



January 2017

GIFT OF GIVING

Merle Stoltzfus

It's bed time which means it's story time in our house. Every one of our six children would sit quietly and listen to a whole hour of stories if it was bed time; anything to delay going to bed. The grandchildren are from the same genetic pool.

So it's Christmas with the grandchildren staying at Pop's and Mimi's house. The pleas for a bedtime story are mostly a delaying tactic. But, this presents a great teaching opportunity. And since it's Christmas, why not use the excitement and anticipation to again reinforce the gift of giving? This virtue can't be learned too early in life.

Stories about the joy, satisfaction, and thrill of giving may have been written about more than any other subject. Even the process of reliving "giving" experienced by somebody else through a story is a gift all by itself. The more precious the gift, the greater is the thrill. Or, the more sacrificial the giving process, the greater is the satisfaction. If there is joy to be found in life, it is in giving and serving others.

Giving toward an obligation is quite a different story. When there is obligation, the word giving changes to paying. Even though the same value and sacrifice are part of the process, the joy, satisfaction and thrill evaporate. With obligation, giving becomes paying and the exchange feels like a burden to the giver (debtor). Grace is so much better than law!

Many of the necessary services required for our health, safety and welfare require significant resources. Taxes are levied to pay for most public services. Endless formulas are continuously enacted to create a "fair tax code" but I've yet to hear anyone expressing joy about March and October property taxes or April 15th income taxes.

In our rural communities, our fire protection services and much of our ambulance and local government services continue to be provided by volunteers. Our volunteer workers enjoy their portion of the giving - many hours of their time. We have the opportunity to enjoy our portion of the giving as well. Either by gifts or taxes, the resources needed for our public services will be covered. When we miss our opportunity to give, the necessary exchange will become a burden instead of the gift of joy.

So, when I am tempted to relinquish and bypass the opportunities to give to our public needs, I need to sit myself down and read a few bedtime stories. The 2,016 year old Christmas story will live on because the Gift of giving is an eternal truth. The meaning of Christmas is grounded in no obligation by God. For us, missing the potential joy, satisfaction and thrill can never be recovered when the opportunity becomes an obligation. Let's experience the gift of giving.



To donate to the Twin Valley Fire Department, send your gift to Twin Valley Fire Department, PO Box 181, Elverson PA 19520-0181 or visit tvfd69.com to donate online.

To donate to the Elverson-Honey Brook Area Emergency Medical Service, send your gift to Elverson-Honey Brook Area EMS, PO Box 154, Elverson, PA 19520.



“Sully”

I have had several people tell me they saw “Sully” the movie, in the theater and say they really enjoyed it and asked me if I had seen it too. For a long while, I had not. I had shied away from viewing the movie version of the Hudson River Ditching because, like many film productions, I expected it to be over-sensationalized and rather hokey. My life has been in aviation. I flew 43 years before retiring in the Autumn of last year. I have seen many aviation movies which were absolutely cringe-worthy in the way they failed to understand the details and intricacies of flight operations. But, far more importantly, this story was different. It was real, it was my airline, my co-workers, my area of expertise.

Finally, the other night, my wife and I decided to take the plunge and loaded “Sully” into our on-line account and sat down to watch it. As the movie began, I had a sinking feeling because right out of the starting gate came the sensationalization - with screaming passengers and an “out of control” plane plunging into a city. I immediately felt the disappointment closing in from all sides. But it was only a dream, a nightmare. A bit of a glimpse into the enormity of all that might have, in fact, unfolded very differently. It turns out the dream being dreamed was the nightmare, not the movie.

In fact, I found “Sully” to be the most technically correct movie about an aviation event I have ever watched.

Every time Sully's plane was depicted in the movie it was always an Airbus A-320. All of the scenes involving taxiing, flying, ditching, cockpit procedures, interior cabin events, simulator reenactments etc., etc... were all A-320. Small but critical details such as these are actually very rare in a Hollywood production. Cockpit procedures and voice communications were right on. Terminologies were those used every day and from cockpit transcripts, without using over-emphasized substitutions to make things more understandable to “lay-listeners”. Again, in the sensationalized world of aviation incidents, this is rare. The directors and production crew obviously listened carefully and relied heavily on the clear, focused, specific knowledge and advice of the professional pilots and technical advisors from the airline's Training Department.

The pilots who flew the A-320 simulators in the movie scene depicting the public hearing, where the NTSB was trying to prove the plane could have been landed safely back at Laguardia or at Teterboro, were actual pilots from the airline. It even turns out I know both of the female pilots who were in those scenes. The female aviator who played the co-pilot in the simulator attempting to land back at Laguardia is also a former Navy Pilot and female aviation trailblazer. The female captain who flew the simulator which was attempting to land at Teterboro was for a while, about 30 years ago, the youngest female airline captain in the world. Back then, when she was checking out as a new captain in the Boeing 737, I was her copilot for 3 weeks of 737 simulator training. Quite an impressive woman and aviator.

And... Quite an impressive movie. “Sully” will touch



everyone differently and will resonate on many different levels. I believe it is a movie worth seeing.

So far, I have viewed the movie twice and have since received a DVD copy of “Sully” for Christmas. I thoroughly enjoyed everything about “Sully” and will watch it many more times over the years. I hope you enjoy it too.

Seawolf

Below is a poem I wrote in the harrowing and celebratory hours after the incredible events of Flight 1549:

Simple Living, Enormous Fate

Beauty meets trauma
Life turns in an instant
Nature collides with mechanism
We are all interconnected
Interchangeable in our experiences

The news flashes
Images sear the soul
We trade places
Then step back... relieved
But only for an instant

The pilot could be any pilot
The majestic flock anywhere
The traveller could leave tomorrow
or yesterday
The details entirely interchangeable

We hold our breath
Then let out a cheer
Turn our thoughts to loved ones
And look back again
There but for the grace of God...

It could be any day
It could be any crew
It could be any traveller
It could be any River
We are our brothers keeper

We have known others
Same searing instant
Same convergence of events
Same heroic efforts
Yet, we cried

But not today.
We travel together
We hold each other's care
We connect with every soul
We are one

And We Cheer!

Seawolf
January 18, 2009



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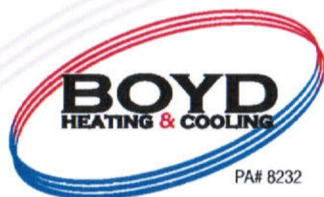
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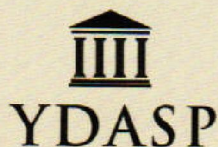
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How Well Do You Know Elverson Borough?

Jody Phillips

Ten people identified the mystery photo in the December issue of the Elverson Borough Newsletter. Congratulations to Derek Altman, Donna Daprile, Toni DiAddezio, Edie Gerasimon, Peggy Kandle, Al Menger, Rosalie Olshefski, Kayleigh Troxell, Beth Stoltzfus and Marianne Stoltzfus. I delivered their Elverson Day tee shirts throughout the Borough in mid-December.

I purposely made this contest easy, partly as a Christmas gift to everyone who has been looking for my mystery photos all year long and partly because there are so few Elverson Day tee shirts left. I hope to have a new sponsor soon. But in the meantime, I will continue to award small and medium yellow and orange shirts to those sharp-eyed residents who find the location of the featured photograph in each issue.

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Send your Elverson news and stories to our editor at brenda@stoltzfus.com by January 20 or call her at 610.286.5115. Newsletters can be found on elversonboro.org.

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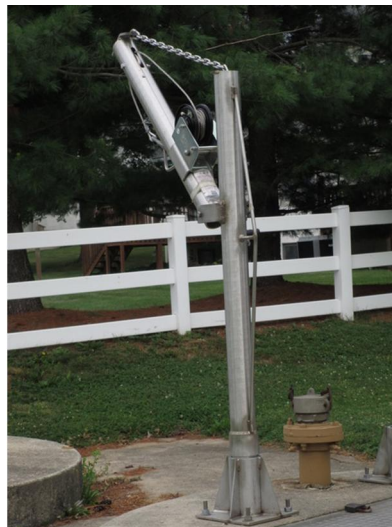
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As most of you probably know, I took that photo through the doors of the new sanctuary at the Community Evangelical Free Church located at 52 South Brick Lane in the Borough. Most of you have also probably watched the progress of this extensive building project over the past year. Once the beams were erected late in the fall of 2015, the structure rapidly began to take shape.

The church has come a long way since its humble beginnings in mid-1977, when fewer than 20 adults and children began meeting in local homes to worship as members of the new Evangelical Free Church in the Elverson area. The congregation has increased dramatically in number in the past 40 years, outgrowing several rented structures before finally buying nine acres of land on Brick Lane and constructing its own church building in 1987.

The members of the ever-growing Community Evangelical Free Church significantly expanded and remodeled their building in 1992 and this past year just underwent a second, even larger expansion to meet their needs. This has added 27,000

square feet of space for worship, Sunday School, Bible study and other church-sponsored events. The Community Evangelical Free Church opened the doors of its new sanctuary for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services in a joyous celebration of the birth of a Savior and a spacious place in which to worship Him.



A special walk-through tour of the new building is scheduled for January 10, 11 and 14 from 1 to 3 pm and on January 12 from 5 to 7 pm so that everyone may visit this beautiful new addition to an Elverson landmark.

The first mystery photo of 2017 depicts an unusual-looking object, which can be seen in the Borough. Please tell me what it is, where it is (approximate address) and describe its function. E-mail me at Jodysfritz@gmail.com or call me at 610-286-8913 if you think you know the answer by January 15. If you are correct, you will win a small or medium size, yellow or orange Elverson Day tee shirt.

