

Rumblings from Chief Silver Cloud

### **This is NOT the Time to Relax**

The big silver commuter train came to a stop. I flipped off my ever-present pal, my Blackberry and stumbled down the aisle, down the stairs and on to the platform. Man! It had been a long tough day. I began the walk home and just kept thinking about getting some peace and quiet. I thought to myself, once I get home I just want to sit back and relax. I was hoping the kids weren't rambunctious because I had no energy left for anything.

I entered the front door, announced that I was home, and went right to the refrigerator and opened an ice cold can of soda. I loosened my tie and leafed through the day's mail without really paying attention to what was there. So I sat in the living room, took my shoes off and kicked my feet up on the table to sit for a few minutes.

I was happy to have just a few quick minutes of down time before the kids inevitably came bounding along asking old dad to throw a ball around, or play in the yard, or explain the answers to whatever questions occurred to them today. I was hoping to delay the inevitable as long as possible so I could simply decompress and find some peace and quiet.

I thought to myself, "This is great! Just sitting here, relaxing, without any interruption from my progeny." I could feel the day peel away and my mind began to clear as my eyes slowly closed. Some time passed and my wife walked in the room. I began to return to consciousness.

"Where's the kids" I asked reflexively?

My wife gave me a funny look and replied "William is away at Tecumseh and Jacqueline is at competitive cheer for two hours".

"Oh, yeah," I meekly replied as my wife departed the living room and I sat there. Alone, but relaxed. I had gotten what I wished for that evening: a little piece and quiet. I looked around the room, took a sip of my soda. I could hear the clock ticking in the hall. It was strange not to hear the sounds of my children.

I don't know why I had forgotten about driving our son to Tecumseh this past weekend. How could I forget? I was as excited as he was. As we pulled into Tecumseh, I felt that wonderful sense of anticipation as if I was going away to another Indian Guide or Princess Campout.

As I sat on the couch, the sound of the clock was ticking steadily. That fact that I could hear the clock, made me think about how loud our house can be with our kids and their friends and all the squealing laughter and playful chaos. The tick of the clock seemed to

get louder and louder, but I was so relaxed without kids, just stretched out in my nice comfortable living room. Sometimes, with all the organized sports and activities that my kids have to attend, it sure makes me feel stretched like as rubber band, but right now, I was at rest. Ah, the good life.

“Yep.” I was drumming my fingers on the soda can. “This sure is nice just sitting here with the sound of the silence,” I thought. The clock was ticking now like a steady sledge hammer. My peace and quiet began to make my skin crawl. I felt ill-at-ease and my growing anxiousness was just a tick-tock away from a full blown panic. I leapt off the couch. Terror struck me!

Is this what life will be like when the kids head off to college? I can't take the silence!

I left the comfort of the couch in search of something to do. Anything. Sitting was no longer relaxing. I'm not ready for this. I'm not ready for a quiet house. I'm not ready to unwind freely after a hard day. I'm not ready to be the father of grown kids. I'm not ready for a house without nicked corners and without toys under feet. Where was the noise? Where was the chaos? Where was the fun of fatherhood?

I headed to the basement. There was always something needing to be done in the basement. I know! The dehumidifier! I'll empty it. Whew. Something important to do!

As I calmly emptied the dehumidifier bin into the utility tub, I looked over at nearby shelf and saw my son's old Indian Guide vest. He made passage a year ago and we now participate in Trailblazers. I pulled the vest off the shelf and examined all the patches, patches from our campouts together, from events we attended and activities we did together. Lots of great memories! The vest smelled like camp. I took a deep breath and was thankful for all that I do with my kids, and all that I have yet to do with them.

As I put the vest away, I realized that now is NOT the time to relax. There will be plenty of time for that later. And when the time comes to relax, maybe I'll be ready for it. But I'm not ready to relax right now. I'm ready for more! I'm ready for activities with my children and the children of my tribe and my neighborhood and my great Indian Guide and Indian Princess and Trailblazer Federation.

Thank God that William will be back by the weekend and that Jacqueline would be back in a couple of hours. Hey! Maybe she'd want to throw a ball around in the back yard. I'd better get out of these dress clothes and into my jeans and sneakers, so I'm ready to play when she comes home.

Happily not ready for relaxation,  
Federation Chief Silver Cloud,  
Tom Estey