

Canada: Land of Danger

Before I get to today's topic, which is mutant cereal in Canada, I want to apologize in a sincerely legal manner to JOCKEY International Inc., which manufactures JOCKEY brand wearing apparel. Recently I received a certified letter from Charlotte Shapiro, a JOCKEY brand corporation attorney, noting that, in a column concerning the issue of whether or not you can eat your underwear, I had incorrectly used the official JOCKEY brand name in the following sentence:

"Waiter, are these JOCKEYS fresh?"

Ms. Shapiro points out that the word JOCKEY is an official trademark, not a generic word for underwear, and it must be used "as an adjective followed by the common name for the product." Thus my sentence should, legally, have read as follows:

"Waiter, there's a fly in these JOCKEYS!"

I am grateful to Ms. Shapiro for making me more sensitive to this issue, and in the future if I ever hear anyone misusing the JOCKEY brand name, I will make it my business to strike that person with a Sears CRAFTSMAN brand hammer.

Speaking of hard objects, I have here an alarming item from the oxymoronically named Canadian newspaper Northern Life, sent in by alert reader Alan Nursall. The article, by Kim Dominique-Plouffe, concerns a Sudbury, Ontario, woman named Dot Brousseau, who was pouring some Kellogg's brand CORN FLAKES cereal into a bowl when - please try to remain calm - out came a hard, fist-sized clump of CORN FLAKES all wadded together.

Here in the United States, a typical consumer, confronted with this situation, would probably just take it in stride, by which I mean do a STYROFOAM brand neck brace and sue Kellogg's for \$4.7 million. But Canada is not part of the United States (it is part of Iceland). So what Dot Brousseau did was contact Northern Life, which printed a story headlined WOMAN SURPRISED TO FIND A LUMP 'THE SIZE OF A FIST' IN HER CORN FLAKES BOX. The article is accompanied by a photograph of Brousseau looking concerned and holding the CORN FLAKES clump, which looks sort of like an oyster.

Like most professional journalists, I routinely investigate any documented case of breakfast foods spontaneously wadding together, so I contacted various news sources that I have cultivated over the years, and I was able to determine that Canada does, in fact, have telephones. I then called Dot Brousseau and asked her for an update on the situation. She told me that she had received "several compliments" on the Northern Life article, and that a number of people had come over to view her clump, which she is keeping in a BAGGIES brand plastic bag.

She said that a Kellogg's representative had also come to her home and examined the clump, and had wanted to take it away, but she refused. "I'm going to have it analyzed," she said.

She also said that Kellogg's had given her some free products. "They're going to bend over backward to kiss our butt," she noted.

I asked Brousseau if she was aware of scientific experiments showing that Kellogg's strawberry POP-TART brand

snack pastries will, if you place them in a toaster and hold the lever down, burst into flames within six minutes (unless you attempt to demonstrate this to a national TV audience on the Dave Letterman show, in which case the POP-TARTS will not ignite until after your segment has ended). Brousseau was surprised to hear this, and told me, with concern in her voice, that she had strawberry POP-TARTS in her cupboard even as we spoke.

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Speaking of scary consumer things, I have also received, from alert reader Ron Fusco, an article from the Dec. 27, 1994, edition of The Pacific Daily News, which is published in Guam, an island located somewhere in the PACIFIC brand ocean. The top story on page one concerns a 13-year-old Guam boy whose NIKE brand shoes exploded. I am not making this up. The article, written by Elizabeth A.

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Thompson, quotes the boy's mother as saying that her son had jumped up to touch a beam in the garage when his shoes "seemed to explode, catching his jeans on fire."

The story states that the shoes were turned over to the fire department; a fire official is quoted as saying that "it does appear that the explosion came from within the shoe itself."

I want to stress that this is just one isolated incident of NIKE shoes apparently exploding. We cannot conclude that all NIKE footwear explodes, even if we feel somewhat bitter toward the NIKE brand corporation because we are forced to purchase its absurdly overpriced products for our children, who refuse to wear any other kind because they have been exposed to relentless multimillion-dollar advertising campaigns featuring athletes such as MICHEAL brand JORDAN. We should continue to purchase and wear NIKE brand shoes with total confidence, unless we happen to be among those rare individuals who need, for some medical reason, to retain the use of their feet.

Ha ha! I am joshing, of course; I have nothing but the deepest respect and affection for the NIKE corporation and its huge legal department. So just in case I may have misused or maligned any brand names in this column, let me conclude with this formal statement of apology to NIKE, CRAFTSMAN, KELLOGG'S, STYROFOAM, BAGGIES, MICHEAL JORDAN and any other giant corporate entity I may have offended: I'm really sorry, OK? So don't get your JOCKEYS in a knot.

by Dave Barry
syndicated columnist

Patience is a virtue Or something like that

A few months ago, my good friend Yvette and I went to the Cleveland Airport to pick up some other friends who were returning from a vacation in Florida. We decided to make our two-hour trip into a fun time, with music and food to boot. We laughed and joked around as we caught up on some gossip and enjoyed the scenery. (If the view surrounding I-90 qualifies as "scenery.")

So, there we were on our way to cheery Cleveland when I looked at Yvette and queried, "Do you know exactly how to get to the airport?"

"Sure. Well, I think so. There'll be signs."

"Yah, you're right," I said with a smile. "Why wouldn't there be signs? And besides, how hard is it to get to the Cleveland Airport?"

(Before I go any further, let me give you some advice. If I ever happen to invite you to go with me on a road trip, or if I ever offer to accompany you to go ANYWHERE, like Panama City, or Toronto, or even downtown Erie, be sure to have a map on hand and have it ready to go right along with us. You see, I was born with some sort of direction-deficiency hormone that prevents me from locating the most elementary places in any of the tiniest towns in the world. It's not my fault, though, I was born this way.)

To continue my story of Yvette and I, we ended up sailing past the correct exit that would have led us directly into the lap of the airport, no problem at all.

Of course as fate would have it, we had to find ourselves not in the lap of the airport, but in the bowels of downtown Cleveland, where the darkness and dank weather did not offer much comfort or reassurance.

In addition to our predicament, I was the one in the driver's seat, which was enough to make both of us wonder if we'd make it back to Erie, PA ever again.

Yvette and I pulled over at a corner to hold a meeting of the minds, or "mindless," and low and behold a police officer and his shiny coach went driving by. He had to stop for a red light, so we immediately reacted to such an opportune moment.

Yvette jumped out of the car and tapped on the officer's

window. I could barely see from where I was watching, but I could tell that he had at the very least rolled down the window to acknowledge my friend, and she seemed to be conversing with him for what felt like an hour or so.

While I was waiting, I was talking, out loud, to myself saying, "You know, Laura, you're a real idiot. You can't even make it to the stinkin' Cleveland Airport, (swear word, swear word)." I was pretty hard on myself, but, then again, anyone else would've said the same to me, maybe worse.

Yvette ran back to the car, got in and slammed the door shut. Lucky for us the officer said we could make a U-turn, and he'd point us in the proper direction. (It took us two or three U-turns, but we got it right.) Thank God for honest people of the law. He must have had a good laugh on us, anyway.

Needless to say, my friend and I finally made it to the airport. When we got there, though, we had to figure out where to park the car. That wasn't too difficult, even for us.

The trip to the Cleveland Airport gave both of us a few more grey hairs, and we realized a valuable lesson: "Don't be

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afraid to admit that you're stupid. Someone will always be there to help."

NOTE: If you or anyone you know is suffering from this dreaded disease of never knowing where the hell you're going, please take care to offer your time and attention to the issue at hand. Please be more patient with yourself or with others suffering from this direction-deficiency hormone. This is not something to write off as a lack of intelligence. Individuals who are diagnosed with this illness really do know where they want to go, and isn't that what really counts, even though they're not sure how to get there?

by Laura Borowski
Collegian columnist