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A STAND UP GUY

Greg is a real *'Stand Up Guy'*.

Last week as I was going around the now famous *'Meredith Rotary'* when to my surprise and wonder my Jeep was hit by a car whose driver apparently failed to notice my car, the rotary or the yield sign. I call it DWD --- Driving While Distracted. Fortunately nobody was hurt and as we stood on the side of the road waiting for the Meredith Police Department to arrive I saw a man walking towards us. He had parked clear on the other side of the rotary and on this very cold night was making his way back on foot. He stopped to ask if we were OK and to tell me that he had seen everything and to call him if I needed help. His name is Greg and he is from Rochester and he just happened to be passing through on his way home from a job.

This was about 5:30 in the evening – a very busy time around the old rotary --- and while we didn't need any help – he was the one guy out of hundreds passing by that stopped to offer help. That makes him a real Stand Up Guy!

There is an increasing tendency for us all to look the other way and shy away from getting involved. We rightly tell our children not to talk to strangers and we are reluctant to speak up when we see something going on that is wrong. We are reluctant to get involved in other people's business.

Last week I also happened upon a television show called *"What Would You Do"* hosted by John Quinones where they use a hidden camera to film how people will respond to challenging situations. While some do get involved – many do not. The show uses actors and in one segment an obviously wealthy person steals change from a homeless guy in order to buy himself a cup of coffee with people around watching everything that is going on. Even when there is no likelihood of 'danger' many people neither said or did anything. As much as they objected to what they saw going on – most did not say anything to this obviously obnoxious

guy. Interesting was when the 'rich person' was played by a woman – there were even fewer people who spoke up or intervened. If Greg were on that show I know what he would do --- he would get involved!

We are quickly losing a generation of people --- the '*Greatest Generation*' – for whom getting involved was never an option – it was a given. It is part of who these people are, a part of how they were raised and reflects the values they live by. Now in their mid to late 80's they are not always such a visible part of our community and sadly their numbers diminish each day. These are people for whom '*Doing the Right Thing*' had nothing to do with what was convenient or even safe. These are people who know how to stand up for what they believe in.

Today we have to be careful. We are busy and there are '*bad people*' and '*strange people*' out there that we need to worry about. We want someone else in a position of 'authority' to handle difficult and/or uncomfortable situations. Increasingly we define '*getting involved*' to be nothing more than calling someone on our phones. We tend to be very polite, very politically correct and very reluctant to engage in anything remotely close to being confrontational. We tend to prefer that everything be calm and predictable. Unfortunately life is not that way.

A '*Good Samaritan*' is defined as a compassionate person who unselfishly helps others. While I certainly do not want to declare that Good Samaritans are on the '*endangered species list*' it does appear to me that their numbers are in a state of decline. I think it is a decline that we can work towards fixing.

I'm convinced that most people really do have a good heart and that they want to do the right thing and that they are compassionate towards others. While converting those good intentions into actions might need some work – I think that we have good reason to be optimistic.

Why am I so optimistic? Because last week a guy I didn't know and who didn't know me was on his way home and instead of doing what everybody else did – He stopped, got out into the cold and offered to help. With guys like Greg out there we all have good reason to be optimistic. He's a real Stand Up Guy!

Age Well!

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