

# THE CURSE OF COMPETITION OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

by: George Barry, jr.

Did you ever notice how everything seems to be so damned competitive these days? Well, I have and I want to tell you that it really worries me. Everybody is in a big hurry to get someplace and to get there it's always necessary to step on somebody else, either directly or indirectly. Like hockey teams vying for the Stanley Cup, we live in a world filled with Montreal Canadien-type people and Colorado Rocky type-people. And guess which type comes out on top?

Of course there will always be the fat men in the three-piece suits with the big cigars and the small minds who'll tell you "My boy, you don't get breaks, you make them". Oh sure. Just because certain people, though perhaps quite brilliant in their own right, might not be able to hack the system doesn't make it wrong. Hell, where would we be without it. Competition is the food upon which human society feeds. You've got to get out there and chop off your little piece of the rock. And if some other poor slob wants it, well you just let him go right ahead and, as he passes by, give him the old permanent pat on the back, with a knife carefully planted between the shoulder-blades. After all, as Tarzan said to Jane after a hard day of ignorant savage slaying, "It's a jungle out there".

Yep, we all just say to ourselves "I'm number one", and like football teams rushing onto the field or armies staring at each other across a no-man's land, we play the competitive game. We compete for jobs, for elected office, for scholarships, for marks, for money, for love, for just about everything. Even the world of art, lofty place that it is supposed to be, offers no respite. Somebody is always a better writer or artist or musician. But that's just the way things are, isn't it? Certain people excel and the others, well who gives a shit about them, anyway? They're losers; they're weak; they're not as good as other people.

Call me a sentimental fool, but I think that people, and I mean all people, have value. People are different and it's not a simple question of good and bad, better or worse. Differences don't matter though. All that matters is how smart you are or how much money you have or how pretty you are or how long your dick is. We take the mentality of competition and measure everybody by its stupid, unreliable standards to see if they are an A or a B, a 10 or a 0.

Let's face it, this system sucks out loud (how's that for incisive criticism). I don't know about you, but I don't like competing with other people in everything. It makes it all seem like a game. I like nothing better than a good hockey game; I've been a Canadiens fan since I was an embryo, but I don't like to think of life in terms of beating everybody I come in contact with. That's the main thing that I don't like about the so-called realities of economic life. Survival becomes a matter of simple competition: if you want to feed yourself you've got to grab the food from somebody else.

But hold it a minute. If we didn't have competition where would we find excitement in life? Why, we'd end up a bunch of weak-kneed pansies, holding each others hands and kissing each others asses. I don't really know about that. It seems to me, though, that too many good people are dumped into

the competitive meat grinder to make it all worthwhile. Life isn't a game and there's more to life than having the desire to win. Perhaps we shouldn't be dropping football programs. Perhaps we should be dropping the marking system, and the Dean's list, and scholarships, and the Business Department and anything else that makes people believe that they have to beat somebody else before they can be anybody in their own right. If there is one lesson to be learned from our history as a species, it is that the competitive system does not always allow the cream to rise to the top. The saga of good old Richard Milhous whatshisface should have made this fact abundantly clear.

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