

LAS VEGAS

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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

NAACP elections official, furor fails to subside

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

The NAACP Tri-State Conference's Internal Affairs Committee has ruled the Jan. 9 Las Vegas branch elections are official.

But the political pandemonium isn't over.

The Rev. Jesse Scott, who was defeated in the elections by Gene Collins, and Louis Overstreet, who was barred from running, both plan to protest the committee's ruling.

The committee, in accordance with NAACP election guidelines, formed after Scott, Overstreet and David Bailey protested the election process.

In a Feb. 5 letter to Gene Collins, committee chair Leshia Lee-Dixon wrote, "the Committee has dismissed the complaint, pursuant to Article V Section 15 of the Constitution and Bylaws of Branches, as devoid of merit. Even if the events were as depicted by Mr. Scott, the results of the election would not change."

Scott has already raised the issue with the national board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

When asked why he just doesn't join with Collins,



LOUIS OVERSTREET

Scott replied, "If you were married and you and your husband agree that you would play fair, but it turns out he did the opposite, would you just go along with him anyway? I don't think you would and I can't go along with this."

The committee also summarily dismissed protests by Overstreet and Bailey.

"In that Mr. Overstreet was ineligible to run, he was also ineligible to protest the election. Our response to him was a courtesy," said Edward Lewis, president of the NAACP Tri-State Conference and Internal Affairs Committee member.

Overstreet will travel to Washington, D.C. to appeal to the National Committee on Branches during the NAACP's annual meeting.

"I was raised to help out when you can," said

Overstreet about his commitment to overturning the Committee's decision. "Once you give your word, you see things through until the end."

He insisted that his membership was up-to-date, qualifying him as a candidate. The National headquarters and the Tri-State Conference, however, have disputed evidence of his membership.

"I was at the Freedom Fund Banquet in November 1997. I remember renewing my membership at that event. Now, if I was a member in November 1997, I still would be a member through November of 1998, in time to be eligible to run," Overstreet said.

Overstreet is also a lifetime member of the organization and in September 1998 asked that his status be switched to the Las Vegas branch. He claims that as a lifetime member, he only needed to change over his membership 30 days prior to the nomination meeting, held on Dec. 4. He feels that several NAACP members have been in collusion with one another to keep him out of office.

Mark Clack, National Field Secretary, contends that there was a typographical error in the Constitution

concerning lifetime members' eligibility and that they must have memberships in the local branch 180 days prior to the meeting.

"I feel quite confident in the decision we had to make to install some type of leadership in Las Vegas," Clack said, "There's been no fraud, conspiracy or cover-up."

Lewis doesn't see why so many people are being so "disruptive".

"The members of the Las Vegas branch boycotted their own state conference ... Not one representative from Las Vegas was at the recent Image Awards ... No one from Las Vegas came to the board meeting we had in Seattle, specifically so the Western states could make it. Yet, everyone acts like they're so concerned about the success of this organization," he said. "They're lying and acting."

The Internal Affairs Committee has cleared the path for the installation of new officers after Feb. 19. Collins plans to move forward despite opposition.

He is sticking with his five-point plan for immediate action which includes: staffing the branch office, gathering the knowledge of the chapter's past presidents, (See Elections, Page 16)



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

In 1956 entrepreneur Larry Wilburn was excited about his music bar location on Jackson St. in west Las Vegas.

Staple music store ousted by development project

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

If walls could talk, the building that houses Larry's Sight and Sound would never shut up. For 35 years the black music store has sat comfortably at 811 W. Owens.

In March, the two attached stores will have to move to 1000 N. MLK beside neighbors such as Grooves Corner Cafe and Hair Unlimited.

(See Move, Page 2)

Activists protest NYPD shooting

WASHINGTON (AP) — Protesting the shooting by New York City police of an unarmed black immigrant, a group of civil rights activists called Monday for an examination of police violence against blacks nationwide. "Enough is enough," they declared.

"They've got to reign in these officers of the law who are killing black people," said Rev. Walter Fauntroy, a former District of Columbia delegate to Congress.

The shooting is being investigated by the Bronx district attorney's office, but federal officials are already involved. The U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White in New York has begun a separate

investigation, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation has said it is assisting the Bronx attorney's office.

About 400 protesters started outside the White House and then marched to the Justice Department and the U.S. Capitol. Federal offices were closed for Presidents Day.

"We want to see to it that an end is brought to this police violence against people of African-American ancestry," said Mark Thompson, who chairs an NAACP criminal justice task force. The protesters called for stiffer federal laws against police officers who target citizens because of their race or ethnic background.

The protest was sparked by the Feb. 4 fatal shooting of Amadou Diallo, from the West African country of Guinea, by New York City police officers as he stood in the entrance of his Bronx apartment building.

In Conakry, the Guinean capital, hundreds of people gathered for the return of Diallo's body. The body was taken to a hospital morgue to prepare first for a funeral on Tuesday in the city's main mosque, and then a 270-mile journey on Wednesday to his home village of Hollande-Bouroy, in the country's mountainous interior.

"It's too bad that our young have been sacrificed (See Shooting, Page 13)



Tarnished Gold

In a barrage on punches delivered in the 12th round by welterweight champion Oscar De LaHoya at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, he retained his World Boxing Council belt by a split decision against Ike Quartey.

Sentinel-Voice photo
by Jonathan Olsen