

Deadline

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safety," and shared his dim view of a community coalition that was organized to stop the violence.

"I know that Community Peace is suppose (sic) to have such a project, but can this project be working," Current asked in the letter, saying "Community Peace seems to come out after someone is dead or the riot has started; this is not keeping the peace to me."

In February, the coalition unveiled an elaborate plan to intervene. Speaking at the same event, Current revealed his own plan to a standing-room crowd of more than 200 at the West Las Vegas Library, announcing his intent to deliver a list of demands to the city.

Community Peace, clearly stating its top priority- to stop the violence- had just called for a protest march in West Las Vegas that weekend to dramatize the loss of life to violence. Coalition facilitator Uri Clinton noted, however: "If we don't address the socioeconomic conditions, we'll end up worse than we are."

For Current, addressing those conditions is the priority, and back in February he had said of the coalition: "If these people don't have jobs to give these brothers, then they're wasting their time."

Current indicated at the time that he, too, was considering staging a march- not in West Las Vegas, but along the Las Vegas Strip. He saw little value in marching through the westside, saying, derisively, "It won't make a difference. They don't care if we march around this community."

Saying "feelers have already been put out across this country" and that he felt encouraged by their results, Current also said national media- including TV news programs like "Rivera Live" and "60 Minutes" had shown interest in his cause.

In early April, Current did deliver a list of demands to the mayor. A few weeks later he spoke about the issues with Goodman and was hopeful that by April 23 the mayor would have a timetable for addressing them.

Six more weeks passed, then, last Friday while in California, Current told the *Sentinel-Voice* that he had spoken with the mayor earlier in the week by phone, noting that "there were a couple of Panther members there with (Goodman)."

"I'd say my conversation with him lasted about twenty minutes," said Current. "We agreed that there are some problems with the social services that are presently in West Las Vegas. We agreed there should be a conference held, and he said he'd be willing to be part of it."

But just days after that conversation, Current sent Goodman the letter, intensifying the situation.

"I know he's read it," the mayor's spokesman said on Monday, explaining that Goodman has been too busy with meetings and other business to respond.

Referring to service providers he considered ineffective, Current mentioned the federal "Weed and Seed" crime intervention program, which involves some city personnel. Most of the agencies referred to, however, are not within the city's purview.

The letter criticized local drug intervention programs—the school district's prevention program and the Economic Opportunity Board's treatment program—but both are agencies of Clark County. It went on to assert that the gambling industry should be a major player in the economic development of West Las Vegas.

On Tuesday, Erik Pappa, senior public information officer for the city, said most of the points made in Current's letter should have been directed to others.

"Social services are operated by the state and county," said Pappa. "We're suggesting to Ron that he ask the governor to hold the conference," he said, indicating he had just spoken to Current and had confirmed for him Goodman's willingness to be involved. For Current, however, that was barely sufficient.

"He's willing to participate," he said of the mayor, "but they're trying to pass the buck on to the governor." Stressing his organization's impatience with what it considers a lack of progress, Current said, "The Panthers are doing everything conceivably possible to give the city and the state time to do the right thing by the people of that community."

The organization says it will hold a press conference at 10 a.m. on Monday at the West Las Vegas Library. Current plans to discuss a package of economic initiatives for the westside proposed by local businessman Ernest Fountain, Jr. and others. He will also examine the possibility of a protest march.

"Our foremost concern is economic development within that community," Current said on Friday. "I just don't really (See *Deadline*, Page 5)

Las Vegas to host first BET Awards

By Nyla Pickett
Special to *Sentinel-Voice*

Over the last 21 years we have certainly evolved as a national community. We have grown and expanded our tastes, our likes and dislikes. We have broadened our horizons, we have what the fans want. This ceremony brings to light the choice of "bests" in several categories, including lifetime achiever in entertainment overall.

Keeping pace with the

broadening horizontal reach of the African-American influx into mainstream popular culture, the categories also include the Oscar-type best actor and actress in films. What better time than a new millennium to celebrate the fact that there has been increasing representation from the Black community in the big box-office arena- to say nothing of the fact that the Athlete of the Year category will celebrate the fact that the "non-traditional" sports arena

has also become a showcase for the best talent from our backyards.

Curtis Gadson, Senior Vice President of BET Programming, says this ceremony will be "a celebration of who we are as a people"... a bit more than the average awards show. The fact that the network now reaches 66.4 million households nationwide is evidence of the fact that there is a support network, and that the programming platform is still relevant

in today's world. The question of whether entertainment, as a whole, should be a reflection of our culture or a portal of new life introduction was answered with a resounding, "YES!" on both sides by Stephen Hill, BET Vice President of Programming. The consensus is that our community has made BET what it is today, and even the awards show nominees and winning (See *BET Awards*, Pg 5)



Just think: Your son is bright, healthy and headed for college one day. You love the direction your career has taken. You're doing a lot of the things you planned and even a few you didn't. Living life to the fullest is easy when you have family behind you. American Family Mutual Insurance. Call and talk to one of our helpful, friendly agents. You'll find out why we're consistently rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best, the insurance rating authority. Then, go on. Dream. Plan. What you do next is up to you and we'll be here to help you.

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