

National Organization of Women against Tyson's reinstatement

By Lee Hubbard

Special to Sentinel-Voice

In one corner, we have former heavyweight champion "Iron" Mike Tyson, standing 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighing about 220 pounds. In the opposite corner, we have the National Organization for Women (NOW), weighing in with over 1 million members and counting.

The bout between the two — the "mother" of all battles — could halt the re-start of the former heavyweight champion's boxing career. It began after the Southern Nevada Chapter of the National Organization for Women announced a nationwide letter writing campaign to try to block Tyson from getting his boxing license reinstated by the Nevada Athletic Commission.

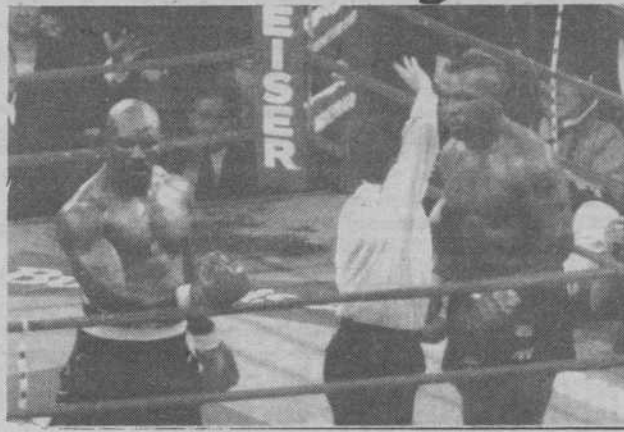
Last July 11, The Nevada Athletic Commission banned Tyson from boxing for one year, after he bit heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield

on both ears in a boxing match. He can apply to get his license reinstated any time after July 11, but it seems that NOW wants to stop this by swaying public opinion against Tyson.

"We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to strike decisive dual blows against violence towards women and un-sportsmanlike conduct at the most prominent level of sports in our country," reads a NOW fax. "On July 11, 1998, Mike Tyson will become eligible to apply to the Nevada Athletic Commission for a new license. Without that license, Mike Tyson will not be allowed to box anywhere in the United States."

Although NOW's national office in Washington D.C. hasn't endorsed the letter writing campaign yet, it has been supportive, according to Anne Golonka, the president of NOW's Southern Nevada chapter.

When told that Tyson paid



Sentinel-Voice file photo

A third fight between Evander Holyfield, left, and Mike Tyson, right, is possible if Tyson gets his license reinstated after biting Holyfield on the ears during last year's June 28 rematch for the WBA and WBC heavyweight titles.

his debt to society with his time spent in jail for his sexual assault conviction, and has finished his boxing suspension, Golonka said she wanted to see more remorse. She also said that Tyson's conviction was not an isolated sexual incident.

Asked why her local branch and NOW's national office

haven't expressed this type of emotion regarding sexual allegations against President Bill Clinton, Golonka said "politics makes strange bed fellows."

Her response and NOW's latest action are puzzling considering all of the serious issues that affect women in this country such as welfare to work

programs, child care and business development.

Is the boxing reinstatement of Tyson the only issue that NOW and the women's movement can get motivated around?

Yes, according to Ishmael Reed, an author and cultural critic. He called NOW a "White supremacist organization."

Reed said "Black feminists have been calling White feminists racists for over 100 years," and this is another example.

"White feminists are becoming the new oppressors," said Dr. Julia Hare of the San Francisco-based Black Think-Tank. Dr. Hare said this latest action by NOW, which she said was racist, was one of the reasons why a majority of Black women have rejected the

feminist movement and organizations like NOW.

"Black women have seen this feminist farce," said Dr. Hare. "They have seen racism much more than their oppression as a women."

Mark Ratner, executive director of the Nevada Athletic Commission, said he isn't surprised by this recent NOW letter campaign, because "in the USA, everyone has an opinion."

Ratner said he has received pro and anti-Tyson letters, but it will be up to the five state commissioners to decide if Tyson will be reinstated.

He said he hopes the commissioners won't be persuaded by public opinion, but should instead look at Tyson's actions out of the ring since he was suspended.

Health

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terms of empowerment and self-sufficiency rather than dependency.

Do you want your children to be part of a permanent undercaste?

We cannot change racism, because we did not create, institutionalize or maintain it.

We can, however, change our group self-esteem, which will lead to improvements in our relationships and communities.

We can think and act in proactive race conscious survival modes rather than being reactionary or catatonic.

There is an African proverb that says, "You wear a watch

but you don't know the time."

The time for understanding and healing our situation is now. America has never been a homogenous culture. Due to our unique experiences here, the history of race relations, and present attitudes and trends, we should be formulating empowerment/

survival strategies.

The American legacy is one of fermenting racial discord and animosity. Being in denial won't make it go away. If we fail to comprehend its ramifications, we can't possibly save ourselves.

Lawsuit

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aftermath of Gammage's death, said she is "still concerned about getting justice." She said her organization, The United Concerned Christians at Work, is still insisting that all of the police officers be charged and held accountable.

Urquhart, who has kept in contact with Mrs. Gammage, said, "No money can bring her son back," but felt the settlement should have been more.

"It should be \$10 million (and) the city of Pittsburgh should be included in the settlement because it was within the city limits. He was a businessman and would have made his million. The police cut short a businessman's life."

Bridgewater

(Continued from Page 10) with Nickelodeon and she's interested in writing. My second daughter has been bitten by the bug and we always knew she would because she's always been dramatic. I wouldn't be

surprised if my son goes into show business in some capacity, but he said he doesn't want to be a musician. He doesn't like screaming girls. We took him to see Hansen and he was blown away by all these young girls screaming.

Savoy: How long are you going to continue to perform?

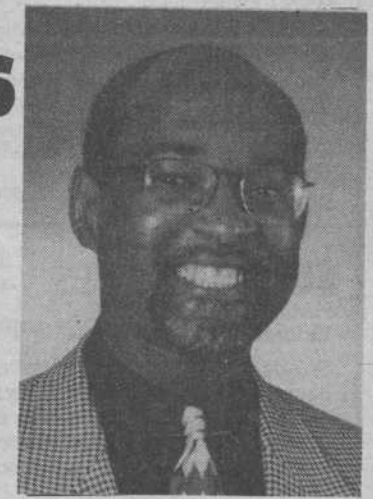
Bridgewater: I don't know. Probably as long as my mental capacity is well and my voice isn't wobbly, and as long as I have the desire. I don't see myself stopping in the foreseeable future, although I'm developing other types of projects so I don't have to stay on the road, because the road is really, really, really wearing, and I've been nonstop on the road now for four years. I'm really tired and I'm starting to feel creatively empty, so I need to take a break and recharge. Hopefully, I'm going to do that next year.

Savoy: Anything you'd like to say to Sentinel readers?

Bridgewater: I'm just very happy that jazz is coming back into the community here. I hope the readers will take it upon themselves to support this music more. It's really a cool music and a nice change from smooth jazz and funk and hip-hop, and all that stuff has come out of this music, so come and see the real deal. Evolution.



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