

## **Attention Must Be Paid**

As I go through life riding on a smile and a shoeshine, I appreciate and pay attention to the holidays. November has brought us such red-letter days as Election Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving and my 35th wedding anniversary (maybe not a holiday in your household, but....) The last three -- particularly my wedding anniversary -- fill me with gratitude and acknowledgement, but I don't think of Election Day the same way. Perhaps I should.

As a child of the anti-war protesting 60's, I was never tempted to join the armed services, but I was always appreciative of those who made the choice (or who had the choice made for them.) My security, my liberty, my life has been made possible by those who have put on the uniform of the U.S. military and particularly by those who have served in combat. A job needed to be done and I didn't want to do it: God bless those who stepped up in my place. Let's hear it for Veterans -- attention must be paid!

I have no wish to serve in our local, state or national government either, particularly not in the current poisonously polarized political climate, but once again -- a job needs to be done. I am happy to have other people do the job of passing legislation and administering and enforcing laws. My part in the political ecosystem is relatively modest: I pay attention -- by educating myself about the issues, contacting my elected representatives with my concerns, and voting.

Less than a third of eligible voters voted in this recent midterm election, but that is still twice as high a percentage as the 15% that votes in the typical Equity election. You may be perfectly content to have someone else review and vote on bargaining proposals, negotiating teams, contracts, the AEA budget and the other aspects of Equity policy and governance -- and that's perfectly fine: we couldn't get much done with a 50,000 person Council. I hope, however, that you will pay attention and do your part in the process by educating yourself about the issues, contacting your elected representatives with your concerns, and voting.

Those first two suggestions -- educating yourself on the issues and contacting your representatives with your concerns -- are right in line with Council's strategic plan: getting more information OUT to the membership -- in Equity News, with e-mail blasts, on the AEA website, on our Facebook page and Twitter and Instagram feeds -- and getting more information IN from the membership -- through e-mail, Facebook, and with surveys and focus groups.

This way we will educate and inform each other: you'll know what we're doing and we'll know what you want. And don't forget that third suggestion -- voting: let's make that 15% more like 50%. And perhaps, just as my wife 35 years ago saw a job that had to be done by someone and heroically put herself forward, you will step up and put yourself forward as a candidate for Council. Nobody dast blame you.