

What really matters

Last time I wrote, I concentrated on why you should stick it out for the rest of the semester. I considered writing about exams this time, but that might remind you (and me) that exams are actually coming. So instead of traumatizing my readers, I decided to be cheerful and insightful.

While daydreaming in my Atlantic Literature class today, I was suddenly struck with some very profound ideas and questions. Most of them are too controversial to print, but I managed to find 10 that I can share with you. They serve no useful purpose, but they're worth read if you're looking for a chance to procrastinate. Here they are:

1. FACT: If effort was valued at UPEI as much as bologna, we would all learn a lot more.

2. I understand the saying "red with anger"; your face turns red. But what about feeling "green with envy"? or just feeling "blue"? Is it just me, or is there a lack of colour-coordination here?

3. JOKE: If an m is an n, and an n is an n, what's a p?

ANSWER: A relief! (Don't blame me- this one's from my aunt who lives in the boonies!)

4. Instead of taxing the public to death and watching education and health care become a privilege, why doesn't the government just print enough money to pay off the national debt?

5. We all know Murphy's Law (anything that can go wrong, will go wrong)-- but who is Murphy? And who is this wonderful guy Pete, for whose sake we do so many things? (and why is Hannah holy?)

6. Why studying literature is important: If you're alive, you live one life. If you're alive and you read, you live a thousand lives. (Credit for this one goes to Dr. Epperly of the Eng. Dept.)

7. If God exists, does He (or She) have a sense of humour?

8. Where do we get the saying "old wives tales"? What about young wives? (And, hey, what about the husbands?)

9. Does anyone besides me think that there should be one full week between the last day of class and the first day of exams?!

10. SMILE! If you meet a murderer on the street, he'll kill you no matter what you do. But if you meet an ordinary Joe on the street, you just might make a friend (or, better yet, the man/woman of your dreams!).

Well, that's it, folks. Take what you will and discard the rest. See ya next time.

'Til then,
Take Care & Dream Big.
Faith Hunter

book reviews

Mary Engelbreit's Home Companion: The Mary Engelbreit Look and How to Get It.

Text by: Charlotte Lyons

Photographs by: Barbara Elliott Martin

Publisher: Andrews and McMeel

Mary Engelbreit has apparently made oodles of money selling greeting cards and posters and dolls and such which depict a charmingly cluttered world of rosy-cheeked little people dreaming in cosy corners. This book of decorating ideas is touted as the how-to book to give the average reader that look in their own homes. Here's a quote from the chapter on kitchens to give you an idea of what that look is: "Mary's kitchen is chock-full of cherries and checkers. A Welsh dresser holds teapots as well as her hand-painted china pieces on top. Cherries brighten the painted floor and most of the serving pieces in the cupboards. Filled to capacity with cheerfulness..." "Chock-full" and "filled to capacity" are the watchwords here.

Now, don't get me wrong, this was a delightful book. It's beautifully done, with shiny paper, lovely full-colour photographs, inspirational quotes, adorable graphics and interesting text. I'm glad I own this book and will probably keep it around for some time to come. It's just that as a decorating how-to book, it's useless. For all its rhetoric about cosy welcoming spaces in the home, all I could think about was that if I walked into any of the rooms depicted, I wouldn't be able to get out without breaking several of the profusely strewn pieces of bric-a-brac or knocking over a few of the charming piles of vintage books. The decorating maxim of this book is "if there is a space, fill it". They're especially big on displaying collections of dishes and dolls and antique postcards on all the surfaces you can possibly get your hands on. This looks rather nice, but just you try using that antique rustic smoking table, let alone dusting the collections every week. Gole painters, rug hookers, and people with hot glue guns will love this book. But forget about the adorable projects at the end of each chapter. The "Sunflower Mirror" in chapter one calls for 8 twigs, and tells you to "install the mirror with glazing points and a putty knife", and then glue the twigs on in a pleasing arrangement. The summation of this book is that just as all the furniture, collections, and stacks of books depicted are to look at -- not to use -- and so the *Home Companion* is also to look at, not to use.

-- Danielle Christensen

Moral Panic Biopolitics Rising

John Fekete

(Robert Davies Publishing)

As a beginning curmudgeon, I have felt for a while now that the world of relations between the sexes was spinning slightly off kilter. It is rewarding to see that someone shares that feeling and has taken the time and used his skill as a researcher and writer to identify and illuminate the cause of the wobble. The culprit, according to John Fekete, is biopolitics and moral panic which gives rise to the demands for absolute correctness in our relationships and a profound sensitivity to the smallest actual or perceived slight.

Fekete builds his case with scientific and philosophical arguments supported by concrete examples pulled out of today's media. These examples demonstrate graphically the physical and moral panic that is becoming a primary influence on our social institutions and relationships in modern life. Fekete argues that these feelings evolve from false perceptions, faulty statistics and deliberate misdirection. Anyone who has wondered how things could have gotten so bad so quickly without their noticing any direct change will find one version of the answer here.

The chapter on "Professors on Trial: Universities Exercise their Demons" should be a must-read for all those involved in teaching or learning in a university setting.

No one argues that there are dangers in the world, but it may not be as dangerous as some people would like us to believe. John Fekete doesn't provide an easy read, but does hold a glass up to certain special interest groups in our society, and what we see is smoke, but no fire.

-- Dave Schneider

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