

You're receiving this email because of your relationship with Ara Norwood of Leadership Development Systems. Please [confirm](#) your continued interest in receiving email from us. To ensure that you continue to receive emails from us, add ara@aranorwood.com to your address book today.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

In This Issue

[Life-Long Learning](#)
[Public Prayer](#)
[Cat's In The Cradle](#)
[Add Cascading to your Vocabulary](#)

Quick Links

[Ara's Web Site](#)
[Facebook Page](#)

Join Our List

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Issue: # 083

October 25, 2014

Greetings!

Thank you for opening up this issue of Uncommon Sense.

While I do a few quit hits with some short pieces, I do confess to offering up a slightly lengthier missive on the important issue of School Prayer and the Supreme Court which you may find eye-opening.

While the weather seems to be undergoing a cooling trend, I am still red-hot in my effort to provide singular thought on the important issues of the day.

OK, let's get started.

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



Self-Development

Life-Long Learning

Occasionally we should all return to school. Sometimes a refresher course is in order. Or, sometimes it's just wise to return to the classroom to learn something new: botany, algebra, statistics, acting, fencing, history, or philosophy. An easy way to do this with minor expense is through the community college system.

Find the community college near you, go to their website

and look at the schedule of classes to be offered the next semester. Then jot down the names of the professors who teach the courses you are considering enrolling in.



By the way, a good tip for figuring out if the professor is any good is to go to the very popular website, RateMyProfessors.com and see if there is a profile on the professor in question. You can usually get a sense for the quality of the instruction from this source, as the people who leave evaluations are former students who do so anonymously. One or two negatives reviews may reflect sour grapes on the part of the student. But if a professor receives quite a few negative reviews, that should tell you something. If you want to sample the site, go to my own profile to get a sense of how the site works. You can do so by [clicking here](#).

Taking classes at regular intervals is a great way to stay sharp, to stay interested, and to better understand the world around us.

Life-long learning is fun!

The Elephant In The Room **The Supreme Court and Public Prayer**

It is fascinating how our public figures cater to placate atheists and other godless life-forms. In the [news this week](#) was a story about an 11-year-old boy who refused to stand during the pledge of allegiance at his middle school. Why did the boy refuse to stand? What caused him to take a position of disrespect for our country? What makes him unpatriotic? It's simple: the presence of the phrase "one nation under God" causes this 11-year-old to demonstrate open disdain for our country. He claims he doesn't believe in God and so he is interested in standing up to authority.

And it works. The school board is going to issue a formal apology to the student. But that's not all. A banner that had been in the classroom for years with the words "Prayer Changes Things" will be removed. No one is saying why the banner will be removed, but rest assured the 11-year-old atheist has scored a major victory in his life. He sees that he has beaten his teacher, all of his classmates, the entire school administration, and the entire school district, in his defiance against the idea of God. He won.

And the district has done him a terrible disservice in caving in to his militancy.

Actually, the greater likelihood is that a parent in the boy's life is behind all the hullabaloo. Radicalized parents often use their children as pawns, and transmit their mental poisons to their children, then coach their children to be the surrogate of the parent. Again, the child pays a heavy price.

But what about the notion of God or prayer in the schools?

We've certainly seen a spike in school shootings and other forms of violence following our ceding to the Left that our school standards should be as Godless as possible. Prayer is routinely banned at school graduations, at football games among the teams, and elsewhere. When I try to understand why that is, I am told by my Left-of-Center colleagues that it's all based on the First Amendment which demands a separation of Church and State. Since the schools represent "state," I am told, there can be no "church," i.e., no mention of anything even remotely smacking of God, prayer, the Bible, religion, Church, or anything even slightly connected with them, unless one is taking the name of the Deity in vain, or mocking organized religion, in which case the mocker is given a free pass. That is the world we now live in. It is a world that would be totally unrecognizable to George Washington, John Adams, or the other Founders of our republic.

I am told the Supreme Court upholds such bans on school prayer, and that this proves our nation actually is in favor of such bans.

But in examining such claims, I find there is more to the story. Take, for instance, the 1992 case of Lee vs.



Weisman. This involved a similar incident to the news item told above, where a middle school student named Deborah Weisman was about to graduate from Nathan Bishop Middle School in Providence, Rhode Island. The school routinely invited a member of the clergy to offer a prayer at these graduation events, and in this particular year, the invitation was extended to a Jewish Rabbi by the name of Mr. Leslie Gutterman of the Temple Beth El. Such prayers are explicitly advised to be non-sectarian, inclusive, and sensitive. But Ms. Weisman's father is an outspoken atheist and did not want any such prayer to be offered at his daughter's graduation ceremony. He wanted his own godless world-view to be accommodated and catered to at the expense of the masses, and being the narcissist that he is, he sued. While his lawsuit was filed too late to prevent the prayer by Rabbi Gutterman of being delivered at the graduation ceremony that year, Mr. Weisman pressed the issue long after his daughter's graduation was past, and he eventually found his case before the U.S. Supreme Court who ruled in his favor. He must have felt very vindicated to know that going forward, a long-standing tradition of dignifying an important ceremony with prayer will never again be something experienced by those young graduates or their families.

My Leftist colleagues do seem to exhibit a bit of glee at such developments. After all, they regularly see the masses routinely cave in to a very tiny minority of noisy voices who insist that a godless society is a better society.

But I think it's instructive to look deeper at this particular Supreme Court ruling.

I found that the U.S. Supreme Court was not unanimous in its ruling of the case. Far from it. In fact, the ruling

almost went the other way. Five of the nine supreme court justices ruled in favor of the atheist, citing the separation clause of the First Amendment. Four of those five justices - Blackmun, Stevens, O'Conner, and Souter - tend to lean Left-of-Center in their thinking (with the lone exception being Kennedy who is unpredictable.) Yet the other four members of the Supreme Court - Scalia, Rehnquist, White, and Thomas - all lean conservative and all viewed the case differently. Their written statement of dissent can be summarized as follows:

1. The establishment of religion clause should not have been interpreted so as to invalidate a longstanding American tradition of nonsectarian prayer at public school gradations.
2. Graduation prayers involve no psychological coercion of the students to participate in religious exercises.
3. The only coercion that is forbidden by the establishment of religion clause is that which is backed by a threat of penalty.
4. The middle school principle did not direct or control the content of the prayers in question, and thus there was no pervasive government involvement with religious activity.

What this tells me is that had one more member of the U.S. Supreme Court viewed the case through a conservative lens, the ruling would have gone the other way. Prayer would have not been escorted out of the public square.

Since one of the most momentous and far-reaching actions taken by the President of the United States is to appoint new members of the Supreme Court, all this points to the fact that when we elect liberal presidents, we get liberals appointed to that august body, and the consequences on society are profound.

And that, my friends, is the latest elephant in the room.

Shameless Plug
Don't Put Your Audiences To Sleep

Special Report

A number of months ago I attended a seminar. It was awful.

The seminar leader, though quite accomplished in running several businesses, seemed to break every rule imaginable when it comes to making presentations. I wanted to get up and walk out, but then an idea struck me: Why not capture all the things he is doing wrong and write a paper spelling them out -- as well as what to do differently.



I wrote the paper. It's a Special Report and it's available on my website.

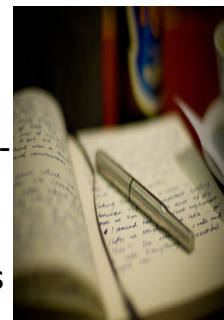
If you give presentations and you'd like to make sure you don't make some of the same mistakes as the presenter I endured, you can download solid information and advice for less than \$30. [Click Here](#) and add "How Not To Do It" to your Shopping Cart. It's easy and fast.

From Ara's Journal

Cat's In The Cradle

My son turned 30 this week.

I reflected on my earliest memories of him - at age two, innocent, fun, and enjoyable to be around. His devotion to me as his new father - the only father in his memory - was satisfying and meaningful.



I remember back then when he was about 4 or 5 that I would jog around the perimeter of a park in our community. He would see me at one particular point of my run, and he would make a bee-line to where he had seen me, unaware of the concept of a moving target, and thus, upon reaching that spot, realizing that I was now in a very distant location of the park. So he would lock in on my new position and start the process all over.

He was always trying to catch up with Dad.

I reflect on a pop tune from 1974, Harry Chapin's "Cat's In The Cradle." It was a provocative song about an elusive father who's son wanted to grow up to be just like him. When the father finally made time for his son, he found that his son had, indeed, adopted his father's busy habits, pulling a role-reversal and finding it impossible to carve out time for his father. While the song is not quite parallel to my own situation, the imagery of seeking bonding is apt.

Now he is a man. Legally he became one when he turned 18, and then again when he turned 21. But I've always considered age 30 the point at which someone leaves "youth" and enters that phase we refer to as "middle age." When one enters their 40s, they are in the middle of middle age. And when one finally reaches their 50s, one is in the latter phase of middle age. That's where I am now. So he and I are in the same broad category of life -- middle age - with my son at the beginning and me at the end. When I hit 60 in about 4 years, I'll enter the beginning phase of old age.

And so it goes.

Kind of reminds me of those jogs I did in the park so many years ago -- son chasing father.

The World of Words

Cascading

Building Your Power of Expression

Cascading v.

Pronunciation: kas'kādiNG

Meaning: When something is cascading, it is flowing downward. This overflowing imagery can apply to substances like water, molten rock, or to non-tangible substances such as ideas.

Usage:



- *The cascading downpour of new innovations seems to be part and parcel with the culture of Google, Apple, and similar firms in Silicon Valley.*
- *The summer breeze blew the bunch of pink bougainvillea, creating a cascading effect.*
- *He hesitated, and then came that marvelous, cascading laugh, halfway between a tease and a guffaw.*

New subscribers, the Special Report "11 Ways to Beat the Odds" should have been sent out to you already. If you have not received it, please communicate that to me via email (ara@aranorwood.com).

For more information on my work, follow me on Twitter ("Ara Norwood"), or on Facebook (keyword "Leadership Development Systems") or via my website: www.aranorwood.com

Sincerely,

Ara Norwood
Leadership Development Systems