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September 25, 2013

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Re: Blessed are the prepared; multiracial casting; substance abuse; *INDY* endorsements

Re: Blessed are the prepared

I was appalled by the cover for the Sept. 11 issue ("**Blessed are the prepared**"). Would you have mocked Jews or Muslims in this way? As a longtime reader of the *INDY*, I expected better than crude Catholic bashing.

Marjorie C. Malley, Cary

Editor's note: We used Catholic imagery because Monica Byrne's play is about Catholicism, women and birth control. Had her production explored these issues in the context Judaism or Islam, we would have visually portrayed those faiths similarly.

Re: Multiracial casting

It was very satisfying to read Byron Woods' words on theater casting and race identity in his review of Little Green Pig's production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*: "... the only true limits in theatrical casting are those of the imagination." ("**Masterpiece theater**," Sept. 11)

At Durham Family Theatre, I serve as artistic director of an intentionally multiracial community-based theater entering our fourth season of what we term "Rainbow Casting." To further the practice of casting across racial lines, DFT has adopted an institutional policy stating that any DFT production that fails to attract a multiracial cast simply does not go forward. We are dedicated to helping stretch imaginations toward a near future where all U.S. theaters will practice such casting.

Thanks to Mr. Woods for his eloquent support of an exciting and long overdue change in how plays are cast. As he observed, artists (and I would add audiences) "flourish only when they're allowed to explore all regions of the human experience."

Jenny Justice, Durham Family Theatre

Re: Substance abuse

Thanks for the recent article on substance abuse in Durham chronicling STARR program graduate Eric Graham's story ("**Stealing home**," Sept. 11). According to Durham TRY, nearly 20,000 people in Durham are addicted to substances, including alcohol, marijuana and opioids. Thousands more people in Durham use substances regularly, including high school and middle school students.

There are lots of ways people can help those like Graham who battle addiction. Prevention of substance use, intervention for users and recovery programs are abundant in Durham through programs like Durham TRY, TROSA and Durham's Wellness City. It's thanks to successful programs like STARR that Graham's story shines, and it will take many more volunteers to help others like him.

Let's invest in Durham's organizations dedicated to ending substance abuse.

Elizabeth Poindexter, DurhamCares

Re: *INDY* endorsements

Like the editors, I support increased density in Raleigh. The City of Oaks suffered significantly from bad growth in the Fetzer-Coble era. That is why I was troubled by an argument in **last week's Raleigh endorsements**.

You write: "What could go wrong? ... maybe ... the scale of growth—all the big-box apartment buildings with their giant parking garages full of cars will overwhelm the old neighborhoods."

But more downtown construction is the definition of density. Absent new buildings, two paths are possible. One is that rents would rise to crippling levels. On the other hand, developers could use tightening downtown markets as an excuse to resume sprawl. Either way, the densification project loses out.

This is why the obsession with preservation functions, essentially, as a snake eating its tail. When neighborhood advocates succeed, incumbents avoid the dilution of property values and sentimental attachments remain undisturbed. Meanwhile, low-income people are forced to live farther away from the best

jobs. If we truly care about density and social justice, we must consider the possibility that for once developers may be on our side.

Alex Jones, Raleigh

Reading the **INDY endorsements for Wake County school board** this week, I found myself wishing you had pointed out something very important about Nancy Caggia, candidate in District 9.

Caggia was a loyal supporter of Ron Margiotta during his term on the board, his destructive reign as chairman and his run for re-election. In fact, a close friend stood across from Caggia at a polling location on Election Day in 2011 as Caggia actively campaigned for Margiotta. This is a red flag for me and would be for many others if they knew.

What about him and his leadership did she so loyally support? I attended the debate you referenced in your endorsements article between Caggia and Bill Fletcher and agree the two were pretty much on the same page. I thought she did a good job and even told her so. But I have to wonder if Caggia has the same agenda in mind for our schools as Margiotta. If so, it's critical voters know this and cast their votes for Bill Fletcher.

Lynn Edmonds, Raleigh

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