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Letters to the Editor 8/29

Two ends of the spectrum

What do the debates about Annie, illegal immigration and Sunny Acres have in common?

They represent extremes in viewpoints of how society should work.

On one end, some believe in strict adherence to laws and regulations despite the consequences to the people involved. On the other end, some believe that compassion for the perceived victims should override all other considerations, including the law.

In my view, our society can do some of both. While the original owner of Annie appears to have violated some regulations, that does not negate the years of bonding he has had with Annie.

The vast majority of immigrants are hard-working people who are trying to make better lives for themselves and our economy has come to depend on their labor, yet we can't overlook the violations of our immigration laws.

Dan De Vul should not be given a pass for code violations in the process of helping people, but our society has an obligation to help the people who De Vul claims have no other option.

Any problem that people have created, people can solve, but it takes time, effort and courage on the part of our citizens and leaders. We can't afford to adopt positions that reflect the thinking of only one end of the spectrum.

Jan William Simek

San Luis Obispo

Dogs need identification

Regarding Annie, an ounce of prevention: None of this would have happened if Annie had an identification tag or a microchip.

As a former volunteer, I know there is little likelihood that Annie, or any other lost animal without identification, can be reunited with their owner (even if they find their way to the shelter) because lost animal reports fill a thick binder. They accumulate daily, and owners rarely withdraw reports upon finding their animals.

The overworked staff and understaffed volunteers make an effort to check on these reports, but they are swamped trying to exercise animals, help the public, answer phones and see to the needs of the animals.

To "find" even one animal requires a time-consuming review of the binder, a slow walk through the kennel and phone calls to reach the owner.

Also, descriptions of the animal by the owner as compared to that of the shelter usually differ, or the report is made when the lost animal may not yet be in the shelter.

There is no computer program to match lost animal reports with animals at the shelter. Failing identification, the animal's owners must call and come in continuously to check for their own animal.

Ruth Bianchi

Morro Bay

Welcome back to school

A new school year is here along the Central Coast. On behalf of our local division of the California Retired Teachers Association, we welcome back staff members of the San Luis Coastal and Lucia Mar school districts.

With dedicated and professional certificated and classified employees, our local schools are doing a well above average job for our children and our community.

More importantly, we welcome back the thousands of students to their new classes (and possibly new schools) for another year of learning. We know that going to school is a very important job for everyone (students, parents and school employees) and that students may see rewards to be far off, but with everyone's efforts, our kids will be ready for their future.

Students, get to bed early so you have a full night's sleep, eat nutritiously,

listen and do your work in class, ask questions when you don't understand something, make great friendships, get out and exercise, do your homework and know that the adults around you (at home and at school) are trying their best to get you ready for all the adventures of your life.

Steven Click

President, Division 23, of the California Retired Teachers Association

Who is the real elitist?

Charles Krauthammer's recent column ("Last refuge of the liberal," □Aug. 27) concludes that those who hold opposing views to his on illegal immigration, Proposition 8, the proposed mosque near ground zero or, one can assume, any other issue, are just members of "the arrogant elites" who are contemptuous of "the great unwashed."

Apparently, he assumes we Democrats are mostly elitist, and he states as a fact that we will be badly beaten in November. He does not explain how a group of elitists won control of Congress and the White House in 2008.

Krauthammer's columns reveal in tone and substance that he should be able to recognize an elitist when he sees one. For him to claim kinship with "the great unwashed" is ludicrous.

He makes the same mistake his fellow right-wing conservative Bill O'Reilly makes when referring to "the folks" believing this or that. Both assume all the folks see things their way. That is arrogant, elitist and wrong!

George Miller

Los Osos

GOP talking points

I have a suggestion. If you could print The Heritage Foundation's daily morning bulletin that they send out to the various news organizations, other like-minded organizations and their followers in the Republican Party, we readers of your newspaper could get the so-called "talking points" directly from the source.

Then you wouldn't have to print the columns by Victor Davis Hanson, Charles Krauthammer and the rest of the crew of mouthpieces who repeat said talking points over and over, and we readers would be spared the pain.

Christopher Mitchell

Shell Beach

School is too pricey

Regarding the \$578 million school built in Los Angeles ("The 'Taj Mahal' schools," □Aug. 23):

I simply cannot believe the audacity of building a school that costs that much in these economic times (actually, in any economic times).

But now, when teachers are being laid off, stipends are gone for athletic coaches who freely give many more hours than those for which they are reimbursed and bus routes are history (plus the jobs of those drivers are lost and, therefore, families are on welfare), the money being spent is just criminal.

Since often funds are redirected when "needs" are seen by our noble legislators, do not even try to tell me the funds for this ridiculously-priced school could not have been redirected towards education, instead of a mammoth shrine to the goodness of the donors or whatever.

Not right, not right, not right! When are the American people going to demand that our legislators do what is right?

Carol Kiessig

Templeton

Legal pot is costly

Brady Lahr is wrong about his stance on the legalization of pot ("Lynem is wrong about marijuana," Aug. 22).

Lahr's reference to the Portugal program of legalization, which was reported on by "Time" □magazine with a Cato Institute study attached, has all the earmarks of more pot propaganda.

The Cato Institute is heavily funded by tobacco companies and other corporations waiting to capitalize on the legalization of another addictive

drug. The tobacco companies already have the fields to mass produce pot. When a drug is legalized, it gains cultural approval and finds its way into all walks of life. This happened with alcohol and will happen with pot if it is legalized.

The alcohol experiment taught us that a legal, addictive drug is far more costly to regulate and clean up after than an illegal one is. It costs society more in hospital beds, police work, courts, lawyers, jail cells, broken families, etc. once the drug is legalized.

There are plenty of credible resources to help with this decision. For starters, I recommend Phil Agre's, "The Crisis of Public Reason."

Norm Jackson

Atascadero

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