

Excerpts from the Sept 1998 MIND

The Newsletter of

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PUBLISHING STATEMENT

Central Indiana Mensa, a Local Group of American Mensa Ltd., publishes MIND monthly. Mensa, a not-for-profit organization open to all persons scoring in the 98th percentile on a standardized intelligence test, neither endorses nor opposes the opinions reported in MIND, which remain those of the individual contributors.

Dom Jervis

Rednecks

What makes a redneck's neck red?

Sunburn, caused by working outdoors all day. This implies a vocation of manual labor. This insinuates a lack of education, which suggests a lack of sophistication. Using the definition of "sophistication" as "experience in worldly ways," this leads to the conclusion that one who might have a more narrow view of the world would deal with a problem based on how a similar problem was handled in the past.

One definition of conservatism is the belief that problems should be addressed based on making changes in line with proven values of the past. Conversely, liberalism claims to be based on a willingness to change ideas and policies to meet problems as they occur.

Given all of this, one would expect "rednecks" to, more likely, be, more conservative than liberal.

To recap: a tendency toward education, leading to a lack of knowledge of the complexity of the world, results in a tendency to attempt to solve today's problems by relying on "tried and true" solutions of the past, rather than using the innovative ability afforded by more advanced education to explore potential remedies outside one's current set of principles.

Therefore, while exceptions do exist, rednecks tend to be conservative.

BINGO!

A "re-ordering of our prejudices" is putting it mildly! A genuine battle has been engaged, and every conservative in our nation is justified in feeling that a bullseye has been painted on his/her back.

It has become fashionable to demean conservatives. From Hollywood to the evening news, to the President of the United States (as well as her husband) the cunning, surreptitious wiles of the liberal power elite have shown that the velvet glove can cover the mailed fist quite effectively. The tolerance

(even solicitation) of condescendingly classifying people who do not believe in whichever cause is in vogue at the time as "rednecks" or "trailer trash" is nothing more than a ploy to extol the virtues of the liberal school of thought, by verbally battering into submission those who hold the values which made our nation the greatest in the history of the planet Earth. Our country did not become great through welfare programs and coddling criminals. It did so through hard work, honesty, frugality, and moral restraint.

To quote the July MIND, "Highranking careers end abruptly on a single racial slur but references to "trailer trash" circulate with impunity." This citation illustrates my argument quite well. Liberals can (and do) inflict the verbal equivalent of felonious assault at conservatives and we are expected to just accept it. However, let us attempt a rebuttal, even one rooted firmly in fact and devoid of profanity or even slander, and we are branded as being somewhere between Nazis and Attila the Hun. I have been called both of these (and worse) by fellow Mensans (not from Central Indiana), of all people! And they wonder why membership in this chapter is declining, despite the fact that they claim that all viewpoints are supposedly welcome. Right! Any viewpoint is welcome as long as it agrees with theirs.

The bottom line is: I miss all of you in Central Indiana Mensa! I am with you in spirit, always!

MIND STRETCHERS

In Western Culture lies an unspoken assumption that all questions have answers. This notion pervades to our entertainments and we expect every puzzle to have its solution printed on the back page, or at least in the following issue.

Some other civilizations show more tolerance for the occasional unanswerable question. Puzzles which have no "school solutions" provide value by inducing the ponderer to consider nontraditional modes of thinking. The Zen koans provide the best example of this approach, but the "Impertinent Question" has appeared in the West in at least two classics: "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" and "If a tree falls in the forest where no one can hear it, does it make a sound?"

The "answer" to such questions show how the thinker thinks.

Here's a tough nut from the Islamic regions:

A man joins a caravan in which he has (unknowingly) two bitter enemies. During the night, one of them steals to his water bags and poisons them. Later, the second enemy also tampers with his foe's water supply, but he weakens the bags so that they will burst during rough travel.

The following morning the man leaves the caravan and strikes out across the waste toward his personal destination. On the way, the water bags burst and the man eventually dies of thirst.

Unknown to the two villains, their actions did not go undetected and shortly the dead man's relatives hail the rascals before the emir for justice.

The first rascal argues, "True, I poisoned the man's water, but he didn't drink it, or at least didn't die of it; he died of thirst. I could perhaps be accused of attempted murder, but not of murder.

The second would-be killer argues, "Yes, I caused his water bags to burst,

but as we have just heard, the water in them was poisoned. What harm can it be to prevent someone from drinking poisoned water? True, the man died of thirst due to my actions, but he was doomed from the time his water was poisoned, so how can I be responsible for his death?"

The family of the slain man argued that both men were guilty since they both designed his death, even though their designs interfered with each other.

The emir realizes that he's on the verge of setting a precedent equating deeds with intentions. What would you do if you were the emir?

B _____
A _____
S _____
I _____
L _____
by Basil Wentworth

130 What's In A Name? -VIII

Tchaikovsky, surveying the shores
Of the Volga and Don, said, "Three four's
The meter, perchance,
To depict them in dance
And I'll call it the waltz of the flowers."

Said the farmer, "That garden of ours
Is burgeoning after the showers
But I feel moved to state
That the furrows aren't straight --
It is due to the faults of the plowers."

He would glance at the gauge every hour
And now and again he would glower,
Give a tweak to a knob;
Said, "I'm doing my job,
Controlling the volts of the power."

The Pillsbury doughboy looked sour,
(Or maybe the word should be "dour")
"The reason I'm white,"
He explained, "is: last night
I inspected the vaults of the flour."

Yes, Disney and Whitman had faults
But each had a gift that exalts
The spirit -- each gift,
And its power to uplift,
We recall as the flower of the Waltz.

* * * * *

While the flowers are waltzing through,
Other waltzes are flowing, too --
Let your senses surrender
To moments of splendor
Tchaikovsky provides for you.

Dom Jervis

The War on Drugs: the Military Model vs the Medical Model

The definition of war is "a fight, strife or conflict." However, a connotation of "war" might be "a noble crusade to obliterate from the face of the earth a cancer which would destroy all the beneficence so arduously created by us and our beloved ancestors; such an enemy must be annihilated at any cost; even death would be preferable to the victory of such a loathsome pariah." Now, if you think we are fighting a "war" on drugs, please stop reading right now, and go take the CTMM again. There must have been a mistake the first time.

The so-called war on drugs has: gouged money from already overtaxed Americans; allowed police officers to engage in practices Saddam Hussein hasn't dreamt of; allowed self-serving prosecutors to seize homes, cars and liberty on a whim ("suspicion of racketeering") and hold the honest, hard-working, tax-paying masses (who pay their salaries) in constant fear of atrocities.

Will the powers-that-be let this system be changed? Come on! The current Resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue will keep his pants zipped first. Would treating drug addiction as a medical problem be preferable? Probably, but only because the current solution is not only ineffective but abominable. However, the alternative solution suggested, while well-intentioned, simply won't work. It will lead to public money sending addicts through the rehab revolving door and government bureaucrats using actual numbers of participants and contrived numbers of "successes" to justify increased funding, leading to liberals using conservatives' rebuttal of these programs as proof of the "mean-spiritedness" of the Republican Party, leading to ever increasing waste of the taxpayers' money. The Lions will win the Super Bowl before the custodians of the current system acquiesce to "their" money going to "treating criminals like they have cancer."

"OK, Jervis, you've shot down everyone else's suggestions. What's your answer?" It's one I certainly did not invent, but it is one that many admit privately, but deny publicly. I'll spell it for you: L-E-G-A-L-I-Z-A-T-I-O-N. My rationale is basic common sense, not self-interest; I do not use drugs.

A legalization program can be phased in, starting with controlled possession (like alcohol) for the softest, most recreational drugs. Tax it. Be of legal age to consume it. Possibly tax paraphernalia. Maximum legal quantities might be an option, or licenses for possessing additional quantities. A portion of the tax revenues could be set aside for treatment programs. These effects may eventually bring drug use down, like the proposed cigarette taxes might do to smoking. The details can be worked out, and it would certainly be an improvement over the current system.

Oh, and enforcement of the new rules should not be under the control of the DEA, which acts like King Kong with street punks, but like Pee Wee Herman with Pablo Escobar. Give jurisdiction to the IRS. If you try to play games with them, you're asking for it.

Such a program, if done right, could actually benefit the Service's reputation. I'm not holding my breath, but hey, a guy can dream, can't he?

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