

editorial opinion

Carl Stoddard writes

Cat's a tonic for illness

The flu knocked me off my feet for two days last week and left me home alone with our cat as my only companion during the day.

He helped me somewhat. He chewed my toes, dived on the newspaper while I tried to read and played the piano (in a heavy-pawed manner).

But like most cats, he favors soft beds and long naps. So I read all the magazines in the house and went through all the newspapers.

When I had exhausted those, I tried a little daytime television viewing. But soap operas and game shows proved to be too two-dimensional for me. In fact, some of the soap operas made me feel even worse, and I wasn't feeling too good to begin with.

After a while, I found myself lying in bed with the television off, the magazines read and the cat asleep on my feet. The sun was filtering through the bedroom windows, spraying patterns on the walls. Everything was quiet and idyllic and I slowly drifted into a world of philosophy.

I thought about a lot of things and in the course of the afternoon I solved many of the world's ills. It was no easy task, as I was occasionally interrupted by the cat who periodically rose and stretched before curling up for another nap.

I wondered, at length, what it would be like to be a cat. That was probably one of the more absurd thoughts that crossed my mind that afternoon. But I wasn't feeling well at the time.

Our cat, at least, lives a very easy life. He goes out when he wants to go out. He comes in when he wants to come in. He eats what and when he chooses.

And you must understand, our house is not his house. His house is our house. Period. And when he is in good spirits we may pet him.

I have often said that no one can own a cat. Cats, unlike dogs, can't be tricked into playing that game.

Dogs will bound through a mile of frozen mud to bring back a dead duck. A cat may let you scratch him behind the ear.

Anyway, in my philosophical journey down the alley of cats, I paused to wonder what would happen if cats—rather than men—were the dominate creatures on earth.

But before I could reach a conclusion, the cat rose and demanded to be let outside. Although sick, I rose and led him to the door.

I opened the door and was struck by a sudden blast of cold air. The cat walked to the door sill, paused for a minute or two and then decided that he would not go outside as planned.

Still shaken by the cold, I went back to bed. I tried to remember what I was thinking about, but I forgot.



Jackie Klein writes

Council entertains (?) students

Sometimes even small doses of city government may be hard to swallow, especially if you happen to be a teenager.

For two weeks in a row, students in Southfield high schools' government classes were treated to a live show of the Southfield city council in action.

The most exciting moment was when the high school radio station tape recorder started to buzz and whirr like a dentist's drill, drowning out some heavy council discussion.

It must have been disconcerting for the kids to miss the biggie about ordering 20 dozen zelballs (paddle tether balls) for the Southfield Parks and Recreation Department's 1975 summer playground program.

Considering the city spent \$227.52 for 240 zelballs last year, Councilman Stephen Cooper wanted to know if they could be retreated to help cut the fat out of local government.

Those who missed that vital issue might have heard Cooper call for an intensive study and review of picnic table needs for summer, 1975. If the tape recorder was sounding off, you could still get the drift of the conversation from Council President Steve Hurite's raised eyebrows.

The week before, there was a lively discussion about bike racks, investigating the possibility of providing king-sized chains on 10-speeds to keep them from being ripped off and federal funding through the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) to upgrade two-wheel facilities.

Seeing as though there hadn't been a public hearing on the council agenda for two weeks, the city fathers had to find something to illustrate democracy "in-action."

Last meeting, Councilman Phil Peterson came up with a lesson for the yawning government class. It was a report of emergency rentals of snow removal equipment during the snowstorm of Dec. 1-4, 1974.

"We spent \$6,700 for three trucks. That's a total of \$13,930 for emergency equipment rental besides the \$781.55 the city spent for meals for maintenance employees during the storm. The total cost of \$14,711.55 is paid out of the 1974-75 budget. Now you have learned how government works in 20 inches of snow."

All kidding aside, the council is a hard working group. The government classes will have to realize business is slow and they'll have to settle for zelballs for a while.

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