

POINT OF VIEW

OUR VIEW

H2O Everywhere

No more is the quote —“water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink” — more appropriate than Southern Nevada, which is in the midst of its worst drought in a century.

Take rapidly receding Lake Mead water levels, add precipitation that's both sparse and minimal, a glut of water-hogging lawns and a gaggle of water-wasting homeowners and businesses and a drought is virtually assured. That's not even calculating the impact of the 5,000 Valley newcomers each month, all of whom require water to drink, bathe in, use for laundry, etc. Nor do the current outlook factor in future growth in housing starts, construction of new neighborhood casinos, mega-resorts and the erection of additional golf courses.

So, yes, we had it coming.

Of course, drastic, drought-plagued times call for drastic measures. As it is, the water Gestapo, a.k.a., the Las Vegas Valley Water District and the Southern Nevada Water Authority, was left with no choice but to hit conservation-be-damned locals with citations and fines. Obviously, few people took “water cop” patrol units seriously. It's common to drive in neighborhoods around the valley or up and down business-lined thoroughfares and see water streaking down sidewalks and puddles in gutters, put there by misalign, broken or badly programmed sprinklers. Maybe the fear of legal repercussions will move folks from inaction to action.

No, the legal recriminations aren't powered by the possibility of criminal prosecution. But you can get hit with a hefty fine, in addition to enduring the tedium of court, missing work, and the embarrassment that comes along with getting in trouble for something so menial. Drastic, but necessary, yes.

The importance of conservation can't be understated. Additional water resources to aid our breakneck growth aren't assured. California doggedly fights to keep its more-than-enough share of Colorado River water and southwestern states continue to haggle over river water allocation.

No one wants to turn on the shower and be greeted with dust or turn on the sink and get drips. While that reality is far away — and likely far-fetched, since water officials would implement even more drastic measures if the situation got that bad — it should serve as a motivator for you to do your part.

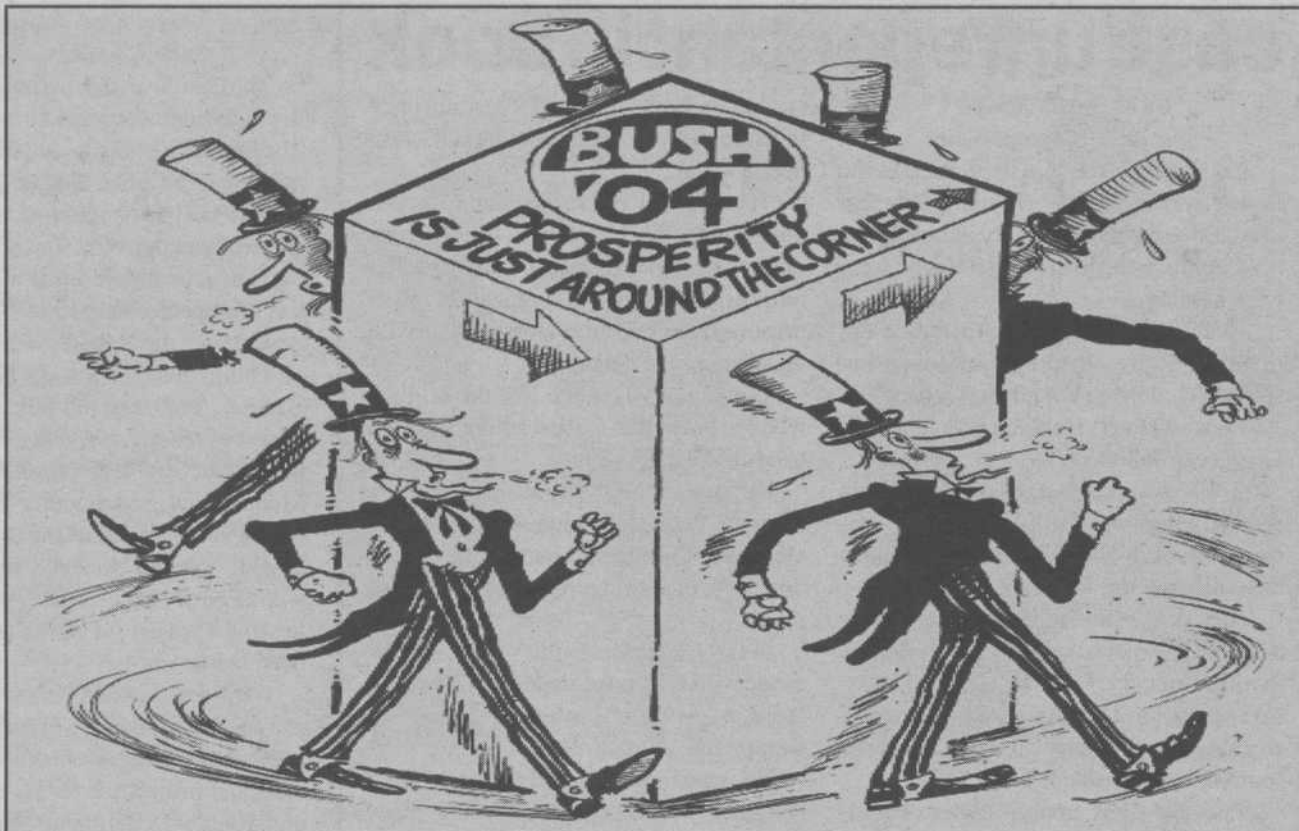
No, there isn't “water everywhere.” And if we don't take the necessary steps to ensure that we have enough of this resource to sustain our city, now and in the future, we might be lamenting a new reality: “Water, water nowhere, we must go elsewhere for a drink.”

H&H Community Icon

The spirit of H&H Barbecue will live on long after rubble from the fire that destroyed the venerable soul-food restaurant has been picked up. For H&H was much more than a greasy spoon, much more than a black business. It was “our” place.

But more than “our” place, it was a place for all people, as likely to be the site of a black fraternity's monthly meeting as it was a place for white politicians to dine with black power brokers. In that sense, H&H was the lone place in the entire Las Vegas Valley with such power, such appeal. In a way, it was an ambassador for West Las Vegas, drawing people scared by the area's “reputation.” For that role, H&H should be venerated as an icon, as a testament to the power of food, black-oriented food, to unite people.

Kudos goes to owners and workers for such great food and atmosphere. We wish you Godspeed in your efforts to rebuild.



Patriot Act II would further rob freedom

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Awhile back, I sounded the alarm that the passage of the Patriot Act was designed to capitalize on the fear of Americans following Sept. 11, 2003. Our fear of being victims of acts of terrorism allowed our government to pass this law that in a number of ways violate freedoms of citizens guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution.

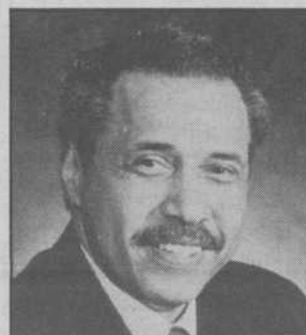
I am sure most of you dismissed my alarm as merely a case of crying wolf. Others may have thought I was engaging in a mental exercise akin to debating the proposition if a tree falls in the woods and there is no one around, does it make a sound.

Well folks, I am back! This time I am not alone. Cities and organizations are beginning to take objection to provisions of the Patriot Act.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a lawsuit July 31 in federal court in Detroit on behalf of six advocacy and community groups from across the country whose members and clients they believe are currently the targets of investigations because of their ethnicity, religious and political associations. The lawsuit names Attorney General John Ashcroft and FBI Director Robert Mueller as defendants.

Also, to date 143 communities around the country in 27 states have passed resolutions opposing the Patriot Act.

Unbelievably, while challenges are being made to the



LOUIE OVERSTREET

Patriot Act, the Justice Department has been drafting legislation called the Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003. Folks, this “ain't” nothing but a Patriot Act II. Draconian powers it would grant our federal government by comparison, however, make the Patriot Act I look like child's play.

Just in case anyone chooses to hear the trees of personal liberties and freedoms falling in the woods of irrational fear, I am going to list the areas that our government is chopping away like mad men with axes.

1. Chops away at personal privacy, removing checks on government power to secret access to credit reports without consent and judicial process.
2. Chops away public accountability by increasing government secrecy such as harming citizens' right to a fair trial by limiting defense attorneys from challenging the use of secret evidence in criminal cases.

3. Chops away corporate accountability under the pretext of fighting terrorism by granting immunity to businesses that provide information to the government about

customers without regard to their right to privacy.

4. Chops away fundamental constitutional rights of Americans by giving an overly broad definition of what constitutes terrorism such as making it criminal by “association” without any intent to commit specific acts of terrorism.

5. Chops away at presumption of innocence of immigrants by targeting undocumented workers with extended jail terms for common immigration offenses.

In the face of what is being proposed, it is truly amazing that in this country persons of color are not opposing Act II. Phones should be jumping off the hook in the offices of our federal elected officials.

Believe me, it can happen to “them” because it has happened to “us.”

Just check your American history: The pretext of the doctrine of “Manifest Destiny” almost resulted in the complete annihilation of Native Americans and for many years reduced their existence to subsistence lifestyle on reservations. Our (African-

American) existence in America has been such a “ball of confusion” that we aided both the North and South during the Civil War. Even to this day, we are cursed with the ability in far too many instances to identify with institutions and persons who oppress us.

Asian-Americans mistakenly believed that they were just like all other Americans. That is until the reality of internment caused them to lose everything they owned or believed in before the offset of World War II.

Hispanics are entering the country legally and illegally, in record numbers, just to become a part of the permanent subservient underclass in America.

Persons of color, I hope like hell that you have heard the expression that basically states. If a negative circumstance causes you harm the first time, then it is shame on the perpetrator. If the same thing happens to you a second time, then it is shame on you.

If you have heard this expression, then do not let Patriot Act II happen to you.

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