

9500 LIBERTY



a documentary based on the groundbreaking YouTube series: www.youtube.com/9500Liberty

“ 9500 Liberty makes it clear that when we, as a nation of immigrants, debate the immigration issue, we are defining our very identity as Americans. ”

John Grisham

Best-Selling Author of *The Firm*, *The Pelican Brief*, and *The Client*

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I.D. Alliance presents a film by Annabel Park & Eric Byler **9500 Liberty** produced by Chris Rigopoulos
Executive Producer Alex Rigopoulos music by Michael Brook edited by Eric Byler videography by Eric Byler Jeff Man

SYNOPSIS

In July of 2007, Prince William County, Virginia became ground zero in America's explosive battle over immigration policy when elected officials adopted a law requiring police officers to question anyone they thought was "probably" undocumented.

9500 Liberty reveals the startling vulnerability of a local government targeted by national anti-immigration networks using the internet to frighten and intimidate lawmakers and citizens. Alarmed by a climate of fear and racial division, residents form a resistance using YouTube videos and virtual townhalls, setting up a real life showdown in the seat of county government.

The devastating social and economic impact of the "Immigration Resolution" is felt in the lives of real people in homes and in local businesses. But the ferocious fight to adopt and then reverse this policy unfolds inside government chambers, on the streets, and on the Internet. **9500 Liberty** provides a front row seat to all three battlegrounds.





Annabel Park

Director/Producer

Annabel was born in Seoul, South Korea and immigrated to America when she was nine years old with her family. She grew up in Texas and Maryland. She studied philosophy at Boston University on a Melville Scholarship and political theory at Oxford University as a Marshall Scholar.

Annabel's life experiences include working with inner city children, management consulting, writing and directing theater, and combining new media and political activism. She won The Cameron MacIntosh Award for her playwriting at Oxford University and was selected as a fellow for Film Independent's Filmmaker Lab in 2005.

In 2007, Annabel was the national coordinator for the 121 Coalition, organizing a historic grassroots effort to successfully pass U.S. House Resolution 121, also known as the "comfort women" resolution, which will be the subject of her upcoming film *Journey Into the Divide*.



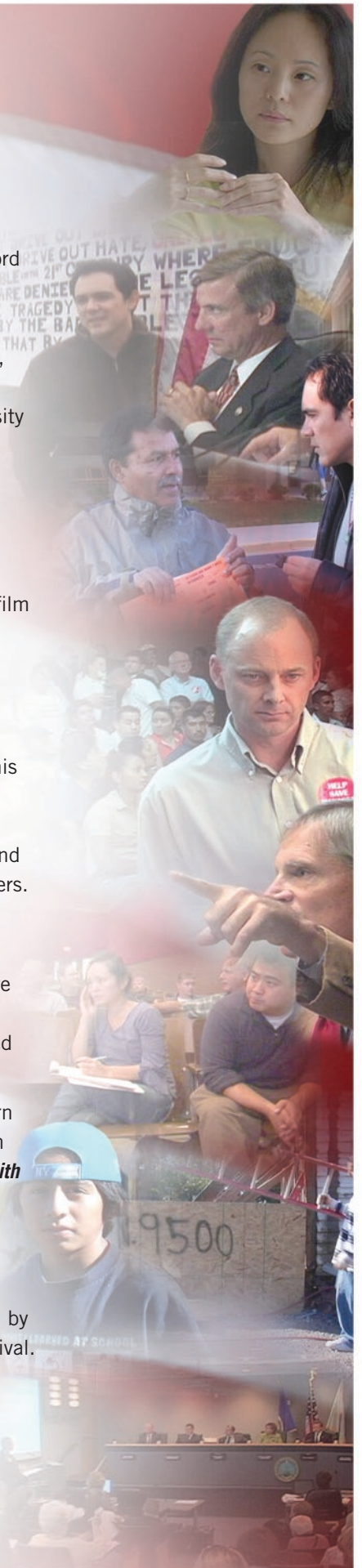
Eric Byler

Director/Producer

Eric Byler was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for his debut feature *Charlotte Sometimes* (2002), hailed by film critic Roger Ebert as a breakthrough for Asian American filmmakers. His films have won a dozen international film festival awards, and paved the way for a new generation of Asian American filmmakers.

Eric's second feature *Americanese* (2006) was acquired by IFC Films and won both the Audience Award and the Special Jury Award at the South by Southwest Film Festival. His third feature *TRE* (2007) won the Special Jury Award at the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival before being released theatrically by Cinema Libre Studio in 2008.

Eric was born in Los Angeles, California and grew up in Northern Virginia and in Hawai'i. He majored in film studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut where his senior thesis film *Kenji's Faith* (1994) went on to become a finalist for the Student Academy Awards, screen at the Sundance Film Festival, and win six film festival awards. Other *Charlotte Sometimes* accolades include a Best Supporting Actress nomination for Jacqueline Kim at the 2003 Independent Spirit Awards, the Audience Award at South by Southwest, and the Special Jury Award at the Florida Film Festival.





Chris Rigopulos

Producer

Chris Rigopulos is a seasoned business professional with more than ten years of strategic management consulting experience, most recently as an associate partner with OC&C Strategy Consultants. His particular expertise is in the media and entertainment industries, and his portfolio of work includes corporate growth strategy development, acquisition due diligence, post-merger integration management, and pricing strategy for Fortune 500 companies, leading global private equity firms, and non-profit organizations.

In addition, Chris has spent more than four years working in both product development and business strategy development with Harmonix / MTV Games, the creators of the *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* videogame franchises. Chris is also the lead guitarist for the Boston-based rock quartet *Honest Bob and the Factory-to-Dealer Incentives*.

Chris earned his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Pennsylvania and his MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management.



Alex Rigopulos

Executive Producer

Alex Rigopulos is the co-founder and CEO of Harmonix, developers of hit the music games *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band*. In 2008, Rigopulos and Harmonix co-founder Eran Egozy were listed in the TIME 100, *TIME Magazine's* annual list of "the 100 most influential people in the world."

Rigopulos graduated with an BS in Music and Theater Arts in 1992 and an MS in Media Arts and Sciences in 1994 from the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Michael Brook

Composer

Michael Brook is a world-class guitarist, composer, producer, and recording artist, perhaps best known for his sonic contribution to U2's record-selling 1987 album "The Joshua Tree" in the form of his invention, the Infinite Guitar. He was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1996 for his production work and as a co-artist on Pakistani singer **Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's** album *Night Song*.

Michael's film score credits include Al Gore's Oscar winner *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Who Killed the Electric Car?*, *Sugar*, *Affliction*, and Sean Penn's *Into the Wild*, for which Michael was nominated for a Golden Globe.

Michael's acclaimed solo albums include *Hybrid*, *Cobalt Blue*, and *RockPaperScissors*. 9500 Liberty is his fourth collaboration with director Eric Byler (*Charlotte Sometimes*, *Tre*, and *Americanese*).



AS THEMSELVES



Greg Letiecq

Greg Letiecq is an influential and controversial blogger turned political activist. He is the President of Help Save Manassas and Save the Old Dominion, organizations he formed to reduce the number of undocumented immigrants living in Manassas, Prince William County, and Virginia.

Greg is also a member of the gun rights group Virginia Citizens Defense League, and the Prince William County Republican Committee. Of French Canadian descent, he grew up near Syracuse, NY, and majored in international relations at George Washington University. Before becoming an activist and a blogger, he worked as a programmer in the defense industry.



Corey A. Stewart

Republican Corey A. Stewart was elected as Chairman of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors on November 7, 2006 in a special election after Chairman Sean Connaughton was appointed as head of the U.S. Maritime Administration. Previously, Stewart had been elected as the Occoquan District Supervisor in 2003. Stewart began the sudden “crackdown” on illegal immigration in July 2007, and was reelected in November 2007 using “Fighting Illegal Immigration” as his campaign slogan.

During the height of his fame, Chairman Stewart hinted he may soon run for Congress in 2008 or for Lieutenant Governor in 2009, but he did not announce his candidacy for either race. He resides in Woodbridge with his wife Maria and two sons.

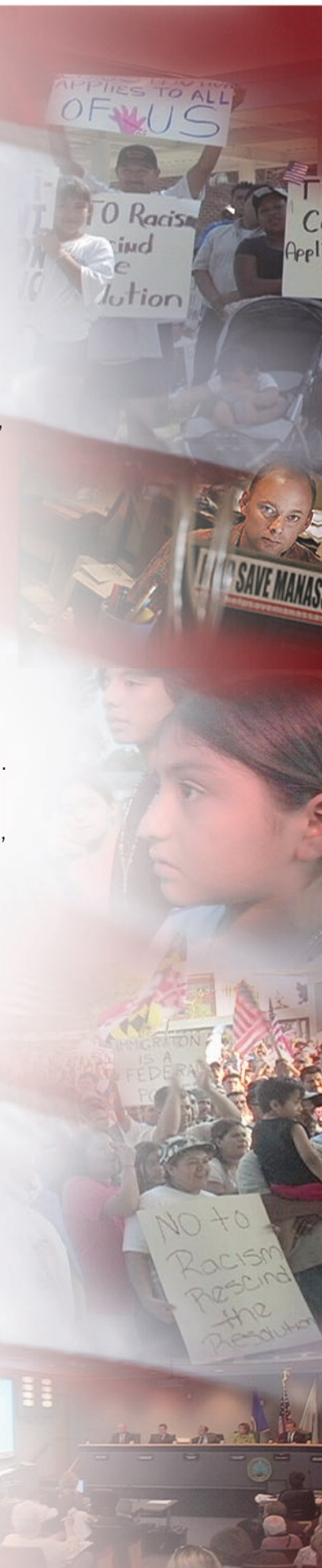


Col. Charlie T. Deane

Chief Charlie T. Deane of Prince William County is the longest serving police chief in the region. He has seen Prince William County transform from a farming community to one of the fastest growing, most diverse counties the country. He has grappled with the “DC sniper” case in 2002, and the uproar of immigration policy in 2007 and 2008. After pointing out the potential unintended consequences of the proposed “Probable Cause” standard for mandatory immigration status checks, he executed the policy faithfully until its repeal.

Chief Deane joined the Prince William County police department at its inception in 1970. He served 12 years as a criminal investigator and rose through the ranks to become Deputy Police Chief in 1985.

Chief Deane is a graduate of George Mason University with a masters degree in Public Administration. In addition, he has a bachelors degree in Administration of Justice from American University.



AS THEMSELVES

Gaudencio Fernandez

Gaudencio Fernandez is a home improvement contractor and father of three. He immigrated to the United States from Mexico as a teenager and became a citizen in the 1980's. Gaudencio and his wife Delia have owned the property at 9500 Liberty Street in Manassas, VA since 2003.

They were renting the house to tenants in 2006 when it was destroyed in a fire. During the process of tearing down the home, Gaudencio decided to leave one wall standing and create Liberty Wall in order to protest Prince William County's Immigration Resolution.

The first of his three banners began, "Prince William Co. Stop Your Racism to Hispanics!" The sign directly faced the center of town where thousands of passengers board the Virginia Railway Express and Amtrak.

Liberty Wall soon became a lightning rod for controversy. Supporters of the Immigration Resolution demanded that the sign be removed, but the City of Manassas refused to take action against the Fernandez family citing protected speech.

Alanna Almeda

Alanna Almeda worked as a programmer for the U.S. Department of Transportation until the birth of her youngest child. She has three daughters and a son with her husband of 18 years. She has lived in the Manassas area since the age of seven, and is a life-long Republican and an evangelical Christian.

Alanna was an outspoken critic of the Immigration Resolution. For months, she was frustrated in her efforts to counter Greg Letiecq's influence on her county government, until she figured out the real battlefield was on the Internet and created the blog antibvbl.net.

Elena Schlossberg

Elena Schlossberg is a stay-at-home mom with two young children. She has been active in county politics advocating on local environmental issues. She was a fundraiser and supporter of Chairman Stewart until he began championing a "crackdown" on "illegal aliens" in the county.

Her April 1, 2008 speech before the Board of County Supervisors is seen as a turning point because it challenged the Board to stand up to the intimidation tactics employed by Chairman Stewart and Greg Letiecq. She then partnered with Alanna Almeda to create antibvbl.net and became the face of public resistance to the Probable Cause mandate.



AS THEMSELVES



Frank J. Principi

Frank J. Principi is a Democrat who was elected to his first term on the Prince William County Board of County Supervisors in November of 2007. He is married to a Peruvian American, Cecilia, and they have twin daughters.

During his first three months in office, Supervisor Principi worked closely with Republican Marty Nohe to build a consensus on the Board to repeal the Probable Cause mandate in order to avoid racial profiling law suits. They achieved this goal on April 29, 2008.

Frank earned his BA in American History and Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles. Mr. Principi and his family attend Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church.

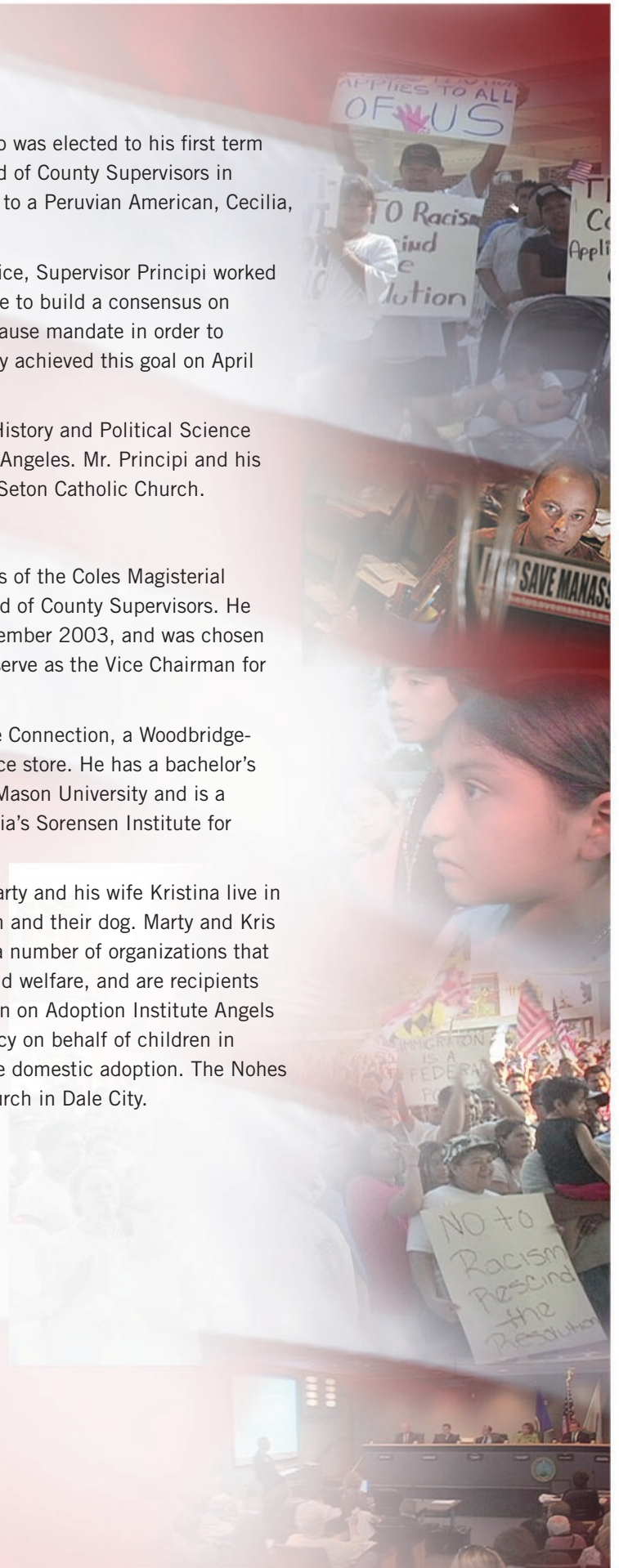


Martin E. Nohe

Martin Nohe represents the citizens of the Coles Magisterial District on the Prince William Board of County Supervisors. He was elected to this position in November 2003, and was chosen by his colleagues on the Board to serve as the Vice Chairman for calendar year 2007.

Marty is the president of Appliance Connection, a Woodbridge-based, family-owned retail appliance store. He has a bachelor's degree in economics from George Mason University and is a graduate of the University of Virginia's Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership.

A Prince William County native, Marty and his wife Kristina live in Woodbridge with their four children and their dog. Marty and Kris actively volunteer for and support a number of organizations that further the cause of child safety and welfare, and are recipients of the 2006 Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute Angels in Adoption Award for their advocacy on behalf of children in foster care and efforts to encourage domestic adoption. The Nohes belong to Holy Family Catholic Church in Dale City.



The Washington Post

Raw Look at Immigration Crucible

Pr. William Web Serial Aims to Foster a Deeper, More Civil Discourse

By Nick Miroff

Washington Post Staff Writer

Saturday, November 3, 2007; Page A01

In one video, a man furious about hearing Spanish at a hardware store berates a group of Latino families with a lecture on American history, telling them “my ancestors were here before the Constitution.” A little girl shyly reminds him: “The Indians were here before the Americans.” In another clip, a woman asks county officials not to forget “who was responsible for 9/11 — illegals,” while a man tells them, “Don’t confuse the 9/11 with the 7-Eleven. ... The guys at the 7-Eleven just want to work.”

Other scenes show worried, frustrated residents denouncing a “foreign invasion” and warning of “civil war,” to which one scowling young man taunts: “Bring it.”

The illegal-immigration clash that has consumed Prince William County neighborhoods and government halls is now showing up in serial form on YouTube, archived and freely available in all its raw intensity.

The footage, posted by local filmmakers Annabel Park and Eric Byler, is neither pretty nor polished. But the couple adds a chapter nearly every day, offering all sides a chance to be seen and heard, as well as a forum for well-mannered debate to those willing to engage in it.

Park and Byler describe their project as an interactive documentary that aims to defuse tensions and explore the complexity of the issue. Their clips are loaded with the unfiltered emotions that have flooded county streets and county politics, but the filmmakers allow the material to stand on its own, without narration or commentary. A more complete documentary might come later, they say, but for now their goal is to edit and upload the footage as fast as possible to their site, <http://www.youtube.com/9500Liberty>.

“What you normally do is shoot, then edit, then enter film festivals,” said Byler, a Gainesville resident. “On that trajectory, people would see this film for the first time next summer. That’s a long time to wait. If the movie is meant to create dialogue, why release it after things may have already shifted?”

With little more than a basic video camera and laptop computers, Byler, Park and a third partner, Jeff Man, have spent the past few months filming Prince William’s efforts to enact the region’s toughest measures targeting illegal immigrants. Before the county supervisors voted last week to cut off certain services to illegal immigrants and increase immigration enforcement by the police, Byler and Park recorded the session of emotional public testimony, which lasted more than 12 hours.

Excerpts of the testimony have been posted in installments on their site, along with their most-viewed clip, set at the so-called Liberty Wall in Manassas, which has been viewed more than 38,000 times.

The five-minute video tracks the fate of a large banner in Manassas that reads “Stop Your Racism to Hispanics” and hangs from the last wall of a recently demolished house at 9500 Liberty St at the intersection of Liberty and Prince William Street,” the filmmakers note. The banner has been a symbol of the county’s tension, as well as a target for it, having survived a dud Molotov cocktail attack only to later be ripped in half by vandals.

“People are writing to us and saying, ‘What can we do?’” Park said. “They want to get involved.”

Park was born in Korea but grew up in Houston and Rockville. Before Prince William became a flashpoint for the nation’s immigration debate, she led a successful campaign for a U.S. House resolution urging Japan to apologize for the sexual enslavement of “comfort women” during World War II.

Since then, Park said she has declined several job offers from lobbying groups, opting instead to follow Prince William’s rocky effort to rid its communities of illegal immigrants. Park said she and Byler, as Asian Americans, are able to bridge the conflict’s undercurrent of antagonism between whites and Hispanics.

“We went into this feeling it was about election-year politics and racism,” she said. “But the more we learn about it, the more we see how multifaceted it is.”

The Washington Post

In one video viewed 26,000 times in its first week, a group of Latino children run and play outside the chambers of the Board of County Supervisors, seemingly oblivious to the charged debate unfolding indoors. A Woodbridge high school teacher cautions the board's chairman, Corey A. Stewart (R): "The very people you are trying to oppress today, their children may rise up tomorrow and stand in judgment of you."

For Byler, an independent director whose 2002 film "Charlotte Sometimes" was hailed as a "breakthrough for Asian American filmmaking" by critic Roger Ebert, the roots of the 9500 Liberty project trace to George Allen's calling an Indian American "macaca" last summer.

Byler, the son of a white U.S. Army officer and a Chinese American mother, spent much of his childhood in Burke. He said he was teased often about his appearance.

"Watching George Allen look into the camera and point and say you are not the real Virginia, the real Virginia is the people who are laughing with me at you, reminded me of this whole thing that was never resolved," Byler said.

"I've always been sensitive to situations where people are being singled out."

After the macaca incident, Byler and Park moved back to Virginia from Los Angeles and volunteered for Democrat James Webb's Senate campaign against Allen, helping to raise money among Asian Americans.

Although they worked on a Democratic campaign and their video clips show a sympathy for Latino immigrants' fears about racism and discrimination, Byler and Park have sought to capture all sides of the debate on illegal immigration. One of their most-viewed videos shows a meeting of the anti-illegal immigrant group Help Save Manassas, and others include interviews with Stewart, whose reelection campaign slogan is "Fighting illegal immigration."

"They're really trying to do a service," said George Taplin, director of the Virginia chapter of the anti-illegal immigrant group Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, who appears in two videos about the now-defunct Herndon day-laborer center. Taplin praised the videos' fairness but said he thought the couple's editorial balance was missing in their administration of viewer comments on their

YouTube page.

"What I'm seeing as far as the reaction is rhetoric and people calling each other names. That's not going to help anything," Taplin said. "You don't get dialogue going by fanning hatred and discontent."

Like Taplin, some viewers have accused Byler and Park of censorship for rejecting their comments on the 9500 Liberty page. Byler and Park maintain that they are trying to keep the discussion free of hate speech or racism, especially as viewings of their videos have increased and comments have begun arriving from viewers elsewhere in the United States and abroad.

"We don't approve the ones that are going to lead to violence," Byler said. Some of the hate-filled diatribes that arrived in the past week were so disturbing that they notified federal authorities, he said.

Byler says that viewers need to watch several of the videos to understand the larger picture of Prince William's illegal-immigration debate. The clips have appeared on blogs and elicited hundreds of comments. But despite the couple's efforts at peacemaking, there is little sign of reconciliation in their videos, though no shortage of resentment, fear and bitterness.

Still, Park said she is not discouraged.

"I see a lot of hope in this," she said. "Ultimately, the only way to heal the community is to work together to end the fighting and to collaborate on solutions that address the real grievances people have