

## THE IDLE AMERICAN

Postal Service Rescued?...

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

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With news of incivility, protests and disruption gobbling up radio and television air time and dominating front-page newspaper articles, many of us are in a state of perpetual tension. What will tomorrow bring?

It's tough to find even a sprig of a smile, but heaven knows my ancient Uncle Mort is trying his best to hack his way through an underbrush of chaotic unrest to find that sprig.

"About the only thing positive coming out of all of this is that the U.S. Postal Service may be able to back off on its request for a second increase this year," Mort said, noting stamps may cost 73 cents each come July....

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I couldn't immediately comprehend any connection between the cost of postage stamps and turmoil that has erupted on a hundred or so college and university campuses throughout the country.

I felt sure, though, that my uncle would 'splain it to me, and sure enough, he did.

"I figure that hundreds of thousands of prospective college graduates already have sent out invitations to their commencement exercises," he opined. "Now, many of them will be sending out second mailings, indicating that they are canceled. Surely this unexpected postal income will take at least a small bite from the \$6 billion shortfall."....

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My uncle's cut-to-the-chase pronouncement is trivial, of course. Legions of Americans are stunned that outcries of a distinct minority are disrupting daily lives of a vast majority.

During my undergraduate days in the 1950s, my late president, a beloved Christian patriot named Dr. Guy D. Newman, reminded us regularly during chapel programs about the fragility of a democracy.

An ongoing warning was to protect the Declaration of Independence, emphasizing that democracies depend on the consent of the governed. (Benjamin Franklin once observed that a democracy has to be more than two wolves and one lamb deciding on what to have for lunch.)....

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Dr. Newman often quoted Hiram Mann's short poem, this version paraphrased:

"No one escapes when freedom fails. The best folks rot in filthy jails. And those who've screamed, 'appease, appease,' are hanged by those they tried to please."

Oh, 'tis true, 'tis true....

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To end many sermons, Dr. Newman would quote Psalm 121:1-2, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." (KJV)

Let us who claim to be Christians make this central to our prayers. The prophet Isaiah offered still more advice in Chapter I, verse 18: "Come now, let us reason together."

It is never too late to be reasonable, but rules established by the will of the people must never be tossed aside. When they are, consequences are in order....

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Let us be prayerful that all graduates who cross stages to accept diplomas and degrees remember that each document includes both rights and responsibilities.

Let us seek joyous graduation moments for the honorees and give thanks for loved ones who made their educational pilgrimages possible. And for the few Americans who received

graduation invitations for whom commencement exercises have been canceled, let 'em keep the presents, even if addressed to "occupant."....

Finally, may the late Dr. Theodore Geisel, better known to the world as "Dr. Seuss," again be acknowledged for what is believed to be the shortest commencement address ever. He called it, "My Uncle Terwilliger on the Art of Eating Popovers."

My uncle ordered popovers from the restaurant's bill of fare.

When they were served he regarded them with a penetrating stare. Then he spoke great words of wisdom as he sat there on his chair: 'To eat these things,' said my uncle, 'You must exercise great care. You may swallow down what's solid....

But you must spit out the air!... And as you partake of the world's bill of fare, that's good advice to follow. Do a lot of spitting out of hot air. And be careful what you swallow.'....

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Dr. Newbury is a longtime public speaker and former university president who is Texas' longest-running syndicated columnist, now in 23rd year.