

COMMENTARY

Real dumb education choices

By Louie Overstreet

Special to Sentinel-Voice

With all due respect to the stars of the movie, *Dumb and Dumber*, Jeff Daniels and Jim Carey are not in the same class of dummies as those who are making policy decisions for public education in the Clark County School District (CCSD) and the State of



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Nevada University System (UNLV/UNR).

Administrators at CCSD and UNLV/UNR are making decisions that are so dumb that their poor judgments are worthy of world-class ranking in the nomination category for Stupidity.

It is bad enough that CCSD is spending over a billion dollars more than was approved by the taxpayers for capital projects. The wasteful and often fanciful expenditures are being used to purchase such items as the following.

CCSD bought a four-wheel-drive Explorer SUV for use by the superintendent. I guess the one-year-old 4-door sedan with the vanity license plate "CCSD-1" was not suitable for taking his family camping on the weekends.

CCSD is using capital construction bond funds to purchase millions of dollars worth of vehicles for use by personnel not remotely associated with construction.

CCSD is paying ridiculous amounts of money for land on which to construct facili-

ties, e.g.: 13 million dollars for a parcel on which to build an elementary school. The normal going rate is two to three million dollars for a parcel of land on which to site a school. One of these days I am going to find the time to research the property records of site purchases being made by CCSD. I have no doubt that a pattern of corruption will be uncovered.

However, the most harmful and abhorrent decision made by CCSD in recent memory, is the removal of assistant principals from schools in low-income neighborhoods and reassigning them to the "Taj Mahal" schools that were recently opened in high-income communities. The reasoning employed by CCSD in making the shift is that the enrollment is higher in the new schools.

You would have to be pretty stupid to buy into the logic that the sole criterion of enrollment is a better determinant for assigning assistant principals than the criteria of need and other factors that indicate that prudence of assigning administrators to schools in low-income neighborhoods.

What's most amazing is that the CCSD uses the need for "at-risk" schools to get more dollars from the feds and the state to address the special demands of these schools.

(See *Dumb*, Page 17)

Welcome to state of high alert

By Stan Washington
Special to Sentinel-Voice

You don't really need to hear it from me again, but here it is anyway with a slight twist: Life in America has changed since Sept. 11.

That is, life for America's White population, all Generation Xers and Black folk who have become too comfortable.

Life is somewhat back to normal in America. The airlines are flying again with lighter passenger loads and fewer employees.

Our airports are open for business under new security measures that won't even allow a staple remover to be brought on board. The stock markets are humming along downward.

Sports have resumed under tighter security. Jay Leno and David Letterman are back to telling jokes.

Things are somewhat normal. Normal like living with an abusive, alcoholic father or husband who forces you to walk on eggshells because you are not sure what will set him off causing him to strike out again.

America is walking on eggshells. Americans are going about their normal duties, but it's still hard not to think about Sept. 11, the day that terrorism changed America with simultaneous hijacked passenger jet attacks on the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon.

It's hard not to think about that day of terror, for more than one month after the attack they are still pulling bodies from the wreckage of the towers.

How can you not think about it as America and British forces are bombing the Taliban out of office in Afghanistan while on a mission to kill Public Enemy No. 1 Osama bin Laden and all of his army of terrorists?

Then the FBI issued a warning for all Americans (the good and the bad) to be on alert for a possible terrorist attack against American interests either abroad or at home.

So the already heightened state of alert increased at least for the aforementioned.

As a Black man who grew up in southern America

(Georgia), I have always been at a high state of alert ever since I learned at a very young age about life, death and seeing two hooded Klansmen walking down my street late at night. (And this was an all Black neighborhood.)

My parents shared the same worries that all Black parents in the South had about their children—particularly their sons.

They were concerned that they might not live to become men. And then when we did, they worried we might not live to become old men.

See, to grow up in the South from the late 1950s through the '60s and '70s was to live under government-sanctioned terrorist rule. You didn't have to go searching for terrorists back then.

They were not difficult to find at all. Sometimes you worked with them or for them. Sometimes they were police officers patrolling your neighborhood or they were your political leaders like the mayor or the governor. (See *Alert*, Page 18)

War's unintended consequences can be devastating to Africans

By Emory Curtis

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Shooting wars, declared or not, produce unintended consequences; non-combatants are killed by mistake (or otherwise), and structures that have no military value to either side are destroyed. And when any of those occurrences occur, each side's story needs to be taken with a grain of salt.

Karam, a village in Afghanistan, was destroyed; all its inhabitants were killed or seriously injured. Those dead were in the tens or hundreds, depending which side's numbers you buy.

Actions of that type will be occurring all through this war. In the long scheme of things, how the sides handle them will determine the post-war unintended consequences. The most benign consequences would be post-war recriminations sprinkled with a few war criminal trials or, in this case, a few terrorism trials before normalcy takes over.

However, as wars go, this war is decidedly different. It is not a war between nations. It is a war of Western coun-

tries, led by the United States, against a fundamentalist (we call it radical) movement in the Islamic world.

All reports show that within that movement its members hate the U.S. more than any other Western country lined up against them. That is because we dominate the Western world in terms of technology, culture, trade and military might.

From their locations in the Middle East and North Africa, followers of Islam once dominated in technology, culture, trade, military might, etc. That's why the area is known as "the cradle of civilization."

The Arab Islamic world that once was in the same commanding position the Western world is in now has found itself in a position where they dominate nothing. Their leaders act as if the U.S.'s wish is their command. To the fundamentalists, that is rubbing salt in an old wound. They want to strike back.

Instead of blaming their own leaders, past and present, for their present plight, they blame the U.S. for them be-

ing so far out of the sweep of today's history. The West shouldn't be blamed. The problem lies at the feet of their leaders, past and present.

In the far past, their leadership failed to keep Arabic minds open to new ideas that would keep expanding their knowledge base. As a result, Europeans took advantage of the Arab's knowledge base and expanded it into assets that took the European world past the Arabs to stay.

Arabs are not the ones who were once ahead in terms of technology and development, closed off outside contacts, and ended up on the short end. That's China's history.

However, unlike the Arabs, the Chinese people woke up and are engaged in a fierce catch-up process today. Even Islamic countries, with all their untold oil revenue, are making no effort to bring their nations up to Western standards in this knowledge race.

Radicals in the fundamental Islamic bloc have made the U.S. their mortal enemy, no matter the facts or our statements to the contrary.

Since they have no com- (See *Consequences*, Pg. 17)

Thurgood Marshall's wisdom illuminates Afghan war worries

By Linn Washington Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

When it came to defending the constitutional rights that make America a special place, most acknowledge the legendary stature earned by that extraordinary soldier in the fight to fulfill the promises of democracy named Thurgood Marshall.

Marshall, a lawyer and later a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, made mighty contributions that literally changed the face of America by shaving away the stubbles of legalized racial segregation and its racist roots.

Many of Marshall's most significant civil rights victories, via using the law to beat back institutional bigotry, resulted from actions initiated during and after World War II—that global battle where America used its might to make the world safe for democracy while still enforcing harsh apartheid against its Black citizens.

"War is hell in every place and time," Marshall once told famed journalist Carl T. Rowan when reflecting upon his experiences during the World War II era where he fought in the trenches, though not the military front lines in Europe or Pacific Ocean islands.

World War II, Marshall continued, "was a special hell for people who were forced to fight for freedom they had never known, for liberties that thousands of them would die without knowing.

"I watched the bravery and patriotism of Blacks, of the Japanese [Americans] in WWII and I couldn't believe White Americans would continue to treat them as semi-

slaves," Marshall noted during his conversations with Rowan.

Japanese-American soldiers fought valiantly despite the fact that their parents, relatives and friends "were behind the barbed wire of our concentration camps," Marshall said.

Black soldiers served their country with heroism and dignity despite enduring daily indignities from their fellow White soldiers and White countrymen.

Imagine the stinging indignity for Black soldiers guarding German soldiers held in POW camps in the South and escorting them to restaurants in Southern cities that freely fed these enemies of America while refusing to serve Blacks...including those soldiers defending American freedom.

"What really burned my ass was when I learned that as more and more Blacks were drafted into the military, more and more found themselves subjected to court-martials, mostly because they refused to submit meekly to White supremacy regulations," Marshall recalled.

Marshall said he fought in WWII everyday despite never wearing an armed forces uniform.

Marshall said he knew he was also in the war because everyday at his NAACP Legal Defense Fund office he received "an endless string of telephone calls, telegrams, letters, from colored GIs, or their wives, parents, girlfriends.

"I got some heart-wrenching stories of bigotry on base and off base, of Blacks sentenced to the brig, given dishonorable (See *Marshall*, Page 19)