

Greetings:

The last Dear Friends letter appeared on April 4th, over six months ago. I appreciate the queries from those who have written to ask about this long interval, what I have been doing, if anything was wrong. I had been disappointed in the few responses to my letters. Now I turn my efforts in other directions. I direct a drum beat of Letters to the Editors. Their policy is not to print more than one letter a month from any one reader. This does not dissuade me from writing whenever I have something to communicate. I do not expect to convince the Editors as they handle mail like a mechanical chore. But even an infrequently printed letter will reach a wide circle of interested readers. I shoot a letter in the air, it lands I know not where.

I write to officials - at all levels - on land value taxation, on nuclear plants, on other vexing current problems. I write to merchants and bankers, to law breakers and law benders to defend the unconscionably mistreated and imposed upon consumer, the senior citizen and others whose interests coincide with mine. I will write to defend Israel against harsh, braying critics who do the insidious dagger work for her enemies. It is easy to know them. They betray themselves with words pejoratively used like zionism or expansionism, even as they mouth hypocritical avowals of friendship for the tiny State. How blind that they will not see Israel as the one bulwark for democracy in a vast benighted region of backward Arab states. They fail to see that Israel is where progressive programs and toil and tears offer hope for the uplift of peoples, Jew and non-Jew alike. They ignore the ominous spectre of Russia waiting to pounce upon the rich resources of the region.

Also, I have been continuing with my weekly Bible Study group - an alert class of loyal students - age up to 85 and more - who meet with me every Tuesday to mine the books of the Old Testament for nuggets of wisdom and lessons in human experience. This year, we have continued beyond the Pentateuch. We have gone thru Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 11 Samuel, Job, Jonah, 1 Kings, 11 Kings and are about to start the Prophets with Isaiah. We find it a remarkable source of history and enlightenment for students of Government, an exposition of Political Science unsurpassed.

A second group we call Senior Citizens for ABC. The letters stand for A Better Community - a challenge and how to achieve it, not alone for oldsters but for people of all ages. We are getting revved up. Alert, concerned septuagenarians and octogenarians, men and women, tackling tough problems, arguing, probing and not afraid to speak out.

It was Pangloss in Voltaire's Candide who called this the best of all possible worlds. How can we not agree? If we allow it to fulfill its promise for mankind, if we manage to curb those who befoul it and menace it and its creatures. If we can end the blind greed that pursues shallow and unworthy ends. This summer, despite \$1 gas, we toured Northern Arizona and Southern Utah, breath-taking scenery and eternal beauty beyond description in words. Bryce Canyon, Lake Powell and Glen Canyon, Zion National Park, the North Rim of Grand Canyon, Cedar Breaks. A gift of Nature that is awesome in its magnificence.

This summer, I had the delightful experience of raising cantaloupes in our home garden. How wonderful is the lowly soil we tread. How faithful in its productivity. Would that the generations might learn to use it wisely, generously and preserve this ever replenishing earth for those who will follow us.

And so on to Vol 16 No 17 which has to do with money - which we mishandle in so confusing and contradictory ways to make it dilemma, debacle and deviltry.

--- Joseph Zashin

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