

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

COMPASSION LACKING IN CLASSROOM LESSONS ABOUT 9/11

Muslim students are grateful that this 21st anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks falls on a Sunday, when there's no school.

It's because we still teach about the events of that day in a way that makes these students feel unsafe, unwelcome or uncomfortable in their classrooms. It's a heavy price to pay, considering they weren't even born when the attacks occurred.

Lallia Allali believes our school systems must do better. Allali is a Ph.D. student in the department of leadership studies at the University of San Diego. She also serves as chair of the District English Learners Advisory Committee in the San Diego Unified School District.

Allali, a Muslim woman, arrived in the U.S. with her oldest daughter, Selma, 21 years ago — right when the terror attacks occurred. The fear she experienced — moving halfway around the world to an unfamiliar country — was compounded in the attacks' aftermath.

But on Selma's first day of preschool, Allali's fear turned into a passion for academic excellence.

She immersed herself in the American educational system, learning about school policies and practices and advocating for parental involvement.

At school sites, Allali — who wears a hijab — was often approached by Muslim students. She heard a consistent theme in their 9/11 stories: that classroom discussions made them feel cornered, attacked and sometimes drawn to tears.

The frank and heart-wrenching conversations inspired Allali's research project at the University of San Diego, exploring the experiences of Muslim students, grades 8-12, in three San Diego area school districts.

The students reported that teachers placed heavy reliance on stereotypes and generalizations to describe the 9/11 attacks: Since the perpetrators were Muslim, the entire faith must be suspect (a sentiment that was only reinforced by teachers' use of the term "Islamic terrorists").

The students also spoke about inadequacies in textbooks and classroom conversations. There was no mention of the Muslims who worked in the World Trade

Center, acted as first responders, or died on the ill-fated planes.

Nor was there discussion about related but controversial topics, like the subsequent treatment of Muslim prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. The students' own views and perspectives were not solicited.

In her analysis and interpretation of the focus group transcripts, Allali noted a direct linkage between the classroom experience and the bullying of Muslim students. Sadly, it's more than a once-a-year occurrence.

The California Chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-CA) conducts a biannual study that evaluates the school climate for Muslim students ages 11-18. The most recent study (2021) showed that more than half of respondents felt harassed or marginalized because of their identity — feelings that have grown since the first study in 2013. One-third of students experienced or witnessed cyberbullying or negative social media posts about Islam or Muslims; one-fourth reported that a teacher, administrator, or other adult at their school made offensive comments.

One way to address the continuing discrimination and bullying of Muslim students is to modify school curricula — beginning with the way we teach about 9/11 in our classrooms. Allali has started this work, collaborating with the San Diego County Office of Education to create the "Educators Guide to Teach 9/11 with Compassion."

Among the guide's recommendations is that teachers use accurate and unbiased resources focusing on the event and its historical context; avoid inflammatory terminology, especially implying a linkage between Islam and extremism; and provide examples making clear that perpetrators of terrorism aren't just one race or religion.

While it was created specifically for educators, the guide is useful for us all. According to research conducted by the Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project at the University of California, Berkeley, 80 percent of Muslims worry about the safety of their families here. They feel unsure about their place in American society — an uncertainty that's been exacerbated in

recent election cycles by politicians (still) using Islamophobia as a political tool.

The worry is not misplaced. In March 2019, John Earnest set fire to the Dar-ul-Arqam mosque in Escondido. A month later, he opened fire at the Chabad of Poway synagogue, killing a worshipper. In court, Earnest pleaded guilty to 113 hate crimes in all, saying he wanted to kill Muslims and Jews.

The endurance of anti-Muslim and antisemitic feelings — and their connection — will be explored at a Sept. 22 event hosted by the National Conflict Resolution Center. I will be moderating a conversation with panelists Imam Abdullah Antepli of the Duke Divinity School and New York Times opinion writer and Pulitzer Prize winner Bret Stephens. For information or to register, visit ncrconline.com. I hope you will join us.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncrconline.com

CHANGE REQUESTED FOR CARLSBAD E-BIKE ORDINANCE

Riders say walking near pedestrians is not necessary

BY PHIL DIEHL

CARLSBAD

Bicycle riders are asking Carlsbad to modify an ordinance adopted earlier this year to address community concerns about the rapid increase in e-bikes and other powered mobility devices.

Included in the ordinance is a provision that requires e-bike riders to dismount and walk any time they come

within 50 feet of a pedestrian or equestrian on a trail less than five feet wide.

"Any rider following the law would spend more time walking their bike than riding it," states a letter to city officials from Will Rhatigan of the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition.

"E-mountain bikes have had a transformative effect in allowing seniors and people with mobility impairments low-impact access to nature and trails," Rhatigan said. "This ordinance is currently preventing them from equal access to Carlsbad's beautiful natural areas."

The executive director of the San Diego Mountain Biking Association, Susie Murphy, called the dismount requirement "well intended but misguided."

"As an advocacy organization for fair and open access to public trails we are strongly opposed to this aspect of the ordinance," Murphy said in a May 5 letter to the mayor and City Council.

Others said enforcement of the rule would make it virtually impossible for cyclists and e-bike riders to use places such as the Lake Calavera open space preserve, which has more than

five miles of trails popular with hikers.

Carlsbad declared a state of emergency last month because of the recent increase in collisions involving e-bikes and bicycles, including two fatalities last month. Since then the city has stepped up enforcement and taken other steps to improve bicycle safety.

The city went from 30 bicycle and e-bike collisions in 2019 to 100 collisions in 2021, according to police. Trending statistics show the total could be higher this year.

The ordinance the City Council approved in April

covers a wide range of potential violations, from not wearing a helmet to running a stop sign, Deputy City Attorney Marissa Kawecki said Tuesday at a meeting of the city's Traffic and Mobility Commission.

However, police officers have said the dismount provision is difficult to enforce. Officers rarely patrol the city's trails, and it's often difficult for riders and officers to estimate the width of a trail or the distance between riders and pedestrians on trails.

"It's challenging ... and it may not be necessary,"

Kawecki said of the dismount provision.

The commission voted unanimously to recommend the city drop the provision from the ordinance. The City Council is scheduled to consider the issue Sept. 27.

Last month Carlsbad approved spending up to \$2 million to hire additional police officers, create and stripe or modify bike lanes, install additional speed signs and message boards, and conduct rider training as part of efforts to improve bike-riding safety.

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MEMORIAL

FROM B1

Opening the park on the former site of the Naval Training Center in Point Loma, along with fundraising and other planning.

Smay is the sole survivor of the now-disbanded chapter of the WWII group. A former submariner, Smay served in the early 1960s.

Since the markers' installation, at least 16 have had to be replaced or repaired. The cost has exceeded \$31,000.

Smay said the original monuments continue to degrade and several are "in dire need of replacement."

"Initially, when the memorial was new, we had problems with lawnmower strikes. There were also other types of vehicles that would run into the monuments and damage them," Smay said.

But as time went by, another type of damage began to occur.

Smay said the monuments aren't solid pieces but instead are constructs glued together with epoxy. Over time, the epoxy hardened and cracked, causing the glued pieces to fall apart.

About five years ago, Smay formed the 52 Boats Memorial Veterans organization in an effort to continue maintenance of the monuments.

Its solution to the damaged and degraded markers has been to replace them with concrete replicas.

"Unfortunately, we have encountered problems with the process," Smay said. "The first was that we lost a key member of our organization, Warren Branges, my good friend and shipmate, who passed away in May.



COURTESY OF 52 BOATS MEMORIAL VETERANS

This digger hat, seen on a monument at Liberty Station, was part of the uniform worn by World War II submarine veterans.

"The second was that the company making the concrete replacement monuments went out of business. I am attempting to recover the molds used to cast the concrete monuments so I can find another company to continue the process."

Replacing the rest of the markers is estimated to cost \$56,000, but Smay said the problem isn't the money.

"We have the funds to replace the damaged monuments and have replaced a number of them already," he said. "But we need someone who can make concrete and use the molds."

Ideally, the person or business also would be able to deliver and install the heavy monuments, he said.

Almost all of the \$250,000 raised initially to establish the memorial came from private parties, especially

WWII submariners, Smay said.

"These guys, by and large, were enlisted men, distinctly middle class, not wealthy. They gave an amazing amount of money to build this thing," he said. "They gave so much because it meant so much to them. And they were so unbelievably proud of it."

The 52 Boats Memorial begins at the corner of Cushing and Roosevelt roads. The plaza area includes a parallel sidewalk on either side. There are 26 monuments per sidewalk. Together, they make up the 52 Boats Memorial, with each marker representing a sunken submarine.

Originally, the monuments were laser-etched, but they quickly faded. The process was changed so the words and images are now

printed on a high-pressure laminate plaque attached to each monument.

Each plaque includes the name and image of a submarine, when it was launched and when it was lost, the commanding officer, the history of the sub, the circumstances of its loss and the names of the lost crew members.

In some cases, the crew survived and the boats were destroyed to keep them from falling into enemy hands.

During WWII, submarines had a 20 percent loss rate. Most of those lost went down with all hands on board. On the other hand, U.S. submarines sank 201 Japanese warships and 1,113 Japanese merchant ships during the war.

"Generally speaking, after the fifth patrol, most subs were on borrowed

time," Smay said. He said his father, Howard Smay, a WWII submarine veteran who died in 2009, survived 11 war patrols.

Smay noted a couple of additional monuments, one that lists all the submarines lost before and after WWII and another that lists subs that survived but someone in the crew didn't. That monument has more than 100 names, including a Medal of Honor winner.

Another monument can be found at the far end of the rows, in the middle of the Hugh Story Memorial Rose Garden.

Hugh Goodman Story Sr. was a Navy veteran and reservist who served in World War II. He earned a Bronze Star with Combat V Citation for acts of valor. For 24 years, he volunteered in Point Loma, leading weekly beautification projects and planting hundreds of trees and flowers.

Though the memorial markers are kept up by the veterans group, the Point Loma Association's "Mean Green Team" cleans and maintains the landscaping around the monuments. It also puts Christmas wreaths on each one during the holiday season.

At the memorial dedication in 2010, it was noted that the submarine monuments are important because many of the fallen aren't resting in cemeteries.

"During the war, in many cases submarines were the only weapons the U.S. had. They generally went behind enemy lines by themselves or in small 'wolf packs' of two or three and kept to strict radio silence for the entirety of their 60-day patrols," Smay said.

"The Navy often wouldn't

know what happened to the subs and crews until the end of the 60 days. In many cases, the submarines were never found. The boats became the tombs for these men."

Crew members lost in battle are said to be "on eternal patrol."

For each marker, a flag is flown on the anniversary of the day the sub was lost. Flags are placed on each of the monuments on Veterans Day, Memorial Day and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

"Memorials like this one are hallowed ground," Smay said. "We frequently find flowers and notes left on the markers. This is a physical place where family members and loved ones can come. They often have no place else to go."

"The motto of the people who built the memorial was to keep alive the memory of our shipmates on eternal patrol," Smay added. "But in a larger sense, the memorial now commemorates ... the men who built it. They are my heroes — they gave so freely of their time and treasures. To be a part of it is so very meaningful to me."

Smay noted that the memorial's website, 52boatsmemorial.com, hasn't been updated in more than 10 years and that he's also looking for someone to take on that role.

For more information about the restoration project, write to 52 Boats Memorial Veterans, 2960 Chicago St., San Diego, CA 92117, call (619) 276-8999 or email dcsmay@san.rr.com.

The veterans group is a nonprofit corporation and all donations go to maintenance of the memorial.

Elling is a freelance writer.

VOTING

FROM B1

By contrast, she said, California has expansive voting laws, with mail ballots delivered to all voters, extended periods of in-person voting and same-day registration on Election Day in many counties.

However, she warned students not to take those opportunities for granted, noting that democracy can backslide quickly amid neglect.

"Democracy demands an educated populace," she said.

Moreover, politicians closely track voter turnout and are keenly attuned to people and demographics who voted consistently in each of the five previous elections, Weber said. Those are the constituents they cater to and whose interests they aim to serve, she said.

"If you're not a five out of five, in the political world you

don't exist," she said.

She pointed to President Joe Biden's recent executive actions granting student loan relief and said students could expect more educational support — with less political backlash — if they voted regularly.

Several members of the Southwestern student government who participated in the event said the Biden administration's new student loan forgiveness plans haven't really resonated among their classmates.

That's probably because community college students are newer to higher education, tend to carry a lower debt load than those at four-year schools and often qualify for free tuition through state grants, they said.

However, they said they believed that students are becoming more politically active, in part because of social media and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The pandemic was one of



NANCEE E. LEWIS FOR THE U-T

Secretary of State Shirley Weber addressed students at Southwestern College about voting in anticipation of the upcoming November midterms.

the reasons I got more civically engaged," said Imani Drew, 18, executive vice president of the Associated Student Organization.

Faced with social isolation, Drew said she found an online community of politically like-minded peers on social media.

And while social media has notoriously disseminated political disinformation, student trustee Jose M. Perez said platforms including TikTok and Instagram have become more aligned with traditional news outlets and other credible sources of information.

Weber encouraged students not only to cast ballots but also to become voting rights activists in their homes and communities.

"When you have the chance to express yourself, do it," she said. "Make everybody in your family vote."

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