

THE SUN

CLARK THURMOND — LINDA SCARBROUGH
PublishersKathryn Manasco, General Manageraccounting@wilcosun.com
Matthew Brake, Production Managerproduction@wilcosun.com
Dawn Steele, Advertisingads@wilcosun.com
Rodney Schwartz, Lead Pressman512-930-4824Nicholas Cicale, Editoreditor@wilcosun.com
Katherine Anthony, Reporterkatherine@wilcosun.com
Nalani Nuylan, Reporternalani@wilcosun.com
Kaitlyn Wilkes, Reporterkaitlyn@wilcosun.com
Abbey Archer, Reporting Internabbey@wilcosun.com

Letters

Don't dismiss racist displays in Georgetown

Some of you may or may not be aware of the fact that white supremacist and homophobic pamphlets were dropped off on dozens of doorsteps in the Georgetown Village neighborhood this past weekend. They were disturbing, disgusting and disappointing.

But as deplorable as the pamphlets themselves were, equally puzzling were some of the responses by residents. Georgetown Village, like most of the neighborhoods in Georgetown, has its own Facebook page. Shortly after the first individual found this trash, several others chimed in and commented on the effort to rid the area of such literary filth. There were objectively great responses, but in the comments a trend crept up of dismissing this activity as a "teen prank."

I work with teens. Like all of you, I was

a teen at one point and was one who did pranks.

This was not a teen prank. The tendency to relegate this to something so dismissive is indicative of a bigger problem: ignoring problems.

Every problem-solving strategy begins with problem identification. Without identifying a problem, you have no hope of fixing it.

There is a reason people think this area is fertile ground to plant the seeds of white supremacy and homophobia. There is a reason people spent time packaging and distributing such trash. Even if it was teens (I bet it wasn't), there's a reason teens spent time on this activity. That reason is a problem we need to fix.

We could start by removing the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument that sits in our square.

JASON NORWOOD
Bluehaw Drive

Notes from a melting pot American

I'm a melting pot guy. By training, temperament and tradition in love with both the romance and reality of how everyone in our country came, at some past point, from somewhere else. And of how — by training, temperament and tradition — they became this new, rooted yet evolving creature called Americans.

Many were, and continue to be, drawn by harsh and life-threatening circumstances in the places they were born. Some were brought against their will, specifically those African American "pioneer settlers" our county courthouse plaque talks about.

And here we all are. My own life — and maybe yours, too — is the American melting pot in miniature. Dad, of German-English stock, was raised Methodist and converted to Judaism when he married Mom. Her people hailed from Germany and the Odessa region of Ukraine. They adopted me. I was raised in the faith of Abraham and after marrying Irish-Catholic Wife Ellen, became, for a time, the best Jewish usher St. Helen's Church ever had.

E pluribus unum we call it, printed on our seals and coins. From Latin, it literally means "out of many, one." But it's also just another way of saying "I am an American."

How much we — as individuals and a nation — still believe in the melting pot is open to debate. Toward the end of his long life, historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. groused, "There's times we have too much pluribus and not enough unum." I'll note here that Schlesinger — an FDR New Dealer and one of JFK's New Frontiersmen — was no right-wing reactionary.

As the Apostle Paul put it, in another context altogether, we are all of one body. The head can't say it doesn't need the feet. The eyes can't say they don't need the hands.

Close to 30 years ago, in Round Rock, I was talking with a newly minted reporter fresh out of Texas A&M. The phrase "melting pot" doesn't really describe our country anymore, he said, with a clear implication he didn't think it was ever the right description at all. "We're more like a stained glass," he said.

My first thought was: How very sad. The pieces in stained glass are separated by lead dividers and never touch each other. My second thought — following quickly on the heels of the first — was: Is this the sort of nonsense they teach in school these days?

A story made the rounds several years back, about the Princeton University student who had written something controversial in one of the school's publications. There was push back, including comments that he should "check his white privilege."

And then the kid pushed back against the



MELANCHOLY PARADISE

Brad Stutzman

push back, pointedly asking if his critics meant the "privilege" his grandparents had encountered in a Nazi concentration camp.

Touche, I thought. But there's also this: One cannot go around their whole life cleverly playing trump cards. And, since our time on earth is frighteningly short, I don't know where the back-and-forth dance of victimhood one-upmanship really gets us. Except to some place where the head doesn't think it needs the feet, etcetera.

Tribal affiliations — by race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual identity — will always be

with us. After all, if your "group" — whatever that group might be — doesn't stand up for itself, who will? But these tribal affiliations don't represent our highest ideals or even the best we can do.

After all, unless a person is living in some remote global outpost — some Land That Time Forgot — we must acknowledge that any culture, by definition, is itself multicultural. Which is how it comes to pass that Ellen and I serve Easter ham, along with matzo, at our Passover seders.

Yet even as a staunch defender of the melting pot, I also value diversity. My epiphany — my "now I get it" moment — came during Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg's tenure on the U.S. Supreme Court.

School authorities in Arizona had strip-searched a 13-year-old girl. It was without her parents' knowledge and based on what turned out to be a false claim she had prescription-strength ibuprofen in her possession.

An 8-1 court majority ruled the child's rights had been violated but Ginsburg, the only woman among eight male justices, said some of the men she served with had difficulty grasping what the big deal was.

"They have never been a 13-year-old girl," Ginsburg said. "It is a very sensitive age for a girl. I don't think my colleagues, some of them, quite understood."

Human empathy is born of many things and one of these is lived experience. Empathy surely is, on some level, a biological imperative for the survival of our species. But it is also learned. "We are all born human," my dear friend and mentor, the late Rabbi Elihu Schagrin, used to say. "But we have to learn how to be humane."

One of the ways we learn is through the lived experiences of others. That is the value of diversity. As such, it is completely compatible with the melting pot and our shared assumption that we are all in this together.

We need both the *pluribus* and the *unum*. Just as the eyes need the hands. Just as the head needs the feet.

Discrimination, hate have no place in Georgetown

My name is Jo Ivester and I am the President of PFLAG Georgetown, a chapter of the 50-year-old national organization supporting LGBTQ+ people and those who love them. I was greatly saddened to read a letter in the *Sun* that was insulting, degrading and hate-filled regarding President Biden having invited LGBTQ+ people to celebrate Pride Month at the White House.

Among other things, the letter complained about how the American flags were presented hanging on either side of a Pride flag. While it is not unreasonable to discuss whether the display matched the letter and spirit of the U.S. flag code, it is totally unacceptable for that conversation to devolve into an anti-LGBTQ+ rant. The *Sun* would never have chosen to print the letter had it

said that it was disgusting for the president to invite a particular religious group to the White House. Why is it okay to make a similar statement about LGBTQ+ folks?

I believe that Georgetown strives to be a community where all people are welcome. This is demonstrated every time folks walk by our PFLAG booth on Market Days and give us a thumbs up and tell us how glad they are to see LGBTQ+ support in our town. It is obvious whenever I walk into a store or restaurant that has a rainbow or other Pride symbol displayed at their counter or in their merchandise. It is clear each and every time I see someone smile upon seeing a gay couple walk through our beautiful town square while holding hands.

Discrimination and hate are not Georgetown values.

JO IVESTER
Retreat Place

Be self-aware enough to recognize traps of our egos

We seem to be struggling — all of us — to reconcile those things we do not instantly understand, recognize as familiar or that we perceive as misaligned to our priorities and values.

In our reactive haste, we can viscerally discharge hate-filled, divisive words. And history teaches us, if we pay attention, those words, which come first, construct beliefs which solidify subjective "truths" that can and do lead to actions ... and hate and harm and hell on earth.

A reflection I received this morning (Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation) speaks about the concept of such "societal impasse," describing the experience as "no way out of, no way around, no rational escape from what imprisons one, no possibilities in the situation."

This moment ... these words and the tenor of this letter and a much larger, collective and prevalent disregard for each other as human beings, which seems so profoundly present everywhere, can paradoxically

be a doorway. Rohr's reflection goes on to suggest, "an impasse can be the condition for creative growth and transformation ... if the ego does not demand understanding in the name of control and predictability."

I pray that we choose to be self-aware enough to recognize the traps of our egos, find and open that doorway, choose to self-regulate and learn to love one another, as all spiritual teachers charge.

With love and care for our diverse and human Georgetown community.

MARTY CORMIER
Wildwood Drive

How to get your letter in

We and our readers value your letters. Letters should not exceed 250 words. **Please include the source of your information.** Letters are edited for length and clarity. Include your name, address and a daytime phone number. Submissions become property of *The Williamson County Sun*.

Email your letter to opinion@wilcosun.com and put your letter in the body of the email in plain email type. We do not open attachments or accept letters written in capital letters.

A summer of art at the library

BIBLIOFILES
Ann Evans

This June was not the hottest on record in the Austin area, though it certainly felt like it. If you are searching for a place to cool down, look no further than the Georgetown Public Library.

Of course, there are the usual ways to enjoy the AC at the library such as picking out an interesting book, flipping through a magazine or grabbing a delicious, iced beverage from Little Lemon. Another way to pass the time inside the library is to enjoy one of our three new art installations; the Texas Society of Sculptors summer show, "Namaste India" and "It's All About the Lights."

On June 18, the library welcomed back the Texas Society of Sculptors summer show, which runs throughout the building until September 15. A patron favorite, the show features artists from across the state and is in its 15th year.

This year includes 59 sculptures from 25 artists. Cash awards, including the "People's Choice Award," are funded by the City of Georgetown Arts and Culture Board. Visitors to the library can pick up a ballot and vote for their favorite pieces between June 18 and July 9. Award winners will be announced July 16, at 1 p.m., at an artists' reception on the second floor of the library. Additionally, on September 9, sculptors



"Tunes of the Monsoon" by Shruti Mehta uses the Gond, Pichwai and Warli styles from India alongside the acrylic pour style.

with work in the show will demonstrate various techniques in a come-and-go Sculpture Demonstration in the library lobby from 1-3 p.m.

The library also opened two new shows in its gallery spaces on June 20 that will run through July 23. Downstairs in the café gallery is "Namaste India" by Shruti Mehta. The artwork features imagery from rural life, women and festivals to landscapes and



"The Trifecta" by LaWann Tull is on display upstairs at the library.

abstract art. Ms. Mehta began painting at the age of 12 in Ahmedabad, India. After moving to Austin to pursue her master's degree, she began to fuse Indian art styles such as Pichhawai, Madhubani and Gond with western art styles in a variety of mediums.

Upstairs features LaWann Tull's "It's All About the Lights," which centers emotion and utilizes dramatic light and atmospheric effects to lead the viewer through the work. The exhibit includes animals, people, still life and landscapers.

"I paint the things I most deeply respond to and have been described as a whimsical and romantic painter using bold color," she said of her oils.

What's going on in the library?

June 18 - September 15: Texas Society of Sculptors 15th Annual Show
June 20-July 23: Shruti Mehta: Namaste India, café gallery
June 20-July 23: LaWann Tull: It's All About the Lights, upstairs gallery
July 4: Library closed for Independence Day
July 7, 6 p.m.: Art for All: Art supply swap
July 7, 7 p.m.: Adultish Art Experiments, ages 18+ per-registration required
July 16, 1 p.m.: Awards reception for Texas Society of Sculptors Summer Show
July 16, 2 p.m.: Live Music at the Library: Swing Shift

For more information about library events, visit library.georgetown.org/events-calendar or call 512-930-3551.

She is a native Texan and includes Georgetown's Dalhart Windberg as one of her influences.

Stay cool and we hope to see you soon at the library!

Ann Evans is the Adult Services Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.