

Anti-immigrant billboard up in Little Haiti

By Hansen Sinclair
Special to Sentinel-Voice

MIAMI (NNPA) - It may as well have said, "Get Out of Our Country," because the message is just that clear. A sign recently erected in Little Haiti communicated effectively just how some Americans feel about illegal immigrants. The sign, at the corner of NW 79th Street and right next to Interstate 95 reads boldly, "Stop the Invasion."

The sign stems from a

campaign by the Grassfire Alliance to close off the U.S.-Mexico border to illegal immigration. Signs such as this one have been posted around the nation, especially in areas where illegal immigration runs rampant. The billboard was a shock for not just residents in the area, but for passers-by as well.

"I can't believe my eyes," said one gas station patron who wanted to remain nameless. "This, to me is just outrageous. I can't believe they

actually allowed this sign to be put up." The patron is of Cuban descent but was born in Miami. Because of the nature of his employment, he requested to remain anonymous.

The group solicits online support and donations in order to pay for the signs and campaigns through its website

at www.grassfire.org. They are heavily in favor of stricter immigration enforcement laws, but they oppose Presi-

dent Bush's guest worker program.

Many who saw the sign said it just didn't make sense, especially in a city such as Miami where it is so diverse and where immigrants fuel the economy.

Janet Hubbard, a firm supporter of the ACLU and similar organizations said, "People are insensitive. We all have ancestors who were immigrants. Whoever put this sign up is just ignorant. Without our tourism or immigrants, Miami would be nothing. Most of our government is made up of immigrants themselves or relatives of immigrants. Even our mayor is an immigrant. I can't believe he let this sign go up."

President of the conservative group, Steve Elliott, stands by his signs, which have already been displayed in Atlanta and Dallas, saying that demonstrations and protests in metropolitan cities show just how many immigrants there are.

"Hundreds of thousands show up to march," he said. "We need to wake up and tighten up our laws," Elliott said.

Despite what he considers a patriotic attitude, some view Elliott as nothing more than a bigot when some of his comments are assessed by them.

"This is just the sort of injustice we are talking about," the anonymous gas station patron said. "Racism

is definitely alive and kicking in the South."

Not only are the sign and Elliott's view questioned, but the location of the sign itself — right on the verge of Little Haiti.

Jack Lieberman, Haiti Solidarity Committee, said the fact that the sign is right at the edge of Little Haiti seems intentional. "Of all the places to put such a sign; the sign itself is offensive, but the location is horrendous. We definitely plan on doing something about it."

No one can predict just how long the billboard will stay up, but it is apparent that this will not be the end of this discussion.

Hansen Sinclair writes for the Westside Gazette.



NOT AGAIN

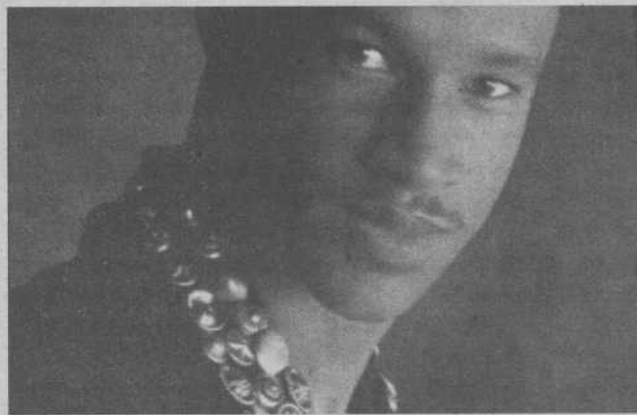
A video by Hamourabi Human rights group shows covered bodies, which Hamourabi says, are of a family of 15 shot dead in their home in Haditha, in western Anbar province. U.S. military officials say the killing of 24 civilians in the Iraqi town of Haditha in November appears to have been an unprovoked attack by U.S. Marines, after an investigation found the victims died of gunshot wounds, The New York Times reported on Wednesday.

Expo

(Continued from Page 1) connect with the public as well as participating vendors." Jackson said she also "wanted to allow other businesses to share what I am doing."

She has invited magazine publications, such as Nevada Black Pages, Urban Network Magazine, and Music Choice along with broadcast networks, such as Cox Communications, and a wide variety of vendors.

Jackson supports and salutes her community and industry partners. "Expo was made possible through Power 88 [KCEP]. I want to thank them for all they have done for us," she added explaining benefits of the event. "New artists stole the



TONY TERRY

show," Jackson said recalling last year's success. "In fact, three [artists] were signed to major deals, with 12 releases in rotation on radio stations across the country."

She vowed, "There will never be a charge [for attending the two-day expo] and it will always be open to the

public."

Tickets for the gala fundraiser are \$75 and may be purchased at the radio station, at Sight and Sound Music or by phone. More information is available at the event's website, www.blackmusicmonthexpo.com or by calling 648-0104.

Liberian president portrays grandmother at graduation

KENNESAW, Ga. (AP) — Hundreds of people cheered, clapped and snapped pictures Saturday in the presence of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, but most of the praise was not for the leader of the west African nation. Instead, it was for the hundreds of graduates of North Cobb High School's Class of 2006, including Sirleaf's granddaughter, Jenelle Elsa Sirleaf.

For a couple of hours, the first democratically elected female head of state in Africa's history took pleasure in being a proud grandmother. Smiling from her front row seat at Kennesaw State University, the president stood to salute Jenelle and applauded when the young woman accepted her diploma.

Principal Gary Boling took only a moment to recognize Sirleaf at the beginning of the program, mentioning her name in the same breath as school officials before recognizing

the class salutatorian.

After the ceremony, Boling said he was honored to host the dignitary and proud of the United States' relationship with Liberia, which was founded in 1847 by free Blacks and former slaves from America.

Sirleaf is a 1971 graduate of Harvard University, where she earned a master's degree in public administration.

Gladys Blackman of Philadelphia beamed with pride at Sirleaf as she waited to see her grandson, Derrick Lee Alexander Blackman, in his cap and gown.

"She's a female, so I'm proud of her," Blackman said. "She might bring another view to overcome some of her country's problems."

After being sworn in Jan. 16, Sirleaf inherited a war-ruined nation of 3 million that is among the world's poorest.



Congratulations, Kanika. You Continue To Make Us Proud! The Toston Family

Kanika C. Toston, native Las Vegas, 1988 (Honors) graduate of Advance Technology Academy, and 2002 (Magna Cum Laude) graduate of Temple University, will graduate, June 2, 2006, from University of Southern Nevada, in Henderson, Nevada, with a Doctorate of Pharmacy Degree. Kanika is the daughter of Roosevelt and Gertrude Toston, and the granddaughter of Bertha L. Carrol.

Reid

(Continued from Page 12) boxing was being conducted properly in his home state.

"He is no more obligated to go to boxing matches than he is to a Celine Dion concert in Vegas," said Melanie Sloan, a former Justice Department prosecutor and head of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. Fred Wertheimer, a longtime ethics

watchdog, agreed.

"The test under congressional ethics rules in these circumstances is not what state a member is from but whether the gift creates the appearance that the gift is motivated by a desire to influence the member or gain favorable official action," Wertheimer said. "If the gift creates such an appearance, it should not be accepted."