

Overstreet to stop elections if he can't run

Cat Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

An author and one-time NAACP presidential hopeful says he will stop the Jan. 9 Las Vegas NAACP elections if he cannot run.

In a memorandum dated Dec. 21, Mark Clack, NAACP National Field Secretary, wrote that the "National Office shows no record of Mr. Overstreet's membership in the Las Vegas Branch....Therefore, it is the opinion of the National Office that Mr. Overstreet does not have a membership in the Las Vegas Branch and is ineligible to seek office."



LOUIS OVERSTREET

"Someone is covering for somebody. They're trying to keep me out," Overstreet said. "Hopefully, I have the intellectual and financial

wherewithal to stand up against this."

Overstreet has hired former NAACP council Thomas Peterson III and plans to take the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to court and have the election process halted.

"We will try to conciliate the matter by Thursday," Peterson said, but "if we cannot come to an adequate solution, we will file an injunction."

Clack could not be reached for comment.

Eleven other prospective candidates were also cited as



MARZETTE LEWIS

"ineligible" in the Dec. 21 letter, including vice presidential candidates Kawiim Kawee and Jerry Lindsay.

According to the letter, NAACP records show that Swadeep Nigam, a candidate for treasurer, has never "been a member of the branch or the Association." Uri Clinton, Jerry Harper, Minnie Ivery, Marzette Lewis, Charles Seals, Helen Toland, Lawrence Wickcliffe and Lonnie Wright can't run for executive office, according to the letter.

"Doesn't that seem incongruous that I served as vice president for two years in this branch, I voted in the Tri-State Conferences, yet, I'm not a member?" Kawee said. "My nomination wasn't

even being contested and all of a sudden, I'm not eligible? This is an underhanded scandal."

Overstreet said forces within the group and have conspired against him. He also blasted NAACP presidential candidate Gene Collins for circulating what he says are disparaging leaflets about him.

Collins denies harboring ill will. "I don't get off on that kind of stuff. I have never and will never stoop to that level of demagoguery," he said.

Overstreet began talking (See Overstreet, Page 3)

Las Vegans enjoy Kwanzaa kick-off

By John T. Stephens III
Special to Sentinel-Voice

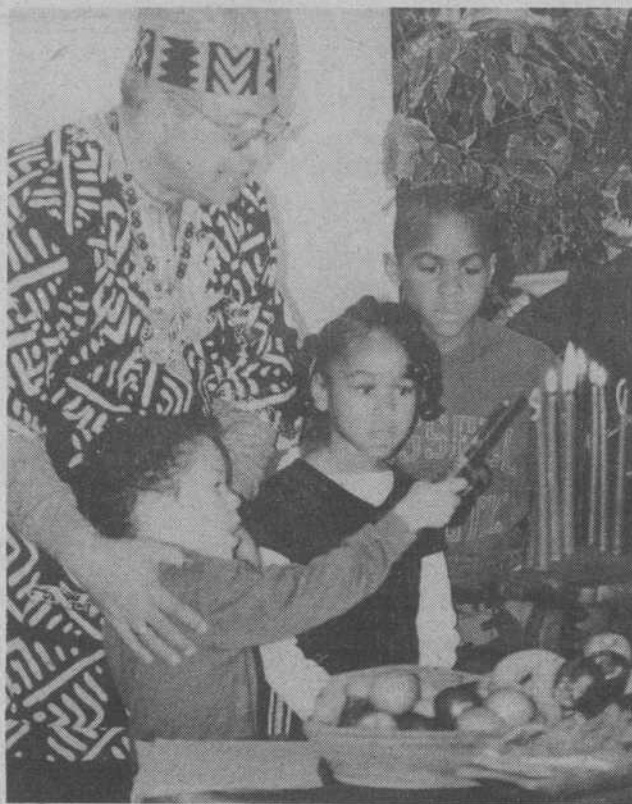
The West Las Vegas Arts Center was immersed in the spirit of Kwanzaa on Saturday, the first day of the African-American holiday started 32 years ago to boost black awareness.

Families convened at the West Las Vegas Arts Center for a day filled with culture. Umoja, which means unity in Swahili, was the focus of the day.

"Kwanzaa is a celebration of family, community, and culture," said Dr. Al Gourrier, who lead the celebration. "Its an opportunity to share our (African-American) culture with anyone."

Kwanzaa observes the Nguzo Saba or seven principles. The holiday runs Dec. 26 to Jan. 1, with each day representing a Kwanzaa principle.

The principles are: Umoja, which means unity; Kujichagulia, which embodies self-determination; Ujima, representative of collective work and responsibility; Ujamaa, which stands for cooperative economics; Nia, which means purpose; Kuumba, a synonym for creativity; and Imani which stands for faith.



Dr. Al Gourrier helps Shane Brown light a candle during Kwanzaa festivities Saturday at the WLV Arts Center.

The Umoja celebration took on a carnival-like atmosphere. More than 90 people participated in the festivities and heard Anika Johnson-Cunningham lecture on how families could incorporate Kwanzaa into their lives.

"We know that Kwanzaa is supposed to be celebrated in the home, but we (at the West Las Vegas Arts Center) would like to encourage,

inspire, and educate people on what Kwanzaa is and how to celebrate it," said Marcia Robinson, cultural center coordinator at the arts center. "Hopefully down the line we'll have more families celebrating it."

Kwanzaa was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966 in San Diego. Today, more than 28 million people worldwide celebrate the holiday. Kwanzaa means

"first fruits" in Swahili and reflects on the significance of the first harvest among African people. Karenga, who chairs the black studies department at Long Beach State, said Kwanzaa is an effective way to restore African culture and tradition into Black Americans and the mainstream society since the principles are universal.

"Celebrating my family, community and heritage," is why sixteen-year old Trinity Smith enjoys Kwanzaa because it involves "celebrating my family, community and heritage and appreciating everything that I have and what I will soon accomplish."

"Its a time for relatives and friends," 7-year-old Mariah Occhi said.

"Its a good holiday



Johnson-Cunningham

because we are all family and I just got adopted," said Jessee Occhi, 7.

"We celebrate Kwanzaa every year and feel its important that they (three boys and two girls) know their culture and their heritage," said Ann Occhi, who has adopted all five of her children.



LV Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy

Members of an African dance troupe perform Maandamano Ya Kwanzaa procession during Saturday's Kwanzaa holiday kick-off at the WLV Arts Center.

Applications available for annual King day parade

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Applications are presently being accepted for the 18th annual Martin Luther King Day Parade Saturday, Jan. 16. Start time is 10 a.m. in downtown Las Vegas.

This year's theme is "Living the Dream - By Stopping the Violence to save our youth." The grand marshals are Ernest Fountain and Stella Parson. The parade route is currently being changed by the City of Las Vegas. All participants will be notified about the change and the parade line-ups.

The deadline for applications is Friday, Jan. 8 at 5 p.m. The fee is \$50 and payable only by money order or business check.

Applications accepted after the deadline will be assessed a \$10 nonrefundable late fee. Applications can be mailed to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Committee, P.O. Box 4324, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89127.

Those interested in more information can call parade chairman Eddie Taylor at 658-8440, Marcia Washington at 799-0670, or Larry Weekly at 631-1913.