

SIXTH ANNUAL POODLESHOOT

Thanksgiving, 2004

The Sixth Annual Island Poodleshoot and BBQ began sedately with none of the wildness experienced in prior years. Please note the events of the tumultuous year 2001. The shoot began promptly at dawn at the usual starting point out on the West End ferry landing with a nip from the flask, a toot from the official Horn of the Hunt and a rousing rendition of A Nation Again by the Homophile Boys Symphonic Orchestra.

Vicious rumors had been circulating that the grand old tradition of the Fox Hunt was about to be abolished throughout the British Isles by Parliamentary Order, had produced its own ripple of concern here for there are some, surprisingly so, who maintain that the notoriously vicious, savagely destructive, and inane poodle is actually an animal possessed of intelligence as well as complex feelings, although no one has gone so far as to allege any serious utility for this creature.

Its hideousness is generally acknowledged, for the atrociously barbered poodle is recognized by every sound and sane gentleman to be an affront to Nature, aesthetics, and the eye of God and therefore worthy of destruction.

Nevertheless, there are some, such as Reverend Rectumrod, who have asserted that the means is as questionable as attacking and destroying a foreign country solely to obtain control over its oil reserves.

Strike that last comment as being entirely inappropriate for the avowed nonpartisan Poodleshoot.

Still, there are those who have wondered just what do we have against poodles in particular. Surely the yappy Chihuahua or the unnecessarily surly and unpredictable pitbull are more contemptible.

No, the faults of these dogs reside with their contemptible owners, who deserve to be exterminated without appeal, and not in the nature of an animal which began free from taint. Note how the Chihuahua will attempt to finger-paint messages with the only medium available -- its own excrement -- in desperate plea for an SOS when constrained in a public kennel. But ownership is not the fault of the dog in this case. What sort of idiot would consent to ownership of such a foolish thing is beyond me and therefore we see the entire problem resides in the ownership. Left to themselves, it seems plain that the yappy Chihuahua would have long since either exterminated itself by way of nerves, or developed more sophisticated means of communication than described above.

As for pitbulls, a cursory examination of their owners reveals the lowest segment of society: criminals, vagabonds, lowriders, litigation attorneys, and

such ilk. Is it any wonder that any animal turns bad in such vile company? Look ye upon a baby pitbull and you will not discover a more adorable creature in the Creation of Goddess. As in the Doberman, who starts off life well enough until some asshole has his ears clipped, the pitbull means no harm on the outset. Perhaps we should rename the breed to Fuzzy-Wuzzy, instead of the obvious vermin-magnet "pitbull".

The poodle, however, is born vile and develops with care and feeding into an abomination that encourages the worst aspects of human behavior, for wherever the poodle holds sway among humans, one finds intemperance, intolerance, poor artworks, viciousness, saccharin sentimentality, miserable aesthetics, and general inclination to foolishness. Here we have the unusual occurrence of the Animal corrupting the Human and we firmly believe that the poodle is not a true animal, but a third category to be called Spawn of Satan, among which we list poodles, Neo-Conservatives, and the Ebola Virus.

But to continue, the Poodleshoot began without a hint of trouble. Lately the air has turned crisp -- for Northern California -- turning all the leaves of the oaks along Grand Street and the evening air is scented with the smoke of long dormant fireplaces all over. Soon the air was filled with the sound of 12 gauge shotguns, the distinctive pop of 45 caliber rifles, the calling of hunters, "Poodle here!", and the occasional CRUMP! of the hand grenade and other surplus ordinance. One enterprising fellow used aluminum siding to fashion a couple mortars used with great effect down at the Point.

Mortars were forbidden within 1000 yards of the marina, owing to various errors of trajectory in previous years resulting in depletion of the Hunt Funds to pay for the unfortunate damages to several boats. One can only imagine the shocked surprise of all concerned at the time due to errant mortars.

Things went swimmingly until the BBQ started, when a contretemps developed between Rev. Rectumrod and Father Persnickety over the issue of Moral Values in re poodles. The Reverend maintained that 'twere better to say grace after the dispatch of the pup and before dining per Tradition, whereas the good Catholic Father Persnickety maintained that it were better to perform orisons prior to dispatch -- when possible -- in respect to a life taken (no matter how vile). The dispute soon fell to blows between the principals -- as so often happens between the followers of Martin Luther and those of the Pope -- and the matter required sturdy intervention by members of the party.

Meanwhile, down on the strand a brace of hunters headed by an enthusiastic Eugene Gallipagus encountered a party of UltraRight Neocons embedded in a party of Island DogWalkers and there ensued a pitched battle nigh unto 8th Street with the Neocons employing the usual methods of deception, subterfuge, feint and bother, against the straightforward cut and thrust of the Hunters, who resorted in close quarters to cutlass, rapier and impermeables.

A brace of Silvers, guarded by a stout resistance of Dogwalkers, took shelter as rain began to fall, upon the islet of Foofoo, nigh unto the Falafel Cafe.

Hearing of a possible containment of poodles and the infamous Osama Bin Lassie, Eugene Shrubbs sent a detachment of weary Marine Bums dressed in

colander helmets, vestments of jerkin, hauberks of wok, and leggings of worsted, from his investment of Newark to see about this issue.

Night fell as the Marines arrived in wind and rain to bivouac in the Washington park, and thus ended the first day of the Annual Poodleshoot.

The Second Day dawned with cloudy skies and intermittent rain, which yielded in the latter part of the day to clarity and dry weather, albeit some wind. Down by the little strip of water separating FooFoo from the Island, the Marines decided upon a full on assault with heavy weapons to eradicate such resistance as remained. The defenders there prudently removed themselves prior to the assault and so the barrage of bottle rockets, mortars, and empty bottles of Jack Daniels fell upon deaf or nonexistent ears. The battalion of Bums charged through the shallows to take the island and destroy the two poodle Toys which had incomprehensibly remained. There they stood and raised the flag upon the Islet, which measured some .1 x .1 acre in size, proclaiming a great triumph of Democracy. Everyone then repaired to McGraths to get thoroughly drunk.

Newark, however, has yet to hold a free Election.

Down by the Strand, however, things did not go well. Dan Rathernot, of the local cable channel We Be Us, was deceived and snubbed by the City Council and parties thought to be aligned with the Neo-con Poodle Support Party, while Missy Showslip, of the Foxy Network, was feted and well embedded with the most significant dignitaries.

As a result the reports from the battlefield are sketchy. We do know that Eugene's small party was beaten back by a phalanx of DogWalkers, Fire and

Brimstone Preachers, and a large number of Christeen Shouters bearing bibles and terriers among them, and the hunters were driven nigh unto Crab Cove, site of the infamous Battle of the Bog in the year 2001. There the plucky warriors formed a shield wall about the children's trapeze set while the Christeen Shouters hurled imprecations of the most awful kind even as the terriers set up a most horrendous din. Several Homeboys playing B-Ball on the Courts there were advanced upon by a platoon of Ecumenicals threatening the Courts with dismay. Night fell mercifully quick and all repaired to their respective bivouacs. Thus ended the Second Day.

The Third Day began with the Preachers stirring from their camp to receive reinforcements in the form of bullhorns and pulpits mounted on wheels. Things did not look well for the besieged as a cold rain had fallen during the night and several members became afflicted with the catarrh and all their gunpowder was spent or damp.

But just as the Preachers had got their pulpits harnessed up to the terriers for quick feint and dodge drive-by sermons, and the sun peered forth on the cold morn and the clouds rolled back from His Face not unlike the stone set before the tomb of the Great Holy Roller Himself for it was said, perhaps in a movie, "Look to Me on the Third Day". Then, across the sward there came a troop of Ecumenicals dressed to the nines in collars and habits and bearing crucifixes that glittered in the sun with great majesty and there were Bishops and Ministers among them. From far off Boston and New York and the distant sunless lands of

Toronto they came, the Liberal Clergy, proceeded by the indomitable and well armored Popemobile.

The Liberal Clergy fell upon the Arch Conservatives with a great disputation and there was a tremendous thumping of bibles to be heard. First this way then that the battle raged and the warriors of the field were not unlike the leaves of grass bent by the wind. Eugene ran down to the Cove and threw himself in, there to be Saved by a Liberal Evangelical who baptized there on the spot. The crucifixes were used with terrible potency as battle-axes and the nuns employed steel-weighted rosaries with awful effect, slinging them about their heads and smacking them upon the pates of the prelates with Amazonian war cries.

Then, from the West, there arose a great shout and into the fray marched the Wiccans of Marin, casting spells and putting the fear of the pre-Xian Spirit into everyone. Then there was confusion among the Neo-Cons upon the pronouncements of Malthus and of Vico and Moses Maimonides. and others besides, for the Neo-Cons never had much of a grasp of History to begin with and they were sorely unprepared to debate these issues and they were sore perplexed.

Just then the Popemobile was overturned upon a charge of pederasty-- fortunately after the Holy Rider had already disembarked -- and there was confusion and dissent among the Clergy with a great deal of milling about the palms of Washington Park, with a lot of rending of garments and sackcloth and ashes. During this melee, several poodles were aided in escape in the company

of several visiting Japanese schoolgirls and the Hunters also took this opportunity to flee back to the ferry landing where all remarked that it was the most sanctified of all the Poodleshoots ever held, and many were drenched by the copious buckets of holy water which had been thrown.

They were soon joined by the Wiccans, who have no taste for religious disputation, or violence for that matter, and the company adjourned to McRaths for a round of drinks and celebration and thanks for having escaped a Fire and Brimstone fate. Thus ended the Sixth Annual Poodleshoot in the Year of Our Lord, 2004.