LD 1588 Hearing Notice

Sun Journal

Lewiston, Maine, Sunday, May 1, 2005

PERSPECTIVE

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between a team called Soccer Locker, representing a local store, and one called Seleccion Haiti, representing Haiti.

Philip and I sat in the stands with, I would conservatively estimate, every Haitian person on Earth. It was an exciting match, and not just because we thought the stands, which appeared to be made of aluminum foil, were going to collapse. What made it exciting was the Haitians, who are, without question, the greatest sports fans I have ever seen, and I will tell you why: They gave me these painkillers.

No, wait, I'm getting confused (which is another side effect). The Haitian fans are great because they are so enthusiastic: They react to EVERYTHING that happens on the field, including photosynthesis, by cheering, booing, shouting, chanting, dancing, singing and making cellular phone calls. Many fans do all these things simultaneously.

Philip and I got so caught up in the spirit that we started cheering also. We do not speak Haitian Creole, so we invented cheers based on our recollection of high-school French, including such rousers as:

Philip told me that English soccer fans are VERY intense and sometimes express their disapproval by throwing darts from the stands.

"Voici la plume de ma tante!" ("Here is the pen of my aunt!")

"Montrez-moi le livre!" ("Show me the book!")

"Nos rendements sont noirs!" ("Our outputs are black!")

No, we did not really yell that last one. But we did, by cheering for the Haitian team, become close personal friends with the large, enthusiastic and very muscular man in front of us, often exchanging painful "high-five" style hand slaps with him. And when the match went into overtime, and the Haitian team won, and the crowd went insane, and the grandstands were wobbling like Jell-O on a jackhammer, the large man turned around and decided to express his joy by picking both Philip and me up.

Philip, using the quickness he developed by dodging darts as a lad, managed to escape, but I never even realized what was happening until the large man got his arms around my knees and hoisted me high into the air, and I found myself being waved back and forth above the crowd like a human pennant. That was when I hurt my back.

But now, thanks to Dr. Curt, I'm feeling really, really good, and if I have any of these painkillers left over, I'm going to implement world peace by sending them to the hostile factions in the Middle East and wherever it is they're having those troubles involving the "Kurds." Because you cannot feel hostile with these painkillers. I love the Kurds! I love you, too. Time for a nap.

This classic Dave Barry column was originally published on March 14, 1999.

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