

M 1 | TUESDAY | NOVEMBER 6, 2007 | ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH | STLOUIDAY.COM | B7

OTHER VIEWS

MORE LETTERS ONLINE "Ellen Goodman referred to many high-tech ways to keep track of our children and how they go beyond protecting to stalking them. In some examples, I see her point, except one," writes Roger Chalmers of Rock Hill. "Just ask the parents of a child who has gone missing if they would have preferred this option." Read and talk about this letter and more letters online at STLOUIDAY.com/letters.

Monday - Jonah Goldberg, Paul Krugman
Tuesday - David Brooks, Maureen Dowd
Wednesday - Bob Herbert, David Ignatius
Thursday - Kathleen Parker
Saturday - Ben Greenman
Sunday - Charles Krauthammer, Leonard Pitts

OUR LOCAL CONTRIBUTORS

Working outside our comfort zone increases quality of life

By Terrence Freeman

St. Louis is a diverse community that sometimes fractures along city-county, north-south, east-west and white-black-immigrant fault lines. The mere mention of "diversity" generates reactions ranging from uncaring support to outright dismissal. Disagreements often stem from suspicions of hidden agendas or ulterior motives. Some see "diversity" as a code word for "affirmative action." Others regard it as a kind of political correctness that encroaches on freedom of speech, artists and writers, advocates of diversity sometimes devote too much energy to compelling letters and news columns that should be forbidden so that no person or group ever is offended by them. Such a definitive list is, of course, non-existent.

Although we should not pretend that words cannot hurt, demean or marginalize others, what truly matters in a rapidly changing, demographically diverse environment is how we build and sustain cooperative and productive communities and organizations. Demographic studies continue to chart the societal shifts. Millions of immigrants have come to the United States in recent decades, and many thousands have settled in St. Louis. There is no typological profile. Along with undereducated immigrants, there also has been a "brain gain." Writers, artists and scientists are contributing to making the United States a technological and cultural capital of the world. America's non-immigrant profile is likewise diverse. Nonwhites now make up 30



Dean Robert / iStockphoto

percent of the U.S. population, projections by the U.S. Census indicate that the percentage will increase to 50 percent by 2030. Race relations will continue to be a major challenge throughout the 21st century, and issues of class will add to the complexity. The fastest growing age segment of the population is the one 85 years old and up; only 25 percent of that group is healthy enough to live alone without difficulty. By 2030, one-third of the U.S. population will be older than 65.

We are challenged collectively to better communicate and cooperate across the demographic barriers. All too often, we view each other through culturally tinted lenses and see caricatures and stereotypes, instead of unique blends of culture, personality and experience. No group is monolithic. Because our cross-cultural vision often is impaired, we end up discriminating personally and systematically, sometimes even without conscious animosity. This makes us even more uncomfortable when our actions or omissions are challenged. Developing a multicultural perspective requires us to critically examine patterns of behavior and biases we've learned and internalized. As we meet and interact with people from many cultures and backgrounds, we will have to acknowledge and respect our different perspectives and practices in order to achieve our common goals.

The truth is, many cultural differences just push us outside our respective comfort zones. Finding common ground on which to stand and from which to work will increase the quality of our lives dramatically. It's not just a matter of age, gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation; it's the untapped reserves of creativity, innovation and accomplishment to be found in all segments of society. The strength of our country and our region ultimately rests on how well we can respect each other's varied backgrounds as we go about the task of forging our separate parts into a unified future.

Terrence Freeman of Spanish Lake is an award-winning professor at St. Louis Community College's content program on how to use the Black Box of America. Freeman has worked as a consultant and volunteer for churches, community organizations, unions, university and law enforcement agencies.

"S" DEBATABLE

SATIRE
Feeling the love (as if)



Onstage at the Democratic debate Oct. 30: Sen. Christopher Dodd, Sen. Joseph Biden, John Edwards, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, Sen. Barack Obama, Rep. Dennis Kucinich and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson. Rusty Kennedy / AP

GENDER
Hillary Clinton: There's nowhere she won't go

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Welcome to Drezel University, the site of tonight's Democratic presidential debate. Let's get started with Sen. Barack Obama. Senator, you've vowed to spread this entire debate standing on Sen. Clinton's windpipe while reducing her to a quivering mass of jelly. How do you plan on doing that? SENATOR BARACK OBAMA: Well, Brian, as you know the goal of my campaign is to make this country as noble as I am. But without casting aspersions or criticism in any direction, I have noticed that Sen. Clinton, probably without meaning to, has fully contextualized her discourse, which has had the effect of diffusing the national conversation we must have about the tremendous challenges we face. WILLIAMS: Sen. Clinton, I'm going to give you a few seconds to recover from that mauling. SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON (quietly weeping): Thank you, Brian. TIM RUSSETT: Sen. Edwards, let's turn to you. Four years ago, you vowed to run an entirely positive campaign. Now you're running a negative one. What changed? JOHN EDWARDS: My convictions, Tim. The American people want a president they can trust. Four years ago I went from being a centrist New Democrat to a left-wing populist because I wanted voters to be able to trust that I won't stand up against the forces of opportunity in this country. Now I stand up to the hedge fund managers, the big sponsors and the McManion owners. Basically, I've been standing up to myself. And I don't take money from Washington lobbyists. Later money from the people who hire Washington lobbyists, which means a savings of, like, 15 percent. RUSSETT: Sen. Clinton? CLINTON: First, I want to pre-emptively agree with what everybody will say on all sides of every issue in this debate. That's why the Republicans are so afraid of me. Second, I want to congratulate the Boston Red Sox. I've been a Red Sox fan my whole life. WILLIAMS: Sen. Biden, a different topic. If the Iranians sponsor Tel Aviv with a nuclear weapon, should Democrats and then to politicians? SENATOR JOE BIDEN: Well, I... WILLIAMS: Sorry, your time has expired. Sen. Obama, same question. OBAMA: Absolutely not, Brian. If you look at this administration's record on Iran, you see a lot of pejorative words, some of them very harmful. We Democrats need to have the courage to counter the politics of fear by using the word "diplomacy" six and seven times in one sentence — eight, if necessary. EDWARDS: I worry about the two Irans. For while the corporate Irans are building nuclear weapons, the working-class extremists are shivering in doorways and making do with sharp sticks. WILLIAMS: Sen. Clinton, at the end of your

husband's administration, you played your authentic self in a cryogenic vault in the National Archives. Will you allow the archives to release your authentic self during this campaign? CLINTON: It's kind of embarrassing being Brian, but my authentic self was mislabeled sometime in 2003, and we can't find it. RUSSETT: Another question for Sen. Clinton. You support giving driver's licenses to illegal aliens. How many times should they be able to make the little photos until they get one they like? CLINTON: To be clear, I said that licenses for illegals was a smart idea that I oppose. There are also many dumb ideas I support and mediocre ideas I'm lukewarm about. I keep track on my iPhone. REP. DENNIS KUCINICH (carrying): Sorry I'm late everybody. My UFO got held up in traffic behind Shirley Maclaine's house. WILLIAMS: Now we turn to our lightning round in which each of the candidates will have 120 seconds to spend pandering diatribes that demonstrate how the campaigning process has reduced their minds to pubescent. Sen. Clinton, which issue would you like to obfuscate next? CLINTON: Obfuscate? Sen, let me tell you, the truth, because you can't handle the truth. We live in a world with enemies. We fight elections where people play rough. What's going to do it? These two pretty boys? The left-wing nutcase in our party who sit around watching Bill Maher? I have a greater responsibility than you can possibly fathom, and my existence, while grotesque and incomprehensible to you, leads to victory. Because deep down, in places you don't talk about at Santa Monica dinner parties, you want me at that podium. You need me at that podium. And I have neither the time nor the inclination to explain myself to the self-righteous liberals who rise and sleep under the blanket of the very victory I provided I wish you'd just shut thanks and went on your way. In any case, I don't give a damn what answers you think you're entitled to. GOW BIL RICHARDSON: That was beautiful, Hillary. I love you.



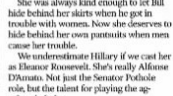
Candidates Clinton and Obama. Rusty Kennedy / AP

WASHINGTON — Gifford had a rough week. First Hillary got hit by the boys in the back. Then some women booed Hillary's "Don't hit me, I'm a girl" strategy. The Washington Post's Maureen Dowd deplored the "anti-feminist subtext" of Hillary's campaign playing the woman-as-victim card. "Using gender this way" she said "is a setback." I must rush to a sister's defense. Women need to rally to support Hillary and send her money because there are men, men like Tim Russert, who have the tendency to ask her questions during a debate. If there are six male hits on stage and two male moderators and heaven knows how many men manning lights and boom mikes, the one woman should have the right to have it two ways. It's simple math, really, an estrogen equation. If Hillary wants to run on her record as first lady while keeping the lid on her first lady record, that's only fair for the father. And if she does not want to have it both ways on illegal immigrants getting driver's licenses, then she should, especially if those illegal immigrants are men, or if Lou Dobbs is ranting on the issue, because he's not only a man, he's a creepy, creepy, bohemian creep. Hillary should certainly be allowed to play the gender card two ways, or even triangulate it. As her campaign manager, Patsy Solis Doyle, said after the debate, she is "one strong woman" who has dwarfed male rivals and shown she's tough enough to deal with terrorism and play on the world stage. But she can break, just like a little girl, when male chauvinists are rude enough to catch her red-handed being slippery and opportunistic. If the gender game worked when Rick Lazio muscled into her space, why shouldn't it work when Obama and Edwards monster some media? If Hillary could be a senator by playing the victim after Monica, surely she can become president by playing the victim in the kitchen. After trying to have it both ways during the debate, she tried to have it both ways after the debate. In New Hampshire on Friday, she stayed above the fray, saying her male rivals are not "piling on" because she's a woman but because she's "winning." Meanwhile, she let her aides below the fray

stir up fem-outrage by putting a video on the campaign website called "The Politics of Pile On," edited to highlight men ganging up on her to the tune of Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro." Mark Penn presided over a conference call Wednesday to rally supporters on how to use the backlist, during which one devoted Ellen Jamesian suggested that Tim Russert "should be shot." The woman quickly retracted the sentiment, but the fact that she shouldn't have said it on a conference call (NBC security remained on high alert.) Nothing should be secret when it comes to crossing the women's vote, especially the working-class women Hillary needs to carry her back to the White House. That may be why she recently blew off a Vogue photo shoot with Annie Leibovitz at the last minute, according to Liz Smith; to show solidarity with supporters who can't afford Vogue frocks. And remember the time HBO file used a Washington Post story about a sighting of the senator's cleavage in the Senate to spearhead a fundraising drive with women? Dollars for Decollete. Genius! When pundits insist that playing the victim is not what a feminist should do, they forget that Hillary is not a feminist. If she were merely some clichéd version of a women's rights advocate, she never could have so effectively blown off Marian Wright Edelman and Lani Guinier when Bill first got in, or played the Fury with Bill's capes during the campaign. She was always kind enough to let Bill hulk behind her skirts when he got in trouble with women. Now she deserves to hide behind her own pantaloons when men cause her trouble. We underestimate Hillary if we cast her as Eleanor Roosevelt. She's really Allison Damato. Not just the Senator Publicist role, but the talent for playing the aggrieved victim. Damato pulled off a dramatic upset in '92 against Robert Kennedy, the New York attorney general, by pouncing when Abrams slipped one night and called Damato a "fascist." Never a sensitive soul about leading other ethnic groups, Damato quickly cast "fascist" as an insult to Italian-Americans, producing an ad with scenes of Mussolini. "It was sheer gall," Anthony March, Damato's media consultant, proudly told The Times' Alessandra Stanley. Like Allison, Hillary has the gift of gall. She can be righteous while playing brass-knuckle politics. She will cozy up to the enemies she can use, like Matt Drogala and Barack Obama, and lack W's bellicosity if it helps banish her old image as anti-military. There is nowhere she won't go as long as it gets her where she wants to be. That's the beauty of Hillary.



DAVID BROOKS



MAUREEN DOWD