

EDITORIAL

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

DOCTOR WARNS More Shootings To Come

Say Treatable "Biological Unhappiness" Causing Problems

Teenagers shooting classmates. Employees killing coworkers. Suicides accounting for more deaths than murder. Mental health costing \$200 billion a year in the US alone. "Unless we do something about the causes behind these problems, they'll continue and even escalate," says Dr. Leland Heller, a Florida family physician, mental health expert, and author of the new book, "Biological Unhappiness" (Dyslimbia press, 1999).

The irony, says Dr. Heller, is that virtually all of the problems are biologically based and treatable.

"There are common neurological problems behind most of these shootings," explains Dr. Heller.

"And these problems are treatable with the right combination of medication and counseling. Making all the diagnoses and treating them comprehensively is crucial, but rarely done."

Dr. Heller has a free screening test to find out if a person has one or more neurological disorders leading to un-

happiness, substance abuse, violence, or even suicide at <http://www.biologicalunhappiness.com>.

The test helps determine if someone has any of a variety of disorders, from Attention Deficit Disorder or Bipolar Disorder, to Borderline Personality Disorder or Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

A recent study conducted by the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and Harvard University, reveal that mental illness, including suicide, accounts for over 15% of the burden of disease in established market economies, such as the United States. This is more than the disease burden caused by all cancers.

"If we catch the problems now, we can help stop more shootings," says Dr. Heller. "No one has to suffer, or die."

Dr. Heller has answered a thousand "ask the doctor" questions for a website on the borderline personality disorder.

You can email a question to him at the "Borderline Personality Disorder Sanctuary" at: <http://www.navicom.com/~patty>

To the Editor

As we learn more about Buford Oneal Furrow, the man who reportedly opened fire on children at a Jewish daycare center in Los Angeles, we experience a sick sense of déjà vu. Once again, prejudice—this time against the Jewish community—has turned violent. Sanford Cloud, Jr., national President and CEO of The National Conference for Community and Justice, had the following reaction to the pattern of hate crimes seen in recent months:

"This pattern leaves us with choices. We can be silent, but we know that is wrong. We can condemn the hate crimes, but we know that is not enough. We can support comprehensive national and

state hate crime legislation... but that is not the complete answer. We must actively participate in the solution, come to know one another and learn how to work better together, and make our communities more inclusive for all." And we must do that in Oregon. It is time we came out of our communities of isolation and stood together in the effort to build a community where we all understand that a hate crime committed against any group is a crime committed against all humanity and only serves to deteriorate the very fiber this country was built upon.

Nurella Dournitt
Executive Director • Oregon Region, NCCJ

More Hate...More Need For New Legislation

By BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

I have seen evil in my life and I have always been aware of its presence when I was near it. I could feel evil in the air when I traveled to apartheid South Africa in the 1980's. It was palpable, like static electricity in the air and I was always conscious of the battle between good and evil which was going on around me. I saw evil again a few weeks ago in a little town in southern Illinois. I saw it in the eyes of the leader of the World Church of the Creator, a Christian identity, white supremacist group which claims Benjamin Smith, the man whose shooting rampage ended in the wounding and deaths of blacks, orthodox Jews and Asian Americans in Illinois and Indiana. It was to that same church that two California brothers belonged and who have been charged in the murder of a gay couple and who are thought to be behind the burnings of three synagogues in Sacramento.

Now, these hate crimes seem to be escalating and little preschoolers at a Los Angeles Jewish community center program have

been shot it seems by another white supremacist from a different group of hate mongers. Despite the fact that we no longer read about them in newspaper headlines or see the reports on CNN, African American and multi-racial churches are still burning, some even on the same Fourth of July week-end where Benjamin Smith carried out his killing spree, while the rest of the nation celebrated our independence. We are still not free from the hate it seems.

And so the question must come — how many people have to be murdered, how many children and innocents shot, how many James Byrds or Matthew Shepards have to be killed in order for our Congress to act to expand the federal hate crimes legislation?

The proposed legislation has been languishing in the halls of Congress for months and was finally passed by the Senate in late July. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 was incorporated into the Commerce, State, Justice Appropriations bill. This modest legislation will eliminate the highly restrictive circumstance under which crimes based on race, na-

tional origin or religion can be prosecuted and extend the coverage to individuals with disabilities, women and gays and lesbians. Now it is up to the House of Representatives to pass this important legislation which is now before the House Judiciary Committee.

Clearly, toughening the laws will not legislate hate crimes away, but it will at least send a message that these crimes will not be tolerated and that we as a nation will use every tool to eliminate them. But our work cannot stop there.

Hate groups are found in every region in this nation. Too often we write them off as a few kooks or pretend that they don't exist. Too often the actions of young men who are on the fringes of these groups — cross-burnings, spray painting, harassing of people of color in their communities — are excused as "boys being boys" or as kids who had a few too many beers.

But more and more hate groups are taking on new clothes of respectability. David Duke, once a KKK grand dragon, has run for public office and covered up some of his old rhetoric. Matt Hale, the

leader of the World Church of the Creator, dressed up and went on morning talk shows with the appearance of being unjustly accused, and claiming that Benjamin Smith had no longer been associated with his group, when only weeks before he had given Ben Smith his group's highest prize and made him his assistant. Today's hate groups not only recruit in beer joints and back woods, but they use the internet and look for lonely young men on college campuses.

So our nation's work against hate crimes must begin with law enforcement and end in our schools, our communities and our homes. We must work hard to end the hate, to stop the scape-goating and blaming of others in a variety of ways. Ending the hate must be a priority for us all and we can begin by letting our congresspersons know where we stand on the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

(Note: you can write your congressperson at United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 or call (202) 224-3121)

The Slow And Silent Disaster

By AGRICULTURE SECRETARY DAN GLICKMAN

Despite its devastating effects, drought doesn't get the attention it warrants because, unlike hurricanes, tornados or floods, it is the kind of disaster that has to be around for awhile before anyone feels its effects. The fact is, year in and year out, drought causes many more problems for American agriculture than the natural disasters we hear about more often.

Drought sneaks up on you. A long dry spell can happen almost anywhere in the nations, but you never know specifically where or when it will hit. But every year there is drought somewhere. Last year it was the southwest — New Mexico, Arizona, Texas and Oklahoma. This year it's the mid-Atlantic, northeast and some areas in the northwest. The mid-Atlantic region is experiencing the worst drought since the 1930s, and there is no end in sight.

The droughts of the past two years are making a bad situation worse. They are compounding and already tough situation for farmers who are experiencing historically low commodity prices for row crops.

In this decade alone, USDA had paid out \$3.4 billion in crop insurance benefits due to drought, compared to \$268 million for crops damaged by floods. USDA is providing some emergency relief through low cost loans. And we are providing cost-share benefits through our Emergency Conservation and Emergency Watershed Programs, to help with water needs such as installing pipes, drilling new or deepening existing wells, supplying emergency water for existing irrigations systems, and more.

But, most importantly, this Administration is working very hard with Congress to make sure farmers and ranchers receive sufficient emergency assistance to help them get through the present crisis. In doing so, we need to heed the lesson we are being taught by repeated disasters — be prepared.

In addition to helping farmers to be better prepared for emergencies like drought, we must also provide aid for family operations to help them cope with adverse conditions beyond their control. Removing the cap on loan rates, expanding and improving crop insurance and enlarging the Conservation Reserve Program are the kinds of actions which will give farmers greater flexibility. I also want to see a new farm bill that will grant more emergency authorities for the Secretary of Agriculture — for example, extending commodity loans, helping to provide on-farm storage, increas-

ing food aid donations, aid donations, or providing adequately funded livestock feed assistance.

Last month, I opened the first meeting of the National Commission on Drought, which will report back to the President with a comprehensive plan on how to prepare for drought.

Some of the issues the commission will review include coordinating drought management through a

single government agency, enhancing crop insurance, a rapid response style program to provide immediate relief in emergencies, developing better preparedness, water conservation programs, and more technical assistance that will help farmers with stand drought, for example, better irrigation techniques or rotational grazing.

I also want to see better coordination between federal, state, local and

tribal officials.

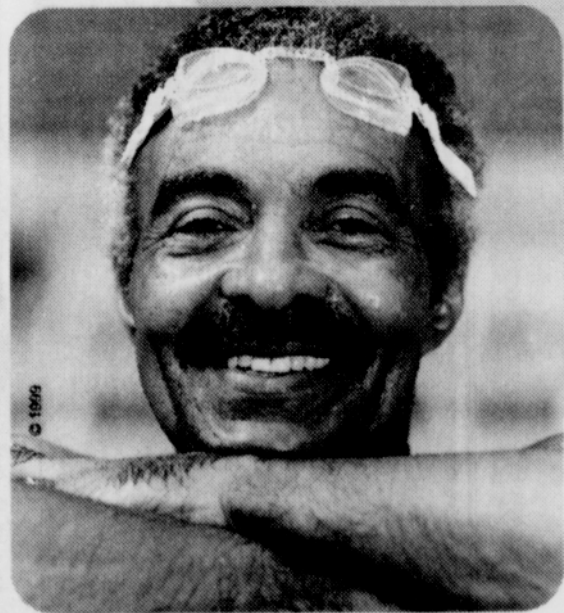
We must recognize that managing our water resources is not just an agricultural issue. It is something urban, suburban and rural communities all have a stake in. So as we act quickly to help farmers and ranchers now — and I believe that the Administration and Congress will do so — at the same time, we must learn from this experience and act for the long-term.

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