

Did you ever stop to consider how our beliefs, upbringing, and interests color what we see? One would think that sight would be pretty objective, that any persons with 20-20 vision would perceive the same things when looking at a particular scene. But that seems to be very far from the truth.

Suppose, for instance, that you were driving down the road and met a truckload of logs. What would you see? If you were a truck enthusiast, you'd probably note the make and model of truck and all the particulars concerning it. If you were a weighmaster, and it was early spring, you'd automatically mentally estimate the size of the load. If you were a logger, you might make a guess at the number of board feet of lumber the load would make, or note whether the truck carried saw logs, pulp, or firewood. A botanist might say, "That's a nice load of maple," or whatever kind of wood made up the load. A small child would probably exclaim, "Look at that Big Truck!"

If you see a whitetail buck with an exceptionally nice rack, and you mentally see a target on him, you are probably an eager hunter. If the buck seems framed in black, with some brown oak in one corner of the frame, and perhaps some play of sunshine and shadows across his back, you are, more likely, a nature photographer. If, at the sight of the big deer, you also imagine ruined beans, pulled carrots, and eaten-up pea vines, you may well be a northern Michigan gardener.

The weather and how we view it is a particularly subjective topic. A sunny, pleasant day may be especially appealing to the tourist, for he or she will be able to play that game of golf, or go to the lake shore, or view the Great Lakes' scenery in comfort and with no disruption of plans. The farmer, too, may see that same day in an equally positive light. There may be hay to bale, or grain to combine, or sheep to handle. All of these can only be accomplished in dry weather. The launderer may see the sunny day as good drying weather, knowing that the clothes would dry well on the line on such a day. The school teacher may view such weather positively, as well, as a day when the pupils can surely play outside at recess.

At other times, though, the farmer may be saddened by another

sunny, dry day. The crops and pastureland may be drying up, and a day which is perfect for golf can signal the farmer that he is one step closer to selling livestock because of drought, usually at a reduced price. The gardener, seeing his produce dry on the vine, may also be clamoring for rain.

Snow, too, provokes varied reactions among people. To the skier, snow means fun. To the ski resort owner, it means money. To centers of population in some areas, it means next season's water supply. But, to many drivers, snow means slippery roads and extended driving time, plus added dangers. To a large percentage of older people, snow and the accompanying ice mean less security while walking, the fear of falling down and breaking a bone, and unwelcome white stuff to shovel. To road workers, it means less rest and more overtime. To kids, snow means fun--snowballs, snow forts, sliding, and general good times.

We can look at any number of familiar sights with similar results. Who we are, what we believe, the subjects in which we show knowledge (or ignorance), all contribute to our view. It is hard to remember that others don't see the world just as we do, that they see issues as important which we consider trivial, that their experiences have also shaped their views. We'd perhaps all get along a little better if we thought about this. It isn't so easy to understand each other when we don't even see the same things in a life scene. We probably need to try.