

December 21, 2009

Be thankful for the joys living in United States affords us all

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Reading and listening to the news has become tiresome. It seems like everyone has something to complain or argue about.

We are not doing enough about health-care reform; we are doing too much for health-care reform; the economic recovery plan is failing because we did too much; it is failing because we did too little; the president is taking too long to determine strategy in Afghanistan; we are being too hasty in deploying more troops.

On and on it goes with little or no regard for civility or, in many instances, for a factual basis.

Forty years ago, I had the opportunity to host a Vietnamese student in the U.S. Army Rotary Wing (Helicopter) Flight School Course at my home for Christmas. We were attending Flight School at Fort Walters, Texas, so my wife, son and I brought Bien with us to Colorado for a big family Christmas.

Bien was a captain in the Vietnamese Army, married, lived in Saigon and was relatively wealthy. He was quite taken with all of the "chaos" of a large family gathering and, of course, he had a boat-load of presents under the tree.

It is our family tradition to open presents Christmas morning, which is followed by a big breakfast with all of us gathered around tables.

Everything seemed to settle down during the late morning, and I noticed that Bien was nowhere to be found. I happened to glance out the front window and saw him standing by himself off to the side of the yard.

When I got out to him, I found that he was crying. "Bien" I said, "what is wrong? Did we do something to upset or offend you?" His answer has stayed with me all of these years. He said "No, I'm not upset with anyone. It is just that I know I'll never have back in Vietnam what you have here and it makes me sad."

The point is that whether we are Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal, growth or no growth, young or old, we all share this wonderful country, which is like no other on Earth.

While we have our disagreements, we all have a special commonality that binds us together. So this holiday season, let's all take a few moments to give thanks in our own way for having the wonderful good fortune of living in the United States.