

POINT OF VIEW

OUR VIEW

Vote McCurry

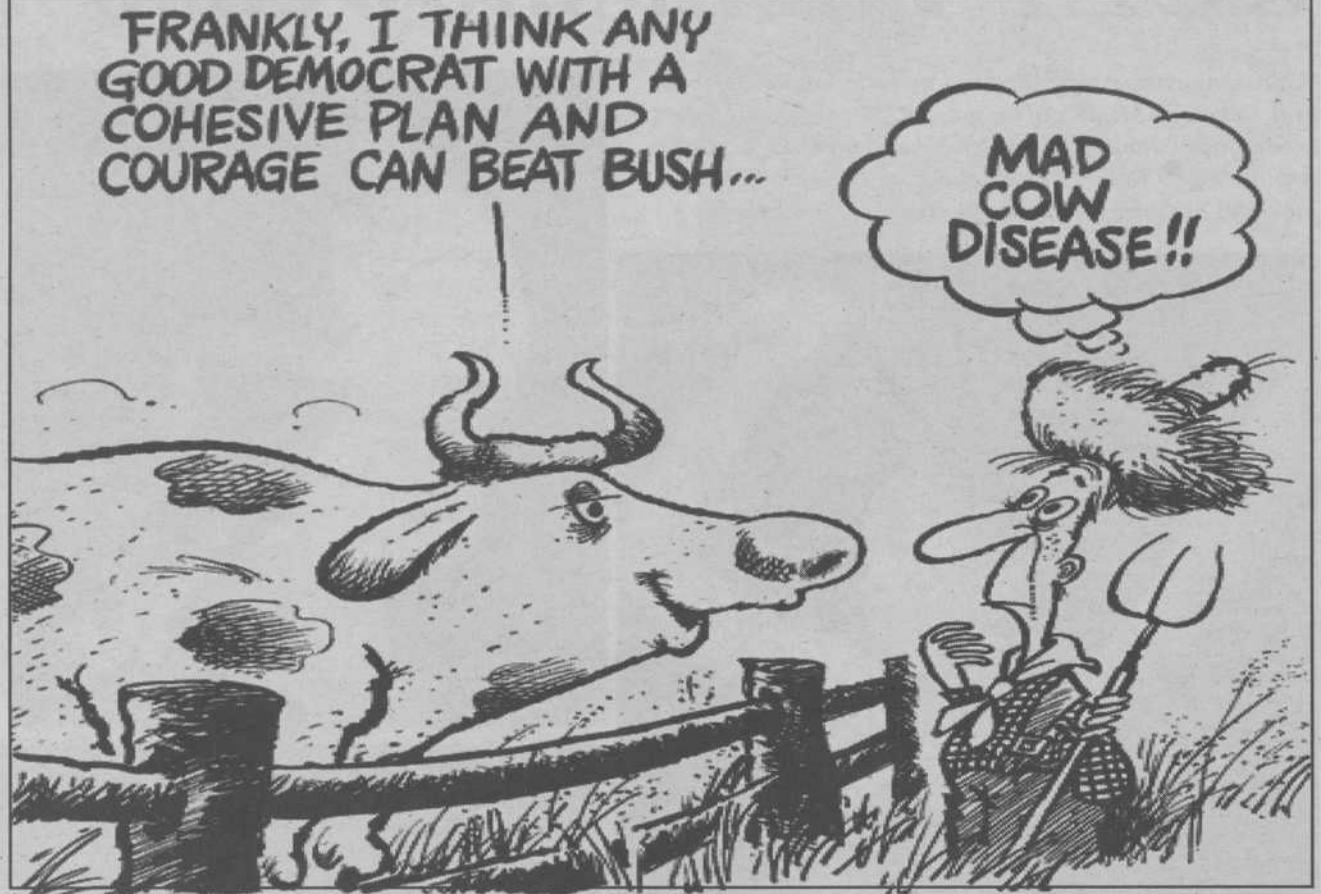
Do Las Vegans—indeed, Americans—loath anything more than voting? That's a rhetorical query, of course. At this point, nothing seems to trump this nation's derision for all things French—witness the creation of "Freedom Fries" to replace French Fries. But judging by the ever-poorer showings at the polls, be it local or national election, it seems that voting comes a close second.

The reasons are myriad: Why vote, some ask, because politics is all about corruption, corruption and more corruption? Voting won't change that, they argue. Voting is simply picking the lesser of multiple evils, others opine, because in the end we the people will get screwed. Then there are those of us who are "too busy" to exercise our constitutional right to determine how government should be run (thus keeping politicians from running this country into the ground). Oh, let's not forget the conspiracy theorists and anti-government types; they prefer their politicians dead and their governments to be hands-off. Add to this thousands of ex-felons so tired of jumping through more hoops than a circus tiger for repatriation they give up. And add the hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants unwilling to register for fear of deportation. Then add the millions of Americans disenchanting with the political process—in which the squeaky wheel gets ignored while the moneyed wheel gets attention and the deep-pocketed hold sway while the voices of the poor are muted—and you have a climate of indifference.

But now, a plea to Las Vegans: Please vote in Tuesday's election. Vote because, one day, you may be affected the decisions of a councilperson or judge now running for office. Vote because, once in the system, it's a lot harder to push for change. Vote because being unfamiliar with the system makes it that much more difficult to navigate it. Think about it: If you have to go to municipal court, wouldn't you want to know something about the person adjudicating your case? Thus the race for the judicial seat in Municipal Court 1, which features incumbent Toy Gregory against Denise McCurry. Since McCurry is a known commodity, we're supporting her bid.

By forcing Gregory into a runoff, McCurry beat expectations of political pundits who said the novice politico couldn't win. A lawyer, McCurry made a convincing showing in the primary, giving us hope that she can make history and become the first African-American (and first African-American woman) to serve in Municipal Court. Were it that McCurry's sole salient characteristics were being black and woman, then she would not merit our endorsement—appointment for appointment's sake does no good; look no further than the Bush clan for evidence (Papa Bush in the early 1990s—Desert Storm anyone?—Jeb in Florida—hanging chads, disenfranchisement anyone?—and Baby Bush—the economy, Desert Storm II and who knows what next).

McCurry is qualified for the position and she comes without any baggage. Though Gregory has not been implicated in "Operation G-Sting," an FBI-led political corruption investigation focusing on government officials and local strip club owners, he did receive campaign contributions from one club proprietor. Sure, judges aren't perfect and shouldn't be expected to be. But they must have standards. McCurry does. Give her a chance to win. Give her your vote.



— Playin' the race card —

By Al Triche
Special to Sentinel-Voice

For the first third of each year, the spirit of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is ubiquitous. We celebrate his birth in January, he wins February's Black History Month popularity contest and by April we recall that white supremacists murdered him, robbing us of what might've been his best years as our leader. He richly deserves his status as the social justice icon of "The American Century" just passed.

However, one of his contemporaries deserves equal prestige — in African-America, at least. Last weekend, while noting my own birthday I couldn't help thinking of his, which had been on Monday. El Hajj Malik el Shabazz, known to most as Minister Malcolm X, was born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925.

Much was made of his early life of crime and how by the time he had turned 21 he'd found himself incarcerated, three years before the squeaky-clean, wet-behind-the-ears and, frankly, somewhat timid King found himself conscripted into public leadership of an ongoing struggle for civil rights.

Having adopted the 'X' upon joining the Nation of Islam, and while still in prison, Malcolm had experienced "conversion." He ended up confounding everyone but devout Muslims by undergoing a second transformation that began during

his pilgrimage to Mecca, made not long before his death.

Unlike Dr. King's, Malcolm's life had, nearly from beginning to end, been a crucible.

By the time each were working miracles in American black communities, however, both were being tormented by detractors, black as well as white, in league with the enemy. Both, too, were victims of the demonic J. Edgar Hoover and his bottom-feeding F.B.I. minions, who tried to destroy the best leaders we'd had since Frederick Douglass. When all else fails, white supremacists in search of scandal return to territory they know intimately. Thus did Hoover — himself, wallowing in "sins of the flesh" — try to discredit Dr. King.

But, let's not forget that Malcolm survived the same scrutiny, intact.

What made him impervious was the conversion — change that took place long before whites proclaimed him a threat; change that was clearly for the better, and permanent; for Malcolm had relinquished selfishness for service, and never looked back.

It gave him moral authority to condemn America's immorality, hypocrisy and mistreatment of blacks, and chastise us for mistreating ourselves. His integrity was unassailable, such that Hoover, the consummate hypocrite, felt compelled to conspire with some of

Malcolm's brothers — hypocrites all — in a most unlikely American phenomenon: white and black cooperation. But this, not surprisingly, was only to provide the means to an end that might cripple our movement.

Their end was achieved 38 years ago when he was assassinated on the 21st — of February, which is now designated Black History Month...and during which Malcolm is routinely ignored.

No one persuaded our whitewashed people to discover and love its blackness more than Malcolm, or had the charisma to so effectively capture imaginations and penetrate hardened hearts of African-Americans with no apparent interest in non-violence, but, as it turned out, plenty of zeal for liberation.

Before he was murdered, Malcolm was unifying people of African descent worldwide, addressing brutal conditions under which they lived in the U.S., and trying to make America accountable — to the world — for its crimes

against us. The foregoing doesn't even consider most of the man's profound message, in which can be found sage advice and dire warnings that have gone unheeded over the years while becoming increasingly relevant.

Near the climax of his meteoric career, I was in my early teens and among countless youths he inspired. Infectious militancy and resolve — manifest, then, in people with names like Carmichael, Nash, Brown, Seale, Newton, Davis, Hampton and so many others — are gifts of Malcolm's legacy.

These young leaders' energy, passion and potential still exist, in young blacks wandering aimlessly across the American landscape today, withholding their gifts from their own needy people. They'd be far wiser listening to Malcolm's voice, the sound of one who loved us, than the American siren's song with its "bling-bling" diversions.

Today's gangbangers
(See Triche, Page 14)

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