

# OPINION

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION



DAVE GRANLUND



**Your Turn**  
Ray Smythe  
Guest columnist

## ‘Words are a powerful commodity’

“Words have magical power. They can either bring the greatest happiness or the deepest despair.” Sigmund Freud wrote this quote and he is so correct. Words are the most powerful commodity on the planet. Let me share some examples of their power.

Many years ago, I was a first-year teacher at a very rough middle school in Portland, Oregon. It was a low-income area with a high crime rate. I was a lousy teacher. The education classes I had taken in college had not prepared me for dealing with these resistant students.

One spring day, I was walking up to the school office. I was planning on quitting and finding another career. As I was walking to the office our principal, Alice, was walking toward me. When we met in the hallway, she took one hand placing it on my arm and the other in my hand. She said, “Ray, you do really good work.” I couldn’t believe the words coming from her mouth. However, they changed my life. She believed in me and knew I would be a successful teacher. Of course, I went on to be a teacher for 39 years. I had a very rewarding career, and I owe it to those encouraging words of my principal decades ago.

During World War II, England stood alone against the German Luftwaffe. The infamous Blitz of London and other cities lasted over eight months. Thousands of innocent English citizens were killed and scores of buildings destroyed. It was a bleak time in English history. Having said that, words pulled the English people together. Store owners plastered the outside of their buildings with signs that said, “Business as usual.” The phrase, “Keep calm and carry on,” was used to uplift people’s spirits. Winston Churchill’s famous quote, “Never give up. Never give up. Never give up,” rallied the British population. Again, the power of words helped the English endure and survive Hitler’s nightly bombings.

“One kind word can change someone’s entire day.” – Unknown.

I find this so true here in the valley. People are very generous with compliments whether you are in a grocery store, bank or some other venue. The other day I was at Trader Joe’s and two strangers came up to me and said, “I love your colorful shirt. It is so Palm Springs.” Of course that made me feel great. Recently, I was talking with a new checker at a local store. He was lots of fun to visit with as he was ringing up my bill. After I had paid my bill I said to him, “You have a great personality.” You could just see him beam with pride. Again, the power of words can make or break someone’s day.

Movies have celebrated the power of words for decades. Think of Rhett Butler saying, “Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn,” to Scarlett O’Hara in “Gone with the Wind.” Bette Davis saying, “It is going to be a bumpy night, fasten your seatbelts,” in “All About Eve.” Judy Garland murmuring, “There’s no place like home,” in “The Wizard of Oz,” or the infamous “Star Wars” quote, “May the force be with you.” Yes, movies have given us thousands of powerful word phrases through the years.

A friend of mine had a very abusive father. When he kicked her out of the house at 18, he said, “you will never amount to anything.” Those words really stung her heart. However, she ended up becoming a nurse and earned a Ph.D. in nursing. She became a highly skilled nurse working with all sorts of patients including AIDS patients when people were afraid to care for them. Those negative words from her father became a catalyst for her to enjoy a very successful life.

Last, but certainly not least, I have been submitting columns to The Desert Sun for over 20 years. So many people write to me and say the kindest words. Readers have consistently said things like, “I always enjoy your columns,” “Your column always makes my morning,” or “Never stop writing.” Those positive words keep me going. Thanks to all of you who have written to me.

“The tongue has no bones, but it is strong enough to break a heart. So be careful with your words.” Unknown. I think this quote says it all. Choose your words carefully as they can make or break a person’s day or life.

Ray Matlock Smythe is an author/retired teacher. His most popular book continues to be “Coping with Grief – My Personal Journey of Learning to Overcome Sorrow.” He lives in Cathedral City and can be reached at Rayme49@aol.com.

## Supporting H1-B visas: A personal perspective on innovation and opportunity



**Your Turn**  
Joe Wallace  
Guest columnist

As a young engineer in the early days of Silicon Valley’s technological boom, I had the privilege of being part of a team at Verbatim Corporation that developed and demonstrated the world’s first erasable optical disk. This innovation, later commercialized as the CD-ROM burner, revolutionized data storage. Looking back, it’s clear that the success of this project – and countless others in tech – would not have been possible without the contributions of professionals who came to the U.S. under the H1-B visa program.

In the early 1980s, Verbatim’s engineering team showcased global collaboration. Our vice president of engineering, director of research and development and directors of drive and media development all came to the U.S. on H1-B visas. Two young engineers on the team were also H1-B visa holders. These individuals, all with at least a bachelor’s degree in engineering, played critical roles in overcoming technical challenges. Under the leadership of my manager, Dr. Ingolf Sander, we tackled some of the most complex problems in data storage. Our wages were among the highest in Silicon Valley, and none of these H1-B holders displaced American workers. Instead, they filled a skills gap essential for our success.

H1-B visa holders often go on to create jobs and drive economic growth. Consider these examples of technology leaders who began their journeys in the U.S. on H1-B visas:

- Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, transitioned from a student visa to an H1-B, driving innovations in AI and cloud computing.
- Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet, started his career on an H1-B, overseeing transformative products like Google Chrome and Android.
- Jensen Huang, founder and CEO of NVIDIA, whose GPUs revolutionized gaming, AI and high-per-

formance computing.

These individuals’ contributions have generated millions of jobs and positioned the U.S. as a global tech leader.

Critics argue the H1-B program suppresses wages or displaces American workers, but my experience tells a different story. In the 1980s, demand for skilled engineers outpaced supply. Companies like ours competed globally for talent, offering competitive salaries to attract the best minds. The H1-B program was a lifeline that enabled innovation and growth.

Today, industries like software development and biotechnology still face shortages of qualified candidates. Restricting H1-B visas risks stifling innovation and losing competitive advantage to other countries. H1-B visa holders are not just employees; many become entrepreneurs. A 2016 study found that immigrant-founded firms account for 25% of all venture-backed startups in the U.S., disproportionately driving job creation and economic dynamism.

The personal stories of my colleagues at Verbatim underscore the promise of the American dream. Many chose to become U.S. citizens, raising families and contributing to their communities. Their journeys exemplify the power of opportunity and innovation.

As we tackle 21st-century challenges, the need for skilled professionals has never been greater. The H1-B visa program enables the U.S. to attract the brightest minds from around the world. By investing in this program, we ensure a future where engineers, scientists, and entrepreneurs can build on the foundations we’ve laid.

My experience at Verbatim demonstrates the critical role H1-B visa holders play in advancing innovation and economic growth. From groundbreaking products like the CD-ROM burner to transformative companies like Microsoft and NVIDIA, skilled immigrants are vital to our success. As a nation, we must support policies that welcome talent and foster collaboration to maintain the U.S.’s position as a global technology leader.

Joe Wallace is a retired CEO of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership. He can be reached at jjw0729@aol.com.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### President Joe Biden appears delusional in exit interview

One does not need to be a Trump supporter to find Susan Page’s exit interview with President Biden stunning. The setup of Biden behind the Oval Office desk with FDR’s picture has all the earmarks of a puff piece. Beyond that, Biden suggesting he would have won the election after his June debate performance that America’s leadership in the world has been restored and that his biggest regret is that he did not counter misinformation sufficiently makes him appear delusional.

Paul Seideman, Rancho Mirage

President Joe Biden’s presidency was an abject failure

Someone made a mistake and put the funny pages on the cover of the Jan. 8 issue of The Desert Sun. Joe Biden had a career of “honesty and integrity?” A really

big joke! Was plagiarizing his papers and reports an act of honesty? How about saying he had degrees and accolades which he did not have? Or, promising, numerous times, not to pardon his son Hunter and turning around and pardoning him for the existing convictions and all things he may have done during the time Mr. Biden was both vice president and president. Constantly saying that our southern border was secure while millions of undocumented immigrants, from many foreign countries, crossed the border and disappeared into society on a daily basis.

Most of those undocumented immigrants also received federal taxpayer funds while many Americans went without food and shelter. Looking at integrity, President Biden said the transition of power would be peaceful and without issues. But he is now putting as many roadblocks in the way of the incoming administration as he could, while searching for more in the next 12 days. This is a sad state of affairs! Joe Biden will not admit that his presidency was an abject failure!

William R. Logsdon, Sr., Palm Desert

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Community Member

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