

## OUR VIEW

## Gun Nation

America. We, in this country, have a very serious problem. We are enthralled by firearms. There are as many guns as there are people in this nation. Which means that we've chosen to live by the gun. You know what that means right? Many of us often die by the gun as well.

Las Vegas. We, in this city, have a very serious problem with guns. Looking at headlines over the last couple of weeks is proof positive. On Wednesday, maintenance workers found a loaded .38 caliber handgun in the bushes at Brinley Middle School. Authorities are currently reviewing surveillance footage. On Saturday, two passengers in two cars exchanged words on the Strip. That same night, bullets hit the newly opened Diablo Cantina restaurant at the Monte Carlo. Officers responding to the incident stopped one of the vehicles near Harmon and the Strip. When one of the passengers swung around, an officer fired a round through the driver's side window. Authorities say the officer thought he saw the man with a weapon in his hand. Police said they found a shotgun and spent shotgun shell. The round struck the dashboard, and no one was wounded in the shooting.

Enough gunplay for you already?

In three separate incidents two weeks ago, authorities arrested young people for bringing guns to high school. Among those caught: five people (four adults and an Eldorado High School student) who were loitering outside Eldorado. Authorities found a .38-caliber handgun, two swords, five baseball bats and two knives in the car driven by the loiterers. Early last month, Las Vegas police shot and killed a suspect who'd robbed the Community One Federal Credit Union near Flamingo and Pecos and brandished a gun when confronted by authorities.

Late last year, Canyon Springs principal Ronan Mathew asked the school board to approve the installation of metal detectors. Trustees said no. And in March, a 16-year-old male who was registering as a student brought a loaded .25-caliber handgun to campus. During the same time, a Mojave High School 10th-grader was arrested for having an unloaded, small-caliber weapon with him in the parking lot of the school. A little more than a year ago, a 17-year-old Canyon Springs student shot at a bus carrying fellow students. Fortunately no one was injured.

These snippets of violence and near-violence should be a sobering wake-up call. That unless we do something about guns and/or gun culture, we can expect more gunplay, more arrests, more injuries, more deaths, more shattered lives. Arming teachers clearly isn't the solution, as was championed by State Sen. Bob Beers.

Turning teachers into Rambo has the potential to make the problem even worse. District Superintendent Walt Rulffes has said: "The more people who have guns, the more likely it is that there will be a shootout." Weapons might also embolden teachers. "Would you like Mr. Pervert or Mr. Killer to be armed when he teaches your children?" Adler Chang, a Clark High student, wrote in a February letter to the editor published in the *Review-Journal*. The National Council of State Legislatures reports that 38 states and the District of Columbia prohibit people from taking guns to schools. An *Associated Press* report on guns on campus didn't specify how many states exempt gun owners with concealed-weapons permits.

The hard question is what to do? Reasonable debate would be a great place to start. Second Amendment absolutists should be able to agree with people who have a more liberal and benign view of the right to bear arms that kids shooting kids is a problem that needs addressing. We should all agree that massacres like Columbine and this week's shootings in Cleveland cause physical damage to the victims but also collateral damage to the psyche of a school district and of a town. Fear breeds more fear. We should be able to agree that we can teach kids about guns (through hunting and other means) and instill a healthy respect for firearms.

We've got to have these conversations. We've got to change the paradigm via conversation, investigation, legislation and civic action, or we'll need to get used to the depressing headlines about kids and guns.



## We need 'conscious millionaires'

By James Clingman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Have you ever given any thought to the fact that Black folks have the ability to create our own millionaires? We have certainly created millionaires and billionaires among other groups for a long time now; Oprah and the Bob Johnson family notwithstanding.

What if we implemented an initiative specifically directed toward creating conscious Black millionaires? Conscious Black millionaires would most assuredly use some of their money to assist the Black collective; conscious Black millionaires would not hesitate to use their resources to help empower our people; conscious Black millionaires would not be afraid to espouse the principles of economic empowerment and then put their money behind their words.

What a thought! But it's not just a thought, folks. This can be done. This should be done. This must be done if we are ever going to move beyond rallies, speeches, protests, philosophy, pontification, intellectual rhetoric without commensurate action, and mere symbolism without real substance.

Every rational brother and sister out there knows that at some point, everything we do to fight against injustice, to challenge the evil we face each day in this country, to suppress the discrimination under which we suffer, and to obtain the economic reciprocity we seek and deserve, will require money.

Think about how much money was spent to travel to Jena, La.; remember how



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much was spent to attend the Million Man and Million Woman marches; think about how much money is needed to mount a legal battle in the courts; and what about doing a ballot initiative in your local political arena? Everything we need to accomplish, at some point, will cost money.

Two questions: Who will fund the initiatives we take on to deal with the inequities and unfairness that Black people face in this country? Who will benefit from the dollars we spend to accomplish our goals?

The answer to both questions should be, "Us." The revolution will not be televised, but it will have to be financed, and we should benefit economically from our expenditures and activities associated with our fight for freedom. Currently, we are benefiting everyone else as we run for freedom, as we protest, as we demonstrate, and as we conduct our conventions and other meetings around the country. I am proud to say that I will be attending the Bring Back Black meeting at the Black-owned and -operated Dudley convention complex in Kernersville, N.C.; we have a Black caterer preparing our food, and everything else that

can be done with Black vendors either has been or will be done.

No, every convention cannot do that, but if we create conscious Black millionaires, some of them would do what the Founder of Compro Tax, Jackie Mayfield, is doing in Beaumont, Texas: building his own meeting and convention center. Mayfield is, indeed, a conscious Black millionaire and, like others that I know, he is not only taking care of his family, but he is also doing a great deal to help others via business opportunities and his philanthropic efforts.

Now imagine what progress we would make if we created more millionaires like Mayfield. The good news is that we can do it! All we need to do is put our financial support behind the efforts of a conscious brother or sister who has demonstrated a willingness to sacrifice and walk the walk when it comes to the overall empowerment of Black people.

Look around in your city and see who is doing what; check out the Black business owners who are sharing their

resources as they do well. Look for brothers and sisters who are committed to true freedom for Black people, and support them with your dollars, by buying from them, or by volunteering your time to help them.

Then look around the country and find others you can support in some way. Send an encouraging message, tell your friends about them, purchase something from their business, and watch them grow.

Then, watch those brothers and sisters use their resources to assist Black folks in our fight for empowerment. They will do it because they have a level of consciousness that will allow them to do no less. Conscious brothers and sisters consider it their "reasonable" service to support one another, to contribute to one another's causes, and to let their actions speak louder than their words.

We have created a lot Black millionaires by supporting them and doing whatever they tell us to do. Don't you think we should be able to look at their work and see

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