The Season of Our Discontent: It Can (and must) Pass!

During these times that many would consider the season of our discontent, I am reminded of George Steinbeck’s novel, The Winter of Our Discontent. I would suggest that an interesting analogy exists. Steinbeck’s novel is built around lost fortune, and possible ways to deal with its realities. Values are examined, questioned, and challenged. Ironically much of this season of our discontent is created by weakened values in need of being examined, questioned and challenged.

The current circus-like political scene can certainly leave one tired, frustrated, and wanting to bury their head in the sand like an Ostrich. The problem with that course of action, is that your behind is still exposed. So long as anything is exposed, everything is as risk. Nothing is or has ever been gained by ignoring hatred, racism, sexism, and ignorance. Wishing for a perfect solution is not an acceptable action plan. A more appropriate plan of action is doing what you can, with what you have, when you can, and while you still can.

Between now and November 8th, Voters that have not already done so, will have the opportunity to make choices. In the news media, “How low can they go” seems to have replaced “what solutions do they have to offer.” Negativity makes news, and moves the focus away from taking any action toward positive change. Please keep in mind that after this period of discontent, Spring will arrive. After all the disturbances and distractions, this nation will either spring forward or spring back, depending upon what action we take between now and when the final bell tolls on Election Day.

If you are not yet moved to action, please consider the sacrifices of the men, women and children who have paved the way for the freedoms we are tempted to take for granted. Many of them are mentioned within this issue. Some that are acknowledged endured the ultimate sacrifice, for no greater “crime” than sitting in church, learning to love rather than hate. They can no longer choose whether we will build walls of exclusion, or bridges of inclusion; for their votes were cast in blood and have been written into history. If you are in doubt about the upcoming election, think of what their choices would likely have been.

This season of our discontent will pass, so let us concern ourselves with taking action in the present to impact the future. A common thread that exist in all the people featured in this issue, like the common thread that exist in all successful people, is that they did not wait for everything to be perfect before they took action.

Shortly after Election Day, our nation will celebrate Veterans Day, honoring those whose service and sacrifice is indicative of what has helped this nation survive and become great. They didn’t wait for the weather to be right, for all the supplies to get to them, for the bleeding to stop. Oftentimes, they could not even pause to say goodbye to a fellow soldier who wasn’t going to make it. Our Veterans fought for freedoms, that in some cases they could not themselves enjoy. Some of those who fought abroad, so they could return to fight for freedom in their own communities, include members of the Navajo Code Talkers, the Japanese-American (Nisei Troops), the Buffalo Soldiers, and the Tuskegee Airmen.

As we move toward Thanksgiving and celebrating the acceptance of the first immigrants by the Indians, we must acknowledge that “we want our country back” does not reflect the direction in which we must head. We cannot move forward, unless we are willing to acknowledge and build upon the reality of our history.

Dianne and I wish you Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy New Year! If we missed the greeting you expected, please look into our hearts, fill in the blanks, and let’s move forward together!

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Pulling together content for this page seemed unusually challenging this time. I couldn’t understand why I felt stuck. I looked through emails, and checked recent and upcoming youth programs. I even called upon my memory, and I knew that meant trouble! I finally decided to take a short break from the hunt for information. I began scrolling aimlessly through the Facebook Newsfeed. After seeing several Thank You posts to various clients from my friend Harvey Alston, it occurred to me that I had “struck gold.” In addition, several days earlier, I had seen a post from Kris Blu. It occurred to me that in this issue, this column should acknowledge both youth and those who support and inspire them. With all the rhetoric floating around about “making America great again” and the reality that “it takes a village,” I’m surprised it took me so long to realize that the answer was right in my face. So below are acknowledgements to two of the people who truly make America great, and the greatness they inspire.

CONGRATULATIONS to Kris Blu who surprised his granddaughter by managing to make it to Grandparents Day despite his work schedule.

His post on Facebook (below) certainly made his grandkids proud, and a lot of the rest of us also! “My granddaughter didn’t think I was going to make it to her school for grandparents day, because of work. But I got there right on time. I LOVE all my kids but the JOY and LOVE my grandkids bring I can’t explain..I love you Akayla, Dyelin, Cordale and Caiden”

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CONGRATULATIONS to Harvey Alston who surprised his granddaughter by managing to make it to Grandparents Day despite his work schedule.

A message from Harvey:

Forty-Seven years ago I stood in front of a group of young men to give my first locker room speech as head football coach of Columbus East High School in Ohio. Forty-Seven years later I find myself standing in front of a group of young men as a speaker for the football team of Columbus East High School in Indiana. Both of these high school colors were orange.

By the way, they won 35-7...Go East

So whether he is coaching in the locker room or sharing wisdom from the podium, Harvey is changing lives by promoting winning attitudes with his words and actions. Ironically, among his many works is the best seller Be The Best. For more about Harvey, visit http://www.harveyalston.com

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
December 10, 2016

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Twinsburg Library Features Pixel Photo Club During November

During the month of November 2016 (Beginning Friday, November 4th), members of the Pixel Photo Club will display samples of their works at the Twinsburg Public Library. A large variety of photos are possible, covering astrophotography, family, landscapes, pets, sports, water scenes, and whatever else the imagination may conceive and capture in the lens.

The Pixel Photo club was founded by photographer Vicki Jeromos-Blayney, owner of Jerney Studios in Aurora, Ohio. I met Vicki a couple of years ago when she conducted a photography class at the Twinsburg Library. Fortunately our paths crossed again when she founded the Photo Club. You would expect Vicki to run out of ideas or out of energy, but neither is likely to happen.

The gallery showing will be the second she has organized at the library. After the photo class, Vicki encouraged participation in a showing that featured the students work. It was a great success, and a Launchpad of sorts for the upcoming November event. Several top photographers in the area are likely to show their work; some possibly for sale, and some simply for viewing. An advantage to the month long gallery showing is that you can view at your leisure without anyone following you around with a credit card scanner. The primary purpose of the venue is to display interests and talent, and to inform and inspire you, the viewing audience.

Several Pixel Club members are active in the community, and many of their photos appear often in civic and school publications. During the recent Red Carpet Film Release of Voices of the Hill by filmmaker Carla Lyndale-Carter, the photo club presence was “in the house,” with Vicki, along with husband and graphic designer Jim Blayney providing photos and backdrop.

Make plans to visit the library during the month of November to view the gallery. Hint; if you come early in the month you will avoid being caught up in the rush of the Thanksgiving Holiday, and end up saying “I missed it because I got too busy.” Also, if you happen to see something that peeks your interest and is for sale, you have a better chance of purchasing the photo by contacting the photographer early rather than later. A gallery visit might also connect you with a photographer for an upcoming event.

For library hours, visit www.twinsburglibrary.org. For more information about the Pixel Photo Club, please visit www.pixelphotoclub.blogspot.com.
Have you ever heard somebody say, "I am a self-made success?" The fact is that there's no such thing. Sure, someone may have put in a lot of individual effort, but it just isn't possible to become a success all by yourself. "News Flash" - You need people to be successful.

Yes, winning in the game of life takes help from people - a lot of people. Personally, I know of no one who has ever achieved great success without first developing relationships.

If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want ten of prosperity, grow trees. If you want on hundred years of prosperity, grow people! - Chinese Proverb

If you stop to think about it, isn't life really all about relationships? I contend that everything we do involves people. Therefore, I must warn you that the art of developing winning relationships takes a great deal of work and understanding on our part. Why? Because people are different. Yes - we all have our own set of individual characteristics; and that's what makes people so special. If we were all the same, some of us would not be necessary.

It's not always what you think that matters, it's what they think that matters. External circumstances and the environment people live in have a lot to do with their perspective. Therefore, I would submit to you:

- The key to effectively communicating with people is understanding how they think
- Your success is dependent on your ability to successfully communicate with the greatest number of people possible.

This can't be accomplished if you are only thinking about what matters to you. [Note: I believe it was Zig Ziglar who once said "You can have anything in life that you want - as long as you help enough other people to get what they want."]

Values determine the quality of a relationship. Rewarding relationships are built over time, and based on a foundation of values. Personal character values include trust, honesty, integrity, dependability, responsibility, and patience. I have found that "trust" and "honesty", are the two values that people treasure most in a relationship. I have also found that it is very hard to rebuild trust, once it is broken; and that we should never compromise our values just to satisfy toxic relationships.

Great relationships begin with a great attitude. Having a great attitude and a positive outlook on life will help attract other cheerful people - people you will want in your life. What you get out of a relationship begins with what you put into it; therefore, you will reap whatever you sow. Yes - the quality of your relationships directly reflects who you are as a person. If you enter relationships expecting to get things just to make you feel good, you will have lousy relationships, and you will probably blame the other person. On the other hand, if you go into a relationship without expectation and are willing to give it all you can, you will experience the rewards and joy of a great relationship.

Remember: Good Relationships Are Giving - Bad Relationships Are Draining!!

The Real Game of Life: “Developing Relationships”

By Willie Johnson
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Congratulations to Jamie Taylor, who was recently featured in the Laurel School Academy September 2016 Alumnae Spotlight.

According to Maegan Ruhlman, Assistant Director of Alumnae . . . “Alumnae Spotlight showcases amazing Laurel women and the paths they have charted since graduation. Whether they are doctors, designers, artists, authors, scientists, lawyers, teachers, entrepreneurs, engineers, pharmacists, or civic activists or volunteers, Laurel women inhabit nearly all careers and corners of the world helping to make it a better place. Our alumnae and the journeys that they have taken speak to the essence of a Laurel education and what makes this School and the community of women who call it their own distinctive. This space highlights their fascinating lives and the mountains they continue to move.”

I learned long ago that you cannot be in the spotlight without being under the microscope. It’s not as though we’ve been stalking Jamie Taylor, but as longtime friends of her parents June and Joseph Taylor, Dianne and I have been witness to and shared many of her amazing achievements in VISIONS Newsletter in the past.

I also learned long ago the importance of asking “Who, Why, When, Where, How.” We know that the “Who” is Jamie. The “What, Why, When, Where, How” are addressed in the Laurel School Academy September 2016 Alumnae Spotlight.

After reading Maegan Ruhlman’s glowing article about Jamie, I wanted desperately to jump in and as the saying goes “add my two cents worth” to the story. It turns out that Maegan’s article was so thorough, that there was not a lot I could add.

Maegan graciously extended an invitation for me to quote the article, but that presented me with the challenge of deciding what was most important. I took the coward’s way out, and decided to simply share a link to the article. The link is located at the end of this story. Following the link directly to the Laurel article should encourage you to see what else is available at the academy, one of Cleveland’s premier educational facilities.

To help peek your interest, below are some of the questioned covered by the Spotlight article:

- What was your favorite class at Laurel?
- What do you think makes a Laurel education distinct?
- What do you feel is the greatest strength of an all-girls school?
- What drew you to Gannon University after Laurel?
- Did you always know you wanted to be involved with the LPGA?
- What does your job entail?
- What do you love most about the sport of golf?
- Describe one of your greatest challenges.
- How do you think Laurel has influenced your life since graduation?
- What advice would you give to current Laurel girls?
- What do you do for fun?

Best Wishes to Jamie as she continues to pursue her dreams and provide vision, wisdom and training that can positively impact others.

For the complete Laurel School Academy Spotlight article, please view the article at www.laurelschool.org/page.cfm?p=1152. You can view more of Jamie’s achievements by visiting her blog at www.msjamietaylor.blogspot.com.
Above: Decorated Veteran Sgt. Johnnie Downs talks with other Veterans. In photo at the right he speaks with a member of the famed World War II Buffalo Soldiers. Sgt. Downs travels the country promoting the value of education.

Above Right: Roy Richardson, many decades later, still serving the community he helped to protect. Roy has been instrumental in teaching and inspiring young people in a variety of ways, including training and mentoring youth in the Cleveland, Ohio area to become good citizens and in some cases, future pilots (See photos below). You can find out more about Roy at http://royrichardson.blogspot.com/

Reality Check - This land is our land too!

Wed., Nov. 2, 2011, in a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol, more than 19,000 Japanese Americans who served during World War II were awarded the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal. The ceremony was attended by dozens of surviving members of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service. These soldiers, primarily second-generation Japanese Americans known as “Nisei,” faced down the racial prejudices and fears associated with one of the darkest periods of American history to become some of the most decorated soldiers our nation has ever produced. Source: http://www.history.com/news/unlikely-world-war-ii-soldiers-awarded-nations-highest-honor

In January 1941, the Army opened its nurse corps to blacks but established a ceiling of 56. On June 25, 1941, President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802 created the Fair Employment Practices Commission which led the way in eradicating racial discrimination in the defense program. In June 1943, Frances Payne Bolton, Congresswoman from Ohio, introduced an amendment to the Nurse Training Bill to bar racial bias. Soon 2,000 blacks were enrolled in the Cadet Nurse Corps. Source: http://www.womensmemorial.org/Education/BBH1998.html#6

A BIG THANK YOU to all Veterans for their service. As we hear from those who want to make our country great “again,” may we remember the sacrifices and the diversity that help make and keep it great thus far!
There are few things likely to make one more tired of the political process than the focus of the past several months on the national scene. Despite how tired you think you may be, there is a task and a challenge that needs to be met between now and when the polls close.

There are many things to keep in mind. One thing is that you being tired, frustrated, and confused are among the many distractions designed to keep you from exercising your rights and responsibilities. Another thing to keep in mind, is that you are probably not as tired as Rosa Parks was, not as threatened as Dr. Martin Luther King was, not as injured as four young girls who died when an Alabama Church was dynamited. Please remember that Politics are much more inclusive than the much publicized Presidential Election; in fact much of it is local.

On October 14, I attended a Candidate Meet-n-Greet event hosted by (BWPAC), the Black Women’s Political Action Committee. BWPAC has for years provided a forum for candidates to meet the public, and exchange ideas. BWPAC provides the location, the food, introduces the candidates, and encourages interactions between candidates and the public.

The forum allows and encourages dialogue in a non-confrontational atmosphere, where concerns can be addressed one on one, or in small groups. The forum provides one an opportunity to discuss issues without the dramatic, distracting, emotional rhetoric that so often invades our television screens, and tires us of the political process.

A Big Thank You to the organization for their encouragement and support of the political process. The extent of the organization’s political message is this: **BECOME INFORMED AND EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!**

Despite claims to the contrary, it is not the Ivory Towers of the elite that make this nation great, but rather the giving, pain, sacrifice and suffering of many. Among those were the Indians who helped the Pilgrims survive harsh winters, the first responders of 9/11, those who today help to keep an uneasy peace in a world bent on terrorism, and those who insist that the peacekeepers recognize rights and due process. Our greatness lies in our diversity and ability to be respectful and accepting of others. Below are just a few of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in order that we might work together toward a greater good. They did not leave us towers from which we would look down upon others, but rather foundations upon which we can build. I am so thankful that we did not build a wall to keep them out!

**Addie Mae Collins**  
**Andrew Goodman**  
**Carol Denise McNair**  
**Carole Robertson**  
**Cynthia Wesley**  
**Denmark Vesey**  
**Emmett Louis Till**  
**James Chaney**  
**James Reeb**  
**Jimmie Lee Jackson**  
**George Winston Lee**  
**Martin Luther King, Jr.**  
**Medgar Evers**  
**Michael Schwerner**  
**Viola Liuzzo**  
... and so many more!

"Preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.”

Cesar Chavez, Civil rights activist

**PLEASE VOTE**  
**between now and November 8th.**
Whatever your interests and preferences, we are anxious and able to offer you the best products and services by partnering with quality providers. Among those providers is Amazon, known around the world for Books, Music, and for their virtually endless product selection, top quality, and fast and convenient service and delivery. Another is Carlson Craft, a world leader in Wedding and Social Invitations, and a wide variety of other printed products.

Since 1980, we have provided products and services to our valued customers, always striving to bring maximum value. Today’s technology simplifies the process of locating, ordering and receiving what we want and need, without leaving the comfort of our home.

Yes, from the keyboard of your computer or phone, you have access to the vast array of products and services available through those we partner with. It is convenient, cost efficient, environmentally-friendly, and a great way to support our efforts to help others.

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As always, we are grateful for your support. Thank You.