

Deborah Nankivell and Richard Johanson: Merging generations — the Boomers and the Greatest

By Deborah Nankivell and Richard Johanson

Next year will mark the 65th year since the conclusion of World War II, the largest war in our nation's history. Men and women in all branches of military service returned to civilian life filled with hope that our democracy was safe from external threats and that prosperity lay ahead for all.

Next year also will mark the 40th year since the conclusion of the Vietnam War. Men and women in all branches of military service came home to join with their civilian counterparts in expressing their embitterment over our nation becoming involved in an extended no-win conflict.

Chronologists have recorded the first group as the "Greatest Generation" and the second group as the "Baby Boomers" —more familiarly known as the "Boomers." The distinction between the two groups has continued to exist in subtle forms for decades. Recently we have been witnessing a significant change that is drawing them closer together. The magnet is concern over the growing gap between the wealthy and those living in poverty.

The two generations are beginning to ask each other the same questions and are seeking a common answer. When did the accumulation of excessive wealth become the sole measurement of success? When did living in poverty become an acceptable societal life style for the under educated and unskilled? Why has this gap continued to grow greater and separate us in our nation when researchers tell us the planet's happiest peoples live in the Scandinavian countries where the earnings gap is the narrowest?

Out of this merging of generational groups a new concept is evolving in the way we must govern ourselves. It is called stewardship. No longer must it be acceptable for those at either extreme of our political spectrum to demand full compliance with their limited philosophies. Rather we are witnessing the return to a nation founded on democratic principles wherein the will of the majority of our voting population becomes our common pathway. The two generational groups are recognizing that this unacceptable widening of our economic gap has become a basic threat to our way of life and are acting to negate it.

Stewardship demands obedience to blending the welfare of others into one's personal aspirations. Stewards recognize that giving of themselves for the good of others is a key part of their persona. They are the seasoned and successful leaders who inspire others. They can come from any age, group, position or gender. Stewards accept the reality that the excessive polarization that exists within too many of our elected governmental agencies has resulted in many of today's societal issues.

Stewards believe that the remedy lies in creating a cadre of governmental leaders who place the financial welfare of middle-class America as the most pressing issue facing our nation. The ever widening gap between the wealthy and the needy must be addressed and corrected particularly as it affects our astronomical national debt. This will demand closer analysis of our educational processes, our health care services, our ability to create jobs here at home versus sending them overseas, our undocumented immigration population and, most of all, the future welfare of tomorrow's generations.

Our nation was created by those who believed in equal opportunity for all who lived within its borders. Today's generations are coming together to once again ratify the vision of our founding fathers.

We offer ourselves as examples. While eras, genders, birthplaces, career choices and philosophies could have kept us apart, we have spent the last 20 years in ongoing communication to learn from one another. Our shared passions

— the founding principles of America and the vision for liberty and justice for all — transformed our differences into shared strengths. We believe our generations working together along with those coming behind us can heal the rifts that have weakened our resolve as citizens. Our dream is that together we can inspire others to rise up as patriotic stewards to create a new national culture built upon the dreams of our founders.

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