

The Late David Gilley
...A Life Well-Ordered

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Where Do We Go From Here?...
Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury
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The old hymn declares that we are marching to higher ground. Our prevailing culture, however, suggests otherwise.

Consider a joke making the rounds at the turn of the century when the internet was beginning to take hold. A couple of 10-year-olds were chatting aimlessly during summer doldrums. Something about Washington, DC came up. "What does the 'DC' stand for?" one asked.

"I'm not sure," the other responded. "Maybe Dot Com?"....

We chuckled, half-thinking that even 10-year-olds might "get it right" about the District of Columbia.

Now, let's fast-forward to the here and now. A new set of kids ponders the same question.

"I think I know," one responded, "Maybe Den of Confusion." The other chimed in, "It might be District of Conflict, District of Chaos, or even Dire Consequences." Perhaps we all need to search again for DC's original intent....

For the masses, things seem upside down. We are confounded by multiple challenges leading to much head-scratching.

Sometimes I find news accounts confounding and often trivial. For example, I read the other day that hundreds of species of fish are getting smaller. This is purportedly true; you can look it up.

Scientists claim that warming temperatures and loss of oxygen in the sea are inducing shrinkage of such fish as tunas, groupers and salmon, notably since 1960. It started near the Arctic Circle. Now, nearly three-fourths of marine fish populations sampled worldwide have seen substantial decrease in body weight, as much as 16% in 64 years....

Should such diminishment continue, some changes seem to be inevitable. Future fishing hooks and grills may be smaller. Game wardens may have to change the length of fish deemed legal to take home.

Tellers of fish tales--and there are many--may have to shorten the distance of outstretched hands used to describe the length of trophy catches. One day they may even brag about catching one "this short," with hands barely separated!

For folks usually seeing fish only in grocery store meat sections, this "news" may seem trivial. For true fishermen, however, most "fishy" topics can find their way into stories worthy of hearing....

One such sportsman was the late David Gilley. His was a well-ordered life. He and Marijane, his wife of some 54 years, raised two sons, Lance and Blake, who became the center of their parents' universe. David, a Cleburne High School graduate who aimed for the stars early on, not only excelled in football, but also was winner of the Kiwanis Club's Sportsmanship Award in 1966.

Each season of life brought new blessings for the Gilleys, who jointly majored in doing "all things family." He coached his sons in both YMCA football and Little League baseball, and was a board member for years of Western Little League. Later, he and Marijane supported both

sons in junior high school and at San Angelo Central High School, both on and off the playing fields.

And did they ever value summers, immersed in water sports. He taught his sons (and numerous others) how to water ski and was a proud member of the Concho Bass Club. In 1998, David caught a Lake Nasworthy bass that weighed in at 12.43 pounds, a record catch....

All this to say that this Christian gentleman, with a 41-year Santa Fe Railroad career, learned early on what was important, always treading the trail of giving back. That's what he did for his wife and family, including five grandchildren and legions of others he guided and befriended.

A true sportsman, he shared the story of his prized fish catch many times, gesturing it to be "this long!" Now, here's ironclad proof of his love for both family and fishing. He bragged that his record fish was bigger than his first grandbaby who was born three months later!

Kiwanians recognized this true sportsman nearly 60 years ago. Thousands of others he taught along the way fully agree....

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