

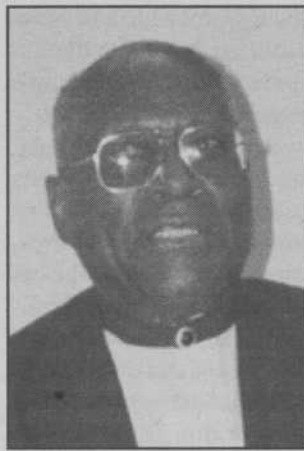
Candidates stump in West Las Vegas

By Lés Pierres Streater
Sentinel-Voice

Thirty-one candidates running for elected office assembled at the West Las Vegas Library Monday to solicit support from voters for the upcoming primary in August.

Sponsored by the Nevada Voters League in conjunction with AARP, the American Association of Retired People Local 4395, the forum sought to introduce the candidates to the public before the elections.

The Nevada Voters League has exercised its mission for 40 years: to ensure preservation of our right to vote in Las Vegas. The organization firmly believes that if you don't exercise your right to vote, then you don't have any reason to complain



REV. JESSE D. SCOTT

if things don't happen as you expect them to. That is its reason for holding the forum to meet each candidate, regardless of his or her office or party affiliation.

Rev. Jesse D. Scott, president of the Nevada Voters League, moderated the fo-

rum. It garnered a standing capacity crowd of over 100.

Scott said, "This has been the best turnout by the public to this forum..."

At the beginning of the event there was some confusion about the way the forum's procedure would operate regarding the questioning of candidates from the audience, but that matter was quickly resolved. Each candidate was offered the opportunity to address the audience for three minutes, followed with brief questions from the audience.

Sharing his insights about the event: "We've done a fantastic job of making sure that the voters get a chance to meet with the candidates, especially the judges. That allowed you the opportunity to

know them before seeing them in a courtroom, because once the judges put on their robes, they're inaccessible."

He continued, "We're glad that we had the opportunity to present candidates running for the State Supreme Court, District Court, Family Court, and the other various local, county, and statewide offices here tonight. This allowed the voters an opportunity to associate a face with the names of the candidates... [voters] enter the polls on Election Day and cast their ballots with some intelligence."

Scott expressed a call to action: "We want more than [a third] of our voters showing up for the primary. We want people to be informed about the issues and translate

those concerns to votes. For example, the public works department, both city, county, and state, have [few] Black employees, in any positions... we need to address this issue with the candidates and know where they stand on hiring us and allowing us to be represented as government employees."

Among the candidates and incumbents who attended the forum are: Dina Titus and Jim Gibson, gubernatorial race; Jack Carter for U.S. Senate; Kenneth Wegner for U.S. Congress; Kate Marshall and Geoffrey VanderPal for State Treasurer; Kim Wallin for State Controller; Ross Miller and Danny Tarkanian for Secretary of State; Sandra Tiffany for State Senate, and

Catherine Mastro for Attorney General.

Participants included judicial candidates Michael Douglas, Michael Cherry, Diane Steel, and Nancy Saitta for State Supreme Court Justice, along with Timothy Williams, Elizabeth Halverson, and Jerry Wiese for District Court Judge, and Robert Lueck for Family Court Judge. Assembly candidates included Harvey Munford, Joseph Hogan, Steven Dempsey and Stan Vaughan. Sheriff candidates present were: Jerry Airola, Bill Conger, Douglas Gillespie and Ron Williams. Other participating candidates in other races were: Chris Giunchigliani, County Commissioner; Charles Harvey (See Candidates, Page 4)

Inquest

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the purpose of the conference.

"We are not here to dishonor the work of the many, many fine officers who serve in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and other law enforcement agencies in Southern Nevada.... We are here, however, to express our deep and abiding concern for the escalating number of police shootings that we have witnessed during the first half of this year."

Peck emphasized that this conference was not to prejudge any of the cases or to say whether a shooting was justified or not. He continued, "...But to say that the sheer number and the circumstances surrounding some of them raise very serious, very troubling concerns and questions."

NAACP's Las Vegas chapter President Dean Ishman addressed the crowd: "Alarm bells are ringing in my ears with these recent, resurging numbers of police shootings. Most alarming to

me is the number of non-lethal incidents that have resulted in death."

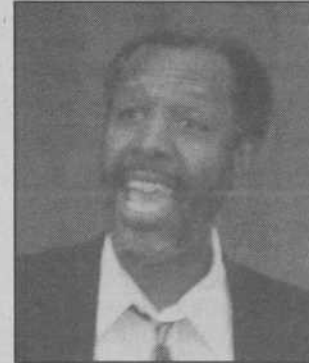
He spoke about the most recent cases under investigation including the death of Lopez. To the encouragement of the crowd, Ishman declared, "When you filter these occurrences through the current coroner's inquest process, you get inadequate and unacceptable results leaving us with a formula for distrust, disease and disaster."

Other recent highly-publicized, officer-involved shooting events under investigation include the fatal shooting of an African-American motorist reportedly approached for playing loud music and failure to stop his car on Las Vegas Blvd South last week and this week's fatal shooting of a domestic violence suspect at a convenience store parking lot.

General Counsel for the ACLU of Nevada, Allen Lichtenstein, discussed solutions to the growing problem

"Alarm bells are ringing in my ears with these recent, resurging numbers of police shootings."

— Dean Ishman
President NAACP's
Las Vegas chapter



of local officer-involved shootings. "We believe that in the cases of the use of force... that there are really three things that need to be done. One is training, second is supervision, and the third is accountability. When we say accountability, we mean public accountability... We need a process that is open, that is neutral, and that is credible."

Edna Jaeger, spokesperson for ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, was visibly shaken as she spoke. "I applaud Sheriff Young for his remarks in this morning's paper welcoming in the FBI [to look into the increase in officer-involved shootings here]. It's about time."

The crowd was very receptive as Jaeger spoke, "I believe that the huge and rapid population growth in this valley in recent years may well be a factor in the increase of officer-involved shootings, as [one police sergeant] said on the news the other night. But I don't think this is as significant as the fact that Metro has had a history of practicing what I call 'Cowboy Justice': shoot first, and ask questions later."

She openly criticized the

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police and their policies and called for Undersheriff Gillespie, if elected as sheriff of Clark County, to make changes to Metro his top priority.

She concluded, "Every man, woman and child, regardless of race, ethnic origin or economic background or status is in serious risk with this madness until it ceases."

Lisa Rasmussen, president of Attorneys for Criminal Justice, told the group that, "We want the public to know that we support the efforts for reform that are being proposed by the various organizations of our community."

District 6 Assemblyman Harvey Munford commented, "I am here to lend support to the ACLU, the NAACP and to see what I, as an elected official, can take to Carson City and form some legislation to see what we can do and pass some kind of bill that would give some impact. [I want to] try to work with the legislature and see what kind of support I can get."

Executive Director Andrea Beckman of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Depart-

ment Citizens Review Board, stated her support, "We have the same concerns, and we are seeing the same types of complaints that are filed with us as far as police officers engaged in the excessive use of force in situations that escalate, like the situation on the Strip on the 4th of July."

Beckman added, "We have the same concerns expressed by the ACLU and NAACP, and we are willing to be involved and hope to be involved in the process of overseeing law enforcement and misconduct."

Dan Winder, attorney for the Lopez family, was there to observe the press conference and to lend his support.

"We certainly want the

process of the coroner's inquest to be reviewed and we believe the suggestions made... will help greatly in tweaking that particular process." When asked about a pending civil lawsuit, Winder told the *Sentinel Voice*, "We haven't made a final decision yet... We expect to make that decision in the next two to four weeks."

Minister Duke Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, although not part of the press conference, told the *Sentinel Voice*, "We are here to support the efforts of the ACLU and NAACP and all of the organizations that came together to address a concern that is on the rise in our community."

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Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Edna Jaeger, a spokeswoman for the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, speaks during Tuesday's press conference on the coroner's inquest system.