

OUR VIEW Hot Summer

Summer and crime go hand in hand. Juvenile crime, in particular, tends to go up during the summer largely because kids are out at home (or out causing mischief) when they'd normally be in school. During the early part of last year, juvenile and gang crimes skyrocketed according to Metropolitan Police Department data cited in published reports. During the first six months of 2006, there was a 48 percent increase in shootings as compared to 2005 and a 100 percent increase in gang-related homicides—from 10 to 21. These stats could be bad omens.

If we're to make this a safer summer, the Las Vegas Valley will truly have to be a village and raise and look out for its children. Parents should explore all available options for involving their children in constructive pursuits such as arts, camps, field trips, sports leagues and, yes, even summer school. Rather than taking off for the summer, organizations that run youth-oriented programs could kick continue mentoring. Seeking to volunteer? Summer is an ideal time to befriend a young person.

Taking an active role in a young person's life is key to preventing the types of wanton displays of violence perpetrated by the 311 Boyz and the young toughs who carried about the brutal, surveillance-captured attacks on two MGM Grand employees. This means parents should search their children's rooms. This means that parents and mentors should be educated on the telltale signs of gang affiliation. This means that adults must know about the company young people keep—are the people my son or daughter hangs with troublemakers?

Failure in these areas leads to the types of headlines in the news recently. In Miami County—*Crime spree linked to Paola youths* (a story about a string of residential and auto burglaries). In Charlotte, N.C.—*Six Charlotte teens charged in crime spree* (a story about a carjacking). In Alabama—*Alabama teen charged in case of brutally punching teacher, taping attack* (a story about two teens assaulting at 61-year-old teacher). These crimes are as disheartening as they are scary. And they speak to the yeoman's work we in America must do to empower youth. We know it's going to be a hot summer. Let's hope, pray and work on preventing a hot summer of crime.

Joy and Sorrow

The municipal election season is over and it's a time of joy and sorrow. Congratulations go out to former city liaison Ricki Barlow for becoming the new Las Vegas City Councilman for Ward 5. A lifelong Las Vegas, Barlow weathered a particularly nasty frontal assault on his character to represent the ward (winning with 56 percent of the vote), which includes predominantly Black West Las Vegas. From here on out is where the proverbial rubber meets the road and Barlow will have to work tirelessly to live up to his campaign promises and to improve the quality of life for his constituents, particularly those in West Las Vegas. Everyone will be watching.

Congratulations also go out to North Las Vegas Ward 2 City Councilman William Robinson for re-election to his position. This is Robinson's last term before being term-limited out. With an overwhelming 77 percent of the vote, Robinson has a referendum to serve. But that show of support mustn't be taken lightly. Accomplished as he's been in his time in office, Robinson will still have to work hard to help older parts of North Las Vegas catch up to the pace of progress experienced in the city's newer areas.

Now to the sad news. Election turnout was woeful. The lack of municipal races likely affected turnout. On the heels of the mid-term elections just last year—where dozens upon dozens of races were up for grabs—it's hard to think voters would be eager to cast ballots for (in some cases) one or two contests.

Even still, with all the methods available to voters such as mail-in ballots, early voting and day-of polls. Perhaps it's time to open booths on weekends, so that workaday folks don't have to change their schedules. Something must be done because we're taking for granted a basic right that people in other countries risk their lives for and, sometimes, die for. We need to do much better.



Generating hurt at gas pump

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Let me see if I can say this a little stronger than I did the last time.

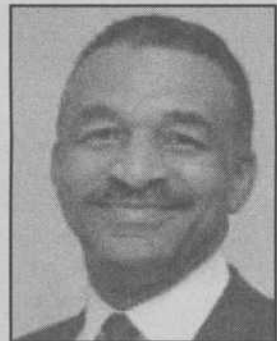
Economics is local!

Until we make a point of doing more than complaining and calling for symbolic gestures to protest high gasoline prices — along with conservation, of course — Exxon/Mobil, Conoco Phillips, Chevron, Shell, and British Petroleum will continue to laugh at us and do whatever they want with prices. Just as the crooks at Enron did in California when they caused an artificial hike in energy prices, the gasoline crooks are doing the same thing to us now.

Until we get serious in our outrage and really do something drastic, like causing a few gas stations to either close or lower their prices due to the excess supplies they will have when we refuse to purchase gas from them, we will continue to get ripped off. I know the local stations, for the most part, do not control this, but who else do you deal with when it comes to gas prices?

Like George Bush and his crew say about the tens of thousands of innocent Iraqis killed thus far, "It's the casualties of war."

For the life of me, I do not understand why we continue to come up with empty, meaningless, gestures to let crooks know we don't like



JAMES CLINGMAN

their actions. Don't you think they already know that? Gas Out Day, May 15, on which I did participate by not buying gas, was symbolic and really meant nothing to the gasoline industry thieves. Where I live, the price per gallon on May 14 was \$3.19; on May 15 the price was \$3.29. Gotcha!

The gas crooks just raised the price in the correct anticipation that many would still need gas; thus, they made even more profits on Gas Out Day than they would have on any other day. And just think what they made on May 16.

Knowing that we consumers are so undisciplined and dare not ever inconvenience ourselves by organizing a real gas out effort, they played us for the suckers we are — again. Now they are paying us back for our temerity of trying to retaliate against them by raising prices even higher to \$3.49-\$4.00 or more per gallon.

I can see them now, like that TV commercial with the fat-cat bankers eating shrimp and playing golf while they

hide a small business owner who wants a loan.

"We'll show those stupid consumers who's the boss. And our excuse, this time, despite barrel oil prices being low, will be that the refineries need repairs." (After all, they suffered damage during Katrina.)

"But that was two years ago," said the stupid consumers.

"Don't bother us with minor details," the oil moguls responded, as they continued to count their \$72 billion in profits.

We love Martin Luther King so much. Every year we repeat his "I Have a Dream" speech and his "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech. Since we love him so much and believe in what he said, let me see if I can get us to actually do something he said. Read the following excerpt of his "Mountaintop" speech on the evening before he was killed.

"Now the other thing we'll have to do is this: Always anchor our external direct action with the power of economic withdrawal.

"Now, we are poor people, individually, we are poor when you compare us with White society in America. We are poor. Never stop and forget that collectively, that means all of us together, collectively, we are richer than all the nations in the world, with the exception of nine. Did you ever think about that? ...That's power right there, if we know how to pool it.

"We don't have to argue with anybody. We don't have to curse and go around acting bad with our words. We don't need any bricks and bottles. We don't need any Molotov cocktails. We just need to go around to these stores and to these massive industries in our country, and say, 'God sent us by here, to (See Clingman, Page 9)

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