

# We have smart and dumb days

**Bill Hall/Lewiston Tribune**

My wife says we are all smart and dumb about one thing or another. She's right, of course, though I would rather she didn't include me in the downside of that opinion.

However, she is honest enough to accept the fact that she also is both smart and dumb about one thing or another. She believes that neither she nor I - or anybody else on this planet - is always right or wrong. We are all collections of wisdom and stupidity. That's because there are thousands of ways to make a living and it just stands to reason that we can't all learn everything there is to know about all of them.

That's why auto mechanics and electricians and architects and mathematicians chuckle at me when I say things that reveal how little I know about their realms. They can't help it when I tell them things like, "My left saftenhaidle has a cracked nuftenshager on its flamflew."

I chuckle right back at them because their grammar isn't perfect.

If you are a normal human being, you are smart about a lot of things and dumb about a lot of other things. And if people are lucky in life, they will find a job they are good at and will enjoy. I enjoy spinning yarns in newspapers and I haven't starved, but I would be a disaster if someone tried to put me to work teaching chemistry, repairing trucks or removing people's gall bladders.

But so what? None of us was ever cut out for all the professions there are. However, a few people in some professions think they know everything and that they are never wrong. That is especially true of professions that require a dictator.

Airline pilots, surgeons and dynamite-using miners know for a fact that a job dealing with danger to the customers virtually requires a command personality, a leader who can think quickly and accurately and maintain the ability to bark harsh orders to a crew.

Unfortunately, many of such bigshots have the flaw of being bossy in all parts of their lives and not just in the empires where they do their actual work.

It's not that they are stupid in most matters. They aren't. While they are on their own turf, they deserve to be recognized as the dazzling big brains they are. And we need them.

On the other hand, some of them make the mistake of assuming their opinion is superior in all realms of life, not just in places where they work.

I am reminded of that attitude by watching Dr. Ben Carson, one of the Republican candidates for the White House job. He is a chronic case of a brilliant surgeon who is so certain he is right about everything that he imagines he is ready to be president.

When it comes to instant national leadership talent, the good doctor is still wet behind the ears. But he considers himself so smart that he doesn't even know he doesn't know.

Granted, practically anyone who is running for president - Democrat or Republican - tends to have a high opinion of his or herself. In fact, practically everyone is stretching reality in taking on a huge job like president. A naive guy like Carson is an example of how anyone has to be crazy to think he is prepared to run an entire country.

Conversely, some people who are truly smart enough and sane enough not to run for president are more likely to be fit for the job they refuse to do.

I have no doubt that Carson is a genius at his real job, and he seems to have a brain in his pumpkin. But he is a raw beginner when it comes to guiding a nation.

Shouldn't he be expected to run first for county commissioner or state legislator before trying to leap overnight into the highest, hardest job in the land?

Young Barack Obama has experienced similar stumbles because he wanted to be near the top of all that power and glory at a tender age. But at least he spent some years learning similar ropes in the Illinois state Senate.

What would Carson think if Obama had decided to become a surgeon without any training or experience in medical schools?

Seeking to become an instant president is not for greenhorns like Obama and Carson. And so, if Carson gets the chance, he will learn something important:

It isn't easy being green.

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