

Befriending the queen cow

Occasionally, through no fault of newspapers, or the media in general, two stories clash. This past weekend was one of those times.

It seems that Michelle Obama and Queen Elizabeth of England have established a friendship, or close relationship of some kind. Apparently, their friendship extends beyond the delicate boundaries of protocol concerning international relations with two world powers.

This is probably a good thing, considering the two countries the ladies represent were at war on more than one occasion, starting with the Revolutionary War in 1775. So, the bonding of the two first ladies of the British Empire and the United States was big "good" news, and the media from around the world treated it as such.

Then the old saying, "No good deed shall go unpunished," raised its dependable head and splashed "Cows Fight to be Queen" on the same page as "Michelle Obama Befriends British Queen."

I don't think we should make a big thing of it, but it seems to me that the cow headline kind of reduces the status of the title of "Queen" just a tad.

Now keep in mind that the cow fight story has just as much place in the news as the story of the two first ladies. The cows fighting for the title of queen is a tradition and celebrated annual event in Grimentz, Switzerland. Grimentz is a Swiss state.



You can't beat a system you can't understand

By Sam Bari

According to one of the articles I read on the subject, every summer for hundreds of years, Heren cows have engaged in this ancient ritual. The villagers make a party out of it and trek up the mountain to watch the regal battle, so to speak.

Specifically, after a week or so of elimination battles, two cows fight for the title of "Queen of the Cows" in this remote corner of the globe. Judges record every fight as spectators sit on the surrounding mountainside, sipping local wines and cheering their family herd. But it is the cows who choose who will fight and who will reign supreme at the end of the season. That is the significant newsworthy item.

I had no idea cows were that organized. They actually arrange this tournament amongst themselves, and go through the ancient ritual year after year and successfully choose a queen. That is fairly sophisticated even by human standards.

The Swiss swear that the cows rarely do serious damage to one another, although a few sport battle scars that mark the enthusiasm they have for this highly regarded ritual.

After the final battle, the herds return to the valley from high up in the mountains and the real celebration begins. Owners decorate their cows with flowers and giant bells and they parade through the village, led, of course, by the queen.

According to the locals, there is no prize money for the winner, but owners can fetch a handsome price — up to \$30,000 in U. S. currency, if they choose to sell a queen. Most important, said the local, is the respect. The winner's owner is crowned "king of the village" for a year. He's more respected than the mayor.

Don't scoff at this method of choosing a leader. There could be a lesson here that the world should learn.

Switzerland is one of the wealthiest countries per capita on the planet. They haven't been in a war since 1815, and they refused to fight in that one. It only lasted for three months. Swiss soldiers assisted some allies in a brief skirmish in 1860, but for the most part, they are a highly respected neutral nation that refuses to engage in anything as appalling as actual warfare.

Good for them! Don't we wish we could accomplish as much.

I wonder if we could have a battle of the cows in this country. The winner would be the "First Pet," and the owner would be appointed president for a year. If he did a good job, I suppose we could elect to let him stay in office for a while until he lost favor. Then we could stage another cow fight and

get a new one.

We would have to import a Heren cow from Switzerland to teach the American cows how the system works, but it could be done.

This method of electing a leader is easier to understand than the system we have now. But don't forget, we live in a system we can't understand.

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