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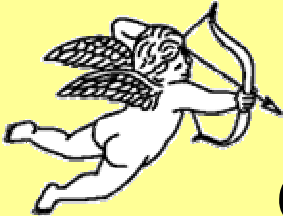
Opinion #18

What the newspapers won't tell you!

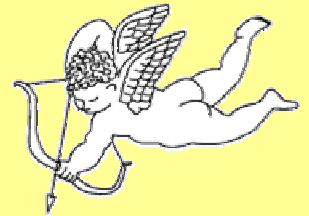
♥ February 14, 2007 ♥

74th Nevada Legislature

Very Special Valentine's Day Edition



Love is in the air.



Can you feel it? The current session of the Nevada Legislature is shaping up to be the most cooperative ever. Only one Assemblyman doesn't seem to share the love. Can he be treated?

BY GLENN CAMPBELL

Nevada was built on a solid base of cooperation. We would not have been able to sustain our phenomenal growth without casino owners cooperating with developers cooperating with county commissioners cooperating with legislators. Other states may be contentious places, but here in Nevada, we believe in working together.

The bi-annual encampment of our legislature in Carson City is a chance to reconnect with one another. We gather 'round the campfire, hold hands, sing songs and proudly proclaim our unity. It is a chance to patch over any differences that may have arisen over the past two

years, join together as one, and move the state forward for the good of everyone who can afford to hire a lobbyist.

Every once in a while, however, some impulsive young person comes along who doesn't share the love. Usually, this is not a problem, just a matter of education. The youth just needs a sitting down and a talking to, and almost always they will see the error of their ways.

We had just such an incident last week, on the opening day of the encampment, when the Assembly held a routine vote to affirm the coronation of Sister Barbara Buckley as Queen Mother. The call went out: "All in favor?"

"AYE!" said just about everyone.

"All opposed?"

"NAY!" said one lone voice, booming across the chamber.

It was Brother Ty Cobb from the Washoe district. Needless to say, Brother Cobb is a neophyte with absolutely no experience in the



Brother Cobb needs our compassion, not retribution

legislature who doesn't understand the way things are done here. Evidently, he believes that being elected by the people of his district gives him the right to come to the legislature to vote, which is true, but it doesn't necessarily give him the right to vote "No." →

In Nevada, being elected by the people doesn't give someone permission to come to Carson City and make trouble. It only gives him the right and responsibility to cooperate with everyone else.

Obviously, Brother Cobb needs a sitting down and a talking to, which the newspapers assure us has already happened. Most of our brothers and sisters in the mainstream press are firmly on-board with their cooperation. They know which side of the bread their butter is on. Almost universally, they have glorified the Queen Mother, and when one man raised a voice to oppose her, they soundly condemned him. It was called a serious breach of protocol.

In her 2/8 column in the *Rebuke-Urinal*TM, Sister Erin Neff streamed rebuke on our wayward brother and assured us that "Cobb was quietly reminded of protocol in a closed session with leaders of both parties." Further, she noted that Cobb was publicly scolded by the leader of his own minority party, Sister Heidi Gansert.

"I believe all of us were elected, not to promote an individual agenda but for the good of the whole state," Sister Gansert told the entire Assembly. "We are one Nevada."

On the Assembly floor, Sister Gansert essentially apologized for Cobb's behavior and bowed down to the Queen Mother: "To be successful in this body, you have to earn respect," she said. "Madame Speaker, you have my respect."

The Queen Mother herself was very gracious. She told Sister Molly Ball of the *R-U*TM (2/6) that there would be no direct retribution against Cobb. Still, she made her displeasure known.

"I think it's disappointing," the Queen Mother said of Brother Cobb's behavior. "Nevada has had a tradition of acting in a bipartisan manner forever. We're trying to do something unlike they do in (Washington) D.C."

The queen was emphasizing Nevada's differences. Just because Congress and every other state do things a certain way doesn't mean that we have to. Other places don't believe in unity

the way we do. Probably the closest analogues to our form of democracy are those found in Singapore and Japan, where there is little disruptive dissent. The only question is who should bow lower when two lawmakers pass.

By the way, Sister Ball, the new political reporter for the *R-U*TM, is coming along nicely in her cooperation. Whenever you see a new face in the press corps, especially one with an Ivy League education, you wonder if they are going to get all idealistic and investigative and start causing problems. Some brash outsiders get the notion they are going to report things in Nevada that shouldn't be reported, and no matter how many sitting-downs and talking-tos you give them, they just don't get it. Then you have to sit down and talk to their bosses, which gets awkward and uncomfortable for everybody.

Fortunately, Sister Ball has shown in her first few articles that she is completely on task and on the team, without any talking-tos necessary.

In Nevada, if there is anything we believe in as much as cooperation, it is personal responsibility. That's what sets Nevada apart.

For example, only in Nevada do we all agree that if you want to gamble, you should be able to do it wherever you want, whenever you want, as much as you want, no matter how much it hurts you and your family. It's your personal responsibility to know your limits. Likewise, if you want to engage or partake in prostitution, only we give you the option of doing it legally. In Nevada, we believe that everyone should be free to make their own choices and accept their own consequences.

We all agree that government is necessary, but mainly to build roads, hire police and run prisons. Everything else can and should be the responsibility of the individual.

If a person is homeless, mentally ill, hooked on drugs or poor, that's their responsibility and their personal choice. If they commit a crime, we'll put them in prison for the maximum term, but we don't believe in interfering in their lives otherwise.

Likewise, if a child is abused or neglected or is having trouble in school, it is their personal responsibility to find their own solutions. If there is anything children need, it is more rights and responsibilities. For example, if a child commits a crime, Nevada law will do its best to have that child treated as an adult. We believe that 14 is not too young to sentence a child to 40 years in adult prison, because every child needs to be held accountable for his actions.

As a matter of fact, the Queen Mother herself runs a county-funded organization in Las Vegas, the Children's Attorney Project, that helps abused children as young as three years old "take responsibility for their future." The Queen Mother is a big believer in rights and responsibilities, which is obviously how she got her new job.

If we tried to do more than roads, police and prisons, that would require more taxes, which is a dirty word in Nevada. In our encampments every two years, our job is to convince the voters that we are doing more for them without actually having any money to do it with. This is a very challenging mission that usually involves passing idealistic-sounding laws but not actually funding the programs that they imply.

Pulling this off requires creative management and close cooperation between members of the cast—like acrobats in Cirque du Soleil.

It is good to know now that our whole troupe is working together.

—GC

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