

"Concerned NAACP Members" Issue Position Statement

The following statement released for publication is authorized by the "Concerned NAACP Members," Las Vegas Branch: Executive Board Members — Mr. & Mrs. Elmo Aderholt, Virginia Fountaine; Hampton Giner, President Pro-Tem Alfred Gleghorn, Member Rev. James Allen, and Life Members James F. Veal and Benjamin Bell.

The action taken by the "Concerned NAACP Members," in the removal of President Lovell Gaines, is predicated upon the dire need of the Black community of Las Vegas. This community must have a competent, efficient NAACP organization to represent them. We have on file in our office literally hundreds of complaints by people of this community, whose Civil and Legal rights have been deprived.

President Gaines conducted the administration of his office in an "Autocratic & Dictatorial" manner, often stating, "I am the president and I will do things the way I want to." He refused to accept the advice and counsel of his Executive Board, Chairmen of Committees and his membership. This is in direct conflict with the Constitution and By-laws of this organization. Often his behavior and verbal interaction with members was dehumanizing and demeaning in nature.

President Gaines and Sherman Hatcher (Treasurer) are both charged with the following violations of the Constitution and By-laws of this organization:

- A. Failure to maintain and properly process financial records and other related administrative material as provided by the Constitution and By-laws of the NAACP.
- B. Failure to produce financial statements, vouchers, requisitions, cancelled checks and other pertinent records related to the financial status of this Branch.
- C. Failure to appear along with Sherman Hatcher before an Executive Board meeting, at which he was requested to produce the records.
- D. Abuse of Executive power in that Mr. Gaines caused to be issued and cashed checks above the sum permitted by the Constitution and By-laws. These checks failed to meet the criteria of bearing the correct number of legal signatures authorized to conduct the business of this organization.
- E. Failure to see that proper financial reports were rendered to the Executive Board and membership relating to the following.
- F. Affairs: 1. The NAACP Freedom Fund Affair; 2. NAACP Housing Complex; and Other related involvement of this Branch.
- G. After having been afforded and requested numerous times an opportunity to respond in a positive manner, he and Sherman Hatcher, including Rev. Sam Roberson attempted to conduct a hearing of these charges through the local press.

Some person or persons of this community or other area, have seen fit to call the home of Rev. James Allen, at which time the life of Rev. Allen was threatened. This is an indicator of the level of importance enjoyed by anyone elected President of this branch. It also indicates the fear being experienced by those persons involved in this disgraceful affair, and the limit to which they will go to silence any opposition.

The "Concerned Members of the Las Vegas Branch," have resorted to a last effort to clean up this branch. After having appealed through the correct channels of supervision, from Regional Office to National, and having been frustrated in our attempts to rectify wrong, we took the final action of removing Lovell Gaines as president. This action was taken with the best interests of the Black Community at heart. The community is now in desperate need of a competent, efficient NAACP branch in full operation.

In the past few months the office was swamped with complaints from Black citizens of Las Vegas. All of them are related to abuse of their Civil and Legal rights. The NAACP came into being due to a need for some positive action in both of these areas — Discrimination in Hiring, Loss of Employment, including Unequal Justice within the Criminal Justice System. A mechanism for investigation into Police Abuse and Brutality is also needed. Problems have again risen related to the impartial and correct educational procedures accorded to Black children.

It is an accepted scientific study result that "Back Lash" against minorities increases during economic periods, which are classified as "Inflationary, Recessional or Depressive." Thus we observe the treatment accorded Black people in many instances of the complaints we have received.

It is the hope of the "Concerned NAACP Members," that from this internal struggle will develop a sense of unity and purpose within our community and a new NAACP branch conforming to the principles of our national organization and dedicated to progress in all levels of American culture.

The above was submitted through the local NAACP office as a press release.



TOWARD EMPOWERMENT

Another Look at Hypertension and Smoking

The U.S. government, through a number of its health-related agencies, has been conducting a wide variety of experiments relating to health hazards for black Americans. Discovered to be a major menace to black health are the two "Dangerous S's"—sodium (better known as salt) and smoking. Both of these items—as with almost all sources of pleasure—may be used rewardingly, however, with moderation.

Salt and smoking derive their danger from their association with the primary killer among black Americans, which is hypertension. Among black Americans it is usually called high blood pressure. Hypertension is reported in government studies to be the most prevalent of the major diseases in the United States. It is an even more potent killer disease among blacks.

Thirty-five million Americans (one out of every six) have definite hypertension. This reflects the problem of hypertension as present in some degree in nearly one-third of our total population.

The figure of one-third represents the proportion of black Americans who face the more serious high blood pressure problems. According to findings by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), blacks are far more likely than whites to get high blood pressure. They also are far less likely to be treated for it.

High blood pressure is most frequently associated with high fat diets and with an excessive use of salt. Both of these tendencies are found strongly in black Americans. An intensive and thoroughgoing educational drive perhaps needs to be undertaken throughout Black America in this regard.

Hypertension is also associated with nervousness and quick temper. Minority persons and others on a high fat or a high starch diet additionally may tend to be sluggish, because of the difficulty of digesting fats and starches.

The presence of heavy foods in minority group diets is cited as one of the leading causes of inattentiveness among many black students. Further, the build-up of gas not only increases nervousness but prompts a mixed feeling of general discomfort and anxiety, with an attendant "quick-on-the-draw" attitude.

What is suggested here is the relationship between traits often ascribed to blacks (in a caricatured and criticizing manner) and the

realistic or sober facts of black eating habits. The "soul food" pattern of eating accelerates hypertension and creates other conditions which are highly restrictive to and prejudicial against black people.

In Veterans Administration (VA) studies, it has been found that high blood pressure, untreated among blacks, is a prime factor in early deaths. This condition brings about earlier (and higher) undertakers' bills among blacks, since younger persons are buried more lavishly than are much older persons.

These same early deaths help bring about higher insurance rates for blacks and they help to create gross inequities in pension and Social Security benefits for black men and women. Blacks die altogether needlessly of heart attacks and strokes, so the government study findings suggest.

Smoking is—along with sodium—a primary aggravator of hypertension. Smoking by or in the presence of black males especially may present a crucial health concern and must be dealt with at every hand in the most sensitive and responsible way. Ideally, blacks who choose to smoke should not

smoke in the presence of other blacks, since the health of other blacks may be directly impaired.

Smoking is said to be nearly twice as impairing or deadly in its potential for blacks as for whites. Smoking need not be stopped by those who enjoy it, provided it is responsibly controlled, as with many other realistic sources of pleasure. The emphasis here—as elsewhere in our health and enjoyment habits—is upon the taking of a thoroughly responsible attitude.

Along with a high degree of smoking, the use of salt is a major source of pleasure, especially among black Americans. Both can be enjoyed with moderation. Cheaper foods (which are made to taste better or are preserved with salt), prepared foods and foods which are purchased in fast-food chain restaurants all contain higher or unacceptable levels of sodium.

Hence, a basic rule regarding the use of salt among blacks of all ages—and for black families as a whole—is to refrain from highly salted foods where possible and to abolish the use of the salt shaker itself on the family table.

Editorial

The daily newspapers have reported on the in-fighting that has been taking place among members of our local NAACP Board of Directors. The reports have not had a positive influence upon the image of our Black community.

The meeting that took place last Sunday at the Zion Methodist Church was a disgrace to our community, and should have been dismissed until tempers cooled. No minister wants his/her church building that has been dedicated to the worship of God to be desecrated by arguments, blame-placing, etc.

We are all aware of the friction within the leadership and among the membership of the local chapter of the NAACP during the last two years. It appears that the business of the NAACP has not always been conducted in a democratic manner.

We live in a democracy. It would appear that we, as Blacks especially, would be democratic in our dealings with one another.

The real workings and purposes of the local chapter of the NAACP have been tempered by this in-fighting. In the meantime, very little has been done to promote the general welfare of Blacks in Southern Nevada, to provide a program for our youths, to attack racism where it exists, and the many other things that the NAACP could be doing. This is not the time or place for internal bickering. The job is too large and the need is too great for us, as Blacks, to project a divided stance to those who would try to keep us down.

We propose that both sides sit down together and try to work out the differences between them in a manner that is befitting our intelligence. We know that the Board of Directors of the local chapter of the NAACP is composed of persons with a high degree of intelligence who can bring this chapter together again without the intervention of the national office of the NAACP.

The views expressed on these editorial pages are those of the artists or authors indicated. Only the one indicated as the Vegas Voice editorial represents this publication.