

Opinion

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STAFF

EDITOR IN CHIEF,

PUBLISHER

Charles H. Washington

EDITOR

Larry J. Jackson, Sr.

BUSINESS MANAGER

Gary Ann Taylor

ASST. PUBLISHER

Michael Leighton

COPY EDITOR

Joy Ramos

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Paul Neufeldt

4747 NE Martin Luther King,

Jr. Blvd.

Portland, OR 97211

503-288-0033

Fax 503-288-0015

e-mail

news@portlandobserver.com

subscription@portlandobserver.com

ads@portlandobserver.com

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An Open Letter To All Oregonians:

As members of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs in Oregon, we would like to express our profound sorrow about the loss of life and about the immeasurable pain caused by the events in New York, NY, Washington, DC and Pennsylvania. Our thoughts and our prayers are with those who have lost loved ones, those who survived with injuries and our grieving nation as a whole. Our deepest appreciation goes to the emergency workers, law enforcement persons and volunteers of all races, ethnic groups and faiths, many of whom risked and lost their own lives in their efforts to save others.

We strongly condemn the horrific acts of September 11 2001 and we are shocked, deeply saddened and appalled at the hate and cruelty of these acts. In the greater interest of healing and peace for our state and nation, we would like to appeal to the general public to exercise caution when expressing understandable anger and frustration about the attacks, even if and when it becomes clear who was responsible for the attacks.

Blaming and attacking people simply because of their appearance, their national or ethnic origin, or their religion are not the acts of a just people. Unjustified acts of racial and religious discrimination and bigotry will do nothing to restore justice and bring peace to those who have suffered. It simply will continue the vicious cycle of injustice and violence. As a Commission, we fear especially for the safety of Muslims, those of Middle Eastern heritage, and especially the children. We

hope that adults of all faiths and races will be positive role models for our children and the world in these very difficult times.

This is a time for all people regardless of race, ethnicity or faith to stand together and look out for each other, not a time to cause further fear, pain and hatred against specific groups of people, many of whom have arrived at these shores to seek refuge from violence like we saw perpetrated on September 11.

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs encourages all Oregonians to remember that we are all the children of immigrants and that we must stand together during these turbulent times and resist the urge to strike at those who may appear different or worship in a different manner.

On September 11, 2001, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, people of all races and ethnic groups, and nationals from over thirty different nations died in the terrorist attacks.

Let's be mindful of the great words of an American known throughout the world. "The ultimate measure of a man or woman is not where they stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where they stand in times of challenge and controversy," — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., minister and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

If there was ever a time for all Oregonians to be understanding and tolerant, it is now. We encourage all Oregonians and residents in our state to do so.

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs.
Salem, Oregon, USA

SOMEBODY OUGHT TO SAY SOMETHING

BY LYDIA K. BASS



When Faced With Adversity

Some of the lessons we learn in life are told to us in an anecdote: a short story with an instructive purpose. Recently, someone shared an anecdote with me, which infuses knowledge and wisdom with a moral truth; where lessons are exemplified by the human experience.

In light of current events, where we've been shocked by devastating realities, awakened to the purpose of life and the irrevocable ending of it, many of us look for ways to sustain and regain strength while holding onto hope. In that venue, I'd like to share the following with you by Eric Mansfield:

POTATOES, EGGS AND COFFEE BEANS

Once upon a time a daughter complained to her father that her life was miserable and that she didn't know how she was going to make it. She was tired of fighting and struggling all the time. It seemed just as one problem was solved, another one soon followed.

Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled

three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Once the three pots began to boil, he placed potatoes in one pot, eggs in the second pot, and ground coffee beans in the third pot. He then let them sit and boil, without saying a word to his daughter.

The daughter, moaned and impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing. After 20 minutes he turned off the burners. He took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. He then ladled the coffee out and placed it in a cup. Turning to her he asked, "Daughter, what do you see?"

"Potatoes, eggs, and coffee," she hastily replied.

"Look closer", he said, "and touch the potatoes." She did and noted that they were soft.

He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg.

Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. Its rich aroma brought a smile to her face.

"Father, what does all this mean?" she asked.

He then explained that the potatoes, the eggs and coffee beans had each faced the same adversity—the boiling water. However, each one reacted differently. The potato went in strong, hard, and unrelenting, but in boiling water it became soft and weak. The egg was fragile, with the thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was put in the boiling water. Then the inside of the egg became hard. However, the ground coffee beans were unique. After they were exposed to the boiling water, they changed the water and created something new.

"Which are you?" he asked his daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a potato, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

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