

CLIMBING KILIMANJARO * THE BEST LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

AT HOME
FRESH IDEAS
FOR THE HOME
INSIDE

THE Good Life

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RED-COATED MESSENGER

BY MATT ERICKSON

As the old saying goes: Life is what happens while you are busy planning something else.

Life can be difficult to decipher as it is unfolding, especially when it runs contrary to one's plans.

If one is paying close attention, perhaps something could be done to avert disaster at the early stages of mounting contrary evidence. Of course, if you are like me, it will take a brick wall crashing down upon you before you realize that you should have taken an about-face and reversed your course far earlier.

A lot has changed in my life in the past year. In December of 2009, my stepson and I closed our cabinet shop of five years due to too much indebtedness and too little profitable work (if I had only listened to that little voice of reason... no, not my conscience, but my wife screaming at the top of her lungs).

What we had spent years building up, we methodically dismantled in short order. After liquidating our assets, often for only pennies on the dollar, "things" matter to me much less now. I value time — time to spend on activities that matter most to me.

Raising awareness of threats to individual liberty and limited government is very important to me. As my grandchildren sit on my lap as I am writing today, I find it difficult to reconcile what the past few generations have allowed to threaten this great American nation and worry that this youngest generation will not be allowed the same or better opportunities than we of my generation faced.

I cannot help but feel that America is at the crossroads of great change, and not for what I had hoped.

Many people of opposing viewpoint on limited government have told me over the years that I "should be committed." Though I may have chosen to understand their recommendation differently than they likely intended, I cannot be anything other.

That brings us to my activities today. Besides writing on liberty and the U.S. Constitution, I have been doorbelling my neighbors, many of whom I had never before met. In order to make a "committed" first impres-



Matt Erickson in his outfit: "A downfall of choosing red is that it was the traditional color of the British forces seeking to curtail American efforts at independence. A number of homeowners have thus asked if I portray a British 'Redcoat.' If the opportunity presents, I explain that my frock is a civilian-style coat, all one color; while the British uniform of the era had off-white trim, blue facing, elaborate button stitching, and was cut much differently. Neither am I carrying a musket or firelock with bayonet or sword (imagine the stares if I did). Mostly, though, I just say no, that though I wear a red coat, I am not a Redcoat."

Photo by Pam Erickson

sion, I am wearing what my four-year old granddaughter affectionately calls my "silly costume" — my red, white and blue colonial patriot outfit.

I wear a long red frock coat, ruffled white shirt, and blue waistcoat vest. My breeches (pants which stop just below the knee) and long stockings are also white. I top off my outfit with my black, fur-felt "tricorne" hat and finish it off with brass-buckled, black shoes. In my haversack side bag is my collec-

MATT ERICKSON IS A WALKING,
TALKING COMMITTED GUY
COMING TO YOUR DOOR

tion of handouts: a pocket-sized constitution booklet, four-inch by six-inch American flag, and some reference material for the Patriot Corps and the Foundation For Liberty.

There are a number of potential downfalls, unfortunately, in choosing red for the coat. The first is that it would serve as the brightest target for those so inclined (no attempts yet, thankfully).

After knocking on my first thousand doors, I have deduced that there is yet another missing link in the evolutionary chain, as dogs are clearly related to bulls; free-range dogs charge at my coat whenever the opportunity presents, as if it were the red cape held by a matador.

I feel compelled at this point to posit that believing dogs color-blind is a massive, left-wing government conspiracy espoused by the liberal media, designed to lull patriot-attired people into complacency when choosing their clothing colors.

This is so government bureaucrats rationing health care can deny them treatment from rabid dog bites, hoping to limit the number of offspring from those who don't take their carbon footprint seriously, who would otherwise transmit such views through their "jeans" to an irresponsibly large family.

So far, though, dogs' barks have proven worse than their bite and the first nip didn't pierce the skin. Oh yes, I forgot to mention earlier that I carry a walking stick, which also serves as a handy canine-blocking device. The stick is quite effective at thwarting the liberals' devilish, population-control tactics (though perhaps not as effective as my wife's method of "get off me").

Walking down the street, I wave to passers-by who look at me somewhere between amazement and indifference.

Surprisingly enough, even a 16-year-old-ish young man listening to rap noise (I mean music) will stop and ask me what is going on. His curiosity at my "commitment" provides me a brief opportunity to hand him and others like him a packet of information and urge them to study the Constitution and reflect upon what a blessed privilege it is to be born an American.

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I suppose there is a certain amount of risk of being viewed as a “crackpot” by doing something out of the ordinary, something no “normal” person would willingly choose to do.

Of course, not all I talk with were born here or are even in the U.S. legally, so I should add in the appropriate disclaimer for the latter, “What a blessing it has become for them that they chose a competent coyote to help them cross the border (here we are back again to canines — see how intertwined conspiracies can become!).

I hear the occasional screech of tires as I walk down the sidewalk as a driver does a double take, rolls down the window and asks what in the world I am doing. So far, thankfully, no “bang” has followed the screech. I wave early at oncoming cars, so drivers have more time to assess the situation and be less likely to cause an accident.

I had never before been in the position whereby a stranger would ask to take my picture; now it happens up to a half-dozen times in a single afternoon as I walk the streets of Wenatchee.

One of the more memorable comments on my attire came in early October from a gentleman with extensive Halloween decorations in his yard who had just returned from a trip to Gettysburg. Evidently on the tour of that Civil War battlefield, his guide explained that many people there report seeing ghosts of the war dead. The startled homeowner relayed that his first thought when he saw me was that a ghost had followed him home (note to self: Consider

getting a tanning appointment before Halloween).

As I knock on the doors of strangers, a few invite me in and begin building a friendship. Others take a quick look at my get-up and tell me to “get out.” Some want no part of what I am “selling;” many others seem eager to listen, and quite a number take the opportunity to voice a few concerns of their own.

I suppose there is a certain amount of risk of being viewed as a “crackpot” by doing some-

thing out of the ordinary, something no “normal” person would willingly choose to do.

To me, however, it is a “commitment” thing: Why would I not take every opportunity possible to help my grandchildren have a wonderful future? Why would I not try to restore these United States of America as a bright beacon of liberty in a world all too full of darkness and despair?

I have little idea what tomorrow may actually bring; and I

may well get it wrong if I make extensive plans for it.

Yet that cannot provide me with sufficient excuse to evade the responsibility of trying to make life a little more just while properly oriented at liberty, at least to the extent of my limited means and ability.

God Bless America, land where we are free to be committed.


Matt Erickson is the founder and president of the Foundation For Liberty and the Patriot Corps.

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It's an honor to serve as your 12th District State Representative in Olympia. The 2010 session was brutal, but I'm looking forward to going back in January to continue fighting to curb wasteful state spending, control taxes and address the other issues you've contacted me about.

Please take a moment to visit my website, MikeArmstrongOnline.com to learn more about me as well as my activities on your behalf during my tenure in the State Legislature.


Thank you for allowing me to work for you. I look forward to continuing to represent you in Olympia.




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MIKE CASSIDY



Grandma Cassidy might not approve

My grandmother had a rule for visitors in the house where I grew up: No discussing religion or politics.

This rule made sense because we had a very diverse family.

Uncle Gordon was proud to admit to being a “card-carrying member of the Communist Party” (this during the 1950s and early 1960s during the “Red Scare” years) who advocated breaking up the large timber companies into 40-acre plots to be handed out freely to the public.

Uncle Oscar, on the other hand, was a tight-fisted farmer who — once seeing a county road grader smoothing the ruts in the public gravel road that ran past our home — said the government shouldn’t spend money to maintain highways. “People should take their own shovels and pickups and repair the roads in front of their places. We don’t need the government to do it.”

Uncle Oscar also had an interesting idea about paying taxes. On the day when the local county assessor was coming out to evaluate his personal property, he ran his cattle across the river to the neighbor’s place. When the assessor went to the neighbor’s, the neighbor ran his and Oscar’s cattle back across the river to Oscar’s land.

Uncle Frank was a union organizer, and Uncle Chet worked all of his life in a local brickyard for not much more than minimum wage and believed unions were too powerful.

And religion, well, that was stranger yet.

Interestingly enough, take these two topics off the table,

and the family got along very well.

Fascinating human interest stories flowed, usually helped along by the food my grandmother cooked on the old stove in the corner because that was her second rule: Insist that anyone who came in the front door had something to eat.

My grandmother’s first rule seems like a good idea for **The Good Life** because we are not here to advocate or expound one particular cause over another, but to entertain and perhaps inspire readers to try new adventures of their own.

So, why then are we publishing a story in this issue about Matt Erickson whose strong political views have him going door-to-door in a red, white and blue Colonial suit, espousing his beliefs on life, liberty and the U.S. Constitution?

First of all, because if you see him walking the streets in his period costume, you want to know: “What’s that guy’s story?”

And second, he writes with a nice touch of self-deprecating humor, an element sadly missing by advocates on both the left and the right these days.

But mostly, because as Matt conveys early in his story, there comes a time in life when if you want to do something with the years you have left on this planet, you had better get out there and do it.

And that is one message we do stand behind with every issue of **The Good Life**.

Be committed. Enjoy The Good Life.

— Mike