

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 69 (2003)
Heft: [7]

Rubrik: [Impressum]

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Editorial

'I've been thinking'...to borrow a favourite phrase of a prominent member of our current crop of MPs! So, I've been thinking, one of the lovely 'perks' of being a pensioned-off 'oldie' is that one can sit in the armchair anytime one feels like it and, sometimes for hours, one can become an amateur philosopher, provided one's mentality is still sound, of course! Well, that has been my pleasant experience anyway, especially over the past two to three years. I must be getting old!

These thoughts and observations have been strengthened lately on reflecting on a number of news media reports, most of which I'm sure you will remember. These and memories of other media reports in years gone by, bring to my mind a marvellous aspect of human nature

which can be very accurately described by quite a short phrase - instant bravery and raw courage!

You will remember a very recent TV report on a terrible car crash where one vehicle containing three people burst into flames on impact. Two young men walking only metres away from the impact immediately ran to the flaming car and proceeded to rescue the victims, with some difficulty, I believe. As there were only two rescuers on the spot, the third victim had to wait some seconds longer until rescued and sadly died of injuries shortly afterwards. Both the police and firemen, who arrived on the scene within minutes, were loud in their praises of the two young rescuers and all were convinced there would have been three fatalities but for the quick

and daring actions of the two young men. The marvellous thing about these two heroes is that one is only 19 years old and the other not much more. Yet, seeing the dire need of fellow humans they jumped to the rescue without a second's thought of the serious danger to their own lives, had the burning car exploded! I'm sure you'll all agree, this is the stuff of real heroes!

I'm also sure most of you can recall other media reports of brave actions and rescues by police and firemen, many in other countries, often of brave people jumping into flooded rivers to rescue drowning people and risking their own lives. I suppose it's easy to say that the police and firemen are trained to deal with floods, fires and other emergencies, and there is truth in that. However, we, the public cannot expect them to risk almost certain death, yet they so very often do - for us! Witness the hundreds of police and fire people who lost their lives in the WTC terrorist attack in New York!

This, to me, makes it more remarkable when one hears of acts of bravery such as that of the two young men mentioned earlier. They are ordinary members of the public, untrained and untaught in the finer arts of a safe rescue bid, yet they jumped in without a moment's hesitation to help their fellow humans in deadly danger!

I could not help but wonder, in their shoes, would I not have hesitated just for those first few critical seconds? Would you? I could not find a sure answer for myself, Can you?

Paul

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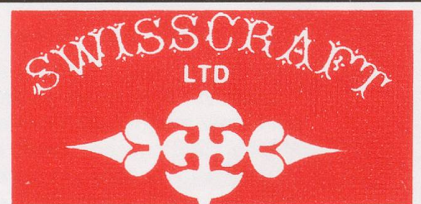
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