



ASK
UNCLE
MIKE

Dear Uncle Mike,

You made a nasty crack last month about guys in Dockers beating drums and looking for the warrior within. What exactly is wrong, oh guru, with men getting in touch with the spirit of their masculinity?

---Al in Astoria

Dear Al,

Uncle Mike scarcely knows where to begin. First off, we must distinguish between your avowed search for spiritual illumination and pounding on a store bought drum in hopes of releasing a romanticized male archetype.

This vision quest stuff can be tricky, Al, and you really want to do your homework. If we can believe 2,000 years of testimony by an impressive array of mystics, one's spiritual essence is not gender specific. Contrary to what certain deconstructionist feminists and Robert Bly might tell you, there are no boy spirits and girl spirits. There are only, depending on how you look at things, shining stars and teardrops from the eye of God.

Moving on to the world of form, if beating drums with your fellow WASP don't wannabes gets you off, Al, Uncle Mike would be the last person to stand in your way, or even near you. It's just that he hates to see a full grown human imagine that getting together once a week to evoke a vision he had after seeing Dances With Wolves will somehow save the planet. It's doubtful it will even save your marriage.

As someone must have said, it's easier for a tribe of nomads to slip through the eye of a needle than for a marketing manager to get into heaven with his drum.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Is homosexuality genetically determined, or is it a behavior?

---Tina in Portland

Dear Tina,

In Uncle Mike's wildly unqualified opinion, yes and no.

Owing to the recent discovery of variations in a small structure of the brains between homo- and heterosexual men, and studies indicating that the ratio of hetero- to homosexuals cross-culturally has remained historically constant at about 1:9 would seem to indicate some distinction in our genetic hardware that predisposes us to certain dating habits.

Uncle Mike also believes, on the basis of personal observation, that homosexual and bisexual behavior can arise from the software of our experience. We all need to love and be loved and sexuality is not bipolar so much as it's a spectrum. Though not all love is sexual, and not all sex is lovable, the two are old and intimate companions.

Men and women, on the other hand, now cross the street to avoid each other. Sex, for most women, is an act of trust. It is no longer fashionable for women to trust men, even when they deserve it. As for men, being loathe objects (one step down from success objects) does nothing to spur acts of courtly love. Sex without love is hollow but it's impossible to love someone you're afraid of. Women fear men physically, men fear women emotionally, both for good reason. It's hard to see how we get to respect among equals from here.

When women buy guns and men hide their emotional gonads, Uncle Mike is not surprised to see the walking wounded exploring sexual alternatives to doctrinal trench warfare.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Does time really go faster when you're having fun?

---Shelley in Hood River

Dear Shelley,

It depends on what you call fun. Time slows with velocity so, strictly speaking (and we should), it passes fastest for those standing perfectly still. More correctly, since time is inextricably linked to events (or changes in space), absolute lack of motion (outlawed since 1905) would occur only in the complete absence of time. In the real world, if time goes fastest when you're having fun, those enjoying themselves the most are barnacles.

Dull, yes, but there's a bright side. Since mass increases with velocity, if you jog you can lose weight by stopping.

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There's a difference between a philosophy and a bumper sticker.
Charles M. Shultz

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436-
Is a phone number to call to confess your sins. You may also listen to the sins of others.
1) Leave a message of your sins.
2) Call back and during the opening message punch in 537, .. wait a sec .. then 1. Now wait till the tape rewinds. (We get up to 30-50 calls a week so be patient). If you get bored hit 7 to skip through message to the next one.

MR. BASEBALL
Ferguson Jenkins

IP ERA W L SV ER BB SO(7th) H
4500.2 3.34 284 226 7 1669 997 3192 4142

Some years ago, Bill James proposed a reader write-in project aimed at standardizing pitchers' motions in mathematical terms. That is, pick a pitcher, then assign a value to each of his characteristics of delivery; for instance:

Leg Kick none..... 0
slight..... 1
thigh up, knee out..... 2
thigh up, knee bent..... 3
leg out, knee straight..... 4
Juan Marichal..... 10

and so forth, for stretch, overhand vs. sidearm, follow through, etc.

With all of these data, he would feed his computer and a sabrmetric image would result.

The purpose of this has always eluded me. I have a very clear image of Fergie Jenkins feasting on my beloved Cardinals for many years. Six twenty-win seasons with some woeful Cubs teams. (Knock it off, Billy; you know it's true.) A flawless delivery, second only to Seaver, a crackling fastball with Gibson-like movement. Plus above average breaking stuff, for a right-hander. And he could knock out the clutch hit now and then, too.

Bill James makes some peculiar comments about Jenkins. He lumps Jenkins, Catfish Hunter, and Robin Roberts in one mass. His criteria?

-A) Outstanding Delivery
O.K., Fergie was good, but Hunter could paint the black within a quarter inch, and pitch, any inning, any game.

Sure, Jenkins only had 997 career walks, but if you had Cubs and Rangers defenses behind you for most of your career, you'd tend to groove them, too, right? Which brings up item

-B) Very high number of home runs allowed.

Jenkins pitched mostly in Wrigley; Hunter pitched in Oakland and Yankee Stadium.

-C) Medium range strikeouts
Ferguson Jenkins is ninth all time with 3192 K's. This is not medium range. Neither was his life.

His mother went blind giving him birth.

She died of cancer when he was in his teens. He marries and fathers a child.

His wife dies in an auto accident.

He gets busted going into Canada for an infinitesimal amount of cocaine, delaying his election to the Hall of Fame.

Last November, Ferguson Jenkins' girlfriend took his child, drove to a wheatfield, and ran a vacuum cleaner into the car and gassed herself and the child to death.

His close friends say he is amazingly stable in spite of this. He has maintained his religion without succumbing to despair or zealotry and is very active in community projects.

This man is in the Hall of Fame.
Next month--Reggie Jackson.

February Quiz

1a) How many stitches on a baseball? b) How many seams?

2) In 1944, Braves RH sets a ML record for fewest pitches in a game, shutting out Cincinnati 2-0. How many? a)36 b)49 c)58 d)66

3) Who am I?
.297 Lifetime, Dodgers one year fielding leader, CF. So, after one game, Stengel goes nuts and fires me. I have to charter my own plane to get home. This other passenger gets on my nerves, I start to brawl, and the co-pilot brains me with a fire extinguisher and kills me.

4) Who is this?
In 1959, I hit .255 with 14 HR and 44 RBIs. I was despondent, and requested and was granted a 20% salary decrease.

In 1960, I hit .275 with 17 HR and 63 RBIs, with increases in hits, 2Bs, runs, and SBs. I was 39 years old.

*hint--Preacher Roe--"I pitch him four wide ones and then I try to pick him off first base."

And now, a NEW FEATURE!
As you recall, last issue I was lamenting the state of Minor League Baseball.

Send me your best Minor League story from your childhood. Maybe we'll even try to contact the subjects! Kind of a "Glory of Their Times" with a bit less glory.

- Mr. Baseball
P.O. Box 664
Tolovana Park, Or. 97145
No winners last month.
Last Month
1) Sandy Koufax
2) Jim Kaat
3) Denton True Young
4) Whitey Ford
5) Ducky Medwick
6) Bonus--Donnie Moore