



LIFE AMONG THE HUMANS

The Minefield

By Martin Levowitz

Here's an old Sufi teaching-story: *Walking home late at night through the quiet streets of his village, a man is startled by a loud noise. Turning the corner, he sees a dog and a donkey, fighting. "Friends, Friends" he implores, rushing between them, "Surely there's some better way to settle your differences." Whereupon the dog bites and the donkey kicks him.*

Obviously, we all need copper. Each of those huge wind-turbines emblematic of "green energy" contains more than a ton of copper. Hmm. If some clever thief steals all of the copper out of your car this evening, guess what will happen when you turn the ignition key to-

morrow morning on your way to work or coffee? That's right, Watson: *Nada!*

One cynical formula, these days, defines environmentalists as "Those who already own their cabins in the woods and now oppose further development." A much older folk-saying declares: "A full man cannot understand a hungry one."

There are certain long-standing rift-lines which are so deeply established that any minor disturbance or passing disagreement tends to reignite the twin flames of mistrust and resentment. Visit Ireland, for instance, or con-

sider cats and dogs. dogs and donkeys. donkeys and elephants, Suunis and Shiites, rednecks and "rich retirees," as "the gas man" likes to call us more-recent arrivals to Patagonia.

Until recently, this town has been a ranching /mining town. At public meetings, hereabouts, Misterters Bowdon, Montoy, et al., like to mention how long they and their families have lived here. (Suggesting, I suppose, that *their* opinions should carry more weight than those of us more recent immigrants.) It's easy to see how they might feel that way. Normal animals, human or otherwise, feel violated when someone new invades the region which, till recently, was comfortably *theirs*. Consider Palestine.

So, let's agree that 50 years is longer than five years. The mountains, however, are not much impressed either way, since *they've* been here for several million years. The question, then, in this dispute, might be: "Which group has the mountains' best interests at heart?" Does that question sound silly to you?

When you go to town or Forest Service meetings hereabouts, you don't have to be Claude Levi-Strauss to notice broad differences between those who root for mining here and those who strongly don't. Steering clear of inflammatory language like "class warfare," let's refer instead to "perceptible lifestyle differences." Generalizations are both useful and dangerous, of course. But, please relax and take this little quiz.

QUESTION 1: Which team has the stocky guys with burly shoulders, thicker necks, work-boots and

"manly" guts? (These people worship beef and beer.) And which group has the slender guys with sandals, shorts, and maybe beards? (They like their algae green or blue and are excited by tofu.)

QUESTION 2: Which faction loves the mountains and is worried about squirrels, owls and whales? And which group loves the mountains since they used to hunt there with their dads and still hunt there today?

QUESTION 3: Which clan moved here from Wisconsin to enjoy their golden years in peaceful hikes on quiet mountain trails? And which group grew up here and need a decent-paying job or will be forced to move away despite that this has been their home?

It angers me and makes me sad to hear about ivory poachers in Africa or about Brazilian farmers burning down immense tracts of virgin forest. Do these dudes just not give a damn or are they unaware what harm they wreak? Yet, who am I to judge these guys? (Some middle-class, twit in a land far away who has rarely known hardship or need.) People who work and have families to feed will do all that they can to survive. Yep, whatever it takes. So, if you want to piss them off and reassure them, *once again*, that you have come here from the moon and don't know squat about reality, complain to them about an owl or minnow in the woods whose happiness their jobs may compromise. To them it sounds as if you'd rather see their children starve.



Beth Barth
home matters

Choosing a Buyer's Representative

When it's time to buy a home, it's also time to select a buyer's agent to represent your interests. Here are some questions to ask when interviewing a buyer's representative.

Experience and Credentials - How long have you been a buyer's agent? How long have you been an Accredited Buyer's Agent? What other real estate designations do you hold?

References - Can you share the names and contact details for three past buyer-clients who can provide references?

Pledge of Performance - What is your pledge of performance? Will you provide me a written copy? If I hire you and I am not satisfied with your performance may I fire you?

Representation - Please explain what representation choices I have as a buyer. What is meant by fiduciary duties? Do you practice dual representation?

Services Provided - Please explain how you will assist me at each stage of the transaction. Do you have a written representation agreement that details our obligations to each other?

Compensation - How will you be compensated? If I hire you as my buyer's agent will I be subjected to any additional costs in my transaction?

Personal Support - Will you handle all aspects of my transaction, or will I be working with your assistants?

Negotiating - Will you counsel me on a negotiating strategy and appropriate contingencies? How will you package my offer to the seller? Will you personally present my offer?

Financing - Will you provided guidance on affordability, mortgage options and how to choose a lender? Why should I consider becoming pre-qualified or pre-approved on a mortgage?



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