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Opinion

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VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

What happened to El Centro?

Can anyone please tell me what happened to El Centro?

Back in the 1980s and 1990s, El Centro was a clean city where people showed pride in their properties, whether it was a business or a home. There was little weed overgrowth along the city streets and medians, relatively little trash or litter, and people's homes were clean and well-kept on the outside. I realize people have differing perceptions on what constitutes a nice-looking home and citizens of El Centro have no control over that, but why has the city let itself become so ugly?

I think an unsightly city says quite a lot about our City Council and the mayor's office! My wife and I were driving through El Centro recently and we both remarked how terrible and embarrassing the city looks. Why is this?

Our president repeatedly states our economy has recovered and everything is great, so the response to an unattractive city cannot be due to lack of funds, unless we have been led to believe something that is incorrect. People routinely comment on how our community has become unkempt, "trashy" and many people traveling through, or relatives who visit, hesitate to return. Can you blame them?

It wouldn't take much for the city to save money for a cleaner community; put a little money aside and at least do a cleanup once a year!

How about a citywide volunteer cleanup? Imperial Valley is a liberal community with city councilmen/women who often use the phrase "Save the Planet."

Don't you think saving the planet starts at home? Your home, your city, and your county? Didn't we just have Earth Day? The city could have chosen to have a citywide cleanup with a party afterwards, but no, instead the city chose to throw a large, seemingly worthless party at the baseball field and the next day, the park was littered with trash, bottles, and cans. Although Bucklin Park has made great improvements over the recent years, other area parks and playgrounds continue to lack attention and look neglected. As a citizen, I would rather see money spent on parks, playgrounds or places that adults and children can go to spend quality family time together.

It was disappointing to learn the exorbitant amount of money and time spent on the bus stop located on State Street, El Centro. After it was built, a local politician tell us "it's the fruits of our labor" and how beautiful it is, but I haven't spoken to anyone who thinks it's a beautiful site, rather it's an eyesore!!

People still continue to use other citywide transit bus stops, and when you drive by the new bus stop, there generally are only a handful of people nearby.

The new multi-sports complex on Eighth Street is a great idea for our youth, but only if people actually use it!! Too many times people in this community flock to new things, whether it's a new restaurant or shop for a few months, then the newness wears off and they stop going. Another failed business.

It would be nice to see money spent on projects that matter to the people and less money spent on trivial items. Maybe it's time to vote in politicians who care about our community and the beauty it could have once again.

STEVE VAN ZANT
 El Centro

LETTERS POLICY

■ Voice of the People letters are invited and will be run as soon as possible after they are received.

■ The Press reserves the right to reject letters deemed libelous, in poor taste, produced on a mass basis or solicitous.

■ Voice letters must be 350 words or fewer. "Thank You" letters must be 300 words or fewer.

■ Letters must be signed and include an address and telephone number for verification.

■ Letters by the same writer are limited to two per month.

Send your opinion to ...

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OUR VIEW

THE ISSUE:
 The passing of Sharon Ryan

WE SAY:
 Finding her niche was our gain

WHAT DO YOU SAY?
 Send us your thoughts on this topic to www.ivpressonline.com/letterstotheeditor

Ryan's passing leaves void in city, community

Sometimes people find their calling, their niche, their place in life, a bit later than others.

Such certainly appeared to be the case for Sharon Ryan, who moved to the Imperial Valley eight years ago to be closer to her children. She took a job as director of the Imperial Chamber of Commerce. In that job she more than flourished.

Ryan died last week of natural causes. Her passing shocked many because she always seemed such a vibrant, vital person.

Being the director of the chamber was not only Ryan's vocation but her avocation. She loved the job, loved the town, loved doing all she could for Imperial, for which she was a ceaseless advocate.

Under her leadership, the image of the city continued to transform from El Centro's dusty little northern neighbor to a vibrant, growing place where many in the Imperial Valley want to live.

The relationship between the Imperial City Council and the Imperial Chamber of Commerce improved

greatly during her tenure, according to those intimate with the situation. That had a lot to do with Ryan's community spirit. Ryan volunteered at countless community events, including Christmas in a Small Town, the Imperial Parade of Lights and the annual Imperial Welcome Back Teachers Luncheon.

But Ryan's love for the area extended beyond Imperial. Family members said she loved the entire Imperial Valley.

As a Navy wife of 22 years, Ryan participated in local Navy League activities and also helped with the annual Fourth of July Freedom Fest event, which is a grand Valley-wide celebration.

Described as outgoing, positive, tireless and vibrant, those who knew Ryan said they will miss her deeply. The many events and organizations with which she was associated also will have someone irreplaceable to try to replace.

Sharon Ryan did a tremendous amount in her eight years as director of the Imperial Chamber of Commerce. She had found her place in life, and everyone and everything around her benefited as a result.

ANOTHER VIEW



MY VIEW

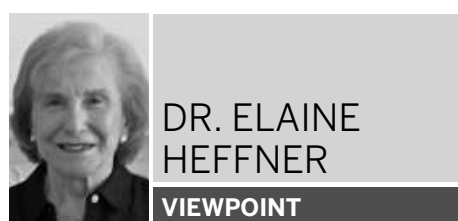
Golden rule still good way to teach

Much that is written about children these days relates to the issue of academic success and preparing children to be successful in the modern world. Now attention is being given to raising a moral child. A recent article defines a moral child as one who is kind, compassionate and helpful and suggests that this is a greater priority for parents than children's accomplishments and success. But this is not always the primary focus in raising children.

Parents respond in different ways to what they consider the bad and good behavior of their children. They may differ in the importance placed on such things as respect for the property of others, attention paid to parental wishes, sharing possessions with siblings or friends and consideration of the needs of others.

There are differences, too, in the way parents teach or enforce their values. This is connected to children's social development and parents' role in teaching and promoting social behavior. In observing young children, one can see a natural expression of empathy in some. Children may try to console someone who is upset or reassure a crying child that "mommy will come back."

At the same time, one also can see the child who is aggressive toward others, for no apparent reason. Parents and teachers may try to respond in ways that will discourage negative behavior and reinforce acts of kindness and generosity. A common adult response, particularly to young children, is to say "Good boy" or "Good girl" when we approve of something and "Bad boy" and "Bad girl" when we don't. Disapproval is usually accompanied by parental anger, and children may feel shamed as a result. A difference is noted between shame and guilt: shame reflecting the feeling that one is a bad person, while guilt expressing the feeling of having done a bad thing. The deeper question is how to help children distinguish between feelings and behavior: how to develop an ability to accept one's feelings while



DR. ELAINE HEFFNER
VIEWPOINT

not acting on them always in behavior. One can feel angry but not express it by hitting. One can want another child's toy but not grab it away.

One suggestion is that children should be taught to feel guilt rather than shame when they misbehave. Supposedly, this promotes the distinction between feelings and behavior, since shame implies being a bad person while guilt means having done a bad thing. Calling children "bad" in response to their behavior can convey to them that they are bad people and does not help them distinguish between what they feel and what they do.

But promoting guilt seems like a tricky idea. The thought is that guilt leads to feelings of remorse, which motivates good behavior. But guilt can also lead to feelings of worthlessness and can be directed toward oneself in negative ways instead of toward others in positive ways. Perhaps making moral judgments about behavior is a shortcut we take to avoid the time and effort required for teaching. Anger and other negative emotions do not make us bad people. The reason we do not act on those feelings is because we value the ability to live together with others. The rewards of living with others can only be maintained if, as the good book says, we do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

The golden rule may be a moral precept, but it can be taught to children in a way that enables them to respect their own needs and feelings as well as the needs and feelings of others. Feeling bad doesn't mean you are bad.

Elaine Heffner, LCSW, Ed.D. can be reached at her blogs at www.goodenoughmothering.com

MY VIEW

Blood red moon-gazing



RICHARD RYAN
VIEWPOINT

The first announcement I heard about viewing the blood red moon indicated we'd need to be up at 4 a.m. That was not going to happen unless the pope was speaking locally. However, as usual that was eastern time, three hours ahead of us late-sleeping Californians.

The eclipse took place around 10:30 p.m. a week ago Monday, during a full moon. We first noticed a foggy gray smudge appearing in the moon's southwest quadrant. It was unusual appearing and the beginning of the eclipse. At this point we began shuttling between the live view in the backyard and the explanations being broadcast on CNN. Fortunately Wolf Blitzer was not the announcer. If so, the eclipse would have been elevated to a galactic war or at least a loony plot by the Taliban. As it was, Fox News blamed the lunar eclipse on ObamaCare. Russia's President Putin accused the European Union of engineering the eclipse in order to ruin his moonlit Crimean cruise, making it impossible to count all of the Ukrainian ships seized by the Russians. Google twittered that photographically mapping the moon with the Google Moon Rover was impossible in the dim orange light. Google apologized for the delay and promised new technology to illuminate the moon from within. However, Google glasses would be required to see the moon's full new luster. The glasses would be available in stores soon.

Indeed, by 1 a.m. the moon was a disk of dull orange light. It was otherworldly. Not a neighbor stirred, just us insomniacs and a few cats wondering what the fuss was all about. It was a beautiful sight. The moon's orange color emerged in stages as the moon moved into the earth's shadow and received its orange tint from earth's sunrises and sunsets. The sun's light shimmered through the earth's atmosphere and projected onto the moon. How small we humans are, and that sense is heightened watching astronomical bodies put on a show.

The ever optimistic photographers that we are, my wife and I snapped away at the moon, a mere 238,900 miles away from earth. "Say cheese!" The orange dot in the photo I emailed from my phone was not merely screen lint as some of my friends claimed. Our neighbor, Steve, an amateur astronomer, thanked me for the email and orange dot. He and his wife were in cloudy, rainy Ohio and didn't get to see the eclipse at all. To add insult to injury, they awoke last Wednesday to an inch of snow and a wind-chill of 17 degrees. It was 92 degrees in the Valley on that same day.

If you missed the lunar eclipse, there will be another in October, and then two more in 2015. Mark your calendars. When I lived in West Africa, the people responded to a lunar eclipse by banging pots and pans to scare away the cat who was supposedly eating the (cheesy?) moon. I enjoyed that community spirit.

If you enjoy astronomy and looking at the planets through a telescope, come to the Imperial Valley Desert Museum's stargazing event on June 14. Details can be found at www.ivdesertmuseum.org.

Bring the family. Children are fascinated by telescopes and other worlds. Extraterrestrials are welcome, but be sure to bring your intergalactic passport. Even the Border Patrol speaks Klingon out in Ocotillo.

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