



Kevin Sherrington

Sportswriter Speaks Out on School Funding

(Check link shown in my column to see how it "fits" with Uncle Mort's take.)

THE IDLE AMERICAN

Mort in Mourning....

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

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Taxation without representation is tyranny. Though it's hard to nail down who initially coined this statement, it was the hue and cry of "British Americans" when they fought during the American Revolution 260 years ago.

My Uncle Mort--a homespun philosopher lazily whittling away the day from a cane-bottom chair on the porch of the thicket's general store--came up with a rejoinder. It's one that millions of Americans currently believe but don't know how to express. Or to whom? And when? And how?

"I wish whoever first said that taxation without representation is tyranny could return and see what it's like with representation," according to my uncle....

Conservative to the bone, Mort claims no allegiance to either Democrats or Republicans, claiming to be fiercely independent. He's not yelling as loudly or stomping his feet as often--and his teeth no longer function as fangs as in yesteryear--in his battles for the common good. He's greatly saddened by the decline of our culture, values and government.

"Our leaders have strayed far away from reasoning," Mort opines, "That's what Isaiah 1:18 makes clear in the Bible: 'Come, let us reason together.'" He added that many political leaders may have never heard of this scripture, or perhaps even the Holy Bible.

It's difficult to argue with his contention that ugliness and discord seem yoked both in Washington, DC, and Austin, TX. "Too few people are involved in 'shot-calling' in both DC and Austin," Mort observed. "There's never been a better time to consider term limits in both places."....

Mort has always "reserved the right" to be wrong, but today's full-blown controversies are leaving many persons in "cross-eyed confusion" about right and wrong.

For example, he's flustered about the maligned Texas system of public education and the "buzz" about the steamrolling proposal to provide state funds for Texans who opt for private schools. "I'm not against private schools by any stretch, nor do I oppose eventual state support, but I'm not sure the voucher system is the right choice at this time," Mort explains.

He's right. Texas' support for public education has been playing 'catch-up' for decades. The Lone Star State ranks 44th in the per student funding ratio among the 50 states and DC....

Before stepping down from his apple box, Mort mumbled something about Texas' long-touted "rainy day fund," where some \$24 billion await distribution, ostensibly for crisis situations.

Mort poses a worthy question of what constitutes rainy days?

He feels the political weather maps suggest that we're nearing flood levels that equal--if not exceed--those encountered by Noah....

But, wait. He climbed back atop the fruit crate. "We hear that help is on the way for education," he said. "That's how the state lottery got a foothold. Promises abounded that public education would be awash in funds generated by the lottery."

He contends that for "big winners" in the lottery, there's mostly been heartache and disappointment--not to mention suicides, bankruptcies and divorces--and at this very moment the government-operated lottery is being investigated for serious allegations of wrongdoing.

"Next thing we hear, they'll be claiming that casino gambling will generate massive state financial aid, with little said about critical costs. Ask law enforcement folks concerning crime rates in current casino locales to see how that's working out," Mort moaned.

Much of Mort’s “research” is conducted following his perusal of newspapers left behind at the general store.

The other day, he carefully clipped Kevin Sherrington’s column from the *Dallas Morning News*, pinning it on the wall next to the cash register.

He calls it “classic,” this piece that illuminates what is right about public education. Readers who don’t shop there may review the column, posted by permission, on my website, https://www.speakerdoc.com/columns/current_column/Kevin_Sherrington_Speaks_out-on_School_Funding.pdf

With his huffing exceeded only by his puffing, my uncle left the general store. He headed for home on his golf cart, parking it at the swinging gate. Climbing over the gate to save the hinges, he went inside, hoping there’d be a slice of Maude’s apple pie to sweeten his evening....

Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, continues to speak and write. The Idle American, begun in 2003, appears weekly in newspapers throughout Texas. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com.

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