



# NORTH COUNTY TIMES



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## Roses & raspberries

North County Times

### Editorial

A rose ---- the "Vox populi" award ---- to the 270 million citizens of the United States, who have displayed admirable patience and understanding while the politicians and lawyers have snarled their way through repeated lawsuits and vote recounts Florida for almost two weeks. Regardless of which side one takes in this impenetrable political and legal thicket, citizens across the country have showed restraint and many have enjoyed a protracted opportunity to learn more about how our political and legal systems work. The Electoral College, county regulations, state laws, constitutional issues and the order of presidential succession have all come in for scrutiny ---- not to mention the word of the week, chad. Though denunciations and bitter jibes have been hurled about, virtually all of them came from the political class and their hired legal guns. The average citizens ---- Democrats, Republicans, Greens, Reformists and the undecideds ---- have gotten along famously while the presidential election has hung in the balance. For all of the carping we do about our political and legal systems, the past two weeks have demonstrated Americans' deep faith in the stability and fundamental fairness of our political and legal systems. Seldom is there a need to have recourse to the courts after an election. But there was a need this time around, and as the courts slowly unweave this complex skein of events, Americans have treated every step of the battle with interest, civility and an honest desire to understand. Whoever emerges as the winner may go down in history with an asterisk by his name, but there is no doubt this has been a fine moment in the history of the men and women in the street. We have answered the famous question asked years ago by Rodney King: "People, can't we all get along?" Sure, we can. That's just what we're doing.

A rose ---- the "Civic Comity" award ---- to the Palomar College Performing Arts Department and its faculty and staff diversity committee, for sponsoring Speak Out, a Thursday night workshop called to discuss racism in the U.S. educational system. That's a touchy subject in the United States, and around the world. But the only way to eliminate the scourge of racism is to talk about it, calmly and with mutual respect. That's the mood that prevailed at Palomar College Thursday night among a crowd of more than 150. This is a subject about which there may always be disagreements, and honest, open discussion about it is heard far too seldom. Palomar and all of North County should be proud of the organizers of this event, and proud of Palomar College for taking community leadership on an issue of such vital importance.

A rose ---- the "Hero" award ---- to the late Uriel Valdez Oropeza of Vista, who saved his granddaughter's life at the cost of his own by pushing her out of the path of a speeding truck that police said hit and killed him. Valdez, 68, was picking flowers with his 5-year-old

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granddaughter when a Ford Ranger that police said was driven by a drag-racing teen-ager crashed through a retaining wall, down an embankment and struck the retired landscaper. Valdez was able to push the little girl away just before the truck struck him, police said. That's a terrible tragedy for the Valdez family. We join the Valdezes' friends and neighbors in Vista in offering condolences to the family of this brave man.

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