

Letter from the Editor - Remembering 'Hurricane Anita'

Posted by [TBN Editor](#) On 10/26/2016

Hollywood, MD – About a quarter of a century ago I was home one evening when I decided to flip the television channel to the spot where local cable programming was airing. A video of the Calvert County Commissioners' weekly meeting was being shown. A woman stood up to deliver public comment. The presiding commissioner asked her not to but she was not to be denied. What followed was a tirade, admonishing the local cable company for the way they did business. She called them all kinds of uncomplimentary names and accused them of lying to the public.

"Wow" I thought. "This woman is insane. She must be having a really bad day." As I came to learn as I got older, insanity is, in fact, totally trusting all government and local utilities all the time. And no, this woman, Anita Jazwinski of Dunkirk, was having a typical day—one where she always spoke her mind and left absolutely no doubt where she stood.

Anyone who thought local politics and government in a small, rural county was a safe stage on which to perform had not experienced the hurricane-force storm that Anita would unleash when she appeared at a public meeting or forum. I can count on one finger—maybe two—the number of county commissioners she truly, unabashedly admired and praised constantly. The others were not so lucky.

In some other non-democratic nations, evil and ill-tempered despots have 'Anitas' executed just about every day. In our democracy the opportunity to speak one's mind can be viewed as a privilege or a right. Anita was way beyond that thinking—speaking out was a civic responsibility. Hypocrites, incompetents, ultra-radical liberals, whiners, idiots, greedy people and charlatans all needed to be exposed and chided. While she always seemed a bit peeved I think she truly enjoyed it. It was maximizing your God-given right as an American citizen. What's not to love about that?

It seems as soon as I acquired an e-mail address (a few years behind everyone else) I was part of Anita's email chain. Some days it was a trickle and other times it was an avalanche. Some of the partisan ones I have to admit I skipped—"I think I know where this one's going," I often thought. But some of the forwarded submissions were fascinating. This woman who could give a nasty tongue-lashing to elected officials had a keen eye and appreciation for aesthetics. Some of the compilations of photographs she sent by email were spectacular...everything from flowers and forests, land and sea creatures, world and American history in black and white and/or glossy color. And there were the amazing e-greeting cards, which always arrived by email in time for all the major holidays. She was aware the world did not revolve around her and it was her privilege to be a small part of it.

After several years of survival from a series of painful illnesses, Anita's physical life ended earlier this month, a few days after she turned 79. Clearly she understood that physical suffering was the payment we must make for the great gift of life. That's something that many in our society refuse to accept.

There's a famous quote, sometimes attributed to Mark Twain, that states "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt." That is good strategy if you really are a fool and are obsessed about what people think about you. The lesson from Anita's Earthly life, however, is 'don't be a fool, be prepared, speak your mind while you have the chance and don't be concerned about what other people think.' After all, you are part of this world, too.

1 July 2016 Dear Marty Madden, Anita Jazwinski has sent you a [Jacquie Lawson e-card](#).

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