

## OUR VIEW

# Summer Break

Attention all parents of students in the Clark County School District: Summer break shouldn't be a break for your children. It certainly shouldn't be a break for junior high and high school students, the former being at their most impressionable time of life—thus needing to be engaged in positive pursuits—and the latter needing to work, preparing for post-secondary education and otherwise planning for the next years of their lives.

Various studies show that juvenile crime spikes from 3 to 8 p.m. during the weekday. Summer extends that five-hour period to 90 days, which is more than enough time for the type of mischief authorities reported this week as the school year winds down: youth "acting up" in restaurants; teens threatening to egg or water balloon school buses; rivals meeting in parks to violently settle scores.

Knowing this, it's incumbent on parents to go the extra mile and ensure their children are involved in constructive pursuits. No longer is it acceptable for parents to complain that there's nothing for their children to do, no activities for them to be involved in. There are dozens upon dozens of summer camps, both free and fee-based, covering a wide range of activities.

In the Advantage Basketball Camp Nevada, "you'll learn all the moves you've seen in college hoops and made by NBA professionals. You'll be the most improved player on the team, dribbling and ball-handling past defenders through the key for a sweet lay-up and the victory." The mission of the Mad Science camp is "to spark the imagination and curiosity of children everywhere. We provide fun, interactive, and educational activities that instill a clearer understanding of science and how it affects the world around us." Your child might just become a star via the Second City improvisation and comedy writing boot camps: "The Second City has launched the careers of countless actors, writers, directors and producers, and has influenced American comedy like no other theater. Our summer programs attract students from all over the country and abroad." (All these camps can be accessed via [www.mysummercamps.com](http://www.mysummercamps.com)).

These activities only scratch the surface of what's available. The libraries are treasure troves of information on workshops, forums, plays, classes, books, CDs and DVDs for young people. Go into any of the Clark County Parks and Recreation Department's eight community centers and you're bound to find something suitable for your youngster (the department even runs a camp in the cool, alpine climes of Lee Canyon 45 miles away). Ditto for the 11 community schools and community centers run by the city of Las Vegas' Leisure Services Department. With all these resources, there's no reason that summer shouldn't be as educational as the school year.

## Who's Watching?

As utterly depressing and bitterly disturbing as the recent violence that gripped the Berkley Square neighborhood was, it's made even more so by the fact that cops were already at the scene of the deadly May 28 block party—and, theoretically, should've prepared for a worst-case scenario given the neighborhood's known gang affiliation—and that they were secretly surveying the area.

A photo released to the media moments before the violence show youngsters milling around, including a few who appear to be concealing things behind their backs. Authorities are using the photo to search for at least six youth who might have been involved with the shooting. What's unsettling about this is that it appears that the event was being videotaped for no apparent reason. Like the Patriot Act has come to the 'hood.

So the questions: Why was the block party, which has been an annual Berkley Square affair and was approved by the City of Las Vegas, under surveillance? Were the powers-that-be thinking that a fugitive or someone wanted for questioning in a crime would show up? Who authorized this Big Brother activity? Are other block parties and city-sanctioned events subject to the same scrutiny? Are there cameras at First Friday?

This is not to overshadow the tragedy. This neighborhood needs healing, not to wonder if it's being watched.



# The perpetual cry of bias

By Dora LaGrande  
Sentinel-Voice

Politics these days has become a cesspool of corruption. Morals and values in the political realm have become as meaningless as the term affirmative action has become to some White folks and to some Blacks.

The issue for me though is this: Why is it that when Black elected officials are accused of a crime, it all of a sudden becomes about race? Racism is in many cases, the fall guy for many an elected official when they're indicted, jailed, accused of financial improprieties, ethics violations or other wrong doings.

Recently, when Louisiana Congressman William Jefferson's office was raided by the FBI, some Blacks loudly proclaimed that he was a victim of a racial double standard. Mind you, this is the same William Jefferson who used the National Guard to get some of his personal belongings during the Katrina disaster while at the same time nearby residents needed rescue from possible drowning. The same William Jefferson who was caught on videotape accepting \$100,000 in marked \$100 bills from an FBI informant who also recorded the conversations with Jefferson. Later, \$90,000 of the marked bills were reportedly found in his freezer at his home.

Also, recently Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney initially screamed race when



## ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

she took a swing at a Capitol Police officer who had attempted to verify her ID (which she was not wearing contrary to protocol) at a security checkpoint. Senator Roscoe Dixon's bribery charges are being questioned because his lawyers claim that federal agents unfairly went after Black legislators in the Tennessee Waltz sting just because they were Black — even though two of the already indicted politicians are White.

During the 1990's Congressman Mel Reynolds screamed racism when he was indicted, tried and convicted of sexual assault charges. Mayor Marion Barry of Washington, D.C., screamed racism when he was indicted, tried and convicted on a drug charge; California Congressman Walter Tucker was convicted of bribery charges, which led him to cry racism.

Now we all have to admit that there is lots of racism taking place in America today in every facet of life, but when you're caught with \$90,000 worth of marked bills in your freezer, how can you call that racism? What does racism have to do with punching a Capitol Police officer or accepting \$9,500 in

bribery money to vote for a dummy business that was part of an FBI undercover sting? What does racism have to do with having sex with a 16-year-old girl? And finally, what does racism have to do with an individual possessing crack cocaine and snorting it up his nose?

Racism had nothing to do with any of these charges or convictions, so why do we always use that as a crutch? Do our elected officials truly believe that we are so stupid and gullible that we don't know the difference between right and wrong? And more importantly, as a whole, are we that stupid?

I have witnessed many occasions when our Black representatives — locally and nationally — have

clearly been wrong, but to deflect attention from their crimes, the first thing they do is cry racism or White persecution, and then we jump on the bandwagon.

Black elected officials should be held to the highest standards, maybe even higher standards. Why? Because we are currently experiencing a crisis in Black leadership all across this nation and our elected officials, in whatever capacity they're in, play dual roles. Not only are they looked to in the battle for our political interests as African-Americans, but also they are looked to for providing direction and advocacy. My question is this: Who do we presently have that is credible enough and honorable enough to not only provide the aforementioned, but to be willing to do any and everything he or she can to avoid even the appearance of an impropriety while honestly working towards the uplifting of the Black race?

(See LaGrande, Page 9)

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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