

Entertainment Outlook

Proving they're nuttier than Guinness Book

I'm always delighted to come across a news story about someone who is attempting some extraordinary task which will prove that he is even nuttier than everyone else in the Guinness Book of World Records.

From time to time, for instance, we read about someone who is trying to set a new record for the amount of time spent in a room full of snakes. And it's always fascinating to read about a man who has achieved the world's longest sojourn with snakes.

In fact, the only thing more fascinating would be a story about the man who achieved the world's shortest sojourn with snakes.

If memory serves, this distinction belongs to an Australian zoologist named Fitzsimmons, who discovered after 12 seconds that it is essential to feed a boa constrictor BEFORE you move in with him.

And now, an even more remarkable feat is being attempted. A game park employee in South Africa is trying to spend 64 days in a cage full of lions in an attempt to raise \$250,000 so the zoo can buy two gorillas.

In short, this extraordinary fellow is going after not one but three Guinness records — most time spent

with lions, most money raised for the purchase of gorillas and most desperate lengths gone to in order to make an employer like you.

I mean, not many of us would be willing to spend 64 days with lions just so the firm could afford new gorillas. ("Couldn't we just rent them, sir? I'd be happy to organize a bake sale...")

Admittedly, it's a pretty clever fundraising stunt — although you would have to be careful to control the enthusiasm of the donors.

"Notice: If you wish to contribute, please mail a cheque or money order. DO NOT throw handfuls of coins directly into the cage, as this irritates the lions. This has happened several times already, as a consequence of which we are down to our last employee."

But we're getting off track. What really intrigues me is the harrowing experience that this employee has already endured.

Apparently the brave chap has already spent more than a month with the lions — during which time they have torn his mattress from under him, ripped three of his jackets and smashed his radio.

Now, I'm certainly not an expert on the behavior of lions. But I vividly recall the behavior of some of the

guys I went to junior high school with — and the behavior of these lions sounded strikingly similar.



Weir's View

By Ian Weir

As such, it sounds as if the feat this fellow is attempting is even more fascinating than we had first assumed. He's not just trying to spend 64 days with lions — he's trying to spend 64 days with juvenile-delinquent lions.

Look at it this way. A responsible adult lion, when confronted with a man on a mattress, would do one of two things: eat him or leave him

alone. Only a group of juvenile-delinquent lions would slide up behind him, snickering: "Look at him. Thinks he's pretty comfortable, eh? Grab the mattress, Artie, grab the mattress! Har-har-har."

The fact that the lions ripped three of his jackets without inflicting bodily harm is another sure tip-off. And imagine the poor guy's distress as the gang backed him into a corner of the cage:

"Hey, nice jacket. I wish I had a jacket like that. Lemme feel the material... whoops!"

"What a jerk, Artie. You've gone and ripped his nice jacket with your claw."

"And now you've made him cry. Aw, what a sissy."

But let's not make light of this. After all, these are lions we're talking about. And it sounds as if things almost got totally out of hand on the day they smashed his radio.

The news reports haven't indicated how this happened — but we can certainly make a pretty good guess.

"Hey, listen — this guy's got Duran, Duran on the radio. What a nerd!"

"Gimme that thing."

"Careful, Artie. Don't bash it around like that. You're gonna —"

"Oops."

"Way to go, Artie. Just way to go. It's probably his dad's radio, and now we're gonna get it."

Ah, well. With any luck, this brave game park employee will survive the rest of his stay with the lions, and win his rightful place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

At the end of the 64th day, the director of the zoo will open the cage door and discover him sobbing quietly in the corner.

And the lions will look startled, then furtive, then defensive, and they will mutter: "Hey, we didn't do nothing."

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The owners of The Ravine, Anne and Edwin Bischoff, also operate Crossroads Restaurant in Brampton. Mr. Bischoff was educated in Hotel School in Switzerland, while Mrs. Bischoff is English by origin.

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