

Letters on “The social paradox in the ‘miraculous’ rescue on the Hudson”

20 January 2009

Below we post some the letters received in response to the January 17 article "The social paradox in the 'miraculous' rescue on the Hudson" by David Walsh.

Terrific article. An everyday incident that captures the popular imagination, retold because it's a story that calls out for retelling, and then clear insight into how it all fits into the broad sweep of politics, history and philosophy. I loved it.

Elmar M.

17 January 2009

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Yes, a wonderful outcome thanks to the solid working people/responders who are constantly under assault—low pay, long hours, cutting of funds... and agree with your conclusion too: that human beings will almost always transcend their personal interests for the greater good... we see it all the time, even in the face of the selfishly greedy and twisted... the mounting economic/political crisis will count on this innately moral instinct of our species...

Rob M.

17 January 2009

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Thanks for the excellent article. It begs to ask, how long before the results of the corporate money-grabbers' and selfish politicians' actions affect the ability of heroic performance during times of disasters. Oh, never mind, we already have it with Katrina.

Peggy M.

California, USA

17 January 2009

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This was a thoughtful and compassionate article about the amazing landing of that jet in the Hudson with no loss of life. The pilot was, in fact, truly deserving of that over-used label, "hero." It is an

outrage that he and other serious employees of the airlines are and will be treated like ignorant brutes and disposable parts when cost-cutting time comes around. In fact, his employers are lucky to have someone like him. He managed to avoid crashing the plane on land and performed a brilliant landing on the water. That took guts, experience and ability—something that is losing its value to employers around the world because it "costs too much."

We see everywhere around the country the hiring (at lower wages) of inexperienced and downright incompetent people, to the detriment of other, long-term workers, and also to the detriment of the quality of goods coming out of the factories where these cheap greenhorns work. It is not fair either to the experienced workers or to the new ones (who are usually blamed for the downturn in quality by the very people who hired them for pauper's wages).

Thanks for reminding us of the difference experience and ability can make when lives are at stake and a split-second decision is required.

Carolyn Z.

San Francisco, California, USA

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The "socialistic" values as you call them that these heroes exemplified were all done by choice. They are conservative values. These actions were performed not only by down-trodden laborers but also by executives (who you despise). The compassion and valor was not mandated by the state as in socialist/communist compulsory public service. It is done by individual choice.. Individual responsibility and individual compassion. The state cannot make that happen. It is freedom of choice that allows the true expression of compassion to flourish.

Ron G.

17 January 2009

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Thank you for a very poignant account of this averted catastrophe. I have sent this story around. Keep up the good work.

Lynn

17 January 2009

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NYC's employees and US Air's employees are pros. It's too bad that NYC and New York state's politicians and US Air's managers aren't dedicated pros of the kind their employees are. There would be more employees and adequately paid employees if their bosses were dedicated pros.

This ends my grouching—for today.

Larry L.

17 January 2009

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David Walsh's eloquent commentary recalls the argument advanced by the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin in "Mutual Aid" to the effect that cooperation and mutual aid are as important in the evolution of the species as competition and mutual strife, if not more so. Thursday's events reveal that the instinct of solidarity has thankfully not yet been totally extinguished among the human species, and in fact remains alive and well, albeit underappreciated in contemporary Western society.

Colin B.

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

17 January 2009

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Excellent article—raises valid points. Especially regarding the treatment of these employees.

Paul S.

18 January 2009



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