

October 12, 2021

**Roots!**

At the end of September, my wife Liz and I drove up to Bismarck, North Dakota to spend a week with our daughter Melissa and her husband Tim. Bismarck is the town where I grew up. (Yes, Thomas Wolfe, you can go home again!) While we were there my younger brother Tom and I hosted our annual party for a bunch of guys, most of whom we have known for over sixty years. The party is called The Tudor Bothers’ Annual Stag Reunion. (My wife does all the work!) This last gathering was number eight. When people ask why I do this, I have a simple answer. I say, “I want to stay connected to my roots!”

I suppose that there are people who don’t understand what I mean by this. When you grow up in a fairly small town in the Midwest, there is a decidedly different feel to life than that experienced by individuals who grow up in much larger communities. Anonymity is not a possibility. People know who you are, and they are seriously interested in you. To put it another way, I would say that the word “neighbor” has a much fuller meaning in smaller communities.

I know that people are going to say that this is just a lot of nostalgia about the good old days. All things considered I disagree! The adults I knew and looked up to when I was growing up were people who had lived through the Great Depression (the dirty thirties) and then went off to fight in Europe and the Pacific: World War II. Those were definitely not the good, old days. Tom Brokaw described those resilient men and women as “the greatest generation!” Would we say that America today is producing great generations?

I have a classmate who told me recently at our 60th reunion that the men with whom he occasionally has coffee are amused by his descriptions of the “Leave it to Beaver” upbringing which he enjoyed in the 1950’s. Now that is amusing on its surface, but it has a serious side. Innocence was still an important part of childhood in those days. Social media and television have pretty much taken care of that today.

I will stand behind my statement that I want to stay connected to my roots. There is a certain amount of pride in being from a certain place. When you are from there, you retain a soft spot in your heart for your hometown. Your memories sustain you.”

Richard B. Tudor