

OUR VIEW

So, What...

...will you do to improve the quality of life in Ward 5 in general and West Las Vegas in particular?

That question should be foremost on the minds of voters in Ward 5, which is the scene of one of the most contested political races in the Valley in years. Ten candidates are vying to replace Lawrence Weekly, who was selected by Gov. Jim Gibbons to the fill the County Commission seat vacated by Yvonne Atkinson-Gates.

It's imperative that Ward 5 voters—and anyone interested in the future of West Las Vegas—attend a candidates' meet-and-greet at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday at the West Las Vegas Library Theater. This is your chance to meet with each of the 10 people vying for the Ward 5 City Council seat. It is your turn to get face-to-face with the candidates and ask direct questions, take notes on what they say and let them know that, if elected, you will hold them accountable to keep their promises.

For those who may not know, the candidates are Ricki Barlow, Marion D. Bennett, Richard B. Blue Jr., Gene Collins, Katherine "Katie" Duncan, Earnestine L. Howell, Jeffrey Loveall, Shondra Summers-Armstrong, Stacie Truesdell and Marcia L. Washington. A crowded field to say the least.

And if you need a refresher course on the issues facing West Las Vegas, here's a quick primer: crime, poverty, a lack of educational and recreational amenities and a dearth of new development and industry (in terms of affordable housing and jobs paying livable wages).

Now more than ever, it's imperative that West Las Vegas voters in Ward 5 make their voices heard and follow through by voting. The adage of the squeaky wheel getting the grease is apropos. Only if West Las Vegas residents turn out in significant numbers will the eventual Ward 5 City Council winner recognize and realize that this is a constituency to be respected and heeded. If West Las Vegas don't weigh in heavily in this process, the eventual winner could very well focus his or her energies on improving other parts of the ward, to the detriment of historically Black West Las Vegas.

Sure, there'll be other elections, but this one is crucial, which means that next Tuesday's meet-and-greet is vital. West Las Vegas is on the precipice; there's more positive things going on than in a long time. The expansion of the Agassi school. New and affordable homes on Martin Luther King and Lake Mead boulevards. Booker Elementary is getting a new building. The brothers at Masjid As-Sabur conduct weekly walks near H and Washington to give folks positive images of Black men. At the same time, West Las Vegas still lacks a grocery and still is the scene of too much crime and poverty.

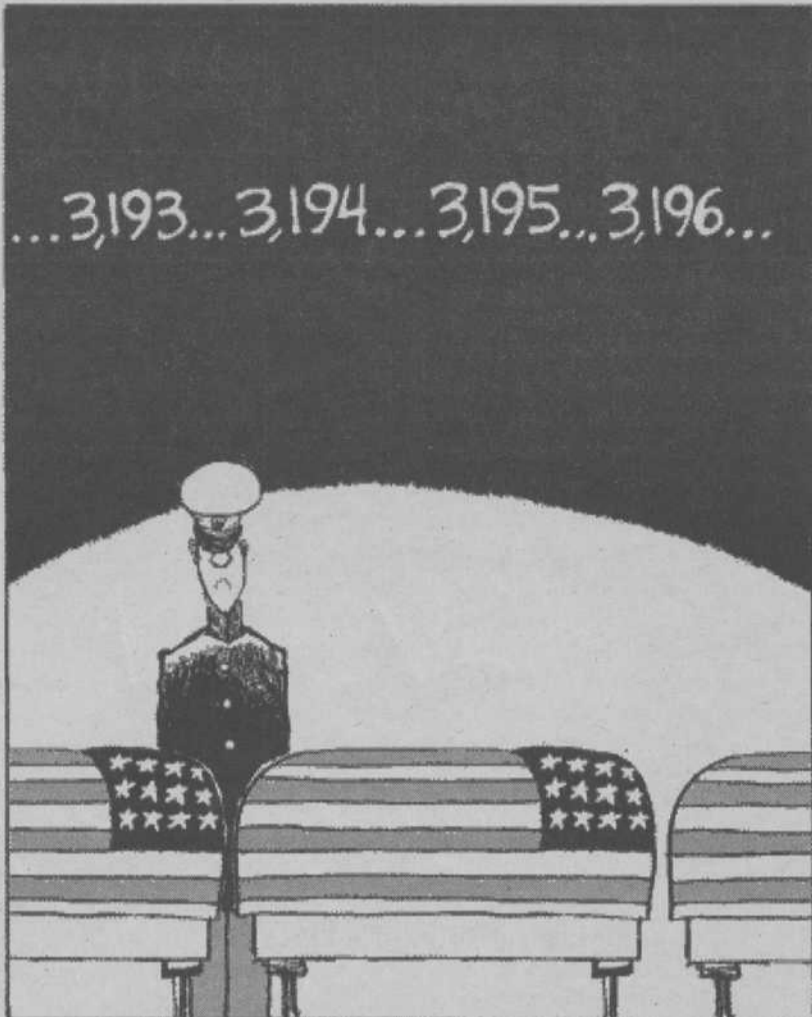
West Las Vegas can't keep fighting against itself. It can take two steps back for every step forward. Nor is stasis an option. The momentum will likely shift more toward the positive or more toward the negative, and West Las Vegas needs a representative who's going to work their hardest to turn the tide for the better.

Killing FOXes

It's no secret that Fox News hasn't been very kind to Black America. But is this mean-spiritedness the result of a coordinated campaign of bias or something less nefarious? An upcoming documentary from Brave New Films titled "Fox Attacks" leans toward the former.

A clip circulating on YouTube makes a convincing case that Fox is, indeed, racist. The 3-minute clip features snippets of interviews filled with incendiary messages. There's former Bush advisor Mary Matalin blaming them for fomenting a victim mentality in Black America. One commentator says Whites need to have more kids because half of the children under age five in America are minorities. Former LAPD cop Mark Furman says he's dealt with people like O.J. Simpson who will kill somebody and then go have chicken at KFC. It goes on and on.

It's time for Black America to watch Fox, at least long enough to get phone numbers and e-mail addresses to let the network know we won't stand for its racism.



U.S. worsened life in Iraq

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

In all, 13 aspects of life, ranging from security to obtaining medical care, conditions have grown worse in Iraq since the U.S. invaded the country four years ago.

That's the conclusion of a survey of 2,212 Iraqis conducted by ABC News, USA Today, the British Broadcasting Corp. and ARD, a German television network.

As U.S. officials attempt to mark the fourth anniversary of the war this week by projecting an overly optimistic view of life in Iraq, more than half of the residents of the country say they try to avoid walking by public buildings because of their fear of suicide bombings, they stay away from markets and crowded places and, except for the largely independent Kurds in the North, are not optimistic about their future.

The opinion poll, which was released this week, is extremely valuable because, traditionally, Americans measure progress — or the lack of it — by how many of its soldiers are killed or maimed in war. This survey tells the story of the war from the perspectives of the people most affected — the Iraqis themselves.

"When I go out, my family calls me every five minutes, or whenever there is an explosion — there are many — to see if I am still alive.



GEORGE E. CURRY

It's worry, worry all the time," Zaid Hisham, a 29-year-old Shiite engineer, told USA Today.

"You can't see your future, and you can't even try to put an outline for your future," Hisham said.

A majority of residents say life is better for them than before the invasion, though that margin is slipping. By a margin of 43 percent to 36 percent, Iraqis said life was better than before the invasion. In November 2005, the figure was 51 percent to 29 percent.

As optimism fades in Iraq, U.S. public opinion has turned against the war, largely because of initial claims that weapons of mass destruction — the pretext for going to war — proved to be false. More than 3,200 U.S. troops have been killed, and spending is approaching \$500 billion with predictions that it could exceed \$1 trillion.

Initially, almost 75 percent of Americans supported the invasion. The latest public opinion surveys show that

opposition to the war is now at 60 percent.

In Iraq, the U.S. presence is being viewed almost as much of a problem as it is a solution. According to the poll of Iraqis, 44 percent say U.S. or allied forces have been involved in unnecessary violence nearby.

Most do not feel safe.

"I don't feel safe, even at my home," Munaf Mahmood Lafta, a Sunni taxi driver, told USA Today.

"My brother was taken from his house by people wearing Iraqi commando uniforms. That was on Jan. 12, 2006, and we don't know where he is, even now. My mother died from her sadness. So where is the safety you speak about? No safety at all, and no security — not in our neighborhood, nor in my house," he said.

Public opinion in Iraq is not universal, varying by religious and ethnic affilia-

tions.

Kurds, 15 to 20 percent of the population concentrated in the North, report the fewest problems, according to the survey. Shiites, about 60 percent of the population and the group that suffered the most under Saddam Hussein, are hopeful. And Sunni Arabs, about 15 or 20 percent of the population and favored by the former dictator, expressed the most desperation, according to USA Today.

Followed by a weekend of anti-war protests, Iraq received increased attention this week as the House of Representatives considers measures to cut funding for the war and set a firm pull-out date of Sept. 1, 2008.

A \$124 billion spending bill under consideration would appropriate \$95.5 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even if it passes the House, the measure is not

(See Curry, Page 11)

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 380-8100
Email: lvsentinelvoice@yahoo.com

Contributing Writers:
Frank Albano
Debbie Hall
Lés Pierres Streater
Kanika Vann
Photographer:
Joseph Sawyer III

Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief
Parker Philpot, Copy Editor
Don Snook, Graphics
Ed & Betty Brown, Founders

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association
and West Coast Black Publishers Association