



BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

Apathy harmful to society

By Owen Barnard
associate editor

Sometimes it is hard to know just what to think, and these past couple of months are no exception. Grand juries have been called, footage of deaths has been released, and people have become divided. Organizing our scattered thoughts into coherent progress is nearly impossible, and battling the dwindling faith for humanity in our hearts becomes a continuous struggle. It is hard to believe that deep down humanity is still good when every single day people are murdered, raped, oppressed and persecuted for their beliefs.



Every day there seems to be a new development revolving around our breakdowns within society. Protests notably break out in more cities around the nation, buildings fall in flame and ashes greet us with the sunlight. All of this calls some of the most divisive issues our nation faces to center stage. But what is more important are the questions that it is requiring us to ask of ourselves and of others. It is wrenching the “why” out of the woodwork, and challenging more than what we have to discern between as fact and fiction. The streets of America have become a clash between duty and destruction, community and connection, justice and justness.

My skin color alone statistically dilutes the likelihood that I will experience a watered down set of opportunities, or fear the brutality of society on a daily basis. I never have and never will believe it to be fair that others receive fewer chances than I would on account of what they cannot control about themselves. No one should have to apologize for who they are, or be inhibited because of it. “Hands up, don’t shoot,” has become the plea of the endangered, “I can’t breathe,” the cry for reform, and both the basis of a question to us all.

How much longer can we all as fellow Americans let “out of sight, out of mind” guide our daily lives?

Too often are we consumed by internet fads and the crippling thought of forgetting to set our DVR. This is what surrounds us, and for many of us it becomes what consumes minds, consciences and our days. We neglect to view the unfortunate surroundings that we often experience without noticing. Even in our home of Oxford, there are people struggling and we go through our days without them crossing our minds. Why is it the case that we come to care only for what we are closely surrounded by?

I am liable to slip into a state in which things like having to walk across the house to get the next gallon of milk elicit words like tragedy and disaster, when in actuality they are nothing more than a mere inconvenience. Red lights are not my sworn enemies, the “right” side of Sonic is not a necessity and the parking meters on the Square aren’t robbing me. What I have come to realize throughout this process is that my problems are trivial compared to the injustices that are raging around the world and the United States. Are my inconveniences so significant to me that they overshadow the struggles of the oppressed?

Michael Brown’s life was lost too soon, Eric Garner struggled for breath, and in Tamir Rice, childish play really did become life or death. A life lost so early is never easy to stomach for anyone, and the actions of just a few around the nation will forever be carved into the stone of history, etched into our history books, and maybe taught someday. But there is still a bigger picture. I am in no place to comment on what happened, I wasn’t there in any of the situations. I thank the law enforcement of every city in America for the sacrifices that they make on our behalf. I empathize with those who lost loved ones, and I deeply support those who fight the injustices of the world firsthand. I hate to see the destruction that has come in the wake of these tragedies. Martin Luther King Jr. once said “A riot is the language of the unheard.” In a nation predicated on freedom, why do we still not listen when those in need speak?

Frances Wright writes that equality is the soul of liberty; there is, in fact, no liberty without it. The masses of protestors have many motives, but the deeply rooted desire to have the right to exercise all freedoms ordained to us by the laws of our country is just and righteous cause. At all times we maintain many rights, including those of speech, religion, press, petition, and assembly. Sometimes it is perceived that a larger reaction will elicit a larger solution, but the level of care our society neglects to show is beyond public protesting. We need to refocus and delve together into the issues that pierce our cities and communities.

While the whys of our world may never be carved out of their calloused knots in the woodwork of our society, it is of dire importance that we continue to ask questions of ourselves and our way of life. Ask why in our nation there are still those without a voice.

Ask why our world ever overshadows that of the oppressed. Stress the importance of that which extends beyond what our eyes see in the normal light of one day. See that which is unseen. Remember we are all in this one boat together. It is not the time for a new wave of Twitter politicians; it’s time for us all to become someone with change for a mission.

Just remember, where we start is up to us all, and feeling confused is just