

PARENTS TALK BACK
Creating your own second chance

When Mary Jane Turrubiar­tes’ youngest child dragged her to the gym near the end of 2012, it was the last place she wanted to be.

Her daughter Elida, now 21, knew her mom was unhappy. Turrubiar­tes was nearing 200 pounds, pushing a size 18 and taking four medications for high blood pressure, along with steroid medicine for asthma. She was prediabetic and her cholesterol was high.

Her self-esteem was even worse than her health.

“She was always so negative about herself,” Elida said. She said she didn’t want her mother to die because of health problems related to her weight.

Turrubiar­tes, now 48, knew her marriage of 20 years had been bad for a long time. She struggled with emotional demons she wasn’t ready to confront.

But she listened to her daughter and went with her to the gym in the suburbs of Houston where she met a personal trainer — my brother.

She sat in his office with her daughter and listened to him say she could change her life.

“I’m too old,” she said. “I’m too fat.” Her daughter and her new trainer refused to accept that.

So, like so many others with the same intention near the start of a new year, Turrubiar­tes signed up to begin training. It was pretty miserable at first. And it didn’t get much better for a while. After a particularly difficult workout, when she felt discouraged and wondered whether she should continue training, her trainer said to her: You need to look in a mirror and figure out what is going on with you.

“Who does he think he is?” she thought to herself. She wanted to quit.

She talked to her mom, who encouraged her to stick with it. Elida told her to keep going, too. They were proud of her effort.

She had been through a lot of hardship, even before this particular journey began.

Back in 2000, Turrubiar­tes had nearly lost her own life when she was 36 weeks pregnant. Doctors induced her to give birth because of preeclampsia, a condition in pregnancy when women develop high blood pressure. Her baby was born with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck.

He died in the hospital two weeks after he was born.

“I just got numb after that,” she said. “I went into this place in my head where I was on autopilot. I didn’t grieve. I went back to work right away.”

Years later, the weight started really adding up. She was the one who cooked for her entire family. She loved to bake for them, too.

“I was eating everything I was cooking and baking,” she said. “I was so unhappy, I don’t think I even knew it.”

At the gym, 13 years later, she was dealing with those emotions while transforming her body.

After changing her diet and about six months of training three days a week, the pounds started falling off pretty quickly.

Her doctors were amazed at her progress, and she slowly got off nearly all her medication. The hardest decision she made was realizing she had to move on from a marriage that had only been getting worse.

“I gave everything to my husband and kids. I thought we were going to grow old together. I’m not 30. It’s kind of scary being alone,” she said.

She filed for a divorce that should be finalized in a few months.

“There were days when I was so down in the dumps, I didn’t want to go anywhere,” Turrubiar­tes said, let alone a gym. But she forced herself. The things she was able to do while training gave her courage. It made her stronger physically and mentally.

She lost more than 50 pounds over the course of that year. She’s now down to a size 8. She decided to study for her certification to become a trainer while she continued to work. She passed the test in October, and wants to train other women and help them regain their confidence.

Her daughter had seen how unhappy she was with herself, even when she couldn’t face it.

“If it wasn’t for her, I probably would never have done it,” said Turrubiar­tes.

Elida said her mom may not realize it, but her dedication to making her life better has encouraged her just as much.

The transformation in her life has been bittersweet.

“It’s sad because the family is broken up,” she said, crying. “But I’m at a better place physically, mentally and emotionally.”

Her daughter had helped her realize: I can’t be unhappy like this anymore. And she’s starting to see herself differently.

“If someone tells me I’m pretty, I’ll say, ‘No, I’m not,’ she said. “My girls will say, ‘Mom, learn to take a compliment.’”

Sometimes when she gets dressed and passes by a mirror, she does a double-take and backs up to take another look.

“Oh, OK,” she’ll think to herself.

“I’m learning how to take a compliment.”

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AISHA SULTAN
Parents talk back

Americans’ slipping sense of duty

By CONNIE CASS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Americans are a little less likely to ask what they can do for their country these days.

An Associated Press-GfK poll found that the sense of duty has slipped since a similar survey three decades earlier. Civic virtues such as staying informed or serving on a jury don’t seem as important as they once did — especially among the younger generation.

The findings fit with research that’s been worrying many experts who study civic engagement or advocate for teaching more about civics in school.

“I don’t see any recovery,” said Rutgers University Professor Cliff Zukin. “The people who were 40 two decades ago aren’t as engaged as the people who were 60 two decades ago. This generational slip-page tends to continue.”

Here are five things to know about Americans’ sense of civic duty:

Citizenship’s not what it used to be

Americans’ commitment to some traditional obligations of citizenship has slipped.

An Associated Press-GfK poll repeated questions asked in 1984 about six civic-minded activities: voting, volunteering, serving on a jury, reporting crime, knowing English and keeping informed about news and public issues.

Of the six, only voting and volunteering were embraced about as strongly as three decades ago, when NORC at the University of Chicago posed those questions to Americans on the General Social Survey, but volunteering doesn’t rank very high on the list for many.

While just 28 percent say volunteering is “a very important obligation” that a citizen owes the country, three-fourths of Americans consider voting central to citizenship.

Nonetheless, only about 36 percent of eligible voters turned out for November’s midterms, according to University of Florida Associate Professor Michael P. McDonald’s analysis. That’s the lowest since World War II.

But big majorities still feel an obligation

Despite some sliding, Americans still think U.S. citizenship carries some duties as well as rights.

About 9 out of 10 say that reporting a crime you witness, voting in elections, knowing English and serving on a jury when called are at least “somewhat important” obligations.



AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File

In this Nov. 11 photo, a group of Boy Scouts carry a large American Flag down Capitol Mall during a Veterans Day Parade in Sacramento, Calif. Americans are a little less likely to ask what they can do for their country these days. An Associated Press-GfK poll found that the sense of duty has slipped since a similar survey three decades earlier.



AP Photo/Darron Cummings, File

In this Nov. 4 file photo a voter marks her ballot at in Brooklyn, Iowa.

And each of those is still rated “very important” by a majority. It’s just that, except in the case of voting, those majorities have slipped by an average of about 13 percentage points.

“There are a lot of arguments about how our society has shifted toward a rights focus instead of an obligation focus,” said Scott Keeter, director of survey research at the Pew Research Center. But Keeter isn’t convinced there’s enough evidence to support that conclusion.

“It’s a little early to pull the alarm bells about the demise of our civic culture,” he said.

Sense of duty lowest in the young

Young people are feeling less dutiful, or maybe just showing their libertarian streak.

In every category except volunteering, adults under 30 were less likely than their elders to see any obligation, and also felt less obliged than young people of the past.

In 2014 about a fourth of them said there’s no duty to keep informed, volunteer or speak English.

Young adults felt the most responsibility about reporting a crime: two-thirds said that’s “very important,” and the rest were divided between “somewhat important” and “not an obligation.”

Still, in 1984, their parents’ generation was much more devoted to maintaining law and order — 86 percent of young adults then called reporting crime “very important.”

Volunteering up among under-30 crowd

Compared to the 1984 survey, Americans’ sense of obligation fell across every category and age, save one.

Today’s young people are more likely than their parents’ generation to consider giving their time for community service “very important.”

Nineteen percent said that three decades ago; 29 percent think so

OUT OF THE VAULT

Fugitive rescued after months in handcuffs

A man who escaped from Washington police traveled for months with his wrists bound in handcuffs before being picked up north of Pendleton in January 1915.

The man, with matted hair and beard, filthy and dressed in rags, and with handcuffs grown in to the flesh of his wrists, was spotted camping in the gulch across the Lee street bridge. Several neighbors and campers notice his strange behavior and called police. The man tried to run but was apprehended Jan. 6, 1915.

Sheriff T.D. Taylor and his officers first cleaned the man up at the county jail, trimmed his beard and hair and gave him clean clothes, and then whisked him away to the Bowman photography studio to have pictures taken to help in identifying the fugitive. The man was then taken to St. Anthony Hospital, where Dr. Guy Borden, assisted by Deputy Sheriff Joe Blakely, removed the manacles with a hack saw after administering anesthetic. Dr. Borden said it was incredible that he had remained at large for so long without discovery, or



RENEE STRUTHERS
Out of the vault

flesh had completely covered it. On his left arm the cuff was halfway concealed by skin. The man had picked at the locks until they would no longer work, and Sheriff Taylor didn’t have a key that would fit.

The man gave his name as Robeno Battiste, a Swiss-Italian immigrant who had no idea why he had been arrested. Speaking through a Portuguese inmate at the jail and a local Italian man, Battiste said he was just walking down a road near Seattle when he was grabbed and clapped in irons. He believed he was being taken back to Canada and escaped when the officer was making a phone call. Sheriff Taylor received a visit from U.S. Immigration Agent E.L. Wells,

without ridding himself of the handcuffs, and he was lucky not to have lost one or both hands, or his life. On the right arm the manacle had eaten its way almost to the bone, and the

Walla Walla, two days later who said Battiste had escaped from the law in Nooksack, Wash., on June 19, 1913 — he had spent 19 months on the lam in handcuffs. Information from the immigration office in Portland confirmed Battiste’s identity, and said he was arrested in Nooksack on suspicion of being an illegal alien trying to sneak into the country. Battiste, not speaking English, thought he was being arrested for some serious crime and in his ignorance had made his escape at the first opportunity. Wells took Battiste back to Walla Walla, declaring that if he had committed no crime he would probably not suggest deportation, considering what Battiste had gone through. He also said he would try to interest wealthy Italians in Walla Walla to take up his cause, and find him work once he was recovered from his ordeal.

Battiste, however, had other ideas. He walked out of the hospital ward at the Walla Walla county jail and made his second escape on Jan. 10. Sheriff’s deputies caught up with him again Jan. 19 at Eureka, Wash.,

on the Snake River, but Battiste jumped out of the buggy and fled again, to be recaptured after a two-mile chase that led over a steep bluff into a ravine.

By March 2, Battiste was still being held in the Walla Walla jail’s hospital ward, though he appeared to have certain privileges. The *East Oregonian* reported Battiste stirred up officers again when he once more disappeared from the jail’s confines. Deputy Sheriff Sam Bryan and Immigration Inspector Wells were soon hot on his trail, and caught up with him leisurely walking on Main Street. He was confused at all the commotion, saying he had merely gone for a stroll and was on his way back to the jail when officers caught up with him. He was okayed to take walks thereafter, but was required to tell jail officials before he left the premises. By this time his hands had improved considerably, and it was expected he would soon be ready for release.

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ODDS & ENDS

Toilet paper links man to heist attempt

UNIONTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Police say they matched a would-be pizza shop robber to a roll of toilet paper in his Pennsylvania home.

Uniontown police say 29-year-old Eric Frey tried to rob Michael Maria’s Pizza on Saturday by handing an employee a note written on toilet paper that read: “I have a gun. Give me \$300.” Police arrived before

Frey could leave because an employee hit a panic button.

Frey told officers he was forced to commit the robbery by a large, bearded man with a gun who accosted him in a nearby alley.

But police say a search of Frey’s apartment wiped out that explanation: That’s where they say they found a newly opened roll of toilet paper with the pen impression from Frey’s note on an outer sheet.

Online court records don’t list an attorney for Frey.

Burglary suspect found sleeping in bed

HOWARD, Pa. (AP) — A woman has been jailed on charges she broke into a stranger’s central Pennsylvania home after a night of drinking and was found by police in bed.

The *Centre Daily Times* reports state police responded to an alarm about 4:15 a.m. Sunday in Liberty Township, Centre County.

That’s where police say they found a broken window

and 27-year-old Nicole Lynn Daugherty in the homeowner’s bed. Nobody else was home at the time.

Police say the Bellefonte woman told them she had been drinking at a party hours earlier, but couldn’t remember anything else — including how or why she got into the house.

Online court records don’t list an attorney for Daugherty who faces a preliminary hearing Wednesday on charges of burglary, criminal trespass and criminal mischief.