

Reflections of 9-11 sp

Community Comment
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This has turned out to be a week of reflection. The eleventh anniversary of 9-11 prompts much of this. I noticed that the memorial eliminated political office holders from speaking. This moving and important memorial simply reads the names of those innocent people who died at the hands of cold blooded killers. Murder, cold, plain and simple. Family or friends read the names so that none of us would forget. It is not and should not be a political event

But so much to think about. The countless lives lost and impacted. Children losing parents and spouses being wrenched apart. A nation shocked and grieving. The political effects and economic toll. The loss of innocence as a nation. The going to war. Think about that alone. The going to war. More lives lost and disrupted. And then, another war. These are the facts of what happened, our individual and social choices constitute our response. It's what is. We charted a course with our response and are still working out the path.

By coincidence, 9-11 also happened to be the day I became an orphan. My Mother died that day eight years ago. It's hard not to do some serious reflection when a parent dies; especially the last one. Over the years I've thought of so many questions I wished I had asked. Questions about her and my dad who passed away 30 years earlier. Questions about our family and our tree. My mother and father were first generation Americans and they honored that status. They loved the old traditions and spoke Italian but not to me. They told me it was important to them that I not have an accent. But oh how I wish I had learned Italian as a kid. My youngest daughter lived a year in Torino and learned the language quite well. Her experience was much richer than my visits for her time and her ability to hold normal conversations.

We traveled some this summer and had the opportunity to go abroad. This trip was a different experience for us. We visited a small city in Holland to attend a wedding reception of a friend. Her husband is from Holland and this reception was mostly for family and friends in his home town. As a result, we got to see some of Holland through the eyes of people who live there. Since we already spent the money to get to Europe, we also visited friends on the West Coast of Ireland. We were in a very rural area and the one pub in the village was the center of the social scene. About 5 in the evening, most of the village would show up to have a Guinness or tea and share the news of the day. We were warmly welcomed and joined right in. Again, we saw a small part of Ireland through the eyes of those who have lived there for countless generations. What a privilege. Travel seems always to be good for reflecting on ones life.

Finally, just yesterday. We laid to rest a cherished member of the family. My oldest daughter rescued a small dappled weeny dog nearly 11 years ago. She was born the day after 9-11 and came to live with us here in Arcata. Lulu was not a typical wiener dog;

she was sweet as could be. She was a perfect companion and will be well remembered.
She was a gift and worthy of reflection.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment and remember, we are in this
together.