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# VIEWS LETTER

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AWD's Views & Other Things of Interest

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## Choices, Perseverance & GRIT

By *A. Wayne Doudney*

The difference between us humans and the rest of the creatures in the world is our ability to choose between good and evil. The bottom-line in life is liberty, the freedom to choose. We each have been given the gift of choice and the ability to use it. God in His infinite wisdom has allowed us to make a difference in the life that we live by the choices we make. The choices that we make today may affect others hundreds of years from now just as the choices made by others hundreds of years ago affect us today. We have been given the opportunity and the power to make things happen, and to affect the world long after we are gone.

The most important thing to us on the day of our final intelligent thought will be the choices that we have made since the day of our first intelligent thought. Choosing not to choose is as much a choice as choosing to hang in there tenaciously. This is the story of a young girl and her mother, and some of the choices that they had to make. [Continued on page 4 column 1: See](#)

## Kansas Senate Opening Prayer

I thought you might enjoy this interesting prayer given in Kansas at the opening session of their Senate. It seems prayer still upsets some people.

When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

**"Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask Your forgiveness and to seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good', but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.**

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## Insight, HINDSIGHT, and Perspective!

*NOT NAMED AIRLINES fired the pilot and co-pilot of a Boeing 737 that, in March, on landing, crashed through a fence in Burbank, CA, in what the airline called the carrier's worst accident. The airline fired the pilots after completing an internal investigation of the March 5 crash of this flight, the first major accident in the carrier's 29-year history. The flight from Las Vegas, carrying 142 passengers and crew, overshot the runway at Burbank Airport and ran through a chain link fence and across a six-lane road. Sixteen people were hurt, including the pilots, but no one was seriously injured.*

*(Reuters 01:44 PM ET 08/03/2000)*

*Out of respect for the airline and their employees I am not using the name of the company. This article is only my opinion and the only authority that I use is my own*

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*experience.*

To be on a five-mile final approach to the runway with the aircraft totally configured for landing, with all checklists completed, with the speed within a manageable range is the place for any pilot to be for any normal approach and landing at any normal airport. This is being in “good shape.” The shorter the runway and the more hazards in the vicinity of the airport, the more paramount it is to be in “good shape” on final approach and the easier it is to be “out of shape.”

There is not an airline pilot worth his pay that hasn't ended up on a final approach to a runway “out of shape” one time or another. “Out of shape,” in this instance, means being on the final approach too high too fast and with not quite enough room to correct the situation. Sometimes a safe landing can be made anyway, and sometimes it cannot, as was the case of *this flight* on March 5, 2000.

As a pilot, my heart goes out to the two former airline pilots that are no longer gainfully employed. Their dismissal is a real shame because these two pilots now have more experience than most of the rest of us.

They have had the experience of being totally out of control and at the mercy of kinetic energy as it drove them and their transport category aircraft full of healthy people off the end of the runway through a blast fence, through another chain link fence, across a six-lane street, and almost into gasoline pumps at a Chevron service station. When the energy finally played out, it left them sitting in the middle of one of the many busy streets in Beautiful Downtown Burbank. These pilots have had the experience of an actual emergency evacuation. They have had the experience of what must have been and probably still is a major despairing time in their lives. Before the incident, both young men had bright futures in a gratifying and exciting industry. Now their careers as airline pilots are over. They are still alive and healthy, and all of their passengers and their crew are still alive and ➤

well. The pilots can be thankful for these things, for this accident could have been much more catastrophic with numerous fatalities and injuries. The aircraft they were piloting, however, did not escape harm: it was a total loss except for a few spare parts.

The possible reasons for their being out of shape are numerous, for in spite of what the average person may think, flying is not an exact science. From long before the push tug pushes the airplane off the gate until the final moments that the pilots are gathering up their personal things to leave the airplane after the flight, decisions are constantly made, changed, remade, and re-changed thousands of times. Some are almost automatic, but some require careful consideration. Most accidents occur during the departure and arrival phases of the flight. Particular care must be used before and during these critical phases.

About 5 miles from the arrival at the end of the runway to touchdown is considered the final approach. The physical attitude of the aircraft and the amount of power required are constantly changing. Of course, the more experience that a pilot has, the fewer number of changes that are necessary; but still there are lots of judgment decisions being made on each and every approach.

In this case, it could have been that ATC (*Air Traffic Control*) held the flight too high too long too near Burbank airport, not allowing the pilots to start their descent until late. This situation is becoming more common as the skies become more crowded, leaving ATC with less airspace to work with. When this happens, we call it getting “slam dunked,” as it requires a keener management of excess kinetic energy. *Kinetic Energy is the energy possessed by a body because of its motion equal to one half the mass of the body times the square of its speed.* An easier way to think of it is this: the bigger and heavier the airplane is and the faster it is going, the harder it is going to be to slow down and to get stopped in a given distance. Another important factor is the altitude. The

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higher the aircraft is the more stored up kinetic energy it will have to dissipate between the start of the descent and the time that the aircraft comes to a stop at the gate. Altitude is stored up kinetic energy. It takes an enormous amount of energy to get an aircraft up to altitude and once there, all of that energy is available to the pilots to use. If the pilot has an abundance of it, then it must be wasted or dissipated in some way. Nowadays, a pilot must learn how to waste energy in order to be at the proper point in space and at the proper speed in order to make a safe and successful landing. Safety requires that we pilots waste some of the kinetic energy and then use engine power or engine energy the last few miles in order to make consistently safe approaches and landings.

Sometimes, our judgments are wrong, and we find ourselves too high, too fast, and too near the runway to make a safe landing. Burbank has shorter than normal runways; they are not too short, but are very short compared to the runways of other airports where most airlines operate. Too high, too fast, and too close to the end of the runway is precisely where the cockpit crew of this flight found themselves on this particular night. It was time to go around and try it again. I can only guess why they didn't, but they didn't. I do know what should have been done. I possess the credentials to say what I'm saying, but I am not claiming that I have not made this same mistake myself, because I have, just not to this extent, and I am thankful for that. I have learned something from this accident and thinking about it. I will go around with no thought of the embarrassment of admitting a poor judgment decision on my part. I will never criticize my partner for making a go-around if he or she is the least bit uncomfortable with the way things are shaping up.

When it is time for pilots to eat crow, we should go ahead and eat the meal. When we have made a judgment that cannot be corrected, the sooner we admit it the sooner we can safely go to plan B. All accidents are caused by more than one or even two errors in judgment. Most accidents are caused by as many as 25 errors in ↗

judgment. Plan B is always available, and we should use it before causing harm to any of our passengers or crew.

When this flight was on a five-mile final and success of the approach and safe landing looked iffy, it was time to eat crow and admit that they were out of shape, for whatever reason, and go around. Being out of shape might have been their own fault or it could have been ATC's fault for leaving them too high for too long. At this point, it does not matter who was at fault. Admitting the error and going around would have been very humiliating and embarrassing for the pilot who was flying. That's OK; a good meal of crow is good for the health of future judgment decisions.

Eating crow contributes to our becoming better at what we do. Making sure that there will be a next time is all part of the formula of getting better. Admitting, for whatever reason, that "we are out of shape and this approach is not going to work" is a judgment decision of its own. Let's go around, come back, and get this plane safely on the ground. Then we can start getting the meal of crow down and allowing time to take care of the bad taste that it always leaves. An embarrassing memory will be all that remains after a couple of weeks. After a year or two everyone, but us, will have forgotten. Not so for the crew of *this flight* March 5, 2000.

The crowding of airspace is becoming more and more of a problem, particularly in places like Southern California. Pressures to get the job done and to be on time are just a few of the additional problems that we pilots face. We spend a lot of time looking for other aircraft, constantly trying to avoid a fatal catastrophic collision. Trying to end up at a given point in space at a particular speed and configuration is becoming more difficult as the airspace becomes more and more crowded. We are left much higher for much longer than we were say 15 years ago. FAA Air Traffic Control is doing a good job; it is by far the most productive part of any agency in the Federal Government. We, as pilots

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**GRIT** Continued from page 1.

Gentrye Rebecca Houghton arrived the twenty-sixth day of April, nineteen hundred eighty-five in Amarillo, Texas. She was welcomed into this life by parents, Dr. Don & Becky Houghton, who along with her brother Drew and her sister Shannon were thrilled at her arrival.

Gen seemed like any normal little baby girl for awhile, but it wasn't long before everyone realized that she was something special as she had a special intelligence and ability with horses and music that wasn't common to others her age. As she grew up, she attended Wolflin Elementary School and Stephen F. Austin Junior High School in Amarillo, Texas. Now she is presently attending Tascosa High School. She started riding horses at the early age of seven and started playing the violin at age ten.

She will tell you that life around the Houghton House has its moments, but all things considered it is as American as Apple Pie. It has joy, pain and struggle, but nothing out of the ordinary. At this point in her life, fate had been very gracious to Gentrye. Not only was she supplied with extraordinary gifts, she was blessed with a very strong mom. Her mom has the ability to set her focus, and once that focus is set, she has a power of determination that can move mountains. There are more than a few women with this sort of strength, but few with the tools needed to achieve their goals. Gen's mom has a tool box full and is skilled in the use of each tool. It is a distinct advantage to have a mom like Gen's.

By June of '96 Gentrye had become an old hand with the horses; she had been riding for four years and had developed the ability to move in and around them with ease. She had been competing for three years and was on a winning course. She was, at this time, training for a world championship competition, "American Saddlebred Breed," in Louisville, KY. She was staying with her trainer, John Wallen and his family, near Springfield, MO.

Sometime during the afternoon on the 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1996, she was struck down by one of ↗

Fate's unpleasant blows. After a hard day of training, she and her best friend, Ashley Birdsong, were out riding bareback on their horses when the accident occurred. Ashley was riding ahead with Gen following her on the back of her old buddy, Biz. It is believed that a horsefly bit Gen's mount somewhere on the rump causing him to pitch forward kicking out with his rear legs. The action was so unexpected that Gen found herself falling forward off the horse's back. As she fell, Biz threw his head back in the opposite direction, and her head collided with the very hardest part of the horse's head, the part right between his ears. It hit Gen's head on her forehead, a little above the bridge of her nose. She fell unconscious to the ground.

Gentrye was immediately taken to the hospital where a brain scan was done. There, it was determined that the extent of her injuries was a cracked skull, some splintering on the inside of the skull, and some internal bleeding. At that point, she was in a life-threatening coma.

Her parents, who were back at home, were notified as soon as possible. When they heard the news, they dropped everything and started the long drive to Springfield. Their prayers were a constant flow heavenward. It was a most difficult time for both mom and dad! Their little girl was in a coma miles away, and they didn't know if she would ever regain consciousness. They were both devastated, and a creature called **unknown** was barking from every shadow. Sleep was impossible. There was nothing to do but to move closer and closer toward their cherished little daughter, ignoring fear as best they could.

Gen remained in a coma for five days. Her coming around was proof enough that prayers are answered. Hope was revived. Hope, above all, was that this nightmare would soon be over and they could get back to a normal life.

Independence Day, the Fourth of July, was the day that Gentrye was released from the hospital. She was hardly able to walk. She was unable to sit for any length of time, and for all

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practical purposes, she was still a very sick little girl. Mom decided to accept an invitation to stay at Ashley Birdsong's; Ashley's mom is a medical doctor, and she could help keep an eye on Gen for a few days before they returned home to Amarillo.

After only a day at the Birdsong's, with barely enough mobility to get to the bathroom with the help of her mom, Gen started becoming nauseated and delirious with a high fever.

What now? Hadn't this family suffered enough? Quickly, it was back to the hospital with a very sick little girl.

At first, the doctors thought she was coming down with Spinal Meningitis, so they decided to do a spinal tap. In the Emergency room, Don, Gen's dad, was asked to help get the spinal fluid from his little girl. What is a dad to do? Everything possible! So that is just what Don did; he helped with the procedure. Instead of Spinal Meningitis, it was discovered that Gentry had a bacterial infection near her brain. It had made its way to the brain cavity through a sinus duct when a sinus cavity was damaged during the collision of the heads. The infection had collected as a pocket of infection near the brain. Emergency surgery as quickly as possible was a necessity to prevent the bacteria from doing damage to brain cells.

There was no time to waste. Minutes could make all the difference. In the meantime, tremendous amounts of antibiotics were administered. This was brain surgery! It could only be considered serious and life threatening---serious, life-threatening, necessary surgery, SERIOUS with all capital letters! This surgery is something you don't even like to think about, but now it was a fact of life for Don and Becky Houghton. The precious little girl that they had had a part in creating could be gone tomorrow. The prayers were flowing again. Their little girl was facing a serious few hours in a surgery on her precious little brain. This was World-Class major scary business for Mom and Dad.



Gen is living proof that God answers specific requests. Gen came out of the surgery just fine. She spent a day or two in the hospital and another week with Ashley Birdsong and her family; then Gen and her mom headed to Amarillo.

At home, she didn't waste any time climbing back on the horse. Mom and Gen were in agreement that she had to get back in the saddle as soon as she could. They decided there was no time like the present, so she climbed back on. The first day she sat in the saddle for five minutes; the second day, ten minutes; the third, fifteen minutes; and after that, an hour. Before anyone knew what was going on, she was riding around the lot like nothing had ever happened. Mom and daughter were so encouraged that they went to the trainer --- rider, saddle, horse, and all. Things seemed a little shaky at first, but firmed up much faster than anyone would have dreamed.

The World Championship Show took place four weeks to the day after Gen underwent surgery. She barely had any hair on her head, but she was determined to be in that show. She did ride, although she didn't take home the "First Place Ribbon." But, hey, third place in the world title ain't too shabby!

Two months later, in November of '96, she won first place in the National Championship at the AMERICAN ROYAL in Kansas City. It had always been a dream to be a first place winner, and now she was! And a National Champion to boot, but her goal was still a World title.

There were no more world competitions for a few years. Their thinking was; why go somewhere without a good shot at winning? And winning this title would require a powerful horse. Gen needed a high dollar pony to compete at this level, especially since the older she became the tougher the competition became. Dads can only afford so much money for ponies, so another approach had to

Continued on page 6 column 1: See GRIT a world champ

**Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what in the world happened.**

What is a little adversity when it comes to a dream? The time had come to go for it. The World Championship was calling, and although it was a tall mountain to climb, she and her mom had already proven that they had what it takes to climb a hill or two.

So mother and daughter, together in their goals, both with a similar amount of grit, went out on a search for a horse.

It was March of '99 in Colombia, Missouri that they came across a six-year-old gelding called "Timeless Drifter." Right away, they both knew that this horse had great possibilities. The biggest obstacle was talking the owner into a deal they could afford.

The horse was tall and beautiful, but no one had been able to manage him without a great amount of difficulty; in fact, few had been successful in riding him. When Gen asked if she could ride him, everyone within earshot perked up and wandered over to watch. Everyone, with the exception of Mom and Gen, were surprised to see the ease she had with this frisky gelding. It was almost love at first sight. They became instant buddies, and all that remained was a deal. Could the Houghtons afford this piece of horseflesh?

An offer was made and a price was negotiated. When the deal was consummated, Gen and Mom were both jubilant; things were beginning to work out perfectly. This horse, most certainly, had the possibilities of being the World Champion.

The rest is history. Timeless Drifter, ridden by Gentrye Rebecca Houghton, won the World Championship title in the American Saddlebred Breed, August 23, 2000. Best in the World! World Champion! What an amazing achievement over adversity!

This sort of achievement exemplifies the meaning of true **grit** and how making hard choices can change the effects of bad things into greater outcomes. 🍷 🍷 🍷

Tact is the ability to describe others as they see themselves. —Abraham Lincoln

## A CITY DOG'S VIEW

By *Shelby Doudney Schnauzer Dog*

Well if you can't accept change around here you're in the wrong place. Nothing is ever the same from one day to the next---except maybe the boss going off every week or two when his computer takes a crash.

I think that computers are a waste of time myself, but what do I know I'm only a silver Schnauzer, and seldom rate much more than a hello and a pat or a gentle ear pull.

Linda finally quit her job at the Optometrist office. She is on a house cleaning campaign like I've never seen before. She works a good while then crashes in the green chair for about as long. The boss has been encouraging her all this time---telling her to just keep at it at a steady pace which she has been doing.

The boss was hit pretty hard last week with some unexpected expenses. He broke down and bought Linda a new washer and dryer for Valentines Day. Gezzzzzz what a cheapskate---it reminds me of the story that he tells of his dad buying his mom a hoe for her birthday. He says that it was all a funny story, but I doubt that the boss's mom laughed very hard. Oh well, Linda seemed to be pleased. Not only that---the boss had to replace the water heater. He is getting much smarter in his old age. He paid someone else to install each of these appliances even though there was additional expenses to bring it all up to code. The government man rejected the installation so the plumber had to come back and fix something or other---it's a good thing too, because the boss got him to finish the washing machine installation that the man from Sears didn't know how to do. The boss liked the plumber just fine even though he charged an extra five hundred bucks to install the water heater---when he found out this additional expense was due. CODE is about the time he started grumbling about the stupid government bureaucracy! When the boss starts off saying, "What a pain in the rear," it's usually pertains to

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# DOGS DON'T HAVE SOULS, DO THEY?

*By Chuck Wells, Palmyra, N.Y*

I remember bringing you home. You were so small and cuddly with your tiny paws and soft fur.

You bounced around the room with eyes flashing and ears flopping. Once in a while you'd let out a little yelp, just to let me know this was your territory.

Making a mess of the house and chewing on everything in sight became a passion, and when I scolded you, you just put your head down and looked up at me with those innocent eyes, as if to say, "I'm sorry, but I'll do it again as soon as you're not watching."

As you got older, you protected me by looking out the window and barking at everyone who walked by.

When I had a tough day at work, you would be waiting for me with your tail wagging just to say, "Welcome home. I missed you." You never had a bad day, and I could always count on you to be there for me.

When I sat down to read the paper and watch TV, you would hop on my lap, looking for attention. You never asked for anything more than to have me pat your head so you could go to sleep with your head over my leg.

As you got older, you moved around more slowly. Then, one day, old age finally took its toll, and you couldn't stand on those wobbly legs anymore. I knelt down and patted you lying there, trying to make you young again. You just looked up at me as if to say you were old and tired and that after all these years of not asking for anything, you had to ask me for one last favor.

With tears in my eyes, I drove you one last time to the vet. One last time, you were lying next to me.

For some strange reason, you were able to stand up in the animal hospital; perhaps it was your sense of pride. ↗

As the vet led you away, you stopped for an instant, turned your head, and looked at me as if to say; "Thank you for taking care of me."

I thought, "No, thank you for taking care of me." 😊

*This article was donated by Inez Henslee*

# IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER

*by Erma Bombeck*

I would have talked less and listened more.

I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the sofa faded.

I would have eaten the popcorn in the 'good' living room and worried much less about the dirt when someone wanted to light a fire in the fireplace.

I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth.

I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed.

I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose before it melted in storage.

I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about grass stains.

I would have cried and laughed less while watching television-and more while watching life.

I would have shared more of the responsibility carried by my husband.

I would have gone to bed when I was sick instead of pretending the earth would go into a holding pattern if I weren't there for the day.

I would never have bought anything just because it was practical, wouldn't show soil or was guaranteed to last a lifetime.

Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.

When my kids kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, "Later. Now go get washed up for dinner."

There would have been more "I love you".. more "I'm sorrys"... but mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute...look at it and really see it... live it...and never give it back. 😊

**Prayer, Continued from page one**

**We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it Pluralism.**

**We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism.**

**We have endorsed perversion and called it alternative lifestyle.**

**We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery.**

**We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.**

**We have killed our unborn and called it choice.**

**We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable.**

**We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem.**

**We have abused power and called it politics.**

**We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition.**

**We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression.**

**We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.**

**Search us, Oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent to direct us to the center of Your will and to openly ask these things in the name of your Son, the living Savior, Jesus Christ.**

**Amen"**

The response was immediate. A number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest. In six short weeks, Central Christian Church, where Rev. Wright is pastor, logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea. ➔

Commentator Paul Harvey aired this prayer on his radio program, "The Rest of the Story", and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired.

With the Lord's help, may this prayer sweep over our nation and wholeheartedly become our desire so that we again can be called "one nation under God."

If possible, please pass this prayer on to your friends. "If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for everything." ☺

**HINDSIGHT Continued from page 3.**

and passengers, owe much to these young men and women that work controlling the movement of aircraft for their constant vigilance. They do a super job, especially when you consider the antiquated tools they are given to work with. Of all the employees of the Federal Government, Air Traffic Controllers are by far the most productive when it comes to protecting human life. All of us who fly depend on literally hundreds of people, from the Clearance Delivery Controller to the last Ground Controller on each flight, to keep track and watch the plane's every movement. These guys and gals do it day after day and do a wonderful job. ☺

*By A. Wayne Doudney*

**Dog's View Continued from page 6**

the government.

The only government that I know anything about is the one around here, and the boss **is the government** even though he is a push over, especially for Linda, Andy and Ashley. He has threatened us dogs with death by shooting on several occasions, but I doubt that he would ever act out his threat.

That is about all that I can think to say today. Keep your nose to the ground and your tail a wagging, we will see you guys around. ☺

Notice the change of Name, but the paper is the same. I appreciate your cards, letters and contributions. Let me hear from you:

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