

Educationally Speaking
The Salem Leader
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Teensy Weensy Observations

I made an observation a couple weeks ago. I was sitting in my favorite chair with a cup of tea and my cat was sitting by my side. (My cat, by the way, is named Payton and she is adorably cute. I dare someone to look at her and no say, “Wooga booga boo!”) Anyway, I hadn’t read the paper since before the fair – they were all just stacking up in my magazine rack waiting to be read. I started reading the past few weeks of newspapers and I realized judging by all the hate mail that only one thing must be true: someone hates me.

I sat down at my desk and started writing my next column. Then I received the Leader and I noticed Stephanie hadn’t published my article. That’s when I decided Stephanie has a very difficult job. Every other Wednesday morning she sits down at her desk and BAM! There’s an email from me sitting in her inbox. I have to concede I’m geared more for writing on the Internet because no one can tell me what I can and can’t say. Anyone that doesn’t like it can be sent a computer virus. Stephanie, in all her editorial powers, has to sit and tackle the nearly impossible task of editing my columns so that more than just my name remains in the whole piece afterwards. I doubt it’s an easy job. So go her. My last column that Stephanie (rightfully) didn’t publish is published online at my website – www.justinharter.com/archives/080606.html.

I have, however, managed to achieve an extraordinary feat. I received more negative columns about my “I’m not cut out to be Amish” column than Vic Dufour about everything else. Vic spent years ticking people off and working in the public eye. I wrote a column that implied I could make a horse poop on command. These, I assume, are of equal caliber. Either way, while I was writing my controversial column I never really thought anything negative about the Amish community. You must realize I have a fundamental belief that all things in this universe are ultimately stupid. Me, you, jobs, everything. It’s all really stupid so we might as well make fun of it now. I poke fun at myself all the time; I make fun of politicians and other groups of people all the time, too.

For example, when I was a freshman at Salem High School, Al Qaeda attacked the World Trade Center. I figured they couldn’t be that smart because the last syllable of their name sounds like “duh”. It doesn’t strike much fear into me when you say it – “Al Kie-Duh”. Then there are “elduhly” people and “induhviduals”. Don’t forget “Juvenile Duhlinquents”. Oh, and George Bush.

It’s easy looking back to see how some people might take offense to the comments I made. I’ll concede in all fairness that it probably wasn’t the most efficient use of my time but if someone or a group of people can’t even laugh at themselves for all the stupid things people do there’s a serious problem.

One woman even went as far as writing a Letter to the Editor about me only to make the comment I should use my “high-tech knowledge”. This is a writer with some serious passion. So much passion she even threw an extra hyphen in “high tech” for added emphasis.

That’s why I offer my apologies to those I may have offended and from now I’ll stick to making fun of things only Americans can hate. Like terrorists and “Islamofascists”. Before anyone raises a red flag against those topics be aware that terrorists are just a bunch of people with an idea and you can’t kill ideas. Not to mention Bush’s “Islamofascists” – that makes just as much sense as saying “Catholic Muslims”. They don’t really exist. Either way, I’ll poke fun of them.

I’ll also stick with jabbing dim-witted ideas as per my usual. For example, a recent suggestion in the Town Crier implied ‘Kroger was pushing the stores out of town, including the farmer’s market’. I’m all for expansion of business and I’m all for farmers – I love eating. But for those of you that have a problem with either side, I think the only way you’re going to prove your point is by not eating.

Between that and this zoning fracas on Main Street I can only make one other observation: The people handling real estate in Washington County evidently don’t get out much. Have you driven across Washington County lately? There’s a whole lot of nothing out there. If someone would just chop down a few trees, lay down a few doilies and set out a couple of coasters you could make good use of that land. You’re sitting in the fourth largest county (geographically) in Indiana – you can renovate JayC *and* have a farmers market. All with room to spare for an airport runway that’s long enough to make NASA blush.