

## Longing for the return of common sense

**Mark Pavilons]**

?You can swim all day in the Sea of Knowledge and still come out completely dry. Most people do.?

Norma Juster

A recent study in th



e U.S. found that 55% of average Americans felt they were smarter than average Americans. And only 4% said they were below average in the smarts department.

Well, we all know this just can't be accurate. The majority are lying. I'd say roughly half the population is a bit deficient in gray matter, but I'm not being mean or elitist. This is by observation.

But I find it quite amusing and silly things make me smile on an almost daily basis.

We're not perfect. There are plenty of monkey wrenches in society, armed and ready to muck things up at a moment's notice. We make mistakes, often big ones.

But that's what makes sharing this planet with our fellow bipeds so interesting and colourful.

Apparently, it's a scientific fact that humans are getting dumber as time goes on.

Unlike our ancestors, we don't have to use our brains to survive, outsmart our predators, build contraptions, sharpen sticks or dig wells.

Also, the gigantic sum of human knowledge and access to information makes it a bit easier for us to get by. We don't have to know a little bit of everything but can focus on just a couple of areas to hone our skills.

Intelligence no longer plays a significant role in our supportive, technologically advanced society.

Geneticists say that mutations in our genes that control intellect have crept into our DNA, slowly diminishing our IQs, with each passing generation.

I?blame it on mac and cheese, aspartame and Velcro.

It's so true and the proof is all around us.

From Bay Street financial gurus to world class surgeons and scientists, the only daily mental exercise we get is playing the latest game on our smart phones. When I'm in a crowd of smart phone addicts, I?often think they're reviewing documents, research papers or making trade deals. But no, they're commenting on Facebook posts, playing Tetris or watching cute cat videos on YouTube. Just what would we do if Godzilla trashed the TTC?

We are in the midst of a provincial election campaign, sometimes referred to as ?silly season.??It's silly because of the statements made by untold would-be politicians and incumbent storytellers, all in the name of democracy.

Now, that's not to say they all don't have something interesting and valuable to say. That's for us to decide. But it's a time filled with all kinds of mixed messages, promises and mudslinging.

It can sometimes lead some classic one-liners, goofs and foot-in-mouth syndrome.

I?have my own opinions regarding provincial policies, but I'll save them for later.

One of the parties has suggested a ?ministry of saving? that has the job of saving money. Wow, what a concept, a think tank of expert civil servants in charge of not wasting tax dollars. Wouldn't fewer civil servants, not more, save money?

Do we really need a government body dedicated to telling us how to spend money wisely??Ask any average homeowner and we'll give you dozens of suggestions.

I?believe a guy named Drummond came up with a massive report, recommending all kinds of ways to save money and look for efficiencies.

What happened to that report? Did anyone read it?

It is to laugh.

But wait, the power is in the hands of the masses, those with shrinking IQs.

In our free and democratic society we give anyone who possesses the minimum mental requirements the okay to drive a car, own a home, order cable TV, raise children and vote in elections.

Let the people speak.

But if the people today are less intelligent than our Neanderthal ancestors, just what can we expect?

As one of the ?people??I?suggest the creation of the Ministry of Wisdom and Smart Thinking.

This would be a volunteer-run agency, made up of citizens who can pass a simple written test. Obviously PhDs, astrophysicists, genetic engineers and stand up comedians would be preferred, but we can't pre-judge.

So, this group would come to work every day, search out stupidity and spring into action. Their mandate would be to stamp out blatant dumbness and replace it with something better to benefit humankind.

They could start by reviewing each ministry's spending habits, hiring policies and any other ridiculous happenings.

It would likely be quite easy, and wouldn't involve wire-tapping or video surveillance. The water cooler should provide ample opportunities to apprehend these culprits.

I?would also implement simple IQ tests for all politicians, civil servants, lottery winners and health care professionals. If they don't pass, out the door with them!

If the problem of stupidity becomes too great and simply cannot be contained in government offices, I would recommend we create a sort of SWAT team ? armed with water balloons and cans of whipped cream. They would scour the city streets, like modern superheroes, looking for any intellectual transgressions, and then pounce, like Ninjas.

Unfortunately, I?think we'll have to put up with billion-dollar boondoggles for a while longer.