

OUR VIEW

Mr. Goodman

Downtown Las Vegas is undergoing a slow revival. If you haven't been down there in awhile, you should check it out. Entertainment options now extend past the Fremont and Las Vegas Boulevard intersection. At the southeast corner, across from Neonopolis, there's Hennessey's Tavern and Mickie Finns, which appears to be doing good business. Where the 7-Eleven used to be on the northeast corner, someone is planning a huge music venue.

Next to that is the Downtown Cocktail Room, a popular spot for the in-crowd. Back on Fremont, further east down the street, bars like The Griffin and Beauty Bar have developed loyal followings. Take 1 Nightclub has brought life to corner of Fremont and 8th Street. The El Cortez recently put in \$20 million of improvements. Back up Fremont and over on Third Street, near Ogden, things are happening, too. The Celebrity Nightclub, Hogs & Heifers and Sidebar have enlivened the area.

Elsewhere downtown progress is evident: parking garages at the Las Vegas Premium Outlets, a third huge edifice for the multi-billion-dollar World Market Center; construction on the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute. Several condo-towers have risen, including SoHo Lofts, Hue Lofts, Juhl and Streamline Towers. Funding is coming in place for the \$250 million Smith Center for the Performing Arts; more than half has been raised or committed. There's still an outside possibility that downtown will get a stadium to house pro sports. The progress has been slow, but it has bore tangible fruit.

Now we come to West Las Vegas. Why the jump in geography? Well, it's not really a jump, considering that much of the revamped areas of downtown are in the same ward as West Las Vegas, which is generally bordered by Carey Avenue on the north, Bonanza Road on the south, Interstate 15 on the east and Rancho Drive on the west. That would be Ward 5. Why doesn't West Las Vegas get the same attention? This isn't to call out the council members who represent the area; Ricky Barlow seems to be working hard to lift the area and his predecessor Lawrence Weekly certainly stumped for it. There's now a Ward 5 Chamber of Commerce whose goal is "to enhance, protect and promote businesses located in or doing business in Ward 5." It aims to reach its goals through, business networking, education and promotion, focusing on business growth and examining issues such as taxation, employment and opportunity diversity, among other things. But will that be enough? Something more may be needed. Or someone. Who could that be? Well none other than the mayor himself, Oscar Goodman. Downtown's biggest cheerleader needs to become West Las Vegas' biggest cheerleader. Love him, hate him or dismiss him, Goodman deserves the lion's share of the credit for injecting downtown into the public consciousness. He talked the talk of a dreamer when he first got into office. He didn't tamp down on bold statements in the face of booming construction on the Strip and expensive casino-resorts built on the outskirts of town. Instead, he talked to wealthy businessman, offered incentives to businesses, walked the streets (both to get in shape and help, if only symbolically, take back rough neighborhoods.)

At various times, the area's unemployment rate was triple that of the state's. Crime has been a persistent problem, concentrated in a few areas. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department created a special Homicide Task Force to solve crimes, particularly gang-related incidents, on the Westside. Crazy thing is that West Las Vegas, if you go by certain crime data—such as arrests, prostitution-related crimes—has actually been safer than several places downtown, i.e., parts of Main Street and Fremont Street. So if all these great things can come downtown, which still has an overabundance of cheap, crime-ridden motels, then West Las Vegas isn't irredeemable.

The revamp, Mr. Mayor, should start with a supermarket. Then a plan to fill up Edmond Town Center. And to bring something substantial to all the land on Martin Luther King Boulevard between Owens and Lake Mead. You can get the investors to open their wallets Mr. Mayor. Will you? Or is rebuilding downtown (and drinking lots of gin) going to be your only legacy?



Big Oil: Mission accomplished!

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Have you had enough yet?

Are you convinced yet? Now that oil has hit that magical price of \$100 per barrel, are you finally ready to respond with a strategy that makes sense this time?

Or, do you want to call for another "Gas Out Day"? Been there, done that, right?

Although we missed a great opportunity back in 2002 to show the oil thieves we would not take being ripped off lying down, now that we are paying through the nose, and every other orifice, for gasoline and related oil products, maybe now we are ready to strike back.

Bush, Cheney, Rice and their international crew of oil thieves have slowly but surely secured their futures and that of their families with their shady deals and secret meetings with the oil barons.

Under the guise of developing an energy policy for the United States, "Darth" Cheney, the guy who has given new meaning to the "vice" in vice president, convened his boys and girls and has yet to divulge what went on in those meetings.

Cheney also, as former chair and CEO of Halliburton, negotiated pipeline deals for Chevron and, if you connect the dots, you will see why he was and still is so adamant about maintaining the wars in Iraq and



JAMES CLINGMAN

Afghanistan.

"There's oil in them there hills, boys!"

Condi, as she is affectionately called by George, gave up her seat on the Chevron Board in 2001 when she was named National Security Advisor, and Chevron changed the name of its oil tanker from the "Condoleezza Rice" to the "Altair Voyager."

Maybe that's why Rice was so supportive of the war, as well.

George W.? Well we all know his deal. He is just the puppet that keeps us all laughing.

He is the stringed marionette that dances across the world stage, keeping us diverted from reality.

He is the old-time cowboy we liked so much in the "shoot 'em up" movies.

He is the village idiot no one really pays serious attention to other than to keep track of his gaffes and malapropisms.

Among the three of these characters — and, of course, more second-string players,

such as Ken Lay (Is he still dead? Did he really die?),

Daddy Bush and James Baker with the Carlyle Group and others — there must be billions of dollars hidden in some international pipeline somewhere.

The stage was set even before Bush Jr. became President, and now the die has been cast.

Think back to 1999; oil was below \$20 per barrel, and it was only after Saddam Hussein halted production late in 1999 that it went to \$27 per barrel.

Then about a year later, around October 2000, Saddam decided he would take euros for his country's oil rather than the vaunted "petrodollar."

Uh Oh! All of a sudden, "Houston, we have a problem." I say again, just connect the dots; do a little research and you will see the "mission creep" that started with a plan to capture greater

control of the world's oil reserves in light of China's burgeoning society and its growing thirst for Black Gold.

If you think this is all happenstance, I would be happy to make you a great deal on some beautiful ocean-front property in Kansas.

Now, what do we do?

Having tried one-day boycotts and protests of big oil companies, as if that would hurt them (they make billions of dollars per quarter and pay their executives hundreds of millions annually), it's not likely that a one-day refusal to buy gas would do anything but make them irritated to the point of raising prices, the way they did on the last "Gas Out Day."

I reiterate what I wrote in my last book, "Black Empowerment with an Attitude."

It's not good enough simply to complain; heck, you can see how much good that (See Clingman, Page 9)

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER
LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice
GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.
100 SOUTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 100

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

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