

A PATH FORWARD

JULY 4TH: WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Even though the July Fourth holiday is around the corner, I'm not thinking about red, white and blue. I'm thinking about a different color scheme: black and white - and brown, too.

I'm hoping this upcoming holiday is very different from Memorial Day, when George Floyd lost his life, igniting protests around the country. Floyd, a Black man, was killed by a White Minneapolis police officer. In response, the Black Lives Matter movement was reborn. And this time, the usual talk of police reform might actually lead to concrete action.

Yet in San Diego, Blacks represent just 6.4 percent of the population. In our city, there are many more Asians (16.8 percent) and Latinos (29.6 percent). Together, those two groups represent a minority-majority, when compared with the White population (43 percent).

Unlike Minneapolis and many other cities, we here in San Diego have more than a Black/White problem when it comes to uneven policing. Our problem is multi-colored. KPBS reporter Claire Trageser reviewed San Diego Police Department use-of-force records dating back to 2001. She

found that when local police use force on a suspect, they're more likely to shoot if that suspect is a person of color. If the suspect is White, police are more likely to use alternative methods of force, such as Tasers or police dogs. This pattern is mirrored in other California cities.

The reporting has been uneven, too. There's been hardly a peep since the recent killing of Andres Guardado, an 18-year-old Latino man shot by two Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies. Guardado, who produced a firearm and then ran away, was pursued on foot and shot six times. His death follows the fatal shooting earlier this month of Sean Monterrosa, a 22-year-old Latino man. Monterrosa was on his knees and had his hands above his waist when Vallejo police officer Jarrett Tonn shot him through his windshield. Tonn claimed that he believed Monterrosa had a gun in his pocket. It was actually a hammer.

Because police departments are not required to report consistently on race and ethnicity, it is difficult to tell how many Latinos are killed by their officers, says Eric Rodriguez, senior vice president of policy and advocacy at UnidosUS. He believes that Latinos are less likely to speak out, sometimes



AP FILE PHOTO

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of achieving economic equality.

because of immigration concerns — despite fearing over-surveillance and use of excessive force. Other members of the Latino community wonder why the killings of Latinos by police fail to generate the same level of scrutiny or outrage as the fatal shootings of Blacks.

I wonder that too. And while there is an undeniable and enduring pattern of discrimination in policing, we need to have a broader conversation about structural racism, manifested in disparities

from economic well-being to educational attainment to health outcomes.

Since the early 1980s, the total share of income claimed by the bottom 90 percent of Americans has steadily decreased, with the majority of income gains going to the top 1 percent.

The Economic Policy Institute states, "Rising inequality might not be such a major concern if our education, economic, and social protection systems acted as compensatory mechanisms, helping individuals, and especially children, rise above their birth circumstances and improve their mobility. But that is hardly the case." America's reputation as "the land of opportunity" seems suspect, with pockets of persistent poverty — especially in communities of color.

Then there are the stark disparities in the health of our citizens, as evidenced by COVID-19 racial data. According to NPR, deaths among Blacks from COVID-19 are nearly two times greater than would be expected, based on percentage of population. In four states, the rate is three or more times greater. Latinos, too, make up a disproportionate share of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said,

"The time has come for an all-out world war against poverty. The rich nations must use their vast resources of wealth to develop the underdeveloped, school the un-schooled, and feed the unfed. Ultimately, a great nation is a compassionate nation."

King believed that racial inequality could not be defeated without first achieving economic equality. The result was the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, a multi-racial, interfaith coalition motivated by a desire for economic justice. It drew attention to poverty in our country and gave voice to the poor. Consistent with his belief in non-violence, King said that the highest patriotism demands that we open a "bloodless war" to final victory over racism and poverty.

I don't know about you, but I am ready to fight in a bloodless war on behalf of all people — Black, White and Brown.

In the spirit of July Fourth, it feels like the American thing to do.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based organization working to create innovative solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. NCRC is nationally recognized for its conflict management and communication strategies. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncrconline.com

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

COURTS: KRISTINA DAVIS

Confirmation of judges dragging on

I last wrote about the judicial vacancies at the San Diego federal court in September, when President Donald Trump had named all five nominees.

The process to get them seated has been slow going ever since.

On June 17, two nominees — Shireen Matthews and Todd Robinson — appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee for their confirmation hearings. If they are confirmed by the committee, which seems likely, then they must still win a Senate vote. It's unknown if that will happen before the July 4 recess.

Three additional nominees haven't been scheduled for their committee hearings yet.

The hearing for Matthews and Robinson was supposed to happen a week earlier, but live-streaming issues caused it to be postponed. The nominees testified virtually from San Diego due to the coronavirus pandemic, an interaction that Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-California, called "a bit artificial."

"I like to see how they react," she said of having nominees in front of her in person.

Both Matthews, a former federal prosecutor who is now a partner at the prestigious law firm Jones Day, and Robinson, a 26-year career assistant U.S. attorney, held up well under the questioning. They fielded the usual inquiries about their experience and interpretation of the law, but also were asked about diversity and personal biases.

Matthews, who is the daughter of an Indian immigrant, said that a judge's role in hiring law clerks was a key step to encourage diversity in the courts. Robinson, who is White, also pledged to hire staff who are "reflective of society as a whole" with diverse viewpoints and backgrounds.

The three nominees still waiting for hearings are Adam Braverman, Michelle Pettit and Knut Johnson.

Braverman and Pettit are federal prosecutors while Johnson is a prominent defense attorney. None of the five seem controversial picks, unlike some of the others nominated by the White House.

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SAN DIEGO: JOSHUA EMERSON SMITH

Story behind 'Diary of a Recovery'

The 'Diary of a recovery' project started on Monday, June 1. The San Diego Union-Tribune's new enterprise editor, Dan Beucke — pronounced Berky — had an idea to take one block in San Diego and follow the people living and working there as they struggled to recover from the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting economic lockdown.

We chose the area around University and Euclid avenues in City Heights. It's a low-income neighborhood struggling to bounce back, like so many places in American right now. But it's also highly diverse and teeming with all types of cultures and viewpoints.

As we wrote in our first story, Diary of a recovery: One San Diego block begins to climb back from the pandemic: "The intersection of Euclid and University avenues is starting to vibrate again with car engines and waves of rap music rumbling under conversations in Chinese, Cambodian, Thai, African dialects, Spanish, English and Arabic.

"A young Latina mom walks her toddler down the sun-baked sidewalk. A Black man jogs by White hipsters in sunglasses. A Muslim couple in traditional dress strolls down the block as two Asian kids on bikes weave into traffic."

Over the last month, photographer Sam Hodgson and I introduced ourselves to as many locals we could find who were willing to participate in the project. We ran into Shimeles Kibret, who's fighting to keep this Ethiopian restaurant, Red Sea, open after decades serving as a social hub for the African refugee community. We met Bill Lutzius, owner of Brooklyn Bar & Grill and

David Chau, who attended SDSU and started Lotus Garden after escaping the Vietnam War as a teenager.

Most recently, we spent time hanging out with the folks who use the bus stops on University Avenue at 47th Street. We were surprised to find out that the Route 7 bus, which runs between downtown and City Heights, is now the busiest route in the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System.

In our latest installment, Diary of a recovery: A bus stop for riders who have few choices in the pandemic, we talked to folks such as Roland Howard. The former pastor from Michigan was attacked during a robbery and fought his way back to health over nearly a decade. Today, he uses a motorized wheelchair and uses public transit. He said he even found his church through a bus driver who's also a preacher.

As we wrote in the story: "The neighborhood is full of people like Howard — older, many with disabilities, many who have no choice but to use public transit even in the midst of a pandemic.

"For three months, as much of life froze across San Diego, the Route 7 bus kept rumbling along, connecting City Heights to downtown San Diego. Now it is providing a vital lifeline as this diverse neighborhood struggles to recover."

The goal of the project is bring you coverage of the pandemic in a way that honors individual experiences. Too often those get lost as people turn into casualty statistics.

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EDUCATION: ANDREA LOPEZ-VILLAFANA

Barrio Logan institute hires new CEO

Jose Angel Cruz has been hired to lead the Barrio Logan College Institute, a nonprofit organization that provides free after-school programs for several hundred children in Barrio Logan. He replaces interim CEO Barbara Ybarra, who left in May for a job at San Jose State.

The Barrio Logan College Institute serves 433 students in Barrio Logan and the surrounding neighborhoods of Logan Heights, Sherman Heights and Shelltown. Students attend from third grade through college. The programs include tutoring, workshops, field trips, and assistance with applying and getting into college. The nonprofit also provides workshops and seminars for parents to encourage involvement in children's education.

The organization recently finished transforming a facility that previously housed a printing press for Diego and Son Printing into classrooms and office spaces. The nonprofit, which transitioned its programs online in April because of COVID-19, does not have an opening date set for the

new facility. Cruz said he plans to focus on enhancing relationships with community organizations, school districts and parents. And because of COVID-19, Cruz said he will focus on the organization's virtual programming. "We need to develop better strategies to stay in touch with our kids, to make them feel as if they are at the site even if they are not," Cruz said.

Cruz served as director of mission advancement for the World Federation of Youth Clubs, a Virginia-based youth development nonprofit, for 15 years. Before that he was with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, which provides programs and services focused on youth development. He served as director of Latino outreach, family strengthening initiatives and international support.

He was born in Mexico City and raised in Santa Ana. He earned his undergraduate degree from Cal State San Bernardino and began working in youth development.

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SAM HODGSON U-T

Christopher Castor, 56, pilots the No. 7 bus, rides his bike to work last week.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

A WOMAN FOR VICE PRESIDENT?

In 1920, with the 19th amendment that granted women the right to vote yet to be ratified, women delegates at the Democratic National Convention scoffed at the notion of a token vote for a female vice-presidential candidate. In 1964 Margaret Chase Smith, a Republican, became the first woman to have her name placed in nomination for the presidency at a major political party's convention. Geraldine Ferraro won the vice-presidential nomination for the Democratic Party in 1984.

From The San Diego Union, Monday, June 28, 1920:

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN SCOUT SUGGESTION THAT ONE OF SEX BE NOMINATED FOR V.P.

Mrs. George Bass Creates Stir by Saying They Want Planks And Not Compliments; Bryan's Pet Project Is Ignored; Leaders Among Women Delegates Have Mentioned Dr. Annette A. Adams for Office-Holding Honors.

(Universal Service)

SAN FRANCISCO, June 27. — The woman for vice president boom which some progressive men launched at the Democratic national convention today was pounced upon and torn into little wriggling shreds by the women themselves.

During the mauling process, leaders of the party explained that not only do they fail to derive any soothing complimentary effect from the physician, but that they will not

support woman candidate for nomination.

It was shortly after a male member of the national executive committee announced the likelihood of a woman being given at least a few complimentary votes for the vice presidency that Mrs. George Bass created a stir by stating that in her opinion women are neither eager nor ready to assume the responsibility of big office-holding.

NOT SEEKING COMPLIMENTS

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CHICAGO, June 27. — The woman for vice president boom which some progressive men launched at the Democratic national convention today was pounced upon and torn into little wriggling shreds by the women themselves. During the mauling process, leaders of the party explained that not only do they fail to derive any soothing complimentary effect from the physician, but that they will not support woman candidate for nomination.

Mrs. Bass is chairman of the women's bureau of the Democratic national committee and is considered one of the most spectacular organizers in politics. She said:

"What women want is not complimentary votes nor a complimentary appointment for one woman, no matter how deserving of either or both she may be.

"What we do want is recognition of the whole body of women with all that it stands for. As to honor and office we want what we have earned — nothing more.

According to the committee member, who said that he spoke for a group of Demo-

cratic leaders, the woman being considered for nomination is Dr. Annette A-Adams of this city. Dr. Adams yesterday was sworn in to office assistant United States attorney general and is the first woman to hold that office in the history of the government.

She was spoken of as a woman of amazing brilliance and a clever politician, well equipped to discharge duties of a vice president, or even to "sit in" for the President of the United States should the need arise.

PROPOSED CANDIDATE SILENT

Upon the matter of being a candidate, likelihood of nomination, or remote possibility of being elected, Dr. Adams today maintained complete if cryptic silence.

"I cannot talk about the political situation at all," she declared. "Not upon any phase of it."

Mrs. Bass hastened to explain that disapproval of her organization was directed against a woman for candidate in the abstract—not against Dr. Adams.

"Her appointment would be an example of the opening of high office to women," Mrs. Bass said, "and particularly significant because Mrs. Adams earned the honor.

"There is no doubt that women—some women—are fitted by training and natural talents for highest office in the United States. The general recognition of this fact, is one of the most encouraging signs of the times."

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