

Forum hits political topics

By Lés Pierres Streater
Sentinel-Voice

The National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression held a public forum at the North Las Vegas Council Chambers last Thursday night. Approximately 40 attended and heard about two public issues — education and police matters. The audience consisted mostly of political candidates and their supporters.

Dr. James Tate, the executive director of the national organization and chair of the local chapter, moderated the forum.

The NAARPR is a human rights organization formed in 1973 to campaign for the freedom of all political prisoners in the United States. The organization maintains active chapters in three states, Illinois, Kentucky, and Nevada, the location of the national headquarters.

The mission of the group includes three areas they consider to be important battlefields against racist and political repression: police misconduct, maintaining political freedom for all, and maintaining strong affirmative action policies.



"There is an undercurrent of racism in our schools. The racism comes directly from the top and goes all the way down to the classroom..."

— Dr. Ronan Matthew, Principal at Canyon Springs High School

They are concerned that police misconduct across the country is at an all-time high and the only way to correct this problem is to create civilian control boards that are able to review the conduct of police officers on a daily basis.

Expressing the need for the forum, Tate said, "We're sponsoring this event because we believe that a voice from the community needs to address the issues existing and confront the candidates running for various offices. We all see television ads and listen to radio ads that the candidates run, but we rarely get the opportunity to hear about the essence of what a candidate is really thinking and talking about when they

are running for office. So, this is an opportunity for the community to address the candidates to talk about what's going on and hearing their views on many of the issues."

The forum presented two areas: law enforcement and public education. There were two speakers on the panel, each leading one topic. No elected official or political candidate was part of the panel.

No representatives from any law enforcement agency or the District Attorney's office participated in the forum, nor were any identified in the audience.

One topic discussed was policing, in particular the matter of police shootings

and oversight. Comments from the audience questioned the coroner's inquest process that has exonerated nearly all officers who have used deadly force resulting in death or severe physical injury to alleged suspects, individuals in custody or other victims.

Tate explained that his organization has vigorously protested against the coroner's inquest process because it fails to allow any outside intervention beyond the District Attorney's office. He stated that it would be more beneficial if the process had an independent prosecutor investigating the police shooting incidents along with establishing a citizens control board that has the authority to interrogate police officers.

David Muldrow, a member of the audience referred to the expression, "I would rather be judged by twelve, than carried by six," as he commented on police shootings. He elaborated on the statement, suggesting, "If there is an incident in which things can go either way, the belief of many police officers is that [they] would rather (See NAARPR, Page 7)

Katrina victims behind crimes

HOUSTON (AP) - A letter to inmate No. 1352951 and a cell phone bill for \$76.63, both found in a soggy New Orleans duplex ruined by Hurricane Katrina, led Louisiana bounty hunter James Martin to Texas. Again.

It marked the seventh time since Katrina that Martin, whose pursuit of bail jumpers often begins with clues salvaged from abandoned New Orleans homes, has followed a trail to Texas.

"I don't think Texas really knows what they got," Martin said.

Katrina sent a lot of bad guys to Texas, as Houston is finding out.

Houston took in 150,000 evacuees — the most of any U.S. city — after Katrina struck on Aug. 29. Houston police believe the evacuees are partly responsible for a nearly 17.5 percent increase in homicides so far this year over the same period in 2005.

About 21 percent of Houston's 232 homicides through July 25 involved an evacuee as either a suspect or a victim, according to police, who attribute much of the bloodshed to fighting among rival New Orleans gang members.

"New Orleans allowed a lot of these guys to stay on the street for whatever reason or be picked up and released after 60 days," said Capt. Dale Brown, who oversees Houston's homicide division. "Texas law, I don't want to say it's tougher, but we take these offenses very seriously."

Judge Robert Eckels, chief executive of Harris County, which includes Houston, said Katrina evacuees arrested in the Houston have cost the county's criminal justice system more than \$18 million. In June, Texas Gov. Rick Perry sent \$19.5 million to Houston to help pay for additional officers and overtime to police the city after Katrina.

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Rahman

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Maskaev (33-5, 26 KOs) seemed headed for an uncertain decision in an entertaining fight until he sprang to life in the final round, knocking the champion into the ropes with a series of heavy blows.

Rahman (41-6-2), obviously hurt after setting the pace early on, desperately tried to hold on until the final bell, even grabbing Maskaev's leg as he stumbled to the mat. But referee Jay Nady stopped the fight with 43 seconds left after one last beating in front of a frenzied Thomas and Mack Center crowd.

Rahman was the only U.S.-born heavyweight champion left in a division long dominated by Americans; Maskaev, born in Kazakhstan, lives in Staten Island. Three Eastern European champions — Ukrainian Wladimir Klitschko (IBF), Russia's Nicolai Valuev (WBA) and Sergei Lyakhovich of Belarus (WBO) — hold the other significant belts.

"I'm proud of where I come from, but I consider myself a Russian-American," Maskaev said. "This is a message to everyone: European fighters are tough."

The fight was impressively even. Maskaev led 106-103 on judge Jerry Roth's scorecard entering the 12th, while Anek Hongtongkam favored Rahman 106-103. Glenn Trowbridge had Maskaev ahead 105-104, leaving Rahman in need of a 12th-round victory to force a draw. The Associated Press had Rahman winning 105-104 entering the 12th.

Maskaev's first fight with Rahman in 1999 went down in highlight history, thanks to Maskaev's stunning eighth-round right hand to Rahman's head. The punch knocked Rahman out cold and sent him tumbling through the ropes, over the broadcast table and onto the apron around the ring.

The rematch was nearly as dramatic — and again, Rahman dominated when he used his jab, but couldn't back it up with discipline or a knockout punch.

Rahman pushed the pace from the opening bell, patiently touching Maskaev with jabs and combinations. Maskaev matched Rahman's pace and landed his share of hard shots in a heavyweight fight that turned out to be much more entertaining than the division's dismal reputation would suggest.

Afterward, Rahman claimed the punch that staggered him occurred while Nady was telling the fighters to break — but he still blamed himself for abandoning the jab.

"I put my hands down, and he caught me with a shot," Rahman said. "I'm really disappointed. I never thought that he would be taking the world title out of Las Vegas tonight. I'm going to have to watch the tape and see what I did wrong."

Promoters attempted to wrap this fight in a red-white-and-blue package, labeling Rahman as "America's Last Line of Defense." The Baltimore native embraced the storyline, but Maskaev was a bit miffed — although he knew the facts never get in the way of a good boxing promotion.

Rahman became a heavyweight champion for the second time when he beat Monte Barrett last August and inherited the WBC title after Vitali Klitschko's retirement. His first title defense was a draw with James Toney.

On the undercard, David Diaz claimed the WBC interim lightweight title with a stunning 10th-round knockout of Jose Armando Santa Cruz. Diaz (32-1-1, 17 KOs), a 30-year-old from Chicago, took a steady beating in every round until he abruptly floored the champion (23-2) twice.

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