

EDITOR: Joyce Swarn; REVIEW BOARD: Bertha Baugh, Earl W. Ford, and Joyce Batten

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



### NO ON THE USE OF N-WORD IN OUR SCHOOLS

My name is Earl Ford, and I have lived in Vancouver for nearly 20 years. I have had four children graduate from Vancouver Schools. Two of my children graduated from Evergreen, one from Fort Vancouver, and the last just this year from Heritage High School.

As President of the Vancouver Branch NAACP I am here to tell you that we despise the use of the N-word. We believe that enlightened people around the country no longer use the word, and insist that others do not use it as well. Two years ago the NAACP, at its national convention in Detroit Michigan held a symbolic burial of the N-word. As tax paying citizens of this community we are here to ask for your help and vigilance in eliminating the use of the word on every campus in the Vancouver School District. We are also asking that you take steps to ensure that our children are protected from racial taunts and slurs whenever they are representing the Vancouver School District.

As I write this I am sitting with a parent whose child is constantly taunted by another student who repeatedly uses the N-word

against her child. Worse yet, the child was victimized again by school administrators who have failed to protect him. Yet, when her child was forced to defend himself because the school refused to protect him, he received and in-school suspension for hitting the child that call him the N-word.

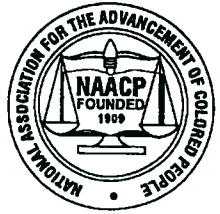
Then to my utter disbelief, in a meeting between the mother, Ms. Stephanie Simmons, NAACP 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Reverend Marva J. Edwards, and the school's principal they were told by the principal, and I paraphrase, that he did not want to send the message that students would be suspended for using the N-word. The principal then asked why she was upset since Black people use the word.

Well, I want to briefly tell you why we are upset that hate words are allowed at school sponsored sporting events, literature classes, and in the school period.

In America this word is rooted in a particularly bloody history. It is rooted in slavery, it is rooted in the Jim Crow South, it is rooted in race riots around the county, and it is rooted in the lynching, and mutilations of African American men and women in this country through out history.

I despise the use of the N-word because it was one of the last words heard by Mulugeta Seraw who was brutally beaten to death by Skin Heads in Portland Oregon, or Abner Louima who was raped with a broom by police in New York City or Rodney King in California. It is a horrible word and should not be tolerated in our schools.

**Let's stop the victimization of our children,  
Stop the use of the N-word.**



**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
**Saturday October 18, 2008**  
**10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**  
**Community AME Zion Church**  
**3605 E 13<sup>th</sup> Street**

**BRANCH NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
REPORT**

The Nominating Committee will report out on nominees for the following offices:

- AGENDA**
- **Officer Nominations 2009-2010**
  - **Clark County Health Assessment**
  - **Strategic Planning Report Out**
  - **School Board Report Out**

President  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Secretary  
Assistant Secretary  
Treasurer  
Assistant Treasurer  
Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

**Heather Gramp, MPH. Health Assessment  
and Evaluation Manager, Clark County  
Public Health**

The input of the NAACP as a stakeholder group for a community health assessment process that Clark County Public Health has begun is requested. The County has conducted 11 internal staff meetings and 8 community stakeholder meetings over the past 6 weeks.

The purpose of the stakeholder meeting is to hear from people what they perceive as the most prevalent, serious, pressing health issues for their community. From there the Clark County Assessment staff will analyze these issues in detail before sharing findings and recommendations with the leadership. The information will be used to guide the County's next Strategic Plan.

**Margo Bryant** will update the Branch on the outcome of the October 4, 2008 Strategic Planning Analysis. A small group of members met to complete an analysis of Branch Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and threats.

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