Earl's Pearls

Politically Correct Sierra outings

This is the age of Politically Correct thought. To be politically correct one must not speak nor write nor think any word or phrase that could in any way be considered a derogatory comment on gender, religion, race, national origin, physical or mental condition, sexual orientation, or species. (In writing this non-exhaustive list, I know I run the risk of being politically incorrect by some omission, for which I effusively apologize in advance.)

The Sierra Club would like to include in its membership persons from all walks of life. (I've often wondered what a Walk of Life is, but that question will be left for another day.) The reality of our organization, however, is that it is predominantly white (Euro-American) and middle class. To ensure that the Sierra Club is in harmony with the mood of our culture, the outings henchmen are formulating policy guidelines to govern camping trips, hikes, canoe float trips, and other Sierra-sponsored outings for the Politically Correct.

...one meal shall include organically grown broccoli, in defiance of our broccoli-disdaining erstwhile environmental president...

The first point is the abolition of trip “leaders.” This term has hierarchical connotations, suggests male dominance, and implies an exclusiveness (leader versus followers) that is repugnant to politically correct sensitivity. Those who have volunteered to plan the trip will be designated as “organizers” or “facilitators” and will do no more than initiate the trip planning. All decisions concerning the trip (type of trip, where to go, when, etc.) will be made by vote of those going, with due respect to and extensive discussion of any dissenting opinions.

Any outing that makes it past the first stage must then check the gender/race/national origin/sexual preference status of those participating. All politically correct Sierra outings must include: (a) at least one Hispanic/Latino(a)/Spanish-surnamed person; (b) at least one African-American/Black/Negro; (c) one Native American/American Indian; (d) one gay/lesbian/homosexual; (e) one habituation-deprived/homeless person. Straight white men will be permitted on politically correct outings, but only if they are guilt-ridden and contrite about their status.

After making sure the participant population is balanced, the next step is for all involved to hold a group discussion to sensitize everyone to the “rules” of a politically correct Sierra outing. The term “rules” must be used cautiously, lest someone be offended by the authoritarian tone of the word. Sensitive participants may prefer to speak of “guidelines” or “suggestions.”

The first of these rules/guidelines/suggestions is the absolute prohibition of gender-specific words in conversation. For example, “mankind” and “maternity leave” are inappropriate and should be replaced by “humankind” and “parental leave.” An exception will be made for any eco-feminist participants who will be allowed to refer to “Mother Nature” and to speak of God as “She.”

The outings participants must also discuss food. Anyone suggesting

So what is beyond politically correct outings? Even as you read these lines, Sierra outings henchmen are consulting shamans, astrologers, and channelers to set policy for New Age outings. Stay tuned.

— Earl Higgins

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