



Pride and Joy?

Alternative to baby photo?

THE IDLE AMERICAN

Not a Creature Was Stirring....

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It was the slowest of hot, muggy days in the thicket. Mercury in the thermometer bulged and lodged in three-digit territory. Someone said he saw a dog chasing a rabbit, and both creatures were walking.

The general store cash register had broken the silence twice before two geezers wandered in, and they weren't there to buy anything. Their quest was to find a domino game.

Realizing that commencing with just two players meant that the odds of winning were 50/50, they resorted to one of their oldest pastimes....

One of 'em grabbed the syrup pitcher, carefully pouring a single droplet on the tattered oil cloth table covering. Then came all kinds of silly wagers, such as which fly would discover the sugary treat first, which would become stuck and which would escape and return to flight. It's a "made-up game" closely paralleling the children's book, *What to Do When There's Nothing to Do*.

The unlikely pastime provides credible evidence that the maxim "fits" when life's shadows grow long. In at least two scriptures we are said to be "once an adult and twice a child."

The old pair soon abandoned the "fly game," since even the pesky flies thought it too hot to aimlessly fly....

They spoke of words they abhor, but grudgingly tolerate. You won't hear "no problem" or "right quick" cross their lips. "No problem" is a catch-all response that no longer means anything, and "right quick" is an expression for the younger crowd, one opined. The geezers "gruffed" about politics, cringing at the thought of broaching a subject that surely would darken their day.

Almost simultaneously, they extracted their wallets. This meant there soon would be multiple pictures of grandchildren, with verbal descriptions--often to the point of excess--for each photo.

Sure enough, one of the old-timers unfurled a packet of photos. So many were unleashed that they almost reached the floor. The other guy--without any grandchildren nor prospect of any--was reminded of childhood days, when perfect attendance at Vacation Bible School warranted pin-on medals. Over the years, he had so many medals hanging from his chest that they--like the string of his buddy's photos--could easily have been tripped over....

"Before you show me pictures of your grandchildren, I want to show you one of my pride and joy," he said, knowing the joke to be so old that describing it merely as rancid would be complimentary.

The old-timer produced a single photo showing his "Pride" (furniture polish) and "Joy" (dishwashing detergent).

There was polite laughter--borderline gratuitous--before the "grandchildless" guy admitted, "No grandkids, but we do have 'grandcats'."....

Watching the vignette unfold, the general store owner said, "Men, I don't think I've shown you a picture of my new grandbaby."

In unison, the two buddies answered, "No, and we really appreciate it."

Oh, me. How often have we "faked it"--reaching for superlatives to thrill parents or grandparents--when we really want to say, "Yep, that's a baby."....

The man who has only “grandcats” tells about a friend who has pedaled Science Diet dog food for decades.

He poses an unlikely question upon meeting new friends, asking them if they have dogs. If they do, he unerringly offers a sobering observation.

“I hope you’re feeding them Science Diet; if you don’t, they will die.”....

Such reminds of the pet lover who provided a major distinction between dogs and cats. I thought of several, but remained silent, wanting to “hear her out.”

“When you ask a dog to ‘stay,’ it ‘stays’,” she said. “When you ask a cat to ‘stay,’ it purrs, ‘I’ll get back with you later’.”

Hard to argue with that. Aren’t we fortunate to be able to select the pets we like? A final truth for most: We don’t have pets; pets have us....

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