

PINE NUTS

BY McAVOY LAYNE, THE GHOST OF MARK TWAIN



Am I becoming a curmudgeon?

I've never read a self-help book, probably because I'm beyond help, but I do take friends' criticisms to heart, and I was told today by a trusted friend that I am becoming a curmudgeon. Of course I objected strenuously, insisting I am no W.C. Fields, who would sign an autograph for a 13 year old and say, "There you go, Sonny, you little son of a b____!"

But my friend asserted that America needs curmudgeons to keep us from becoming complacent. The curmudgeon keeps a critical eye on society, and by mixing sarcasm with humor, makes us smile at our shortcomings. And just here my friend cited the testy Phyllis Diller: "Never go to bed mad...stay up and fight!"

This sent me in search of examples of curmudgeonly observations, and I didn't have to go far. My favorite guy, Mark Twain, who was limitlessly human, quipped, "Fewer things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example." And, "At fifty a man can be an ass without being an optimist, but he cannot be an optimist without being an ass." If you count Mark Twain as a curmudgeon, then I guess I am one, as a true curmudgeon has the greater good at heart.

My second favorite curmudgeon would have to be H. L. Mencken, who to my mind, was about as crusty and as American as an apple pie. "On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last, and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron." And, of course, "Nobody ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American public."

Curmudgeondom is not the exclusive purview of older men. Dorothy Parker ranks in the annals of curmudgeonettes, and she had an elegant touch when phrasing her curmudgeonology: "Now I know the things I know, and I do the things I do; and if you do not like me so, to hell, my love, with you!"

Playwright Oscar Wilde died too young to gain the status of curmudgeon, but he was well on his way to understanding what it takes: "A cynic is someone who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing." Purportedly, Wilde's last words from his death bed were, "My wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. One of us has got to go."

Would you consider the Dalai Lama a curmudgeon? When asked what surprised him most, the Dalai Lama had this to say: "Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived."

Alright, if the Dalai Lama and Mark Twain are curmudgeons, then I am proud to be called, on occasion, a curmudgeon.

Learn more about McAvoy Layne as the Ghost of Mark Twain at www.ghostoftwain.com



STOREY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ARREST REPORT



On September 15, Storey County Deputies were dispatched to the Chinatown area of Virginia City. There they arrested Jeffrey Wood (34) of Reno, NV, for a warrant out of Reno Municipal Court. He was booked into Storey County Jail.



On September 19, Storey County Correction Officers responded to a physical altercation in the Storey County Jail. Jefferey Browning (26) of Fernley, NV, was charged with Felony Battery and booked for the additional offense.



On September 17, Storey County Deputies enacted a traffic stop on a vehicle in the Lockwood portion of Storey County. After a standard records check, Luke Godsey (25) of Sparks, NV, was arrested on an outstanding Sparks Justice Court warrant. He was booked into the Storey County Jail.



On September 21, Storey County Deputies conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle exhibiting excessive speed in the 341/Cartwright area of Storey County. Upon routine records check, Dustin Virdel (29) of Reno, NV, was arrested for basic speed 22 mph over posted speed, no proof of insurance and driving on a suspended driver's license. He was booked into the Storey County jail.

EDITOR RECEIVES PUBLIC SPANKING AT COMMISSION MEETING

By Las Swanson

Austin Osborne walks to the podium. Another person in the galley says, "He's an interesting man." I respond, "Yeah, I like him. I think he does a good job for the county."

Austin then proceeds to give me a public spanking right there on the meeting floor in front the commissioners and attendees. And worse, this meeting is broadcast to listeners outside the courtroom and recorded for posterity. Good thing I consider Austin to be such an eloquent public speaker or it may not have been quite as pleasant to hear myself being chastened in such a manner.

I had a little difficulty understanding precisely what had him so upset but it centers around a timeline and articles I published in the September 23rd issue of the Comstock Chronicle. The problem article: Oops. VC Leaks, again? The timeline as I know it:

Sep 18 Sunday
Email sent to Storey County asking questions.

Sep 19 Monday
Polite response from Austin asking when answers were needed. I asked if Thursday was ok.

Sep 20 Tuesday

Our 9-23 edition was completed and sent to the printer.

Sep 21 Wednesday
Answers received from Austin for planned *follow-up* to the 9-23 article.

Sep 23 Friday
The newspaper comes out. Received email from Austin asking: "Did you get my response? I provided it per your given timeline. Your published article suggests that you did not get it."

I responded to Austin on that same date explaining that the paper he was reading was printed on Tuesday prior to receipt of his answers on Wednesday. I explained that his answers were for use in a follow-up to that 9-23 article. (That follow-up article is on page one of this edition.)

And then, at the Commissioner's meeting today, he made statements to the effect that he provided responses and yet I ran an article stating that he had not. That is incorrect. This makes me want to ask him, "Austin, did you get *my* response? I provided it on the same day of your query. Your presentation at the Commissioner's meeting suggests that you did not get it."

At any rate, I can only figure that Austin's presentation was the result of misunderstanding and personal interpretation of my articles? Each of us is entitled to our individual interpretation of matters. That is our right. I am not responsible for the interpretation of others nor the response evoked by their interpretation. I am only responsible for my intention. My intention was good and will be clarified in an upcoming edition of the Chron.

There are two sides to every story. To properly cover a story, both sides must be acknowledged, explored and reported. Regardless of what I publish, half of the citizenry will be shouting "yay" while the other half is yelling "boo." If I am being encouraged to share only one point of view, I cannot consider nor comply with that request. Sometimes you will agree with the side of an issue which is presented. Sometimes you will not. Boo yay!

Am I mad? No. Am I upset? Yes. I am upset that my communication was not sufficient to prevent this misunderstanding and I apologize for not communicating more clearly. It is regretful that I was not contacted for clarification.

I feel just like a big paper now! It's nice to be officially welcomed into this big dysfunctional county family and.....I still like Austin.