

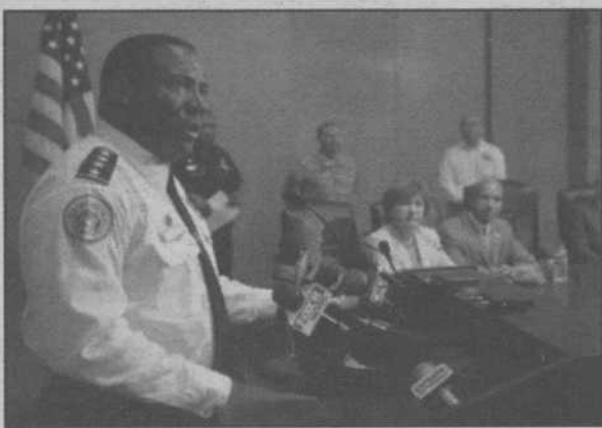
LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

VOLUME 27, ISSUE 8

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

June 22, 2006

"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"



A press conference announcing that more than 100 National Guardsmen will patrol New Orleans' streets.

Guard sets foot in New Orleans

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Nine months after they rode to the rescue in the desperate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, National Guardsmen carrying M-16s returned to the city Tuesday to reinforce a depleted police department and battle a surge in violence.

The 100 or so soldiers will patrol the streets in ravaged neighborhoods left deserted by Katrina, freeing up police officers to concentrate on more heavily populated sections.

"We're just trying to give a hand to the city of New Orleans," said Lt. Melvin Edwards, 32, a member of 239th Military Police Company.

Gov. Kathleen Blanco sent in the National Guard at (See Guardsmen, Page 5)

NAACP wants members

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The NAACP, which has claimed an inflated 500,000 members for 60 years, has announced a new membership drive to reach that goal finally.

"We're flat. We're not where we need to be. Civil rights should be a growth business because there are a lot of conditions in this country that require it," said Bruce Gordon, nearing his first year as president.

For years, the NAACP has inflated its membership numbers, according to sources that have seen membership records.

The last four executive directors/presidents — Benjamin L. Hooks, Kweisi Mfume, Ben Chavis, and now Bruce Gordon — have cited a membership level of 500,000. However, sources with direct knowledge of the figures, say the actual number fluctuates between 150,000 and 250,000 members.



"Civil rights should be a growth business because there are a lot of conditions in this country that require it."

— Bruce Gordon
NAACP President

The *Baltimore Sun* said in a story two years ago that the NAACP has been reporting the 500,000 figure since 1946.

Gordon said he has confirmed an active membership of less than 300,000 after ordering a methodical search of membership data.

"Those are accurate data according to membership files," Gordon said. He declined to state his ultimate membership goal. "I'm not trying to set public expectations." But, less than a year ago, Gordon told BlackAmericaWeb exactly where he wants to go.

"The NAACP has a 500,000-volunteer membership. I'd like to see 5 million members," he told Michael H. Cottman last July.

In recent years, under Chavis and Mfume, the NAACP has announced membership drives, none of which has gotten the organization close to 500,000 members. A year ago, the NAACP announced a billboard campaign in 46 states.

There was no tangible evidence that the drive significantly increased the membership, and some critics doubt whether this new drive can achieve significant numbers over such a short time period that ends with the opening of (See NAACP, Page 3)

Civil Rights groups share common, activist agenda

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

CHICAGO (NNPA) - During Rainbow/PUSH's annual convention, a panel of leaders was assembled to work on a common agenda. However, before moderator Ron Daniels could

call on a second panelist, NAACP President Bruce Gordon had articulated what everyone would later agree was a series of common issues. The leaders realized that what they needed was not another agenda, but a plan of action.

Outlining the goal of the session, Daniels said, "What can we collaborate on becomes the most urgent question. How do we frame an agenda and how do we regain the momentum in the current climate?"

Gordon, the panelist with the least experience in his or her current position, listed five key areas: education, healthcare, criminal justice, civic engagement and economic empowerment.

"I believe that already today, regardless of which organization we bring to the table, we're focused on those five issues," he said. Sounding like a battle-weary veteran, Gordon added, "We can't be satisfied with meetings, discussions and speeches. We need to act on them."

Southern Christian Leadership Confer-

ence President Charles Steele Jr. agreed.

"We don't have enough direct action," said Steele. "That's what got you your freedom." The crowd applauded loudly when he urged them to "raise hell."

Jesse Jackson outlined four targets: British Petroleum (BP), whom Jackson accuses of having no Blacks among its 800 gasoline distributors and less than 1 percent of its senior managers, figures the firm say are inaccurate; launching a boycott of CNN, if necessary, to get it to place more people of color on the air; taking on unrepresentative trade unions and marching before the Supreme Court to preserve affirmative action.

In taking the action against BP, one of the sponsors of this year's convention, Jackson says in addition to having a solid case against BP, he was also signaling to corporations that even though they support Rainbow/PUSH financially, that support does not buy his silence. Jackson said after the BP drive, a coalition of organizations would shift and focus on other oil companies in an effort to drive down gas prices.

The threatened boycott of CNN also makes a statement to companies headed by Black CEOs, putting them on notice that they (See Agenda, Page 12)



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

JAZZY EXPERIENCE

Najee (right) joins the Larry White Experience for a jazzy jam session during Saturday's 6th Annual Las Vegas Juneteenth Festival at the Sammy Davis Jr. Festival Plaza at Lorenzi Park. The event, which commemorates the June day in 1865 during which Texas slaves learned about their emancipation, served as fundraiser for education. The event featured food, music and fun. (See additional photos on page 8)