



Points East

By:
Ike Adams

There's an old monicker for partisan Democrats in my state called "Yellow Dogs." It's supposed to fit Democrats so loyal to the party line that they would vote for a yellow dog before they would vote for a Republican. But the fit is long gone.

One has to wonder, for instance, where the yellow dogs are every time that Senator Mitch McConnell relieves himself from the caviar he just digested courtesy of the special interests groups that keep him fat and happy while he makes a fine living killing democracy by selling off Americans' birthright—to name your favorite Fortune 500 company.

Either a bunch of yellow dogs vote that nut term in and term out or they stay away from the polls altogether.

In any event, Kentucky sends ole' Mitch to the U.S. Senate and if that isn't proof enough that we deserve our ranking as being about the dumbest place in the country, I don't know what would. Thank God for South Carolina and Jesse Helms is all that I can say. We're dumb. South Carolina is patently stupid.

Frankly, I'm of the opinion that state-level Kentucky politicians almost universally belong to the yellow dog fraternity and that the fraternity now crosses party lines. Every time a special interest group waves a hundred dollar bill in front of a State Senator or State Representative you can watch some rolling over and barking and playing dead and sitting up with a paw out and begging for more, etc.

Then they turn vivid yellow when it comes to doing something about the garbage pit the state is in or tackling real issues like predatory lending.

Bought-off it is a bad word in Frankfort but if you think your representation in Frankfort hasn't sold his or her heart and soul to the lobbyists who pillage this state to their heart's desire you need to have your head examined.

There are some honest people in the General Assembly but they are mostly women from Lexington and Louisville. The rest are a bunch of bums who spend more money than the office pays to get elected so that they can sell your best interests out to the lobbyists or figure out another way to line their pockets.

There are no saints in our Legisla-ture. There is no genius. That brilliant light you see glowing out one ear is coming from a lamp on the other side of their heads. Most of them have a lot of empty space between the ears.

That's the way that politics works in Kentucky and you are naive if you believe differently.

But the politicians are not alone in selling you out.

The brainless wonders on the Editorial Board at the Lexington Herald Leader can take a lot of credit for the fact that our State Legislature is in session in a year when most of us could have rested easy in the knowledge that we were safe from the General Assembly. They pushed the Constitutional Amendment that made this folly possible like it was the best thing since sliced bread.

What the big city papers should be doing that would do this state a valid service is hiring some intelligent undercover investigators to really figure out how the money changes hands and putting some meat on the bones of crap that is obviously suspicious. The last time that happened The Speaker of The House and a bunch of his cronies got prison terms.

If the FBI is really serious about cleaning up corruption, why don't they have at least one agent assigned to every legislator and every lobbyist in this state. Where did those guys go anyway? AHHHHHHHH, I forgot the lobbyists....

What goes around comes around, and, as we all know, The FBI has about as much credibility as the Kentucky General Assembly these days.

We have a bunch of jerks in the General Assembly working around the clock to protect the best interests of these check cashing schemers who charge several hundred percent interest a year to forward a few bucks to hard working families and get them in a pay-off circuit they can't escape.

Do you believe for a moment that members of the General Assembly are not taking a bunch of unsupported cash to keep these vultures in business?

If you do believe that, you deserve precisely the kind of crap you are getting out of Frankfort. If you work for the FBI, why the heck aren't you on the job?

In the meantime, you can hold me in contempt of Congress or whatever you call it when the only thing you can feel is absolute disgust for the Legislature of this state. I have absolutely no respect for this lot of flunkies and I am, as usual, embarrassed to be a Kentuckian when the Legislature is in session.

There is work that needs to be done. Much, much needed work and the first that comes to mind is showing the rest of the world that Kentucky is not a congregation of pigs who open their waste into every public waterway and alongside the highways of our home.

There is a desperate need to get rid of the predatory leaders who suck blood in the lifeblood of our more economically distressed families and, instead, help them find ways to deal with debt and desperation.

But you are not going to find that in this General Assembly. You are going to find Pistol Bill Dammam making it far easier to get away with shooting somebody. You are going to find the polluters far more protected than they were before. You are going to find the money changers who rob our poor folks with fatter pockets buying shrimp and the fixings for your elected representatives away in Frankfort and you are going to find the state in a lot worse shape than it was before the session began. If you work for the Herald Leader, or any other naive propagandist, I hope that you are happy. I also hope that you get up and get a grip on the reality of Kentucky politics.

Our State Legislature, in my opinion, should meet for two days at the end of each millennium. Anything more than that is dangerous to our health and well being.

"Yellow dogs," is right on. Too yellow to face up to any responsibility and converting like dogs for the next little bit of cream from their big corporate owners.



The Family Room

By: Dr. Roy Don Whitehead

Is It Shyness or Social Anxiety Disorder?

"I have been offered the promotion," John told me, "and it is a good one with a nice raise, but I can't take it. It means I would have to speak in front of groups. I can't do that. I get too nervous." (All characters are fictitious.)

"Why can't I talk to guys?" Lisa wanted to know. "I can make conversation with women or the elderly or young people, but when I get in a conversation with a guy, I freeze up. I don't know what to say, and I know I look stupid. No wonder I never have any dates."

Marcia was afraid to talk to people of any age or gender. Her anxiety had become so bad that she now stayed at home most of the time. She went to work and came home, avoiding stores and people as much as possible. She lived by herself and did not want anyone around.

Social anxiety is "the tendency to be nervous or uncomfortable in social situations, usually because of fear about doing something embarrassing or foolish, making a bad impression, or being judged negatively by others."

For some people only specific social situations bring anxiety. The specific situation may be speaking before a group, talking to a member of the opposite sex or having a job interview. For others the anxiety includes all contact with other humans, no matter what the situation.

Social anxiety can be crippling, as can be seen in Marcia's case. Her life is restricted to home and work. Or it can restrict a person's relationships or job, as it is doing in the lives of Lisa and John.

For many people social anxiety produces physical symptoms. These may include quickened heartbeat, dizziness, sweating, chest tightness, shaking, difficulty swallowing, blushing, nausea, tearfulness and dry mouth. These symptoms make the anxiety worse, as the anxious person fears that others will notice the symptoms.

There are two treatments for social anxiety that seem to help: medication and counseling. There are anti-anxiety medications that work to lessen the anxiety symptoms. There is a beta-blocker (propranolol) that is sometimes helpful for performers who have "stage fright." Some antidepressants have been shown to be effective in helping anxiety. Paxil is the one antidepressant that has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of anxiety.

No one but a physician can determine if one of these would be helpful in treating the anxiety.

Counseling is also helpful in treating anxiety, particularly a kind of counseling called Cognitive Therapy. Cognitive Therapy works to change the thought processes that cause the anxiety. Lisa, who has trouble talking to men her age, does not even realize what she is telling herself to cause the anxiety.

When Lisa analyzes her thoughts, she realizes that she is saying to herself, "Guys will think I'm stupid. They will laugh at me. No one will ever ask me for a date. I'm better off just being quiet."

In working with a counselor Lisa can come to realize that many of her fears will never come true! She can also realize that even if they do come true, this will not be the end of the world. What if one guy to whom she is attracted does not ask her out. While that may be somewhat disappointing, it will not devastate her.

(The quote above is from Shyness and Social Anxiety, a book by Martin Anthony and Richard Swinson. I recommend it.)

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