

THE SILVER BULLET

El Capitan Resort, Santa Barbara
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We are agreed in principle that the United States is no longer an Industrial Nation. We are now a “Service” nation, providing systems, operations, guidance and consultancy to the rest of our Mother Earth.

Such changes are guided by the global economics that morph through changes in transportation, communications, and world populations. Whatever the total explanation may be to the many causes of this change, today's “power generation” exists in a different world than the one of our formative years.

Our future as a nation will be guided by how well this influential group meets the new and different challenges of our 21st century World. Will they adapt? Will they adapt quickly enough? Will our population be willing to make their necessary changes in hopes and skills to permit the nation to retain its leadership role in the globe as we see it today?

All good questions, but.... so few answers.

No, that is incorrect. So MANY possible answers.

The single greatest force is our American population. Always an ethnic mix, now at 330 million souls, the greatest number than ever before, with the oldest average population than ever before.

The most common thread that I hear across all the differences in race, wealth, and age, is “Entitlement”. The young believe they are entitled to liberal freedom to act as they please. The elderly are entitled to be able to live a longer, healthier lives than ever before. Industry and business is entitled to use all means to show a profit, without regard to some of the older ethical rules which were once thought to guide our western economy.

The word “entitlement” has an interesting subtle undercurrent. It presumes that one does not have to “work” for it, but rather, it is a god-given right. (Well perhaps not a god-given right, but at least a government-given right.)

Neither individuals nor communities have to sustain themselves. They are entitled to be protected, housed, fed and have medical care given to them by their government until the end of their life – (if the end of Social Security does not arrive first.)

As more and more generations and emigrants add to the total population, this culture of entitlement leads to more numbers of “takers” and fewer “providers” until Big Government has greater rule than ever before.

This brings tensions. Events as large as 9/11 and Katrina show the inherent weakness of passive populations waiting endlessly with their hands out for everything. Not just food and water, but classrooms to return to school, trains, airplanes, seats on a subway. And for everything we are given, we lose a little more of our “freedom”. Not freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but freedom to carry cosmetics on a plane. Take away a woman’s lipstick and now you have an angry segment of the country.

The growth of fear in the population increases. Mostly, fear of the “unknown”

“What next”, is the question in everyone’s mind. And now comes the crucial question. How safe can my country make me? I am entitled to safety. I’ve been promised life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. How is that possible when I have so much insecurity and fear?

In our culture we run to the drug store for any ailment, real or imaginary. We need an over-the-counter pill or potion for fear. Take one every three hours and you won’t worry about a thing. Well, it appears that you can do that today. At least according to the ads on my T.V. each night.

Everyone is looking for that “Silver Bullet”. We have had “Silver Bullets” throughout our many generations. That of the cure for venereal disease during the 1800’s. Even the silver bullet of the Lone Ranger who would protect us as little kids glued to the radio.

There is no “quick fix” at your pharmacy for a strong nation. Strong nations are built on strong communities, which in turn are built on strong individuals. You and I, our friends and our neighbors, we are the “silver bullet” for our country’s strength and for the survival of the freedoms that at the root of our American beliefs. We all have watched the truth of that legend. A body builder from Austria, now governor of California; a humorist, Will Rogers, the descendent of a Mayflower family and a Cherokee native American grandmother, the pundit and sage of his era. The foremost industrial architect I.M. Pei, from China. and on and on. If we start young enough we may become the next Bill Gates.

Now that is a type of Freedom worth fighting for. The freedom to hope and to aspire. All it takes is to offer your hand to the hand of your neighbor, and your community, with kindness. Kindness is a commodity not prevalent in our society in American today. Rather in this time before the next election, we are

making a cannibal feast of our government servants, both saints and villains alike. No wonder we are afraid.

But take heart. I have a silver bullet for each of you. You don't have to go to the pharmacy for it, or even WalMart. You carry it with you wherever you go. It is your greatest survival tool. It is your brain and your heart.

Yes you need to work a bit on how to use it. You need to start "giving" of yourself: --to your family, to your neighbor; to your community and to your nation. I know that is a parable. "To give is to receive".

Why do you think sayings become parables down through the years? Because they are true. Try it. I promise you it works!! Be kind and people will be kind to you. Here I am at 85, looking back on so many folks that have been so kind and generous to me. Did I "deserve" that kindness? Certainly not all of it, although I tried to give back as good as I got.

But I am not afraid as I live these last years, healthy and vigorous (for my years). I know that the strength of our people is just sleeping, waiting for that clarion call to take our future in our own hands and respond to the call of freedom which is the essential core of the American people whether you arrived here yesterday or 386 years ago this Thanksgiving 2005.

Each of you, Press on.