

P O I N T O F V I E W

OUR VIEW

411 on 311 Boyz

If these boys were anything but yuppies born with silver spoons jutting out of their mouths, then they'd be under the jail right now, scorned as incorrigible thugs who deserve long-term iron vacations.

If these boys weren't white, the crimes they were accused of — carrying out multiple beatings, attempted murder for a rock-throwing incident that shattered a teenager's face — their lawyers would be scrambling to keep them from lives behind bars, not gloating that prosecutors don't have legal legs to stand on.

If they weren't the sons of parents with the financial wherewithal to buy the best defense and the political stroke to influence justice, then these boys would be trading designer fashions for jail garb and inmate numbers. If any other group of non-white kids videotaped their brutal mayhem in an attempt to sell it to the masses — profiting, much like the producers of the "Bumfights" videos, from someone else's misery — they wouldn't be admonished for making "bad choices."

Too bad we don't live in a world of "what ifs."

Day by day, more information comes out about these boys, self-dubbed the 311 Boyz, yuppie racists. 311 is a purported reference to the Ku Klux Klan, "K" being the 11th letter in the alphabet. Their alleged battleground is the northwest suburbs and Summerlin. They have a penchant for violence rivaled that of any gang but whose unmitigated bravado is singular and sadistic.

Since we don't live in a world of "what ifs," we know — yes, we know — that these boys will not only benefit from a societal view that their violent behavior was the result of "boys-will-be-boys type fun, but from the best lawyers' money can buy. Theirs is a dream team of legal eagles that will go beyond Johnnie Cochran lengths to ensure their clients avoid jail time. And if successful, it will, unfortunately, only embolden the terminally vicious 311 Boyz and boys like them, reinforcing the notion that money may not be able to buy love, but it can buy freedom for yuppie racist gang members.

Non-Preservation

West Las Vegas deserves an answer, not so much for the abrupt closure of the Neighborhood Preservation Office, which for a long time was the only link area residents had to city officials, but for its closure altogether.

The reasons are too cozy and jibe. This is more typical government-speak about saving money, property apportioning resources and improving efficiencies.

We argue this office should not have been shut down. The Preservation Office was vital to the community it served, which largely has been disconnected and summarily shutout of the economic boom that's turned Las Vegas into a desirable metropolis.

If the people employed in the office weren't doing their jobs, as at least one city official as intimated, then replace them. It says nothing good about city leaders if they're willing to harbor slackers and its make them look even worse to eliminate an office providing vital information to a disaffected community.

To know West Las Vegas is to understand that many of its residents don't trust City Hall, have trouble getting there, and feel intimidated by what it stands for. To the extent that the Preservation Office invited them to take part in governance, to have say in their own fate, it was worth the expense. The conditions that necessitated its birth — discontent in the aftermath of local riots sparked by the Rodney King acquittals in Los Angeles — haven't been fully addressed.

How does the city truly justify its closure?



Tis' noble to shoulder yoke of race

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

In the past, I have written about the dilemma African-Americans face when societal expectations imply that we should shoulder the burden of race. The saying which characterizes our dilemma first became popular over a half-century ago. The saying, however, still has implicit purport in modern society. You know the one about our need to be a "credit to our race."

Certainly here in America, the burden of race is not the responsibility of the red, yellow, brown and black people who have been oppressed. It should be the burden of the imperialists who have ruled this country for the last 300 hundred years. Responsibility, also, can be an obligated or assumed duty.

As it relates to us, the U.S. Constitution, the document that governs our nation, Article I, Section 2 contains a derogatory reference to our less than "full human" status. Further, this very same document had to be amended four times by progressive whites of good will just to define our rights as citizens of the United States.

Listen! Folks who look like me do not concern yourselves with the obligation of shouldering the burden of race; it "ain't" your load to bear. I am sure you know as implied in today's lexicon, being a credit to one's race means in code "knowing and staying in your place."

By allowing the ruling



LOUIE OVERSTREET

class to obligate you to being a credit to your race, renders you ineffectual in the struggle that must constantly be waged to have the opportunity America affords is made available to all its citizens regardless of race.

If one, however, chooses to assume the burden of race, then such a pursuit can be a noble calling. Such is the case with the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) of the United States Congress.

At the end of this month, this group of 39 black men and women will be hosting its 33rd Annual Legislative Weekend in Washington, DC. These dedicated elected officials from throughout the country devote four days to addressing the issues facing our nation in general and the impact these issues have on persons of color in particular.

In alphabetical order, workshops and seminars will address the following: Administration of Justice; Commerce/Economics; Community; Defense; Education; Environment; Federal Budget; Health; History; Housing; International; Media/Arts; Organizations; Science/Technology; Sports; and

Voting Rights.

While all 16 areas are important, there are five issues that are extremely critical to our very existence. I believe these to be the Administration of Justice, Commerce/Economics, Community, Education and Health.

Under each of these five areas, a number of topical matters will be addressed. Reviewing the subject matter, the two that seem to be the most critical in each area of emphasis are as follows:

Under Administration of Justice is "The Wrongful Arrests and Convictions of Black People in Tulia, Texas and the Tragedy of Mandatory Minimum Sentencing." Another is "Prison Systems on the Brink: America's Choice-Explosion or Transformation?"

Under Commerce/Economics is "Fostering Financial Literacy for All Americans" and "Cash Rules Everything Around Us! Economic Empowerment: The Now Civil Rights Movement."

Under The Community is

"For Such a Time as This: The Black Church's Challenge" and "Blacks in the Americas: Issues of Race, Identity, Social Inclusion, and Culture."

Education includes "Justice for Future Generations: Education the Key to Success" and "The Tyranny of Testing: The Scandal of No Child Left Behind."

Health issues defined by the CBC are "Our Healthcare Provider Crisis: Why We Can't Wait" and "Domestic Violence Prevention: Integration in the Health Care System."

Needless to say, in order for the CBC's efforts to be successful at the national and local level, they need our help. While it's true we are their brothers and sisters, let's not also be heavy (a burden) by knowing and a staying in our place while they wage a war on oppression.

If you do, the results are that the majority culture will not respect you as an individual and in the process you obligate us to bear the burden of race.

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