

I run to satisfy a deep hunger ... one that can't be satisfied with any other activity. It is atavistic in its nature with very deep roots. It is a sense of freedom that escapes everything. The month of July is a celebration of freedom. But what does freedom really mean in the context of today's culture?

Uncle Arthur died in World War II. He was a soldier among the many who made the supreme sacrifice on the beaches of Normandy in June of 1944. There are countless stories of brave men and women who defended freedom in its darkest hours.

As Mahatma Gandhi noted, "Freedom is always won by a few brave, self-sacrificing souls who will stake everything for the sake of honor." They gave their lives in places not too far away and not too long ago. They are all gone. What is left is all of us to carry on ... the beneficiaries of their sacrifices ... the recipients of those freedoms.

Now we look today at what we have gained, what we have lost, and the sobering thought that perhaps we have fallen short of the gallantry, sacrifice, and honor from which we benefited. We must ask ourselves as we pass the torch of freedom to another generation whether we have nobly safe-guarded those liberties and protected them at all costs. Or have we lost our focus as Americans on what is important? Have we lost our commitment to our own national survival? When will the American people take back their government, their country, and those freedoms entrusted to each of us?

When we are left with the people living in fear of government, we live in tyranny. When will we stop being concerned that nobody ever gets offended and doubly sure that we hyphenate our ethnic and American identities? If asked to give an accounting to those heroes of the past, what would we tell them? And how would we answer these questions? Have we been too comfortable? Too distracted? Too selfish?

July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 ... We are on the edge of finishing the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's a good time to evaluate whether we have been good stewards of our freedoms or whether we have squandered the essence of what we have been given.

When the government fears the people, we have freedom and liberty! Is that where we are today? One thing is certain ... freedom is not free!

May the wind be always at your back!

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