

unMitigaTeD AudactY

SNIPING AT THE STARS

Can removing the fakes make the issue a headline?

As we all know by now, the mild winter has resulted in a lack of ice in the gulf. And as a result, there's presently a few hundred thousand seals clinging to ice floes floating along the western edge of PEI. This has caused some panic among the fishing community, and a few rounds of mammalian brain-bashing appears to be in the cards.

Fearing that a Maritime version of Whacking Day will be imminent, environmental and animal rights groups have mobilized, and as this rant is being slapped together, there should be a flotilla of ships around the western tip of the Island. This fleet comes carrying international celebrities who are protesting the seal hunt. It isn't a bad strategy: having a screen star photographed with a fuzzy, snuggly seal pup gives the ol' heartstrings a good yank and immediately demonizes the pro-hunt forces.

I have to admit that I don't have any leaning towards either side of this issue, and I don't have enough info pro or con to fill a page, and therefore won't get into it. What does get me is the outsider element who jumps into the fray not because they're concerned, but because it's a good career move. A boatload of self-promoting phonies has no right to involve themselves in a matter and transform it into an emotional issue. So here's a suggestion: taking a cue from the whole seal hunt question, an immediate open season should be declared on the celebrity busybody element; those not directly involved on the frontlines -- that is, anyone but hunters, fishers or environmental/ animal rights activists -- is declared in conflict with the issue, and as such, is a target for elimination. With the showbiz element out of the picture, the meat of the issue can be dealt with.

It would be absolutely essential for a zero-tolerance policy to be invoked on this matter of recognizable protestors; if the cause is a secondary consideration to their career, they're gone. It'd be best to have an impartial group, one having no ties to either side of the dispute, assigned to patrol the area, but a healthy hate for self-promotion would be a must for keeping the unnecessaries out of it. Naturally, they would have to be provided with weapons, and given permission to use them. A sense of competition among the celebrity hunters would both scare away anyone hungry for a photo-op and thin out the ranks of self-righteous Hollywood fakes. For those with no desire to see the stars' pelts nailed to someone's wall, the methods of some protestors could be used against the celebrity hordes. This ironic justice could be more of a deterrent to them than the prospect of death. Personally, I'd find it funnier if Bruce Cockburn was found on an ice floe covered in green spray-paint than full of bullet holes.

Or what about using the publicity factor against the beautiful people? The paparazzi could be involved in this. No doubt the tabloid press would pay handsomely for a photo of some starlet cuddling a seal pup. And given the sick imaginations of the tabloid press, it would be no small stretch to conjure up a degrading headline about said-celeb and their "bizarre sexual practices". Although the "legit" press wouldn't easily join in here, a brief explanation of what's at stake could be enough to get them to lower their standards of integrity a bit. A small epidemic of backfiring publicity stunts could go a long way to eliminating the celebrity cause-crusader.

This position of open season on the environmentally-sensitive famous folk could be seen as being a little harsh. After all, name recognition does at least make people aware of the issue in question. But when the names become more important than the events causing their presence, the problem is obvious. Maybe if the celebs were forced to flee from the site of protest, the issue would be of more concern to the public.

- Ross Williams, who's cleaning his rifle and waiting for the call

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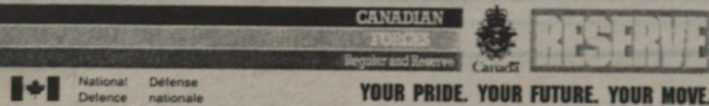
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