

All The World's A Circus

Life, According To "Baba"

Fun at the cat show

Last Saturday I attended the Cat Fanciers' Association Cat Show held at Brock University in St. Catherines.

I've never been to a cat show. I had no idea what to expect.

Outside the building I imagined I'd see some pretty mangy-looking dogs milling around, testing the security and scalping tickets. All I saw was people smoking.

I thought for sure I'd see two hell-raisers in peewee hockey jackets, one with a box of mice under his arm. All I saw was a woman having a sneezing attack.

Once inside, I stood near the entrance to the gymnasium, absolutely appalled as the cats were formally signed in. I once attended Brock University.

Like everyone else, I've heard of the deteriorating state of our education system but witnessing 282 cats being registered at an accredited Canadian university -- good Lord, I had no idea the admission standards had dropped so low!

I remember when Brock was admitting first year failures from the University of Toronto, but bald cats....and some without tails?!

I certainly hope the people responsible for this have some sort of downscale co-op program planned for these animals. The last thing a Canadian university graduate needs these days is to be beaten out for a job by the family pet.

Not that some well-trained domestic animals couldn't do the job of some recent university grads, it's just that such a trend could, in the long run, be demoralizing to our young (people).

Once inside, it wasn't at all what I imagined.

I suppose I was anticipating some

sort of beauty pageant for pets -- sassy little Siamese with silicon breasts sashaying around hulking male Tabbies with pectoral implants.

But what I saw was a couple hundred precocious pedigrees being pampered and fawned over like the Roman emperor Caligula.

If boredom was a judicated characteristic at cat shows, all of the contestants would tie for first place.

They are gorgeous animals, almost all of them, lolling away their time in plush, carpeted cages, stretched out in overstuffed round beds and ignoring the feathered teasers tickling their whiskers. This whole exhibition of exhaustion

and extravagance is a quiet and orderly affair, interrupted occasionally by the shrieking caterwaul of a contestant who feels he or she's been lowballed by a biased judge.

And the people -- the breeders of these cats, their owners, their trainers, their live-in maids and their personal appointment secretaries -- are a severely serious bunch, operating in a business of such high finance that a mouse catcher named Mel, with healthy hormones, could be worth thousands and thousands of dollars.

Serious people. Like the lady who owns Saint, a strikingly-beautiful, copper-eyed White Persian worth \$2500.00. All combed-out and purring, Saint wore a white and blue embroidered bib collar and batted those big round eyes at me.

"She's a beauty", I said.

"She's a he", was the brief rebuttal.

"Dressing him like that...are you not concerned that he may turn out to have homosexual tendencies later in

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William J. Thomas

Six days is enough

To stay open or not to stay open. That is the burning question.

What is this Sunday shopping controversy all about anyway? Yer ole Baba reads and listens to all the pros and cons as to whether or not it should be legally allowed, and I wonder.

I wonder why on earth people need yet ANOTHER day in which to buy and spend when we already have extended hours during the ordinary week. If anybody can't get even their necessary grocery shopping done during this time, there must be something terribly wrong with their time scheduling or their headbones. Nobody can be that busy they can't squeeze in the necessary hours. If they are, they need to get un-busied before they busy themselves into an early grave.

I also wonder at the specious argument which religions other than Christian use, that they are at an unfair advantage because their Sabbath happens to be on a Saturday and therefore they are losing out on one extra day a week. Did not their Allah, or Buddha or Jehovah or Great Thunderbird not advocate a time of rest too as did the Christian God who rested after his six time-elements of labouring to create the Universe? Or was this just man-made fabrications on the part of the early Christians because they knew we'd come down to this stupifying argument in our centuries?

Religion apart, it makes one wonder at the selfishness of the demanding consumer who would force more people to labour yet another day on their behalf. Sure, we have Sunday labourers with us already in the police

and fire forces, telephone exchanges, hydro generating plants, hospitals, bus drivers, etc, etc, but is that argument enough for yet another day of running around the aisles buying unnecessary things? And is the profit off sales from yet another shopping day as experimentally experienced by some store owners, worthwhile? Not from

what I've read and heard. Are the extra bucks in the pockets of the sales people really worth the extra time away from their families? Only they know for sure.

But after cogitating all the pros and cons, yer ole Baba has come to only one conclusion why people are agitating for this extra day. Not for the bucks, not for the profit, not for the added

convenience, but for something much more prosaic - loneliness, fear and boredom.

Because most people are too lonely, too afraid of being alone, and too bored to spend even one day apart from other human beings in the confines of their one rooms, little apartments or house, or even in the great outdoors. Whether single, married, widowed or divorced, if they are not busily occupied with some distraction or other, a whole day away from the work place or from the shopping arenas, looms like a desert island in a sea of activity.

We no longer have the common grassy ground or market places of the medieval world where the peasant folk gathered to exchange gossip, quips and friendlinesses. The shopping malls of today are our common meeting grounds, and people feel deprived and shut out when they close their doors on a Sunday. Especially those lonely, single people who have

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Olga Landiak

Canada sleeping with the elephant

In the early 1960's, Robert Thompson, the leader of the Social Credit Party of Canada, rose in the House of Commons to utter the malapropism that perfectly describes our relations with the United States: "Americans are our best friends, whether we like it or not."

In the height of the Viet Nam war, when President Johnson was ordering massive bombing raids on North Viet Nam, Prime Minister Lester Pearson made his famous speech at Temple University in the U.S. questioning the morality of "bombing the Vietnamese back to the Stone Age." An outraged Lyndon Johnson summoned Pearson to Camp David, grabbed him by the lapels, pushed him up against a porch railing, and accused Pearson of "pissing in my back yard".

By the late 1960's, Pierre Trudeau's distaste for America was evident when he said of our southern neighbour: "When you live next door to an elephant and you're a mouse, the

mouse must pay very close attention to what the elephant is doing."

Nearly 30 years later, we have a government in Ottawa that prefers to sing songs and go fishing with American Presidents, rather than give the slightest appearance of being critical. Mulroney bent over

backwards to support George Bush's approach to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Mulroney received his training in U.S.-Canada relations before becoming Prime Minister by serving a term as president of an American branch plant mining company. Mulroney now obviously believes that the elephant will do more favours for a friendly mouse.

A recent panel at Lakehead University debated all this, in a post-mortem on the Gulf War. The evening was billed as a discussion of "the implications for Canada" of the Gulf

War, but hardly any of the six speakers stayed on the topic of the War's implications for Canada. Instead, all the old arguments against the war itself were trotted out: that it wasn't a war in support of democracy and freedom, since Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are not democracies. Rather, the war

opponents argued, it was a war caused by America's dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf, and by America's desire to rid itself, once and for all, of the "loser image" it picked up in Viet Nam.

But despite their differences over the war itself, both those supporting and those opposing the war expressed concern over the long-term goals of the elephant. When George Bush talks about a "New World Order", he really means a world dominated by America - both militarily and economically. According to Dr. David Robinson of

Lakehead, "the message for the Third World from the Gulf War is clear. Don't step out of line, or do anything to challenge the authority and dominance of the western world, or you will be bombed back to a pre-industrial state." Brian Hermanson, representing the federal conservatives, supported the war but agreed that he was "concerned about the need to reduce the arms manufacturing and sales around the world".

The unanswered question from the evening was whether Canada gained or lost, by supporting the coalition against Iraq. If you subscribe to the view that we get further being a friendly mouse, then Canada gained two concessions from the Americans, according to Dr. Ernie Epp, a history professor at Lakehead: a seat at the North American free trade talks along side Mexico and the United States, and a slightly less rigid position from Washington on the 15% softwood lumber tax.

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**NORTHERN
INSIGHTS**

by Larry Sanders

