

Dear Lynn,

2/4/56

Thanks for JD -- what do the initials stand for, JUST DESEGREGATION? Been a long time since I've heard from you, come to think of it. Glad to know you are still around fandom. Myself, I'm gaffiated to the point of inertia -- haven't even finished reading my FAPA & SAPS Mailings. Yes, I'm back in the latter, or at least I expect to be in the next mailing. I heard the membership was down to 23 and only 7 on the Waiting List and I just couldn't bear the thought of an ape I once loved starving to death that way..... (Above not for publication).

I note that JD 24 seems dedicated to the integration problem. Up here, we find it difficult to comprehend what all the fuss is about. We have been integrated all along and just simply can't understand why there is such resentment about letting negro children go to the same schools with the white children. Children don't mind color -- it is only when they grow up that they notice a difference, socially. Here we have negroes, Chinese, Japs, and an occasional Indian or Phillipine kid mixed in among the whites and the only difference it makes is that it's kind of hard on the white scholars that the Japanese and Chinese kids are so much smarter they always win the prizes! I remember a comment that was floating around Seattle at the beginning of WWII when all the Japanese were sent to concentration camps, "What are the schools going to do for Valetudinarians now that all the Japs are gone?" I guess during the war was the first time in years that white kids got a chance at the highest scholastic standing.

Same way with the public parks. I can see where it is an annoyance to have the swimming pools closed up. We haven't had any trouble like that here, but there was a somewhat similar occurrence. Negroes started using one particular part of one of our public parks near one of the swanky residential districts. People that used to go there just stopped going there, and now I understand it is a sort of unofficial negro section. But it came about because the negroes preferred to stick together, not because anybody told them they couldn't go elsewhere. They do go to the other parks, too, but not to any noticeable extent. The negroes who are sufficiently interested in the things that white citizens enjoy to bother to attend them, are indistinguishable except by their skin -- in appearance and behavior they act just like anybody else so nobody minds them or even notices if they come to the same concerts, movies, dances, etc. etc. Comparatively few do, though. Mostly they prefer their own amusements. But the point is, nobody cares whether they come or not. We don't even notice. So why make all the fuss?

That's the typical Northern attitude. We just can't see why it should make any difference to the whites down South when it doesn't make any difference to us up here. But underneath this uncomprehending indifference, we - some of us, anyway - feel a sort of indignation against our fellow white citizens because they are unjust to our fellow colored citizens. Like getting sore at our brother for kicking our sister, it is a family quarrel and we take sides with the injured one. Because it seems to us that if negroes are citizens, they should be given the same civic privileges as every other citizen. They pay taxes, so they also should use the tax-supported institutions. Schools that are good enough for one, are good enough for the other, too. From our distance up here, we can't see them as 'Negroes' -- we can only see them as citizens that are being denied the use of schools their taxes help pay for; being denied their right, as a citizen, to vote without intimidation. It seems to us that a citizen is a citizen. We look around and see that our colored neighbors are just as good citizens as we are, and feel kind of burned up that American Citizens are being pushed around. Does that attitude seem incomprehensible to you? Of course, miscegenation is something else again. I don't approve of mixing races -- but I can't see that letting kids go to the same school means they have to share the same bed. After all, schools are not matrimonial bureaus.