

Letters

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Despite risks, the nation will survive coming years

In a post-election discussion with a group of remarkable young people, bright, energetic and university-bound, I was troubled by the sense of despair they expressed about the nation's current direction.

They are considering leaving the country. My initial reaction was "Wait for me!" But this great nation, with the most brilliant and resilient form of government yet devised by the human mind, deserves more from us. We have somehow slipped under the grip of zealotry and fanaticism, which truly have no place in a free form of government. The next few years will be difficult. We risk the loss of fundamental rights and protections that have made this nation great and, perhaps as important, have served as an example and a beacon of hope for the much of the world. But instead of leaving the country to that sad fate, we can work to turn this nation back toward the democratic principles that made it so special in the first place. I hope those young people I spoke to, and others like them, the best and the brightest of this nation's future, will stay and join us.

Jill E. Priebe, Ann Arbor

Wrong color at wrong time in the wrong place

Being the wrong color at the wrong time in the wrong place Nov. 6 did not mark any particular or significant historical event on our calendars, yet, it did mark a special day for my family in America and abroad.

That Saturday afternoon in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, being French (or having white skin) instantly became a liability in a country ravaged by civil unrest since late 1999. Local residents targeted this group of expatriates in unleashing their pent-up anger, frustration and feelings of oppression about the current situation in the African country.

That same evening in Denver, a 21-year old black professional woman was stopped by a white male police officer for running a yellow light. The woman was extensively questioned as to what was going on. As well, her car was thoroughly searched. Apparently, the policeman did not feel that he was getting the whole story, so he called for two backup cars. Once again, the two newly arrived white policemen questioned her and searched her car.

On Nov. 6, the French, who by virtue of their nationality are descendants of the colonizers of Ivory Coast, represented all that had gone wrong with the country. Being French was not la mode in Abidjan.

Being black in Denver on Nov. 6 proved to be a risky proposition as well. Despite the fact that the woman was a professional on business, she represented something altogether different in the minds of the officers at that moment.

Susan C. Frazier-Kouassi, Ann Arbor

Adlai Stevenson quote appropriate for today

This Adlai Stevenson quote (1965) seems appropriate today:

"We travel together, passengers on a little space ship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil, committed for our safety to its security and peace, preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and, I will say, the love we give our fragile craft. We cannot maintain it half fortunate, half miserable, half confident, half despairing, half slave to the ancient enemies of mankind, half free in a liberation of resources undreamed of until this day. No craft, no crew, can travel safely with such vast contradictions. On their resolution depends the survival of us all."

John J. Carver, BrightonBrief

City attorney unfairly criticized over pot stance

As a politically liberal Ann Arborite, I read with interest your recent article on the marijuana amendment. Thoughtful people can disagree about our current drug laws. As a physician, however, I am well aware that state and federal laws generally govern drug enforcement.

Our city attorney, Stephen Postema, was unfairly criticized in the article. Charles Ream acknowledges in the article the applicable case law and state and federal law. Yet he criticizes the city attorney for simply explaining the existing state of the law. As a resident of Ann Arbor and a taxpayer, that is what I expect the city attorney to do! The city attorney is a nonpartisan position and is required to state what

the law is - not necessarily what persons want it to be. The city benefits from this objectivity.

I have also known Stephen Postema since we were college classmates. He grew up in this town and deserves praise. He is a fair, ethical, and common-sense lawyer. He has become widely admired in town by persons of all political persuasions as a vigorous and effective advocate for the city and a wise adviser. I have long felt that the city was extremely wise to bring him into public service on our behalf.

David Jacobi, Ann Arbor

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