

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the danger of "drifting". Robert Jackubec, 25, and Raymond Metzger, 27, were traveling on the upper Niagara River just off Grand Island when their boat's engine failed. They desperately tried to use the craft's anchor to prevent drifting further towards the falls but the river was too powerful. Finally they made at a frantic cell phone call to the emergency services. At 2.39 pm the Erie County Sheriff's Marine Unit dispatched rescuers who used a rope to tow the desperate men to safety. Erie County Undersheriff Mark Wipperman said: "The men probably were within 700ft of losing their lives". The next day a 51 year old Canadian woman drifted too close and was swept over the falls to her death before a stunned crowd of 30 witnesses.

The Bible warns against the danger of drifting. **"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard so that we do not drift away" (Heb. 2:1).** Judge Robert Bork sounded the alarm about drifting in his 1996 non-fiction book *Slouching Toward Gomorrah*. Sodom and Gomorrah "drifted" so far from the truth that not even ten people could be found who would dare to stand for God in the face of publicly sanctioned evil (Gen. 18:32). Unfortunately, if we do not "pay more careful attention" we too, like Sodom and Gomorrah, can drift beyond the point of no return.

To illustrate how America has "drifted" please consider the story of the Lone Ranger. He was a fictional hero on radio and television in a previous generation. His character was created by George W. Trindle and Fran Striker in 1933. The Lone Ranger's creed was: *"I believe...That to have a friend, a man must be one. That all men are created equal and that everyone has within himself the power to make this a better world. That God put the firewood there but that every man must gather and light it himself. In being prepared physically, mentally, and morally to fight when necessary for that which is right. That a man should make the most of what equipment he has. That 'This government, of the people, by the people and for the people' shall live always. That men should live by the rule of what is best for the greatest number. That sooner or later ... somewhere ... somehow ... we must settle with the world and make payment for what we have taken. That all things change but truth, and that truth alone lives on forever. I believe in my Creator, my country, and my fellow man."*

In order to facilitate this creed every program adhered to the following strict guidelines:

- The Lone Ranger was never shown without his mask or some sort of disguise.
- With emphasis on logic, the Lone Ranger was never captured or held for any length of time.
- He always used perfect grammar and precise speech without slang or colloquial phrases.
- While using guns he never shoots to kill, only to disarm his opponent as painlessly as possible.
- He is never seen escaping from a barrage of bullets by riding into the horizon.
- Even though he offers aid to individuals and small groups, his ultimate goal is the development of the West and America.
- His adversaries are always "Americans" to avoid any criticism of minority groups.
- Names of unsympathetic characters were carefully chosen to avoid vicarious association.
- Criminals are never shown to be successful or glamorous.
- The Lone Ranger did not drink or smoke.
- Saloon scenes are depicted as cafes with waiters and food, not bartenders and liquor.

The first broadcast was on January 30, 1933. It began with WXYZ and the seven other stations of the Michigan Regional Network. The show was syndicated in 1934. The live broadcasts were

transmitted over telephone lines to the other stations. The Lone Ranger was an immediate hit. In May, a free popgun was offered to the first 300 listeners to send a written request; the station received nearly 25,000 replies. In July, the Lone Ranger made a public appearance at a park and a crowd estimated at 70,000 gathered. The popularity of the series grew rapidly and was eventually heard on 249 radio stations nationwide. In order to service a nationwide audience, the live broadcast was performed three times, once for each time zone. Beginning in February 1938, the third performance was also recorded on a transcription disk for later broadcast on stations that did not have a live connection to the network. The Lone Ranger television series aired on the ABC Television network from 1949 to 1957. Fortunately, the TV series adhered to the same high standards as the radio program.

Someone said: "A short pencil is better than a long memory". A written record does not change like fading memories. Revisiting the recorded history of the Lone Ranger reminds us how far we have "drifted" as a nation. Today the average child will watch 8,000 murders on TV before finishing elementary school. By age eighteen, the average American has seen 200,000 acts of violence on TV, including 40,000 murders. Dr. John Nelson of the American Medical Association said that if 2,888 out of 3,000 studies show that TV violence is a causal factor in real-life mayhem then it is "a public health problem." The American Psychiatric Association addressed this problem in its endorsement of National TV-Turnoff Week, stating, "We have had a long-standing concern with the impact of television on behavior, especially among children."

Read again these inspired words: **"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard so that we do not drift away" (Heb. 2:1).** In addition to keeping our own anchor firm, let us sincerely pray that our nation has not "drifted" beyond the point of no return!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce