

## Lurie: "Pearson should be given chance."

By George A. Burns

City Commissioner Ron Lurie on Wednesday told the *Vegas Voice* that newly appointed city commissioner, Dr. William Pearson should be given a chance in his new job.

While feeling that Pearson is hopefully acceptable to the Black community, Lurie suggested that one of the first things that he (Pearson) should do is meet with the various factions and community leaders of West Las Vegas. "I suggest that Dr. Pearson meet with all the groups supporting other candidates for the commission seat who failed to be appointed," Lurie stated. He went on by saying that Pearson should "find out what they want through open and frank discussions and communication.

Hopefully, a meeting of that kind will take place."

Lurie felt that Pearson is definitely qualified for the city commissioner's job. "I was very impressed with his professionalism the very first time I met him. He was not only very concerned with the problems in his ward, but problems facing the whole city." Lurie also felt that he was the least "non-controversial" of all the candidates. The Commissioner also feels that Pearson will have a lot to learn and prove. "He'll have his hands full just learning the process. It won't be any easy task. He's got a lot to prove, especially in regards to his capabilities to his constituents, but more importantly, he must be given a fair chance."

On other topics, Lurie feels that future city elections could turn out a woman commissioner or mayor. He noted that two commission seats (including Pearson's) and the mayor's office will be up for election next year. "Possibly one of those seats will be filled by a woman," Lurie continued. When asked if Ron Lurie himself had higher political ambitions, he replied positively to the question. "I have political aspirations to seek higher office. I love local government. I am considering entering the mayor's race next year. I'm young enough and time is on my side. I've served the people of Las Vegas well I feel and hopefully, whatever future office I seek, I'll receive their support."

## American Cancer Society Take a day off from smoking

The Great American Smokeout is held each year on the Thursday before Thanksgiving. This year's date is Thursday, Nov. 18. The event is sponsored by the American Cancer Society, but thousands of other organizations, businesses and hospitals join the nationwide effort.

The 1982 goal of the Great American Smokeout is to get at

least one in every five smokers to give up cigarettes from midnight to midnight on Thursday, November 18. (However, those getting a late start on Thursday are permitted to extend the 24-hour period as long as necessary past the midnight deadline in order to get in a full day).

Larry Hagman is returning as National

Chairman for the 1982 Great American Smokeout. Last year, Hagman sponsored a "Quit Smoking Letter-Writing Contest." The winner, Mrs. Janet MacAlnsh of Michigan, broke her pack-a-day habit by wearing a rubber band on her wrist and giving it a healthy SNAP each time she craved a smoke. Hagman and the ACS judges like this idea

# City nightmare became Charles Fuller's 'Zooman'

By Helen C. Smith  
Staff Writer - Atlanta Constitution

What would you do if you suddenly got a telegram informing you that you had won the Pulitzer Prize, especially if you had not for one moment entertained the possibility?

Celebrate in some way, no?

Not if you are playwright Charles Fuller, whose off-Broadway play, "A Soldier's Play," won him the Pulitzer in April and whose "Zooman and the Sign" — which won two Obie awards two years before — will open the Jomandi season Friday, Oct. 15.

"I had been working all day when the telegram came, and when I heard the news I just kept right on with what I was doing," said Fuller in a telephone interview from Philadelphia, where he makes his home. "I personally felt that stopping what I was doing was not what the prize was all about. But the phone did ring quite a few times that day."

That phone has been ringing ever since. A lot of the calls are coming from Los Angeles, where some Warner Brothers powers want to know how Fuller's screenplay of "A Soldier's Play" is coming along. It will be filmed in the spring under the direction of the Academy Award-winning Norman Jewison.

Faced with a Nov. 1 deadline, Fuller, 43, is sticking to his typewriter

these days and will not be able to come to Atlanta for the Jomandi opening.

"Zooman and the Sign," produced first by the acclaimed Negro Ensemble Company in 1980, is a "harsh, provocative, raw play" about juvenile violence in a ghetto, says Tom Jones, a Jomandi founder who will play the title role.

In the play, Zooman — a jittery black Philadelphia teenager who seethes with inner rage — kills a little girl, the youngest daughter of a working-class black family. Although there are witnesses, no one on the block will identify the murderer, so the father of the dead girls puts a sign on his front porch reprimanding his neighbors for their cowardice. In turn, the father is accused of giving the black community "a bad name." Throughout, the play shows how the random killing affects the entire community in one way or another.

"It is much to the playwright's credit that his compassion is not merely reserved for the heroic Reuben Tate (the father)," wrote Frank Rich for the *New York Times*. "He also has sympathy for Reuben's frightened friends — and for the deranged Zooman, a kid driven into psychosis by the social circumstances of poverty. In 'Zooman' there are no real villains, only victims. Every character is locked into the

same cycle of terror, and it's a nightmare only courage can end."

It is also a nightmare that the playwright saw daily as he walked the streets of the black sectors as a housing inspector for the city of Philadelphia during the '60s and early '70s.

"Zooman" is not necessarily any one individual's story, but it certainly comes out of the kind of things that were happening in Philadelphia. During the '70s, Philadelphia was probably the teenage murder capital of the world. For seven or eight years, maybe 40 to 60 teenage kids were killed in gang wars and in juvenile violence."

Fuller doesn't work for Philadelphia any more. Not in the technical sense, that is. But his plays have brought the city some fame. After several early plays went down the drain, Fuller hit pay dirt with "The Brownsville Raid" which began life at the O'Neill Theatre Center in Waterford, Conn. in 1975.

With "The Brownsville Raid," a play based on the black soldiers who were dishonorably discharged on President Teddy Roosevelt's orders following a shoot-up in Brownsville, Tex., and who were cleared 66 years later when the Army called the action "gross injustice," Fuller moved definitively from being a black playwright to a playwright who happens to be black.

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