

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: Fwd: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 8.18.20
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 9:42:04 AM

Begin forwarded message:

From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 8.18.20
Date: August 18, 2020 at 9:19:41 AM EDT
To: MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 7 Cars 5 Trucks 3 Bicyclists 1 Runner

April 1, 2000 was a glorious Shabbat morning in Shul. Ricki R. was celebrating becoming a Bat-Mitzvah and demonstrated real joy, passion and skill in the process. Her mom, Sheila R., was one of the most beloved teachers in our Shabbat morning program and was a great Bar and Bat-Mitzvah tutor. So it was not surprising that the shul was packed, the parking lot full, cars also lining both sides of Victoria Curve and that the feel of a community was palpable from the start until the stragglers left Kiddush(fellowship hour) several hours later. That day, Gadi and Jonathon R., our son Avi and another boy, Rafi F. walked home together from shul. Rafi continued onto the R's home, then on Cheri Ln, and Avi came home—probably before heading off to the basketball court at the end of the block to shoot buckets with Jacob B. The day outside was a glorious one, the sunshine and breezes making for a natural parallel to the beauty of the day we had just experienced in synagogue services that morning. Not 15 minutes passed from when Avi came home that our doorbell rang. It was a highly inebriated neighbor—or at least I can still recall the smell as he talked—coming to the door with a knife in his hand. I opened the main door-but seeing the knife, kept the screen door closed. Sam SH. lived two doors down from us -we are 2161, his house is 2141. He began to yell at me. He said, *"You are bringing trash into our neighborhood. Your kind of trash shouldn't be living here. If they ever walk through this neighborhood again, I am going to slash you from your gonads to your neck."* A little stunned, Phyllis said to me right away call the police. I did, they took a report over the phone, didn't send an officer out and to this day have no idea if they ever spoke to Sam SH. about his behavior, his threats or his words.

When we moved into our neighborhood, we were warned that not all of our neighbors were pleasantly predisposed to like Jews. But other than not speaking to us, we never experienced any hostility. Indeed, many of our neighbors have become good neighborly friends. We have been invited to their children's grad parties, their annual Christmas parties. One of our neighbors almost yearly introduces her "rabbi neighbor" to her priest who comes over. It's somewhat uncanny that all clergy seem to understand when to show up at such parties and when to leave. But I digress...Our

neighborhood is probably like many such Minnesota neighborhoods—filled with mostly Minnesota Nice folks, some people who really seek out to understand who you are and how you practice what you preach, and some—just a few—but some are really uninterested and often times downright angry that our kind has moved into their space. Sam Sh. was just as upset that one of the the four boys mentioned above was also a Jew of Color, as the fact that all four of them were simply Jews. Over the ensuing 20 plus years, we have kept our distance. I always try to wave and smile when I see he or his son. I regularly am greeted with a middle finger in response. It appears that regardless of what it is that we do, the very fact that who we are will forever prevent him from getting to know what we might actually share in common—or how fascinating it is that we share nothing in common except living on the same street. The 20 years that have passed have not soured me on the neighborhood, even though SS has his friends that clearly side with him. We actually love the street—dear friends live just a block away. But we are forever cognizant of the fact that in our midst is a person who would just as much want to see us gone and maybe never have to encounter another Jew again.

I thought of Sam Sh as I was walking early [this morning](#). After leaving Wagon Wheel, I head down Decorah and onto Pueblo and then Mohican Lane. [This morning](#) as I was on Mohican LN., I saw a man bringing his trash out and waved and said hello. I saw immediately that he was wearing a United States Postal Service T-shirt and thanked him for his work. He said to me, “I’m counting down the days.” I said, “to retirement?” He replied, “no until the election and the possibility that we have a President you can be proud of again while working at your job.” I smiled and said, “I hear you; I don’t talk about politics too much(so I stretched the truth a little) but I appreciate your sentiments.” And I went on my way. Here was a guy that if we met at our neighborhood gatherings, I would enjoy having a beer with. Here was a guy who if we lived on the same street, we might have discovered that we share other things in common besides the mail. I doubt he had any idea I was Jewish, and I would be hard pressed to pick the church-if any --he went to. But this brief exchange on the street reminded me that sometimes its easier to find commonality with a stranger than it is to make peace with a neighbor. Its true in one’s personal life and maybe its just as true in the life of nations. For me, I never lost faith in humanity because of Sam SH. and I try not to believe that the world is filled with anti-Semites behind every rock and tree. The only “crime” Phyllis and I ever committed, as far as we know, was moving into his neighborhood. Over the years, we have tried our best to be good neighbors—even without good fences. But not every neighbor is interested in accepting you into their neighborhood. Sometimes, on your morning walks, you just have to start looking beyond the immediate homes around you to find out that the larger neighborhood has plenty to offer as well. Ricki R. had a great Bat-Mitzvah party that evening at the Shorewood community center. Phyllis and I stopped by late(because of shabbat) and celebrated the end of an otherwise great day. We knew when to leave as well- and made it to a late showing of “Erin Brokovitch”. Oh what you remember... Morris

(corrections: my oldest brother corrected a few facts from yesterdays column it was Alan Dines and he was still in the Colorado house and probably chair of the Budget committee. And it was Shelby Harper-not Alan

Dines who lent us his camping equipment. Other than that, the specific details were correct.)

Sent by my iPad