

Cuba - A year round 50's dance

The first thing one (in Spanish it's pronounced *Juan*) notices about Cuba is that the place is crawling with Commies. No really, there are more Communists in Cuba than Ronald Reagan imagined to be hiding under his bed during his eight years in the White House which made him so crazy he would later tell a congressional committee, under oath, that he couldn't remember if he had instructed Ollie North to sell arms to Iran on behalf of the Contras or sell condoms to Iraq on behalf of the Armenians.

You must of course remember that the country of Cuba has for a leader a man who subverts the will of the people, rules with a dictatorial and divisive hand, and makes arbitrary deals with other countries that are devesting the economy. He took office by mili-

William J. Thomas

All The World's A Circus

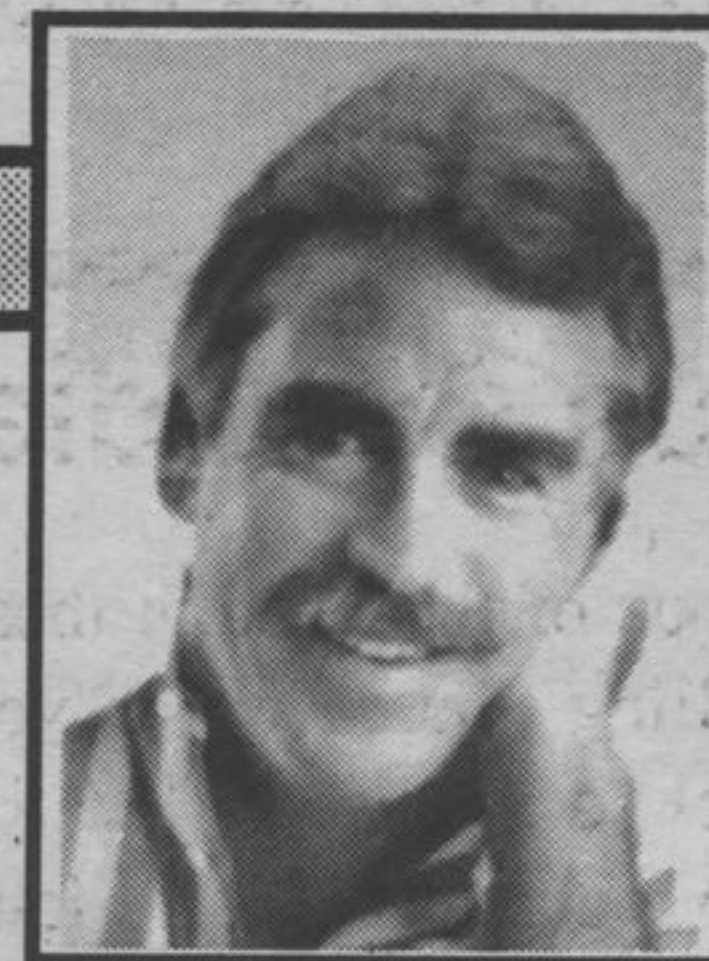
tary force. We, on the other hand, elected ours.

But are these Cubans shrewd or what? The guy who went through the security check ahead of me at the Havana Airport, whose name incidently is Murray (also pronounced *Juan* down here), had his stick of pepperoni confiscated. Honest, I'm not making this up. His bag set off a buzzer, a military cop opened the bag, took out the pepperoni and refused to give it back. The way I figure, if the Cubans have such sophisticated surveillance equipment that can actually spot sausage through Samsonite, they've probably been buzzing the

White House with invisible Stealth bombers and watching President Bush shower with his dog Millie.

Murray, by the way, managed to lose his passport in the thirty-five steps it takes to get from Customs to the tour bus. But to be fair, Murray is a Canadian and an accountant which means if he had gone through the machine instead of his bag, the alarm would still have gone off and the sign would still have flashed: "PEPPERONI" "PEPPERONI!"

Another thing you notice about Cuba, whose national bird is a 58-pound turkey vulture by the name of Juan (pronounced Jose down



here), is the omnipresence of *THE MAN*. His portrait hangs on every wall; his voice resonates powerfully from radios, television and loudspeakers set up in every town square from Veradero to Guantanamo; his words are repeated as gospel by the masses. And I have to admit that although it all starts to get to you after a

while, for his age, Julio Iglesias looks marvelous.

At first glance, a first time visitor to Cuba is convinced that Fidel's transportation minister is The Fonz from Happy Days. Except for Soviet Ladas, which are not really cars but motorized shipping crates, all the cars in Cuba are American cars from 1958, the year of the Revolution or older. Once Castro secured his military regime the United States cut Cuba off from all American goods which is why cars down here have switched from yearly maintenance programs to a more practical repair system utilizing baling wire, wooden boards and flour paste. Replacement engine parts are mainly Campbell soup cans and coat hangers. To do a

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Criticism of voice nit-picking

Yer ole Baba was casually perusing a back issue of Time Magazine and, glancing over an article on a certain female, was suddenly struck by an odd item. A very odd item. Two odd items as a matter of fact.

The female in question was one certain Takako Doi, age 60, who is now the astonishing leader of the Socialist Party in Japan. Astonishing, for a country with a history of complete male dominance ever and forever, that is. If you feminists out there think you were hard done by in the past, well, you should have lived in the Land of the Rising Sun. The only thing that rose there, it appears, were the women who looked after their men hand, foot and bent neck.

For a woman to have achieved the present-day eminence of Miss Doi, would have once been completely unthinkable, let alone manageable. Everyone, including the women themselves, would

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Life, According to Baba

have been horrified at the thought of women shoving and pushing with such impropriety into the male world. The women knew their place and stayed very firmly in it.

Not so today. Even the Japanese women are on the march trying to dynamite the log-jamb of discrimination and sexual stereotyping out their in the market place, and having a tough row to hoe, and making little or slow progress.

But progress enough so that this certain Miss Takako Doi was actually elected to the eminent position of Leader of the Opposition in July of 1988. I think a lot of Japanese men must have had heart attacks, or near ones, on that day. Anyway, they

certainly didn't let the occasion go by without a lot of vociferous sour grapes and nit-picking on their part.

Among the many unkind and downright nasty things they had to say about her, were two outstanding items. One, that she wasn't married. Well, I honestly don't know what this had to do with anything, but according to them, it just wasn't seemly for a very single Miss Doi to be mixing it up with the boys without that certain ring, third finger, left hand. I should have thought they'd be applauding her for being without such marital encumbrances distracting from concentration on career and position. But I guess Japanese men thought it was just one big strike



against her.

Second big gripe they had was - wait for it! - that her voice was too low!

I kid you not. That's what it actually said in the article. Her voice was too low. She sounded too much like a man!

Well, gee whiz, fellows, what the heck. What's the quality of the lady's voice got to do with the matter? Does it make her less capable of carrying out her duties? Does it automatically

make her suspect as one of those 'funny' kind of women who prefer their own sex for bedroom romping or something? You'd think they'd be thankful she doesn't have one of those shrill, ear-piercing, only-a-dog-can-hear kind of voices which plague too many of these feminist careerists no matter what country.

Come on, guys, if you're going to be negative about something, find something more reasonable than the too-low, too-deep quality of the lady's voice. It's a wonder they didn't say she was too old for the job at age sixty.

In case you're wondering why I've chosen to take up the cause of this relatively unknown lady pol, way over there in the Land of the Rising Sun, well, wonder not.

Yeah, you guessed it. Yer ole Baba has a too-low, too-deep, too-much-like-a-man's-voice, too! And has had her problems regarding same!

The Green Plan - too much talk

I put on my green socks. Next, I dug out my green T-shirt. I have green pants, but they're in the laundry, so I can't wear them. I wish I could, because I want to be dressed properly to write this week's column. It's about "The Green Plan: A National Challenge." That's the federal government's latest way of using up paper (admittedly, it's recycled paper) by issuing a discussion paper about what they're talking about doing about the environment. There's a heavy emphasis on the word TALK.

This paper TALKS about all the things you hear these days about the environment - global warming, acid rain, depletion of the ozone layer, how we're drowning in our own garbage, toxic waste, forest depletion, and losing one species of wildlife a day. It then goes on to suggest that Ottawa is very worried about these things, and wants to know if Canadians are really prepared to do something about it. But it tries to put a sweetener in by suggesting that we need more economic development - we just have to learn how to do it in an environ-



mentally friendly way.

Right at the beginning, in the Preface, the Green Plan cites the report of the Brundtland Commission - "Our Common Future." It also goes by the name "The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development." Gro Harlem Brundtland, the lady who leads the Labour Party in Norway and used to be the Prime Minister, chaired the 20-member commission that brought down its report in 1987. They invented the term "sustainable development." According to the Green Plan, the Brundtland report did not challenge us to re-write our consumption handbooks. The Green Plan's version of the Brundtland report is "despite the serious envi-

NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders

ronmental problems we face, the challenge can be met." That may be true, but the authors of the Green Plan did not read page nine of the Brundtland report, which says:

"We do not pretend that the process is easy or straightforward. Painful choices have to be made. Thus, in the final analysis, *sustainable development must rest on political will.*"

That's the big hole in the Green Plan. I read through it twice, trying to find evidence of that kind of political will. Sadly, I didn't find it. As well, the man who released the Green Plan, Lucien Bouchard, has since resigned from the cabinet and the Conservative caucus over Meech Lake and gone home to build



some new version of a sovereignist party in Quebec. One wonders if he was really committed to Greening Canada, or whether he had his heart set on doing something else to this country. The man who replaced him, Robert de Cotret, is only working part-time on the Environment. The rest of the time, he's minister of Public Works.

But you don't have to look any further than northern Ontario to find evidence of this lack of political will on environmental matters. The Green Plan boldly states, "Canada's forest resources are not yet being managed and protected in a fully sustainable manner." What the Green Plan doesn't talk about is Ottawa's cut-

backs on forest spending which have contributed to this improper management. Ottawa used to have an agreement with Ontario called COFRDA - the "Canada-Ontario Forest Renewal Development Agreement" - under which the costs of planting more trees, expanding the horizons of forest research, and forest protection, were shared 50/50, between Ottawa and Queen's Park. That agreement expired on March 31, 1989. More than a year has gone by, and they're still only talking about renewing it. As a result of Ottawa not paying its share, forest renewal is falling behind.

The timber management hearings that have been going on for over two years under the Environmental Assessment board, looking at the way Ontario manages trees, has heard lots of evidence about the poor state of forest management. The board has been told repeatedly that our forest inventory system is so far behind, we don't know how we're doing on regeneration. The experts are convinced, based on

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