

Thoughts on Labor on Labor Day

By Glenn Harlan Reynolds

So I'm working on a Substack piece about calls for criminalizing fraudulent science, something I'm both for in the abstract and concerned about in the concrete.

But Helen persuaded me to spend this afternoon at the Jewish Community Center pool, since this was the last day before it closed, and since it was a glorious late-summer day. So I went.



So instead of a day of writing, I had hotdogs and sunshine. It was very nice.

The last day of pool season always has a bittersweet, elegiac feeling. Where I live it's not really the last day of summer, the way it is, pretty much, in say New England. But even

though it was in the upper 80s you could feel a hint of fall in the breeze. And of course, for the little community that was the pool, it was the last day. You could see it in the parents hanging out while their kids played, and even more in the teenagers who, as I've mentioned before, form the iron core of the pool staff. Most of them will probably continue to see each other around, but not in the same way as when they were working together daily.

You experience that kind of thing all the time, of course – at graduations, on leaving the military, on the final night of a play, and the like. All the strong-but-temporary associations that we form along the way, and that come to an end, sooner or later.

And I was admiring these kids again. I've written [before](#) about how polished, professional, and well organized they are, and I saw it again. Every time a lifeguard changes shift, the replacement stands below the chair and takes a moment to get eyes on the pool. Then the outgoing guard climbs down and gets eyes on while the replacement climbs up onto the station. After the replacement gets settled in, the outgoing guard can leave. It's practically "I relieve you sir" / "I stand relieved," an almost military precision. All to keep some three year olds from drowning themselves, which come to think of it is a pretty important job.

Today's younger generation gets a lot of grief, and sometimes deservedly, but give them some responsibility and they seem to do pretty well. Maybe we should give them more.

Just a small work-related thought on Labor Day. Hope yours was good.

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