



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Adventures of Captain Bob and the Starship NDP

Stardate: Sometime in the future.

Captain's Log: We are entering the democratic sector of the Utopia Quadrant—a reportedly hostile environment where the citizens speak for themselves and the government is ruled by the people. Obviously an uncivilized society greatly in need of our social assistance.

"Captain Bob, Captain Bob!"

"Yes Ensign Noel."

"Our sensors are picking up signs of a major disturbance on the 3rd planet."

"I told you to stop playing around with those technical things Ensign, you're still a junior in training. (Where do they find these candidates today—maybe he's a Ferengi). What does Commander Pinky say?"

"He says it sounds like munitions going off. Wait a minute, no, it's fireworks."

"What are they celebrating?"

"The whole planet is celebrating the anniversary of the discovery of a cure for the aberrant socialist gene factor."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Well, after all the do-gooders received treatment, they were actually able to get real jobs, contributing to the wealth and growth of society, which virtually eliminated unemployment and poverty."

"Who is their leader?"

"It's some guy called the Benevolent Dictator."

"A dictator? Well we can do something about that—energize the photon torpedoes Pinky—Noel, get away from the weapons board."

"Bridge, this is engineering. We've just lost all of our power from the PHA system. Only life support is unaffected."

(Technical Note) The PHA system is a Canadian scientific breakthrough which harnesses political hot air (PHA). The incredible abundance of the fuel source allowed the development of propulsion systems able to reach Warp Factor 12. Unfortunately no



VIEW POINT

with PATRICK KELLY

Canadian development money was available, so the discoverers moved to Seattle and sold their idea to Boeing, who now control the world market for star ships. Canada now leases second hand US models.

"Captain Bob, it's the Benevolent Dictator on the communicator."

"What have you done to our ship? You'll stop it if we just go away? But don't you want to share discoveries for the good of everyone? You'll sell them to us—but that's not sharing? You don't share? I see, you call it charity."

"What do you mean we can't negotiate this with your administrators and planners? You don't have any? How do you know what to do? The people vote on their computers and you get the results? You do what they tell you? The best people get the jobs on subcontracts? Well you don't seem to have anything to do yourself. So what you do is party and play golf? A three handicap! You don't believe you should interfere in the lives of your citizens?"

"What about crime—murderers, rapists? You say you haven't had any in years? You dispose of them through the air hatch? What about fraud and theft? You say you take everything they own and make them start over? What about their rights? You're telling me they have to earn their back by working?"

"What's that cloud coming toward us B. D.? Is it the aberrant socialist gene antidote?"

"Pinky, get us out of here! (Ssssss) Warp Factor...."

Hi there boys and girls, this is cowboy Bob, back at last in a job he's capable of doing.



Self-help for a bad mood



PSYCHOLOGY IN THE '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

"Mood congruency". The notion is that people in a good mood seek out activities, situations and people which will perpetuate their good mood, while those in a sad mood prefer people and situations that will keep them feeling lousy. There seems to be something in us that wants to maintain our mood, nourish it, whether it's a good mood or a bad mood.

This "mood congruence" has many effects. For example, doctors assess what to do with you based on your complaints, and how much you complain. People in a bad mood for a long time may be misdiagnosed, overmedicated, etc.

Similarly, happy people have much higher expectations for good health and good fortune in the future, while sad people expect the worst. Happy people follow health and diet regimes, while sad people don't comply with the doctor's prescriptions as often—the sadness produces a fatalistic attitude. They feel it doesn't matter what they do.

Interestingly, self-evaluation is strongly affected by mood. There is a myth that we all compare ourselves to people who are worse off, to build our own self-esteem. It makes us appreciate what we've got rather than walking around feeling that the world owes us something. The interesting part is that it is the happy people that do this, while sad people tend to compare themselves to people who

they perceive as better off. In fact, the more depressed a person is, the more likely they are to compare with a person they think is better off.

Some studies have found that people high on various depression scales made sort of a habit, a lifestyle, of this to keep themselves down. They truly wallow in their sadness, savor it, spread it to everyone they can.

In younger people, the negative self-perceptions of bullies at 7, 9 and 11 years old became self fulfilling prophecies, as they systematically trained themselves to see the world and other people as hostile, the enemy.

These are just examples of how drastically mood can influence the choices a person makes in life. Moods affect our interpretation of all our abilities—romantic, athletic, social or scholastic.

This does not mean, however, that anytime you get sad you are going to spiral down into the jaws of chronic depression. Of course not. Studies have found that there are many mood changers in life, and it's actually surprising how little it can take to elevate another person's mood. In research, anything from a happy movie to a free set of toenail clippers has been used effectively to elevate mood. If free toenail clippers can work, imagine what a kind word, a touch, positive feedback to a child struggling with his schoolwork can do.

When mood is elevated, studies have found that we see the world differently—you view your spouse, your job, your children and your future more positively. The good mood makes everything look better, the future more hopeful. Most important, it makes you persevere more, try harder—in your marriage, your work or with your children.

Now that we know about the problem of mood congruency, we must get it working for us, not against us. We all will feel sad at times but the key is to not let it grow, expand, until we are wallowing in self-pity. A key is to make sure there are mood-elevators in our lives, the kind word, a touch. A key is to not let our spouse or child keep putting themselves in depressing situations, instead of taking them out to a movie or visiting with (happy) friends. With a little thought, we can short circuit the sad times and let the happier thoughts be the ones that grow and expand.

It's a dog's life: bring on the air conditioning

The 'Dog Days' of summer are here. Actually based on star position in the summer sky, 'Dog Days' signify hot, humid days to most of us earthlings.

'Lucky Dogs' are those who boast air conditioned-digs. When the humidex makes a 30 degree day feel like a sauna with no exit, the dog (and human) with a cool residence is truly fortunate. Happy and smiling.

'Dirty Dogs' are not necessarily scoundrels. They may merely be enterprising individuals, lowering their body temperatures by rolling in some nice cool mud. Well, the ensuing bath should serve to cool things down even more.

'Dying like a dog' is a terrible way to go. Unfortunately, thoughtless or ill-informed owners can cause the horrible demise of their pets during weather extremes.

Car interiors rapidly heat up to more than 120 degrees while owners make a quick trip into the grocery store. At the very least, the dog inside such an oven will suffer severe heat stroke. Worse case scenario—dead dog.

'Leave Sarge at home. Even if you don't have air conditioning, he can find a cool spot somewhere, and you can stay in the store as



PETS AND YOU

with ANNE NORMAN

long as you like.

In my limited experience, there aren't too many places cooler than a grocery store in summer.

'Hot Dogs'. Not just a variation on the above, we're talking barbecue.

Digestive systems tend to be more delicate in hot weather, and digestive upset means two things: vomiting and/or diarrhea. Gross. Even though the temptation is strong, restrict snacks and fatty meat leftovers for your dog. (Restricting your own intake isn't a bad idea either.)

'Dog-tired' is the way most of us feel at the end of a sweltering day. Remember that your pet's metabolism may be suffering too. If he

or she can't settle down without the evening walk, even in extreme heat, wait until it's dark. Far easier on both parties.

'Dogging it up' refers to over-acting and mugging. You know, melodrama, exaggerating wildly. Even though it's hot enough to make fajitas on your driveway, relax. Conserve energy and make sure your dog does the same. There's no way you'll be comfortable if you're explaining, at length, how you'd be cooler in hell, and your dog gets caught up in your agitation.

Hold on to your energy, Grasshopper, you may need it another day.

'Doing something' to the dog is a rude expression which can't be published in its original form. It means, essentially, doing absolutely nothing. Good advice for dog and owner during the muggiest, heaviest days. There are definitely times when doing absolutely nothing is great.

I don't mean to be dogmatic or anything. I'm sure you get the idea. Take it easy in the heat, protect your pet(s) as much as possible, and have a good time. Doggone it, I'm out of here.