

Mauder Maloney's Mentality

I may not be able to cut-the-mustard (anymore); but I can still lick the rim
- "Bob" Maloney

Having met Maloney only day's ago seems to greatly limit the effort to write about him; however, my early fascination with his character, from his meandering and "mauder" to his fluid conversation on history and politics is among the most compelling reasons for his mention in a thousand words.

On the day he arrived (at work), Maloney immediately impressed me as being somewhat confused - even shocked - by his call from retirement: semi- if not fully retired at 82, he had decided at some point that more cash was needed in the coffer and, with all the determination that debt can create, he would return to the rank-and-file as a contractor; and with a past in the sciences and operations of manufacturing and allied industries, Maloney has found himself somewhat drop-shipped on the steps of a mezzanine of aircraft assembly; and along with a team of similar semi-retirees and associates, he is presently finding his place where he may not have thought possible as of late.

I could be wrong on my appraisal if it were not for some conversation on this and other topics of an unrelated nature. Only a few days ago, Maloney and I were discussing some possibilities for his methods' study when he ventured into one of his favorite topics, politics. Citing several of his memorable reads - to include authors and details - he describes each with such reference and reverence as to impress that he has been doing his mental calisthenics beyond the glow of the tube - be it computer or television. Oh yes, he does like these other modes of information, but



mostly for the history and documentaries of similar topics. In all, the man has the mentality that is behind - rather than ahead - of his 82 years; and while he may maunder with some aspects of the task before him (most frequently with use of computer software), the passion of his present interest prevails in the depth of his dialogue. He is a great conversationalist though apparently fixed on his self-admitted and unabashed, dyed-in-the-wool liberal, democrat party affiliation.

On the same day that we met, I learned that Bob was a family-man; a father of five daughters, he had been true to his Irish-Catholic heritage when it comes to family planning. Beginning with a brief stay in the Army on the eve of World War II and continuing with the GI bill at Georgia Tech, he ventured into his career with some latitude for the insurance business as a sidetrack to his primary role in manufacturing and related industries. A collection of full-time and contract positions over the years included military programs West to California and North to Minnesota. With all this travel however, the Connecticut-born Yankee spent much of his boyhood in Atlanta and continued much of his adulthood in the Southeast where he raised his girls.

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One of the particular Southern towns happen to be Plains Georgia where, by no coincidence, he met President Carter on the opportunity to present a paper on nuclear power; and to clarify, Bob was presenting the paper while the president and former naval, nuclear engineer was among the audience. Besides the connection at this event, the Maloney's and the Carters also socialized through the halls of the local high school in Americus. As Bob has told me more than once, one of the President's sons did show some interest in one of his daughters...but nothing became of it. She thought the son to be goofy and that's where it probably ended.

As most of us should accept in the frequency of our brain activity, thinking and responding do not always match-up; and with such momentary dullness of the

mind albeit absent-mindedness or mental rest, the occurrence may be inappropriately described as a "senior moment". In my own experience is the certain and sometimes unexplained interruptions that lead to a momentary loss of thought, my car keys are something else on or in person. Once again, I could be wrong in my appraisal, but Bob seems to reflect such an occurrence through the repeated and insistent questioning on a work-related matter or task. With the kind of resolution but indirection that reminds me of the detective *Colombo* (alias Peter Faulk), his line of questioning can quickly test the patience and lead to exasperation if continued for long. What may be thought of as a hard-case of understanding may, in effect, be a very determined method of learning the lesson at hand; and as with *Colombo*, the method seems to *solve the case* despite annoyance and misunderstanding...perhaps on both sides.

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In the heat of such questioning may come the occasion to gravitate to a subject of more interest; and for Bob, this subject is usually history and politics. When touching on the day's news of the current presidential race, I find that Bob is quick-to-the-draw on similar or related events of the past - ranging from the Revolution to the current threats of recession. He can both entertain and enthrall with an eclectic choice of references coinciding with his own memories and experiences beginning in World War 2 and continuing to the current global warming. Finally, and without any surprise, is his innuendo fired at close range toward Republicans - of which he may conveniently assign to me based on some notions of my own political persuasion or religious background.

To best describe his inclination (on history and politics) would be to simply quote him; and thereby convey the tenor from his first comment or reply to the deviations and sometimes misdirection of his dialogue. As a feeble attempt at trying to capture the essence however, the conversation may begin on a particular

topic of trait - of some historical character or event - and migrate in a direction that would likely not terminate if time were not a factor. Such wide-open and open-ended development is clearly a reflection of Bob's passion for such subjects and, of course, his knowledge mastered by his voluminous reading and life experiences.

In keeping with this development (of dialogue) is the occasional opportunity to voice his invective - whether in person or on paper. One subject that seems more than able to flame-the-fire is that of television evangelists of which he has repeatedly offered a collection of characters (or should I say charlatans) coupled with a predisposed combination of left and right jabs posing as questions and answers; and while the Q&A is merely to drive his opinion home or to-the-mat, it leaves me convinced of the all too certain condition that no human is without sin...except Christ, of course. I know this subject is a tinderbox of which there is evidently some depth and distance; still, we can't seem to get past the basic disgust to the differences of belief and the proposal and possibility to examine the creator - not the created.

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Aside from his mainstream of history and politics, Bob has some inkling of a sports-fan - though he admits that his primary if not singular following is for Georgia Tech. Several times, he has interjected some campus experience as a though it happened recently if not associated with the World War; and the time or era seems to have left many of Bob's age with the greatest appreciation for education with all its promises and potential. These training years, though divided by courtship and marriage, are clearly an experience well kept with him - an association that he has maintained with its memories and some of the methods still applied from industrial management. With his *mentality*, Maloney *maunders* these methods and the steps determined for the day and for his life to come.