

Dear fellow Greater Ft. Smith Association of Home Builder's members. It is I, your fellow servant and President with our monthly update. It is late spring, school is out and summer is about upon us and so is our summer hiatus from meeting. I will miss all of you, but you need a break from me and I need a break from myself, well, at least you will get a break, since wherever I go, there I am. So we will meet again on Thursday September 14th at noon in the Glass Pavilion downtown Ft. Smith. We will not have any scheduled board meetings or Associate council meetings until that week as well. Just because of this, don't think we are gonna' be lazy over the summer, heavens no! The Lego contest sponsored by the Ft. Smith Board of Realtors is July the 8th at Central mall. You remember Central mall, don't you? It was relevant before Amazon.com. It will be a wild and crazy fun filled event, come on out and witness these kid's prodigious Lego abilities. It is so cool! Then July 10th our Rcap apprentice program we are co-sponsoring with Armstrong Bank starts in earnest. It will begin steam rolling towards our first classes that begin August 15th at the Adult Education Center and follows the public school calendar. This is also very exciting and a new frontier for our Association. There is more to come of course, so stay tuned. Many thanks to all our members, you are vital.

I am writing this on Memorial Day and wish to depart from my usual glib light heartedness to ponder the sobering reality of why we commemorate this day. I say that instead of celebrate, because that is a more worthy term. Yes, there will be family and friend get-togethers', ball games, and Bar-b-q's and those are great and I look forward to them every year. American traditions like the Indy 500, I relish. The reason we can do these things is because roughly one million troops and agents on our behalf paid with their lives so we could embrace the concept of freedom and liberty and self-governance. Isn't it sad to think that the high price for these precious and rare commodities are being given away now for apparent Washington DC "Gimmies" and political finger pointing by our representatives trying to portray themselves as more righteous than their colleagues when all along they are all equally guilty of manipulating and indoctrinating the citizens to believe that government is more important than the Constitution. Folks, our Government doesn't respect its constituents anymore. How do we know? They take us for granted and think they have dumbed us all down to the point that they can control us. They spy on us without fear of prosecution or retribution. It sure looks like the "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" has become a hideous monster. You know whose fault it really is? It's ours, while we were staring at our smart phones and cheering on the ball game our fundamental rights were being and are being taken. Our duly elected leaders don't solve issues, they have a perpetual motion machine of wedge issues that they drag out and harp on to incite folks to come out and vote for them to solve, so they will seem important all the while never intending to solve the issues at hand because the gravy train would stop. How sad...Do we lack courage? Do we lack conviction?

Christmas morning 1776, the Continental Army is haggard, it's starving, it's freezing in the snow bound northeast. It is on the verge of defeat. General Washington is starving more for a victory, for a morale boost for his troops and the rest of the Patriots fighting for freedom against the British Empire. An audacious plan for a surprise attack, an act of desperation, courage, commitment to a cause bigger than themselves. They cross the Delaware River in the wee hours of Christmas morning with a few soldiers. Most don't have a coat, some don't have shoes much less boots, some are ill, some are wounded from previous battles, and some don't have ammunition for their muskets. They shiver in the cold, they feel the pangs of physical hunger and exhaustion, but they also revel in the opportunity for a victory. Some are so ill that they die on the way before the battle begins, some suffer such frost bite on their extremities that every foot print that they leave in the snow as they march is stained pink with blood,

but they march on. They win a glorious victory from this surprise attack that shows their enemy what a force they are up against. These troops displayed bravery and determination that causes a crack in the British resolve. It was a tooth shattering uppercut that landed square on the jaw of the mightiest empire on the planet at the time. I think of those GI's jumping into the chilly water off the beaches of Normandy on June 6th 1944 into a ruthless hail of machine gun and artillery fire. Some of our guys drown because they were weighed down with so much gear and the troop transports didn't get them close enough to the beach because the resistance is so furious. Others do get in closer and slug their way in as Nazi bullets whiz by, they whiz by if they are fortunate, but all too many strike home with such flesh destroying force that it seems just a pittance of the allied troops crawl toward the defeat of Hitler's war machine one inch at a time. They say that the water was so cold, that for a split second, the red hot blood that first shown through a gaping bullet wound would lend the briefest of a warm respite for a soldier before he slumped in death in the surf that day, the first day for Operation Overlord, the liberation of Europe from the iron grip of a freedom crushing madman. These events occurred and many more and many have paid the ultimate price so we could enjoy the benefits of this free society, wrought at the hands of the brave at the behest of a divine plan. I say to all my fellow members, never forget this. Bow your head and thank God, that he endowed such people for such a time with such selflessness and courageousness. The most courageous act of putting everything, their own future, their own happiness, any potential future family on the line for us. This allows us to have these things that were denied them. Let us remember and live life to the fullest and fight to preserve our delicate republic and experiment of self-governance. We owe it to these because the old cliché is still correct, freedom is not free. Its cost is so high of a price that it can only be paid for with the currency of the blood of the brave. Which is a picture of an even more eternal gift. Rest on high to all those who were felled for the United States of America, God Bless...

Your Prez...