

Lindon

# CHARACTER

Connection



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**CITIZENSHIP**

**MAY 2011**

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Citizenship is the status of a citizen with its attendant, duties, rights and privileges. Remember... You can make a difference! “All it takes for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.”—*Edmund Burke*

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As I think of Citizenship, I remember when I was standing on the balcony of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense building in the heavily fortified “Green Zone” of downtown Baghdad overlooking the ancient city. I looked upon a land that has over 5,000 years of history and is the cradle of much of the civilization of the world in which we live.

In contrast to the people in the city, I was in a comparatively safe environment with soldiers, weapons and military vehicles behind sandbags, blast walls and miles of concertina wire and barricades.

Across the Tigris River, which runs through the middle of Baghdad, I could see that none of those protections were in place for the thousands of people who live in a dangerous environment. The cause of danger is a continuing conflict between groups seeking power and control over the future of the Iraqi nation and people.

The dangers of war are terrible, especially for the very young, the very old, the sick, the lame and the unprotected. Yet it is within this type of environment that true citizenship begins for the people of Iraq.

Citizenship is often described as the allegiance to a specific nation. For most people citizenship is but a matter of birth, not choice. And if it is choice, they must make a conscious decision to give up one national loyalty for another. However, true citizenship is more than just an allegiance to a nation. It is the fundamental values of believing in what that nation stands for and the willingness to personally stand up for the opportunity to be a citizen of worth.

Many Iraqi’s have made the choice that their type of citizenship is to be found in the

elements of freedom, something they have not had for more than 40 years. There are other Iraqi’s who fear that any change in their political structure will take power away from the few and give it to the many.

Iraqi Army Colonel Ali, whom I have the pleasure of working with every day, is one of those who sees the value of freedom being essential to the principle of citizenship in a modern Iraqi democracy. Colonel Ali told me one day that it was his belief that “the freedom for any person starts from his home.” He explained that was where one learned to be a good citizen in the community and nation.

To Colonel Ali and many other Iraqi’s, it is the hope of the future that citizenship in the new Iraq will take place when there is a level of freedom and security that allows the Iraqi people to live their lives according to the dictates of their own hearts and minds. For that purpose many are willing to sacrifice their lives in hopes that their children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy Iraqi citizenship to the fullest.

We, American’s, have been blessed to live in a time and age when we have enjoyed the blessings of our citizenship which is the envy of the world. No matter what people say against our nation and government for the most part they would give almost anything to be part of the American experience. I have come to see the reality of the dedication to freedom in the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people, and therefore I’ve come to cherish more fervently my own citizenship and loyalty to my country. Yet, as Colonel Ali said, it is in our homes and families that the seeds of being a good citizen are sown and without watering that seed with effort, faith and diligence and giving it the

adequate light of knowledge it will die on the vine and never grow to fulfill its destiny.

Within our own homes is the opportunity to build an appreciation for the value and faith in our nation and the goodness that is inherent in its' foundation and destiny.

May we cherish the blessing of being born American's or choosing to be an American and willing to help others find freedom and true citizenship in their homes and nations.

LTC (Ret.) Joseph L. "Ren" Allred  
Lindon Resident

*"What is right is right, even if no one is doing it. What is wrong is wrong, even if everyone is doing it."*

-- Anonymous

## Family Activities

**\*\*Attend a Memorial Day flag ceremony.**

**\*\*Ask a grandparent or an older relative about their involvement with one of the world wars or other important parts of United States history.**

**\*\* The constitution provides for the basic rights of an American citizen. As a family, read the constitution.**

**\*\*John F. Kennedy, the 35<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, was born on May 29, 1917. He said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." Talk about the responsibilities of citizenship in your own home, in your own neighborhood, in your own city, state and in the United States.**

**\*\* Make a family flag and discuss what citizenship in your family means.**

## Kid's Corner

Do you do your share of the work it takes to be in a safe, functioning and good community? Being a good citizen means to do your part for the good of the whole. The actions of one person can affect many others and do much to help make our community a better place to live.

We need to obey the laws of the land. We have a responsibility to preserve history and our environment. We each need to clean up after ourselves, report wrong doing, vote, pay taxes, study the current issues and voice our opinions.

As John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Each of us who live here have a duty to be a good citizen in exchange for the benefits, rights and privileges of belonging.

Jeffrey Posland

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

-- Margaret Mead

*"There are no 'passengers' on spaceship earth. Everybody's 'crew'."*

-- M. McLuhan

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*Lindon Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting financial support. If you can help please send contributions to:*

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