

What A Year It's Been...

...saying good-bye to 2015...

A dear friend sent me a note a couple of weeks ago, asking if I realized what a year this had been for me. I paused for a moment and reflected on what I was doing a year ago and what I thought 2015 would hold; then ran my actual year forward. Wow! She was so right.

This time last year I was busy working on two projects: frac sand, and prep for working at the Capitol. I had just completed all the video interviews in Barnhart, with those incredible people, having discovered what frac sand can and will do to a community. At the same time, I had applied and received approval for my Capitol credentials so I could work the floor at the Capitol starting in January 2015.

January was packed with a couple of working trips to Austin and discovering AirBNB accommodations. My first experience on my own was literally called a Chicken Coop in the backyard of an older couple in Allendale, a neighborhood in Austin, which was my old real estate turf from back in the 80's. Their last name was Coop and they had converted his old insurance office that was inside a tool shed type structure into a BnB. The decorating theme was chickens, hence the name Chicken Coop.

AirBNB would become my housing accommodations for working at the Capitol. They were always interesting, unique, and cheaper than the hotels. I quickly began learning my way around the Capitol rotunda and annex. It doesn't take long to recognize the tourists, the lobbyist, and those that are activists working the corridors. I was the newbie and appreciated many a kind person who helped me along the way.

I will never forget my eye-opening experiences in the press pit, the dress code for media with credentials, things that I was shocked to see but later was explained the reason 'why,' and the overwhelming reality that Texans are clueless to what is really happening and how all of this will affect their lives. This has to change. Hold that thought!

In January, Christian Reporter News hosted the first of four conferences for 2015. It was called Pastors & Politics. It was a huge success and the attendees



encouraged us to host more, even as often as every three to four months because they were hungry for more. The purpose of that gathering was to educate pastors as to what they could say and do from the pulpit within the 501 (c) 3 perimeters. With the challenges that are facing our country today, we need our pastors to once again become engaged in being community leaders and discuss from the pulpit the issues of today. This is still a priority for 2016.

February began opening yet another set of doors for me. I suddenly found myself being immersed in an incredible education about the terrorism that was happening globally, ISIS, its encroachment into our society here today, and a roster of people that I would be interviewing that I never even dreamed of meeting. New Jewish connections began confirming to me over and over that they were witnessing the US ignoring reality, like Germany and Europe did when Hitler arose and destroyed the Jews. Today the target is America and the Christians that live here, and we are not realizing what is happening and being set up around us to take us down.

My first exposure to terrorism was at a conference that Dr. Jeffrey Addicott of the Center for Terrorism Law hosted in San Antonio. He spoke, plus a Muslim, and an Israeli IDF officer. This was just a couple of days after the horrific murder of the Jordanian pilot who was burned alive in a cage. The world was horrified. We had never witnessed such a thing, but Facebook had the video and the media was using this as their lead story.

The Muslim who spoke was confronted by a gentleman in the audience who had several books in hand with him. He asked him about Muslims burning people alive. While the Muslim denied it being a Muslim practice, the gentleman asked the Muslim, who happened to be an attorney/professor at Seton Hall University, to read a few lines from the book. Sure enough, the book was instructing Muslims to burn infidels alive - he himself, Mohammad, whom the book was relaying his biography, was sharing a story where he had bound a man down and built a fire on his chest and burned him alive. I quickly knew what the theme for my next conference would need to be. Terrorism! This was going to be the major issue/news of 2015. Sadly that proved itself to be correct.

Finally the frac sand issue was heard by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. It was a long meeting. Stressful! But the final result was victory. The frac sand issue was defeated. I was shocked when Texas Monthly contacted me and did a story on it, sharing part of the role the Christian Reporter News had played in its defeat. That was the May 2015 issue of Texas Monthly. Lee Pfluger was the main feature of the article, along with others. It was a very interesting experience. People can speak up and make a difference. We did! It was a sweet victory for all that worked on it.

That was a fast and furious first quarter, and the second would be equally packed and challenging. April began with TLC's 15th Annual Easter Fest that I coordinate each year. We had around 15,000 people, over 500 volunteers, 160,000 Easter eggs, a helicopter that drops additional candies, bounceabouts, rock wall climbing, barrel train, face painting, hot dogs, prizes, and so much more. Before this quarter would end, two of my key people in putting this on every year would be heaven.

Mike Levesque had been one of the original people from the very first event back in 2000. He, along with Mike Wolsfeld, who together I affectionately called them my M&M's, were the two who helped me tackle this project when it was handed to me 6 years ago. They kept me on board when the stress would make me crazy and I'd want to hand it off. I could not have done this event without them. A month after the event, I received a text from my Pastor that Mike Levesque had died. 49 years old, heart failure, gone. Still to this day, my eyes leak when I think of Mike not being here any longer. He truly left us way too soon.

The following month, another person who helped me and encouraged me to conquer the traffic issue we have had with Easter Fest was suddenly taken from us way too soon. Sgt. Korby Kennedy had overseen the police officers for the event each year, and together we worked on the parking issue every year. Last year he gave me the thumbs up on my idea and it proved to work well. My last conversation with him was during a break at city council. I had tossed to him a final tweak on what I wanted to do this coming year and he gave me his endorsement to do it. I can't believe these two gentle giants are gone. They both left their own individual marks on our community and are sorely missed.

In April, after Easter Fest, we hosted our second conference. Yes, it was on terrorism and the Islamic group called ISIS. Dr Jeffrey Addicott was my keynote speaker. I was also able to have the Israeli IDF officer I had heard that day in San Antonio; along with Daniel Akbari, a former Sharia lawyer; Dr Mark Pfeiffer, who teaches about the Islamic ideology; and Lt. Col. Roy White (ret.), with ACT! For America come in to speak. The attendees once again asked for us to bring in more speakers to continue to educate our community along these lines. The headline news was feeding this hunger and the horrors of ISIS continued.

The May elections brought one new face to City Council. In the two years I had been attending the Council meetings, there was now a new and very concerning dynamic to the balance, or lack thereof. The new face, Lucy Gonzales, did not cause this. It was the removal of some other factors that were now gone. I will not get on my political soap box today, but I am very concerned with what I am witnessing happening in our city government. We must awaken and make some drastic changes soon or we are not going to be able to afford to live here.

I'm sure I will be talking about this a lot over the coming months as we move toward the May elections.

May and June found me on the road doing interviews with some of the most fascinating people I could ever dream of meeting, much less to interview. I could not even measure the amount of information I was receiving and learning. The interview that impacted me the most was with Kamal Saleem, a former PLO Muslim Brotherhood terrorist. Literally hearing the plan that the Muslim Brotherhood has in place and are systematically working to destroy this country changed me forever. I cannot hear the news the same anymore. I know the truth, or least a portion of the truth, and the blinders have been removed. Wake up America. It's almost too late to save what we have. We have been invaded, with numerous Trojan horses in our midst.

June brought the closing of Paco's Place. Such fond memories there. I truly love the Diaz family and miss them and their great food. I am thankful for the memories that were made there. So second quarter ended with the passing of two special friends and a favorite restaurant.

June literally closed with one of our nation's most astonishing announcements. The Supreme Court, who cannot legislate from the bench, did. They created a new law that gave (potentially) same-sex couples the right to marry in all fifty states. This ruling will take several years to shake out and bring back into alignment, or it will be simply ignored. Time will tell us on this.

This ruling brought an incredible opportunity into my life. I received a call asking me if I'd do a story on Molly Criner, the Irion County Clerk, the only county clerk in Texas who will not allow her office to issue a same-sex marriage license. While we heard lots of news on Kim Davis in Kentucky and her stance for religious reasons, Molly Criner was basing her decisions on the Constitution of the United States and also the Texas Constitution. Molly blew me away with her knowledge of the Constitution.

So the second half of the year began with the explosive news that gays could marry filling the headlines, competing for air time against the continuing crimes of ISIS. Every month it seemed that ISIS was creating a new way to horrifically kill their captives. To add to this overwhelming overload of news targeting against Christians and their values, soon videos began to be leaked about Planned Parenthood selling baby parts. Christian values and principles were on the chopping block big time.

We hosted our third conference in July, our second one of terrorism. Our speakers included Joe Carey, an apologist who works to convert Muslims to Christianity; Chris Byrd, an attorney who worked at the Capitol during session to help pass the much needed American Laws for American Courts bill (it failed

in the House); Senator Charles Perry, to discuss what he is seeing at the Capitol that is changing our state; Pastor Steve Branson, who helped Sgt Monk with his battle against the armed forces in San Antonio and won; and brought back again Dr. Mark Pfeiffer and Lt. Col. Roy White (ret.) for encore presentations. It was easy to see how the battles are raging from the courtrooms, to the Capitol, to our very own military troops. Citizens are being challenged for their Christian values and beliefs - and the fight has only just begun.

Also in July we began to see our beautiful city being lined with trash cans in the street. This nightmare is the direct result of our City Council and their contract with Republic Services. San Angelo has always been admired for the use of alleys to maintain our look of being trash free. Now our main corridors (such as the loop) are lined with trash and thanks to Republic our residential streets are now too. Who wants to see our trash cans put back in our alleys?

In August we began seeing political candidates announcing their intentions to run. From Lt. Mike Hernandez who will challenge our current Police Chief, to other conservatives across the state vying for the seats of RINO Republicans. This is going to be an exciting election season. And I did mention we had seventeen candidates for the Republican Presidential ticket? People are angry. People are tired of being run over by politicians who say one thing to get elected and then do another in office.

The Jewish community in San Antonio fell victim to hate crimes on their property and we were there when it happened. Pastor Mike Weaver, out in Harper, Texas, began to get involved and worked to awaken his church to what is really happening. Now he is traveling and sharing his knowledge across the state and inspiring other churches to join him in taking Biblical standards on truth and not holding back because of a 501 (c) 3.

The Fredericksburg TEA Party hosted a wonderful event in September, called Conservative Stars Over Texas. Senators Konni Burton and Bob Hall, along with Representative Molly White took center stage for a couple of hours and talked straight about what really happens at the Capitol and what we need to do to change things. Powerful night. I was requested to video it and I'm so glad I did. The truth that was shared was priceless. All of these videos, from Kamal Saleem to the latest news, are still available on ChristianReporterNews.com.

Our last conference was held in October at The Heights church. This one was a Pastors & Patriots Dinner. This was one of the most powerful and impactful events I've ever hosted. The line-up included Molly Criner, the Irion County Clerk discussing the trauma and determination it took to take a stand against the mainstream for what was right; Pastor Steve Branson, who stood with Sgt Monk in his battle, who spoke on the attacks of soldiers, bakers, florist, etc. across this nation because of their Christian values; and closing with Pastor

Charles Flowers, who overheard a plan to allow men to be able use women's restroom and shower facilities that was being proposed in San Antonio and the battle he lead to fight against it through organizing the churches there. When the evening concluded, no one moved. No one wanted to leave. Everyone was caught up in the truth and the battle we now are facing in this state and country. The battle continues.

Next was the City Charter Amendments and Texas Constitutional Amendments election. We got the State ones right, but only got one local amendment right. Local propaganda won. Lack of knowledge won. Lack of understanding our local government won. The citizens surrendered their power to the city bureaucracy. We lost. Yes - we did have one big victory. The right to continue to elect our Chief of Police.

It was shortly after the election that I was asked to go to Iowa and be a part of Ted Cruz's Strike Force Team. What an incredible experience that I shared with you just a few weeks ago. Bottom-line: across this nation the feeling is this.

We have only ONE last opportunity to get this right. There are no further hopes beyond this November election and it starts at the local level and works up. Electing the right President is worthless if you don't undergird him with the right people in congress, at the state levels, county and local government, and even school boards. There is so much work to be done and the gloves must come off. This is going to be a fight.

So looking back over 2015, I'd say we experienced the biggest wakeup call imaginable. The alarm is still sounding full blast. Are we going to awaken and respond and get involved and educated - or are we going to continue to sleep and pretend someone else will take care of it? Someone else will. That story is for another day.

I'm amazed at what all God allowed me to experience this past year. It truly was a life changing year for me. For the last six months, I, along with several others, have been working on something very exciting that we will be launching in a few weeks. It will be taking news to a whole new level. We are very excited and look forward to sharing it with you in February. I truly cannot imagine everything that God has already planned and purposed for my life this coming year. I do ask for your prayers as I walk this out.

Happy New Year! Blessings....

Until next time....

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