



IT'S TOUGH AT THE TOP

HUMANITY WRAP
By Roger Beaumont

The political world has practically no content but money; it's an unpleasant souk full of hustlers and promoters who hide their sins so well they should be arrested for indecent composure.

With the ever increasing number of TRT members it's now a clear case of too many pigs for the teats. During the recent PAO chairmen elections, one candidate was somewhat shocked to discover how few people in his own constituency knew who he was, and even more shocked to find, once they'd been informed of his eminence, that they weren't impressed.

Last week's elections were instructive in that all the TRT candidates had in common was a perverse determination to recoil from the notion that they had anything in common at all.

And, as there can be only one winner, TRT candidates are fast developing a distressing habit of never quite doing well enough. As a result, victors view the losers as a bunch of glamorous insurgents who are not quite glamorous enough to insurgre sufficiently. But there is no one as complacent as a politician who suspects that his own social attitudes may have brought about something deeply unpleasant. Like losing, for instance. Denial of the obvious is infinitely preferable to the abandonment of cherished attitudes. And politicians suffer in silence louder than any living thing I've met.

In every democracy, the pinnacle of politics is a high-wire act. You must promise to protect the poor from the rich, which is a joke, and the rich from the poor, which is a shame. You must claim to share the values, the morals, the pain and, if possible, the ethnic backgrounds of voters, even if you are just back from a Chinese feast at a poncey five-star joint and they are still shuffling out of the work canteen. Being all things to all men, women and

small cuddly animals puts a strain on the soul.

It must be particularly galling to the titled elite that they cannot even drive their own limos, being forced to fume at other drivers from the back seat, with a press attache to reinterpret the hand gestures.

Government ministers are often outspoken, but so far, no one has been able to figure out by whom. Meanwhile, the tone of the rhetoric about missing lawyers, amassing shares and shuffling cabinets is starting to make Wagner look reserved.

My humble opinion of media censorship is like Abraham Lincoln's of slavery – when I hear a man argue in its favour, I feel a strong desire to see it tried out on him personally.

A reader once wrote to The Times in London to suggest that all churches should be equipped with electronic buttons in pews which the congregation can press when they get bored with the vicar's sermon. When more than 50 per cent have been pressed, the floor in the pulpit opens and the vicar disappears into a crypt. I wonder if our TVs could be fitted with these devices during a no-confidence debate in Parliament? Think of the fun. Think of the ratings.

Coming home on the skytrain last week the whole carriage had to listen to a tall farang woman who spent 20 minutes on her mobile phone putting her child to bed at the top of her voice. Just before my stop I blurted out: "Give him a big kiss from me, too." The woman's acid response was: "Do you mind not listening in to my conversation. It's private."

Apparently, under US law, there is no copyright on titles – as we are reminded by Warner Brothers' famous attempt to sue the Marx Brothers over their film "A Night In Casablanca". The Warners alleged the Marxes were infringing their

copyright with the word "Casablanca". G r o u c h o responded by threatening to sue Warner Brothers for their use of the word "Brothers".

A brand new planet has swum into our solar pond.

Rather than a tired old classical evocation such as Venus or Jupiter, the chosen name is the extremely forward-thinking, fabulously exotic, and, of course, politically correct Sedna. It sounds like a sugar substitute, or a Thai nasal spray, or perhaps a cheap Albanian car. But is far more meaningful.

According to Inuit legend, Sedna was a happy Arctic girl until she was let down by her husband (he turned out to be a bird) and father (he pushed her overboard during a storm to save himself from drowning). She then became the goddess of the sea. Look out, Venus, here she comes.

She is a momentous find with a waist measurement of 2,000km and a blood temperature of 400 degrees below zero on her balmiest day.

Sedna is not allowed to savour full planetary status just yet. Questions must be asked, inquiries made and doubts expressed.

Some say that she is no planet at all and should instead be called a Plutino, a "planette", or even, God forbid, a mere Kuiper Belt object. Others say that it is outrageous for a massive celestial body to sound like a cheap fashion accessory. The debate will surely go on.

But despite it, we will marvel at Sedna. Welcome to the neighbourhood.



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