



THE ENQUIRER
ONLINE EDITION OF THE
REGION'S #1 NEWSPAPER

Currently: 
68° F
Cloudy

[Weather](#) | [Traffic](#)

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [SPORTS](#) [REDS](#) [BENGALS](#) [LOCAL GUIDE](#) [MULTIMEDIA](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [SEARCH](#)



Sunday, July 4, 2004

Jim Borgman

Focus on building city must be on people



Jim Borgman is *The Cincinnati Enquirer's* Pulitzer Prize winning editorial cartoonist.

- [Today's cartoon](#)
- [Archive](#)
- [Biography](#)
- [Pulitzer Prize](#)
- [25th anniversary](#)



Letters to the Editor

[Use our online form](#) to send a letter to the editor of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.

Or mail to:
The Cincinnati Enquirer
Letters to the Editor
312 Elm Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Enquirer Columnists

Archives of *Enquirer* columns

EDITORIAL PAGE

- [David Wells](#)

METRO

- [Denise Smith Amos](#)
- [Peter Bronson](#)
- [Allen Howard](#)
- [Randy McNutt](#)
- [Laura Pulfer](#)
- [Cliff Radel](#)

SPORTS

- [Paul Daugherty](#)

TEMPO

- [Deborah Kendrick](#)
- [Jim Knippenberg](#)

FOOD

- [Chuck Martin](#)

ENTERTAINMENT

HOME

[NEWS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [SPORTS](#) [REDS](#) [BENGALS](#) [LOCAL GUIDE](#) [MULTIMEDIA](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [SEARCH](#)

TODAY'S ENQUIRER

[Front Page](#)[Local News](#)[Sports](#)[Business](#)▶ [Editorials](#)[Tempo](#)[Home Style](#)[Travel](#)[Health](#)[Technology](#)[Weather](#)[Back Issues](#)[Search](#)[Subscribe](#)

SPORTS

[Bearcats](#)[Bengals](#)[High School](#)[Reds](#)[Xavier](#)

VIEWPOINTS

Jim Borgman

[Columnists](#)

Readers' views

ENTERTAINMENT

[Movies](#)[Dining](#)[Horoscopes](#)[Lottery Results](#)[Local Events](#)[Video Games](#)

CINCINNATI.COM

[Giveaways](#)[Maps/Directions](#)[Send an](#)[E-Postcard](#)[Coupons](#)[Visitor's Guide](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

[Jobs](#)[Cars](#)[Homes](#)

By Nicholas Spencer
Guest columnist

I read with some trepidation the *Enquirer's* editorial "Census isn't sum of Cincinnati" (June 27). While I applaud your efforts to cast these troubling numbers in a better light, the answers put forward in your piece fall short of offering a serious solution to our population drain crisis.

As a strong advocate for downtown development, I think it is unnecessarily dangerous to imply that the work of 3CDC will do much to stem the mass exodus of people from our city. While this new entity will likely do much good in making certain districts in our urban core more attractive places, they are taking a well-advised "micro" approach in focusing on three small areas of one neighborhood in our city. But population loss is a "macro" issue, and will require an equally measured approach.

3CDC cannot offer answers to the larger problems that caused the evacuation of our downtown in the first place, nor should they be asked to. Families have abandoned the city because of sprawl and the constant construction of new homes in the outlying suburbs, failing public schools, high taxes and soaring violent crime. Much-needed as it may be, tearing down skywalks around Fountain Square won't do anything about these issues.

Offering a vibrant downtown is just one small component of what it will take to repopulate our city. We as a city must first focus our energies on attracting and retaining residents that may be classified as "low-hanging fruit." If stemming population decline is our goal, we should first look at what demographic groups are most likely to move into cities, and build a city that meets their needs.

The work of Richard Florida can be an invaluable asset in this regard. His research shows that certain "canary" groups precede major population and economic growth: gays, artists, immigrants and young professionals. Cities that manage to attract these groups usually experience tremendous growth. This leads to a higher tax base,

[Obituaries](#)[General](#)[Place an ad](#)[HELP](#)[Feedback](#)[Subscribe](#)[Search](#)[Newsroom](#)[Directory](#)

causing better service from our local governments. It means a more skilled workforce, crucial to attracting new jobs and employers. And as a city rebuilds itself, families become far more likely to move back and raise children here.

At the same time, we cannot forget the current residents of our city, many of whom are classified as "the working poor." Cincinnati has a great untapped workforce right now, but our inability to successfully support minority-owned businesses and job-training programs has hurt us immensely in this regard. Poor police-community relations certainly don't help, either.

So how do we attract, retain and empower these seemingly disparate groups? The solution hardly lies in building or expanding stadiums, convention centers or downtown shopping malls. It means putting a focus on people.

It means becoming a city that prides itself on its diversity - repealing Article 12, improving community relations, and welcoming all those who are new to our city or country. It also means real economic inclusion, ensuring that minorities are given the opportunity and access necessary to rebuild our neighborhoods through jobs.

It means becoming a city of ideas: fostering innovation through bold venture capital, and funding research and development through our world-class universities. Government itself must take the lead by embracing new ideas, particularly on issues such as taxes, safety, sprawl and mass transit.

It means offering people great places, not through huge tax subsidies and massive development projects, but through supporting small businesses and community groups. Places like Ludlow Avenue in Clifton have seen tremendous success by offering authentic, grass-roots environments that inspire creativity in people. If development must be our primary focus, why not put our resources into creating more districts like that one?

You mentioned in your editorial that Newport, despite building a big-ticket amusement center on its riverfront, lost population. We should certainly remember that as we proceed with our own projects in the center city. Chain-driven, homogenous districts do nothing but inspire people to move out to suburbs where such districts already abound.

Minimizing the damage already done, or assigning unfair expectations to current initiatives, will do little good. Repopulating our city will take more than a handful of large-scale real estate developments, as important as they might be. It will take real cultural change on all levels.

Cincinnati does have a proud history, beautiful natural assets and great people. But if we want our city to grow again, we must admit the tremendous struggle we face,

- [Polly Campbell](#) - Dining
- [Jackie Demaline](#) - Theater
- [Margaret McGurk](#) - Movies
- [John Kiesewetter](#) - TV

DRIVING

- [Carol Traeger](#)

BUSINESS

- [Cliff Peale](#)
- [John Eckberg](#)

PERSONAL FINANCE

- [Amy Higgins](#)

KENTUCKY

- [Patrick Crowley](#)
- [Karen Gutierrez](#)

Related Links

e.the People

[e.the People](#) is an online public forum. Think of it as the digital town hall for *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.

and commit to a targeted, well-planned effort to counter our losses. We can, and in fact must, become a world-class city once again.

Nicholas Spencer was a charter candidate for City Council in 2003, and founder of Cincinnati Tomorrow, a group working to make Cincinnati a more attractive city for the creative class.

SUNDAY FORUM

[Iraq: Will freedom survive handover?](#)

[Reader's letters: The handover in Iraq](#)

[Winners: Cicada limericks](#)

[Diabetes explosion: What does it really mean?](#)

[Focus on building city must be on people](#)

[Readers sound off on Fountain Square plans](#)

[Let's Talk: Riverfront casinos](#)

EDITORIAL PAGE HEADLINES

[Liberty is still a work in progress](#)

[Ky. leaders' smart idea about college](#)

[Your Voice: Local firms support Special Olympians](#)

[Letters to the editor](#)



Search our site by keyword:

Search also: [News](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Homes](#) | [Cars](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Obits](#) | [Coupons](#) | [Events](#)
 | [Dining](#)
[Movies/DVDs](#) | [Video Games](#) | [Hotels](#) | [Golf](#) | [Visitor's Guide](#) | [Maps/Directions](#) |
[Yellow Pages](#)

CINCINNATI.COM | ENQUIRER | POST | WCPO | CIN WEEKLY | Classifieds | Cars | Homes | Jobs | Customer Service

[Search](#) | [Questions/help](#) | [News tips](#) | [Letters to the editors](#) | [Subscribe](#)
[Newspaper advertising](#) | [Web advertising](#) | [Place a classified](#) | [Circulation](#)

[Copyright](#) 1995-2004. [The Cincinnati Enquirer](#), a [Gannett Co. Inc.](#) newspaper.
 Use of this site signifies agreement to [terms of service](#) updated 12/19/2002.