

Inequitable equation

By Constance Scrafield

The kids at the Royal were so great, beautiful, funny, bouncy. Full of laughter and light. This was the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, you know ? the largest indoor agricultural fair and international horse show in North America, a ten day trial of strength and endurance, from which we packed it up on Monday.

Back to the children visitors. There were lots of them and they were all so fascinating by their honest curiosity, enthusiasm and sheer lust for that which is a bit bad for them but very fun to consume, namely very colourful candies- huge hard candy wheels on a stick or they toted equally intensely coloured hard candy sticks. The children were brilliant, wonderful to watch.

As the world's Eighth Billion baby is born, that tiny soul could have lots to question and lots to demand.

I had a late dinner with a friend, Bob, during the week at my favourite Toronto restaurant, La Palette. Bob is a person I met horseback riding in the Hockley Valley. He lived with his family in a charming house with a swimming pool overlooking the valley. Residing in Toronto since his wife died and his kids are doing their own things, we took time to yak and dine well, a glass of good red wine and the truth will out.

The conversation drifted to this and that until it came to the state of the environment. Suspecting that Bob's approach to the crisis would be quite diverse to mine, I sat back and listened to what he had to say.

?Pipelines are the safest way to transport oil and gas,? said he.

?Except when they leak or break,? I returned but he shrugged that off as an exceptional misdemeanour. ?Since there's fracking, that has made things easier.?

It should be said of Bob that he has dealt and to a degree still deals in venture capital investments and knows people in the hierarchy of the wealthy and with companies whose investments and profits range in the billions.

He sat back to regard me and to make his point his point clear, ?Constance,? he began, to make sure I was paying attention, ?we'll be using oil and gas for decades to come.?

Blunt and unquestioning.

I relaxed and moved my glass closer for him to refill it, saying, ?Okay, we might just as well sit back and drink wine and enjoy ourselves while we can ? don't worry about it because we are doomed, pal ? it's all over bar the misery.?

The next day at the Royal, I was talking about this conversation, somewhat mocking the whole business of going to Mars, with my great friend, Jennifer, who had come over the week to assist as staff for the stand.

She was just as emphatic, ?We have to go to Mars if the species is to survive.?

It is obvious that no company the size of the villainous Shell, well - why chose a favourite when they are all of a common shade? Huge fossil companies with unspeakable fortunes and massive government investment are not ready and willing and maybe never will be ready to dismantle, and ? heaven help us ? clean up the scourge and damage their mining has cost. To bring the fossil fuel industry to a halt and replace it with however workable, clean, planet saving alternatives already invented and being used, there, to take and develop safer ways to power whatever vast numbers of energy needs we believe are essential to the lives we want to live ? all this is pretty well unthinkable to the people living off the fat of it.

Really it boils down to: does the Eighth Billion baby have any rights?

So, with my personal campaign of 'going to Mars is a nonsense' spend the money on re-storing and rescuing Earth, I visited the NASA website for a couple of items that illustrate why going to Mars has no chance of whatever poor success Elon hopes for it:

'Mars has a thin atmosphere made up mostly of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and argon gases.'

Not exactly a summer breeze. Here is even better news:

'Occasionally, winds on Mars are strong enough to create dust storms that cover much of the planet. After such storms, it can be months before all of the dust settles.'

There is no 'living' on Mars; there can only be an existence of GMO humans contained in dwellings completely contained, from which no exit to the greater planet would be possible. However large these dwellings get to be over decades of building them, they are still a life with no natural element to it.

What strange beings we would become.

A Royal Winter Fair visited by beautiful babies and little children, their happy mummies and daddies showing them all the wonders. In the summer they will play on the grass and learn the songs of birds and watch the bees busy at the centre of flowers but not forever and maybe not for long.

What will we offer them and the Eighth Billion baby for their futures: a ruined paradise or torment on Mars?