

The anger bar saloon

Leave it to the Chinese to take a great American idea and improve it beyond our wildest dreams. But before we look at the accomplishments of the Chinese, let's explore the history of today's subject — anger management.



You can't beat a system you can't understand

By Sam Bari

In the good old days when Dodge City, Kansas, set the standard for acceptable saloon behavior, protocol, and propriety, the local watering hole was the place to go to settle differences, add fuel to feuds, and get revenge. In other words — vent, the first step to anger management. That was the American way.

To avoid the trouble of filing a lawsuit, expensive and not so speedy trials, and processing endless paperwork, all that was required to alleviate anger was to use as menacing a voice as possible to challenge the nemesis of the moment to step outside and settle differences. Then in a good old-fashioned quick-draw contest, the opponents would attempt to shoot the object of their afflictions right between the runnin' lights and call it a day.

Nonetheless, these contests were not without ceremony. No siree. A well-defined courage-gathering ritual preceded every challenge. Copious amounts of whiskey were consumed, trash was talked, and invectives were exchanged. After alcohol-inspired bravado took effect, the contestants stumbled out of the saloon and onto the street with encouragement from enthusiastic audiences. Then wagers were made and the contest was observed at a safe distance.

The winner, when there was one, was usually carted off to jail to sleep off his inebriated state until he was released the morning following the altercation, which he probably didn't remember. If they both missed, which was usually the case, they would both endure the same end.

Law enforcement recorded the incidents in their log books (if they knew how to write) as fair fights whether they were or not. If a crime was actually reported, taxpayers' money would have to be used to feed prisoners until a judge was available to hold a trial, and that could take months. Even when a judge arrived, most

trials ended in acquittal because witnesses would be long gone, and the sheriffs were generally too terrified to testify, fearing reprisal.

This system of anger management worked well until too many dead bodies littered the streets and jails constantly filled with more prisoners than local law enforcement found manageable. So to take up the slack, and provide additional ways for the masses to vent their frustrations, some bozo invented the NFL, which was quickly followed by the NHL.

The latter is a combined activity for those who are not capable of deciding which fascinates them more, two men bashing each other's brains out with their fists, or a team of men knocking as many players as possible senseless with hockey sticks. Important decisions like that are apparently not taken lightly and lengthy discussion with knowledgeable peers is highly recommended.

Clearly, these forms of anger management by venting through vicarious means are not working. If they really worked, we wouldn't be experiencing so much "fan violence." You know the kind — like after soccer, football, basketball, and hockey games when thousands of young men are inspired to set fires, overturn cars, loot, and create general mayhem because their team won or lost. They celebrate both with the same idiocy. It doesn't make sense.

The Chinese, long recognized for their wisdom, apparently analyzed the situation and came up with an ingenious concept that should solve a global problem — the anger bar.

This, folks, is anger management at its best. A bar has been opened in Guangdong Province,

in eastern China, where customers can release anger caused by problems of daily life by beating up the staff. This is not a figment of my demented imagination. It was on the Reuters news wire directly from Beijing this past weekend.

"The Rising Sun Anger Release Bar in Nanjing lets customers smash glasses, rant and even hit specially trained workers," state media reported.

The owner, Wu Gong, told China Daily that he was inspired to open the bar by his experiences as a migrant worker. Most of his customers were women working in the service or entertainment industries, he said.

The bar employs 20 men who have been given protective gear and physical training to prepare them for the job. Clients can even ask the men to dress as the character they wish to attack. Most thought it was a good idea.

"Pressure in today's society comes from just about anywhere, from family or from work, from your boss or your girlfriend. We get no place to vent anger," said salesman Chen Liang.

"The idea of beating someone decorated as your boss seems attractive," said another.

But another man, Liu Yuanyuan, said violence was not the answer.

"If people really feel angry, they should adjust their lifestyles or seek psychological treatment," he told the daily.

However, Mr. Wu Gong can meet that need, too. For the most stressed-out cases, counseling is available from psychology students recruited from local universities.

What a concept! Drink alcohol, beat up another live human being with impunity, and if that doesn't work, get therapy from a student shrinks over a few cocktails.

And we wonder why we live in a system we can't understand.

Fools Rules set for Aug. 19 at East Ferry

The nationally famous 29th annual Fools' Rules Regatta, sponsored by the Jamestown Yacht Club, will be held Saturday, Aug. 19, on the town beach at East Ferry in Jamestown. The rain date will be Sunday, Aug. 20.

Construction of the unique sailing craft will begin with the firing of the cannon at 9 a.m. Contestants have two hours to build their vessels from non-marine items. Past years have produced vessels from Volkswagens, doghouses, picnic tables, sandboxes, ladders, trash cans, hay bales, and giant blocks of ice. All vessels must be wind-powered, and crews must wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life preservers.

Entrants compete in one of five classes: one to four people in respective classes, and the Unlimited Class, for five or more sailing fools. Just completing the downwind 500-yard course is difficult for many.

Awards will be given to the first three finishers in each class immediately after the final race. Competition is always fierce for the three most prestigious awards: The Karl Smith Most Ingenious Design, in honor of the regatta's founder who died this past winter, 'The Worst Example of Naval Architecture, and the Frank Newman Judges Award, given to the boat and crew with the best theme.

Anyone looking for an interesting and unusual event this summer, should join in the 29th annual Fools' Rules Regatta.

Entry forms and rules are available at various Jamestown businesses and on the Jamestown Yacht Club's Web site: www.jyc.org. Chief Fool will again be Chris Powell. For more information, call 423-1492.

During the event, parking will be available on the upper Shoreby Hill Green, thanks to the generosity of the property owners. Visitors and regatta participants should remember to remove all vehicles and trash after the regatta.



Inspiration is found where beauty dwells

Our inspiration is endless and our tiles are magnificent.

A Tile and Stone Showroom

3030 East Main Road, Portsmouth, RI

401-683-5577

Tuesday - Friday 9:30am - 5pm • Saturday 10am-2pm

WAREHOUSE SALE

UP TO **60% OFF**

ALL HELLY HANSEN PRODUCT

AUGUST 11, 12, 13
Friday, Saturday, Sunday
9am to Midnight

Newport Yachting Center, America's Cup Ave., Newport
849-6666 • www.hellynewengland.com

Serving the Community for over 22 Years

CUNNINGHAM'S HOME DELIVERY

Saturday Deliveries • Small & Large Loads

- Crushed Colored Stone, All Colors
- Regular Stone
- Wall Stone
- Fish Pond Stone
- Flag Stone
- River Stone
- Pool Sand
- Concrete Sand
- Brick Sand
- Bark Mulch
- Red Mulch
- Playground Mulch
- Cedar Mulch
- Processed Gravel
- Bank Gravel
- Screened Loam
- USA. Flags

Monday through Saturday
828-8338

Cobblestones & Pool Clay

WILLIAM A. LEONARD

General Consulting for Individuals & Small Businesses

I can... > install and setup your computer hardware and software.
 > degunk your computer for better performance.
 > build or help you build web pages and get them on the internet.
 > help you learn how to use Microsoft™ Windows and Windows programs
 > provide scanning services and digital photography and show you how.
 > create custom programs for Microsoft™ Windows Environment.

(401) 423-2809 • WWW.WAL1.COM