

As You Were Saying... Part II

Written by Jack Sparacino
Tuesday, 18 April 2017 13:06

On this the occasion of my 100th column for Lowcountry Weekly, I thought it might be worth taking a breath and sifting through reader feedback. For better or worse, almost all the feedback that comes to me directly is positive. Yes, I suspect that negative responses just don't reach my eyes and ears though such responses surely exist. But all of your thoughts are much appreciated, whether in person or via e-mail. I read them all and never discount anyone's reaction. Never.

That said, I want to begin with some negative feedback. From myself. While I write my columns carefully before submitting them and never release anything until I'm convinced it's factually accurate and at least potentially interesting to folks not named Jack, an odd duck may slip through on occasion. By that I simply mean the column violates one of my own rules. It might be too wonky, disjointed, harsh or longwinded. "Faces in the Crowd" struck me that way (disjointed) upon revisiting it months after publication. A good idea that somehow skittered into the weeds perhaps. Or into the marsh with other ducks. Well, at least I tried my best.

As for other readers, it's always nice to receive praise for one's work and a pleasure to share some of it with you today. In no particular order, here is a sample.

"All Ground Up":

A few well known people commented on this one, which happened to be one of my own favorites. "Lively and entertaining" wrote a prominent naval historian. "Nicely done" chimed in a popular syndicated columnist.

"Él Es Como Yo": ('he's like me,' a piece that took a few pokes at our new president during his candidacy)—Again, I heard from a celebrity who said, "I really like your writing. Smart, witty, informed."

One more high profile reader: "You have a splendid writing style. Unlike so many people, you understand the power and grandeur of a simple declarative sentence. Your writing has vigor and punch."

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“Off The Rails”:

“Hi, it was nice meeting and talking to you under the [hurricane Matthew evacuation] circumstances. I still pray every day for your wife and you. Nature put you in my path for a reason. Now it’s back to rebuilding and moving ahead with life. Thanks for the shout out! I printed the article to be framed! I wish your wife and you the best in rebuilding your home and continuing to enjoy your life to the fullest! May God continue to BLESS your family!”

“Quite good I thought, on all points. Yes, it's hard to imagine how people can continue to support this Trump character. They don't seem to care that he gropes women, his businesses have failed many times, he screws his contractors, he's a tax fraud, and the most belligerent person I have ever seen. It will be good to have this election over but we will still have all the people who voted for him.”

“Dates and Nuts”:

I think you really have outdone yourself. “Dates and Nuts” is one of your best. The dating stuff was fantastic and I enjoyed finding out more about how you and Jane got together.

“Something Old, Something New”:

“Loved your column, as usual. I agree with you about the intergenerational connections. I often feel I have much more in common with people at least one, if not two, generations younger. They do “get” it. They have concern about the environment and global warming. They are not bothered by racial stereotypes and profiles. They are perfectly fine with gender identity and equality.

All in all, I feel like my granddaughters’ generation in particular is a much better bunch of people than most of the Boomers I know. When we were in college and the Vietnam War was still being fought we were totally in favor of peace and equality and justice. And I remember

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thinking that my parents didn't get that at all. Now we are them. We are the people prolonging race and income and sex inequality. We are the people providing ourselves golden parachutes while poor people starve. We are the people who think that Walmart employees should be paid \$7 per hour so the Waltons can make a few billion more. Doesn't make sense. We can learn a lot from younger generations. Good on you to point out the connections we should share."

"Monkey-vision":

"I like this one as you drew out some of Trump's most blatant issues.

Do you get hate mail? [answer: no] Is your editor taking flak? Do you have to wear a disguise when you go outside and walk the dog? I hope not. It is a thoughtful article dealing with the stupidity that passes off for presidential politics nowadays. If it weren't so serious it would be a laugh riot."

"I really enjoy your thoughts. I hope it makes people think as much as it does me. I get a lot of good quality reflection time out of your articles. Keep up the good work!"

"When I pick up the LC Weekly I look first to see if you have a column. If so, I put it in a safe spot so it doesn't accidentally get stuck in the recycle bin before I have time to sit down and enjoy reading it. Doesn't really matter what it's about -I like them all!"

"Balancing Acts":

"You nailed it. I learned some things, too."

"I loved this column. I think about balance often and its importance in all aspects of life."

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“Undercover America”:

“Jack! I like it! Interesting comparison between our parents’ generation and our own. I certainly focus on the “self-absorbed” aspect of our generation. The “I’ve got my own and I don’t care if anyone else does” complex that a lot of us seem to have. The selfish, self-caring, other-people-ignoring attitude that we see examples of every day. On the other hand, there are examples every day of people I know who really do care about, and help, lots of other folks.”

“Oh, Look at the Time”:

“Thanks Jack! Loved the column as usual. Very “timely.” The digital loop theory, well, threw me for a loop. Never thought about the eternal, or infernal, cyberspace that way. Never know. What we post today may live on forever. Speaking of time, I have some evangelical friends who are absolutely convinced that the earth is 3,000 years old and was created in a week. There’s faith and then there’s, well, stupidity. Hard to draw that line sometimes.”

“Built to Last”

“I really enjoyed the column. I must admit I got a certain amount of illicit pleasure from the cuts at The Donald. I talk to folks who support him regularly. One of the things that they always say is that he “tells it like it is.” I don’t think that’s true at all. I read today that he has underestimated his debt by at least \$500 million. Good job!”

Veterans Day:

“Loved your article, as always. Good to keep in mind the sacrifices of our military. We don’t appreciate them enough. You have done a great job of enlightening us on that issue and I thank you for it.”

“Time Benders”--

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I thought that this was one of your best pieces, perhaps in part because it arrived within a couple of days of the anniversary of my mom's death in 1989. So I've been thinking a lot about the passage of time, aging, and the like, and your piece fit right into it.

I think losing your 'last parent' is particularly tough. When my Pop died in 2009 (just short of his 86th birthday), my sister half-jokingly said to me 'You're the family elder now.' Whoosh."

"One of your best. Why doesn't life get TV time outs, like football games do???"

"Great job. It reminded me of some critical work on the cellular biology of aging, work which I continue to participate in enthusiastically."

Thank you again, readers, for sharing your thoughts. I carry them around with me always. Write to me anytime at jacksparacino@embarqmail.com.