

A forum to encourage independent thinking

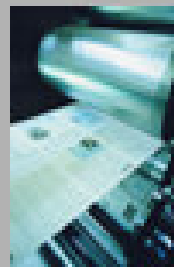
The THINK Club

Eleventh Year

Published Quarterly

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Going Digital



“The Think Club Quarterly is now a digital magazine. Go to www.thethinkclub.com and enjoy the pages. Visit the exciting sections such as: Archives, Book of the Year. Solve puzzles and chat on our Brainy Forum. Read details inside.....”

This issue of Think Club is dedicated to the Children of the world

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee



Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

-William Blake

Announcement

The THINK Club Quarterly IS Going Digital

Dear Readers,

Keeping with the times, **The Think Club** Quarterly will become a web based magazine starting January, 2008 (the winter issue). Although all the features of the website are not complete yet, you can visit www.thethinkclub.com today. We plan to make it a subscription free magazine in the hope of generating revenue through advertisements. *Thethinkclub.com* website will have the following pages:

1. Main Page
2. Current Issue
3. Archive (where the best of *The Think Club* articles will be stored)
4. Book of the Year (where the reviews of *The Think Club* award winning books will be posted)
5. Brainy Page - This will be an interactive page to solve quizzes and chat on related topics

Apart from the web site, we want to continue the tradition of life membership to the *The Think Club*, '**a forum to encourage independent thinking among fellow human beings.**' The fee for life membership has been reduced to \$75. Those, who are already life members will maintain their status. The membership contributions will be used for future seminars, book publications and charities. Life members will always be mentioned as sponsors of any future seminars and activities and will attend the happenings free of cost.

Please visit www.thethinkclub.com today and send us your feedback. If you do not want to get on the Internet, please send us a message and we will print and mail a copy of *The Think Club Quarterly* to you by regular mail. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,
Bala Prasad
Partner and Publisher

Sincerely,
Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'
Partner and Managing Editor

Save Our Children!

By Musafir

While you are reading these pages, 14,792 (per hour) new babies will be born on earth. Out of those, 188 baby girls will be put to death in India alone. 10,000 children will be sexually raped by adults. A few hundred children and babies will go to the cannibals. Thousands will be sold by their own parents for organ trade and child pornography. One hundred sixty-six babies will be born to prostitutes who will either dispose of them in trash cans or flush them down the toilet. If that doesn't shock you, I don't know what will. Are you still worried about gay rights, saving the sucker fish in China, defining religion or finding the meaning of life?

Most of the babies who escape murder lead a miserable life. In India, Bangladesh and sub-Saharan Africa, babies are bred like insects. Children (especially boys) are considered a commodity (worse than cattle) who are used to fetch a few extra cents per day to hundreds of millions of parents who live on less than \$1 per day. Talk about a trillion dollar economy! Most of those children work as slave laborers before turning five and die of malnutrition, hunger and disease before reaching their teenage years. In Latin American cities, people throw loose change from hotel windows to enjoy the brutal fight among hungry orphans who try to kill each other for a few cents. Many of those street children are shot and killed like stray dogs as a part of a sadistic game. Something must be done about this. I hope you agree with me, so far.

There are some common sense approaches that we can take to alleviate or mitigate this problem, if not solve or eradicate it. Let us adopt children instead of producing more. Another approach may be to adopt a sibling for every child we produce. There are many among us who are already doing that. Hats off to all of you! There are millions of children without parents and families and hundreds of thousands of kids are waiting in foster care. Let us take care of them before worrying about animals, I do not wish to undermine the adoption of animals, but children should be our priority. Of course, adopting a child requires money, energy and longevity, but let us not forget that the U.S.

gives a tax credit of up to \$10,960 per adoption. Even more importantly, a single adoption can change at least two people's lives forever – yours and the child's. More adoption and less birth will help reduce overpopulation. If you have any doubts about how adoption changes one's life, some of these famous adoptees. They are: the Prophet Muhammad, Alexander the Great, Aristotle, Richard Burton, President Gerald Ford, Faith Hill, Jesse Jackson, John Lennon, Nelson Mandela, Marilyn Monroe, Edgar Allan Poe, Nancy Reagan, and Malcolm X. There are many more.

We should certainly reduce the birth rate in general and stop the birth of unwanted children in particular by passing laws to force the sterilization of prostitutes and convicted mothers and to require male child offenders and convicts to have vasectomy. We should get involved with children's welfare organizations and help them monetarily and voluntarily. Those organizations are listed on thousands of web pages. I urge you to get involved today. *The Think Club*, in association with *other organizations*, sponsors some deprived children in Indian villages by providing them basic education. We can all do that. I like to leave you with the following thought:

"Why don't I laugh like that anymore? And smile while I am just thinking? Where did my childhood go? My heart is heavy for the child of woe. Why time has forgotten the child who goes to bed with an empty belly. Oh the child of woe!"

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Parents and Children as Role Models

The following excerpts are taken from 'Ignited Mind' by the President of India

By Hon. APJ Abdul Kalam

Whether we are aware of it or not, from childhood onwards, through various phases of life, we adopt role models. When growing up, the best role models would be your parents and your schoolteachers. They are, to my mind, the people who can impart the best guidance during this period. I personally believe the full development of a child with a value system can only come from these people. When I was growing up, I used to see my parents say *namaz* five times a day, and in spite of their modest financial resources, I found them always giving to the needy. My teacher, *Sivasunramania Iyer*, was responsible for persuading my father to send me to school setting aside financial constraints. It is very important for every parent to be willing to make the effort to guide children to be good human beings – enlightened and hard working. The teacher, the child's window to learning and knowledge, has to play the role model in generating creativity in the child. As it is said, "Behind the parents stands the school, and behind the teacher the home." Education and the teacher-student relationship have to be seen not in business terms but with the nation's growth in mind. A proper education would help nurture a sense of dignity and self-respect among our youth. These are qualities no law can enforce – we have to nurture them ourselves.

How are the terrorists developed? They are our own people. We create them through political and economic isolation. I am reminded of our epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. In the *Ramayana*, the battle is between the divine hero *Rama* and demon king *Ravana*. It is a long battle that finally *Rama* wins. In *Mahabharata* also the good wins over the evil. The battles are many but finally good triumphs over bad. Our children need to adopt the good. They should be their role models. The message can only be given by including them in our society and not by creating political and economic isolations. It is



again the duty of parents and teachers to impart the correct knowledge in children.

Every child should have a dream. A dream transforms into thoughts. Thoughts result in actions. If there are no dreams, there are no thoughts; if there are no thoughts, no actions will emanate. Hence, parents and teachers should encourage their children to dream. Success always follows dreams attempted, though there may be some setbacks and delays. 'Child is the first scientist.' Science was born and survives only by questions. Children are the source of unending questions. Teachers and parents should always encourage children to ask questions.

Role models can help us focus on what is correct for us as individuals, as groups and, of course, as a nation. We seem to have gotten carried away with the success of a few in the field of information technology. But what is needed is much more than that. We have to think about the masses. A nation's wealth is the young generation of the country. When the child grows up, he or she then can be role models for the upcoming generation. But we have to be the greatest role models first. This is my message to all parents and teachers.

Humor

Humor, the Worst Medicine?

By Musafir

Patients generally arrive at hospitals in a state of stress and anxiety; are placed in a strange environment; submitted to degrading and embarrassing procedures by people they don't know; have their independence and sense of control removed and don't always get the kind of explanations that they would like. Many nurses and hospital administrators are concerned that patients will perceive them as unprofessional, and as unconcerned about their health problems if they show a sense of humor while interacting with patients. Humor and hospital don't go together unless you consider the following anecdotes about antidotes as humorous:

My first hospitalization occurred in a remote town in Indiana. I had a common cold. My doctor prescribed me a strong antibiotic that caused me to bleed. I was immediately hospitalized and totally wired up. I was put on a stretcher and taken to my room and was instructed to lie down and not move. I was quite energetic, so I got down from my bed and started walking in front of the nurse's station. As soon as the nurse saw me, she shouted, "Go back to your room sweetie! You're sick and not supposed to walk"

"Why not darling?" I asked.

Sweetie! You're supposed to suffer from the disease for which you're being treated. Hospitals are places for the sick and miserable not for the jolly."

I returned to my room and stayed there overnight. The next morning, it was a different nurse. I asked her, "Nurse! Can you tell me why am I here and what's wrong with me?"

"Sweetheart! Only your doctor can tell you that."

"Why can't you tell me that?" I demanded.

"Because your doctor has a professional reputation to uphold. We can't steal his thunder!" Frustrated, I decided to call the hospital operator from my bedside phone and asked for the nurse's station on the third floor.

"Nurse's Station! How can I help you?" The nurse responded.

"Hello, darling, I'd like to talk with the person who gives information regarding your patients. I want to know if the patient is getting better, or doing as expected, or getting worse. The voice on the other end of the line said, "What is the patient's name and room number?"

I said, "Yes, darling! he's Shrivastava, in Room 302."

She said, "Oh, yes. Mr. Shrivastava is doing very well. In fact, he had two full meals, his blood pressure is fine, his blood work just came back as normal, he's going to be taken off the heart monitor in a couple of hours.

I said, "Thank God! That's wonderful! Oh, that's fantastic, darling! ... That's wonderful news! But what was the problem with him?"

"Oh, not much. He was prescribed a wrong antibiotic. That's all." Then the nurse on the phone said, "From your enthusiasm, I take it you must be a close family member or a very close

friend!"

I replied, "I'm Anil Shrivastava in 302! My doctor doesn't tell me crap. Thanks!"

I immediately called my wife and asked her to bring the car in the parking lot. I dressed up and sneaked out of the hospital and came home.

After a few years of healthy living, I developed an itchy patch

on my forehead. So I went to see a dermatologist. After 45

minutes in the waiting room, an intimidating nurse took me to

the examining room; threw a flimsy gown at me and barked,

"Take off everything and put on this robe. The doctor will see

you shortly."

"But I don't need to undress. All the doctor has to do is look at the patch on my forehead," I replied defiantly.

"I don't know, honey, what your problem is. You're supposed to follow the instructions," she commanded.

"Over my dead body," I growled at her.

"Honey! We don't do postmortems in this office. You gotta go to the morgue for that," she retorted.

I was adamant and decided not to undress. The doctor came in the room after 90 minutes (that was shortly) and complained, "I understand that you were discourteous to my nurse."

"NO doctor, I was not. As a matter of fact, she's the one who wanted me to undress," I replied expecting a sympathetic ear. "Yes, she is right. We require our patients to disrobe and wait for hours before the examination."

But doctor, I am here for the patch on my forehead. Does this require me to get naked?"

"Never ask your doctor to explain what she is doing or why she is doing it. It's presumptuous to assume that such profound matters could be explained in terms that you'd understand," she almost lectured me.

"Doctor, you ought to be in Hollywood," I replied in

frustration. "Hollywood??" She shouted at me.

"Because that's what happens there. The directors force the actors to do nude scenes at the drop of a hat. Have you seen a clothed movie star lately?"

"What? She shouted, "Please find another doctor and never come back" she screamed and left the room.

The nurse came shortly after and escorted me to the payment counter and made this parting comment: "To tell you frankly honey, people like you don't deserve to be sick."

Less, Not More

By David Beagan

When I reflect upon the successes I have had in life, and what it was that pushed me to the successes, more than anything I think it was what my parents did *not* do for me that is responsible for my success. Let me check off all of the things that they never did for me. They never gave me a new car – never gave me a new bicycle. They did not give me a college education. I wasn't given my own bedroom, I had to share with my brother. I never went on a wild spring break trip or even summer camp for that matter. I never had a phone in my room (and cell phones were practically unheard of).

Many things that I image many youngsters take for granted or perhaps even think of as necessities were considered treats by me and my siblings. Going to McDonalds was a treat. Soft drinks were special, not expected every day.

For all of the things that I didn't get, most importantly, they did NOT deprive me of the sense of accomplishment – the joy – of working to acquire these things for myself. I am so very thankful for the things I didn't get.

By no means was I deprived, and never really thought of myself as such. I always felt safe and secure and no hint of any financial difficulties my parents may have been dealing with ever entered my mind. I just accepted the fact that parents set the rules, that they understood why the rules were set. I didn't always like it and sometimes there were feelings of resentment, the passing of years have made any such negative feelings now fade into distant memory. I know that I had much more than my parents ever would have dreamed of when they were growing up. Both of my parents came from large families, eight children in my mother's and ten in my father's. Both of them were born in the late 1930s, the waning years of the Great Depression when a good meal and a warm bed were thought of as blessings for many. When I was young it never occurred to me how little they may have had, and of course, any of their stories starting with, "When I was young, we did have ..." would fall on unreceptive ears.

It saddens me to see kids given so much. Obesity is a huge problem with the young. I can't say what it feels like to deny a child something that they really want, even when it is not the best thing for them. But I wish parents would extend the effort to learn more about nutrition and be role models for good eating habits.

I wonder how many kids would be happier and healthier if they could spend a few more hours per week with their parents instead of getting the latest electronic gadget. I hope that more parents can come to realize that for kids, though there is less is more. Sometimes parents need to ask

themselves if in the process of satisfying some of their kids desires, if they aren't making themselves feel better, at the expense of their children's long term well-being.

Kids crave structure, that is limitations. Yes, they rebel against it, but it is through the imposition of these limits that children experience a sense of order, of constancy, and comfort in the stability of rules and order.

An interesting phenomenon is getting attention in the media. It seems that the generation of kids entering the work world – young adults – in the last several years is unlike any previous generation in a very interesting and perhaps irritating way. It seems that those in the work force born after about 1979 need constant praise for the most routine work accomplishments. One report on this phenomenon made the quip, "forget about the employee of the month, you need to have an employee of the day," every day. One manager remarked that it seems this group needs constant "feedback" and that they don't really want to hear the negative parts of the feedback. The manager commented that he found it personally distasteful to have to praise employees for completing the most mundane tasks, but that it appeared to be the only practical way to motivate them to get things accomplished. So what has gotten into this generation? Apparently, this is the result of the theory of child rearing in which self-esteem is paramount. And that constant, even profuse praise for any and every accomplishment, however miniscule, was the correct path to the achievement of the coveted self esteem. What is to become of this generation – it is not clear to me. Is this a true dysfunction, or just an alternative approach to the world of work. When these young people reach positions of leadership will they have matured enough to return the feedback and praise to those under their charge? Maybe in some sense they are on to something in that the work world could be a much better place if each of us endeavored to recognize the larger and smaller accomplishments of our co-workers. It will be interesting to see how this all plays out.

In the final analysis, I think one of the greatest gifts that can be given to a child is a sense of self reliance and the drive to attain whatever level of accomplishment that the child can envision. And to this end, for child rearing, certainly the ironic, and yes clichéd, yet so appropriate, saying is so true: *less is more*.

I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it.

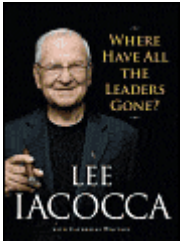
Harry S. Truman

Book Review

Where Have All the Leaders Gone?

Author: Lee Iacocca

First published by Scribner in 2007



Having read *Iacocca, the Autobiography*, I started on his latest book, *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?* with great anticipation because I wrote an essay on the same topic in the past issue of *The Think Club Quarterly*. Although Iacocca pours words of wisdom in his typical no nonsense and

brash style, the book does not have much to do with the title. Nevertheless, Iacocca has very effectively touched on some issues that pose real danger to America as a nation. One such issue is the inactiveness of Congress. While 3 million American jobs have been lost since 2000, the health crisis is at a boiling point, the public school systems are in disarray and energy crisis is threatening our living standards, the Congress seems to be obsessed with the issues such as gay right and flag burning.

Iacocca justly questions where does all the tax payers' money go? He laments how America is becoming a colony by owing money to other nations who, in reality, own America. He further criticizes Bush's involvement in Iraq and points out to his readers that America needs the basics taught by Dale Carnegie, "How to Win Friends And Influence People." His message is relevant and his appeal to Americans to choose the right leaders by voting is timely.

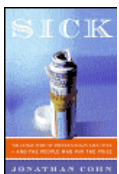
Where Have All the Leaders Gone also becomes tiring due to Iacocca's self promotion. He compares himself with the great American legends such as Walter P. Chrysler. That should have been left for history to judge. He criticizes Bush, but mentions that he endorsed him because he (Iacocca) knew his father. The book is also full of foul language. Overall, it is an interesting and intriguing book.

-Reviewed by Musafir

Sick – The Untold Story of America's Health Care Crisis

Author: Jonathan Cohn

First published by Harper Collins in 2007



Human beings are fundamentally flawed. The doctrine of Original Sin is at least

metaphorically true. Unfortunately, Jonathan Cohn seemingly believes that we are innately good. Never once does he deal with the moral hazard dilemma. Only on page 158 does he even cite an instance when somebody is caught defrauding the system. Much of our health care crisis is the result of so many Americans believing someone else is paying the bill. Such a mindset inevitably encourages individuals to make stupid choices. On page 220, the author asserts that Bush and his allies merely conclude "Public insurance programs are bad because they have to be financed with taxes, inevitably imposing the largest penalties on either the wealthy or big business." Continuing onto the very next page, Cohn adds "this represents yet another nod to shed the burden of financing generous employee benefits." Alas, the harsh reality is that the employer never pays for one's health benefits. They merely deduct money from your salary to pay for the health insurance. The middle class pays the majority of the tax bill. There are simply not enough wealthy people. You might tax Bill Gates, Warren Buffett and other billionaires 100% of their income –and it would barely be noticeable. "Big business" also never really pays any taxes. The large corporations merely pass the added costs along to the consumer. At the end of the day, we will spend more for our products and services.

Jonathan Cohn is admittedly a well meaning guy. However, this is not good enough. Mushy sentimentalism will not get the job done. Devising social policies premised upon a mistaken notion of human nature is utopian and ultimately doomed to fail. They will likely even make matters worse. Meaningful improvement in healthcare will not occur unless Americans directly feel the impact in their own wallets. You should also read *Crisis of Abundance: Rethinking How We Pay for Health Care* by Arnold Kling and David Gratzer's *The Cure: How Capitalism Can Save American Health Care*.

-Reviewed by David Thomson

Sent your comments to:

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letters@thethinkclub.com

Travelogue

Greece Where the Old Meets the New

By: Doug Walker

(Doug Walker is a psychologist. He writes from Mandeville, Louisiana)



Before my wife and I left Greece this past April, we found ourselves planning our next trip to this ancient country of magnificent views, temples, people and of course food. Arriving the week before Easter for a professional conference, my wife and I had the true good fortune of having our luggage lost by our airline. Needing basic necessities until our luggage arrived (mine never did), we found the nearest tram station and plunged ourselves immediately into the rich culture of Athens. While navigating the narrow streets of the central neighborhood known as the Plaka, we were immediately stuck by the mixture of old and new, exotic and familiar. The rail transportation systems, both above and below ground, products of the recent Olympic Games, gave a modern and convenient access to the ancient temples and points of interest in and around Athens. Exotic sights and sounds of this ancient city balanced between west and east was made familiar by store signs and directions in English.

While in Plaka, we found that most shop employees, or street vendors spoke English, and if not we found that a few polite phrases in Greek would facilitate the purchase of fresh local pistachios or a bottle of spring water at the multitude of street vendors and kiosks spread throughout the city. All the people we met during our trip, from street vendor to hotel manager, were friendly and willing to do everything they could to help you find what you were looking for. Although maps of Athens were a necessity when exploring the city, finding the exact restaurant that our hotel concierge recommended among the twisted and narrow streets of the city usually required frequent guidance by locals during our quest for yet another memorable meal. Be prepared to walk in Athens to access not only the famous Acropolis, but the many of the lesser known temples and historical features of this glorious city. We found the streets to be clean, we were not approached at any time by people begging for money, but we did have to ignore the multitude of stray dogs that roam Athens.

We found peace from the bustle of Athens when we traveled to the nearby island of Hydra. Just a 45-minute hydrofoil ride from the port of Piraeus, Hydra offered quiet strolls among narrow streets, breathing air scented by the blossoms of the many orange trees that grow among the white washed homes, hotels and shops. There is only one motor vehicle on Hydra, the garbage truck. All other transportation is

done by foot, hand cart or the numerous donkeys that are called upon to carry everything from luggage to kegs of beer up the steep streets and staircases that surround the harbor. Hydra Island was also made for walking. My wife and I made a long and challenging hike to a Byzantine monastery to one of the highest peaks on the island (there are said to be 365 churches on the island, one for each day of the year), but also enjoyed leisurely strolls along the cliffs that look out over the crystal clear turquoise water of the Aegean.

Being from New Orleans, our focus was naturally the food and wine. Expect first of all to eat small portions at any meal, sampling several foods at every sitting. To order and eat one entrée would be neglecting yourself of the wide range of excellent foods offered in Greek restaurants. Seafood, cheese, bread, white wine, yogurt, fresh salads and of course olive oil all stick in my memory as being outstanding. One thing to remember when eating in Greece, it is not uncommon for restaurants not to use their menus to guide you to a decision. Expect to be escorted to the kitchen itself, where the waiter, waitress or owner will show and describe with pride each dish that is available to you. One of my most memorable moments while on the island of Hydra came in our last few hours on the island. Having hiked the morning, we found ourselves ready for food and drink and found a restaurant overlooking a smaller harbor to the west of Hydra town. After having been shown the daily menu, we ordered and began enjoying a beer as we discussed how we might extend our stay on Hydra just a few more hours longer. While discussing ferry and hydrofoil schedules, I noticed activity in the harbor, a small pleasure boat leaving to meet a larger fishing boat a short distance into the Aegean. The two boats docked with each other long enough for bags to be exchanged. Curious, I watched the driver of the pleasure boat return to the harbor, leave his boat and then moments later walk into the restaurant carrying a bag full of red snapper. I should have listened to the owner when he said his fish was fresh!

Begin planning a trip to Greece now. I highly recommend spending the extra money to find direct flights from the U.S. to Athens (it might help your baggage arrive along with you), but it also gives you the opportunity to rest up for all the exploring you will want to do. Spring in Greece was wonderful, and I would expect that both the spring and autumn in Greece provide relief from not only hot weather, but the throngs of tourists that descend upon this jewel of a country. The pictures that we took do not begin to capture the beauty of Greece's architecture or people. You will bring home pictures to make your friends jealous, but also memories that will quickly turn to daydreams of your next trip to Greece.

Observations

Good News and Bad News

By Srinivasa Bhat
from Pune, India

Last week I traveled to Bangalore and Mangalore on company work. I flew from Pune to Bangalore and a car was waiting at the airport to pick me up. This vehicle was with me for the next five days. The driver was *Jagannath* and he owned and operated this vehicle. Very well groomed, dressed (white uniform with a cap) and mild mannered, *Jagannath* could speak five languages. He bought this car (Ford ICON A/C and fully equipped) with a loan from a multi-national bank. The company he works is ORIX, which is owned by a Korean Travel and Resort Management company. Their customers are predominantly multi-national companies. For every KM he puts on his car, he gets 10 Rs (about 25 cents) and he gets 150 Rs. per day for room and board. He said he saves around 25,000 Rs. per month, after all the expenses! Not too bad for a high school graduate. He is planning to buy another vehicle shortly as he can easily borrow money with his credit history. (He was getting frequent calls from banks offering credit). This is the good news.

Now for the bad news:

He has been trying to find a girl to marry for the last three to four years. But he hasn't been able to find one. The reason is very simple: his profession is at the bottom of the hierarchy of most wanted grooms. The top most wanted are IT professionals, software engineers, doctors, financial guys and lawyers. The bottom are mostly government employees (surprised?), small business owners (shop owners), taxi and rickshaw owners and operators, etc.

Jagannath has been checking on Internet sites like Shadi.com. All he sees there are widows and divorcees! His sisters, mother and brothers also have been trying very hard, but no luck! The reason is that there is a shortage of girls in India. The ratio of



marriage age men to women is 5:3. Most girls have a reasonably good job in call centers, as nurses or in one of the other booming service industries (beauty parlors, therapists, baby sitting, cooks, domestic maids, etc.). So it is a brides' market and grooms don't have much of a choice. So, how long he will have to wait? He is already 35 and he is giving up on marriage! What a change of fortune! This incident reaffirms that the solution for the social evils is economic prosperity for every

one!

The dowry system is disappearing, abuse of women is considerably lower, divorce is becoming easier and most of all, for a change, the brides are in the driver's seat, literally!

Meanwhile, *Jagannath's* newly earned prosperity doesn't mean much for him, according to him, as a life without a family is of no value for him and his mother!

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Let Children Be Children

By Musafir

In 1977, at age 11, Karl Hunter was a freshman at the Michigan State University. Today, at 42, he is a physician in Phoenix, Arizona leading a normal life, not bad for a child genius whose parents robbed him of his childhood trying to make him famous. Others are not that lucky. Unabomber Ted Kaczynski was considered to be a child genius. I have read about children who finished medical school at 17. Children have become preachers and healers before reaching their teens. Most of them are either in jailhouses or mental asylums. A person visiting me from India informed me that his daughter had just given birth to a boy genius and he (the grandfather) had already decided that the boy would go to the top MBA school in the world. The world is full of such examples. Very few of the so called geniuses become eminent, creative adults and when parents are over-involved, pushing children to excess, they end up as failures in life.

In contrast, Winston Churchill failed the sixth grade. Albert Einstein failed an examination that would have allowed him to pursue electrical engineering at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. William Shakespeare, as a child, helped his father make gloves and got in trouble for stealing deer and rabbits. Azim Premji, one of the richest men in the world, helped his father in his oil and vegetable business in his early life. Azim Premji firmly believes that ordinary people are capable of extraordinary things and so are the ordinary children. Children need a chance to be children and act like children. Invariably when I hear a child referred to as gifted or a genius, I find a little fellow with oversized glasses, reading through a stack of big, heavy books. Socially they seem aloof, depressed, overworked, eccentric, unstable and abnormal. It is all about the ego of their parents who want others to describe their children as precocious, brilliant, talented, brainy and geniuses. Parents do that for their own happiness or to fulfill the fantasy that they themselves could not fulfill as a child. In my opinion, that is selfish and is a form of child abuse.

This phenomenon is seen in the school system where scant resources are diverted to accommodate the fantasies of the parents of so-called gifted and genius children, depriving others of much needed attention. The school system should elevate standards for all and cut back on spending for the gifted. Instead of finding child geniuses, we should be finding genius in every child. There are diamonds in the rough. Our society should provide the means to shine them. I teach Critical Thinking for an on-line university. I make sure to spend more time on the weaker students and, invariably, bring them almost at par with the best. I have myself gone through rejection and dejection in life and have seen those so-called geniuses biting the dust at the finish line. I know one thing – Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Louis Armstrong and Maya Angelous are not manufactured. They bloom naturally.

Give Children an Early Start

By Bala Prasad

No matter what time we live in, the mantra to great success was and is the same: “stay ahead of the competition.” This is true at any age. At the youngest of ages, good parenting is one of the keys to a child’s present and future success. Parents want to give the best of everything to their children. Over time, what constitutes “the best” of everything has changed.

Today, it’s essential for children to participate in early learning activities, be it academic, physical, or otherwise. They must attend after-school programs, weekend classes, and extra-curricular activities that involve a broad range of sports and art or music classes. Early headstart programs enhance the healthy development of young children and promote a healthy family environment.

Full days of activities might seem excessive, but in order to stay ahead in life and compete, children of today have no alternative but to stay active and engaged in their surroundings. This is the by-product of an increasingly competitive world. While it is true that children are wired to learn from birth, it is still the duty of the parent to provide an enriched environment in which they can learn and thrive. This is no different than the fact that better quality of food results in a better mind and healthier body.

And for the child to take advantage of these opportunities, he has to spend time in their pursuit. Yes, life was simpler fifty years ago. Children had time to play as they pleased and still managed to study and excel in academics. But this is not possible for the children of today. They have to learn to read and comprehend at an earlier age just to gain admission to the proper schools. And knowledge of computers and the internet at an early age is an essential ingredient to success. Add to this extracurricular activities – sports, art, and music have always been known to foster development and coordination. Of course this means very little time is left for the young one to be a child. But in today’s society, how can a child who does not know all this at an early age keep up with the child next door and more so, how can he expected to be a pillar of society tomorrow?

So, dear reader, do not fret. There is a time for everything and everything has its time. Give every child every opportunity, and they will rise to the occasion depending on their capability.

Save Our Children

By JOE STINEBAKER and LIZ AUSTIN PETERSON

(Original story reprinted from Associated Press Monday, July 2, 2007)

David Ritcheson hated being known as "that kid" — the teenager who was beaten unconscious and sodomized with a plastic pole during a party where one of his assailants shouted "White Power!" Ritcheson didn't want to stand out from his classmates because of the assault, but he acknowledged in an interview that "it was just really hard to hold your head up, even to walk outside with everyone almost in the world knowing what happened." That anguish may have contributed to his decision to leap Sunday from a cruise ship to his death in the Gulf of Mexico.

A man at Ritcheson's home who identified himself as the teen's father confirmed the death Monday to The Associated Press. He declined to give his name or comment further, saying the family would issue a statement later.

Ritcheson, 18, rarely discussed his feelings and declined to get counseling after being attacked at the drug-fueled teen party in April 2006. A year later, he testified before Congress in support of a hate crimes bill.

In an interview with the Houston Chronicle this past April, he said: "I shouldn't care what people think or say. It's just the fact that everyone knows I'm the kid. It was bigger than Houston. It was bigger than Texas. It was bigger than America. Everybody in the world knew what had happened and everybody knew the details of it."

Ritcheson, a Mexican-American, was beaten and sodomized with a patio umbrella pole. He also was stomped and burned with cigarettes, and his attackers poured bleach on him before leaving him for dead. He was hospitalized for more than three months and endured 20 to 30 operations.

On Sunday, he was pronounced dead after being pulled aboard the Ecstasy, a cruise ship en route from Galveston to Cozumel, Mexico.

A spokesman for Carnival Cruise Lines said several witnesses saw Ritcheson jump from an upper deck of the ship Sunday morning. Officials aboard the Ecstasy notified the Coast Guard before recovering Ritcheson's body.

Mike Trent, the prosecutor who handled his case, said the small, quiet youth always seemed positive and upbeat about his recovery.

"He certainly wanted to see justice done in the case and wanted his attackers punished, but I thought that — considering everything that had happened to him — he had come through things remarkably well," Trent said.

He said Ritcheson had used drugs before the attack but realized that played a role in his assault and promised to quit. According to testimony, the attack was triggered by Ritcheson's drunken pass at another teen's 12-year-old sister.

Ritcheson's death is "just very tragic because I thought he had turned a corner and was trying his best to make something positive out of what happened to him," Trent said. "He thought that he could handle everything on his own."

Although he remembered nothing of the four-hour attack, Ritcheson testified about it during congressional hearings in April on a hate-crimes bill. That bill passed the House and is pending in a Senate committee.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, said she hopes to have the measure formally named "David's Bill" in Ritcheson's honor.

"I could not have been more moved by his commitment to getting things right," Jackson Lee said Monday. "He was able to dig deep over all of the pain and all the humiliation and try to be of help to someone else."

The Anti-Defamation League was one of several civil rights groups that organized Ritcheson's testimony.

"Our hearts go out to his family and friends, who already have endured so much pain," the ADL said Monday in a statement. "We pray the same strength, courage and dignity they displayed after David's attack will help them make it through this very difficult time."

Two men were convicted of aggravated sexual assault in the attack. David Henry Tuck, then 18, was sentenced to life in prison. Keith Robert Turner, then 17, was sentenced to 90 years in prison. Both must serve at least 30 years before being eligible for parole.

Ritcheson, Tuck, Turner and two other teens were partying at a suburban home at the time of the attack, drinking and taking cocaine and Xanax.

My Parents

By R. G. Raheja

Mr. Raheja writes from Bombay, India

I am writing about my father and mother, whose lives make me proud to be a son of such remarkable individuals. My father was the son of a very rich businessman in Shikarpur, Sindh (now part of Pakistan). My mother also was of a very rich family. Both lived their lives as completely honest and virtuous persons. Mother and father respected each other; mother never questioned my father's decisions. They had four sons and a daughter. I am the second son.

My father's family suffered great financial losses due to the deceitful behavior of a business partner. Their business was lost and they had no means to maintain their home. My father sought funds from well-to-do relatives to begin his own business, but no one was willing or able to help. Father found employment as an accountant in a finance firm in Coimbatore (a city in the southern part of India). However, the salary he earned was not sufficient to maintain a household. Not having a formal education, opportunities were limited and he eventually decided to return to his family in Shikarpur.

My father struggled to find work and the money he earned at odd jobs was not enough for a home. When times were very bad, my mother would ask her family for help. It was heartbreaking for my grandmother to know her daughter's family struggled and she would help. Sadly, one day my mother overheard someone say "she has come for money." This caused mother to cry and she vowed to herself not to ask for their help again. Despite the most trying circumstances, even when there was no income, mother supported father's every decision. Mother was an unshakable pillar of support to father. We children were too young to understand all that was happening, but I am proud to remember their loyalty to each other. We rarely see such faithfulness in today's relationships.

In 1942, our family left Shikarpur and settled in Bombay (now Mumbai). Soon after our arrival, father found a job as an accountant in a small firm. He rented a one-room house at Chira Bazaar for Rs.20 (less than one U.S. dollar per month); barely enough for keeping the household. Father was up early each morning to pray and worship at the Laxminarayan temple in the city of C.P. Tank. From there, he would walk to Babulnath temple, about two miles distance. Although struggling to provide for his family, he always carried small packets of food to share with needy people he met along the way.

Almost everyone who migrated from Sindh during the partition came to India with hardly any money. Most of them found 'hawala' business as a path to being rich.

'Hawala' is a dishonest means for obtaining and declaring unearned income. My father's older brother worked as a manager with a private finance firm that did business through brokers. Knowing my father's difficulties, my uncle suggested he would help by sending brokers to him, and father could start doing 'hawala' business to become rich. Horrified at this suggestion, father told his brother "I would rather die of hunger than do this." We all heard father speak these words. This was 1950 and many times we would go to bed hungry.

One day my father asked my mother for her wedding jewelry, explaining he would use the money to start a business. Wedding jewelry is an Indian bride's only earthly possession she brings to her marriage. Without hesitation, mother quietly took off her jewelry and presented it to father. Do you find such sacrifice between people today? Father started an honest finance business with the money from the sale of the jewelry. My uncle, now a manager with a large company, was able to help father by recommending him to many honest business contacts.

Father's business struggled but slowly grew. On receiving my father's first tax return showing income from the sale of mother's jewelry, the reviewing officer challenged father by declaring the income as 'black money' [money received by dishonest means such as 'hawala']. Father's legal consultant gave testament to father's honesty in all things and assured the officer that the income is correctly reported. Father's tax return was approved.

Faith in God was the mainstay of father's life. Despite many hardships in his life, father never lost faith in God or used dishonest means in his work. He began each day in worship and prayer, and while he worked to provide a home for his family he never failed to share with those less fortunate. As I remember father's words to my uncle, I am eternally grateful for my parents' steadfastness to God and for their living example to never use hurtful, dishonest ways in life.

Mother and father never lost faith in God or each other. Their faithfulness blessed many and they have my heartfelt respect. I thank God for my righteous parents.

**What feeling is so nice as a child's hand in yours?
So small, so soft and warm, like a kitten huddling in
the shelter of your clasp.**

**A child's hand in yours what tenderness and power
it arouses. You are instantly the very touchstone of
wisdom and strength.**

Marjorie Holmes

Christians and Jews are in Harmony

By Robert Bickmeyer

Not too many years ago a Jewish mother of two in Newtown, Pa. returned home to find her window broken and her menorah smashed by vandals. The next night when she drove home she was surprised to see that about 12 of her Christian neighbors had purchased menorahs and were displaying them in their windows. Seeing this, she wept. My heart was filled with pride and admiration for my fellow Christians. She was celebrating her religion, not imposing it. And it was called a menorah, not a holiday candelabra.

The Jewish Federation of metropolitan Detroit participation in Mitzvah Day on December 25. Their Mitzvahs (good deeds) have to do with taking on volunteer social service responsibilities to free Christian volunteers to help them enjoy Christmas Day.

Why are there not more Christians and Jews who honor and respect one another's religious holidays rather than diluting or secularizing them? Nativities, menorahs and symbols of other religions should be permitted on government property. That mythical term, separation of church and state, is used in the war against Christianity, led by the ACLU, founded by an avowed atheist. Is it the American Civil Liberties Union or the Anti Christian Lawyers' Union? "Separation of church and state" is nowhere in the U.S. Constitution, although it was in the constitution of the communistic Soviet Union.

The clause was enacted by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1947 when five justices reinterpreted the First Amendment from its intended purpose as a ban against a state church to a ban against religion in public life. The five were opposed by four justices. A close vote. In 1952 Chief Justice William Douglas, a liberal, wrote that our Constitution does not stipulate a separation of church and state.

Our Founding Fathers represented a populace that was 99.8 percent Christian. Since that time, our Christian nation has opened its arms and welcomed all religious to our shores. Now, some of these non-Christians might as well be saying, "Thanks for taking us in when we were in need, but your ways disturb us."

America is now 89 percent Christian and some, I repeat some, of the remaining 11 percent minority are represented by the ACLU. If 1,000 Americans want something – whether it be a nativity in front of city hall, prayer in school, Christmas cookies in the kindergarten or a menorah on the courthouse steps – and one person

might be offended by it, a court will censor it or abolish it. How ridiculous!

Every December my sub-division held a "Holiday Lighting Contest." When I attended a homeowners' meeting and made a motion that it be called a "Christian Lighting Contest" a man in the back row spoke up, "I'm Jewish and I resent you imposing your religion on me." It was put to a vote and my motion was defeated by a count of about 20-2. I said, "You've all been brainwashed by the ACLU." A woman in front of me whispered to the lady next to her, "You know, he's right."

At a meeting one year later I made the same motion, but prefaced it with the true story of the Jewish mother in Pennsylvania, adding, "When all you ladies here want your lights put up in December you tell your husband, 'Put up the Christmas lights.' Not one of you tell him to put up the holiday lights." My motion passed 19-8.

Although not liberal, I am "progressive." I want more Christians like those 12 neighbors in Pennsylvania and fewer Ku Klux Klan and Nazi types. I want more Jews like those who perform Mitzvahs on Christmas Day and fewer like the man in my sub-division who sat in the back row. In Israel the high holidays of Judaism, Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, reign supreme over those of other religions, as they should. It is mostly a Jewish nation, 79 percent Jewish. Similarly, in the U.S. the high holidays of Christianity, Christmas and Easter, reign supreme over those of other religions, as they should. It is mostly a Christian nation, 89 percent Christian.

I greatly admire George Cantor, Mona Charen, Suzanne Fields, Bernard Goldberg, David Horowitz, Charles Krauthammer, Michael Medved, Dennis Pranger, Dr. Laura Schlessinger, Jay Alan Sekulow and Senator Arlen Specter, all Jewish conservatives. Their religion is irrelevant to me. They are Americans who are on the same political/socio wavelength as I.

Getting back to the Founding Fathers, they formed a nation based on Judeo-Christian values. The Ten Commandments, whether the Christian or Jewish version, are good rules to live by whatever your religion, even if you do not believe in God. What harm?

I often think of the rabbi on TV who said, "Jews have more peace and prosperity in this country than in any other because it is a Christian nation."

Good Parenting

By Niru Prasad

Good Parenting includes:

- A. Show your child love, concern and respect at all times.
 - B. Provide your child for a safe place to live and play.
 - C. Listen and pay attention to what your children are telling you.
 - D. Help your child express all his or her feelings.
 - E. Give your child margins and appropriate choices.
 - F. Set up some reasonable rules and discipline for them to follow.
 - G. Set good examples for them by being responsible and teach them to be independent and be responsible for their acts.
 - H. Always spend some time with them together.
 - I. Set an example by what you say and do.
 - J. Get them involved with you when you need help.
- standing some distance away while turning on the items.
- B. Most babies are afraid of strangers by 6 months of age, so try to leave your baby only with familiar faces while you are away.
 - C. Have strangers approach slowly at first, focusing their attention on a toy or some other object rather than a child.

The fear of separation develops in a child around 8 months of age, hence the baby may be unwilling to stay even with familiar faces. Around 15 months of age, babies can show even more anxiety over separation from their parents.

- D. Play peek-a-boo to teach your baby that your absence will be short.
- E. Always tell your baby that you are leaving now and will be back soon, rather than sneak out.
- F. Encourage caregivers to be sensitive to your child's feelings about missing you and accept those feelings.
- G. All through your baby's early years, gradually introduce them to new places or people.
- H. Toddlers from 15 months to 3 years do not manage strong feelings like anger, frustration, and jealousy very well. Encourage your child to express feelings in words so the fears won't show up in anxious activities.
- I. Provide calm and predictable routines for your toddler at bedtime.
- J. Pre-schoolers from 3 to 5 years suffer from dark nightmares and fear of the dark.

Child's Fears and Growing Up:

Fear is a normal part of the process of growing up, and as a child grows and learns more about the world, many experiences will make him/her confused. From birth to school age, they will have many experiences that will frighten them. These fears often appear when children are learning to walk, meet strangers, or get in accidents.

Some children are highly imaginative, sensitive, and may adjust less quickly than others to new and potentially frightening situations. Understanding your child's fear is important so you can help your child learn to manage fearful feelings and situations. Here are some important tips to help your children overcome their fears:

- A. If a baby is scared of noise from hairdryers or vacuum cleaners, slowly and gradually introduce the noises by

Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.

Tatanka Iyotanka

How Old Is the Earth?

By Linda Reid



The earth has not been proven to be billions of years old. There is no observable scientific evidence that verifies the earth is much older than a few thousand years old. The scientific community would like people to accept their theories without doubting. They boldly pronounce repeatedly that the universe started 4.5 billion years ago. The average person hearing these sayings throughout their life believes only because they have heard only one side of the story.

The most common and heard of method for dating fossils and rock layers is the use of the geologic column. This column supposedly determines different ages in earth's history, each layer representing millions of years. When asked how old a particular fossil is, a geologist may reply by saying, "We know it is so old because we found it is this rock layer." Strangely, if asked how old a specific rock layer is, the answer might go something like this: "We know that this rock layer is so old because it contains such and such fossils in it." The argument is based on circular reasoning, not scientific evidence.

In addition to faulty reasoning schemes, it is laughable that such geologic column even exists on planet earth. John Woodmorappe argues in his work about the geologic column that there is hardly anywhere on the earth where the column is actually in the order that evolutionists would like it to be (1999). Many people who have come to proper realization have been known to cling to the saying, "The only place the geologic column exists is in the textbooks." This is a true statement; perhaps it could be added, "... in the textbooks and the imagination of evolutionists."

With the geologic time scale argument failing miserably, evolutionists are now heavily relying on the hope that radioactive dating proves that the earth is billions of years old. Author Michael Robbins even goes so far as to say that scientists "know that the earth is 4.5 billion years old" (2006). In Robbins' mind, this is a highly accurate dating method. But is it really accurate?

Creation scientist Andrew Snelling does not buy the proposal that radioactive dating can prove anything. In fact, he holds the opinion that radioactive dating is "unreliable," and "useless" (1992). He shows how radioactive dating runs its clock based on three

1. [That] the initial conditions (of the earth) are known;
2. [That] the system has been closed; and
3. [That] the radioactive decay rate has remained constant.

Since the above assumptions cannot be proven, it follows that one cannot know that radioactive

dating is reliable at all. Assuming any of the above becomes even more ridiculous when considering that we are considering an unimaginable number of years (4.5 billion).

We can at least see that it has not been proven by any means that the earth is millions of years old, let alone billions. In order for a theory to be considered fact, there must be unquestionable, observable, scientific evidence. In the case for a very old earth, there is no such evidence; it is pure speculation based on circular reasoning and faulty assumptions. If we are interested in knowing the truth, we must stick with only science that can be observed, studied and demonstrated.

To Our Contributors:

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Articles should not exceed 1,200 words. Longer articles, if accepted, may be published in installments. Whenever possible, send all articles to editor@thethinkclub.com.

Essay on Man

By Alexander Pope

Behold the child, by
Nature's kindly law,



Pleas'd with a rattle,
tickled with a straw:



Some livelier plaything
gives his youth delight,



A little louder, but as

empty quite:



Scarfs, garters, gold,
amuse his riper state,



And beads and prayer-
books are the toys of age:



Pleas'd with this bauble
still, as that before,



Till tired he sleeps, and
life's poor play is o'er

Mental Exercise

A Miscellany of Puzzlers

By David Beagan

Fifty Coins. Can you make change for a dollar using exactly 50 U.S. coins?

State Name. What U.S. state is named for a man who never went near the state?

Three in Common. Tri-Bond is a game where you are given three items and must find the thing that they all have in common. For example, consider, Cheese, Musical Note, and Knife. The common element is that they all can be sharp. Now consider the following three:

Automobile

Tree

Elephant

What do they all have?

Population Density. The five most populous countries in the world are China, India, United States, Indonesia, and Brazil. Rank them in order of population density, their number of people per unit of land area.

Cube Cutting. A cube measures three inches on each side. It is to be sliced into 27 one inch cubes. After each slice, the pieces may be restacked before the next cut. In how few cuts can it be accomplished?

Card Grid. In a standard deck of playing cards, each card has a value and a suit. Is it possible to place the cards with values Jack, Queen, King, and Ace in each of the four suits into a four by four arrangement so that no row or column repeats the same value and no row or column repeats the same suit?

Over Hill. A jogger goes out for a two-hour jog, starting at home and returning home. Part of the jog is on flat ground and part of the jog takes him up a

hill and back down again. The jogger goes at eight miles per hour on flat ground. On the hill he travels at six miles per hour uphill and 12 miles per hour downhill. How far does the jogger travel?

Answers

Fifty Coins. One solution would be 40 pennies, eight nickels, and two dimes.

State Name. The state of Washington named for George Washington.

Three in Common. They all have trunks.

Population Density. Their ranking in terms of people per square kilometer: India, 336; China, 137; Indonesia, 117; United States, 31; Brazil, 22..

Cube Cutting. Six is the fewest because the center cube requires six cuts, one cut for each face of the center cube.

Card Grid. Here is one solution.

A♣	K♦	Q♠	J♥
K♥	A♠	J♦	Q♣
Q♦	J♣	A♥	K♠
J♠	Q♥	K♣	A♦

Over Hill. The answer is 16 miles. The key to figuring this out is to realize that the uphill distance and downhill distance are the same. What ever that distance is, the combination of the distance traveled at six miles per hour combined with that same distance traveled at 12 miles per hour, works out to eight miles per hour. So, for the whole trip, the jogger averages eight miles per hour.

Keeping Up with the Young Joneses

By Bala Prasad

This month I celebrated the second birthday of my fifth grandson. My first and third grandsons were in attendance, as was my sixth (and newest) grandson. This means the only two who were missing were my second and fourth grandsons. But next month I look forward to having all six of my grandsons at home at the same time.

When the leader of the pack (my 7-year-old grandson) asked me to buy him an iPod, I realized how little I know about the next generation of technology. When my children were young, I watched 8-tracks be replaced by my cassette tapes, which were replaced by record albums, which were replaced by compact discs. Now, I am told that even compact discs are obsolete – they have been replaced by MP3 players and iPods (whatever they are). With so much advancement in the field of technology in one generation, I am left to wonder what the world will be like when my grandsons become adults. Perhaps they will be able to snap their fingers and hear music in their ears. This may sound like a stretch to you and me, but who could have ever imagined that our children would be able to “download” music from the “internet?” Those words never even existed in our vocabulary when we were young!

Communication is another area that advances from generation to generation. When my children were young, we had rotary telephones in our home – and only two at that. Then, against my better judgment, I allowed my children to lead me into the 20th century with portable phones. Then I discovered call-waiting. Then caller-ID. Then 3-way calling. Now, of course, all of my children (as well as my wife) carry cell phones with them. Reluctantly, I allowed them to buy me a cell phone last year. But for my grandchildren, the era of talking on the telephone is becoming replaced by “text messaging”: kids literally type messages to each other (on their cell phones) rather than talk to one another. Again I am left to wonder how my grandchildren will communicate with their peers when they get older – perhaps they will be able to transfer messages via ESP. This may sound outlandish, but who would ever think that children would type the letter “K” to signify “Okay,” or type the letters “OMG” to signify “Oh my God.” Certainly not me!

And what about movies? It used to be that we had to take the family to an old-fashioned movie theater (sometimes even a drive-in movie “theater”) in order to watch movies. Not the grandchildren. They can watch movies in their car, on the airplane, or on their computer

(which they all have). So much for the old-fashioned popcorn in the movie theater!

The way children learn has also changed one hundred percent from one generation to another. My children grew up with a collection of Encyclopedia Britannicas. In fact I remember a new Encyclopedia was delivered to my doorstep every month. My grandsons may never learn what an Encyclopedia is. Or a dictionary. Instead, all of their knowledge will come from the internet (another word that never existed when my kids were growing up). On the one hand, it is amazing to me that these kids can type up a single word on Google and be exposed to a wealth of information. On the other hand, I think it makes me a little sad that books are becoming so outdated. But, such is life. I wonder how information will be obtained (and released) when my grandchildren become older.

In the end, I have to wonder whether the next generation is better or worse off with all of their technological advancements. Is it really necessary for the next generation to be in constant communication with one another by carrying around cell phones all the time? If the answer is yes, what about text messaging – is typing a message to your friend really going to replace speaking to that friend? Is that a good thing? I have the same concerns about video and audio technology – is it really “advanced” for our grandchildren to be able to listen to music or watch a movie on a moment’s notice – wherever they are? I have to wonder what is going to happen to one’s social skills when kids walk around with earphones in their ears all day long, watching videos on their laptops and sending a text that says “TY” instead of saying it the old fashioned way – “thank you.” I guess it’s not for me to say – my job is just to make sure they have their iPods and whatever else their little hearts desire! This may be coincidental, but is certainly timely for me to announce that Think Club is going to be a digital magazine now. Visit www.thethinkclub.com

Sincerely,

Bala Prasad

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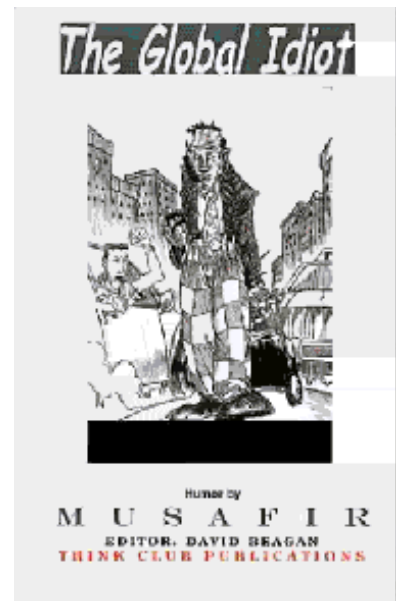
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