

Throughout my life, this scourge - Racism -- was right beside me. It follows me like a shadow , because racism is endemic in our country. When looking at the socioeconomic climate and the human condition in 2019, it's deja vu all over again. It seems that I am currently traveling full circle and experiencing similar conditions, issues, and circumstances -- once again. But, worse! We have a president who wants to divide our country by White, Black and Brown.

*When, I ask, will this country end this national fixation on the color of a person's skin?*

We must wake up, sooner than later, from these ruminating nightmares of racial inequality and racist acts, and rampant capitalist corruption that has become more corrupt, and begin to **dream a new dream**, one that offers real fundamental changes; one that most Americans dream of -- equality, equity, acceptance, unity, respect -- and a "fair day's pay for a fair day's labor." We must avoid this 'hostile state of sameness' from happening in the next generation, and, together, embrace this simple mantra: *'Dream of sharing this country and the world instead of tearing it apart'. Think about that!*

I *do* believe there is hope; if you *strongly believe* that you deserve better, wish the best for your friends and community, and you are willing to strive and unite with others of like mind to make a better human race. It can happen.

Almost five years ago, this coming November, I started a group that I wanted to do for years. At the age of 83, I co-founded, with a lovely, intelligent, African American activist and educator, named Gilda Rogers, an organization called "Citizens for a Diverse and Open Society." Its mission is to try to improve race relations in our community, and we try to actively do things in that vein. Our group has been growing, and has been very well accepted in our surrounding communities.

We created a space where all races can sit together, and sometimes it is difficult to hear the pain of another person's feelings, but, by knowing that we are all of the same mind-set, we can take the heat. That, in itself, is human progress. It makes me feel that there is real hope for humanity, seeing African Americans, Caucasians and Latinos sharing their thoughts, and hearing about their painful experiences. For many white people who attend,

*it was, and is, the first time they ever intermingled or ever sat next to people of other races and felt comfortable! That, too, in itself, is human progress!*

I've met many very nice, educated, decent, and caring people from this experience, including Pastor Terrence K. Porter, of the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Red Bank, where he welcomed us to hold our monthly meetings, and I feel he is a friend. Also, there is Birgit Mondesir, who is the pastor's very capable and a special office manager, and she is very friendly, caring, and has been very helpful to our group. In fact, she attends our meetings.

Last year, in memory of my dear friend, Danny Holgate, a well-known musician and theatre director, we gave a young boy from the neighborhood, whose name is Kyne, and is 12 years old, free piano lessons for the entire year. Last November, he played at our 4th Anniversary party and will continue his lessons for a second year. He said, he "loves the piano," and I told him that "Danny would be very proud of you."

We have coordinated with the Red Bank Superintendent of Schools, Jared Ramage, and the Social Studies teacher, Holly Kluck, to introduce in their curriculum

"March" A Trilogy -- following Congressman John Lewis' experiences in the Civil Rights Movement, which is discussed in class for a couple of years. We would like to do something similar in Asbury Park and Neptune. Maybe, "CDOS" and the "Dialogue Group" in Asbury Park can do some things together to do more of like-mind.

Inspired by the group of people who attend our meetings and contribute their time and ideas, I thought *to celebrate our state's growing diverse racial and religious population*, by commemorating a "*Diversity and Unity Day*" in New Jersey. I know that Assemblywoman Joann Downey has made a strong effort to sponsor a Bill in Trenton. I would think the appropriate day to celebrate would be, July the 2<sup>nd</sup> of each year, because that was the day when President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. Besides, it could become a national holiday.

*So, is there an answer or a place, to make a better human race?* Yes, there is. Little steps have been proven to be positive.

**Come visit us, and find a place where everyone is entitled to express themselves, which is the**

**beginning of transporting new ideas and an expression of unity to permeate society.**

**Write us, and we will send you information:**

**<[citizensforadiversesociety@gmail.com](mailto:citizensforadiversesociety@gmail.com)>**

[The above article was culled from an unpublished book entitled "America: A Country in Search of a New Dream," which Sid spent 30 years writing. It is a first hand account of someone who lived the experience and was very much aware of the strong sentiments before and after the events. He would love to publish the full book during the 50th anniversary of the event in 2020, but now at the age of 88, does not have the funds to do so]