

Small Talk – March 31 2021
Required Facial Covering When in Public – Day 250
By Michael Small

When much younger I would work daily on my yoyo skills. Beginning with a simple wooden yoyo I mastered up and down. After advancing to the plastic red or green with the steel core I could occasionally walk the dog, or rock the baby, could put the yoyo to sleep, but frankly, it was still mostly up and down.

Living in Minnesota is a bit like that yoyo. On Monday we climbed to the upper 60's and I woke up this morning to + 12 degrees. Ice is still solid on Mule Lake – but spring is still coming, and I am looking for my first robin.

There is so much about Minnesota that is wondrous, surprising, engaging, and unpredictable. It is a land where the seasons emulate the cycles of life – spring, summer, fall, and winter. Life abounds. Just the other day a friend marveled at the twenty-one eagles standing on his lake. Yesterday my fox returned looking like it lived through a tough winter. As I look out my window, I see ice crystals sparkling in the air. Yet I know and trust that summer will come and soon we will hear the call of the loon. Living in Minnesota is a bit like that yoyo, up and down.

But, this week, we are painfully reminded of some of the inequities in this beloved state. We are drawn back to those nine-minutes and twenty-nine seconds. Again, I watched George Floyd die – knowing all too well this was not fiction, Floyd would never again stand. I heard a young black woman talk on the witness stand about the daily fear she lives with – it could have been my dad, my uncle, my brother. A nine-year-old has seen and witnessed something I will never personally know or experience. She lives fearing that this could happen to someone who she knows or loves.

More than once while watching the trial of Derek Chauvin I was brought to tears. The guilt of the nineteen-year-old who filmed the nine-minutes and twenty-nine seconds that she didn't do more, she didn't save George Floyd's life. I can't imagine. The helplessness of the EMT who could not intervene. Hearing the pleas and the anger of bystanders begging for the life of George Floyd.

I know, that in the moment, one can get caught up in the drama and quickly moving events, one can lose a sense of time, and it seems there is never enough time to strategize and think about the process. Often, while looking back, there are regrets, knowing we could have done better. But, bottom line, in all that one does, honor and protect life, especially the life of others. I know this story is more complex than just nine-minutes and twenty-nine seconds. Tragically, I know, more people will die by violence done unto them by another. But understand me clearly – no person, no matter what they have done or who they are – no person should ever again have to die the way George Floyd died on May 25 2020. Together, with law enforcement and civilians, that

is what all of us should be working for in our communities and world. Equity and safety for all!

As the weeks of this trial go on, I hope true justice is done. I hope the whole story is told and clearly heard. I hope that the jurors and judge are honest, fair, reasonable, and courageous. I hope that the witnesses will always be truth-tellers. And I hope, that in the end, that we will all agree – never again. I hope for Minneapolis, Minnesota, the United States, and the world – this will be a turning point. I hope for healing. I want us to walk together into the future – side by side. Let us all vow to do better, be better, be kinder, gentler, and more caring.

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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