meek's amendment was added to the massive Higher Education bill presently working its way through Congress. "This amendment extends—for the first time—a helping hand to college students with learning disabilities," said Meek, a former educator and co-chair of the House Reading Caucus. "For many years, the Federal government has mandated 'free and appropriate education' of millions of elementary and high school students with learning disabilities, but has essentially ignored their needs when they went off to college to develop their abilities. This amendment closed a major gap in our efforts to help every person in our society achieve his or her full potential." The National Institutes of Health estimate that there are 39 million Americans with learning disabilities, which include dyslexia (difficulty identifying sounds, letters and words), dysgraphia (difficulty in writing thoughts on paper); dyscalculia (confusing shapes and simple mathematical functions) and a host of auditory, visual, motor and attention disorders.

Black farmers hold historical conference

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DETROIT— More than 1000 Black farmers and advocates from 29 states came to the "Motor City" for the first National Black Farmers Conference held May 9 at the Michigan State Fairgrounds. The theme of the conference was "Saving the Black farmer."

Convened by two members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. John Conyers and Rep. Carolyn C. Kilpatrick (D-Mich), the conference highlighted the plight of African-American farmers.

The most pressing issue of the day was establishing how to force President Clinton to resolve approximately 2,500 discrimination cases against the Agriculture Department (USDA) by Black farmers. The

process is currently being held up by the USDA and the Justice Department. As a result some farmers have filed a \$2.5 billion class action lawsuit. Recently, a federal judge urged the Clinton Administration to settle the cases before a protracted trial begins.

"The Justice Department is the major problem in mediating these cases. You have entrenched bureaucrats there working against a just and fair resolution," said Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers & Agriculturists Association. Grant's organization filed the lawsuit against the USDA. "Black farmers are losing 9,000 acres of land a week, primarily due to foreclosures because the U.S. government is violating the rights of farmers," he added.

Grant said that in the last 12-14 months only about 20 cases have been settled and out of that number, only eight farmers have received cash payments.

Rep. Conyers said that all the right legal and political moves have been made by the farmers; "the question is whether they (U.S. government) are going to do the right thing."

Other participants in the conference included civil rights activists Dick Gregory and Rev. Joseph Lowery.

Attendees said the event will have long-term consequences for the Black farmer and the community. "This was an historic event for our people because it began the process of bridging the gap

between the rural farmer and the people in the Northern cities. We need to connect with each other. Many Black folks living in the North have farm land in the South or relatives who are farmers. Having this meeting in Detroit was an important factor," said Shirley Sherrod, the Georgia director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, the U.S.'s largest Black farm organization.

Sherrod also said that the conference provided opportunities for networking and establishing direct marketing situations for the farmers.

The destruction of Black farms is partly a result of the unchecked growth of giant corporations acquiring more (See Farmers, Page 7)

Confusion dogs man convicted of assassinating Malcolm X

By J. Zamgba Browne

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Captain Abd Al-Aziz, formerly Norman 3X Butler of the Nation of Islam, and the man convicted of the Feb. 25, 1965 murder of Malcolm X, continues to maintain his innocence and announced that he wants a full pardon from New York's Gov. George Pataki.

Reacting to a recent front page article in the *Village Voice*, captioned, "Malcolm X's Killer Appointed to Run Malcolm's Mosque," Aziz, captain of Mohammad's Mosque No. 7 and of the East Coast region for training and security, was joined at a Harlem press conference by Minister Benjamin F. Muhammad (formerly the Rev. Ben Chavis), in vigorously denouncing the story.

Muhammad charged that the story was an "assault on Aziz" and part of a grand scheme to "besmirch" the good name and works of the Nation of Islam's national leader, Louis Farrakhan.

"Why, after having served time for a crime he did not commit, are there to this date attempts to deny Aziz a place in society free of slander and ridicule?" Muhammad asked. He accused the *Village Voice* of trying to "create mischief" and "cause ill will" between the Black community, Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam.

Both Muhammad and Aziz called on President Clinton to ask the U.S. Justice Department, the FBI, and the CIA to open the files on Malcolm X's murder.

"For too long, we have

allowed forces outside our community to use the legacy of Malcolm X as a point of division, when much of Malcolm's life and ministry was dedicated to unity," Muhammad declared.

He said Aziz did not kill Malcolm X. "Aziz was falsely accused, wrongly convicted and unjustly imprisoned for 20 years." He said Aziz continues to be the target of "racial hatred, fear, ignorance and misinformation."

Aziz said that he voluntarily submitted to an independent professional polygraph exam a few days ago, administered by attorney Earl A. Rawlins; he said the results prove his innocence. (The results of a lie detector test are not admissible in a court of law).

"For 36 years, I have been a proud member of the Nation of

Islam," Aziz said. "I had nothing whatsoever to do with the assassination of Malcolm X. I have been unjustly imprisoned 20 years for a crime I didn't commit."

Muhammad praised Aziz as a hard worker and one who will help the Nation of Islam "reclaim our community." As regional director, Aziz said that he intends to help Farrakhan and Muhammad with the "redemption and liberation of our people."

Muhammad charged that the *Village Voice* neglected to note the good work that Aziz has done in "our community since his release from prison" as director of support services at Phase Piggy Back, a substance abuse agency.

"If the editors and writers of the *Village Voice* are sincere (See Al-Aziz, Page 7)

Five Blacks sue Florida Denny's for discrimination

Special to Sentinel-Voice

MERRITT ISLAND, Fla. — Five black customers have filed a discrimination lawsuit against a Denny's restaurant, claiming they were seated behind a partition and ignored by waitresses.

The restaurant chain denied any wrongdoing.

The five filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Orlando, television station WESH reported.

Their attorney, Mark Tietig, told the station they are seeking thousands of dollars in damages.

The black customers said they were ignored while several other customers came in and were served. When the black customers were finally served, their waitress got their order wrong.

Denny's president John Romandetti, however, said the manager replaced the food, discounted their bill and apologized.

"Their claim of racial discrimination is misguided and unfounded, and we will vigorously defend ourselves," Romandetti told the television station in a statement.

Last week, Romandetti apologized to a group of black sixth-grade students and their chaperones from Maryland who complained they were denied service.

The complaint is the latest in a series against the Spartanburg, S.C.-based chain, which settled a lawsuit filed by black Secret Service agents who complained they were denied service at an Annapolis, Md., restaurant and California students who claimed discrimination in a separate incident.

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