

Each Generation Supports The Other



by
Pettus Read

Read All About It

Recently, while attending a college basketball game, I made a nonscientific observation of what people do during the game that seems to be the norm these days. No, the action I saw is not something you would normally expect, such as cheering wildly, calling the ref unrepeatable words or even keeping the concession guy busy providing food. However, food has gone way beyond the usual hot dog, popcorn and cold drinks, to more exotic things like chicken wings, unrecognizable nachos, and gourmet sandwiches. Ballgame fare has gone way beyond the usual gym food to an experience in fine dining. I'm expecting someone to come up with white tablecloths for your nacho boxes some day.

But, the new norm I witnessed was the number of people on Blackberries checking out their emails or other social media that may have been coming across the airways during that evening's really exciting ballgame. In fact, I

the go ahead winning run. They all missed most of it checking on text messages. My thought was what were they doing here to begin with. If what was going on outside the building was that important, why didn't they just stay. Call me old fashioned, which I am, but when I go to a game, I go to enjoy the action and the atmosphere, not to check on business or to look at a little shiny screen with the latest box scores.

I guess that is a difference in the generations these days. The thing that makes us Americans so different is our ability to operate at numerous generation levels and still get the job completed. I saw old guys, just like me, cheering while young fellows kept informed on what ALL the other teams were doing with their Blackberries. My generation enjoys the simple things, as a couple generations under me, take things a little more serious. The differences in our generations also help us to pull

saw an entire row of men all looking down at their palms containing today's modern marvel, during a 20 point run by our team to get

through tough times. I have reached the age where I now remember things that happened way back then. My children are more concerned with what is happening now. And that is the way it should be. We need the two to balance out the present, to avoid errors in the future, and never forget the past.

I found a site on the Internet the other day that specializes in candy of days gone by. It contained those large red wax lips just like those we bought at the annual 4th of July picnic during our childhood days. They tasted terrible then and I guess they still do today. The site sold boxes of Crows, which are black licorice flavored jellybeans. I used to get a brown paper bag of those at the store for a nickel that would last all day. They also had Clark bars, all types of penny

candies and candy cigarettes.

Do you remember when kids could use candy cigarettes with red tips for fire and not be a political outcast? Candy cigs never caused me to want to smoke. Instead they pushed me more over to the dessert way of thinking.

What about getting a cold drink from a machine that dispensed glass bottles that only contained eight ounces? In fact, you could get glass bottle drinks at basketball games in the early days. They could also quench your thirst as well as today's super jumbos and only cost a nickel. How did eight ounces do the job years ago that 44 ounces couldn't do today?

Did you ever drink milk at school from a glass bottle wrapped in red cellophane with a cardboard

stopper? Have you ever used Butch hair wax for a flat top haircut, 45-RPM records, metal ice trays with levers, blue flashbulbs, Mimeograph paper, washtub wringers and S&H Green Stamps?

If you remembered none of these things, then I assume you are being read this article by your parents or grandparents and I am honored they took the time to share it with you. I also thank you for humoring them by acting like you understand what in the world they are talking about and smiling politely.

However, if you remembered most of these then welcome to my world. We are not as old as the ark, but we may be pushing for

lifetime membership in the "I Saw Pistol Pete Maravich Play Club."

Our generations are different and it is hard for me to believe that in 50 years someone will be telling their children about remembering having to use an old DVD player to watch a movie or checking their E-mail on their Blackberry at the ballgame, but they will. And, the fun small things will be the most remembered, thank goodness.

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Michael Johns, a former speechwriter for George Bush Sr, put conservative

mistrust of the census down to fears the Obama administration would inappropriately politicize the operation.

"The tea party movement has legitimate concerns about the integrity of the process," Johns said in an interview.

This year's census will ask 10 questions, including name, age, sex, whether the respondent owns or rents a home, and questions about race and ethnicity. The census form does not ask about immigration status, and the information is confidential.

"This is a census that is being conducted in a period of unusual animosity and hostility toward the government," said Kenneth Prewitt, professor of public affairs at Columbia University. "It's not that people are mad at that census, but when you're mad at the government you

take it out on whatever is handy."

The census bureau has raised eyebrows by again including "negro" as a racial category (it lists African-American and black as synonyms). Most black Americans deem the term "negro" to be more archaic than offensive. The bureau has used the term for decades and opted to include it again after more than 50,000 wrote it in longhand on the 2000 form though it was an official selection.

"Does it have a negative connotation? Is it offensive? No," said Darrell Gaskins, associate professor of African-American studies at the University of Maryland. "But it brings up that feeling of the Jim Crow era," he said, referring to the long period of official racial segregation in the southern states.

Participation in the census is required by law and to refuse, or to falsify informa-



Photograph: Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images

tion, is punishable by fines that can range from \$100 up to \$500 (about £60 to £300), although the law is rarely enforced.

Some Latino groups are urging undocumented immigrants to boycott the census.

The Rev Miguel Rivera, president of the National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders, which represents Latino churches in the US, said undocumented immigrants benefited little from the government funds distributed according to the count and were not represented in the halls of power.

"It is immoral to ask un-

documented immigrants to step out of the shadows, count themselves ... then go back to the shadows," he told the Guardian.

An estimated 12 million illegal immigrants live in the US, distributed throughout the country.

Other Latino political groups have denounced the proposed boycott as counterproductive to Latinos' goal of greater political representation.

"If we don't participate we're not empowering ourselves," said Lizette Jenness Olmos, of the League of United Latin American Citizens

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