

## NEWS CLIPS

### COMMENCEMENT MARKED BY AWARDING OF HONORARY DEGREES

Approximately 1,000 students will graduate during the Community College of Southern Nevada's 28th commencement on Sunday. Activities begin at 6 p.m. at the Thomas & Mack Center. Honorary associate of arts degrees in humane letters will be given to five distinguished Southern Nevadans: Manuel Cortez, president of the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority; Lou Emmert, vice-president and general manager, Sprint of Nevada; Sherman Frederick, publisher of the Las Vegas Review Journal newspaper; Al Whalen, CEO of the Whalen Group and treasurer of the CCSN Foundation, Inc.; and David Hoggard, Jr., manager of the Las Vegas Field Office of the U.S. Census Bureau and former interim president of CCSN. Associate degrees or certificates of achievement will be awarded in 75 career field programs. Nearly half of class 2000 will receive honors or high honors of distinction.

### SHARPTON CALLS FOR END TO DEATH PENALTY, POLICE BRUTALITY

Announced during his weekly radio talk show on New York's WLIB-AM, the Rev. Al Sharpton and former attorney Alton Maddox vowed to organize and lead a national march to Congress in early June to protest police brutality and violence and to demand a national moratorium on the death penalty. The move comes in the wake of activism over death row inmates Gary Graham, who is set to be executed in Texas June 22, and Pennsylvania journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose supporters packed Madison Square Garden May 7 to call for a new trial. In both cases, there is evidence questioning the guilt of the condemned men. Graham's case is at a particular zenith because the execution date is set and only Texas Gov. George W. Bush — now a presidential candidate — can stay the appointment. Sharpton wants thousands of concerned citizens to draw national attention to the nationwide police brutality crisis and what he calls "flaws within the criminal justice system." Sharpton also sees the march as an opportunity for visitors to lobby their congressional representatives. "We know good and well that they don't want us walking through the halls of Congress talking to congressmembers about the criminal justice system," Sharpton said on-air to an audience of more than 40,000 listeners. "But in the case of African Americans (on issues such as police brutality), no news is not good news — instead it means something bad is coming."

### OPERATION LAST CHANCE AIMED AT BOOSTING CENSUS RESPONSE

The NAACP has turned to Black religious leaders and pastors in the final push to be counted in the U.S. Census. The program, called Operation Last Chance, asks that all people cooperate with the approximately 500,000 census takers who began going door-to-door last month. Only 65 percent of American households have returned their census form, according to census officials. Rough counts correspond closely to the 1990 Census, which drastically undercounted people of color, rural and urban dwellers and children. July 7 is the last day to respond to the census.

### JACKSON: RELEASE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS IN SIERRA LEONE

The Rev. Jesse Jackson has called for the leaders of the Revolutionary United Front to immediately secure the release of the several hundred U.N. peacekeepers missing in Sierra Leone for two weeks. The RUF has been accused of taking hostage peacekeeping troops who are in Sierra Leone to oversee the rebel's disarmament. News reports indicate the RUF fired upon a crowd of civil demonstrators that were protesting against the rebel group outside the home of RUF leader, Foday Sankoh. Four civilians were killed and as many as 60 were wounded during the incident. As both the United States and United Kingdom advised their nationals to leave the country and as Sierra Leoneans in the capital city, Freetown, prepare for a similar exodus, Jackson called for calm and a peaceful conclusion to the recent conflict. Jackson said the signing of the Lome Accords was only a first step in the path toward peace. He suggests that now the difficult task of implementing the peace plan and getting past the unavoidable obstacles comes.

# Confederate flag burned in S.C.

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — As protesters burned Confederate and Nazi flags outside South Carolina's Statehouse last week, black Democrats and hard-core flag supporters joined forces to shoot down a compromise amendment that would have removed the Confederate banner from the Statehouse dome. After hours of behind-the-scenes negotiations, the amendment failed 82-35.

The amendment would have flown a similar, square Confederate banner at a Statehouse monument to Confederate soldiers along with banners from South Carolina regiments from World War I and II, and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

The plan also would have allowed the Confederate flag to fly from the dome on Confederate Memorial Day.

"Is that not a small concession?" said Rep. Bob Sheheen, a Democrat who favored the idea. "You get 364 days out of it and they get one."

Last Wednesday, the state's first official celebration of Confederate Memorial Day, someone vandalized the Confederate soldier monument in front of the Statehouse, spray painting the words "take it down, don't put it here" in red on the granite base.

The monument is where the Democrat-controlled Senate decided a version of the flag should go. Republicans, who control the House, favor the Senate plan, but it is opposed by many black legislators and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which has a 5-month-old tourism boycott of the state.

They say the monument, which is at one of Columbia's busiest intersections, would be too prominent a place.

The GOP was a handful of votes short of the majority needed to approve the Senate's plan.

## L.A., Justice Department to team on LAPD overhaul

LOS ANGELES (AP) — City leaders said they want to meet with government officials to discuss how to overhaul the Los Angeles Police Department, a move both sides hope will prevent a federal lawsuit. However, Mayor Richard Riordan told the Daily News of Los Angeles last week that the actual reforms should be directed by local officials, not by outsiders.

The Justice Department on Monday threatened to file a police misconduct lawsuit unless the city agrees to fix the LAPD, an organization it said is plagued by rogue officers and poor supervision.

Several City Council members and a Police Commission spokesman said last Tuesday that they intend to cooperate in resolving the matter out of court.

The city wouldn't find itself facing legal action if it had acted in the past to implement reforms, said Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg, who attended a meeting last Monday with Justice Department officials.

"Their most important goal was to make sure there was a method of accountability, that this time when you have a good set of proposals that they actually get carried out and implemented," she said.

Possible remedies include better training for officers and supervisors, implementing a system to track officer misconduct and appointing an outside auditor to oversee reforms.

Riordan, in Washington to meet with congressional representatives, argued against bringing in an outside auditor.

"I think there's no one better to make reforms than (Chief Bernard Parks), the command staff, the Police Commission, the inspector general, the independent task force, the council and myself," Riordan said. "I'm convinced we can solve our own problems."

Parks has not spoken publicly about the Justice Department's lawsuit threat.

The federal involvement is the latest twist in the ongoing

The war flags plan was an attempt to win over black and white Democrats. White Democrats broke with their black colleagues on the vote.

Black Democrats joined with Republican flag supporters to defeat the plan.

Another version of the Confederate flag, one that does not resemble the better-known battle flag used in South Carolina, flew over the North Carolina state Capitol last week for Confederate Memorial Day.

The custom dates to 1961, the centennial year for the start of the Civil War. Flag opponents ignited Confederate and Nazi flags on the South Carolina Statehouse lawn at midday.

Both emblems represent "crimes against humanity," said Kevin Gray of the Harriet Tubman Read Street Freedom House Project in Columbia.

The Confederate flag did not immediately ignite, and its supporters chanted back, "It won't burn."

The monument was vandalized early last Wednesday. No immediate arrests were made.

The Confederate flag was raised above the Statehouse in 1962 to commemorate the Civil War centennial, though critics suggest it was also a gesture of defiance toward the civil rights movement.

Supporters say it is an important part of the state's heritage; opponents say it represents slavery and racism.

Many state employees got the day off for South Carolina's first permanent holiday to recognize Confederate Memorial Day.

It was authorized by a bill signed last week that also created a permanent Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday in February.

ing scandal, in which anti-gang officers allegedly planted evidence, shot unarmed suspects, falsified reports and gave false testimony to convict innocent people of crimes.

The allegations have prompted criminal charges against three officers and led to about 30 being relieved of duty. So far, 73 felony convictions have been overturned since the scandal came to light last summer.

In its letter warning of a

possible lawsuit, the Justice Department criticized the city and the Los Angeles Police Department for "serious deficiencies" in training, supervising, investigating and disciplining officers.

The letter specifically targets LAPD supervisors, stating they fail to monitor officer performance in the field, respond to the scenes of significant incidents, adequately review arrest reports and ensure proper treatment of those in custody.

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