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Inspirations

by

Tom Holbrook

I don't know if I've received more comments from an article I've written, but I sure received a great many comments from the one that appeared week before last. All the wives and husbands in my neighborhood had something to say about my attention to the abundance of hair in the nose and ear regions of a man's face. Ed confronted me on the golf course and said his wife indicated I had written the article just for him, while another Ed wanted me to check under his arms to see if he passed muster in that area.

Some of the wives thought it was an article way overdue saying their husbands could care less what hangs down from their nose or ears. It was getting to the point that some said they weren't going to be seen in public with them anymore. Then there was Gus, who hadn't read the article but when I told him what the subject matter had been he laughed and said his lovely wife Anita had just gotten on him that morning about the very thing. Apparently I hit a nerve in a great many relationships out there and, hopefully, some of you guys will wise up from this point forward. Keep in mind fellows, I never thought about it either until my wife, out of love for me, brought it to my attention.

My friend Frank asked me where I got my ideas that are the seeds of inspiration for my articles. I told him they came from people just like him. There are so many things going on in so many people's lives anyone paying attention could write a book from all that's happening. One of my colleagues on this paper, who writes the column, "On The Bright Side," each week, mentioned her periodic bouts with writer's block and how panic sometimes sets in as her deadline approaches. I must say it happens to me many times as well but, just as she does, the quickest cure is to sit down in front of the computer and just start typing. Surprisingly, words start appearing on paper, and sometimes they're fairly coherent!

In all seriousness, it's easy to become inspired when one's mind is a little off center from the norm. I've always looked at things from an entirely different perspective than the average person. When I'm interviewing someone for a story my questions seem to come from left field. Many times a thought will come into my head that the average person would let pass on through but I'll verbalize on the thought in the form of a question or a statement.

Writing a column each week certainly has me looking at every situation in which I find myself a little more closely than I might otherwise. In fact, I write two columns each week. One for this paper and one for my hometown paper in Lewisburg, WV. While this column is more loosely jointed and seeking a humorous perspective, the other is a politically oriented op ed piece with more serious overtones. One might say from the ridiculous to the sublime, although sublime might be putting any column I write on too high a pedestal.

Frank, from the paragraph above, also asked me if I considered myself a political person. I told him that I felt I was a highly political individual and a highly opinionated one as well. While I believe we all should be involved in the political processes of our country and participate in them as much as possible, I also believe in having a good time which being retired in The Villages allows me to do every day. I feel especially blessed to be living in Florida enjoying the beautiful weather, hurricanes and all, and to have as many new friends as we've been able to make in our short time living here.

Inspiration comes in many ways and at times when you least expect it. The other evening Judy and I decided to enjoy the beautiful weather after dinner by sitting on a bench outside the restaurant. I paid the bill and came outside to find Judy sitting on the bench gazing up in the air as if in a trance. I asked her what she was thinking about and she pointed to the flag that was flying above. There, just above us, was a huge American flag, approximately 20 feet by 10 feet in size... it seemed much larger. The nice breeze blowing was doing miraculous things with the flag, changing its shape and direction as if making it dance to an unheard tune. It was beautiful and mesmerizing to watch the undulating red and white stripes, wave after wave, with no two the same.

Thoughts of that flag, its history, and the many places it has flown in this world, during wartime and peacetime, gave me a chill of pride, in it and the "one nation, under God, for which it stands." What a great nation we have and fantastic opportunities are available to anyone who wants to reach the top. What great men and women who give their all to protect the honor of our flag and the liberties we enjoy.

We could have sat there all night just watching its silent story screaming out from the top of that pole, but we had to leave. On the way to the car I was thinking of what I could write about this wonderful moment in time when Judy said, "Maybe you could mention this in one of your columns?" Inspiration is all around you...just look around and soak it up.

God Bless America!

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