

The goal: “We all need to have love in our hearts”

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, George Floyd killing June 7, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the George Floyd killing 

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Gadfly:

As my Black neighbor said to me last week, “We all need to have love in our hearts.” And this week another long-time black friend contacted me about being interviewed by the newspaper I freelance for, to discuss all of this. He wants me to do it. “You’re one of us,” he said to me. Not quite, I know, but I am in spirit. I’ve helped him on a number of projects over the years.

I grew up on the side of Stefko Boulevard opposite Marvine Pembroke public housing. The minority population then wasn’t what it is today. However, when the minority kids crossed over to the old Stefko Little League field for pick-up games, all that mattered was how well you could play baseball, nothing else.

The same approach applied to the 23 years that I played softball, mostly as a fastpitch pitcher and centerfielder. When somebody teed off on one of my pitches, I didn’t care that my leftfielder was Italian, my centerfielder was Black, or my rightfielder was Hispanic. All I worried about was if they could save my behind and make the play.

By the way, that Hispanic rightfielder’s brother played third base for our team. He had a golden glove, and it was because of it that I once tossed a no-hit game. He and his wife live in Florida now and we have exchanged Christmas cards for over forty years.

It was the same during the twenty-five years I played volleyball in leagues all over the Lehigh Valley.

My stepdaughter married a Black police officer in Allentown. He was a hell of a nice guy who treated his wife and my granddaughter as the loves of his life. He was popular and a good community police officer. Sadly, cancer took him at the age of 37.

The first time we went to a family gathering with his family, my ex, her daughter, and I were the only white people in attendance initially. I remember walking into a picnic with about twenty smiling Black faces and thinking, “aah, so this is what it’s like for them every day.” We had a blast because we were just people at a picnic.

Of course I see skin color, and of course I’ve been the benefactor of white privilege. Am I a racist as a result of being white? I don’t know.

What I know is that I am a guy who tries really hard to live by the Golden Rule. I pray each night for the guidance to do what is good and right, and for the strength to be kind, caring, compassionate, and considerate of others. I’m not perfect, but those things are what I aspire to be, no matter whom I come across.

Dana

Gadfly welcomes personal reflections on the current racial issues.