

Where Did All The Dumbasses Come From?

Written by Bob Alexander
Monday, 07 July 2014 20:25

After reading through this morning's news I had to get away from the computer and go take a walk. I can get through the Canadian news without too much difficulty, but sifting through news from the U.S. is becoming as difficult as trying to watch an entire program on FOXNews. There's just too much dumbassery to absorb and I no longer have the stomach lining for it.

After I got back from storming through the neighborhood, and with a fresh cup of coffee in hand, I came up with The Answer. Not *an* answer ... **THE** Answer.

Kay Crisman Petrini

If Kay, and other teachers like her, were allowed to do their jobs unhindered by bureaucracy and lousy paychecks, the rule of dumbasses would be over within a generation.

The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking defines critical thinking as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

Critical thinking. That's what the best teachers inculcate in their students. And it's not necessary to have every teacher be a Kay Petrini. If a child has the opportunity to have two or three or four Kay Petrinis sprinkled throughout the elementary and high school years, that's usually enough to ignite the life-long fire of critical thinking. And then on graduation day there will be one more person who will be able to tell the difference between Shinola and that other stuff.

I'm not talking about creating the American Übermensch. Not at all. See here's how it shakes out.

Historically one third of the country votes Conservative. Another third votes, for lack of a better word, Liberal. The battle is *a/ways* about grabbing a little more than half of the remaining third. So the party that consolidates their base, and can convince a little more than one sixth of the voters to come on over to their side ... wins.

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Now let's return to that wonderful time *before* the Republicans and the Supreme Court stole the 2000 presidential election for George W. Bush.

Al Gore was doing his wonky best to convince the middle third that he knew what he was doing and George W. was having a helluva time trying to walk and chew gum at the same time. It was painfully obvious there was something wrong with him. The guy Could Not Talk without lapsing into Bush-isms. Bush-isms. That's what the friendly media termed the gibberish that escaped from his mouth. I'm not going to list any of them here. None of them are actually funny. They're all just sad examples of someone out of his depth but grimly determined to get to the finish line.

Christopher Hitchens summed Bush up best, "*He is unusually incurious, abnormally unintelligent, amazingly inarticulate, fantastically uncultured, extraordinarily uneducated, and apparently quite proud of all these things.*"

Bush was the candidate the Republicans offered. I was not a big fan of Al Gore and thought Joe Lieberman was a gawdawful choice as running mate but there was really no contest. Bush was (and is) an idiot and Dick Cheney was an evil congressman, an evil Secretary of Defense, and an evil CEO of Halliburton. It didn't take *much* critical thinking, just a little, to decide who to vote for in the 2000 election.

Regardless of all the ways the Republicans tried to steal and suppress the vote in Florida, if one thousand more Florida voters had been taught critical thinking by someone like Kay Petrini, election night would not have been the beginning of our perpetual nightmare.

A lot of people have e-mailed me saying Gore would have done exactly what Bush/Cheney did because of 9/11.

Really?

My initial response is I don't believe the events of 9/11 would have happened if Al Gore was the president.

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There are three ways you can look at The United States' role in 9/11:

Made it Happen.

Allowed it to Happen.

Or the attacks of 9/11 took place because of the government's incompetence.

I don't easily see those scenarios existing under a Gore Administration. Do you?

But here's the kicker. Let's say Al Gore would have tried to take the country to crazy-town ...

A nation with enough critically thinking citizens would not have allowed the president, Bush *or* Gore, to get away with the obvious lies, distortions, and distractions, that streamed from the White House since that awful September day. A nation with enough critically thinking citizens could not be lied into a war. It seems to me we need more Kay Petrinis, unhindered by bureaucracy and lousy paychecks, to teach our kids how to think for themselves.

I don't have any idea how to "fix" the schools in the United States. But I'll bet the teachers do. Up here in Beautiful British Columbia the teachers are on strike. Summer school sessions have been cancelled. What do teachers want?

More one-on-one support for students who need it most and guaranteed levels of specialist teachers.

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Smaller classes, so all students can get the individual attention they deserve.

Time to prepare lessons that engage diverse learning styles.

A reasonable wage increase that respects teachers' skills and responsibilities.

This isn't a list of *demands* from a bunch of wild-eyed radicals. This is a simple, sane, to-do list that must be done to keep Canada's school system in the world's top ten. The U.S. isn't even in the top *twenty*.

The BC teachers are *defending* public education. They are proposing a fair deal for teachers and better support for kids. I'm all for it. I'll keep you posted about how it all shakes out as Fall approaches. You can read more at the BC Teacher's Federation website: <http://www.bctf.ca/>

I've been writing pretty much the same thing over and over for months, probably years. The institutions we used to depend on are crumbling, eroded, or gone. The dumbasses are ascendant. Too many Americans Copy 'n Paste talking points directly into their brains without even using a SpellCheck much less an IdeaCheck.

We don't have many options left. I think it's about time we turn to the people we entrust our children to 5 days a week, 9 months out of the year, and ask them what they need ... and then make sure they get it.