

south side is no different than north side except in topography, would we work together in harmony to care for our little blue marble? Would we continue to destroy to fill our pockets? Maybe, just maybe, we would care for the limited space and resources that have so far sustained our human experience.

Instead of building more office space, for rent signs in them all, instead of tax incentives to large corporations to shut the doors of our small shops, instead of another statue, perhaps a park and a bench under a tree. If our hearts felt gratitude for existence on our spinning blue marble, perhaps our enjoyment would be to care for it all. It is the only planet I will ever live upon capable of sustaining this spirit having this human experience. Maybe, just maybe, we could reverse the direction of destruction we have been stampeding in. Maybe, just maybe, we don't need any more storage space to shove our stuff into. Maybe we need to save some dirt and grass and space where we can get away from all our stuff.

\*\*\*

## **"Rights" do not burden others**

**By Mark Hillman**

When we consider drastically altering our expectations of government, we risk undermining the principles on which our country was founded and proving Ronald Reagan's maxim: "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction."

Every expansion of government entitlements masquerading as rights — like a "right to health care" — is a dangerous step along this path, no matter how well-intentioned.

The Founders of our country lived more than two centuries ago in a vastly different era, but they understood that certain principles are timeless, such as the corruptibility of human nature and the danger of unrestrained power.

They risked their lives, fortunes and sacred honor because their government was smothering them with taxes, regulations and bureaucrats — not because it failed to provide health care, welfare or education. They risked future, family, reputation and possessions because they were denied the opportunity to pursue happiness on their own terms.

In the Declaration of Independence, these visionaries unanimously agreed to the "self-evident" truth that freedom comes from a source higher than the state and assures everyone of the right to pursue life, liberty and happiness. They further agreed that the legitimate purpose of government is "to secure these rights."

Perhaps it's unfortunate that they didn't substitute "freedoms" for "rights," but in their day, the two terms were synonymous. The idea that the people could impose their demands on government — rather than vice versa — was incomprehensible. This concept of rights leaves no room for entitlements that benefit some at the expense of others.

Authentic rights can be enjoyed without permission from anyone else. Freedom of speech or religion or the right to keep and bear arms impose no cost on others or government. Only when competing rights collide must one freedom yield. In these circumstances, the Founders concluded that the proper balance ought to be drawn by the people whom government serves.

However, there is no right to be free from annoyance or irritation. That the mere exercise of our rights bothers someone else is an inevitable consequence of freedom.

Freedom also demands that we refrain from interfering in others' enjoyment of their inalienable rights. Freedom encompasses not simply the opportunity to make choices but the responsibility for those choices. Just because one choice seems wiser or safer doesn't justify using the force of government to require everyone to make the same choice. Likewise, government shouldn't protect those who make irresponsible choices from the consequences of their actions or, worse yet, make someone else bear the cost.

Entitlements, on the other hand, always impose a cost and always interfere with someone else's fundamental freedoms. Transfer payments — like welfare, Social Security and farm subsidies — couldn't occur if government didn't have the power to confiscate our property or assets if we refused to pay taxes, even for causes we would not support voluntarily.

No society has achieved nirvana — with or without government. Yet, history is replete with the empty promises of politicians — many of whom evolved into dictators — who suggested that a little less freedom would lead to equality and prosperity.

Conversely, history has but one example of a country founded on individual freedom. Despite its shortcomings and injustices, America remains a beacon to oppressed people around the world.

In his day, Reagan saw the horrors of Nazism and Communism and realized how fragile our freedom could be: "It must be fought

for, protected, and handed on for (our children) to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

Our vision for the future should emulate the Founders of that freedom — not the empty promises and repressive systems that so many around the world are dying to escape.

\*\*\*

## **\*Subject:\* Arlington Cemetery**

On Jeopardy recently, the final question was, How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns? - All three missed it. This is really an awesome sight to watch if you've never had the chance. Very fascinating.

### **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**

1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why? 21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.
2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why? 21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1.
3. Why are his gloves wet? His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.
4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and if not, why not? He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.
5. How often are the guards changed? Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.
6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to? For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30". Other requirements of the Guard: They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform {fighting} or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.

The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe E. Lewis {the boxer} and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, {the most decorated soldier of WWII} of Hollywood fame. Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.

In 2003, as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC, our US Senate/House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a serviceperson. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930.

We can be very proud of our young men and women in the service no matter where they serve.

### **Bill of Rights**

In 1787 the final draft of the Constitution of the United States had been completed by our forefathers yet was considered incomplete. Something was missing. That something was the Bill of Rights, a list of basic human civil liberties. These are the ten basic civil liberties that define the personality of our country.

The first of those ten rights for which countless human beings have died to have is the most well known. Freedom of religion, speech, press and assembly - this we can do and we can do freely and hopefully without fear. As Americans we simply take it for granted that we may basically express ourselves as we please. We do not expect to have our tongues cut out or