

## EDITORIALS



### Children Have to Be Taught About Racial Prejudice

America has always cherished rugged individualism, and it's often said that values are best taught in the home. These are noble ethics. They nourish self-reliance and protect the family from government. But we are no longer a frontier society, and the way we get along with each other is vital to our economy as well as our mutual peace of mind.

Unfortunately, the home does not always reflect the most positive values, as one may learn through the news media, by watching television talk shows or just by getting into a conversation with someone on a public tennis court.

But no race has a monopoly on prejudice.

Many black children learn to emulate their parents' hostile attitudes toward whites, which will burden them for life. Racial slurs uttered by black youths against whites are just as provocative as displays of bigotry by whites. And when the hostility is mutual, the results can be explosive.

Racial tension can undermine the learning atmosphere of schools and rob our young people of the background of knowledge they need to take their place in American leadership. Also, racial tension must somehow end if we are to eliminate friction and violence not only in the schools but also on the streets.

Children aren't born prejudiced. Instead, they learn racist

attitudes from those closest to them.

It's human nature for people to project their faults and idiosyncrasies onto others. Having similar backgrounds, interests or characteristics with others in one's own group, tribe, nation or race can help instill a sense of community in those of a common background.

A sense of community is wonderful, but attitudes which support it should not exist at the expense of the need others have to be accepted by society as a whole. True community does not divide people. It brings people together. True community is not exclusive. It reaches out to include everyone, even those who have been shunned.

Racist thinking must be taken seriously for all the harm that it can cause individuals. People with racist attitudes often do more than just think about their ideas. Sometimes they lash out with words that cut others to their very souls—fighting words. The problem is common in junior high and high schools across the country as young people act, tragically, on the values taught by their parents.

It's good to teach children to be assertive in ways that protect them. If children can be taught to be assertive enough to say no to racism, they will protect themselves from doctrines which are destructive not only to them but to society as a whole.

### Stop Asian Bashing In The United States

BY BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.

Guest Editorial

American racism feeds its perpetuation by fostering negative racial stereotypes concerning people of color. Since the Dec. 7, 50th anniversary commemoration of the military attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor, there has been an alarming increase in incidents of racial violence against Asian-Americans and Pacific Islander Americans. This upsurge in racial violence is part of what is referred to by the term: Asian bashing.

This form of racism involves much more than random acts of brutality and violence. Throughout the nation's social, economic and political institutions, there is growing evidence of the use of demeaning and disrespectful characterizations of people of Asian descent. It is as if the United States thrives in terms of national social consciousness by having a nation, people or person to hate.

Racial hatred is an abnormality. Yet, when it comes to racial matters in this society, that which is abnormal is made to appear normal. No one is born a

racist. Racism is a complex phenomenon that is nurtured over a period of time by the use of stereotypes and the spread of ignorance.

Japan and the Japanese people are now being caricatured as "demons" not to be ever trusted because of the "sneak attack" on Pearl Harbor. Some U.S. automakers were even running television advertisements stating, "We lost Pearl Harbor, but today you can stop the destruction of our values and society: Buy American automobiles." It was also reported that a recent PBS television program on this issue ended with an American manufacturer pleading for a "Desert Storm" for the economy against Japan.

The Washington-based Center for Public Integrity has released a report that seeks to criticize Japanese financial contributions to U.S. colleges and universities. The study emphasized, "For their money, the Japanese get the obvious benefits" including access to knowledge and "influence over what some students learn about Japan." If the private and public sector in the United States would give more financial support to

(See EDITORIAL, P. 10)

## OPINION

## Hill, Smith, Hinckley and justice

By Chuck Stone

The tumult and the shouting dies, the captains and the king's depart. Another judicial orgy comes to an end, once again raising questions about the quality, the economics and the ethnicity of justice.

The year 1991 will be remembered for two of the most explosive back-to-back trials involving the moral credibility of two women—Anita F. Hill and the Palm Beach woman who accused William Kennedy Smith of rape.

Make no mistake about it, although Anita Hill was a witness at a hearing, Senate Republicans, particularly Orrin Hatch and Arlen Specter, put her on trial and treated her as if she were a common criminal. What sins are committed in the name of petty partisanship?

But the trial of William Kennedy Smith also put the criminal justice system on trial. All of the participants—the alleged victim, the accused, the prosecutor, the defense attorney and the judge—were forced to swim in a turbulent ocean of media sharks.

Yet, despite all of the media's excesses in its coverage of both the Thomas-Hill hearings and the Kennedy Smith trial, democracy is always served best when its functions are held up to the widest public scrutiny. (You'll note that I referred to "Kennedy Smith." Had his name been William Kropotkin Smith, media coverage of the trial would have been limited to two paragraphs on page eight of the local Palm Beach newspaper.)

My wife (a no-holds-barred womanist) and I had identical reactions to Thomas-Hill and Smith—Thomas Hill exaggerated and Smith was not guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

But Smith was endowed with one advantage shared by John Hinckley, the would-be assassin of former President Reagan—a family of behemothian wealth. Both families were able to employ the most skilled defense attorneys accompanied by a fortress of forensic and psychological experts.

Once again, we were tragically reminded of the extent to which justice in America is a function of economics, class and ethnicity.

In most of America's city jails, at least 50 percent of the inmates are there because they cannot make bail. This discrepancy between rich and poor results in uneven treatment at bail hearings. Except for a charge of murder, bail is usually automatically offered. But for many poor families (a disproportionate number of which are black or Hispanic), posting a security of 10 percent to secure a bond of \$10,000 is an economic impossibility. For many poor defendants, that kind of money is excessive bail and in violation of the Eighth Amendment.

Many Americans mistakenly believe they have the right to a fair trial. They don't, unless they can be assured that fairness encompasses an impartial jury, an impartial judge, a competent defense attorney, the opportunity to make bail and the absence of residual racism and classism.

Juries, judges and prosecutors are

human. They are infected with the same psychological viruses as their neighbors and peers. I don't think it's hyperbolic or unreasonable to suggest that had Anita Hill been white, wealthy and a member of a prominent family and that had William Kennedy Smith been black, poor and the member of a nondescript family, the Senate would have rejected Thomas and Smith would have been found guilty.

In this revelation? Of course not. Given the kind of transformation this nation is embracing in the Reagan-Bush era, classism, racism and sexism are becoming as American as apple pie.

Wealth, of course, does not automatically assure a finding of not guilty, as Ivan Boesky and Michael Milken will attest. One can only speculate how much more severe their sentences would have been had their wealth not been able to employ the best defense lawyers that money can buy.

In the cases of Hinckley and Smith, money, economics and race made the crucial difference. And American justice is poorer for it.

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CHUCK STONE



### ERNIE'S WORLD

BY ERNIE JOHNSTON, JR.

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ECONOMY IS LOOKING BLEAKER

The Bush administration would have America to believe that the economy is looking good, that everybody is able to buy what they want to and that everything is on the upswing.

That's a lie.

But then here is the latest. The president, in a recent news account, admitted that people are having a hard time and he based it on his conversations with people across the country. Big deal—now he is realizing that people are having a difficult time.

All one has to do is pick up the newspapers and read about companies that are laying off their employees, buying out their workers, giving employees early retirement while many companies and businesses are simply folding their tents and declaring bankruptcy.

One case in point is the demise of Pan Am Airlines last week which puts a dent into the number of carriers flying in the sky.

And not to mention the newspaper business which is teetering on the brink of disaster with many going out of business, many cutting back on their employee load and others (cities with two newspapers) are merging.

So it is no wonder that in New York City, homeless men and women station themselves at the end of ticket booths holding their cups waiting for those who have just purchased their subway tokens to drop excess change into the container.

This is something that only happened in the African-American areas such as Harlem or a Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, but now it has moved into the midtown and the more affluent areas.

Every day, the homeless population across the country gets worse and worse. The way the economy is going, every one of us are one step away from being out on the homeless roles.

And every time we read about the Bushes vacationing, playing golf or flying away, we have to think about the poor families that do not have food on their tables or the men and women who are standing on the unemployment lines getting unemployment checks but still have a burning desire to find a job but can't because of the tight job market.

And then when we read about the Donald Trumps moving about the cities in their stretch limos, shopping for Christmas presents and staying in luxurious hotels, there has to be something wrong with this country where, as they say, "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer."

And the colder it gets, the more you see the doorways of businesses being guarded by people without homes. They have no place to go at night and their bedroom is a cardboard box with tattered blankets, clothing and other material covering them to keep them warm under the elements.

And as the situation worsens, the more people you are going to see standing at those ticket booths holding cups in their hands and begging people to give them change.

Peddling various products has also reached an all-time high during these times of economic depression. People have begun to sell such items ranging from chewing gum to pencils just to make a buck and just to make ends meet.

The good thing about it is that the vendors stand a chance of making a buck because their products are often cheaper than what is found in the stores.

And nowadays, people are looking for bargains to beat the escalating high costs that's against paychecks that don't go too far.

### NNPA FEATURE

## COPING

by

Dr. Charles W. Faulkner



BY DR. CHARLES W. FAULKNER

BE CAREFUL (AND HAPPY) THIS CHRISTMAS

There is more than one way to save your life during this Christmas season. You probably won't die in a horrible automobile accident. But there are many other dangers out there, just waiting for you.

For one thing, merchants are doing everything that they can to convince (trick?) you into buying an expensive item that you don't need or you can't afford. The nice Christmas music that you hear in every store, even at fast-food restaurants, is making you sad and sentimental, so that you will want to buy Christmas presents for everyone—even your enemies. If you fall for this manipulation, you might be in serious debt (unnecessary debt?) for months or years to come. This is the cause of major depression, after Christmas, for millions of Americans.

Here are a few tips:

1. Set spending limits. Don't buy what you cannot afford. Remember, you will have to live long after Christmas is over.

2. Wait until after Christmas to buy presents. There will be many sales.

3. Instead of spending a fortune in postage and Christmas cards, use the telephone to wish many of your friends happy holidays.

4. If the Christmas music makes you sad, avoid it. Or, listen to different kinds of music during the holidays. If

you use this beautiful music, now, as an emotional crutch to keep your spirits up, what will you use after Christmas, when the music stops abruptly?

5. Remember that many television commercials, especially on Saturday mornings, are intended to brainwash little children so that they will drive you crazy until you buy the advertised item. The commercials are not aimed at you, they are aimed at your impressionable kids. Why not buy them presents that will improve their intelligence and that they will find interesting enough to play with long after Christmas? Many such gifts are inexpensive.

6. Are you overweight? If so, this is the perfect time to change your eating habits, so that you can go into the new year lighter in weight, not heavier. "This is Christmas so I have to eat everything!" What a silly thing for an adult to say. If you are serious about losing weight, you'll start doing it now, by adopting a healthy, well-balanced diet—and avoiding those fattening foods. Get counseling, if you need it, to help you fight holiday blues or holiday hunger.

7. Don't drink too much and don't drink and drive.

8. Tell your children the truth about Christmas—and about Santa Claus. If you do not want them to grow up and believe in ghosts and superstitions) and to have fears and phobias, you should tell them that Santa Claus is actually a myth. A fairy tale. You should not lie to your children. Tell them the truth.

9. Now, have HAPPY HOLIDAYS!