

Topic: Days Gone By

A Stark Difference
by Liz Gibbons

Growing up in the 1930's and 40's life seemed simpler and at a slower pace. There seemed to be more trust. We knew our neighbors well, and they all watched out for us kids. We could roam the neighborhood and ride our bikes around town without any worry about our safety. Our school teachers were looked up to in our community. Many had taught for a number of years and were well known in town. Some of the local stores issued credit cards, but people did not charge excessively and go into debt. It was more of a convenience, particularly if the item was to be delivered by the store. My dad liked to go to the utility companies to pay our utility bills for they were small local companies, and that way he got to know the employees. There was no television, but radio was a big part of our lives. My mother had one particular radio series which she often listened to. The advantage of radio was that she could prepare a meal or do ironing or other tasks while listening. We kids listened to The Long Ranger, The Shadow, The Green Hornet, Gang Busters and many other series. The life of those days have long gone by.

Even with my own children having been born in the early 60's, they were free to roam outside. However, by this time television was a part of life and credit cards were becoming common. With Women's Lib and many mothers working outside of the home, day care increased. When our first son was born I had to return to work for seven months while my husband finished law school. I felt fortunate that I found an older couple to care for him. The husband had lost an arm in World War II. They took care of about six children from infants to toddlers and were like grandparents to our son.

Realizing that this week marks the nineteenth anniversary of 9/11, I reflect on how radically our lives have changed. The reign of the War on Terror began with the Patriot Act. Air travel is a hassle with having to get to the airport earlier, take off your shoes, pass through a full-body scanner or be patted down. Now with masks required, that is an additional restriction. Increased security has also been extended to schools and many businesses. Surveillance has increased profoundly through a clandestine network of phone and web infringements on our freedom. Credit scores are kept related to our bill payments. Now with covid more of our freedoms have been taken, and in addition to generating fear from terrorism we now are programmed to fear being too near any other person. And then there is political correctness, social media, and censorship, A whole generation have grown up with these procedures being a normal part of life. Very sad.

As I was contemplating how to end this piece I reread what I had written. I saw the stark difference between my childhood and what children today are being faced with. Forces of evil are striving to enslave humanity worldwide, not just in the United States. Everything that is divine in the world is being annihilated. Can we see through their terrifying tactics and meet the evil, negativity, hatred, fear, and division being generated with a spirit of love, faith in goodness, and with wisdom? Can we come together in a unified positive way to create a humane world where the current model is obsolete?

