



Heart Talk

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Last Saturday, two men came out to repair my garden fountain. They were on time, friendly, and very knowledgeable. They worked quickly, had the fountain up and running smoothly in no time, and explained how I was using the wrong chemicals in the war against algae.

They happen to have been Latinos and spoke with accents. Did the thought cross my mind, “Wonder if these guys have proper documentation?” Not for a second. They came, they smiled, they fixed. That was more than good enough for me.

Later that morning, I drove past the day laborer site in the canyon. This was the day after our Divider-in-Chief pardoned the former sheriff of Maricopa County, Joe Arpaio. I thought to myself how fortunate are these young men, as well as the fountain repairmen, that they were working in Laguna Beach, where our police force is led by someone like Chief Laura Farinella.

Fresh off her professional handling of the white identity group gathering on Main Beach, she stands as a symbol of so much that is good in our community. She is highly educated, a graduate of the FBI National Academy and FBI National Executive Institute, and has a long record of accomplishments while serving with the Long Beach police force. Chief Farinella believes in community based policing and working as a team. In her message to the residents of Laguna Beach on the police website, she says, “Law enforcement is a people business that is only successful through face to face community interaction and exchange of ideas.” Given the fact that 6 million visitors pour into our city each year, it seems clear that the chief, and the men and women who work under her, are doing a great job of protecting and serving our city.

Then, there is Joe Arpaio. Before going into his law enforcement “techniques,” let me mention a couple of things that should cause most people to seriously question his judgment. (Spoiler alert: liberal bias ahead.) Sheriff Joe has said that President Trump will end up regarded as the greatest president in U.S. history. Could someone please send him a biography of Abraham Lincoln? Or actually, a biography of almost any other president in our history. Even Millard Fillmore would do. After President Obama produced this long form birth certificate, Arpaio claimed it was a forgery. How could anyone believe....oh, wait. According to an NBC, poll only 27 percent of Republicans agreed with the statement, “Barack Obama was born in the U.S.”

Look, I know Republicans. I play tennis with Republicans. They don't believe this canard. I'll bet Laguna Republicans are solidly in that 27 percent.

From 1993, to his well-deserved election defeat in 2016, Sheriff Joe reveled in being known as “America's toughest lawman.” Probably most of us, even liberals like me, would not mind

criminals being made a little uncomfortable during their stay with the authorities, but Sheriff Joe carried this to the extreme. He created a “Tent City” jail for the undocumented in the Arizona desert. In a speech, he once referred to it as a “concentration camp.” Men housed there were given pink underwear, horrible food, and forced to endure temperatures that often rose to 115 degrees. Amnesty International described the place as inhumane, overcrowded and dangerous. His department had to pay \$142 million in settlements, legal fees, and compliance costs during his tenure

Such things did not matter to the sheriff because he was cracking down on “illegals.” He ignored studies by the libertarian Cato Institute that reported “undocumented immigrants do not commit a disproportional share of crime.”

His men went on “sweeps,” that detained people based solely on suspicion of their immigration status. These sweeps caused thousands of Latino residents to live in fear.

A federal judge concluded that he was using racial profiling, which flies in the face of the Fourth Amendment’s protection against “unreasonable search and seizure.” Simply put, the judge told him to knock it off. He disregarded this federal judge’s ruling and continued to detain Latino residents. This earned him a criminal contempt conviction, which could have put him behind bars for six months.

Wonder how he would have fared in the now destroyed “Tent City?”

But he will never be locked up in “the gray bar hotel,” because fellow “birther,” President Donald J. Trump, citing Arpaio’s “years of admirable service to our nation,” gave him a presidential pardon. I am aware that other presidents have given some pretty questionable people pardons in the past, but this one really rankles.

Sheriff Farinella, thanks for being the antithesis of Sheriff Joe.