

Such a Puzzle... On Father's Day

By Dave Earling

Two weeks ago we all found ourselves reeling with the horrific news from Orlando. Like many of you, I experienced a combination of anger, frustration, sadness and sheer misery. My first inclination was to immediately write a column for publication last week and let the frustration flow, but I finally talked myself down and concluded it would be best to reflect a bit longer on my reaction.

Writing this column on Father's Day, I find my feelings are still pretty raw, but waiting has helped, both in watching as more facts of the story unfold and in letting me better understand myself.

For me, this Father's Day brings a whole different focus. I think of my father and the important, positive influence he brought to my life as well as my opportunity to do the same for my three children and my three grand children who are all alive and well.

But for 50 other fathers – they no longer have a son or daughter to hug, to nurture and to watch grow; no longer able to share their lives with each other. And of course we now have 50 sons or daughters who will no longer be around to gain knowledge or share their joy with their fathers. As a father and as a son, this leaves me feeling empty.

So what's the answer? I suppose we all have our own ideas of what that is; re-igniting the gun control issue or the ethnic/religious discussion, or perhaps the homophobic/anti-gay debate; tackling the ongoing challenge of world terrorism, or taking on the whole mental illness crisis facing our nation? All of these deserve to be pieces of the puzzle and considered.

And then the experts tell us media coverage will spur more such incidents.

No easy answers, just an ache. And I am amazed how often we experience this reoccurring theme – Sandy Hook, Brussels, Orlando – when we wring our hands, fuss about for a while and then wait for the next occurrence. I continue to grow weary of the national divide between political parties and their inability to come to grips or resolution with the several trying critical challenges mentioned above.

So what can we do here in Edmonds?

Again, there is no easy answer. We can and should keep in constant contact with our federal elected leaders to have them bring their leadership skills and influence forward to make progress on several fronts. We should ask our new Diversity Commission to work on and make recommendations to the community on how we as a diverse community can be aware to assure opportunity exists for all. And certainly we, as a community which cares about itself, need to remain respectful of one another and at the same time remain vigilant for each other's security and safety.