

What Would Grandpa Say?

I don't know quite what to say or think about what is going on in this country, although I do wonder what great leaders like Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Ronald Reagan would say. I bet Will Rogers and Mark Twain would write something entertaining and insightful.

While I may not know what these idols of mine might say, I do feel confident they'd be pretty disgusted with us all.

There's another hero of mine that I can say with confidence I know exactly what he'd have to say. While I miss my Grandpa terribly, sometimes I am glad he's not around to see what's happening to the country he loved.

□ My Grandpa would look at the billions of dollars in bailouts being handed over to big banks and hold his nose. He'd remind everyone that these are taxpayer dollars being given to the same companies who couldn't wait to open call centers and database hubs in India and elsewhere, wherever it was cheapest in the world.

The effect was that foreigners got jobs previously held by American taxpayers. My grandpa would look those big bankers in the eye and tell them to call a 911 operator in Bangalore and ask them for the cash.

Grandpa wouldn't have much sympathy for those of you who lost money in the stock market either. He'd want to know why you sent your money back to shysters in New York and trusted your retirement to a bunch of people you don't even know to invest in options, swaps, hedge funds, spiders and a bunch of other gimmicks designed to steal your money. He'd suggest you shouldn't invest in anything you can't explain.

My grandpa would look at the games played on Wall Street and ask why anyone should be allowed to sell something they don't own. You wouldn't buy the Brooklyn Bridge would you? Maybe you would.

He'd say it's criminal for a bushel of wheat to trade 40 times from the farmer to the grocery store and that the man who grew it ought to make more money than the paper rustler who owned it for 20 minutes.

This man, who didn't owe anybody anything, would suggest that if you managed to save a little money there's nothing wrong with paying off your house, cars and credit cards and then putting what's left in a savings account at your local bank so they could invest it in the community. Like loaning people money to buy houses.

□ Speaking of which, he'd remind everyone of the model that worked perfectly well for many decades in this country: you could buy a house if you had 20 percent of the price in cash and your house payments would eat up no more than 25 percent of your income. If you didn't have the money, you rented until you did have it. There's no shame in that. He'd also wonder why people need second homes when they are having trouble paying for one.

My Grandpa had a good memory. He vividly remembered that December day when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He had friends that were killed in World War II, and he was not about to buy a car made in Japan or Germany. I never knew him to own anything but a Ford.

"We build great cars and trucks," Grandpa would say, "and if more Americans bought them instead of the tin cans from Japan the car companies could continue to pay good wages and benefits to more Americans."

When people say we must bail out AIG, Freddie, Fannie and all the rest of the pikers because they are "too big to fail," my grandpa would ask why our government helped them get so big to begin with?

Grandpa would say the answer is not to give people another "stimulus" so they can buy more

It's the Pitts

Written by Lee Pitts

stuff they don't need. That's what got us in such trouble to begin with.

My Grandpa would say that what we need to do is put the crooks in jail, hold the politicians accountable, tighten up our belts, eat more beef and beans and go back to work earning an honest living. We'll survive this economic mess. After all, we're Americans, aren't we?