

## A Kindness to the Ducks

Kindness, it would seem from stories we see in the newspapers and on television, is in shrinking supply. For that reason, perhaps, demonstrations of it attract attention. Consider ...

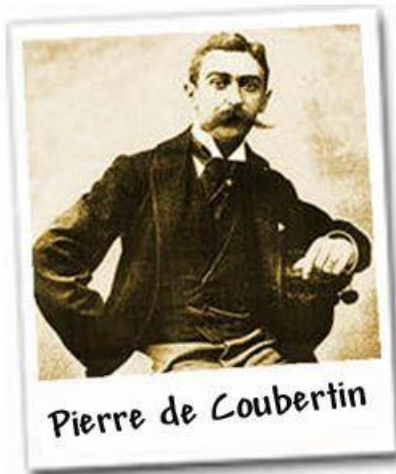
Henry (Bobby) Pearce of Australia was competing in the single scull rowing event at the 1928 Olympics. He was leading when a duck and her string of ducklings came into view up ahead. They were on a collision course and Pearce reckoned that his scull would cut the string in two and sink a few ducklings in the process, so he pulled in his oars. When the ducks passed, Pearce again bent his back to the task.



There's a happy ending to the story. Pearce won. Remember Leo Durocher's pronouncement, "Nice guys finish last?" It didn't happen with Pearce.

And here's another ...

Years ago, in the marathon tandem kayaking racing event at the world championships in Copenhagen, Danish paddlers were leading when their rudder was damaged in portage. British paddlers, who were in second place, stopped to help the Danes fix it. The Danes went on to defeat the British by one second in an event that lasted nearly three hours.



But there's a happy ending to this story, too. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the British kayakers won what many people regard as the highest honor in sports. They became the winner of the Pierre de Coubertin International Fair Play Trophy. The trophy is named for the founder of the modern Olympic Games, and it has been awarded annually to people in sports who have demonstrated nobility of spirit. It is big news in Europe, but it has not been given much recognition in the United States.

In the past, the trophy has gone to a Hungarian tennis player who pleaded with officials to give his opponent more time to recover from a cramp, and to a high school basketball coach who forfeited the Georgia (United States) state championship after he found that one of his players was scholastically ineligible.

(more)

The first trophy went to an Italian bobsledder named Eugenio Monti for a gesture that exhibited a touch of class. In the two-man bobsled event at the 1964 Innsbruck Olympics, Monti was the leader after his final run. The only one given a chance to beat him was Tony Nash of Great Britain.

As Nash and his teammate got ready for their final run, they discovered that a critical bolt on their sled had snapped at the last moment. Monti was informed of the problem and immediately took the corresponding bolt from his own sled and sent it up to Nash. Nash fixed his sled, came hurtling down the course to set a record, and won the gold medal.

*Wikipedia* defines kindness as “a behavior marked by ethical characteristics, a pleasant disposition, and concern for others. It is known as a virtue, and recognized as a value in many cultures and religions.”

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher and scientist in Book II of his *Rhetoric*, calls it “helpfulness towards someone in need, not in return for anything, nor for the advantage of the helper himself, but that of the person helped.”

Kindness – acts that touch and amaze others – is and should be a daily practice in the centers of Life Care and Century Park.

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience* (Colossians 3:12 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter