

With stations, pols, clout has Black Vegas arrived?

By Franklyn Verley
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Have we overcome? Well, nobody told me!

Certainly the amount of radio stations and their musical selections have. Additionally, the increased numbers of Black elected State official's highlights modernize thoughts for Las Vegas.

Recent attendance of 40,000 participants at the Dr. King Parade is impressive. Still I feel disconnected from the people of color in my new adopted home.

Urban music stations as referred to (i.e. KCEP, KVEG, WILD, and KVGs) have quadrupled in my five years. While I have my bias, all enhance the cultural dynamic. Celebrating the diversity within African-American music disciplines and tastes. Counting jazz, blues, and reggae programming at KUNV any listener may feel equity.

Larger cities also have the good blend of Black oriented stations.

This means Black folks are connected and impact their metropolis.

Not in step with National trends, our recent elections have promoted new racial views. Two Blacks elected came from overwhelming white communities. That's the America Trent Lott dreads.

My district's Black Republican representation again supports this racial idealist symmetry of Las Vegas. Although the continuing feud for leadership of the NAACP, the lack of information from the Black Leadership Consortium leaves many wondering.

Are large crowds out to support Dr. King's legacy, or are folks out to support their friends and family in the parade? Many are too young to understand Dr.

King's struggle, viewing King as an icon and the parade as fun. Many major cities are eliminating parades.

Even Atlanta, King's birthplace, has opted not to parade but to instead pay tribute to Dr. King by educating with his works. Providing lectures and conferences stimulating dialogue on race, instead of Battle of the Bands, is more in tune with King's legacy. Dr. King was often heard to say, "taking to the streets is our last method used to get our point across." How would King view marching bands, and young people shaking and gyrating down?

Main Street for him? Watching elected officials on corporate sponsored floats smiling and waving. What side of the table were they on during his life? Given Nevada's historical benign neglect, of peoples of color it's safe to say they were not close.

Dr. King would have lobbied for their support in promotions, hiring, and paying a fair wage instead of a parade. Are the masses being informed about Dr. King's legacy during these events?

Growth means many things, seeds must be planted and replanted, growing can be painful, and growth is a process. With growth comes responsibility to nurture. Growth in numbers of media outlets that only provide music without information show their commitment to your growth. Increases in State Officials without consensus means Sen. Neal still stands alone. Events or opportunities commemorating Dr. King where we come together and walk away only entertained are painful. Growth is a process and yes all I have mentioned is better for Las Vegas. Through critical analyses and King's vision have we truly grown? Somehow, with all this growth, I still feel disconnected.

Walters

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But Democrats are not that much better. Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, who has just taken over control of the Democratic Caucus in the House of Representatives, had the opportunity to name Black Louisiana Congressman William Jefferson to head the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the main electoral arm of the party for Democratic House members. She didn't, theorizing that she would do better at getting Black lawmakers choice committee assignments. Nevertheless, for all of the vaunted

importance of the Black vote, it couldn't yield one major House leadership position for Blacks.

So what does all of this posturing amount to? The old saying is true that you get what you deserve. Black Democratic politicians have not demanded leadership positions and so they did not get them. Black Republican politicians used the Lott crisis to go for themselves. What a sorry excuse for leadership on both sides of the aisle.

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Price

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It's a carefully crafted program that takes into account not only the law of the 1978 Bakke decision, which declared that race could be considered in college and university admissions decisions as one of several factors about applicants. It also seeks to fulfill the university's larger mission of expanding opportunity to all segments of American society — for our society's future well being.

There is no question that the Bakke decision's central element — the continued use of affirmative action — has served America well in expanding opportunity.

It must be allowed to continue to do so in the years ahead, for we know that in the real world of American society, race still matters to great effect in ways that are both

sensational and seemingly picayune.

Its critics say that affirmative action is "divisive." But those of us who support it know that America's "racial divide" springs from the toleration of injustice, not the effort to reduce discrimination's impact.

And we know that what Martin Luther King said in the great "Dream Speech" at the March on Washington in 1963 is still true:

"This is no time," he intoned, "to engage in the luxury of cooling off or take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism... Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children."

Opening the doors of opportunity across the color line has never been an easy task.

To do so, you have to disturb the peace.

Williams

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ity!" he exclaimed, apparently still incredulous.

"It says something about where their hearts were, and it's reflected," he said, angrily.

"If you look at the conditions of the old Madison, Mable Hoggard, Matt Kelly, Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Quannah McCall, it's reflected in those schools today."

Then, suddenly calm, Williams continued. "So, as the Chairman, when I get that gavel every meeting," he said, "I'm mindful of that."

"With the current mindset of the majority in the Senate, and the Governor — and with the President" — he said, "we've got an uphill fight when it comes to public education. With 'No Child Left Behind' Bush, we're into a fight to make sure every child is included."

"My overall objective," says Williams, "is to rebuild all the neighborhood schools. This," he said of the site where

the upcoming ceremony will be held, "is the first one."

"There's an excitement in the immediate neighborhood since the school's been rebuilt," he continued. "There's an uplifted spirit among the neighbors that I've talked to," he said, "and property values have actually gone up in the immediate area because of it."

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Legislative and Assembly Committee on Education is not optimistic. "I have to be ready to fight that fight," he said. However, while pessimistic, he's not helpless.

"I've got friends up there," he said, speaking of Carson City. "It boils down to the power of the chairmanship."

"There's nothing I can't pass out of the Assembly, but, in the Senate, with the Republican-controlled situation, what it boils down to, in the end, is horsetrading," Williams explained. "And that's the power of the chairmanship," he said, "to broker

those deals."

So, what's ahead for the Assembly District 6 strongman; aspirations to higher office?

Nearly making some real news, Williams said, "I have not deliberated on running for higher office. The only deliberation I'm doing right now," he added (one could swear, with a twinkle in his eye), "is ending my political career as we know it. This could very well be the last one," he said of his ninth term.

"The office seeks the man, the man doesn't seek the office." There are a lot of folks that "hop around," trying to move up," he said, "and many times they're not successful that way."

Well, that, if nothing else, should give those attending the reception something else to talk about.

"I'm just elated that the school is named after him, especially because of the work he does as chair of that committee," Barber said, with obvious satisfaction.

McCurry

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acknowledgement of the Tech Start Program and it's coordinator, Joseph Sayles. Tech Start is a non-profit organization specializing in refurbishing, recycling, and redistribution of computers and technology for low and moderate-income individuals, and in breaking down real and imagined barriers to access of new technology. Sayles stated that his organization will be providing technological and multi-media support to McCurry's campaign. He added, "Denise has been instrumental in providing assistance in getting computers into the community to help combat computer illiteracy and giving people a leveled playing field to improve their education, employment, and skills development."

McCurry is organizing a grassroots cam-

paign, and plans to spend most of her time meeting voters at churches, community meetings, and door to door. She will be working hard to raise about \$100,000 to finance her campaign and wants people to know that an investment in her campaign is one that will benefit everyone in the community.

Anyone interested in becoming involved with the campaign is asked to contact her at her campaign office, 671-0013. She needs volunteers for canvassing, telephone banks, distributing campaign literature, and helping to establish name recognition in the campaign.

The next fundraiser will be held on Feb. 16, and plans are underway to host an affair at one of the local casinos to support the campaign.

Overstreet

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if you reasoned there was no real emergency and that the policemen merely chose to arrest this young man simply for "biking while black."

Every fair-minded citizen in North Las Vegas should be all over Chief Paresi's butt and demand that disciplinary action be taken against the "bonehead" policemen who committed this act of gross misconduct under the guise of color. I have almost come to the conclusion that certain powers that be will not be satisfied until every young black male in America has an arrest record. This perception of mine is why I stated earlier that the major problem we have in America is that we are not all treated alike.

Treating certain segments of society in the manner herein reflected places our nation's future in harm's way. How can leaders continue to reason in modern days the same as so many did generations ago? Back then, history documents that it was acceptable to hold the belief that "the only good Indian was a dead Indian."

The modern day version of "the only good black man is a locked-up black man" is just as nonsensical, insidious and racist in its intent as it was 175 years ago.

America needs to wake up to the fact that treating all people alike will prove to be a far less expensive option than continuing to treat people in such a manner that a growing number feel committing terrorist-type acts against perceived oppressors represents a viable option. Fair-minded people must work to stem the tide of daily occurrences of oppressive acts being committed against young males of color. By doing so, this country can be made to live up to its basic precepts.

Oh, by the way, Brother Funchess, I hope you have every intention of finding a civil rights lawyer to file a suit against the North Las Vegas Police Department. If you do, there is no doubt in my mind the next time you are stopped it will not have to be for "biking while black."

P.S.

A couple of weeks ago, I wrote about us not reading books. As a result, I suffered a near death experience. Felton Thomas, director of the West Las Vegas Library, stopped by our office and put a choke hold on me while explaining that not only does he read books, but the books I mentioned in my column were available at his library.

My three — or is it four — fans, do not worry. I have fully recovered.