

# Black sect pledges cooperation on zoning, other matters

EATONTON, Ga. (AP)—A mostly black religious group whose spiritual leader claims to be an extraterrestrial pledged greater cooperation with anxious neighbors and local authorities.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, who claim to be descended from Egyptians, occupy a 476-acre tract in Putman County east of Atlanta. After a two-hour meeting on Tuesday, called by a judge hearing a contempt case, group leader Dwight York said he is optimistic he and county officials can resolve their disputes over zoning and other matters.

"Peace is made," York said to cheers from hundreds of supporters who filled the courtroom or stood in the rain and prayed on

the courthouse lawn. Hundreds of law enforcement officers were also on hand, as well as a helicopter and an armored personnel carrier.

The Nuwaubians have said their difficulties with the predominantly white county stem from discrimination.

The group arrived in 1993 from New York City and has since constructed a 40-foot-high black pyramid with statues of Egyptian gods and goddesses on the grounds.

York had been charged with contempt of court after armed guards prevented the sheriff and county building inspector from entering the community to carry out a court order in April. The county had filed several lawsuits

accusing the Nuwaubians of violating zoning and building regulations.

Hostilities intensified to the point where representatives from the Department of Justice tried to intervene to mediate, and Gov. Roy Barnes called the sheriff for a briefing on the situation.

At Tuesday's court hearing, York declined to answer where he lived and invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. That prompted Judge Hugh Wingfield III to ask everyone but the principals to clear the courtroom.

"I want to move beyond the contempt hearings and get to the meat of the matter," Wingfield said.

Ralph Goldberg, one of York's lawyers, said the Nuwaubians would go forward with the permitting process.

"We agreed to stop attacking each other, and, for lack of a better word, we aired some concerns," he said.

Wingfield did not rule on the contempt charge against York.

York has claimed he's from another galaxy and promises that ships are going to descend from the sky in the year 2003 to pick up a chosen 144,000 people for rebirth as supreme beings. Such predictions about spacecraft remind some of the group's neighbors of the Heaven's Gate sect in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., who committed mass suicide in 1997.

# White supremacist's law license denied by hearing board

EASTPEORIA, Ill. (AP)—Matt Hale doesn't hide his white supremacist views. He says his honesty is keeping him from becoming a lawyer.

The East Peoria man's appeal for his law license was rejected when a state hearing board decided his beliefs and character make him ill-suited to practice law, and unable to follow the state's rules of conduct for lawyers.

Hale said Friday he planned to appeal his case to the state Supreme Court and file a federal civil rights lawsuit.

He said he believes many practicing lawyers share his racist beliefs but keep them hidden.

"If you are a racist, as am I, then they're saying you don't have the right to say what you believe and be a

lawyer. That's a denial of free speech," Hale said. "If someone doesn't like what I have to say, I don't have a problem with that. But why can't I practice law?"

One reason, according to the commissioners who decided against granting Hale's appeal, is that his beliefs are in "absolute contradiction" to the required conduct of lawyers as

regulated through disciplinary action.

Hale is the leader of a white supremacist group called the World Church of the Creator, a movement that couches inflammatory racist language in religious tones.

After he graduated from Southern Illinois University law school and passed the bar exam, an Illinois Supreme Court panel that decides the

fitness of would-be lawyers denied him his license in December. The panel cited a "gross deficiency in moral character."

Hale appealed to the full Committee on Character and Fitness, a board of five lawyers and judges.

In its six-page report released Wednesday, the committee quoted racial slurs from Hale's own Web site as

evidence of his "bad character."

"Mr. Hale cannot wrap himself in the First Amendment and avoid any inquiry into his character and fitness," the panel said.

"He is absolutely entitled to hold these beliefs, but at the same time the public and the bar are entitled to be treated fairly and decently by attorneys."

## Reed

(Continued from Page 1)

Mortgage and Fannie Mae of Southern Nevada officials welcomed Mary Reed, the first new resident relocating from Windsor Parks, into her new home.

"My (old) home was sinking," said an elated Reed. "Now, after six years of working on it, I'm the first to move in and I'm so glad. I wanted a brand new home, too, and I got it. The city offered \$50,000 as a down payment and less than 40 days after I applied for it, here I am moving in!"

The city issued a \$4 million bond, in partnership with the Fannie Mae foundation, to finance the relocation of the two hundred and forty-one families who lived in the 30-year-old development. Through the years, the houses at Windsor

Park have buckled and walls continuously crack because they were built on water depleted earth that had fault lines.

The city is offering \$50,000 grants to Windsor Park residents to purchase homes elsewhere in the city and an additional \$15,000 for renovating homes that have already been lived in.

Six years ago, North Las Vegas city council members, responding to pressure from residents, fought for the bond monies. They secured \$300,000 per year to allocate to the relocation effort, far short of the millions needed.

Fannie Mae provided the city with \$4,000,000, at a 4.3 interest rate for repayment. The foundation applies the \$300,000 that North Las Vegas does have to pay off the loan. The debt will be

repaid through Community Development Block Grant funds over 10 years and through the city's general fund for six of those years.

As far as affordability of the new homes, Director of Fannie Mae's Nevada Partnership Office, Charlene Peterson, said, "Most of the residents are low income, so it's hard to make it match. A lot of underwriting capabilities came into play, and Fannie Mae purchased the first mortgages, which made it more attractive to mortgage lenders. The interest rates on the loans are also very low and we brought in a non profit credit counselor to help them clear up their credit."

Fortunately, Reed doesn't foresee any problems since she's working. "I took out a loan for \$56,000 more and

we've worked out a payment plan where ... I pay \$488 per month for 10 years," she said. "Now, my home in Windsor Parks was paid for, but to bring up the house to livable conditions, I would have to spend the money. Either way, I was going to have to pay. ... You have to buy what you can afford."

For more information on the Windsor Park Revitalization project, contact Lydia Camacho at 633-1532.

## Mayor

(Continued from Page 2)

"I want a voice," said Goodman who urged interested parties to contact his office and sign up to help make their communities better.

When asked how he (Oscar) was going to have time for community forums, to preside over council meetings, redevelop downtown, build a sports arena, and sell Las Vegas to Wall Street, he replied, "I'm full time, man. I'm here all the time."

To reach Oscar Goodman for more information or to become involved in his initiatives, call 229-6241.



OSCAR GOODMAN

## Byrdsong

(Continued from Page 1)

differences as anything less than a challenge both to our humanity and the ideals we Americans treasure."

"We must acknowledge the hurt inflicted on all of us without exception when such deeds occur," Wood said. "Then we must resolve to do better, renewing the promise to understand and get along with people not of our immediate race, religion or ethnicity and working to educate others to that awareness."

The Chicago Commission on Human Relations reported 204 hate crimes in its recently issued 1998 Hate Crime Report, with Wood saying about the Smith shooting spree: "These types of crimes insult us as a people."

A hate crime goes to court and has evidence

not apparent in the shooting spree, said Chicago FBI special agent and spokesperson Ross Rice. If Smith would have lived, it would have been difficult to call the crime a hate crime in a courtroom because there was no direct evidence, Rice said.

"He (Smith) never said anything, and he never left any materials. Practically, it certainly was a hate crime because he targeted minorities, but legally it is not," Rice said.

Police departments are still matching bullets and casings from the various sites that span from the Rogers Park neighborhood to Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind. to officially link Smith to the shootings, but a blue Ford Taurus belonging to Smith was described by witnesses at nearly all the shootings.

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