

I Hold These Truths To Be Self-Evident

Written by Margaret Evans, Editor



Just some recent observations . . .

No matter how sick and tired you are of the holidays, packing away the Christmas ornaments will make you wistful. Maybe even weepy . . .

It takes many months at the gym to whip yourself into some semblance of decent shape, but only two weeks away from the gym – eating and drinking in holiday mode – to physically revert to what you've always imagined "figgy pudding" might look like . . .

If you read "Still Alice" for your book club, a novel about a woman with early-onset Alzheimer's, you'll become convinced that you, too, have early-onset Alzheimer's. It will suddenly be so obvious that you'll wonder how you missed it before now. You'll blame your early-onset Alzheimer's . . .

If your child has a science fair looming on the horizon, it doesn't matter how early you start, how organized you are, how easy the project seems, or how many times you declare that "she's going to do it all by herself this time." Nope. It just doesn't matter . . .

If a movie features singing actors, very little irony, and lots of sincere emotion, there is a certain

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type of critic who is simply incapable of appreciating that movie, no matter how beautiful it is. (This is especially true if the movie makes blatant references to Christianity.) This type of critic will not be content merely to pan the film, but will be driven to savage it . . . to beat this glorious, heartfelt love offering to a bloody pulp. The resulting review will say more about the critic – and about our popular culture – than it says about the film. The scenario is as predictable as it is sad . . .

If you were recently re-exposed to some old music you once loved – say, the score from *Les Misérables* for example – there's a very good chance you're now warbling it around the house 24/7 and you don't even know it. Fortunately, your family will apprise you of the situation soon enough. In no uncertain terms . . .

When you're on the political fence, the folks who chatter endlessly about "extremists" seem just as extreme – or not – as those they oppose. As moral psychologist (and my current hero) Jonathan Haidt says, we really should eliminate this antagonistic word from our political vocabulary, "because extremist just means somebody on the other side." Want to shut down a productive conversation before it begins? Just call somebody an extremist. And remember, he probably thinks the same about you . . .

If you've been watching 'Masterpiece Theatre' since you were a little girl – mostly alone, and with plenty of teasing – the one series you happen to miss will become a national obsession. And you will be left out of the conversation. And will find yourself slightly miffed. Even Rush Limbaugh watches 'Downton Abbey,' for crying out loud! I suppose that should be a small comfort, and yet . . .

If you find yourself feeling nostalgic and decide to watch the Miss America pageant for the first time in 25 years, and you expect it to be just how you remember it . . . you will not be disappointed. Which doesn't mean you'll enjoy the experience. Though the pageant seems strangely frozen in amber and really hasn't changed at all, chances are very good that you have. This topic deserves an entire column, so I'll save any further comments . . .

If you get inspired by springy weather in January and impulsively plant a bunch of flowers

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around your yard, a big frost is sure to come soon thereafter. If you play it safe and do not plant flowers early, the warm weather is likely here to stay. (You can enjoy it from your drab, colorless yard.) Trust me – this maxim is more reliable than the groundhog's shadow. And yes, I have just planted flowers, so break out your snow gear . . .

You can fight it all you want. You can fancy yourself the last hold-out. The noble resistance! You can wax poetic all day long about the beauty of books – their bindings, their heft, their wonderful smell – and the solemn glory of libraries. You can resist for years, while others fall around you, standing firm on principle alone. But when your husband gives you a Kindle Fire for Christmas – when you hold it in your hands and push its little buttons and see what it can do – your vaunted principle will evaporate so fast your head will spin. And you, too – yes, even you – will succumb. "It'll never happen to me," you say? That's what I said. Pride goeth before a fall, baby. You're next . . .

If you finally work up the guts to write a column apologizing for offending a reader with your words, you will inevitably offend a reader with your words. Be on the lookout for the anonymous letter telling you so. And keep a sense of humor . . .

That's all I've got for now, folks. But I'm always on the lookout for the latest Eternal Truth, so stand by.

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