

# OPINION

JOHN S. KNIGHT (1894-1981)

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JAMES L. KNIGHT (1909-1991)

The Miami Herald | EDITORIAL

## Good for Miami

**OUR OPINION:** Miami 21 recognized as effective blueprint for growth

Progress often is the result of a hard-won fight: blocks, feints, counterpunches, cheers and jeers. It was no less with the birth of Miami 21, former Mayor Manny Diaz's vision to bring the city's code of planning and development into the 21st century.

Mr. Diaz — and a host of advocates of New Urbanism in and out of city government — sought to replace the city's Byzantine building code that allowed high-rises to tower over bungalows, gave private interests free rein over public property and blocked with construction water views that folks in Topeka would die for.

The former mayor had a better plan — Miami 21 — which has just been awarded the American Planning Association's National Planning Award for Best Practice.

Mr. Diaz, who has continued his civic involvement, can be justifiably proud.

Miami 21, which went into effect last March, is a blueprint for creating pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, bringing order and coherence to the zoning code and, ultimately, new development.

It took some doing to get all the stakeholders on board. Developers who could almost always count on a free ride in Miami saw it coming to an end; residents in older neighborhoods feared their home would still be overshadowed by too-high highrises. Indeed, some skirmishes continue around height limits.

The APA's Best Practice award is given for a specific planning element or process that advances the role of planning. The APA says, "For the first time ever in a major U.S. city, Miami 21 uses a form-based code — a method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form that improves the relationship between streets and the public realm."

It's a glowing endorsement of a well-thought-out plan that now needs time to work.

### VERBATIM

## Talk that heals, not wounds

*Below are excerpts from remarks by President Barack Obama at the Jan. 12 memorial service for the victims of the shooting in Tucson, Arizona.*

To the families of those we've lost; to all who called them friends; to the students of this university, the public servants gathered tonight, and the people of Tucson and Arizona: I have come here tonight as an American who, like all Americans, kneels to pray with you today, and will stand by you tomorrow. There is nothing I can say that will fill the sudden hole torn in your hearts.

But know this: the hopes of a nation are here tonight. We mourn with you for the fallen. We join you in your grief. And we add our faith to yours that Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and the other living victims of this tragedy pull through. As Scripture tells us: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

Our hearts are full of hope and thanks for the 13 Americans who survived the shooting.

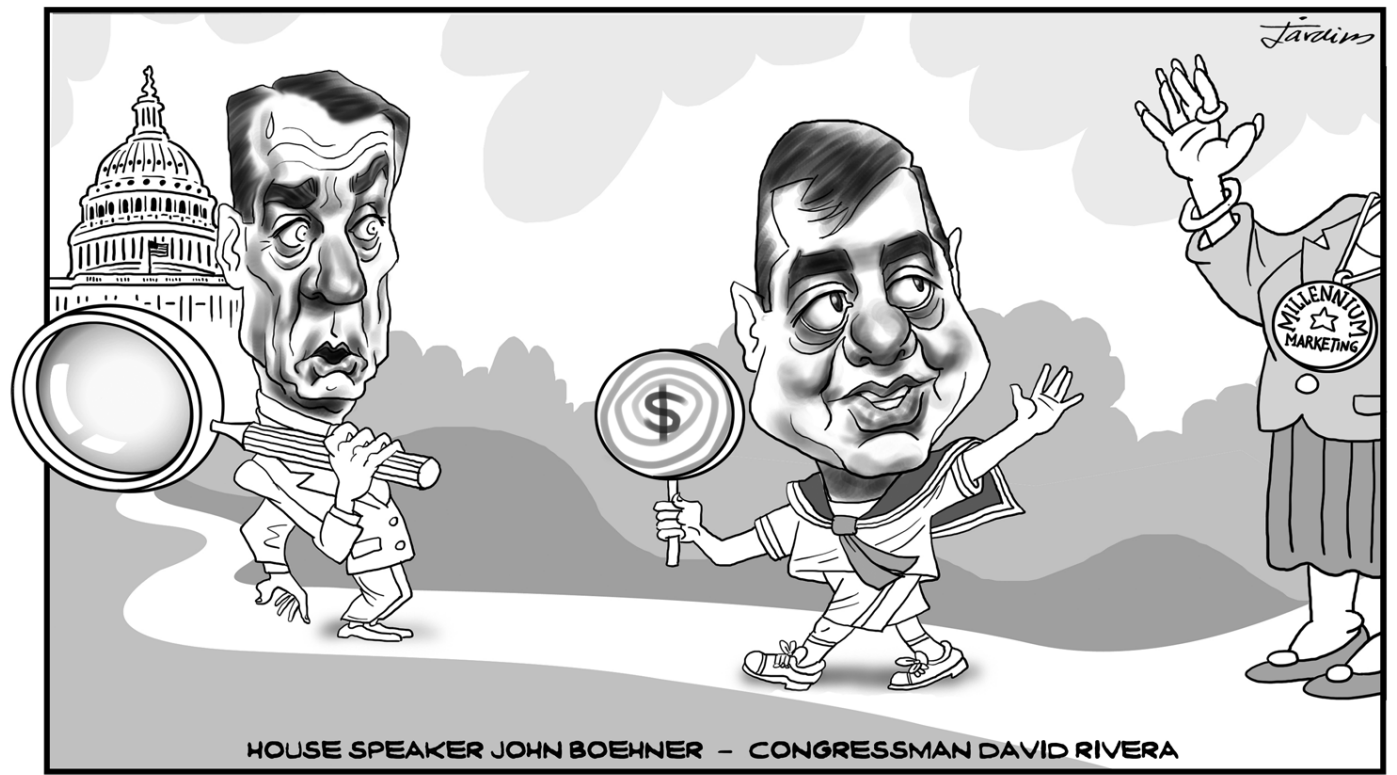
And our hearts are full of gratitude for those who saved others. We are grateful for Daniel Hernandez, a volunteer in Gabby's office who ran through the chaos to minister to his boss, tending to her wounds to keep her alive. We are grateful for the men who tackled the gunman as he stopped to reload. We are grateful for a petite 61 year-old, Patricia Maisch, who wrestled away the killer's ammunition, undoubtedly saving some lives. And we are grateful for the doctors and nurses and emergency medics who worked wonders to heal those who'd been hurt.

These men and women remind us that heroism is found not only on the fields of battle. They remind us that heroism does not require special training or physical strength. Heroism is here, all around us, in the hearts of so many of our fellow citizens, just waiting to be summoned.

Their actions, their selflessness, also pose a challenge to each of us. It raises the question of what, beyond the prayers and expressions of concern, is required of us going forward. How can we honor the fallen? How can we be true to their memory? You see, when a tragedy like this strikes, it is part of our nature to demand explanations — to try to impose some order on the chaos, and make sense out of that which seems senseless.

Already we've seen a national conversation commence, not only about the motivations behind these killings, but about everything from the merits of gun-safety laws to the adequacy of our mental-health systems. Much of this process, of debating what might be done to prevent such tragedies in the future, is an essential ingredient in our exercise of self-government.

But at a time when our discourse has become so sharply polarized — at a time when we are far too eager to lay the blame for all that ails the world at the feet of those who think differently than we do — it's important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we are talking with each other in a way that heals, not a way that wounds.



HOUSE SPEAKER JOHN BOEHNER — CONGRESSMAN DAVID RIVERA

DANIEL JARDIM / EL NUEVO HERALD

## THE READERS' FORUM

### Stand with the people of Israel

On Sunday, more than 800 people in our community will gather for a summit convened by the Greater Miami Jewish Federation Jewish Community Relations Council, together with nearly 60 organizational partners, agencies and synagogues. Tragically, what brings us together is a foreboding sense that we must now educate ourselves on how best to combat the increasingly vocal and sophisticated campaign that calls into question Israel's very right to exist as a sovereign state among the community of nations.

While Israel welcomes legitimate criticism, make no mistake that this anti-Israel movement is an attempt to willfully and cynically distort the facts and falsify Israel's history, policies and human-rights record. People may differ on Israel's policies and debate the issues. However, this movement is clearly born out of anti-Semitism, and its ultimate aim is to isolate Israel from the family of nations. These efforts include boycotts, divestments and sanctions of Israeli products, professionals, corporations, academics, athletes and artists.

This virulent campaign

is aimed at the only country in the Middle East that shares our democratic values as Americans, one that is a staunch ally of the United States and a true partner in fighting terrorism and advancing peace in the region. Israel is a modern, progressive country guaranteeing freedom of speech, press and religion where Christians, Muslims and Jews share civil liberties and basic human rights, including the right to vote. This delegitimization movement uses double standards against Israel's moral obligation to protect its citizens and defend itself against terrorism. As Americans, that violates our sense of what is just and what is fair.

More than six decades after the founding of the State of Israel, it is hard to believe that there is still a need to stand against people and forces determined to wipe Israel off the map. Now, this message, motivated by hate and laden with misinformation, has made its way into our homes, schools, businesses, civic circles, cultural venues and even supermarkets through both traditional means and the widespread use of the Internet. The ranting and threats of Holocaust-de-

nier Iranian President Ahmadinejad are now part of a growing movement of individuals and organizations who cannot tolerate the very existence of Israel, a modern and democratic nation in the midst of the Middle East, and who increasingly feel they have a receptive audience for their hateful message.

People of goodwill will recognize that any threat to Israel and the Jewish people ought to be viewed as a threat to all freedom-loving people around the world. On the occasion of this community gathering, the Jewish community recognizes with heartfelt appreciation the support of the citizens of Miami-Dade County, and we ask that you continue to stand with the people of Israel. Let us never give credence to the cynical manipulation of facts, and let us continue to work to stem the tide of this most destructive movement. Doing so will enable us to work together toward the greater purpose that we all desire: bringing a just and lasting peace to all people in the Middle East and a world free of the scourge of anti-Semitism, terror and hate.

- JACOB SOLOMON, president and CEO, Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Miami

### Don't blame right

Starting to read Leonard Pitts Jr.'s Jan. 12 Other Views column *Born in hope, she leaves lesson*, I was ready to send him a congratulatory note for the great human feeling he was expressing about the tragic shootings in Tucson.

But then he wrote: "It was probably to be expected that the political spin was in motion before the bodies had been cooled. Tea Party activist Judson Phillips quickly deflected blame for the tragedy."

Pitts neglected to mention that the first person to put the spin in motion was the local sheriff, a Democrat, who gave the alleged killer's defense lawyers a very strong argument when he blamed, without proof, the inflammatory rhetoric of conservative commentators, activists and politicians for motivating him. After that undignified remark, many other commentators on the left let loose with similar accusations.

Pitts should practice what he preaches — to be tolerant of others, to not make conclusions without facts.

- JULIAN DARIO MIYARES, Miami

### Wrong on 'blood libel'

While I am in the minority of people who

believe that Sarah Palin should not have been associated with any guilt over the shootings in Tucson, I am, nevertheless, quite upset with her calling any criticism a "blood libel."

A "blood libel" is against people of a partic-

ular faith, and, if anything, it is Palin who has committed a "blood libel" when she came out against a mosque at Ground Zero, tainting all those of Islamic faith for the actions of a handful.

- HERB WOLFSON, Bal Harbour



A medical marijuana shop in Venice Beach, Calif.

## Decriminalize pot

Recent articles about marijuana caused me to think back to the first time I bought some in Chicago in 1960. I bought a clean ounce in a shot glass for \$5. No one was looking in my car or poking in my pockets to find a way to arrest me.

I gave up the habit many years ago, but still hear of "ounces for \$100" and "policemen searching cars" for pot so they can arrest the user. Today's prices from Mexico are horrendous, and the simplest way stop the fighting and killing at the border is to decriminalize the "drug."

Marijuana was very popular during the 1920s and '30s, but never caused the problems we have today. Just as making beer and whiskey available took the profits away from the Mafia, we could save a lot of policemen's checks that are so difficult to pay these days.

- JOHN E. BROWN, Miami

## Blogosphere

Excerpts from KJ Dell'Antonia on slate.com.

The Wall Street Journal Weekend's Review section, in typical hyperbolic media fashion, excerpts perhaps the most inflammatory pages of Amy Chua's memoir, 'Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother.'

In a piece titled 'Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior,' Chua appears to argue her premise without hesitation. Here she is on the dichotomy between Chinese and Western mothers: 'Despite our squeamishness about cultural stereotypes, there are tons of studies out there showing marked and quantifiable differences between Chinese and Westerners when it comes to parenting.'

Chua writes, 'The fact is that Chinese parents can do things that would seem unimaginable — even legally actionable — to Westerners. Chinese mothers can say to their daughters, 'Hey fatty—lose some weight.' . . . Chinese parents can order their kids to get straight As. . . . If a Chinese child gets a B — which would never happen — there would first be a screaming, hair-tearing explosion. The devastated Chinese mother would then get dozens, maybe hundreds of practice tests and work through them with her child for as long as it takes to get the grade up to an A.'

Chinese parents, Chua says, just expect more from their kids, and they also believe their kids can handle the burden of all those expectations. 'Western' readers (those who don't take offense in the first paragraph) will find plenty of hooks for our many parental insecurities in Chua's apparently hereditary conviction that she actually knows how to parent. But as confident as she sounds here, there's plenty of hesitation in the full text of Chua's memoir. The WSJ excerpt tells the story of how she dragged her youngest daughter, kicking and screaming (literally) through learning a difficult piano piece: 'I told her to stop being lazy, cowardly, self-indulgent and pathetic. . . . We worked right through dinner into the night, and I wouldn't let Lulu get up, not for water, not even to go to the bathroom.' Lulu eventually gets it and performs the piece to much applause, which even she enjoys. 'Nothing is fun,' Chua reminded us earlier, "until you're good at it," and both of Chua's daughters get very, very good. For a while.

Ultimately, Chua's kids seem reasonably proud of their intense upbringing.

Chua became a tenured professor at Yale Law School while spending what seems like a mathematically impossible number of hours sitting with (and screaming at) her daughters while they studied and practiced.

"[M]any Chinese secretly believe that they care more about their children and are willing to sacrifice much more for them than Westerners, who seem perfectly content to let their children turn out badly," she says, and although she's most concerned with arguing that her children were better off, it's her sacrifice that stayed with me.

## Jabs

"A new study shows that a woman's tears can chemically lower the level of testosterone in a man. When that happens, the man will also start to cry and then eventually be elected speaker of the House."

- JAY LENO

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