

Cat's medical crisis nearly ruined weekend outing

Last weekend, we left the People's Republic of Ontario for that flighty French province where wine is sold in all the supermarkets and you can bring your own bottle to designated restaurants.

Five of us were staying in Montreal to celebrate a friend's significant birthday and on Friday night we went out for dinner.

The first restaurant we happened upon was completely bereft of customers. The proprietor dolefully explained



Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

that his liquor licence had been temporarily revoked and we would have to take our Beaujolais Nouveau elsewhere.

Two doors down, we discovered a bustling taverna where we were warmly welcomed.

Because we were not obliged to pay outrageous markups for wine, our meal was inexpensive as well as delicious, and we repaired to our hotel feeling a whole lot mellower than we had earlier in the day.

Whenever I leave Chateau Gilderdale for foreign parts, my departure is guaranteed to be attended by at least one crisis and the latest jaunt was no exception.

While I was packing, I noticed Spasm's customary joie de vivre was sadly lack-

ing, a fact he thoughtfully underlined by relieving himself in my closet.

An hour and a half before we were due to leave, Spasm and I were ensconced in the vet's waiting room.

When the diagnosis was pronounced, the good news was that Spasm did not appear to have a blockage, a condition which could have proved serious, not to say expensive.

This meant that Mr. Wallet-head would not have to reply, "Abdominal surgery for the

cat," when asked what your correspondent had given him for Christmas.

My long-suffering spouse, whose love for our frolicsome felines is, to say the least, qualified, would surely consider this alone to be tidings of comfort and joy.

The bad news was that Spasm had fallen prey to a bladder infection, the only cure for which was a 10-day regimen of antibiotics.

And because we were going away, the task of sneaking a pill down Spasm's unco-operative gullet twice daily would fall to my daughter.

By the time we got back from the vet's, I had 10 minutes to finish packing, clean up the kitchen and write a complicated note to Clare outlining techniques for conning the cat into submission, a state utterly foreign to the domestic feline.

Frazzled though I was when we left, the prospect of a weekend away soothed my angst and allowed me to enjoy a carefree round of eating, drinking and making merry.

Thanks to my daughter's dexterity, Spasm was vastly improved on our return and was able to eject his pills clean across the kitchen.

Pill-pushing altercations notwithstanding, our dopey but adorable moggy wraps himself comfortably around my neck while I type this column, providing warmth along with the ultimate fashion statement for the animal rights activist with a penchant for real fur.

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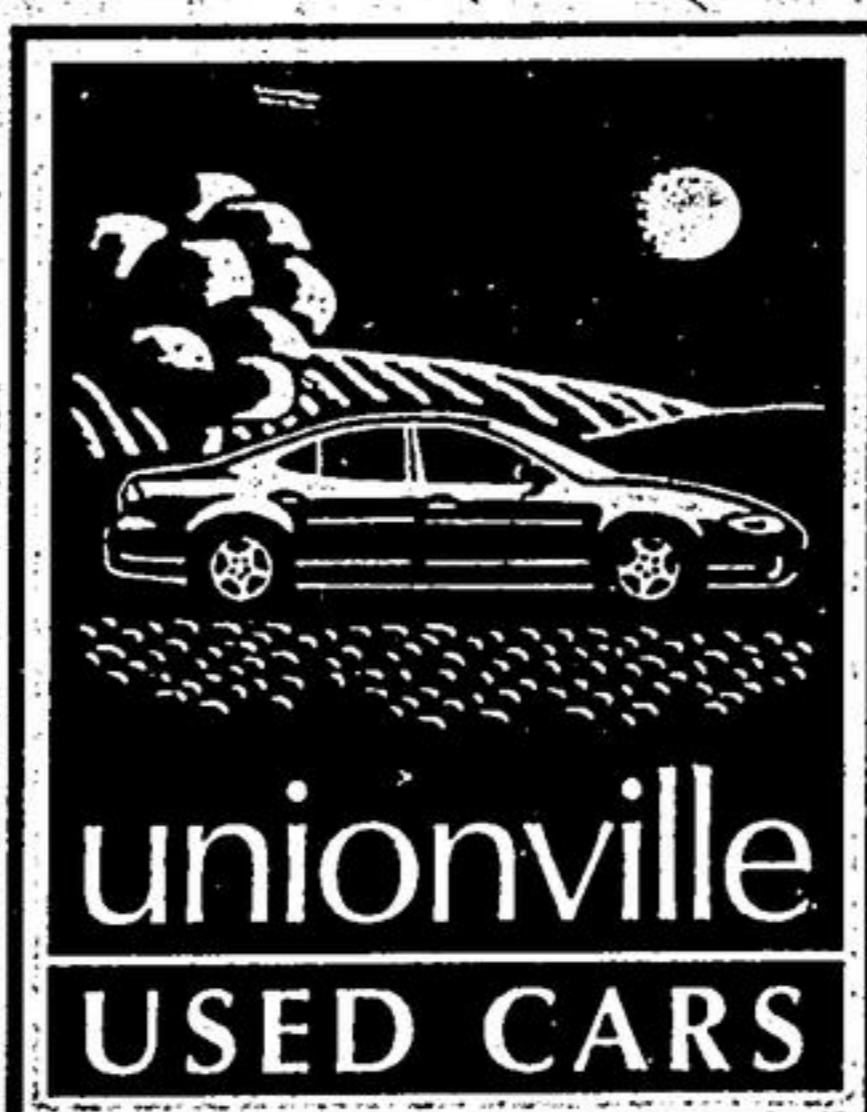
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