# OPINION

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## **Buy Local First**

#### Helping the community when it's needed most

BY DEBBIE MANNINGS

patronize local merchants.

close to home will have a positive effect all through the community. When people spend their hard earned dollars in local stores they circulate wealth bors directly benefit from the in the community making it economics. More jobs in the richer and healthier.

courages neighbors to stay in which then leads to added their neighborhood before business and more neighbors going outside the area to buy products.

This kind of shopping bolsters our local economy when it's needed most. A consumer doesn't have to be motivated by communal interests - Our neighbors will benefit handoften as they can.

Some of the reasons why this is a sensible idea is that you can save gas shopping local and it is easier on your environment. You get better service with merchants in your community. Its easier dealing with someone you know.

Minimum Service CHG.

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2 Cleaning Areas or more

In supporting local mer-Negative economic news is chants, consumers also supevery where today. It's diffi- port those nonprofit agencies cult for the average person to depending on local business have any influence in the lager donations to keep them runtrends, but one way to control ning. When you buy local you our economic destiny is to strengthen your government services such as police and Studies show that buying fire. All business taxes and fees come back into the community to support better services.

Local shopping also means local jobs. This is where neighneighborhood leads to more "Buying Local First" en- money being circulated locally being employed.

Our local neighborhoods have many products anyone would want on an everyday basis. Realistically a person might not purchase 100 percent of their merchandise within a 10 mile radius of their home, somely by shopping locally as but it would be worth their while to try to change their shopping habits and get their neighbors to consider what's available at home before taking their money elsewhere.

Debbie Mannings is the owner and operator of the Bungalow Rose Floral & Gift Shop, 7545 N.E. Sandy Blvd.

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## Stop the Foreclosures

#### Time to support homeowners

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

The federal government recently bailed out Wall Street's failing financial institutions, using more than \$700 billion in tax payer dollars to do so. But the bailout does noth-

ing to assist the millions of Americans who are facing home foreclosures.

Tired of waiting on help from Washington, some states took matters into their own hands, seeknation's largest predatory mortgage lender. Those actions are paying off.

Finally, buyers at risk of losing their homes have some support. Led by Illinois and California At- entire country. torney General's Lisa Madigan and Jerry Brown, 11 states filed lawsuits against Countrywide Financial, the country's largest mortgage lender.

Though the lender didn't admit any wrongdoing, it did settle the suit and created the largest home loan modification program ever. \$8.4 billion will be divided those who've already been fore- Americans lost their homes, it ence.

among Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio,

Texas and Washington. The money will provide

new housing. The Countrywide program is a

strong model that should be expanded. Not only is it mandatory, unlike programs supported by the federal government, it will also be monitored by state officials. It is loan relief to roughly a viable program that serves to

Thankfully, leaders at the state level took matters into their own hands. Because of their work, we ing legal action against the now have a foundation onto which we can build a mortgage relief program that serves the

400,000 homeowners across the not only support families duped

The program will waive nearly \$140 million in late fees and prepayment penalties while also suspending foreclosures on delin-

into risky mortgages but to also create some financial stability for hundreds of thousands of Ameri-

closed on to find and move into seemed federal efforts to offer a solution were nonexistent.

> Thankfully, leaders at the state level took matters into their own hands. Because of their work, we now have a foundation onto which we can build a mortgage relief program that serves the entire country.

Write and call your attorney general's office. Find out if they are planning legal actions similar to those taken in the California and Illinois. If they are, learn which lenders they are targeting. If not, demand that they go after the mortgage companies that are foreclosing on homes during this cri-

Our federal leaders have made it clear, with the passage of the financial industry bailout package, that the well-being of the average American is not their first priority. Instead of looking to them for assistance, it is time we turn to our local lawmakers and ask that they work on our behalf.

Judge Greg Mathis is vice This country has searched for president of Rainbow PUSH and quent borrowers. Additional answers to the mortgage crisis for a board member of the Southern funds will be set aside to help over a year. As more and more Christian Leadership Confer-

## A Threat to Justice Everywhere

### Death penalty case

is troubling

BY M. LINDA JARAMILLO "A threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." These words were shared over 40 years ago by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but they ring as true today as they did then. Troy Davis is a prime example of how the justice system does not seem to work everywhere; nor does it work for everyone.

Mr. Davis was tried and convicted in 1991 for the murder of police officer Mark Allen MacPhail some two years before. Murder trials, especially

those asking for the death penalty, require a higher degree of rigidness or at least they

I always thought that physical evidence was essential in a trial that could result in the state mandated death of another. I always thought that "beyond the shadow of a doubt" was the minimum standard in such cases. It does not seem to be true in this one.

Looking back on the records of Troy Davis' trial, we see that his conviction was not based on any physical evidence; in fact no murder weapon was ever found.

The conviction was reached after jury members heard the testimony of nine witnesses. Seven of those witnesses have now taken back or contradicted their original testimony. Some of them now say that they were coerced or harassed by the police. In fact, one of the nine has now been implicated by others as the murderer.

Appeal after appeal has been denied. The Georgia Supreme Court heard Troy Davis'

Why has no court been willing to hear the new evidence in this case? Is it because Mr. Davis is African American and the police officer was white? I hope not, but

I can't help but wonder.

motion for a new trial in November 2007, but rejected the appeal based on technicalities that were considered by a dissenting judge who set an impossibly high bar for the recan-

tations to be considered. The U.S. Supreme Court recently declined to hear the appeal of Troy Davis, meaning that a new execution date can be scheduled at any time by the Department of Corrections of Chatham County, Georgia. Even though this appeal will not be heard by the Supreme

Court, serious doubt remains as to Mr. Davis'

Members of the Georgia Board of Pardon and Paroles can still reconsider their decision to deny him clemency.

Mr. Davis is entitled to have his case heard again, especially because the primary testimony against him has now been recanted. Troy Davis simply wants his case heard again. He is scheduled to die for a crime that he did not commit; most of the witnesses agree and they are no longer afraid to say so.

Why has no court been willing to hear the new evidence in this case? Is it because Mr. Davis is African American and the police officer was white? I hope not, but I can't help but wonder.

Troy Davis has claimed his innocence for all these years but he has been unable to convince authorities, because he cannot afford a high priced legal team to defend him. Severe cuts to Georgia's legal defense resources have resulted in only two lawyers to represent 160 people on death row.

Death row appeals are time-and-energyconsuming for any attorney. Imagine having a caseload of 80 people to represent! What it comes down to is, "how much justice can you afford?"

The family of Officer MacPhail certainly deserves justice and our deepest condolences for their loss. But a wrongful conviction is not the way to bring about that justice.

M. Linda Jaramilo is Executive Minister of Justice Ministries for the United Church

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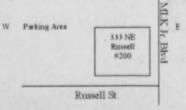
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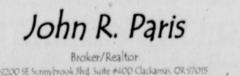
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