

## OUR VIEW Summer School

"School's out." Two of the most dreaded words in the parental lexicon. Thursday is the last day of school for the majority of the nearly 280,000 students in the Clark County School District. Whereas most students look forward to summer—the opportunity to laze away at home without worry of homework or proficiency tests—parents often approach the summer break with dread. Idle time and young people don't always mix positively.

Though it was released in 1999, the report "Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report," notes that juvenile crime typically peaks between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., a period of time in which they're typically unsupervised (parents are typically still at work).

It helps to think of the summer as a one long after-school break. During summers in many cities, juvenile arrests for non-curfew crimes rises—this is not the case everywhere, as vacationing parents often drag their children along with them. But curfew laws haven't been a panacea. Despite law enforcement's best efforts, you can still find underage folks roaming or cruising the Strip. The sheer scale of humanity on Las Vegas Boulevard on the weekends makes catching curfew violators and juvenile offenders nearly impossible. (Curfew arrests also bring up the issue of race in some cities: minorities comprised the majority of arrestees in San Francisco some 15 years ago; as a result, the curfew law was repealed).

The best antidote to keeping your children out of harm's way is to get them active in positive pursuits. Thankfully, there are various recreational opportunities in the valley for parents to consider.

The local municipalities have a bevy of specialty camps and activities, from learning-to-swim classes to art camps, teen nights to hip-hop dance troupes, storytelling for youth ages 2 to 6 to picnics, dances to adventure courses. Many of the valley's recreation centers also have summer programming: Doolittle Community Center (229-6374) is hosting Urban Nights for youth ages 14 to 18 on the last Saturday of each month from 7 to 11 p.m.; there teens can learn life skills and about jobs and educational possibilities, in addition to basketball, games, music, refreshments and swimming. So do entities like the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, which is offering 10- to 12-year-olds a chance to tour the pits, see a VIP booth and takes some laps around the track (Call 229-1607 for more information).

Parents need to study up on their options. And whatever they decide to get their children involved in should be not only recreational, but educational. The end of the school year shouldn't mean an end to learning. Summer will be over before you know it.

## Voter Apathy a Crying Shame

To call the turnout for Tuesday's municipal elections dismal is to place sugar on top of a pile of refuse and tell everyone to "eat up." Perhaps it was due to mudslinging (the Ward 6 Las Vegas City Council race), indifference (races for the Boulder City City Council), misjudgment (Willa Chaney actually outpolled opponents in primary race for North Las Vegas Municipal Court Judge, Department 2, but lost on Tuesday).

Whatever the cause of the abysmal voter turnout, we should be ashamed. If only voters (there were also races in Henderson for Municipal Court Judge, Department 3, and three at-large city council seats in Mesquite) expended as much energy in getting to the polls and making their feelings known as the various candidates did in amassing war chests (the Ward 6 race) and leveling accusations at each other (North Las Vegas mayoral race).

That voter apathy is nothing new in America is a shame. As the beacon of democracy, as the country that holds itself up as a model of a free republic, an exemplar of modern society, a nation governed by the people, for the people, such voter disinterest is regrettable. What kind of role model is America setting for the world when it preaches democracy but doesn't fully exercise its fruits?



## How we can save our children

By Dora LaGrande  
Sentinel-Voice

Over the past few weeks, we have taken a look back at the impact that the Village has played in the rearing of our children, specifically in the areas of parenting, education and discipline. As I bring the village series to a close, I thought we would focus on what it will take to return us to that Village mentality, where many lives help, shape, and mold a child.

Currently, we find ourselves in a state of disarray. Our children have been caught up in the scourge of illegal drug use and sales; gangs and violent crimes; unemployment (Black males at a rate more than twice the national average); sexual looseness and AIDS; educational failure in record numbers; unwed pregnancies; suicide at a rate higher than that of White children, just to name some of our ills.

Yet, when we came out of slavery, we endured the brutality of the physical assaults, our fractured interpersonal relations with one another; and attacks on our sense of dignity and self-respect. It may have seemed certain that we would either be destroyed as moral beings—or that we would instead find a way through faith to transcend our condition. That faith led us to the church.

A National Survey of Black Americans study depicted that, more than any other group today, African-



### ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

Americans are the most religious. Descriptive analyses indicate that large percentages of African-Americans say they are church members (62 percent); attend religious services at least weekly (36 percent); consider worshipping at a church to be "very important" (65 percent); pray nearly every day (78 percent); read religious materials nearly every day (27 percent); watch or listen to religious media programs nearly every day (25 percent); and identify themselves as "very religious" (42 percent). Now, if we are this religious and have this much faith, why do we find ourselves in such a state of moral decay? Is this something that we're actually responsible for, or do we, once again, blame the White man?

The idea that man "must not live by bread alone" was more to us than a theoretical proposition. Grasping this truth was our key to survival. The moral and spiritual values that we held proved profoundly significant in the post-slavery development of Blacks. A spirit of self-help, rooted in a deep sense of self respect was widely embraced among Blacks of all ideological persuasions. We educated

our children, acquired land, founded communal institutions and struggled for equal rights—not in reaction to, or for the approval of Whites, but rather, in spite of Whites—because of our internal conviction of our own worth and capacities.

So where have we gone wrong, and what can we do to right the wrong? The first place we went wrong was the dropping of the baton by the baby-boomers after the civil rights movement. This movement carried with it a spirit of commonality amongst its participants, to create a better opportunity for future generations, one so strong that they were willing to lay down their lives. One of the major quests of the move-

ment was to create opportunities, which would propel the Black population from a state of poverty to a state of creating wealth. Black baby boomers were supposed to be responsible for learning about the American system, coming back into every Black community throughout America and building an economic infrastructure to hire, train and develop our own people—so we wouldn't be dependent on the sympathy of any other ethnic group to employ us, make us a loan or provide our needs.

Needs, for example, like the full-service grocery store that the residents of Las Vegas' Historic Westside are demanding in order to replace the one that closed last year. A grocery store that may employ one or two of our people; a grocery store that is going to make the money in the Black neighborhood but put the money in a White bank, which will, (See LaGrande, Page 11)



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