

## Losing our way in the new millennium

by Julian Sereno

**D**ivisive, controversial issues have polarized the body politic and sickened society since the start of the 21st century. The hyper-partisanship of the Loony Left and the Crackpot Right consumes the national consciousness while social pathologies fester.

Both extremes have more in common with each other than they do with the beliefs of the vast majority of Americans.

Right-wing wing-nuts are first and foremost racists and xenophobes. They came out of the closet when Barack Obama was elected president, got to know one another online, and adored Donald Trump when he spread lies: that Obama was an Kenyan-born Muslim, that most darker-skinned immigrants, with or without documents, are violent felons and terrorists. Wing-nuts embrace conspiracy theories, rumors, canards and falsehoods in support of their ideology.

They denounce taxes, gun safety, women's reproductive rights, LBGTQ rights, immigration and refugees. They loathe all of Islam, particularly Sharia Law, which they see around them everywhere. They adore Israel although they despise American Jews. Many are fundamentalist evangelical Christians who claim to embrace the Bible but use Scripture selectively, with an emphasis on the Book of Revelation, not the Sermon on the Mount. While they claim to love the U.S. Constitution, they are talking Second Amendment, not the 14th.

Left-wing Marxists/Neo Fascists denounce the U.S. Constitution because it was written by slave-owning white men. Their goal seems to be the dismantling of Western Civilization, all for the sake of destroying the patriarchy, i.e. mainstream culture as promulgated by heterosexual men of European ancestry.

Christopher Columbus is getting his statues pulled and his holiday hijacked because his voyages led to the introduction of European migration to the Western Hemisphere. Which led to the extinction and subjugation of indigenous people. And the importation of African slaves. And the Patriarchy.

Identity is the key to their worldview and they way they define themselves and others. Although they are largely white, they favor all those whom they consider oppressed, including unauthorized immigrants, the obese, the differently abled, LBGTQ individuals, and women, particularly Muslim, Latina, African and African-American, but not Jews, unless they explicitly

denounce Israel. They celebrate diversity but decry "cultural imperialism", or the dominant culture learning anything from "the oppressed".

Loonie Lefties, at the helm in academia, abhor free speech because they exert their greatest power through their attempt to control it. They are always tuned-in toward any statement or expression of thought they can deem racist, islamophobic, xenophobic, homophobic, misogynist, sexist, fat-shaming etc., which should lead to loss of employment, exclusion from the economy and social ostracism. All enforced online.

Straight white men (except for the self-selected, penitent few) are the villains, living lives of privilege at the expense of the favored victims.

Women never lie and when a woman accuses a man of anything she is always to be believed. When Duke LaCrosse players were falsely accused of rape by a stripper, no fewer than 88 Duke faculty members believed the stripper rather than their own students.

Extreme lefties embrace conspiracy theories, rumors, canards and falsehoods in support of their ideology. Both sides share a supreme self-righteousness. Neither believe in compromise, only a zero-sum game with winner take all.

And everybody else — that is almost all of us — are losing as a result. While these stupid arguments polarize the citizenry, lobbyists buy up the politicians at bargain-basement prices. Through the administrations of Republicans and Democrats alike, Big Pharma has raked in billions while killing more Americans with heroin than the Mexican mob. Our elected representatives only started to notice when the life expectancy of all Americans started dropping. Traffic deaths are skyrocketing due to distracted driving, but no effort is made to reign in the use of smart phones by drivers. Mass shootings — at schools, cinemas, clubs, concerts, churches, synagogues — are commonplace, killing more Americans than in all of our wars combined. The super-rich get richer while the middle class shrinks.

Both sides embrace hate because it is a big money maker. Both excoriate hate speech, pointing fingers at one another.

Hate, like beauty, is always in the eye of the beholder.

*Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line. (Disclosure: he is a heterosexual American male of European extraction).*

## The 'social justice' Oscar awards

by Jeff Davidson

**C**urious and terrible things have happened to the Oscars since the turn of the century. We can no longer be sure that acting awards are handed out for the pure art of acting. More often than not, they are dispensed to actors who've taken on specific roles that the Hollywood establishment deems to be appropriate for the times.

In essence, acting awards today are 'social justice' acting awards. If an actor portrays someone who has 'victim' status, the probability of that actor winning the Oscar, among the other nominees, is notably higher. The preponderance of acting awards to African-Americans of late, those who have portrayed gay people, and those who have portrayed others deemed to be disadvantaged, is a matter of record.

### OSCARS SO WHITE?

Since 2001, as leading or supporting actors African American men have been nominated a total 21 times, with nine taking home the Oscar. As leading or supporting actors, since 2001, African American women have been nominated 25 times, with seven taking home the Oscar. That's a total of acting 46 nominations and 16 Oscars, in 18 years, out of a total of 180 acting nominations and 36 Oscar Awards.

Said another way, in this century African Americans have garnered slightly more than 25 percent of all possible acting nominations and 19 percent of all possible acting awards. Not bad for a minority group that represents only 12 percent of the U.S. population and easily outflanks awards to Hispanics, who represent 18 percent of the population, and Asians, who represent 5 percent of the population.

Of late, African Americans have also been well-represented in the non-acting categories, as have other minorities. Despite the favorably disproportionate numbers of African Americans who have received Oscar nominations and resulting awards, two years ago "liberal Hollywood" was called out for being "so white," a bogus claim. The Left traffics in white guilt, and employs whenever it possibly can. The reality is that the "Social Justice Oscar path" has already been in places for decades and the year that the "so white" campaign was launched was an anomaly.

### MASTERY OR DIVERSITY?

The 2019 Oscars, handed out for the 2018 movie year, saw Egyptian Rami Malek win for best male actor for his portrayal of the bisexual, but ultimately gay, Freddie

Mercury. The best male supporting actor was awarded to Mahershala Ali, of the Muslim faith, for portraying the decidedly gay Dr. Bart Shirley, a concert pianist. Mr. Ali won for the second time in three years.

The best female actor was given to Olivia Colman, from the U.K., who portrayed a lesbian Queen Anne of England in *The Favourite*, gaining the nod over what had appeared to be the clear favorite, Glenn Close, a seven-time nominee, who merely played a heterosexual wife. The award for the best supporting female actor went to African-American Regina Jones, who did a credible job in the movie *If Beale Street Could Talk*.

Left out of Oscar contention was Ethan Hawke, who portrayed a pastor in *First Reformed*, despite being awarded best actor by the National Society of Film Critics Award, New York Film Critics Circle, New York Film Critics Online, Los Angeles Film Critics Association, and 11 other film societies. Also ignored was Emily Blunt who played a pregnant wife in a family that had to remain silent to avoid being annihilated by sightless aliens. The aliens killed humans on contact who happened to make any kind of audible sound. Not even nominated for an Oscar, Ms. Blunt did win "Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role," by the Screen Actors Guild. Hmmm.

### WORTHY, YES, BUT...

To be sure, all of the current Oscar winners plied their craft with merit. I will not besmirch the job that any of them did in the 2018 season. One does have to wonder, however, has the Left irrevocably infected Hollywood, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, as it has irrevocably infected the arts in general, journalism, public and private universities, elementary and secondary education, race relations, public radio, network television, cable television, public television, government service, the judicial process, and free speech itself?

With increasing frequency, dominated by Leftists, acting awards will mean less and less. The award process is so infused with the erroneous notion of 'social justice' that a brilliant performance by a Caucasian male or female, portraying a heterosexual character, may have little chance.

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## Progressive fads

by Don Lein

**O**ver the centuries, progressives have embraced various fads, but few have developed the fervor and following than has man-caused global warming with its panacea being the banning of the use of fossil fuels, among other draconian measures. We have all seen the movies with the seas rising because of the melting of the polar ice cap resulting in the flooding of Manhattan Island, the extinction of polar bears, among other catastrophes. All of this accompanied by the cacophony of "environmentalists" offering various solutions to this "problem".

Let me first make a personal statement—I have always considered myself a "conservationist". My forebearers were surveyors who surveyed the Adirondack Mountains in New York, with some noted in the Adirondack Museum at Schroon Lake. The Adirondack State Park was declared "forever wild" over a century ago. I treasure the many years I spent growing up there and the years I returned with various Boy Scout troops. The government being a custodian is a two-edged sword: while it provides funding, it also allows politics to enter into the picture which can cloud, if not obscure, the original mission of the park. I also was one of the founders and President of Chatham Parks Foundation for two decades, so I love and respect our natural heritage.

The Green New Deal of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) has once again focused our attention on our environment. Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore has characterized it as the "stupidest" of documents. Patrick has a PhD in ecology, which may or may not measure up to the wisdom of a New York bartender—not to disparage well-meaning bartenders across the fruited plain, Ted Danson/Sam Malone included. In a twitter exchange with AOC regarding her Green New Deal, his closing comments were "Pompous little twit. You don't have a plan to grow food for 8 billion people without fossil fuels, or to get the food to the cities... If fossil fuels were banned every tree in the world would be cut down for fuel for cooking and heating. You would bring about mass death."

If, indeed, fossil fuels are detrimental to the environment what should/could we do for energy? Obviously, technology has accompanied/caused our great leaps forward in other avenues. Why abandon the idea here—why not nuclear energy?? It has proven to be more reliable and environmentally safer than wind turbines (Don Quixote, anyone??) that are eyesores and decimate our bird population, or solar panels that take up huge amounts of acreage and only work when the sun is out and present problems of leakage/disposal. A very large swath of forest was recently clear cut near my home. As drove by I was thinking of those animals who no longer had a home because of some will o the wisp plan. I was wondering where the environmental activists who are concerned about the Haw River and other venues were when this was planned and executed.

Politics and energy seem like strange bedfellows. The Solyndra scandal is a prime example. Not to be outdone we Tarheels have our own questionable activity. There is a portion of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline that stretches from Virginia to South Carolina. We are in the permitting phase and sources such as the National Governor's Association has warned one of our agencies about "extorting" monies from potential vendors. In another instance, Governor Cooper's administration has advised its employees not to cooperate with a legislative committee and threatening retribution. This directive, apparently, would be in violation of a state law that protects whistleblowers. A rather lengthy story that does not reflect well upon the parties. The *Carolina Journal* has run more than 30 stories on the pipeline—simply look them up for the full story and gain an understanding of why they question the transparency of Governor Cooper's administration on this issue.

It is interesting that AOC's polling numbers have tanked. Shrewd politician that she is, she has figured out the reason — it's because the people responding to the poll are racist and sexist. She apparently overlooks such suggestions that she is unpopular among New Yorkers because 2/3 of them supported the Amazon deal and she was outspoken against it or that she is a pawn in the power politics game. She apparently is not a student of Black/minority history or she would recall a quote from Malcolm X from the 1960s, to wit: "The liberal is more deceitful than the conservative. The liberal is more hypocritical than the conservative. Both want power, but the white liberal is the one who has perfected the art of posing as the Negro's friend and benefactor; and by winning the friendship, allegiance, and support of the Negro, the white liberal is able to use the Negro as a pawn or tool in this political "football" game that is constantly raging between the white liberals and white conservatives."

Fifty+ years later with the substitution of progressive for white liberal, the quote still rings true for all minorities. And tomorrow and tomorrow as one fad leads to another the progressive will still demand the same blind allegiance. Sad!!! To quote a famous Hippie trope—"When will they ever learn, when will they ever learn???"

*Don Lein is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A Chatham resident, he is involved in a variety of civic organizations.*

## To the Editor:

I would like to address the way our local pharmacy closed. They closed the door without a word. We called the number for Pittsboro Discount Drug to find out they sold out to Walgreens.

The selling out isn't why I am upset. That's capitalism.

I am angry at the rude and disrespectful way in which they left. Without a warning they left their customers, leaving us after a relationship we'd had for many years. I know that they can't right this.

There's no apologies needed. I spend my money and it's not at Walgreens.

*Respectfully, Barb Hatcher, Pittsboro*