

OUR VIEW

Salvation for EOB? Help set to arrive

The Peer to Peer Crisis Intervention team from Mid-Iowa Community Action Inc. arrives this week with a mandate to correct management procedures at the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County.

The Mid-Iowa team has been given a contract to put in corrective measures over a five-month period. The team was to arrive here this week with a charge that gives it unlimited authority through November. This is a good thing. Amid findings that surely spell out a lack of internal controls and poor documentation of how public dollars were being spent, the arrival of the Mid-Iowa team, perhaps, gives us pause with hope.

The price tag for this expertise could be as much as \$224,000. This expense is in addition to the \$17,500 the state spent in April for a review of operations when reports began to circulate that millions of dollars were unaccounted for. It's not a matter of what new expenses can be absorbed, we think, in the absence of top management staff. What matters most, however, is that the necessary help needed to set the EOB back on a proper course has arrived.

In the absence of executive management, the EOB, in less than a public conducting of its business, was more secretive than it was forthcoming. Those who control the purse strings, however, have fleshed out problems and made them public. These problems can be overcome and this is another good thing.

Most of the executive management staff resigned this spring, including the executive director, or were fired just before news of shaky handling of fiscal affairs began to surface. This has saved the Mid-Iowa team from forcing the EOB board's hand in this matter.

But even the EOB board has taken a hit.

The 15-member board has been pared to six. In Our View, this is a substantive move, positioning the board to be more effective and more accountable. Perhaps this will end infighting and back maneuvering by a board that interfered in operations more than serving as a public oversight body that sets policy.

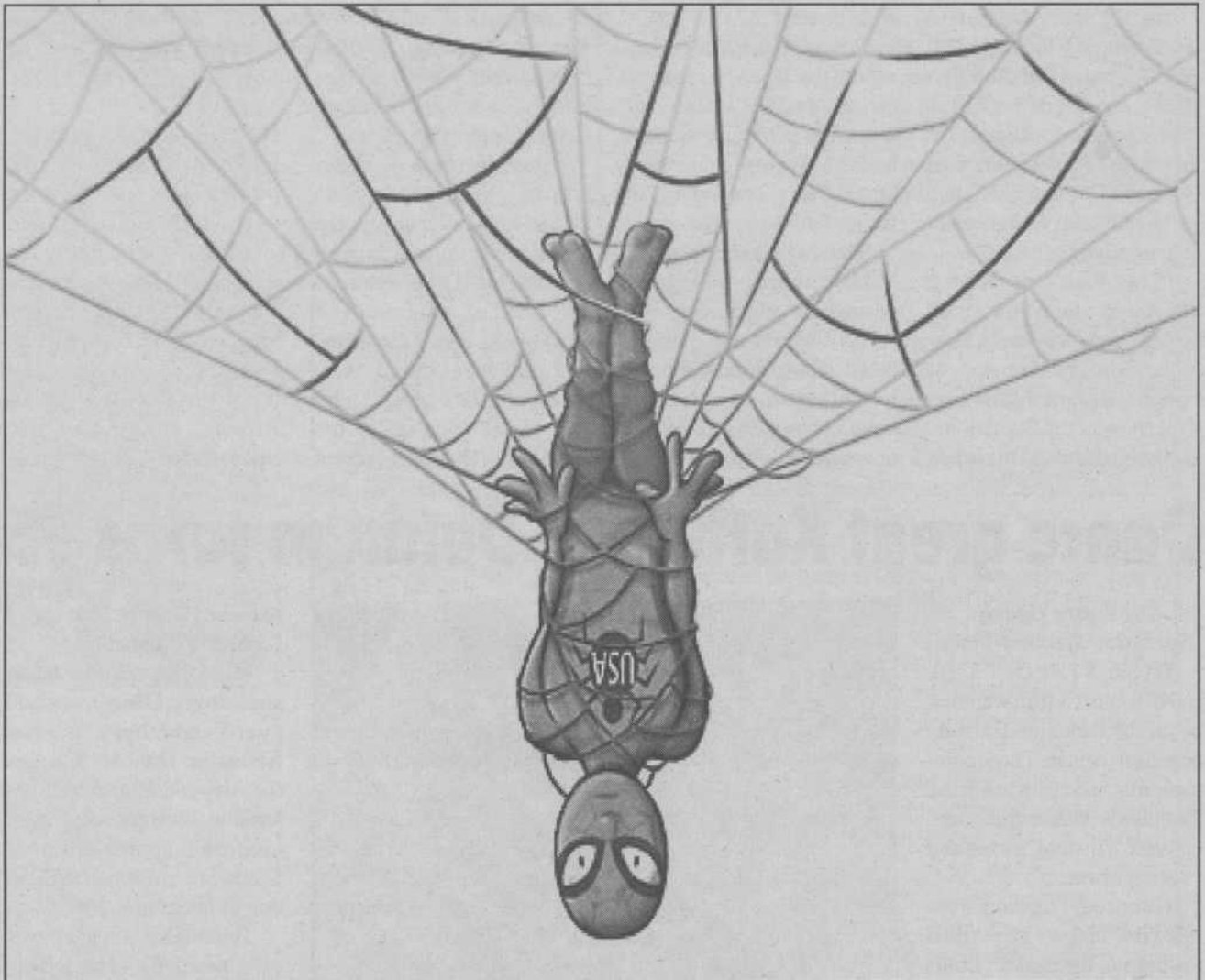
The remaining six board members are State Sen. Joe Neal, Board Chair Claude Logan, Las Vegas Councilman Lawrence Weekly, Latin Chamber of Commerce President Eloiza Martinez, Vicente Herrera and the Rev. Dr. Marion Bennett. While as of late Neal has been serving as EOB spokesman, our recommendation is that this tried and true soldier becomes its chairman. Neal will fight the good fight that the EOB retains as much of what it has become since the 1960s.

He knows the EOB from inside out. More than that, he knows the ever-increasing need for services. His would not be a caretaker's role. Instead, he would continue to be a trusted steward and guardian of hope who has served the people of this city and state well over several decades.

Perhaps EOB will survive and go on providing a variety of social services that includes Head Start programs for approximately 1,800 children ages 3 to 5 and an array of other programs that assist the most needy of our citizens. Further, time is not a luxury the EOB board has on its side. Get things righted in a matter of days or face termination? Of course, millions of dollars in funding are at stake.

Even with the arrival of the Mid-Iowa team, the pared down board will still have to make some tough decisions about which EOB assets will be sold to cover debts. We hope that KCEP will not be an asset the board sacrifices to cover debt. If this happens, it would wound the spirit of the community that relies on its familial voice.

POINT OF VIEW



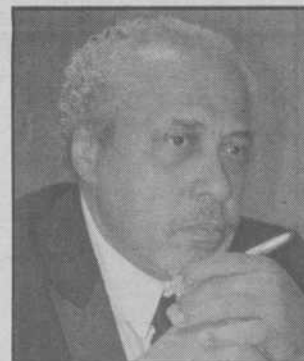
Stokes proof redemption is possible

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

In several earlier columns, I wrote about a young man who arrived on the Las Vegas scene less than two years ago. Immediately he embarked on a mission to politically empower the African-American community. In case your memory is not what it used to be, the young man I mentioned was Cordell Stokes.

Those of you who were around in the Sixties, the surname may be a familiar one to you. His family and the Mitchell family of Baltimore are arguably the two most prominent families in Black political life in America. Stokes' father, Carl Stokes, was the first Black person to be elected Mayor of a major city in the United States when he became Mayor of Cleveland in the mid to late 1960s. Shortly thereafter, his uncle, Louis Stokes, was elected to the U.S. Congress and remained in that august body for 30 years.

A lesser known fact about Cordell Stokes, however, is that he is a testimony to what one can do to turn a life around that got untracked the way some young lives get untracked. The track to which I make reference is the one that too many young African-American males travel.



LOUIE OVERSTREET

This track most assuredly leads to a life of crime and/or drug dependency, if not death.

In the vernacular, Cordell got caught up in feeling the need to "run the streets." Even though he was on a basketball scholarship, at a college just outside of Cleveland, as a young adult, defying explanation, he found the need to hang with gang members in Cleveland's Ward 3. Ironically, this is the ward where his father first got his political start several decades earlier and at a time when the ward was a Black middle-class neighborhood and not the drug-infested area it unfortunately had become over the past decade and a half.

As fate would have it, Cordell and others got "busted" having drugs in a car that was stopped by the police. Those who have been there or have family members who have been there know any interaction with the

criminal justice system is a life-altering experience and not to mention major decision making time.

Fortunately for Cordell, who is now a benefit to our community as well as others, Congressman Stokes' "tuff, love" or possibly a "come to Jesus" talk the day after his arrest, both figuratively and literally turned Cordell's life around.

As Cordell shares his story with me, as he often has in the past with youth groups throughout the country, my mind tried to assign a motive for his youthful indiscretion. First, I thought he may have been rebelling against being the son of a famous person or possibly as a weak person he was susceptible to peer pressure.

After getting to know him over the past year or so, however, I have reached this conclusion. His earlier problems probably stem from the fact that as a highly intelligent person who is blessed with an abundance of charisma and outstanding leadership skills he was looking for a venue in which to put such skills on full display. The political guard that came on the scene after his father's tenure was not interested in providing any access to an up-and-coming youth with Cordell's pedigree.

Thus, not wanting to wait his turn, so to speak, Cordell sought to become a foil to the system with the predictable results. As a first offender, Cordell was placed on proba-

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