

Truth and Justice

More and more, it seems that people of today believe only what they want to believe. Regardless of the facts or science that might show otherwise, if they want to believe that man and his activities are bad, then that's what they believe.

Recently, there has been a lot of talk about how bad it is that people are breaking so many limbs on the piñon pine trees when they are picking piñon nuts. No consideration is given for possible good – such as – it may be that the removal of a percentage of trees vegetation might in fact, stimulate the overall health of the plants as does occur when persons hedge their shrubs within their yards.

Anyway, with all the talk from the environmental community – saying that the Indians never hurt the native pine trees when they harvested piñon nuts each year caused me to think of what Bobby Dick told me one time. He said, that as a young boy, back when the valley Indians would gather each Fall to pick piñon nuts near Gardner Spring, he remembered waking early in the mornings to the sound of his people breaking limbs from the pine trees. Bobby explained that the people preferred to get up early while it was still cold. That way, the limbs were cold and brittle, and would break more readily. Once the limbs were on the ground, the cones were easily removed. Of course, this was done early in season – at such time when the piñon nuts were first ripening. Later, once the cones began to open – then, the people began picking the nuts up from under the trees after they had fallen.

I always had great respect for Bobby Dick. Bobby is just three or four years older than I am. He was raised on the reservation here in Ruby Valley, and like his brothers, quite school to go to work on ranches when he was no more than fourteen or so. Bobby is one of those guys – he can do about anything. He can do carpenter work, he can weld. He can put things together and figure things out what others cannot. Bobby is good with horses and cattle. He's good with equipment. When he and his brother were in their teens they would often take an old car and in no time they would have it running. Bobby also likes to trap and he always did a good job of it – getting the best prices for his furs.

I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, but it certainly seems to me that we have gotten off on the wrong road here in America recently. All this formal education everyone claims we need. Formal education may be good all right, so long as a person has a good grounding in the basics of life, but when they lack the basics, it seems they are more of a detriment to society than an asset.

By basics, I mean they lack in the kind of experience that Bobby Dick has had. From the time they were small, the Dick boys were out in the dirt, learning firsthand about what was around them – things that helped them understand the different characteristics of dirt, iron, water and wood, wildlife and livestock. And of course, having to help in securing their family's food and living helped as well. And having to work on a ranch at an early age where they learned even more about water, wood, dirt and metals and how such things are used to make a ranching operation productive didn't hurt either.

It reminds me of what Theodor Roosevelt said about education. He said “to educate a man in mind and not morals was to create a menace to society”. I believe that when a nation undertakes to educate people in an abstract environment while not seeing that they get a good grounding in the practical aspects of life, is also a formula for creating a menace to society.

You see it every day – people who are put in positions where they make decisions over other people’s lives when they know very little about the particulars surrounding the question – whether they are politicians or do-gooders sitting on a planning board, or some bureaucrat that has been given some authority because he has a certain degree – truth is, in far too many instances, such people are not even capable of running their own lives, let alone dictating policy which interferes with the lives of others.

And that’s another point I want to make. People today, generally speaking, seem to always be trying to make out that it’s the people in business or ranching that are the ones that are lying when certain questions arise. What terrible injustice. It may be true that people in small business are not perfect. They are not always as honest as we would like them to be. But in no way are they as dishonest as what the agency people and do-gooders have shown themselves to be.

The truth is, ranchers and small businessmen are forced to be honest every day of their lives. If they ignore the truth about any aspect of that which affects the outcome of their business they’re going to be out of business in a heartbeat.

But on the other hand, if you’re a do-gooder who has spent his life in the abstract world of formal education and you have had very little hands on experience regarding a question that is at hand, and you are comfortably enjoying a good income with no worry of the future, you can go on forever, exerting your influence and making one accusation after another and you will never have to face the consequences of your actions.

Even worse are those in bureaucracy, for they alone, more than any other group, benefit directly from spreading untruths – for generally, they understand better than anyone – that if the truth is known, government management of anything does more harm than good. And so, of course, the best thing for them to do, in order to protect their jobs and their agency, is to be continually spreading misinformation, or at least covering up the truth about the effects of ranching or some other business activity.

But then on the other hand, there’s more to it than just having to work hard and going without. It gets back to what Theodor Roosevelt said, “to educate a man in mind and not morals is to create a menace to society”.

That’s the most of it I believe. When the youth of a nation are no longer taught to do right by others. When people no longer seek truth and justice about all else. When people no longer stand up for their fellow men when injustice is done them. When it becomes the habit of most everyone to turn a blind eye to what is going on around them in order that they themselves not be politically penalized – so signals that advent of a nation in decline – so signals the advent of tyranny.