

Am I a racist?

Am I a racist?

What do you think.... am I?

How do you judge who is a racist?

What are the benchmarks by which we decide?

Would anyone, of any race or color, be considered a racist if he or she had ever had a negative thought based on ethnicity or skin tone?

What about someone who had sometime during their lives uttered a racial slur?

Are you one who has never racially sinned?

How many people in Bradley County do you think could honestly say they had never racially sinned?

Do you think there are members on the Cleveland City Council who have never racially sinned?

How many and which ones?

Who are the saints and who are the hypocrites?

I think the point has been made. What do you think?

Now it's my turn to speak.

America is unique among all other nations. It is a land of hope and liberty, the reason there are vast waiting lists of potential immigrants, most of whom would risk life and limb for an opportunity to become one of us. Britain's former prime minister, Tony Blair once said, "you can measure a country by how many want in and how many want out." I think Blair was right on target with his remark. The thing that makes the USA truly unique among all other nations is it's citizen's affirmed right to freedom of speech and the dissemination of ideas. Attached to this right is personal responsibility for your remarks and ideas, and the possibility that someone else is likely to say something that personally offends you. If the court

thinks you were slandered you can sue, otherwise it is American liberty at work.

During one of it's March meetings, the Cleveland City Council, and in particular, Councilman Bill Estes, decided to use their government powers to amend part of the U.S. Constitution dealing with free speech and infringement of the press. Because they said they found one of its articles offensive, they hatched a plan to prevent this newspaper, *The People News*, from reaching its readers. The plan was to embarrass everyone associated with it, even in the most remote sense and use their powers of government and the racist label as intimidation. Councilman Estes enjoyed much airtime and press sanctimoniously condemning the article and the paper, using the "R" word whenever the opportunity arose. Other council members led by Richard Banks, unanimously supported Estes' plan without discussion, out of the blue. Presumably the plan was hatched previously in private. They demanded that this editor apologize and fire June Griffin, the author of the article.

As is expected by the United States, and Tennessee Constitutions, I take full and personal responsibility for publishing the article, even though I personally didn't agree with its views or wording. Because of my firm belief in the importance of free speech and an unregulated press to what makes America special, I would not rethink my decision and will not censor Ms. Griffin's work. I can't fire her, she is not paid for her work. It is her opinion, just as if she had written a letter to the editor.

However, I do have some regrets that in all fairness, I should come clean about. I regret that through my actions, embarrassment has been caused to some of our advertisers, pick-up outlets and featured writers. I care not that Bill Estes or the other city councilors were offended in their official capacity, as I believe their actions were, at least in part, politically motivated. It does concern me that a number of our loyal readers were genuinely offended by the article. I miscalculated the reaction. It has been pointed out that it is crazy to offend your customers if you want to stay in business, so I offer this by way of explanation. The U.S. Constitution and the freedoms it guarantees are more important for me to defend and reaffirm than the popularity of either Ms. Griffin, *The People News* or myself. Any local person that feels the need, will have a voice in this publication for as long as I am able to supply it and it is within the laws of the United States. I will not succumb to government pressure to toe the line, but if you, as readers believe we are taking the wrong path then shout loudly.

What do you think?

Cleveland Witch hunt

Throughout history, men have used the witch hunt to intimidate opponents into silence.

During Roman times, Christians were fed to lions as a warning to others not to spread their faith. The 1690's saw the Salem Witch Trials where people were labeled a witch for any behavior that could not be understood. McCarthyism was a 1950's modern day witch hunt when Senator Joseph McCarthy

found he could intimidate his enemies and the general public by invoking the word Communism. Today the word of choice is Racism.

McCarthyism found many unwilling supporters in people who did not want to be labeled a communist and blacklisted from work. They were forced by intimidation to accuse their friends in this now deplorable episode of American history. People were afraid of being labeled even though they knew they were innocent of any crime. Even reporters and editors were afraid to disagree. Finally, it was Edward R. Murrow, a journalist who dared to uphold freedom of thought by challenging McCarthy.

Now the American people are faced with a similar witch hunt that is every bit as insidious as McCarthyism and it is called Racism. In McCarthy's day there were genuine communists plotting to do harm to this nation but they were not the people he accused. Today there are genuine racists, people who hate anyone from another race, violent despicable bigots that are a genuine threat to Americanism, but most of the people accused of

racism by organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, a left wing pro unrestricted immigrant access group, are being targeted to eradicate the voice of opposition, not necessarily because they are genuine racists. This political intimidation is every bit as dangerous as previous witch hunts and is happening in Bradley County right now. We are at a point where people and organizations are being labeled racist for opposing illegal immigration, a ridiculous situation.

The U.S. Constitution is designed to help protect citizens from false and unsubstantiated accusations, but it failed once and will fail again unless local people stand up for Americanism and reject the un-American actions of Councilman Bill Estes and the rest of his colleagues. Estes has not accused *The People News* of breaking any laws but I am accusing him of violating his oath of office to uphold the U.S. and Tennessee Constitutions. I am accusing him of using his government office to intimidate private businesses to further his private agenda.

Estes is one of Cleveland's educated elite, a professor at Lee University and well respected in the community, but it is worrying that his subversive, ultra liberal agenda could be a danger to the impressionable young minds he is charged with educating. If he is prepared to use witch-hunt style intimidation against the press and private business, and also disregard his own solemn oaths, who knows what other un-American practices he is imparting to his students. Lee University should seriously investigate members of its faculty who are trying to undermine the U.S. Constitution, before irreparable damage is done to its reputation.

That's what I think. What do you think?

Prediction

Danny Coggin, current principal of Walker Valley High School will be the next Director of Schools for Bradley County. The selection process interviewing applicants is for appearance only, a waste of time for all involved and an unnecessary expense to the taxpayer, like most local appointments, it was a done deal. If I am wrong, I will eat crow.

That's what I think. What do you think?

Do You Support Our Troops?

Saying you do is easy but words don't always get heard.

Cleveland teenager, Kaylee Radzysinski has found a way that your support can be heard loud and clear. She created a program called Tunes 4 The Troops.

Kaylee, a Naval Sea Cadet discovered that our Military Armed Forces have access to computers but crave American entertainment. After donating several CDs of her own she no longer listened to, she realized that others in the community may also wish to donate discs.

If you have any new or used CDs, DVDs or Books on CD you no longer need, help Kaylee Radzysinski say a big "Thank You" to our troops by donating them to Tunes 4 The Troops

For information call 472-4078

Drop-Off Locations

- Armed Forces Recruiting Offices, 1300 25th Street
- Award Realty
- Bradley Bookkeeping 129 Keith Street
- Bradley County Courthouse Room 206
- Circuit Court Clerk's Office
- Cleveland City Mayor, Tom Rowland's Office
- Cleveland High School
- Country Squire Homes, 167 S Lee Hwy.
- Dick's Graphics, 801 20th St.
- DQ Grill & Chill, 275 Paul Huff Pkwy
- National Guard Armory 4185 Dalton Pike
- Southern Heritage Bank (all locations)