

OPINION

DAILY AMERICAN'S VIEW

# The right direction

Pennsylvania received positive news Tuesday that the number of violent crimes has decreased. State police report the overall crime in Pennsylvania fell last year, led by an even steeper drop in violent crime. The department's annual Uniform Crime Report listed 932,000 reported crimes in 2010, down from 957,000 the prior year, a drop of 2.6 percent. Violent crime fell 3.6 percent, from 48,000 to 46,000, the lowest level in eight years. Rapes were down 4.6 percent, car thefts down 6.6 percent, arsons down 9.2 percent, and assaults on police officers down 11.7 percent. There were 53,000 driving under the influence arrests, a 4 percent decline. The one down side revealed murders were up slightly. There were also increases in burglaries and hate crimes. With the country still battling to recover from the Great Recession, it's good news to see that overall crime has been reduced. There's still plenty of room for improvement. When people learn to better respect each other and avoid abusing alcohol and drugs, the reports of violent crimes will continue to decrease.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**A MOM**  
To the editor:  
I deserve to take my life in a new direction. Happiness, living one day at a time, sad days, glad days, whatever comes my way. I now know my children are part of me, not all of me and that is how it should be. Mothers raise their children in their own way, and I have done that. It was not easy at times. I made mistakes more than a few; and I only had one chance. You see mothers are not perfect, no one is. Now it is time to move on to the rest of my life. You see I'm not just a mom, I am a woman.  
*Bonnie Lou Miller  
Berlin*

**APPRECIATES THE POST OFFICE**  
To the editor:  
Postal workers — are they necessary?  
Talk of closing some post offices, is shameful. The workers are not responsible. I have heard Dr. Phil and even some ministers on the radio refer to the delivery as the snail mail. They should all give a public apology, on TV and the radio. Try running this country without the mail service. I deal mostly in the Jerome post office. They are efficient and courteous, same with the other local post offices. May Mark Critz and his family be blessed for trying to help the postal workers. I say keep the post offices open, and on top of that give them all a raise in pay. God bless all the postal workers and may they all come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior —Psalm 27:1.  
*Alvin F. Wienczek  
Jerome*

**CANCER AWARENESS**  
To the editor:  
October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and as a dietitian, I'm thinking more about green and less about pink. All women should know that increasing the amount of vegetables and other plant foods in their diets can help protect against breast cancer. Scientific research has linked breast cancer risk to dietary fat—but plant-based diets are naturally low in fat. Plant foods are also packed with antioxidants and high in fiber, which helps move excess hormones and other cancer triggers out of the body. Lifestyle changes like eating a healthy diet, exercising, and limiting alcohol decrease breast cancer risk by about 38 percent, according to a recent report released by the American Institute for Cancer Research. Vegetarian diets built from a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes can play an important role in preventing cancer—and they also help fight obesity, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes. This year, let's look past the pink-washing and focus on greenifying our diets to protect our health.  
*Susan Levin, M.S., R.D.  
Director of Nutrition Education  
Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine  
Washington, D.C.*

# The genesis of a rumor

By ROGER VOGEL



ROGER VOGEL

I must put to rest an ugly rumor about myself. I did not try to kill my brother with a pop bottle. It was a frozen chicken leg. And I wasn't actually trying to kill him. This is a story of innocence. And it is a story of rage. It is a story of naive hunger, jealousy and super-human athletic abilities in the face of great danger. It is a distant memory to me, but it tells like the oldest tale I know. And though it is built on exaggeration, it is based on truth and so with only minor embellishments to perpetuate the myth, I relate the legend as it is so future brothers, like all brothers before us, might come to see what foolishness we put our parents through. It was summer. It was hot. We were unsupervised. Our single mother must have been working and though we were deemed old enough to watch over ourselves, I was not old enough to feel at all self-conscious about the fact that I was hanging around the house in my underwear. I am not sure how young we were, but it was way back when Coca-Cola came in heavy glass bottles, before microwave ovens and when frozen fried chicken was probably still a pretty neat thing.

My brother Ed is about two years my elder and all of the boys in our neighborhood were also older than me. He and a group of them were outside in our backyard boisterously bouncing on, and kicking around, an old over-inflated inner tube and sounding like they were having a pretty good time. And I remember being inside, just trying to keep myself occupied, feeling a little bit hungry and perhaps a little bit lonely, too. So I did what any American kid would do: I went and looked in the fridge.

Modestly stocked, there was probably Kool-Aid and hot dogs, assorted leftovers and our mother's saccharin-laced iced-tea, but where fate took its turn was when I opened the freezer and reached up to remove a box of fried chicken with a picture of a happy family eating an appetizing assortment on its frosty front. Let it be known that had I be-

lieved an oven should be involved I would have put it back, but I was young, and dumb, and when I read, "Serve hot or cold," I took out a piece to cheer myself up with a snack. I should have done like Adam and bit into an apple. Then at least I would have had a taste of wisdom, but there was no tree of knowledge in our kitchen, just that freezer offering its fowl of foolishness. (It wasn't really that bad. It tasted like chicken. Just very cold, very hard, chicken.) And so I strolled, gnawing away on that poultry Popsicle, to the back door where I casually took a look out at the gathering of older boys there. *And when the younger went out he made a great spectacle, as he looked down on them from the back staircase, clad only in under things and with fried bird, though no feast had been prepared. And they were an unruly mob and they jeered at him and they mocked his ignorance with taunting and they called out, "But you still have to cook it first, dummy!"*

No one likes to be jeered at. Especially not a lonesome, hungry kid in his underpants. And you know how your ears burn in embarrassment and how your mind races when everyone is looking at you and how you just do dumb things on impulse because you're just standing there feeling dumb. So like Cain slayeth Abel with the jawbone of an ass, I sent that leg of chicken flying. With a quick flick I propelled that pre-prepared piece of family history in a direct beeline to my brother's forehead. And though the sound of frozen poultry hitting a living skull is distinctly different than a Coke bottle would be, I am sure that the feeling is much the same. I don't blame my brother for changing the facts. He, like I, was in a moment changed into a charged and highly emotional state. He may even remember it differently, hav-

ing just received a fairly severe blow to the head.

I didn't mean to do it and I was instantly sorry. I wasn't aiming, just throwing in a general direction, and I was quite surprised at the potentially lethal tomahawk I had made of that drumstick. But I only reflected on my sin for seconds, as I saw a violent change come over my brother as he regained consciousness and began to react to my cold culinary attack.

It is said, "an eye for an eye," but I could see in his that he was going for the entire head. Don't call me chicken, but when I saw the look of rage, the murderous intent, the insane energy that fueled his growing anger, I quickly slammed the back door, locked it and moved toward the front of the house. But before I heard the last tinkling of the broken glass hit our tile floor as he busted through the back door, I was out the front in fear for my life.

And though without shoes and in my tighty-whities, my flight was beyond fleet of foot — they barely touched the ground. It was as if I was carried by angels, for my fleeing was so swift up the alley to the next block where our great-grandmother lived that I felt it had to be a divine intervention saving my skin. And I was surely thanking God when I got to "Grangie's" upstairs apartment where I stood panting in terror and testifying in broken sentences my side of the story, having made it safely to the almost holy sanctuary of our matriarch's rented realm. For that grand old gal was as close to an Old Testament elder as I will ever know and using the wisdom of Solomon and the authority of Moses, and perhaps with a paraphrase of what God himself might have said looking down on the early Earth and his own squabbling grandsons, our grandmother summed it all up in hand-wringing frustration with a family phrase and plea that also transcends the generations of man: "You durn fool kids... Why can't you just get along...?"

(Staff photographer Roger Vogel can be reached at roger@daily-american.com.)



## QUOTES

"I think people are quite unhappy with the state of the economy and what's happening. They blame, with some justification, the problems in the financial sector for getting us into this mess. And they're dissatisfied with the policy response here in Washington. And at some level, I can't blame them." — **Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke after being asked about protests around Wall Street which went on for an 18th day.**

"What's the problem? Do they not have the time? They just had a week off. Is it inconvenient?" — **President Barack Obama in comments while in Texas to deliver his most caustic challenge yet to House Republicans who have not allowed a vote on his jobs bill unveiled nearly a month ago.**

"I'm really overwhelmed right now. I was looking down from the airplane, and it seemed like everything wasn't real." — **Amanda Knox after returning to her hometown of Seattle a day after being acquitted on murder charges after four years in prison in Italy.**

## TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Thursday, Oct. 6, the 279th day of 2011. There are 86 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Oct. 6, 1981, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was shot to death by extremists while reviewing a military parade.

**On this date:** In 1536, English theologian and scholar William Tyndale, who was the first to translate the Bible into Early Modern English, was executed for heresy.

In 1683, thirteen families from Krefeld, Germany, arrived in Philadelphia to begin Germantown, one of America's oldest settlements.

In 1884, the Naval War College was established in Newport, R.I.

In 1927, the era of talking pictures arrived with the opening of "The Jazz Singer," starring Al Jolson.

In 1939, as remaining military resistance in Poland crumbled, Adolf Hitler delivered a speech to the Reichstag blaming the Poles for the Nazi-Soviet invasion of their country.

In 1949, U.S.-born Iva Toguri D'Aquino, convicted of treason for being Japanese wartime broadcaster "Tokyo Rose," was sentenced in San Francisco to 10 years in prison (she ended up serving more than six).

In 1958, the nuclear submarine USS Seawolf surfaced after spending 60 days submerged.

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**Today's prayer**

Thank you, Lord, for giving us peace as we work to help others. Thank you for the opportunities you give us to be a part of your work in their lives. Amen.

**Letters to the editor**

The Daily American welcomes letters to the editor which express a specific view on issues of general interest. Letters submitted for publication must be signed and contain the address and telephone number of the writer. Letters should be limited to about 250 words. The Daily American reserves the right to edit all letters. Letters cannot be returned. Letters may be mailed to Roof Garden Forum, Daily American, 334 West Main St., Somerset, PA 15501; Fax: 814-444-5966 or e-mail: [brianw@dailyamerican.com](mailto:brianw@dailyamerican.com).