

OUR VIEW

Black body politic flexing its muscle

Suddenly the Body Politic at the local level is sitting pretty. Participatory American democracy has the tendency to be sweet — and it was. Last week, the dynamics of centrifugal force continued to stir, as the new way converged with the tried approach to evaluating political candidates.

To pause here for a point of clarification allows us better to enable our observation. To be sure, neither is the new way better, nor is the tried approach obsolete. Both methods can and will live harmoniously with each other. That is why, in Our View, the Body Politic is sitting pretty among African-Americans seeking a greater input into who gets to hold elective office in Clark County and all of Nevada.

To say there is a tried way and a new way is, perhaps, the easiest way to describe current events at different venues: Victory Missionary Baptist Church and the West Las Vegas Library.

Our friends in Iowa have utilized caucuses for a long time to select presidential candidates. Across the wide grass roots, the process in Iowa is as individual as it is collective. If you show up, your voice counts. There are no proxies in Iowa. The Caucus of African-American Nevadans has introduced the caucus to select candidates in this state.

The Nevada Voters League (NVL) held face-to-face meeting of candidates with voters on Thursday, June 24 in the West Las Vegas Library. Incumbents and challengers alike were there. The count was 60, which included 39 candidates, who hunger for more votes. Each candidate was allowed about 2 minutes to speak.

NVL, a 40-year old organization headed by the Rev. Jesse D. Scott, is non-partisan and does not endorse. Do the math along with us to figure out the algebraic equation that leaves candidates wanting greater participation.

The numbers aren't there yet for CAAN either. Future potential, where individuals engage the process, is there along with an abundance of hope. The standpoint here is not to write off the NVL or the CAAN way. We favor both approaches and find a multitude of merit in each way and even more reasons why the people should engage one or both approaches.

What happened in the sanctuary of Victory Missionary Baptist Church, on last Saturday, is best described as a work of beauty unfolding. That is why, in Our View, the Body Politic is sitting pretty. The eight-hour Candidates Forum, among participants, was like plying a trade for some and school convenes for others.

CAAN is planning two more forums, one in July and the other in August.

The process worked with civility and value-added political savvy. Participation grew as the process unfolded. The first round flowed flawlessly, as all the candidates seeking office had 3 minutes each to speak. Then caucus-goers asked questions written on index cards. Next the candidates had 1 minute to close.

Then the candidates were led out of the sanctuary. Secret ballots determined who got the people's endorsement. From the first forum, 11 of 25 candidates received endorsements.

Perhaps it is best to look at the first caucus as the workings of a focus group.

The process is lean right now, as was the NVL candidates' night, but the desired muscle mass will become taut in the future. CAAN is an able collective. Some have politics in their bloodlines, while others know the enormous reach of leadership. This trial run gives credence that the process can work seamlessly and was presented without worn out histrionics. Now who could find fault with this process?

It is rare for those with a jaundiced view of our community to find reasons to praise anything. We will ignore them for now and encourage those behind the formation of CAAN to precede with due diligence and "Blessed Assurance."

P O I N T O F V I E W

FOREIGN POLICY MAP



Sun scribe on misguided witch hunt

*By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice*

Boy, it never seems to stop, does it? One would think in this day and age, in America, organizations established to address the state of African-American life in these old United States would not be subject to attack. Think again.

Such is not the case in Las Vegas. I have three particular examples to cite that will illustrate how the game of attempting to discredit Black organizations is being played in 2004.

The Economic Opportunity Board (EOB) has been around since the 1960s. Annually, this organization manages tens of millions of dollars of public funds to primarily provide services to families and seniors in need of a helping hand.

Under a new director, the EOB changed how it accounted for funds causing it to be audited by state and federal agencies.

While audits proved no funds were missing, there were questions on the appropriateness of the use of some funds. The EOB is now in the process of correcting the problem by selling off some assets to cover the funds used to pay rent on a facility it is using to house administrative staff. This oversight re-



LOUIE OVERSTREET

ceived press coverage ad nauseam in the so-called liberal Las Vegas Sun.

The second issue that has all the earmarks of history repeating itself is that the Sun is starting to write stories about the Southern Nevada Workforce Investment Board (SNWIB). One of its service providers is Nevada Partners. The Sun is questioning how funds are utilized and alleged conflicts of members serving on the SNWIB and receiving funds.

If the same reporter who wrote numerous stories about the EOB was not so intent on doing another "hatchet job" — this time on Nevada Partners he should have researched the facts first. Federal law allows service providers to have representation on investment boards that are providing funds for services to dislocated workers and youth.

If about now, you are won-

dering where your boy is going with this, let me pull your coat to the name of the game.

First of all, any reporter raised in America should have some appreciation for its history. At a minimum he, in the cases I am writing about, should know that the formation of Black organizations came about as acts of salvation. If this were not the case, then why was there a need to amend the U.S. Constitution three times to specifically address the issue of race in America?

Also, for some yet to be defined reason, it has become necessary to have some Black person provide entry for a White reporter to write negative articles about the problems of Black folks. In the case of EOB and the SNWIB

via Nevada Partners it is a disreputable person that is leaking so-called embarrassing information to the White media. If you so choose, go back and read the articles and you will have little difficulty in identifying the Black person, who in 2004, still finds it necessary to practice "racial self-hatred."

If this wasn't bad enough, the reporter — and about here let me name his name — Timothy Pratt is now attempting to disrupt the efforts of the Caucus of African-American Nevadans (CAAN).

While this group has made it a priority to build alliances, its membership focuses on African-Americans who want to empower themselves politically, which makes ab-
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