

I just returned from a week on the lovely island of Maui, and while it was exhilarating to catch a few waves and have fun-in the sun, it was not an experience of community. Why? For one thing, when the waves are good the locals on Maui are not the least bit interested in sharing them with Mainlanders and haoles. But mostly because Maui is a resort and the folks who live there are always entertaining the folks who simply visit. Visitors who do not know each other can smile and be polite, even friendly, but they lack the time to forge any sense of community. Community requires more than one shared experience.

So, what makes a Community ~~a community~~? It is not just proximity, nor the amenities we American often expect nowadays: stuff like good housing, clean water, safe streets, good transportation and effective government. Those things may be *necessary*, and so I salute those who provide them, but they are not *sufficient* to make a town or city into a community. What makes a community is people caring--caring about each other and not just about the stuff: selling, buying making and consuming the goods that we think are so crucial to the American dream.

No one wrote more beautifully or compellingly about community than poet, politician John Donne. He penned these words in the early 17th century: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

In light of this, it's ~~perhaps easy to see~~ ^{understandable} that when bad news strikes it is easy for us to want to distance ourselves from the pain and anguish of both victims. It seems we have had a lot of bad news in our community of late: Shootings and murders, families torn apart, and increasing rates of crime. It's enough to get you down, until you look at the things that counter the bad news. I am heartened to hear that our community rallied behind the families and friends of the victims. I am also heartened to hear that community has rallied behind Betty Chinn on May 11th at St. Bernard's High School, enjoying the fine Mexican food of Rita's restaurant and raising money for the Betty Kwan Chinn Center. There may be a few who oppose the Center, but the vast majority of our community are aware that we humans are not self sustaining islands, but very interdependent clods of dirt. Any person's death, or misfortune, diminishes me, because I am involved in humankind, and the way we treat the weaker members of our community is the way we set our moral compass ~~in North~~.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment