

Senator puts magnifying glass on problems at VA

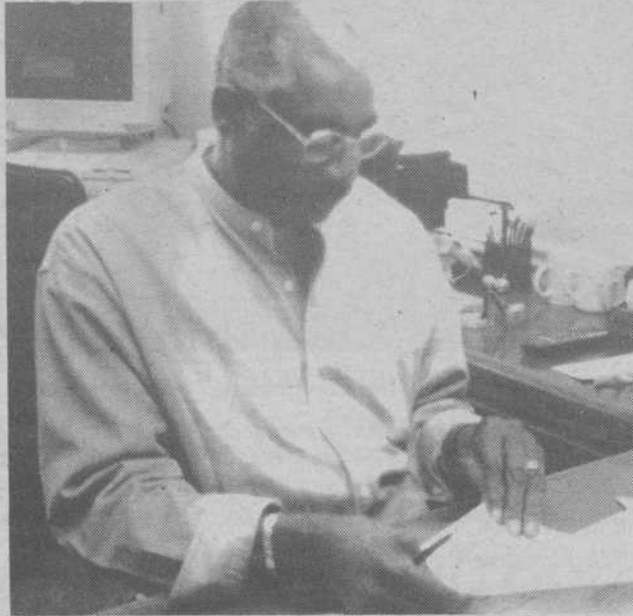
Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

Responding to pressure by veterans and dissatisfied staff at the Las Vegas Veterans' Administration, Sen. Harry Reid is scrutinizing the organization's operations.

"Tremendous growth is putting a strain on the clinic," Reid told the *Sentinel-Voice*. "They're understaffed and expensive equipment is not being used ... I'm not calling for anyone's removal. I'm just putting everyone on notice that I'm watching."

In 1997, the VA had 19,609 veterans enrolled. The number grew to 24,505 last year.

In a February letter to VA Secretary Togo West, Reid expressed concern about management at Addelear Guy, III Ambulatory Care Center and cited various problems — "lack of specialty care and excessive waiting," no MRI or mammogram services, "questionable human resources" practices,



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

VA Director Ramon Reevey reads paperwork at his desk. Reevey has indirectly come under fire since Sen. Harry Reid questioned the management of the AD Guy Center.

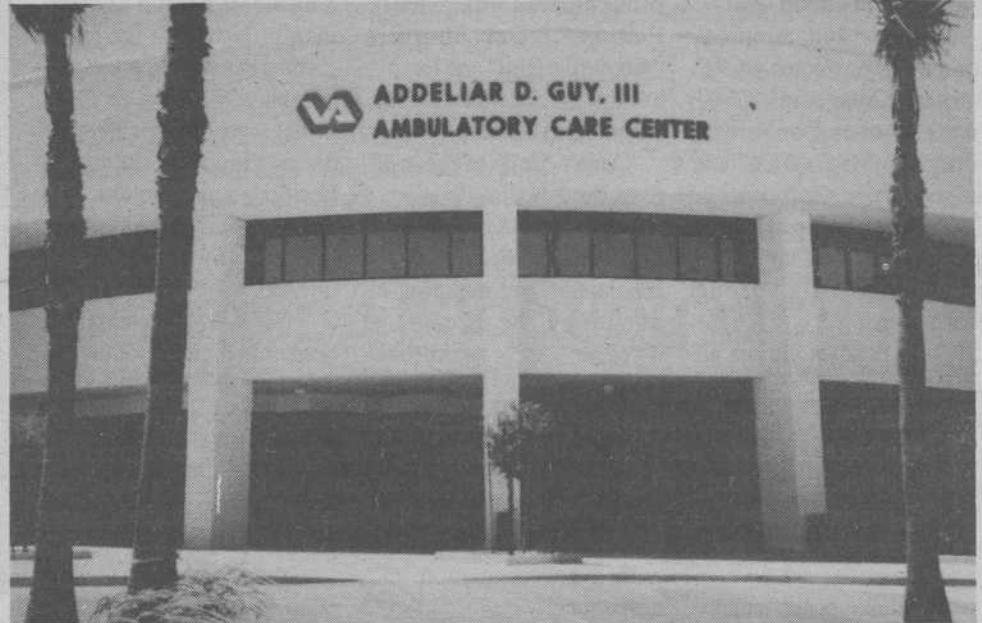
difficulty finding nurses, numerous EEO complaints, low morale and recruiting problems.

West was out of town and could not be reached for comment.

Ramon Reevey, the VA's first African-American

director, acknowledged that problems exist and said he's responsible for fixing them.

"We've had several investigations," Reevey said. "The GAO (Government Accounting Office) did an audit and confirmed what we already know: That there is a



lack of sub-specialty clinics and personnel to staff them. The GAO also recognized that we have taken efforts to remedy the situation."

Reevey said that among other initiatives, the VA has mounted an intense national recruitment drive to fill clinical positions, which, in turn will decrease waiting time for patients. He said that the VA just leased a new MRI jointly with the Air Force at the Mike O'Callaghan Federal Hospital.

They've partnered with four sites around the valley where women can receive

mammograms, and they are constructing a new airflow system, which should be completed by September.

There are seven service sites in the Southern Nevada VA healthcare system.

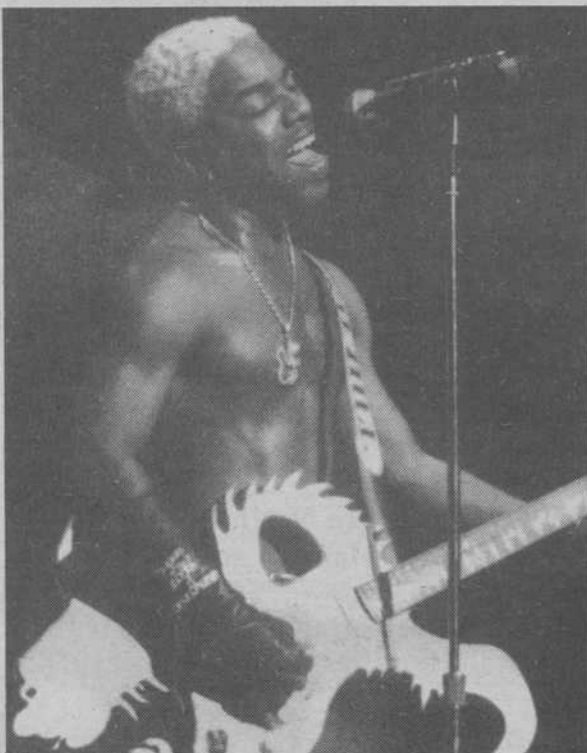
The average age of veterans seeking care is 59 and the most frequent diagnoses are hypertension, diabetes, prolonged post traumatic stress disorder, recurrent depression, atherosclerotic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, refraction disorder, alcoholism, hypercholesterolemia and low back pain.

Reevey said doctors and specialists avoid working for the government because of the low salary.

"I personally had doctors tell me they were interested in working for the VA and I've submitted names and there's been no response," Reid countered.

Reevey said that the preliminary GAO investigation wasn't able to substantiate some employees' accusations that some supervisors had a "hit list" and were out to get them or that the VA was overpaying reimbursement fees to the Air Force.

KING OF THE HILL



Undoubtedly the most energetic presence of the group, Dru Hill's Sisqo croons "Baby, I'm Sorry" to squealing fans at the House of Blues.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

R&B singer Roger killed in apparent murder-suicide

Special to Sentinel-Voice

R&B singer Roger Troutman, who is credited with songs such as "More Bounce to the Ounce" and "I Want to Be Your Man," was shot to death along with his brother, Larry in an apparent murder-suicide.

"I'm in disbelief," said Annette Lewis, a Las Vegas and friend of Roger's for over 20 years. "He was so bubbly. I can't believe that a spirit like his is no longer with us."

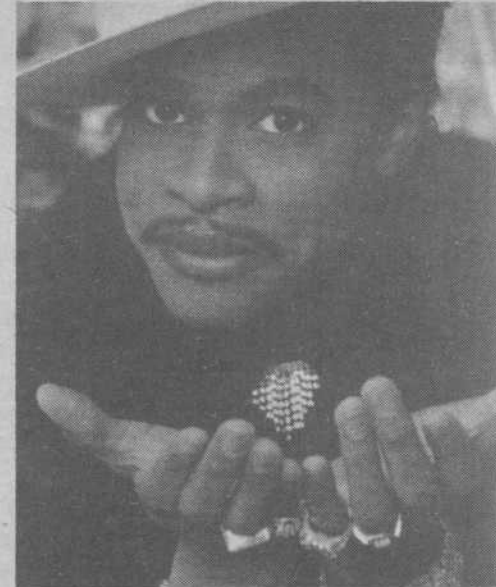
Troutman, who with his brother was part of the family group Zapp and recorded as a solo artist under the name Roger, was found outside his northwest Dayton recording studio around 7 a.m. Sunday.

The 47-year-old Dayton resident had been shot several times in the torso and died while in surgery at Good Samaritan Hospital and Health Center, according to police.

His brother, 54, was found dead in a car a few blocks away with a gunshot wound to the head, police said. They reported finding a handgun inside the car, which matched the description of a car leaving the scene of Roger Troutman's shooting.

Detectives are investigating it as an apparent murder-suicide, police said. But family members don't have a clue what the motive could've been, according to local authorities.

The brothers were part of the Troutman family of performers that formed the band Zapp; Roger (on vocals and guitar), Lester (on drums), Larry (on percussion) and Terry (on bass). The band played throughout the Midwest, eventually filling out the lineup with other backup vocalists, percussionists and keyboardists and helped



ROGER TROUTMAN

pioneer the rock-funk "Dayton sound" in the 1970s.

In 1978, the Troutman brothers collectively took Terry's nickname, Zapp, as their own, with Roger as the flashy frontman.

And with input from George Clinton, the group

signed to Warner Bros. Records, releasing their first self-titled album in 1980.

Their first single, which saw nominal success, was a remake of Gladys Knight & the Pips' cover of Marvin Gaye's "I Heard It

Through the Grapevine".

But the catchy, original "More Bounce to the Ounce" proved to be Zapp's breakthrough hit, helping catapult the band's debut into the top 20 on the pop charts.

Among their other hits (See Roger, Page 9)