

All The World's A Circus

War in prime-time

Who would have thought the American television networks would resort to a World War to knock *Cheers* and *L.A. Law* off the top of the rating charts?

Now we've really done it. Before, all we had to do was cancel *The A Team* or *Miami Vice*, now we'll have to sign a sixteen-nation peace treaty to get the violence off TV.

There's no doubt that in this two-man desert shoot'em up showdown between George Bush and Saddam Hussein, the runaway winner will be Ted Turner of CNN.

I liked the NBC's retired general who described a missile as "a smart and interesting missile", only slightly less than the CBS's retired general who portrayed a missile as "precocious yet tenacious". I sincerely hope these retired television generals lend as much descriptive thought to their wine as they do to their warheads.

We certainly know a lot more about the Scud missile than we ever really wanted to.

I actually had heard the term Scud used prior to the breakout of War, in a doughnut shop conversation between two teenage waitresses.

First Girl: So, I go, like you actually called the witch? and he goes, like, it's not against the law to make a phone call, eh? and I go, like, she's scum-in-a-drum eh?...and if you're like calling her behind my back that makes you a real Scud."

Second Girl: "So?"

First Girl: "The wedding's off."

Scud sounds like the name you would give a big, stupid dog who leaves traction marks on the kitchen linoleum every time the phone rings.

After averaging 2,000 bombing missions a night and returning to base to rest at dawn, I can't get the U.S. Armed Forces television jingle out of my head: "We do more before 9 am than most people do all day!"

Last week I actually stopped at Tent City, an army/navy surplus shop on Main Street in Buffalo, New York, where the hottest selling item after gas masks, is a fatigue T-shirt inscribed:

JOIN THE AIR FORCE

*Travel to exotic, distant lands,
Meet exciting, unusual people,
And kill them.*

And it was only \$9.95 U.S.

I was, as no doubt you were, relieved to see that our Federal Members of Parliament voted to officially approve, what amounts to a Declaration of War, six days after the war began with Canadian pilots already flying combat missions.

Odd that the Meech Lake Accord had to be approved by midnight of last June 23 and the G.S.T. had to go into effect one minute after midnight of December 31 but a World War - hey! what's the rush? Perhaps Brian's dice are wearing a little thin and he can't add up all dots correctly.

If their timing holds, our Government will be voting to initiate a cease-fire, a week after the peace-treaty has been

signed.

I was a little surprised by the British Broadcasting Corporation's decisions to ban the playing of 67 "unsuitable" songs during the Persian Gulf War, including John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance." I am dead against censorship of any kind but, if this ban could somehow be extended to include all rap music, than this temporary abuse of freedom of speech is A-okay with me.

I was riveted to the television set when a military psychiatrist described Saddam Hussein's mental make-up as long periods of clear and rational thoughts interspersed by abrupt spells of insanity. I was on the floor later that night when American comic Jay Leno gave his assessment of that assessment: "It's the Almond Joy Syndrome - sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don't."

Now don't get me wrong, I'm all for throwing another sick Dictator the barbie, even one that enjoyed Favorite Dictator Status at the White House as late as two years ago.

But why did it take thousands of U.S. troops to chase Manuel "El Pimple" Noriega out of Panama at a huge cost of human lives and why is it taking a half a million allied troops to scare Saddam "That Wacky Iraqi" Hussein out of his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



William J. Thomas

Life, According To "Baba"

Baba to lead KPK

Yer ole Baba was quite taken aback by a letter from one Mr. John Harris, advocating a future role pour moi, namely that of future Prime Minister of this faire Dominion of our.

Well, sir, let me thank you for your most flattering compliment (I think it's a compliment, but judging from some of the nerds who have occupied that position in past years, one wonders), and also for thinking yer ole Baba was so qualified on the strength of that particular essay, "Collective New Year Resolutions".

But, dear Mr. H., how would we go about bringing such a wondrous proposition to pass? First of all, we need to have a party. No, no, not THAT kind of party, but the other kind, a Political Party. Can't get to be Prime Minister until you're the Leader of a

Political Party, you know. That's the way the system works in this country. Well, until such time as the strong advocates of governmental change bring about the American way of doing things. Then the Prime Ministership (or would that be, the Presidency, instead?) would be open to all comers in a separate election. Wouldn't that be fun! Every wierdo in the country would come crawling out of the woodwork. As though we don't have enough political wierdos as it is.

But supposing, just for one wild moment, we got serious about this, what sort of Party would we form? "The Kitchen Party of Kanada"; maybe the "K.P.K."? Well, that's better than the K.K.K., I guess, and maybe we could go swishing around in white robes, too, as promoting the Kleanest Party around. (Leave off the pointy hoods, though; that's only for pointy-headed bigots and racists). And among our many slogans could be, "K.P.K. stands for Klean-Klean Government, Klean Society, Klean Morals.", "Our Country Can Stand This Kind of Kitchen-Heat" Kitchen People are Kind, Kourteous, Konderate and Kung-Ho."

And if yer ole Baba is going to be the Leader of this new Party, we'd better have a few personal slogans too. How's about, "Baba is Best", "Believe in Baba", "Baba

for Basics in Everything", "Baba is Beautiful". No, no, scrap the latter. THAT would be carrying things too far!

And along with the white sheets or white clothes, we could sing our Kitchen Party Song: "Baa baa, white sheep, we are oh so clean; Yes sir, yes ma'am, we can make your dream; Come true, come true, at the voting box; If you'll only pray and vote for us!" Never make the Top Ten, I

know, but did you ever hear a political song which did?

And we could give out buckets-and-mops badges to show we're going to 'Kitchen Klean the Kountry', or tiny broom-and-dustpans to "Sweep the Kountry Kitchen Klean", together with token rolling pins with which to bop all the dirty, evil perversions in the land on their very wicked heads.



Olga Landiak

But with all this whiteness

and cleanness abounding, perhaps we should change the name of our Party to "The White Party of Canada". That could generate a whole batch of new slogans, such as, "Vote White for Right", "Whiter is Better", and "The White Way is the Right Way". And I could change my name to Aga Baba Alba, The Great White Grandmother!

Well, it's a lot of fun speculating and making a few terrible jokes, but seriously, wouldn't it be luvly if there were such a Party and Person to vote for who could REALLY assure us of some "Clean, White-for-Good, Principles and Plank" by which this country could be governed and make it a shining example to the rest of the world?

And wouldn't it be luvly if EVERYBODY took to heart those "Collective New Year Resolutions" of which I wrote and which so inspired Mr. Harris, and really put their collective minds and determination to carrying them out.

Then maybe, just maybe, we might have a "whiter and cleaner" world.

P.S. Anybody interested in a copy of "New Year Resolutions" essay, please write to me care of Gen. Del., Nipigon, POT 2J0. I shall be happy to supply same. Also very happy to hear from readers any time, and guarantee answers.

The white elephants of White River

Anyone who's driven the Trans-Canada highway between Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie has seen it. It's looking a little tattered now, and needs a paint job. If you drive past it at night, you might miss it, because the lights don't work any more. But if you drive by it in the daytime, you can't miss it.

It's the infamous White River thermometer, right at the main entrance to town. The white lettering on the fading red and blue signs tell you you're in: "White River - the coldest spot in Canada. 72 degrees below zero". Thousands of tourists have stopped in front of the sign to take a snap shot. Most of those summer visitors are no doubt anxious to leave - with such a warning of what the weather will be in January and February.

White River plane to take the old thermometer down later this year, and erect a statue they hope will present a much more positive image - a statue commemorating White River as the birthplace of Winnie the Pooh - the bear

made famous by the British children's author, A.A. Milne. But the people of White River will have to do much more than put up a new landmark to turn their town around.

If you want to know why I take that view, all you have to do is look south - right across the street from the thermometer.

You'll see one large white house, with some of its basement windows boarded up and a "for lease" sign on the front door. A little further down the street, there's an even larger two-storey house. Behind that, you can see three large garages, and several more houses. Nearly all these buildings are empty. They take up a huge block of land - right at the entrance to White River..

As long as these buildings have sat here, hauntingly empty, they've sent out a negative image of White River - as a town

with problems. The buildings and the land belong to the provincial government - and they've sat there, unused, for 11 years. They're the former district headquarters of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

How did this happen? To find out, I've ploughed through 11 years of documents, and interviewed people in White River.

What I've discovered is a classic case of government waste and mismanage-

ment - the kind of scandal one would think the Provincial Auditor would have blown the whistle on years ago. But my research has brought me to a disturbing conclusion. The Provincial Auditor's own rules are partly to blame for these White Elephants, in White River.

Let's go back to the beginning. In 1979, there were 32 people working in what was then the White River district office of the Ministry of Natural Resources. There had

been rumours for years about possible layoffs and cutbacks in the Ministry, but nothing official. The staff were happy. The White River district had the lowest turnover rate of any MNR office in the province. Dan O'Grady, the district manager back then, told me by telephone from his retirement home in Tweed, Ontario, "when you spend three days together in a tent with your timber staff, the District Manager can't go back to the office and hide behind his desk. Communications were wide open - and friendships were formed."

Then, in April of 1979, the bad news came. Al Baxter, the Regional Director from Thunder Bay, came to White River, unannounced. All the staff were summoned into the large upstairs office. Baxter told everyone that the province had decided to phase out the White River district, and consolidate its operations with Wawa. Dave Futhey, the former District administrative supervisor, told me from his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



NORTHERN
INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders

