

## OUR VIEW Celebrate Dad

Many people don't know that Father's Day was started by a woman. And its purpose wasn't to help manufacturers sell greeting cards, as the popular story goes, but rather to honor a special man, her father. That woman was Mrs. John B. Dodd of Washington. Her father, William Smart, was a widowed Civil War veteran. Dodd started brainstorming the idea of commemorating him after reflecting on the strength it took for him to raise six children by himself (her mother died while delivering child No. 6). The first Father's Day celebration was observed on June 19, 1910, in Spokane, Wash. Fourteen years later, President Calvin Coolidge floated the idea of a national Father's Day. It wasn't until 1966, during Lyndon Johnson's presidency, that the day became a nationally proclaimed holiday.

Father's Day offers a perfect opportunity to reflect upon the importance of dads and the roles they play in building strong families and prosperous societies. Research bolstering these statements is legion. In an October 2000 report, Stephen Green, a child development specialist for the Texas Cooperative Extension, notes that active fathers facilitate their children's moral development, help them learn important life skills, give emotional support, increase their chances for academic success, provide them alternative perspectives on life, stimulate intellectual development, improve their self-esteem, promote healthy gender identity, offer positive male role models, set guidelines for discipline and behavior, lower their children's likelihood of suicide, juvenile delinquency and adult criminality, decrease their chances of engaging in risky sexual behaviors and provide financial support.

Fathers do countless other small things that make a difference—teaching their children to eat right, to share, to exercise, to have healthy relationships, to pray before bedtime; taking them to school, to the park, to the school; telling them bedtime stories; playing games with them; cooking dinner; swimming; helping with homework. Their contributions can't be quantified. But their absence can: Jeffrey Levin's books, "Father's Rights," notes that 72 percent of teenage murderers grew up without fathers, as did 60 percent of rapists and 76 percent of youth in juvenile correctional facilities. There's more: fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school as their classmates who live with two parents, 11 times more likely to resort to violence, score lower than the norm in math and reading tests and suffer from a higher rate of chronic asthma, headaches and speech defects.

Worse still: Eighty percent of the adolescents in psychiatric hospitals come from fatherless homes; and the absence of a biological father increases by 900 percent a daughter's vulnerability to rape and sexual abuse. So on this Father's Day, make it a special point to acknowledge, cherish and commend the father, step-father, grandfather or father figure in your life or in your circle of acquaintances. Thank him for being the man. Let him know that you love him for what he's done and, more importantly, for who he is.

## Each Teacher Reach a Pupil

The state proficiency exam remains a bane of existence for many students, not to mention a seemingly insurmountable impediment to their graduation. Some 1,700 seniors still haven't passed the exam, which tests student aptitude in reading, writing and math (1,353 have yet to master the math portion). Though the overall number is down from 2,200 last year, this failure rate is still very much problematic.

Something must be done. Educators can't count on reducing the number of failures each year because, as the school district continues to grow, more students will take the proficiency, creating the likelihood of higher incidences of failure. One approach to addressing the problem is surprisingly simple: pairing the struggling students with a teacher for several hours of one-on-one instruction. Students get the help they need and teachers get the satisfaction on helping a deserving young person get a high school diploma. That's a win-win scenario for everyone.



# Ku Klux Klan alive in 2005

Dora LaGrande  
Sentinel-Voice

Very often, when people hear me and others say that we are still surrounded by Ku Klux Klansmen (only now, instead of them wearing a hood they wear two-piece suits), they say we are being radical, unfair, and divisive or that we're just dredging up pain from a bygone era.

On Monday, our claim was validated: After a six-week Senate filibuster of anti-lynching measures, when 12 members of the 75 to 80 members present in the U.S. Senate refused to vote in favor of a bill that would apologize to African-Americans for the Senate's poor record of inaction on lynching. And the other 20 to 25 that didn't bother to participate demonstrated by their actions that they feel African-Americans aren't worthy of an apology. Most notably absent were Mississippi Republican Senators Trent Lott and Thad Cochran — Senators from the state that had the highest incidents of lynching in the South, as well as the highest for the nation. In fact, every state in the United States with the exception of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont had lynching casualties.

To add further insult to injury, Resolution 39, which apologizes for its failure to enact federal anti-lynching legislation decades ago, was



## ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

approved by a voice vote and not a straight yes or no vote; the debate took place at night (see the night-rider resemblance) and there was no roll call, so there was no accounting for each vote. The absence of a roll call made it possible for the names of the 12 original dissenting Senators and the 20 to 25 absent Senators to remain anonymous, with the exception of the two aforementioned. There should have been a roll call taken so the names of the Senators could be publicized. Keeping their names a secret is tantamount to hiding under a hood, committing the same hateful, violent acts the KKK committed.

White lynchings of African-Americans grew into a homegrown holocaust, spun out of a contrived social order of segregation, notably, in the South, but by no means exclusively. Between 1880 and 1930, over 5,000 African-American men, women and children were lynched to death by hanging, beating, shooting, drowning or burning.

After the end of Reconstruction, the federal government of the United States restored White supremacist control to the South and

adopted a "laissez-faire" policy in regard to the Negro. This country betrayed the so-called Negro. This policy resulted in economic, social, educational, and employment discrimination; Black disenfranchisement and peonage. Deprived of our civil and human rights, African descendents were reduced to a status of quasi slavery or "second-class" citizenship. A tense atmosphere of racial hatred, ignorance; and fear bred lawless mass violence, murder and lynching of African-Americans.

Most states refused to prosecute White men for killing Black people; shamefully, there was no federal law against lynching. The U.S. House of Representa-

tives, responding to pleas from presidents of civil rights groups, agreed three times to make the crime a federal offense. Each time the measure died in the Senate at the hands of powerful southern lawmakers using the filibuster (sound familiar?).

More than any other injustice in American history, the responsibility for lynching and slavery rests solely on the shoulders of the American Senate. In 1946 and beyond, they found a way to compensate the Native Americans by paying them in excess of \$75.7 million. In 1988, Congress and President Reagan found a way to pass an act to provide a Presidential apology and symbolic payment of \$20,000 to the Japanese internees, evacuees and persons of Japanese ancestry who lost liberty or property because of discriminatory action by the Federal government during World War II. Yet, not only have

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