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# The Patriot

## General J. P. Holland Chapter

Military Order of World Wars

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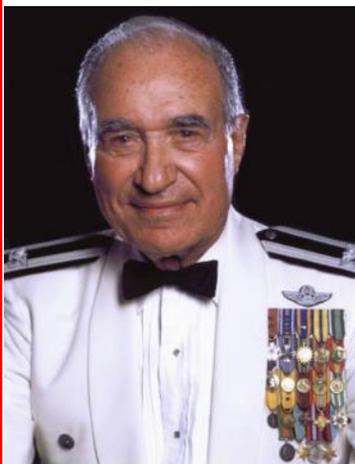
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Volume 3 - Edition 1

July—August 2016

Colonel Steve N. Pisanos (1919 - 2016)



### **Legendary American Hero Steve "Spiro" Pisanos Passes Away**

Colonel Steve N. Pisanos, USAF November 10, 1919 - June 6, 2016 San Diego, "I was born in Athens, Spiros Nicholas "Steve" Pisanos. Coming to America in 1938, as a crew member on a Greek Merchant ship and unable to speak English, I got a job in New York and earned money to start flying lessons to fulfill my boyhood dream to become an aviator. Still a Greek national, in October 1941 I joined the British Royal Air Force's 71 Eagle Squadron, one of three Eagle squadrons in the RAF, comprised of American volunteers. The USAAF 4th Fighter Group absorbed the American members of the Eagle Squadrons in September 1942. "On 3 May 1943, I was naturalized as an American citizen in London, England, becoming the first individual in American history to be naturalized outside the Continental United States. On 5 March 1944, I obtained my 10th aerial victory and while returning from a B-17 escort mission, crash-landed south of Le Havre. For six months I evaded the enemy and worked with the French Resistance. Returning to the United States, I was assigned to the Flight Test Division at Wright Field, Ohio and subsequently served as a test pilot testing the YP-80 jet aircraft. During my career in the USAF, I graduated from the University of Maryland, attended the Air Command and Staff College and the Air War College. In December 1973, after a distinguished thirty years of service in the United States Air Force, I retired with the rank of Colonel. On September 26, 2003 I was inducted into the Commemorative Air Force's American Combat Airman Hall of Fame and on October 25, 2008 into the San Diego Air & Space Museum's International Aerospace Hall of Fame, and made a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor in September of 2009. On June 30, 1946, I married the love of my life Sophie. As a result of 66 years of marriage, we leave our two children son Jeffrey (Carol) and daughter Diane (Richard) and grandchildren Brandon Pisanos and Nicole Wells, and great-grandchildren Baron and MacKenzie Wells. I am incredibly grateful to America beyond imagination, and always will be. I thank the Army Air Force that ruled the sky over Europe in WWII and the USAF that gave me the most satisfying years of my life. **And from the bottom of my heart, I can sincerely say that I am proud to be an American, and even though I have taken my uniform off, I am always ready to wear it again and march forward to defend the United States of America against all enemies. I love you, America, and always will."**



# For the Good of the Order

## Old Bold Pilots

### Oceanside, CA



*"Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared"*

The Old Bold Pilots group meet for breakfast at the Oceanside Denny's off El Camino Real every Wednesday at 0700. The group was founded by four P-47 Fighter Pilots in 1984.

This month's "Old Bold Pilot" is Capt Hal (Mac) McNicol Jr. USN. Mac attended UCLA, and was a member of the University's NROTC Unit when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese. The Unit Commander was quick to inform the cadets that the Navy needed pilots in the worst way. He and other members of the water polo team joined immediately and waited several months to receive their orders. Preflight School was at St Mary's College, in Moraga CA (shown below), near UC Berkeley. There he



got into great physical shape and was indoctrinated into the customs and traditions of the Navy. After three months at St. Mary's, he was assigned for further training at Los Alamitos, near Long Beach. The planes used for basic flight training were the Stearman and the Navy made N3N. Mac was lucky to learn to fly in the Stearman (shown center). He initially was concerned because of his lack of aviation training. But, his instructor relieved him of this anxiety, when his group of aviation cadets were informed that those with flight experience would have



to work twice as hard, because they would have to untrain them, and then teach them the Navy way. "The Stearman was a dream to fly and I loved every minute of it." After his first solo flight in the Stearman, Mac knew that flying was what he wanted to do for a career. After three months of intense training, Mac finished his basic flight training, where 50% of his class washed out. Next Mac jumped on a train at Grand Central Station in Los Angeles and caught the Southern Pacific Railroad to Corpus Christi, Texas. Training was again well organized with more classes in navigation, seamanship, Morse code, flag signals, light signals, and visual identification drill of Japanese and German aircraft and ships. "We were now in Basic Training that included formation flying in the faster SNJ (shown below) with retractable landing gear. The North American SNJs were also known in the Army Air Corps as AT-6s. "Staying in formation within a few feet of the wing tip of the leader, who was our instructor, was no easy deal as he did everything possible to make us fall out of formation. Of course, falling out, also meant failing, so this part of the training was extremely intense. Learning to fly in formation was followed by training in the "Link Trainer" prior to our actual instrument fly-



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# For the Good of the Order

## OLD BOLD PILOTS *(Continued from page 2)*



Squadron 18 Baker. This would give me the multi-engine time I needed when the war was over. The PBY was a combination land and

The Link Trainer was the first real instrument simulator trainer where the pilot was actually under the "Hood" and must be able to fly headings and maintain or change altitudes and at the same time control the airspeed. In other words, it was the beginning of the really sophisticated present day flight simulators. "We were also taught how to fly into a Non-Directional Radio Beacon called the NDB. At that time, these were the only radio beacons at the airports. As soon as we completed our "Instrument Course," we were assigned to a specific type of training. As I had already made up my mind after my first solo flight that I wanted to join the airlines after the war, I asked for and was given my first choice. That was PBY training with



sea airplane with two engines that was designated as a Patrol Plane, but it qualified pilots for various multi-engine aircraft. Two cadets were assigned as a team and we always flew together with our instructor. The instructor would jump in the left seat and we would alternate in the right seat until the instructor was comfortable with us and then we were allowed to fly from the left seat. As a young boy, I had the privilege of sailing a small skiff now and then so taxiing the PBY around in the water was really just like sailing. The PBY was one of the easiest airplanes in the world to fly although it lacked a lot with regards to speed and quick turns. When the sea was calm, I always enjoyed the straight-in power-on landings. At any given altitude, all you had to do was to aim for a point, keep the heading straight and put the rate of descent at 200 feet per minute down and just fly her on to the water. Our instructor seemed to be very pleased with us after we passed all our checks so, for the last couple of hours, he just turned us loose and the airplane was ours to fly. We had a great time switching seats and making take-offs and landings. Upon graduation, I was made an Ensign in the United States Navy and was given my "Wings of Gold." Hank Mitchell (my friend and PBY classmate from California) and I received orders to go to the Navy's new Post Graduate School for Long-Range Navigation at Hollywood Beach, Florida. Hank and I headed to Hollywood Beach, Florida, and checked into this beautiful beachfront hotel. It



was a three-months course of solid navigation. Hank and I had both been good at navigation, so this was like a paid vacation for us, but we did learn a lot more. For the final exam we reported to the Opa-locka Naval Air Station just north of Miami for a night flight in a twin-engine Beechcraft. All of us passed and, a few days later, Hank and I received orders to leave the Hollywood Beach Hotel and report to the Norfolk Naval Air Station, Norfolk, VA. I arrived one day late. As we checked in at the Navy's Administration Bldg., a Lt. Commander who was the Duty Officer, noted that we had arrived a day late. As the Duty Officer, he had been in charge when there was a serious explosion on base the previous day and apparently our being late was the straw that broke the camel's back. He really got mad and told us to stay in the BOQ (Bachelor Officers Quarters) until he decided what to do with us. After a couple of weeks, someone advised us that they had seen our names in a box in the Administration Building labeled FAT (First Available Transportation) to any Squadron.

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# For the Good of the Order

## OLD BOLD PILOTS *(Continued from page 3)*

Shortly after that, a Utility Squadron VJ-4, based right there at Norfolk “urgently” needed two pilots. Mitchell and I finally got orders. We didn’t know then how lucky we were but this assignment probably saved our lives. At first, we were disappointed because the rest of our group were sent to Oceana Naval Air Station and assigned to PB4Ys (B-24) Liberators and headed for Europe. We later found out that



one of the choice assignments in the Navy is the “Utility Squadron”. I checked in with our new squadron and were immediately assigned to flight operations. We hadn’t been there a month when a new squadron, VJ-16m was being formed in San Juan, Puerto Rico, for the whole Caribbean and the East Coast of South America including Panama. We couldn’t volunteer fast enough. San Juan was an extremely interesting city with an old fortress at the entrance to the harbor. I hadn’t been there a week when I was assigned to Chagaramos Bay, Port of Spain, Trinidad. The detachment in Trinidad had three PBY Catalina’s including one PBY-5A with wheels. After I had been there a few days, I learned that the entrance to this beautiful natural harbor, named the Gulf of Paria, was called the Serpent’s Mouth. The Germans had us locked in. They would allow the ships to enter but nothing could depart without being a target for their U-Boats. Within a few weeks after my arrival, the U-Boats disappeared which meant that they were probably recalled to Europe. I like to think that they knew Mac had arrived.”



During his Tour with VJ-16m, Mac flew to Trinidad, French Guiana, British Guiana, Bridgeport, Barbados, Belem, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He flew various aircraft, including the PBY, PBY-5A, and JM-1 (Martin B-26). Mac’s missions were exciting, beautiful, and sometimes very dangerous. His missions included towing targets for the Brazilian Army, with tracers sometimes passing in front of the aircraft, even though the target was towed 5000’ behind the aircraft. In 1943, Devil’s Island was still in full operation. Mac flew over it at about 500 feet and got a fantastic view of the whole island. We could actually see people in various locations and could even make out what looked like isolation cells that had bars on top, but no roof. He also took the mission to transport Senior Officers to Rio de Janeiro. “During this assignment, our VJ-16 Headquarters changed from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Guantanamo, Cuba.” When Mac had completed his Recife assignment and were relieved by two other JM-1 crews, Mac and his group were reassigned to Guantanamo Naval Air Station, Cuba. Guantanamo was the primary “Shake Down” training area for most Navy ships heading for Europe or the Pacific.





# For the Good of the Order

## OLD BOLD PILOTS *(Continued from page 4)*

“Getting settled in at Guantanamo at the eastern end of Cuba was no problem. This was a large U.S. Naval Base and extremely active. We flew a heavy schedule on numerous types of Navy aircraft. As a LTJG, most of my flying was in the Grumman F4F “Wildcat”, the Grumman TBF “Avenger”, and the Douglas SBD “Dauntless”.



As most of our bases were overseas, these two bases were used for short

term assignments depending upon the needs of the Navy. At Ft. Lauderdale, most of the work was flying TBFs for the PT boats in and around the Miami area where there were lots of small islands similar to those in the South Pacific. This was a really enjoyable assignment as the first part of the operation was a “hide and seek” where the PT boats used the islands and inlets for cover. The second part was target practice. As usual, we towed a target at the end of 5000 feet of cable. When they completed their gunnery practice, we would send out a cable cutter that slid to the end and cut the wire connecting the target. The target would spiral down and some of those PT boat skippers got really good at catching the target on their bows before it hit the water. In mid-1944, they urgently needed another TBF at our small detachment at the New Orleans Naval Air Station on Lake Pontchartrain. I was selected to deliver the TBF and stay for a short assignment.



During that three-month assignment, I was able to get a short leave and headed to California to marry the girl I had met while in flight training at Los Alamitos. After that, I headed for advanced training at Corpus Christi, she had volunteered for the Navy “WAVES” (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) program and was based in San Francisco. After arriving in Ft. Lauderdale, I had the following day off so, that next morning, I jumped on a bus and went to Miami where I found out that Pan Am had their offices located in Dinner Key at the Dinner Key Yacht Harbor and Seaplane Base. Here I was in my Navy uniform so I just walked in and told the secretary that I would like to fly for Pan Am when the war was over and could I have an application. She was in her late forties and I was almost 24. She said, “Sonny, when you get your discharge papers, I’ll give you an application.” A few months later after I had just flown some Navy captains to Washington, D.C., I asked our skipper, LCDR Vinny Wright, if I could have the next flight to the States and would it be possible to stop at the Miami Int’l. Airport for a few minutes. I told him of my plan. We had a great skipper and he gave me the OK.

Having received permission to stop at Miami first, I told the Miami Tower I would like to park at the SE corner of the Pan Am Hangar for just a few minutes before proceeding to Ft. Lauderdale. They granted my request. I told my co-pilot to keep the engines running (as there was no ground power there by the hangar). I climbed the steps to the 4th floor of the Pan Am Hangar and walked into the Chief Pilots office. The secretary asked, “How did you get in?” I told her about the Dinner Key and 36th street episode and then decided to fly in. She went to the window and looked down at my big yellow Navy JM, laughed, went back to her office and pushed the button on the intercom and said, “One got in”. She took me in and introduced me to the chief pilot. I told him the same story about what happened at the Dinner Key office and seeing his office from 36<sup>th</sup> Street, so I decided to fly in. He walked over to the window, looked down at my airplane and then we went back into his office. He said that anyone who was that determined to fly for Pan American earned the right to be hired. He gave me an application and said to bring it back as soon as I received my discharge from the Navy. I would be in the first available DC-3 class. Upon discharge from the Navy, I returned to Pan Am with my application, and started my civilian flying career, which would take me around the world.”



# For the Good of the Order

## Corona High School Veteran's Celebration

May 17, 2016



Chapter Commander Nick Herbka and former Adjutant Don Hershberger, attended the 4th Annual Veteran's Celebration at Corona High School, in Corona, California. This program was started by History teacher, Mr. Jeff Perry of Corona High School. Jeff began this program to provide his students the opportunity to meet and talk with the men and women who served our country and were willing to sacrifice all. These Veterans not only make History come alive, but share the reality of war, the honor of service to the United States of America and their deep feelings of Patriotism and Love of Country. This event takes place in the gymnasium where more than 120 tables are set up for the students to engage the veterans and ask them prepared questions about their many experiences, while in military service. At the end, both student and veteran depart wiser and happy for the moments shared.





# For the Good of the Order

## Spirit of the 4th Parade

### Rancho Bernardo California

General JP Holland Chapter participated in the Annual “Spirit of the 4th” Parade, in Rancho Bernardo. The parade was larger than previous years and had many youth and NJROTC Units marching.

Holland Chapter Commander Nick Herbka drove the beautiful Red Camaro convertible with two cadets riding in the back, from the Orange Glen High School (OGHS) Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC). The unit is commanded by CDR Charles Jenkins, USN (Ret), and is assisted by MSgt Keith Porter. Holland Chapter companion Travis Putnam is a past graduate of Orange Glen High School and the NJROTC. Currently, Travis is a teacher at OGHS, and Assistant Instructor for the NJROTC Unit. The NJROTC Color Guard and Banner Teams lead the way for the MOWW Flag.





# For the Good of the Order

## Youth Leadership Conference 2016 San Diego State University

The General John P Holland Chapter sent eight students to San Diego State University Youth Leadership Conference (SDYLC) from June 27—July 1st. Three students were sent from the Liberty Academy High School (LAHS), for the first time. Liberty Academy is a charter school who teaches from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Two of the students have attended the Liberty Academy since elementary school. Devin Spencer, the third student attending from LAHS, was proud to have his father in the audience during graduation. Dad is retired from the United States Navy, in which he worked in Special Operations, Boat Ops, and was deployed to the Persian Gulf several times during his career. Spencer was very happy to have attended the SDYLC, and very appreciative to the Holland Chapter for sending him there. Westview High School NJROTC sent two students, while Ramona High School NROTC, Orange Glen High School NJROTC, and Mar Vista High School each sent one student. Next year the Holland Chapter will be working to increase the number of students attending the SDYLC from 8 - 10 students, a 25% jump.



Past MOWW CINC Debbie Kash presents certificates for Special Achievement in Group Activities



President and CEO of the SDYLC, Travis, Putnam, presents a special certificate of appreciation to last year's Top Graduate, and conference assistant 2016.



San Diego Chapter Commander Ted Parsons presents special awards to the Patrick Henry Group



Top Student receives award from Capt Debbie Kash



# For the Good of the Order

## Pictures from May Meeting





# For the Good of the Order

## Pictures from June Meeting





# For the Good of the Order

## Commanders Corner



*Dear Companions and Friends of the Chapter*—I wish to thank all the Companions and Guests who contributed to the 2016 San Diego Youth Leadership Conference (SDYLC). Because of their generosity, we were able to send 8 students to this years SDYLC. Sending students to the SDYLC continues to cost more each year. The venue of SDSU is very conducive to the learning process and is centrally located, in San Diego county. Next year we will work to raise more funds and increase the number of students we send to SDSU by 25%. Our priority this year, is to increase our Chapter membership by 10%. More members means more donations. **This means that we must actively pursue new members. Look to your family and Friends. Bring in a son or daughter, a grandchild, a veteran that you have for a neighbor or friend. Each year our active membership decreases, and the number of Companions who are able to accept a position of responsibility. The key to the continued success in any organization is their ability to replenish their membership. Let us all set the goal of bringing in one new member each. May God Bless our endeavors to educate our youth in Patriotism and Love of Country. Also, exercise your freedom to vote in the next election.**

### This Day in History

#### July

- 16th 1945 Trinity test of first atomic bomb
- 21st 1969 First moon landing by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin
- 27th 1953 Armistice signed in Korea

#### August

- 4th 1790 US Coast Guard established
- 13th 1981 President Reagan signs largest tax cut in US history— Economic recovery Act
- 18th 1979 Ronald Reagan address Young Americans for Freedom

### Calendar of Events

**General Meeting-Aug 6th**  
**GSP – Capt Tom Marshall—Evolution of Executive Power.**

**Business Meeting— Aug 26th, 0900, Dennys MCAS**

**General Meeting-Sep 3rd,**  
**GSP– CDR O’Brien— History, current operations, and relevance of Amphibious Operations in our Navy**

### Birthdays

#### July

None

#### August

Aug 4th Kay Lettington

### Anniversaries

July 24th Sharon & Jim Oster  
 July 26th Earl & Wentworth

Aug 24th Bruce & Sofia Charnov



# For the Good of the Order

## Guest Speaker August 6th

### Tom Marshall - Evolution of Presidential Power



**Captain Thomas J. Marshall, Jr. MC USN, retired from active duty in December of 2011.** During his 24 years of service, he commanded a combat medical unit during the assault phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, served as Chairman of the Department of Surgery at the Naval Medical Center, San Diego (2006-2008) and served aboard ten ships including four aircraft carriers, five amphibious assault ships and a submarine. In addition to his Medical Degree, he also has a Masters Degree in Military History. Since his retirement he has served the San Diego Chapter as Senior Vice-Commander and is presently Chapter Historian.

**Captain Tom Marshall will follow the “Evolution of Presidential Power”** from its initial definition in the Constitution to present day. He gives examples of how it has expanded over the years beginning from Jefferson to Lincoln, FDR, Eisenhower and Johnson to President Obama. Captain Marshall explains

the actions taken by each of these presidents, which was not specifically given to the president in the constitution, and how each justified their actions. He also cites how each of these actions have become a precedent for actions taken by later occupants of the Oval Office.

**The General John P Holland Chapter is the local Chapter of the MOWW located in Rancho Bernardo, California. The Chapter meets on the first Saturday of the month except for October, which meets on the second Saturday. The luncheon/meeting is held at the Bernardo Heights Country Club, located at 16066 Bernardo Heights Parkway, San Diego, CA 92128. Typical attire is coat and tie, but dress comfortably as you desire. The meeting starts at 1130, followed by an excellent luncheon at 1145. The cost of the luncheon is \$22. Guests Speakers follow lunch, and usually speak for 30-45 minutes. Come join us and see if this organization is for you.**



# For the Good of the Order

## Guest Speaker September 3rd

### CDR Jessica O'Brien - Surface Warfare Officer



Commander O'Brien will discuss her career as a Surface Warfare Officer in the amphibious Navy and the history, current operations, and relevance of amphibious operations in our Navy, specifically as it relates to Beachmaster Unit ONE.

Originally from Ocean Springs, Mississippi, CDR O'Brien graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1997 with a degree in Oceanography. Following graduation, she reported to Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station, Diego Garcia, B.I.O.T. where she served as the Satellite Communications and Technical Control Division Officer.

In 2000, she reported to the USS ANCHORAGE (LSD 36) in San Diego, CA where she served as the Assistant Operations Officer, Electronic Warfare Officer, and Training Officer. Subsequent sea tours included Operations Officer in

USS MCCLUSKY (FFG 41) and N3/ Operations Officer in Amphibious Squadron THREE (CPR 3).

CDR O'Brien has served ashore as Flag Aide to Commander, Navy Region Southwest; Flag Secretary and Speech Writer to Commander, Naval Surface Forces; and as the Maritime Prepositioning Force Officer at Naval Beach Group ONE, Coronado, CA.

She earned her Master's degree in Military Studies from the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College in Quantico, VA.

CDR O'Brien's awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, four Navy Commendation Medals, two Navy Achievement Medals, and various campaign and unit awards.



# For the Good of the Order

## Awards for May and June

### *Letter of Appreciation—LCDR Tom Reeves*



*The Companions and Guests of the General J. P. Holland Chapter sincerely thank you for sharing your most informative and thought provoking talk, "Can Capitalism Defeat Poverty and Challenge Secular Terrorism." We were most intrigued by your analysis of the benefits of Capitalism Verses Cronyism and it's affect on poverty and discontent of the extremely poor People. We wish you the very Best in your future endeavors. "Fair Winds and Following Seas"*

### *Letter of Appreciation VADM Charles Martoglio*



*The Companions and Guests of the General J. P. Holland Chapter sincerely thank you for sharing your most informative and thought provoking talk, "United States verses China Policy" We were most intrigued by your analysis of the current relationship of the US and China. We wish you the very Best in your future endeavors. "Fair Winds and Following Seas"*

***The Military Order of World Wars—San Diego Chapter  
Presents***

***The 60th annual  
Massing of the Colors and Service of Remembrance  
Saturday, October 22, 2016, 1030 AM  
Spreckels Organ Pavilion, Balboa Park***



# For the Good of the Order

## Chaplain's Corner



**Rabbi Dr. Bruce H. Charnov, Ph.D. J.D.  
FRAeS**

### **“In the End Only Kindness Matters”**

Theology is a tricky business—no sooner had a medieval theologian asked “how many angels can dance on the head of a pin” than there were speculation as to “what kind of dances the angels liked” and “did the dancers change partners.” Popular wisdom would appear to be an equally frustrating enterprise - the joy of the originator of “the optimist sees the glass as half-full while the pessimist sees the glass as half-empty” may have faded as the economist wondered “would the glass cost if mass produced” or the engineer concluded that “in either case the glass has 50% over capacity and the lawyer “offered to sue the person who was supposed to fill the glass for breach of contract.”

Perhaps we could learn from the biblical prophet Micah who prophesied from approximately 737-696 BCE in Judah and was the author of the prophetic book which bears his name—when asked what God required of man, Micah kept it simple...very, very simple, when he replied: “Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.” (Micah 6:8). And although tens of thousands of sermons have been written elaborating on Micah’s presentation with sometimes convoluted examples of each of his requirements, they themselves are a tribute and testimony to the power of his simple prescription.

The Shakers knew the power of the simple and embodied it in all aspects of their unadorned lives. Their prescription can be found in a well known piece of music written and composed in 1848 by Joseph Brackett “Simple Gifts” - so simple, in fact, that it remained largely unknown until Aaron Copland used its melody for the score of Martha Graham’s ballet *Appalachian Spring* in 1944. Written by Elder Joseph while he was a resident in the Shaker community in Alfred, Maine, its words speak to us with a power that only the simple can:

*‘Tis the gift to be simple, ‘tis the gift to be free  
‘Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,  
And when we find us in the place just right,  
‘Twill be in the valley of love and delight.  
When true simplicity is gained,  
To bow and to bend we shan’t be ashamed,  
To turn, turn will be our delight,  
Till by turning, turning we come ‘round right.*

And who can deny the power of the simple words of the poet, singer, composer, performer Jewel (Kilcher) Murray who wrote/sang in 1998 in the song “Hands” “In the end only kindness matters.” She later related that this phrase was actually inspired by a kind doctor who treated her when she had neither money nor insurance.

“In the end only kindness matters” - theology or popular wisdom doesn’t get more simple than that!