

NEWS BRIEFS

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES TO REAPPORTION BOARD DISTRICTS

The Clark County School District Board of Trustees will take action on an agenda item regarding reapportionment of board districts at the school board meeting scheduled for August 9, at 5:30 p.m. at the Education Center. Reapportionment is done after the census is taken every ten years, in order to adjust the population between districts and to protect the ethnic makeup of those districts. A map showing the new district reapportionment will be available in the Education Center lobby on August 2, or will be available on the district's web page at www.ccsd.net.

JUDGE UPHOLDS SCHOOL BAN ON CONFEDERATE T-SHIRT

ATLANTA (AP) - A federal judge has upheld for now a Seminole County school system's ban on T-shirts bearing images of the Confederate flag. U.S. District Judge W. Louis Sands on Monday refused to issue an injunction against the district's ban on clothing "that might be offensive to others." Students and parents who filed the suit with the backing of the American Civil Liberties Union argued the policy was too broad. But Sands also said students had the right to free expression and asked attorneys for more information about whether the flag could spark disruptions. He said he would make a final decision within 60 days on whether to uphold the ban. Many black students in the southern Georgia district have complained that the flag is a racist reminder of slavery and segregation. The flags are featured on T-shirts celebrating everything from hunting to trucking. Sands said he was backing the school board because there is "significant evidence of past disruption related to racially sensitive symbols including the Confederate battle flag." Seminole School Superintendent Larry Bryant said the ban began several years ago after some white students and faculty said they were offended and intimidated by Malcolm X and "Black Power" T-shirts worn by black students. The school has about 1,000 students who are equally divided between blacks and whites.

POLL: 60 PERCENT OF BLACKS DISSATISFIED WITH U.S. RACISM

Six out of 10 Blacks are unhappy with the way they are treated in America, according to a Gallup poll released earlier this summer. Thirty-two percent of the 264 Blacks polled in the survey of 1,375 adults said they were "very dissatisfied," with only 8 percent saying they were "very satisfied." Fifty-four percent of the 247 Latinos polled had characterized their treatment as one that left them totally dissatisfied. Meanwhile, the majority of the Whites polled said they felt America treated people of color well, with 64 percent of Whites expressing their satisfaction with the treatment of Latinos.

NEWSPAPER: BLACKS PAY MORE FOR NISSAN CAR LOANS

African-American car buyers in 33 states paid more in car loans than their White counterparts, according to a study conducted by The New York Times. The study of more than 300,000 car loans set up by Nissan dealers from March 1993 through September 2000 showed that Blacks paid more regardless of their credit ratings. The following are the differences Blacks paid in several states: • Connecticut: \$245 more; • New Jersey: \$339 more; • Texas: \$364 more; • New York: \$405 more. A spokeswoman for the Nissan Motor Acceptance Corp., the loan unit for Nissan Motor, told the newspaper the company "has never tolerated" any unfair customer treatment. The study comes in the wake of two class action lawsuits filed in Nashville against Nissan and the General Motors Acceptance Corp., General Motors' loan unit. The suits charge racially disparate lending practices.

Boston firefighters make racism claim

BOSTON (AP) - Gay and minority firefighters claim racist, sexist and homophobic treatment in the department is going unchecked, causing some to fear doing their jobs.

Karen Miller, who is gay and black, said harassment by both white and black male firefighters drove her to a desk job with the department.

She said that when she rushed to emergency calls at her Boston fire station, she found broken glass inside her boots. Other times, her oxygen mask and gloves were missing.

"The incidents of racism, sexism and homophobia have never been properly dealt with by the Boston Fire De-

partment, and the individuals that are creating the problem are more than just a few bad apples," Miller said at a news conference Thursday.

The Coalition for Firefighters' Civil Rights, which includes civil rights and community groups and a minority firefighters association, planned to seek the help of the City Council later Thursday.

The head of the Boston firefighters' union dismissed the group's complaints.

"We've made tremendous strides in bringing everybody back together again," said Jack McKenna, president of the International Association of Firefighters Local 718, the Boston firefighters' union. "I

think this is a lot of hype." But critics say the number of complaints among the 1,600 city firefighters indicates otherwise.

"If there's this much smoke there's got to be fire somewhere," said Joseph Provanzano, an attorney whose firm represents firefighters, including Miller, in employment discrimination suits.

The fire department has been without a commissioner since 1999 and has been embroiled in a bitter contract dispute with Mayor Thomas Menino for two years.

The minority rights group also wants Menino to search for a new fire commissioner from outside the department,

and to appoint a committee to deal with the department's shortcomings.

The city did not intend to reply to the complaints in advance of Thursday's City Council hearing, said Carole Brennan, the mayor's spokeswoman.

The complaints have drawn the attention of Justice Department investigators, who interviewed minority firefighters in March, said Dana Johnson, an associate of Provanzano.

A city-commissioned report, released in January 2000, found the department has fallen short in some administrative areas, including recruiting minorities and women.

Action

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nickel is returned to assist the black businessman and businesswoman," said Collins.

Another issue that Collins and NAN will bring up with the MGM is the hiring of ex-offenders, something that the Bellagio has been doing since it opened.

In addition, Collins wants all of the gaming properties in town to furnish a list of all the African-American employees on their payrolls.

"They promised the Gaming Control Board that they would furnish us that list," he said. "We want a breakdown of all the areas and we want to know how many African-Americans are working. Even dishwashers, porters, maids, everyone."

Collins said he doesn't know what the list will reveal, but he quoted Moses Stewart, director of the NAN's New York Bureau: "It has been said that you could roll a bowling ball through one of these casinos and you wouldn't hit one African-American working there." He wants that list before Sharpton arrives during the first week of September.

Collins is also in the process of selecting a site for an office, filling committee positions and preparing a report for Sharpton.

Sharpton is currently serving a 90-day jail sentence for

trespassing. He was protesting the U.S. Navy's use of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques for bombing exercises. He will be released from jail on August 17. Sharpton will use Collins' report to select the officials he needs to meet with while in Las Vegas.

During Friday's press conference, Stewart said he had spent part of the day touring the city and he had seen parts of the city "that were like heaven and other parts that were like Beirut." Sharpton has, since 1991, fought to level the playing field for all people, he said.

The NAN, with Collins at the helm of the Las Vegas office, will address discrimination, economic development, racial profiling and educational opportunities including a vocational training center.

"We have been asleep at the switch," Collins said, "We must do better. We'll no longer be victims."

The NAN bills itself as the "number one grassroots activist organization in the country." It was founded by Sharpton in 1991 in Harlem, and currently has about 30 chapters throughout the country. Its motto is: "No justice, no peace."

Sharpton is known for his tenacity and his willingness to take on high-profile na-

tional and international civil rights issues. According to Time magazine, Sharpton is the most important black leader in New York City.

Prior to founding the NAN, Sharpton led the National Youth Movement for 17 years. He began his public life at the age of nine when he was ordained as a minister. He began preaching at the age of four.

For more than two decades, he has played major roles in struggles for civil liberty, community empowerment and economic equality.

During last week's visit to Las Vegas, representatives of the NAN and Collins met with Mayor Oscar Goodman. They described the mayor as "extremely cordial."

During a talk show on KCEP-FM Saturday morning, Stewart said the group would use whatever it takes to get the job done, rallies, town meetings, demonstra-

tions, boycotts and marches.

Although the group supports a march planned by the Las Vegas Black Panther Party for September, none have said they would actually participate in the march.

Many people in the African-American community expect Sharpton to run for president, and attribute his reaching into communities like Las Vegas as a means to broaden his support for the presidency.

As for the possibility that someone might offer money to the organization to stay away from Las Vegas, Collins said, "Sharpton doesn't take corporate money. There's no dangling a carrot in front of him."

But the gaming powers in Las Vegas are probably already trying to think of ways to diffuse Sharpton and his group, Stewart said Saturday morning. Stewart is confident that it can't be done.

Mokae

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have any marketable skills to make a successful living."

Scholarships and the financing for the resource foundation is made possible by donations from the public and the selling of ads in the "Mokae Resource Scholarship Foundation Souvenir Program Book," which covers past events, publishes local photos and runs business ads.

Admission for the awards banquet is \$65 per person. For more information, call 474-7911.

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