

Still Pulling on the Oars Together

Does everyone have power back? Sure hope so. Sorry for any and every loss among us all. Truly, I regret every suffering in this community. For over a decade I have wondered how I can watch the local news every night and not weep at someone's tragedy. Yes, I figured out it isn't my job to cry all the time, although I am tempted indeed. It's my duty to be merciful wherever I can. You can be my judge in this life. Frankly, it is you who move me in pride and honor.

I puff up when you vote your values and your wisdom time and again. More than that, I am humbled in the honor of just being your neighbor when I see how y'all responded to Isabel. I wrote about this before, but it needs to be said again.

People who can't live in their water-damaged homes tell me that they "are lucky". Families facing real setbacks from uninsured losses speak genuinely about how "thankful" they are. I keep hearing the words, 'grateful', 'blessed', 'fortunate'. If there are complainers, I haven't heard them. Life is sacred. What a testimony to the spirit, as well as the values, of Poquoson and York Virginians.

Isn't that ironic that so many of our best moments come from the worst of times?

Our happy times may be wonderful memories, but the bittersweet moments of life may be more powerful. Courage comes out of adversity, not easy victory. Patience comes from suffering. Humility comes after failure. Joy comes in the morning after the night of sorrow.

We choose whether to take life's blows and be bitter or better. From all I see, you chose well. So, we all are pulling on the oars of this ship of state together for now. Consider of our craft for The Peninsula and the Commonwealth to be galley ships. Who sits at the oars? Slaves of some tyranny or free folks – like the Vikings? Which are you?

We have to decide where the ship of state will go in the next session of the General Assembly. If you want to increase your involuntary work for the state, tax slavery, vote Democrat. If you prefer spending – and giving – from your income as you decide, vote Republican.

Right after the election, a mere month from now, the new Tax 'Reform' package is going to be pushed on the General Assembly. Your elected representatives will have less than two holiday-filled months to sort out who wins and loses. I spoke to the Speaker of the House, Del. Howell, and he said they don't have a macro-economic model of the Commonwealth. Whoa. That means the legislature doesn't know what really happens – who loses and wins what – with new, different taxes. Not good. Not prudent. Not wise.

How about our elected representatives spending some money on building a good tax model? They could do the analysis scientifically, instead of just tinkering with the tax code politically. Of course, every outcome either supports some principle for taxation or just represents a cash cow to be milked. Let the politics be debated about right and wrong taxes – based on some economic facts.

Remember the Transportation Tax scheme last year? That was a sucker tax you rejected almost 3 to 1. The wrong plan, the wrong tax, with an unelected regional government was cobbled together by the same people who will present 'tax reform' in November. Buyer beware.

The good news this year is the GOP Caucus should be a more circumspect, attentive to constituents, and curious for details.

Until this next divisive political issue drops, let's continue pulling on those oars

to our re-building a community safe haven together. It's a great ride all together.

James Atticus Bowden