**15391, Helen Houston**

The Un-United States of America and Communities across the Nation By-Helen Houston

Dear Editor:

According to SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center), there are currently 892 active hate groups in America. That does not tell us how many hate groups are in our local community, which concerns me. The SPLC defines hate groups: “All hate groups have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics.” It is very disheartening to be surrounded by so much hatred in our country, but what troubles me more is the hatred that is building in my own community. Hatred between the city, organizations, the people and hatred within your own race, not by just one group or race of people, but by many in all arenas.

Here is an excerpt from a recent discussion on Facebook from the Hobbs Commission Cameras Page: Shirley Reever said, “Why do we have an African/American Chamber, a Hispanic Chamber and a Chamber of Commerce? That is Insanity!” Alan Eades responded, “Exactly… Imagine how strong One Chamber of Commerce would be if everyone would work together.” Shirely Reever responded, “Just another rat hole to pour money down.”And, “Don’t even get me started on Miss Juneteenth!”

Mr. Eades, this statement is true, but are you working with any of these groups to bridge any gaps? Have you ever considered why there is a need for more than one chamber? Why is there a need for more than one Baptist Church, Holiness Church, and Methodist Church, Church of Christ, etc. or a variety of social and cultural clubs? It sure isn’t about over-flow, but rather about unmet needs, lack of representation for a group or culture.

Just as you typed your agreement to Shirley Reever’s comment, “Just another rat hole to pour money down”, this is the reason why we need more than one. The African-American Chamber of Commerce is not a “Rat Hole”. How can you represent me if you hate me? How can I represent you if you hate me? The actions and responses from Alan Eades and Shirley Reever do not surprise or move me because they are common among people with this mindset.

What is more disheartening is when any race, hates who you are and where you came from? There can be no grater racism than the racism in one’s own racial group. This is where most “Negros”, like the main representative of the Hobbs NM NAACP fits. When he stands to acknowledge the local groups for their support at their annual banquet, he cannot make himself say the name of the African-American Chamber of Commerce. Yet he wants our support with the feeling of entitlement, wanting and needing attention from the other side while perpetrating a false image of a model citizen.

You cannot organize or support the organization who supports you. Instead, you choose to support a group who hates you and only has plans to hold you down. Blacks separate themselves when they look thru the window and want what the other man has, not realizing that they have their own resources. Make it happen and own it! The old master mentality is consuming the man with the need to please his master.

This is what creates hatred within one’s own race, creating oppression. You’re only happy when you are patronizing the man who has his foot on your head holding you and your future generation back. If you cannot support your own race, your stores, your churches, your black organizations and where you came from, how can you be angry at the man who you think is holding you back and keep you in a glass cage? You hate your own, so stop complaining, stop showing up at meetings ranting about issues you don’t support or have a clue about what’s going on.

If there should only be ONE Chamber, which one should it be? I am so tired of the hatred and the people who believe that other races and creeds do not have the rights to self-representation. I’m even more saddened for the hatred and separation practiced amid my own race. I love you even if you hate me, dislike me or dislike the African-American Chamber of Commerce. I choose not to form judgments and let some misunderstanding, your jealousy, or your poor opinions cause me to practice hatred among any organization, race or creed of people. I will continue to support all organizations because I do not, nor does the African-American Chamber of Commerce, practice hatred or separatism through any type of ignorance.

Sincerely,

Helen Houston