

Obsessing

Nobody asked but ...

Theodore Sturgeon once opined that “ninety percent of everything is crap” (aka Sturgeon’s Law). I’m not here to argue the number itself, but it stands to reason that the figure is heavily weighted toward the unworthy. A corollary would be that the attention of ninety percent of the people would be centered on what ninety percent of the people are doing. It is moot whether ninety percent attention is equivalent to obsessiveness, or not.

Observation tells us that most people seem to be obsessing with whatever most other people are doing. Kardashian, anyone? Prince Harry and Duchess Meghan, anyone?

This brings me to my point, that far too many are making monolithic judgments about the cell phone craze. Haven’t we always had people acting distractedly? Is our concern that they are not paying attention or that they are not paying attention to us? In my youth, I was seldom seen without a book. I wasn’t paying attention to my immediate surroundings. But we may have made the reverse mistake, since books were often highly idealized as the tools of the intelligent. I suspect that ninety percent of the reading was of books about true romance, the day’s Kardashians, or the ‘seventies equivalent of the Royals.

Let’s not forget the much smaller percentage who are taking advantage of having the species’ knowledge base at the touch of their fingers.

— Kilgore Forelle