

## Diversity from page 1A

Any notions student panelists would tread softly were quickly dispelled. Interracial dating was one of the first topics brought up. "It's interesting how complicated race can be," said Harrison High student Will Myers, who is white. "If I date an Asian American, I don't think many people would notice as much. A shade of color can make such a difference."

Added Harrison High student Josh Burt: "When you see a black and white couple walking in the mall, you can see the eyes rolling, the smirks. . . . You don't need that."

"Even if it's not your preference to date someone outside your race, you should be open-minded."

Since the O.J. Simpson trial, Burt said black males who date white females are often stereotyped by whites as batterers. Another panelist later cautioned Burt about his perception.

"You can layer generalizations on top of generalizations," Myers said.

Students reflected how cultural and race differences affects them in school.

Many students don't know much about other cultures, Loria said. She suggested they be

### 'Students have a lot to say about diversity.'

Jaclyn Lossia  
North Farmington High student

taught more than just European-centered history.

But Myers wondered about the feasibility for schools to address all cultures, especially since 68 different languages are spoken in Farmington Public Schools.

"I don't think it's fair we put the whole burden on the school system," he said. "We all have to take responsibility."

Most panelists agreed forcing students to take classes in diversity would not work either.

Mercy High's Christina Donelson questioned why diversity celebrations — in schools and elsewhere — are mostly divided along race. "Why should everything be in black and white?" Donelson said.

African-Americans are entitled to such distinctions because they

were brought here "out of force," said Mercy High's Parini Doehl.

Most agreed, though, race shouldn't be used as an excuse to obscure wrongdoing.

"Sometimes, I agree it's used as a cover," Burt said, "but you have to understand the other point of view."

"When every day you are stared at, you are followed when you go into a store. . . . That's the first thing that comes into your mind."

Students concluded their presentations with statements. Emotions varied.

Farmington High's Patricia Jean-Louis expressed her frustration the division between races and cultures continues.

"I'm angry. I'm very angry, not as a black woman but as a human being," Jean-Louis said.

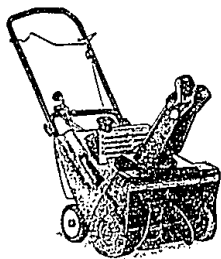
Donelson put a cartoon on an overhead projector. In the syndicated strip "Shoe," the feathered creature asks his wise-owl parent what to do under race and national origin on a school form.

The older one tells him his background includes many colors: Yellow, brown, black and red. . . . What does that make him? The younger one asks.

"That makes you an American," the wise one says.

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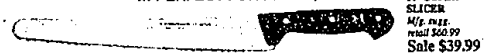
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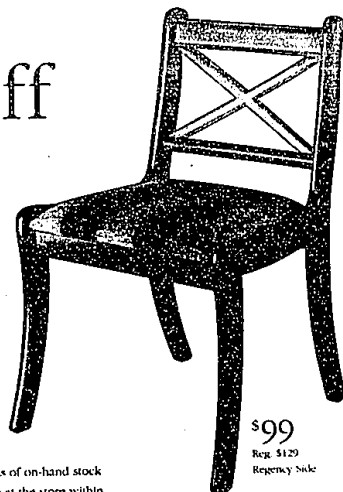
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