

## Son of NOI leader leader arrested

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

VALPARAISO, Ind. - The 44-year-old son of Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan was arrested by Indiana State Police following a hit-and-run accident.

Nasir H. Farrakhan, of Chicago, posted bail from Porter County Jail on Sunday. He had been held on probable cause for charges of operating a vehicle while intoxicated, driving with a suspended license, leaving the scene of personal injury accident and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Farrakhan was driving east on the Indiana Toll Road in LaPorte County on Saturday when his 1997 Hummer struck the rear of a car driven by 73-year-old Charles Peterson of Gary, state police said. Peterson's wife, passenger Gladys Peterson, was treated at Porter Memorial Hospital for neck and back pain and released.

Farrakhan did not stop following the collision and exited the Toll Road, state police said. He was stopped by LaPorte County police.

The Petersons' car sustained about \$5,000 worth of damage, but Farrakhan's vehicle did not sustain any noticeable damage, police said.

## Overstreet

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Here is a simple game plan we need to implement in order to maximize our political and economic influence. The plan merely involves a division of labor.

The concentration of us who live in West Las Vegas must vote in high percentage numbers in order that we can continue to elect African-Americans to serve in city, county, and state positions. Those of us who have attained a middle or upper middle class standard of living need to share the financial burden of helping blacks seeking elective office. There is no way around it. Money is needed to run effective campaigns.

Also, the expertise gained in dealing with the systemic blemishes elsewhere need to be utilized to help change systems of exclusion that remains rooted from the past. Some recall days when the population of persons of black, brown and yellow hues did not comprise nearly 40 percent of the total population of Greater Las Vegas. The need for the old and new to work together across the quality-of-life spectrum is why AB 174 could represent a classic example of the positive results that can be produced by working together.

Longtime residents and elected officials, Assemblymen Morse Arberry and Wendell P. Williams introduced this bill at the request of another longtime resident, Hannah Brown, who is the president of the Urban Chamber of Commerce. The chamber's multi-racial membership is comprised of old and new residents. However, the majority of its membership is

comprised of businesses and professionals who have been in Las Vegas for less than a decade.

AB 174 will help both the old and the new in that it attempts to address the documented pattern of economic discrimination. The purpose of the bill is to provide a forum for public agencies, private sector employers with more than 500 employees, and business groups such as the Urban Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Business Roundtable to discuss ways of addressing the issue of diversity.

In regularly scheduled public forums, a Regional Business Development Advisory Council (RBDAC) will be responsible for discussing ways of improving contracting and employment opportunities for Persons of Color and females. Also, RBDAC is to gather and keep statistics of its efforts and issue an annual report to the Nevada State Legislature.

"Moose" and Wendell P. have accomplished a major portion of the task by getting the Assembly to adopt the bill on a 36-4 vote. Now it's on the Senate, where we will need at least 11 of the 21 votes to pass the bill. After which time, we will need to get Governor Guinn's signature on the bill for it to become law.

Hey, old and new, please call your state senator and let her or him know that you support this legislation. Here is a chance for us to "get over it" by dealing with the reality of the political and economic benefits that can be realized by working together. Make the call.

## Fighters

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Deputy Marshal Preciado, and we offered him the job.

"He wanted to be able to go in as an inspector and lateral over into suppression. We wanted him to get some more experience in inspection. However, he felt he owed the Corona Department because they extended a part time position to fulltime and he could become a firefighter more quickly. We waited two and a half weeks for him to make a decision," said Pitzer.

Baker said his only dream was to become a firefighter in the city of San Bernardino. Two things were important to his future.

"I asked them about my education and what opportunities and support I'd have to continue in the field. They said they didn't have much money and anyway I'd be too busy to go to school. They also wanted me to stay in prevention work and not become a fireman. I felt I'd be limited there. Already in Corona, they sent me to the National Fire Academy for two weeks and I am now a firefighter. It was the hardest decision I ever had to make," said Baker.

Kent said the Blacks in the department were very disappointed and upset about the loss of such a good candidate.

Captain Vincent Gates, a 25-year veteran, agreed and said that is one of the reasons the Black firefighters will not participate on the fire truck for the Black History Parade.

"We don't want to give the false sense that the department is hiring and promoting Blacks or other minorities. It hasn't worked that

way. It is our silent protest," said Gates.

Not all the Black firefighters are boycotting the parade, even though the result is that they are not there. Howard Bennett says he has just been out of town the last couple of years.

Gates said it was he who pulled together all of the Black firefighters to find a solution to the problem. He said the department recently tried to rectify the problem at least on the surface.

It turned out that all of the candidates in the department academy who walked across the stage at the culmination of a department non-certified academy were White. "Not true," said Pitzer. "There were several minorities."

Gates said the idea was to get minorities from the community in the department. Since the city is a majority of people of color there would be a good applicant pool. Unfortunately it didn't work that way.

Gates said he wants to mentor some young people who would be interested in the department. He feels it is the best way to insure minorities are included.

"The academy was set up to get more people from the community to come into the department. Not one made it and even though it was expressly set up to get diversity the goal was not achieved," said Gates.

Pitzer says Gates was not an intricate part of the academy.

"Vincent is a wonderful guy. But he didn't take an active hand in the academy," said Pitzer. "No I didn't be-

cause I know what would happen and it did. It failed to get any Blacks in the process," he said.

Kent was not only upset with her mentee being rejected she tells the story about her own case.

She has been doing the same job for 27 years; four years ago she had to train a White male. She was his supervisor. Before she knew it, he was promoted to fire marshal.

"I never had an idea that the job would become available to a civilian employee," she said, adding that she learned about it through rumor. "I was told that the fire marshal would be recruited from another city then I heard the rumor about it being in-house."

Pitzer admits to the change.

"I dusted off the fire marshal; before, the only person who could apply was a battalion chief," said Pitzer. "I changed the rules on that because I wanted to open it up to other candidates department-wide. There is no question she (Kent) was the senior but he (fire marshal Doug Dupree) had 18 years experience before he was hired in the department and he had a degree," said Pitzer.

Kent said she was hurt by the way the situation was handled. "It is a woman vs. man thing," she said.

"Doug Dupree is finishing up his BA degree, the education requirement has been consistently applied," said Pitzer.

"They change the rules" was consistently voiced but retired Captain Jimmy Jews said, "All of these depart-

ments keep changing the rules to suit themselves. As long as the brothers are new in the department and have no seniority then seniority is what they use. Every time a big group of Blacks get seniority, then seniority is out and merit is in. Merit is very subjective," he said.

Battalion chief Howard Bennett agreed. "One of my concerns is the rules changes," he said.

Jews said the job description for firefighters should be re-written to reflect the education that is needed before anyone walks in the door.

"It is giving brothers a false sense of what it takes to be a firefighter. At least two

years of college is needed along with a lot of preparation and work. Many want to get out of high school and jump right into a job. The job description doesn't say you have to [have college]," said Jews.

Bennett says that is why the area's Black firefighters started the academy.

"There has not been a Black hired in the city for 10 years. I told Tony Dupre (S.B. School board president) of my concerns, and he set up a meeting to work with adult ed. We recruited and accepted applications.

"We started with 158 applicants. They were given a 10th grade LVN test. Sixty-five people passed at 75 per-

cent. Forty-five were selected for the first academy. There were 13 Hispanics and 5 Blacks in the group, the rest were White. I went by the SOP and 27 graduated. All of the Blacks fell away, we don't know why," said Bennett.

Pitzer explained, "We are trying to do the right thing. A new San Bernardino City Schools program that takes students from 9-12 grades placing them in a service-related academy should yield some candidates in the future. We are trying to do what we can to correct the problem. I am passionate about it. Rise and fall, live and breathe on the facts."

*Cheryl Brown writes for The Black Voice News.*

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