

OPINION

# Disturbing Tide of Intolerance

## Poisoned thoughts wreak havoc

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Since the election of President Obama, we've seen a resurgence of racism in every sector of society. From growing websites that allow users to spew anonymously to on-air personalities sharing their prejudiced views with others, the displays have been, to say the least, disturbing.

Many people believe these types of acts are carried out by lower class, uneducated people, not yet aligned with modern views of tolerance. The most recent incident, which took place on a college campus, may change all of our views on that.



Last month, students at the University of California at San Diego held an off-campus party where guests were encouraged to wear gold teeth, mocking rappers and to dress in baggy clothing style that is popular among today's urban youth and wannabes.

Adding insult to injury, the party's hosts served up watermelon...repeating an age old - and overdone - slam on African Americans. To compound the situation, a campus television show highlighted the party on air and used a racial

slur to refer to black students.

As if things couldn't get worse, a student hung a noose from a bookcase in the campus library. Outraged students thought the administration was slow to react and kept too low a profile as the events unfolded. They responded to the perceived inaction by holding a sit-in the university Chancellor's office.

Diversity is key in all aspects of life, especially in higher education settings. If students from homogenous communities are not exposed to a variety of cultures they may not be able to adjust and dispel the stereotypical images they may bring to the table. Additionally, interacting with and, possibly,

befriending someone from a different culture may lead a student to think twice before saying or participating in something that is racially or culturally offensive.

Unfortunately, there has been a lack of diversity in California colleges and universities since affirmative action was struck down in the state. Currently, black students are disproportionately underrepresented in the state's universities.

Those who do enroll are truly minorities within the school; they should not subject to racist acts or images. The University of California at San Diego - and universities and colleges nationwide - should begin to

offer mandatory diversity training for first year students. Furthermore, racist and offensive behavior should carry with it a stiff penalty, not necessarily expulsion but perhaps extensive community service in an urban area.

Colleges can and should work to shift and ultimately change prejudiced behavior among students. If it is not nipped in the bud on the campus level, the racist ideals could grow and these young people, with their poisoned thoughts, could go on to wreak more havoc in society.

*Greg Mathis is a retired Michigan Court judge and syndicated television show judge.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Saturday Mail Essential

Postmaster General John Potter's proposal to eliminate Saturday delivery would be the most radical change to postal operations in the 230-year history of the U.S. Mail.

Eliminating six-day delivery would cut thousands of postal jobs at a time when the U.S. is experiencing near-record unemployment, and there are no comprehensive studies showing that doing so would solve the economic crisis facing the USPS.

One of the defining characteristics of the U.S. Postal Service is its policy - mandated by the U.S. Constitution - of nationwide uniform affordable pricing with six-day delivery. Competitors either don't deliver on Saturday or, if they do, charge a higher price.

Small and large businesses rely on the delivery of the mail six days per week. Saturday delivery is especially important to growing companies like eBay, Netflix and Caremark.

Billions of prescriptions are delivered through the mail each year - a two-day delay in their delivery could seriously inconvenience senior citizens and others.

Americans living in rural areas where the Postal Service's competitors do not deliver rely especially on six-day USPS delivery and would be adversely affected by any service cuts. Farmers rely on the delivery of seeds and other products through the mail, while citizens who live far from retail outlets need the USPS for mail-order delivery.

If the public postal service disappears, private delivery companies, based on profit motive, will not fill the void of the universal delivery service mandated by the constitution.

The U.S. Postal Service is vital even in the Internet age. As letter carriers, we are concerned about not only job security, but the importance of preserving our centuries-proven public postal service.

**James Cook**

*Local president, National Association of Letter Carriers*

### Home Grown Support

If ever there was a reminder that we all ought to buy locally from our community owned small businesses, I will share with you a most recent encounter with the two different business approaches to local consumers.

A week or so before the opening of Roosevelt's "Wizard of Oz" production, I visited each of the businesses along Lombard with reader board signs and asked each if they would be willing to support the youth of our community in promoting their play.

Each local small business merchant was eager to be helpful and supportive. Each Corporate business would not participate, citing corporate policies, etc. In contacting the corporate offices they had absolutely no interest in allowing any flexibility to allow for very limited usage of their reader boards to send a message of support to the students or their families or their neighborhood.

Nearly all of the corporate businesses are near Roosevelt and are heavily patronized by the students. Our community members spend hard earned money at these corporate businesses and they are eager to accept our money. But they find all kinds of reasons why they are unable to support our youth in such a simple way.

A special thanks to the Shell station at Portsmouth and Lombard and to Don Lee Mo-

tors. Also, to Farrell Realty and to the St. Johns Boosters for using one of their Gateway reader boards to promote Roosevelt and our youth. Thanks to St. Johns Theatre for the promotion slides prior to the beginning of the movies and to several of our churches who have eagerly supported our neighborhood high school.

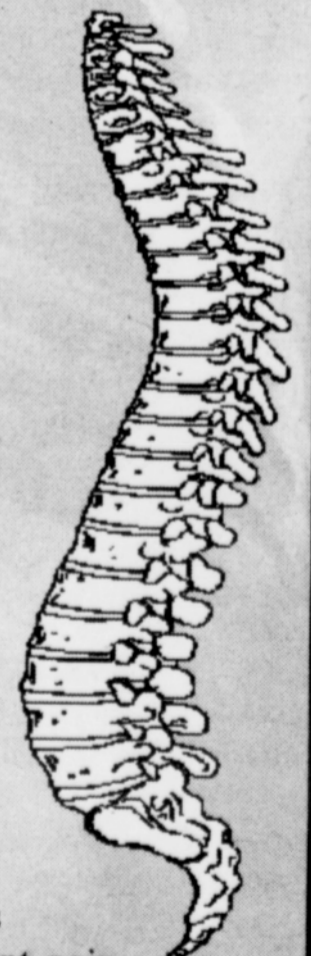
Let's spend our money where people care about our kids and the community that supports them financially.

**Mike Verbout**  
*North Portland*

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