

# REFLECTION

Editor’s note: Op-Ed pieces and Letters to the Editor are welcome. Discussion of ideas and issues is one of our fundamental rights and duties, as well as being essential to the advancement of all people. The main requirement for acceptance is that they maintain civil discourse. Articles or letters that engage in ranting or ad hominem attacks will not be published. An extra long article or letter may be edited for the sake of space. Email your article or letter to [tina.fieldsmedia@gmail.com](mailto:tina.fieldsmedia@gmail.com), or send it via the USPS to Editor, Northwest Michigan Voice, PO Box 28, Rapid City, MI 49676

## Work and Pride

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Before I go any farther with this thought, I need to be clear about what I mean by pride. I’m not talking about the pompous, self-important, braggadocio some people display. I mean the ind of joy we have when we have done something well, or the thing we did was really helpful for another person, or we made something truly beautiful. The kind of pride that feels like gratitude for having the ability to accomplish that good thing, whatever it was.

When I was in my twenties and thirties, I was a professional vocal musician, singing with bands in the dinner clubs around the Chicagoland area. Sometimes our bands also went on the road – to Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, Alabama – those were usually two-week stays. I am a good musician, not a great musician, but a good one. I have a good voice and I “cleaned up nice” so I looked good on stage. I remember my agent telling me always be kind to the “little people” on my way up because I was sure to meet the same people on my way back down. The “little people” he meant were the ones who did things for us, who made it possible for us to do our jobs. They were the ones who kept us on schedule, or provided transportation, or served food, or tidied up the hotel room. Yes, those absolutely essential people, without whom the everyday chores of life would not get done.

My agent meant no disrespect, even though today, I cringe at knowing he called them the “little people.” Did that mean I was one of the “big people”? Yes, that’s exactly what it meant, because I had a shot at being a star and hauling in a lot of fame and money. As a matter of

reality, although I was making some pretty nice music, my profession wasn’t really any better or more valuable than the professions of the wait staff, the taxi drivers, the stage hands, etc. In fact, for a long time, when our band went on the road, our first several hours were as the “roadies” who set up and tested all the equipment. Funny! In the afternoon, we were the road crew. In the evening we were the entertainers.

During those years, when we rehearsed for hours on end, just so we could be secure and at ease when it came time to play, our standard was that it took an hour of practice for every minute of performance. Yes, we memorized music scores and jokes as well as certain precise movements on stage, especially if there were any changes or transitions that had to happen, like shifting from one instrument to another, or disappearing for a quick costume change.

Then came the moment when my husband left. That meant I needed to have a steady job with a regular paycheck because I had four kids to feed, clothe, and shelter. So, no more touring. And it got to be pretty tough working two very different jobs. Eventually, I reluctantly retired from the professional music world and grew into export management and computer skills. I actually went back to school and completed my bachelor’s degree, proudly walking across the stage to receive my diploma at the age of 60.

Having the diploma made a difference in how I felt about my own intellectual ability and my self-worth. I had not expected that change in perspective, and I am deeply grateful for it.

In the years since I left the musical gig world, I have become an export manager, a college instructor of adults, a computer programmer, a database developer, and now the publisher of a newspaper. I have not abandoned music, I just don’t do it for a living anymore. I sing with a choir and I do it for the love of the music.

This past Sunday, my pastor tied together for me the sense of prayer and work, or faith and action, in a way that helped me see how they are intertwined already in my everyday life. I may not actually find the words to describe how that affects my daily living, but I sure do feel it.

So, I am thinking about the stone mason laying the foundation for a cathedral such as Notre Dame de Paris, or the Cathedral of Kölnr in Germany – great edifices that took hundreds of years to complete. When asked what he was doing, his response was “I’m building a cathedral,” even though he would never physically see its completion.

For each of us, is there not a great cathedral in the future that we can help to build? Do we not plant today for a harvest we will never live to see, but we know it is important? Is that not the work we do that gives us the greatest joy and pride?

Well, that’s what I’ve been thinking about.

Shalom

Tina Norris Fields  
Editor

### Citizenship Corner

Answers to last issue’s questions

- 1) In the original Constitution, how were Senators elected?  
*A. Per Article I, Section 3: ... two Senators from each State, [chosen by the Legislature thereof,]\* for six Years.*
- 2) When was that changed?  
*A. Amendment XVII, ratified April 8, 1913, made the change.*
- 3) What was the change?  
*A. ...two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years*
- 4) What are the qualifications for holding the office of Senator?  
*A. Per Article I, Section 3. Paragraph 3: in order to be eligible to become a Senator, a person must be at least thirty years old, at least nine years a citizen of the United States, and a resident of the state for which he or she is elected.*

### Citizenship Corner

These questions may require some research on your part. Thank you for making that effort. The answers will appear in the next edition of the Voice.

- 1) In the original Constitution, how were Representatives elected?
- 2) When was that changed?
- 3) What was the change?
- 4) What are the qualifications for holding the office of Senator?



Everything in this paper  
is important to somebody