

Legislation pushes NLV into wards

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

North Las Vegas will be divided into wards thanks to a bill passed in the 1999 Legislature.

Assembly Bill No. 590 calls for the mayor and the four North Las Vegas council members to map out four districts by Jan. 1, 2000.

Presently, city council members run at-large and thus aren't responsible for a certain section of the city. The mayor is held accountable for the entire city.

"What it allows for is more accountability," said Councilman John Rhodes. "The councilperson will have to reside in the ward they run for, which means people will

be able to identify their councilperson. Designating wards will alleviate a lot of redundancy. Now, when someone calls, if they leave a general message, two or three of us will start working on the issue simultaneously, which is a waste of time and resources."

The legislation mandates the wards be nearly equal in size and composed of contiguous land. The boundaries will be redrawn if the population in any ward exceeds that of another ward by more than 5 percent.

The mayor must be a resident of the city for at least 6 months before elections and each councilman must have lived in the ward which he

"So many people have fought for wards for so long because most of the council people have been concentrated in one area."

— John Rhodes



represents for at least one month before the last day of declaring candidacy. Council candidates will still run at large, allowing for all citizens to vote for them in elections, but will ultimately be responsible for specific wards.

June 30 marks the end of terms for council members William Robinson and Paula

Brown. But North Las Vegas Mayor Michael Montandon, Rhodes and councilwoman Stephanie Smith, whose terms don't end until June 30, 2001, may have more at stake.

"I'll be the most objective," Montandon said. "I'll always be mayor of the entire city. I won't be responsible to one area as

opposed to representing the interests of another."

Said Rhodes, "Whenever you have politics, people have their own agendas that they're going to put forward."

Robinson, Brown and Smith could not be reached for comment.

An issue with the new system is that the upcoming population count for the year

2000 won't be complete until April of 2001, yet the wards must be divided up by January of 2000.

"Firstly, we've got to figure out what numbers we're working with," Montandon said in an interview with the *Sentinel-Voice*.

"That's based on census information and we can't use the 1990 census, too many people have since moved in. So after we know what our population is based on projections, we'll try and draw precincts that grow consistently. We're not going to divide it between mature areas and areas with lots of growth. That would be (See *Legislation, Page 2*)



BOGGS McDONALD

McDonald frontrunner for Ward 2 council seat

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After an unsuccessful run for the state assembly, Lynette Boggs McDonald has set her sights on the Las Vegas City Council. The Ward 2 post was left vacant when veteran councilman Arnie Adamsen ran for mayor.

If appointed, McDonald

will be the first female council representative and the council's first African-American. Jan Jones served as mayor and didn't represent a ward.

"All of my experiences as a woman and my race will have an impact on how I problem solve," she said.

The council is expected to

appoint Adamsen's replacement at its June 28 meeting. The appointee will serve the remaining two years of Adamsen's term. The council will vote to appoint the two new city council members by Jan. 1, 2000.

McDonald, who recently switched from Democrat to Republican, is said to be the

frontrunner. When asked how she earned that status, she said, "I aggressively went after the appointment. I'm also the most qualified."

Developer Mark Fine, another unsuccessful mayoral candidate, and business owner Michael Mack are also being considered for the position.

Citing three years as assistant city manager from 1994 and 1997, Boggs McDonald said she has the experience necessary to be the most effective of the three.

"I'll be able to walk in on day one and get things done," she said. "I have both private sector and public sector (See *Boggs, Page 2*)

African festival draws sparse crowd

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

Battling minimal preparation time and triple digit temperatures, Diana Asabi Aird pulled off Las Vegas' 4th Annual African Heritage festival last week.

"We were put through the gauntlet this time," said Aird. "There were acts of sabotage, indifference and callousness, not to mention the inclement weather, but in the end, the acts of commitment, love and appreciation of our heritage made the show go on."

Aird estimated that 5,000 people attended the 3-day festival, a far cry from the 100,000 who were expected.

"The heat really socked it to us," she said. "We tried the best we could though to get the word out, and I still feel that we were a smashing success."

The health department



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

Ruth Manzo demonstrates Arabesque dance and clothing. She measured the temperature of the Las Vegas Convention Center Gold parking lot asphalt at more than 140 degrees. Aird posted guards at the lot's entrance to tell

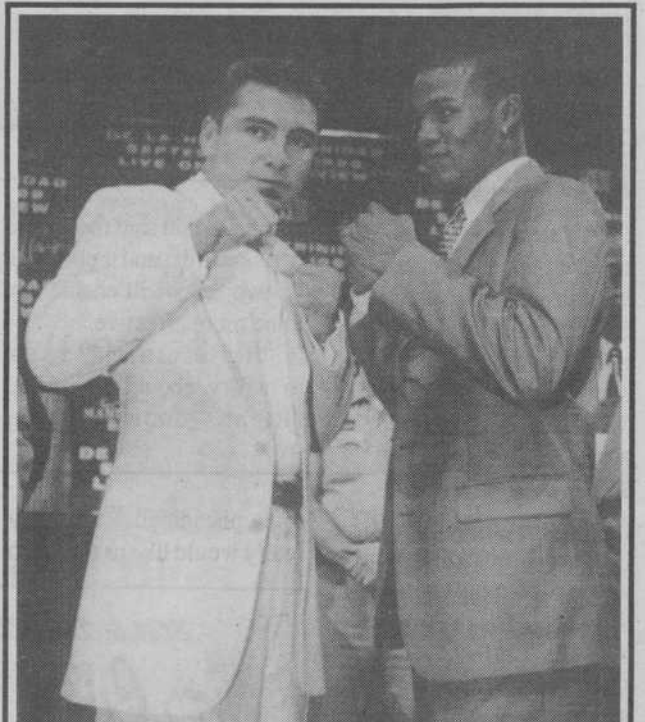
people that the festival would be delayed until 6 p.m. each day, after the weather cooled off. Local radio stations also broadcast the time changes.

"We decided to forego the dollars that could've been made (by proceeding with the festival at the designated time) and we looked out for the health of our people," Aird said.

On Saturday, the festival did have a very celebratory feel, even though the crowd was laid back. Cheerful volunteers pulled together to help out. Vendors sold crafts, clothes, food, jewelry, books and other items.

Som participants dressed in elaborate carnival costumes. The entertainment was superb. African drummers, dancers, a reggae band and a steel drumming orchestra performed.

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FIGHT HYPE

"Golden Boy" Oscar de la Hoya (left) and Felix "Tito" Trinidad hype their Sept. 18 championship fight at the Mandalay Bay during a well-attended pre-fight press conference. The press conference wound up a nine-city tour. The fight will be available on pay-per-view.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Jonathan Olsen/Front Row Photos