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Issue #275

January 27, 2023

Although much later in the month than I would have preferred, I welcome you to the first issue of *Uncommon Sense* for 2023.

We lead off with our **Self-Development** column, which contains 9 quick tips from me on how to enhance your own quality of life. Review my list and select at least one of them to work on.

**The Elephant in the Room** column outlines a litany of Leftist shenanigans for the month of January, some of which are worthy of mockery, and some that are truly heinous and nauseating.

The **From Ara's Journal** column shares a few thoughts on the value of travel.

**The World of Words** column delivers by providing you with a word you may never have used before, but it can come in handy on occasion. Embrace it and use it.

OK, let's get started.

Ara Norwood



**Self-Development**

Norwood's Nine

Try these on for size:

1. Get as much sleep as you need to be functional and effective. If you find yourself out of energy before the day is over, try going to bed earlier to get an extra hour of sleep.
2. Speak less and listen more. But when you do speak, strive for intelligence and relevance in your remarks, not grandstanding or blather. Further, make it a conscious choice to listen. And be prepared to interact with what was said by others.
3. When you come across conflict, strife, and a difference of opinion in your interactions with others, deliberately look for areas of agreement, and focus on those. Take a conciliatory posture when facing up to their opposing viewpoint, acknowledging that they *could* be right but your experience has pointed you in a different direction. Ask them to explain their journey that brought them to such understandings. Be prepared to share your own journey. Above all, look for where you can agree.
4. Bite your tongue from time to time, and don't offer every retort that comes to mind. Let some things that are said by others go unanswered.
5. Since everyone uses email or text messaging, go purchase some beautiful cards (as in greeting cards) and every so often leave a card on someone's desk, or mail a card to a person you haven't spoken to in a while. When shopping in tourist areas or other hot spots, go shopping in town for unique, one-of-a-kind cards made by local artists. They will cost more, but the overall purchase won't break you. Such cards, with your heart-felt message inside, will work wonders in building relationships.
6. Find something you love to do that is not part of your normal routine, and do it more often than you have. Join a co-ed soccer club. Find a new type of restaurant, perhaps one that specializes in Indian food. Go to a movie if you haven't in a while. Find a favorite TV show if you rarely watch TV.
7. Speaking of TV: watch TV commercials with the TV muted. See what you can learn from the body language, gestures, and facial expressions. They might make you more sensitive and intuitive when observing such things in live conversations with others.
8. Carve out some time for personal reflection. Perhaps at the end of the day, review your day and make note of where you fell short (and how you could have done better), as well as where



you performed quite admirably (and how you will work to sustain such action going forward).

9. Keep an open channel to God. Pray. Ponder. Seek. And expect answers. Each of us needs all the help we can get, so let's not overlook the Source of all great blessings. He is there, and He is not aloof.

## **The Elephant in the Room** The "Progressive" Shenanigans Continue

One would think Leftist nonsense would cease and desist with a new year, a sort of turning over a new leaf. But no, the Left is still at it, working hard to destroy lives and ruin the country. Here are a few illustrations of the madness that continues:



### **Climate Activism**

- The mainstream press has been infiltrated by radicalized Climate Activists who provide all sorts of lavish funding to media outlets such as the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Boston Globe*, etc, and then of course, climate stories are shaped to favor the radicalized Leftist narrative rather than the truth. Newspapers are [being bought and bribed](#) to lie to the public.
- On a more entertaining note, it was a hoot to watch Al Gore engage in caterwauling and [unhinged screeching](#) about his latest doomsday predictions due to the climate. Absolute hilarity!

### **Illegal Immigration**

- Nevada considers [hiring Illegal Aliens](#) to become police officers. Now, if they do this, what happens if the Mayor of, say, Reno, orders these cops to go out and arrest illegal aliens? Do the Illegal Alien cops go out and arrest their fellow Illegal Aliens with a straight face? Would they arrest themselves?

### **Pedophilia**

- The Church of England decided it would be a great idea to ordain a person who claims she (or he -- I'm not sure) is "Queer" to the priesthood. So now this person is in a position of power. And what does he or she do as his/her [first order of business](#)? **Rev.**

**Bingo Allison** says "I want to get involved in, not just in my religious work but outside it, with the local secular LGBT youth groups. . . and normalizing it for children." This person is openly telling us that he or she wants to rob children of their innocence and sexualize them. This individual is a Trojan Horse cleric.

- The *Washington Post* seems to believe [there is nothing wrong with pedophilia](#). The paper put out a piece that ridiculed and delegitimized parent's outrage over concerns about a book in the schools that feature oral sex between ten-year-old boys. Shortly before that piece, the Post gave a glowing review of a play that sought to legitimize and normalize sexual predators. Their chief drama critic, a pervert by the name of **Peter Marks**, reviewed a play called "Downstate." He wrote, with boyish giddiness, "'Downstate' is a play about pedophiles. It's also brilliant." Yes, to the Left, a play that glorifies pedophilia is brilliant.
- Left-wing Fake News outlet NPR also [has a fondness for Pedophilia](#). They distributed an essay by a Left-Wing activist who wrote a book meant to groom children into having sex with adults. The author of the book, Maia Kobabe, wrote the essay for NPR to paint herself as the victim, since she is traumatized that some schools have removed her book from library shelves. But she never comes clean about the reason for such censorship: her book is about kids having oral sex with each other. And of course, NPR, being a Left-wing propaganda mill, published this unseemly drivel. Why? Because NPR believes, as does Maia Kobabe, that children should be exposed to pornography at the earliest age possible.
- In certain Chicago school districts, the folks in charge are not content to poison the minds of our children by exposing them to perverse literature or pornographic materials. Instead, they take their pedophilia to the next level and simply [sexually assault children](#) by the hundreds. In other words, hundreds of Chicago teachers and staff regularly perform sex acts with their students. By the hundreds! One particular high school teacher, a man, exchanged 4000 text messages with a female student -- including 400 text messages in a single day! How was he ever able to even do his job of teaching? And, of course, once this became public, the phony district administrators issued the usual nonsense about how "we take seriously our responsibility to serve our family with integrity, . . . and we will continue to ensure our policies support the highest ethical standards. . ." *Continue* to ensure? Seriously?

- And what is probably the saddest story here, and also the one that causes the most rage, involves two homosexual men from Georgia who got married to each other, and decided to adopt children, two boys as it turns out. **Zachary Zulock** and **William Zulock**, the two gay married men, routinely [engaged in incestuous sodomy](#) (anal rape) of their two young sons, performed oral copulation on them and forced them to perform such acts on the two men, as well as used their sons as prostitution bait for other gay men. They also filmed such acts and distributed such films as child porn to satisfy the sickest of the sick in our society. Zachary Zulock even posted messages on social media bragging about his depravity, writing, "I'm going to f\*ck my son tonight. Stand by." One can only think of the admonition of Jesus, that if anyone harms a child, the perp would be better off being drowned in the sea (see Luke 17:2). If convicted on all counts, the happy couple could receive 9 life sentences.

### **Racism**

- So a man goes out and does a mass shooting in California, killing almost a dozen Asian-Americans, and before anyone knows any of the facts, Leftist-Dem politicians such as Rep. **Francesca Hong** of Wisconsin immediately attacks Republicans, calling the killing spree an [example of White Supremacy](#). The shooter was Asian, but that doesn't matter. To Leftist radicals, facts do not matter; only the narrative matters.

### **Transgenderism**

- The YMCA loves it when men who pretend they are women [are seen totally naked](#) in the women's locker room. They love it even more when a normal, healthy, decent young lady is coming out of the shower and encounters the naked man who pretends he's a woman. Thus, when 17-year-old **Rebecca Phillips** of Santee, California came out of the YMCA shower and saw the naked pervert standing there gawking at her, she complained to the front desk staff. They made it clear that they believe she is a trouble-maker, not the naked man who pretends he is a woman. It's an upside-down world.
- **Sandra Feist**, a legislator from Minnesota, wants every school in her state to put menstrual products in every school bathroom, including in the boys' bathrooms. Why? Because in her mind, "[Not all students who menstruate are female.](#)" She really believes this. It's hard to get more detached from reality than this.

- Facebook made the headlines in a few newspapers this month by claiming that while a heterosexual woman is not allowed to post pictures of her naked breasts, a woman who pretends she is a man must really be a man (after all, we can take her at her word), and since men are allowed to post photos of themselves topless, so can any woman (provided she insists she's a man). [So now Facebook is allowing pornography](#). Very progressive.
- A 14-year-old girl got brainwashed into thinking she is actually a boy. And because her parents thought of her as their daughter, which is exactly what she is, the courts claimed the parents "mis-gendered" her, which the courts consider the crime of the century. So they removed her, by force, from her family's home, and then mismanaged her well-being, resulting in [her being sold into sex trafficking](#) -- not once but twice. And yet, the Left-wing courts truly believe it is better to be sold into sex-trafficking than to be called a girl when you wish to be called a boy. That is classic Leftist thought (to the degree that it can be deemed "thought").
- *Hollywood Reporter* used some interesting language to describe an Oscar nominee by the name of **Michelle Yeoh**. They said that she is the first person who ["identifies as Asian"](#) to be nominated for Best Actress at the Academy Awards. She identifies as Asian? Could that be because she actually *is* Asian? This may be the first time that a Left-wing publication referred to someone who "identifies" as something who actually *is* that thing!

### Wokeism

- I thought it was getting harder and harder to find examples of inane thinking in our universities, but I was wrong; universities never seem to run out of examples of pulling us ever deeper into the idiocracy. The University of Southern California has decided we can [no longer tolerate](#) the use of the word "field" as in, "What field are you specializing in?" Or, "Would you be willing to field a few questions?" Or, "I'm no longer going to play Short-Stop; I wish to be in the outfield." What's the problem with the word "field," you ask? It's racist, USC answers. If you were to say "I'll meet you over there where the field meets the highway," that proves you are a racist who hates black people. Only at a university could one think in such moronic terms.
- In another example of Woke-Nonsense, *USA Today* published a piece where a kook named **David Oliver**, who insists he is into

something he glibly calls "inclusion," want to exclude the following words from our vocabulary: *aloha, hola, shalom*.

- San Francisco is considering [paying black residents \\$5,000,000 each](#), plus wiping out all of their debt. Why? Because they think the country is systemically racist. San Francisco never participated in slavery. But it doesn't matter. The Reparations Committee that came up with this believes it's better to see San Francisco go completely bankrupt so long as they are virtue-signaling that it's a welcoming city.

Folks, there is so much more I could get into, such as a professor at Vanderbilt University who insists "[math education is white](#)" (as in, math has white skin and hates black people), or a male high school history teacher who pretends he's nonbinary who spends his time not teaching history [but indoctrinating students](#) to become trans and queer -- and hide it from their parents, but you get the picture: Leftists are here to destroy America as we know it; they hate God and religion; they hate the American family; they love chaos and lunacy. And they are having an effect on the rising generation.

Fight them at every opportunity. We really are at war.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

## **From Ara's Journal**

### The Value of Travel

There are many reasons to travel. Education. Entertainment. Exploration. Shopping for things you couldn't find anywhere else.

For me, I love to travel for the purpose of widening my understanding of the human experience. People fascinate me. Customs fascinate me. From conversing with aborigines from the jungles of Panama, to people-watching in Singapore, to observing street performers in the

little Spanish town of Sóller, I find it enriching to make new discoveries about the nature of life on this planet.

I've been to 44 countries thus far, exploring locales as diverse as Venezuela, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Costa Rica, Iceland, New Zealand, Russia, and Trinidad, plus almost all of Europe. However, I've barely scratched the surface. I've yet to visit Japan, or any portion of Africa, or Brazil, or Scotland, or Israel, or Armenia. I have much to learn from these people, their journey, their life's experience.

I can honestly say I believe travel can provide as vast an education as any graduate degree program.

And I recommend travel to all of you, my readers.

## The World of Words

### Erstwhile

#### Building Your Power of Expression



**Erstwhile**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** ʊrst-hwahyl, -wahyl

**Meaning:** The word essentially means "former" or "of times past" and can sound rather poetic, as it isn't used all that often these days.

#### Usage:

- *The word erstwhile is a word that had more currency in erstwhile times.*
- *He has won over many of his erstwhile critics.*
- *She found herself ostracized by erstwhile friends.*

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