

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Parents are vital ingredient to success of their teenagers

Straddled with epidemics such as drugs, violence and AIDS, today's teens often find themselves wading in a quagmire of seemingly endless potential troubles.

Fortunately, these teens have at their disposal extra-curricular activities like sports, youth groups, performing arts clubs, drill teams, job shadowing and mentoring programs that they can tap to help them avoid life's pitfalls.

Unfortunately, many parents — who should be these teens most reliable resource to escape the dangers of the world — do more to hurt the situation than to help it by providing little moral support, if any, to their child's activities.

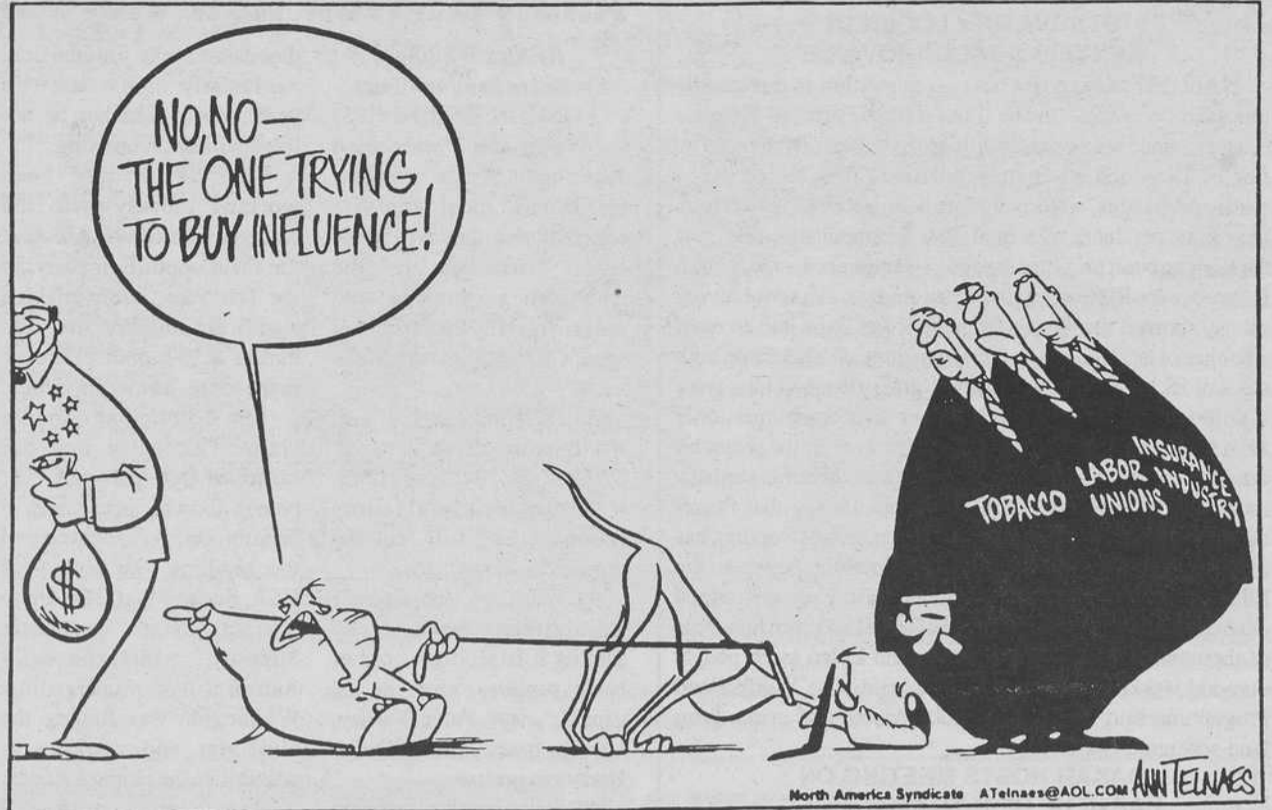
All across America, youth are doing things, both big and small, often without any inkling by the parent as to their child's talents.

We'll use Derek, an imaginary character, to illustrate. Let's suppose Derek decides to join an after-school band to bide his time. For months, rather than spending his evenings being unproductive, he faithfully studies music and practices with his contemporaries. He asks his parents to come to practice. They never do. Time and time again, he offers to entertain his parents by playing what he learned. They decline, always to busy.

Months later, it's time for the band recital. Derek has been telling his parents about for what seems like an eternity. His brother drops him off. As showtime nears, he scans the crowd for his parents. He doesn't see them. The show starts. No sign of them. He searches for them during the intermission, to no avail. The recital ends. They missed it. He is crushed.

Derek is like many youth in Anytown USA. He knows about the ills plaguing young people, but he avoids them. He uses his time constructively but never gets to show the people he cares most about what he has learned.

If America wants its youth to effectively lead the country into the next millenium, then more and more parents will have to stop preaching about what's wrong with today's teens and realize that their inactivity and laizze-faire attitude are part of the problem.



African-Americans still targets of hate crimes

By Dr. Earl Ofari Hutchinson

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Victims of hate crimes joined law enforcement officials recently to testify about their experience during a White House conference on racially motivated crimes.

However, many African-Americans question whether the conference will impact violence against them.

Two weeks before the conference, the Imperial Klans of America mocked Clinton's call to end hate by inviting the "White public" to a day-long rally in Kentucky. There were Bible-laced speeches, souvenir tables loaded with Klan caps, flags, cards, balloons and a ceramic statuette of a hooded Klansman with glowing red eyes. The rally closed with the burning of a giant cross. The media ignored them, law enforcement officials ridiculed them as a handful of pathetic crackpots and civil rights organizations wrote their obituary.

Paramilitary groups have grown since the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. Estimates put the number of identifiable paramilitary groups, in all 50 states, at 858. All are anti-U.S. government, most have white supremacist teachings.

In 1996, government officials say these groups spent an estimated \$100 million on explosive manuals, weapons, and survival gear. They held "Preparedness Expos" in six cities that drew thousands of participants, visitors and dozens of exhibitors. They have 250 web sites and dozens of publications.

African-Americans remain their number one target of hate violence. In the more than 30 documented hate crime murders in 1995 and 1996 more than half the victims were Black. And despite denials by some law enforcement officials, and much of the media, many African-Americans contend that some of the arson attacks on Black churches were part of an organized racist conspiracy.

After much pressure and protest from civil rights groups, Congress passed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act in April 1990. FBI officials promised that they would permanently count hate crimes in their annual Uniform Crime Report. The FBI has, but the number it reports annually are understated. Four out of five victims of hate crimes do not report them because they are too fearful or feel that the police and local officials will do little or nothing to protect them, sources say.

The response to hate crimes from states, cities, and police agencies vary. Under the Hate Crimes Act, only 32 states submitted any data to the FBI on hate crimes in 1995, and only 17 states require reporting and recording of hate crimes separate from those required by the federal statute. Only 35 percent of all police agencies have hate task force units or specific procedures for dealing with hate crimes.

Eight states still have no laws on the books targeting racially motivated hate crimes. Some states allow hate violence to be prosecuted as "stand alone" crimes, meaning the acts themselves can be punished,

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Gates decision should be praised

District Judge Lee Gates' sentencing of three ex-Metro officers to jail was a rare stroke of judicial fairness that will go down in history as a very significant victory for civil rights.

It took great courage for this judge to say enough is enough, from this moment on police will be held to the same standards as citizens. For far too long, certain elected officials have ignored the police brutality in Las Vegas. This decision will have a lasting effect for the safeguarding of the rights of citizens under the U.S. Constitution.

The officers learned that what goes around, comes around. The time has now come for the Clark County District Attorney's Office to face up to being less than diligent in prosecuting the "bad apples" in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

Maybe Judge Gates' good judgment will give the impetus to do so. Is asking for two miracles too much?
Larry Kepler

while others permit the prosecution of hate crimes only if they are committed in conjunction with another crime. Also, only a handful of states permit judges to increase penalties when racial bias is proven as the motive for the crime.

While the number of racial hate crimes are much smaller than the millions of "common" crimes in America, the social and political damage they wreak might be greater. Many contend that when individuals

are victimized solely because of their race, racial fears are deepened and an "us versus them" is perpetuated, thus increasing the possibility for violence i.e. the riots following the turmoil following the Rodney King beating and the alleged sexual torture of Haitian immigrant, Abner Louima by White police officers.

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