

LAS VEGAS

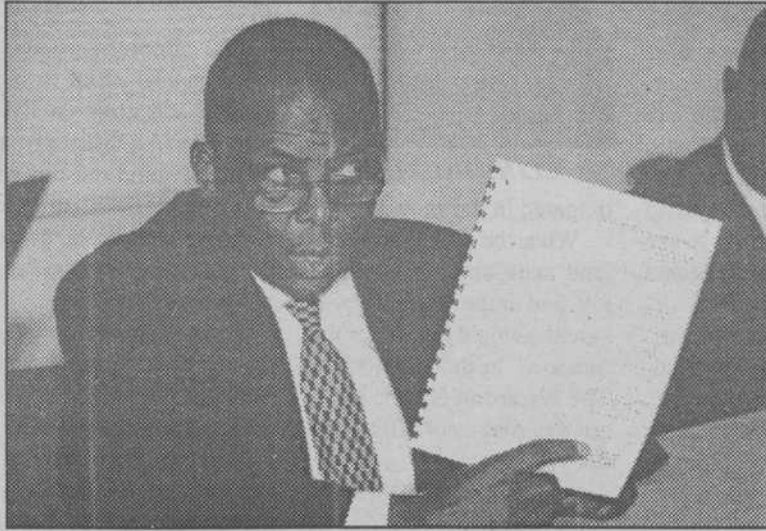
Sentinel Voice

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GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"



Las Vegas NAACP president Gene Collins highlights points of the group's multimillion-dollar reinvestment plan for black businesses.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

NAACP targeting MGM Grand

Plan seeks to divert millions to local black-owned businesses

Ramon Savoy
Sentinel-Voice

In a show of force and unity, the Las Vegas NAACP, with support from the Detroit chapter, drew a line in the sand Wednesday, asking the MGM Grand, Inc. to step up its commitment to African-American businesses.

The Las Vegas NAACP's 10-point, \$100 million reinvestment plan, presented to several top executives of the MGM Grand by local NAACP president Gene

Collins, is part of a continuing effort by Collins to address the disparity of contracts and dollars to African-American businesses.

"The NAACP wants an agreement of substance, dealing with the lack of economic strength in the black community," Collins said.

Collins said at an afternoon press conference at the local branch that MGM Grand spent \$890,000 on for construction services and only \$60,406 was spent with vendors.

MGM Grand Chairman J.

Terrence Lanni said his company spent \$1.6 million with Black-owned companies and more than \$36 million with minority and women-owned businesses since 1997.

The Las Vegas branch wants a five-year commitment, at \$20 million annually, in venture capital for programs to be developed primarily for west las vegas. A seven-person board would oversee the development of a housing master

(See MGM, Page 2)

Hate crimes conference highlights hot-bed issue

Al Triche
Sentinel-Voice

In an event long on good intentions but perhaps limited in practical usefulness, the local chapter of the National Conference for Community and Justice held a "Stop Hate Crimes Conference" last Thursday at the Clark County Government Center.

Representatives from law enforcement, economic development, government, education, religion, news media and "social justice organizations" participated.

"I'm hoping that individuals will be more educated about the pervasiveness of

hate crimes and how we can increase the reporting of them and the bias and bigotry that exists in our community," local NCCJ executive director Susan Boswell said in explaining the event's objective.

Dr. James Weinstein, professor of Constitutional Law at Arizona State University and one of the guest speakers, presented an overview of hate crimes and offered a critique of the NCCJ's definition of a hate crime.

According to NCCJ, a hate crime is "an act or attempted act by any person or group of persons against the person or property of another individual

or group which in any way constitutes an expression of hostility towards the victim because of his or her actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation."

"Technically, the definition they were using was really flawed because nothing in here talks about a crime," Weinstein said. "It talks about any sort of expression of hostility, whereas I make the point that a better name would be 'bias crimes,' that is criminal acts on a discriminatory basis against these various group. It's very controversial to say what groups get cov-

ered, but I think it has to do with groups for which people hold deep-seated prejudices or animosities."

The constitutionality of hate crime legislation is a hotly debated topic.

"For a while, many people thought that they weren't, particularly law professors and even some state supreme courts that struck down these hate crime statutes," Weinstein said.

"More controversially, I talked about the wisdom of hate crime legislation," said Weinstein in an interview after the event, referring to remarks he made during the session. "I'm not so sure that

(it) is the way to go. I understand the moral instinct, but I'm not sure giving harsher penalties to things is the way to solve the problem of hate and even hate crimes.

"I understand the benefit is that it's symbolic," he said. "It shows the communities that we care about the people who are victims of these crimes. That's important, I'm just not sure it deters hate crime. In practical effects I don't know what good it does. So I'm dubious."

"I talked about some of the harms of hate crime statutes," Weinstein said, characterizing those remarks as "singing against the choir."

"I think that law enforcement can use it as a club to coerce plea bargains out of poor people and already over-worked public defenders," he said.

He also pointed out that hate crime legislation can, ironically, be used disproportionately against minorities.

One of the more visceral reactions to a panelist occurred in response to the comments of Gary Waters of the State Board of Education, whose presentation amounted to an apology on behalf of white males, which, he argued is not a privileged class and are not represented by (See Hate Crimes, Page 14)

Poetry growing force in West Las Vegas

Tammy D. McMahan
Sentinel-Voice

Poetry could be described as an outpouring of the soul, "speechifyin'" by creative politicians or entertainment for enlightenment-seekers. However this form of expression is labeled, it's alive and well in West Las Vegas.

The West Las Vegas Cultural Center, 947 West Lake Mead Blvd., is the setting for the Poets' Corner, a gathering of poets who take the mike and share their intimate insights on life every third Friday of each month.

Poets Keith Brantley, Pendelita Toney and Ellis Rice founded the Poets' Corner two years ago.

Participating poets and

attendants expressed that the Poets' Corner is a positive force.

The gathering was praised for being an unfettered source of verbal expression.

In that regard, Rice described the readings as "an uncensored gift." He added that "poets can soar to new political heights, release political anxieties or express their political philosophies" during the open mike sessions.

Some poets noted that their work had been enhanced due to participation in the readings.

Brantley stated, "poetry reading has helped knock down my inhibitions."

Poet Allen E. Jackson commented, "I realized that I could also write something



KEITH BRANTLEY

other than battle rhymes and move beyond my warrior mode."

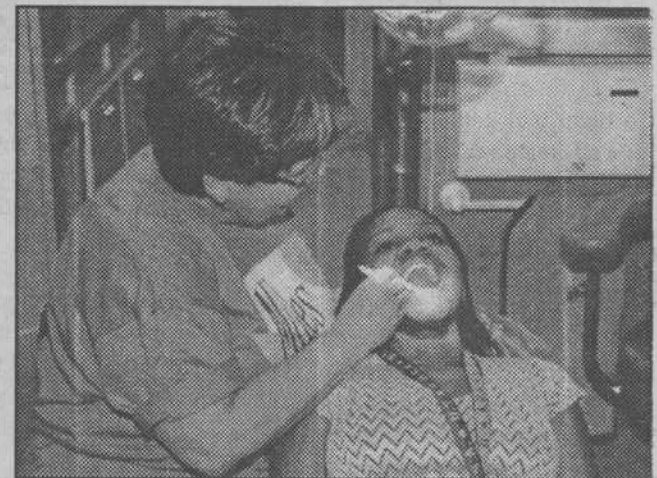
The Poets' Corner was characterized as an inviting, creative "space" for all who visit. Brantley summed up

the poetry group's unofficial motto as "Respect yourself. Respect those around you. Maintain those things and it's all good."

Attender Willie Daugherty added, "it's a wonderful, very nonthreatening, supportive environment for artists and nonartists."

Some thought the readings were essential instruction for the black community.

"The poetry readings were greatly needed because there was a need for our community to share background and reflect upon situations through the spoken word," West Las Vegas Cultural Cen- (See Poetry, Page 9)



Tiffany Lowe receives free dental work at the city's annual Juneteenth celebration Saturday at the Nucleus Plaza.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Juneteenth draws large crowd to Nucleus Plaza

John T. Stephens III
Sentinel-Voice

The fifth Annual Juneteenth Celebration sponsored by the Nucleus Association, City of Las Vegas, Clark County, and the Com-

munity Health Center of Southern Nevada, Inc. attracted the residents and political candidates to a Nucleus Plaza commemoration of the day when the last slaves were (See Juneteenth, Page 3)