

SPOILED SWEET

Eighteen per cent of British dog owners admit pet gets better diet than they do

Britain is living up to its reputation as a nation of dog lovers, with many owners feeding their four-legged friends healthier and tastier meals than they serve up for themselves, a new survey says. A study of 1,337 British dog owners found that 18 per cent fed their pooches a better diet than their own, giving them fresh dishes instead of canned food. Consequently, 21 per cent of dogs enjoyed



cheese, 15 per cent were given fish and 9 per cent chomped on vegetables. More than a quarter of respondents said they would eat the food they bought their dog. However, the gourmet meals came at a price, the study for Direct Line insurance said. Pet owners in Britain pay out £2.3-billion (\$4.8-billion) a year on their dogs' dinners and 10 per cent admit their pet has a weight problem. Reuters



RUSSIA RESTRICTS ADOPTION BY FOREIGNERS TO OFFICIAL AGENCIES

Moscow The Russian government will stop foreigners adopting children outside officially registered agencies in a step toward limiting the number of children who leave the country, Sergei Apatenko, head of the Education Ministry's youth department, said yesterday. This would protect vulnerable children from adoption by inappropriate families. Such a step has long been demanded by nationalist lawmakers shocked by a series of well-publicized murders of Russian children abroad, mainly in the United States. Many have demanded a complete ban on foreigners adopting Russians, although observers say this is prompted more by wounded national pride than by a desire to protect the thousands of children eligible for adoption. They say it is part of a campaign against foreign interference in Russia, including restrictions on foreign funding of charities, which officials have accused of having links to foreign spies. Reuters

GREEK, TURKISH FIGHTER JETS COLLIDE IN DISPUTED AIRSPACE OVER AEGEAN

Athens Two fighter jets — one Greek, one Turkish — collided in mid-air over the disputed Aegean Sea yesterday during a simulated dogfight between the two NATO rivals. The crash between the F-16 jets, 32 kilometres east of the Greek island of Karpathos, was the most serious incident between the two countries since they came close to war over two rocky islets in the same region a decade ago. The Greek pilot was missing, resumed dead, while the Turkish pilot, pictured, was rescued after ejecting from the aircraft. He is said to have refused help from a Greek military helicopter and was picked up by a commercial vessel. The two sides blamed each other, but in contrast with the past were careful to tone down the rhetoric. Turkey said the crash was caused by a Greek fighter interfering in Turkish manoeuvres in "international airspace." Athens said two Greek fighters were scrambled when two Turkish F-16s and an RF-4 jet violated the Athens "flight information region" which extends over the Aegean. Greece claims a 16-km airspace limit, but Turkey recognizes only 10 km. The Daily Telegraph



2,148 EXECUTED IN 2005 DESPITE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BANS: REPORT

London At least 2,148 people were executed in 2005 even though most countries have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice, Amnesty International said yesterday. In its annual report on the state of the world's human rights, the group said at least another 5,186 people were sentenced to death last year, although the true figures were certainly higher. Executions used various means, including hanging, firing squads, lethal injections and beheading. Among those sent to death were children and people with mental disabilities. Ninety-four per cent of executions took place in China, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United States. Amnesty raised particular concern over the risk of executing innocent people. In 2005, both China and the United States released people who were awaiting execution on death row but had been wrongly convicted. China also acknowledged innocent people had been executed, while people were put to death in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan reportedly without being given the benefit of due process of law. Agence France-Press



Holocaust survivor Philip Weiss greets Canadian students from the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program in Washington, D.C., yesterday. The students toured the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum before hearing Weiss speak.

Holocaust program 'overwhelms' students

Asper Foundation program gives teens first-hand view

By SHERLON ALBERTS

WASHINGTON In the six decades since Philip Weiss was liberated from a Nazi concentration camp in Mauthausen, Austria, the 82-year-old Holocaust survivor has often been torn between the urge to tell his story and a feeling that "numbing silence" was the better response to the horrors he witnessed.

Mr. Weiss chose to speak out, forcefully, because he could not allow his history to be denied by the likes of Ernst Zundel, Jim Keegstra and, more recently on the world stage, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian President. "I was there. My mother lost 36 members of her family," Mr. Weiss said yesterday. "I saw the Nazis murdering children and sick people, young and old. I am a witness to that. What makes me speak out? That makes me speak out. You can't let people deny that."

With often harrowing detail, he recounted his suffering and survival before an audience of 250 Canadian students in Washington as part of the Asper Foundation's Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program.

Still emotionally drained from visiting the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the teens heard Mr. Weiss tell of being imprisoned in five concentration camps before U.S. troops freed him in May, 1945.

He described seeing thousands of people "transported in cattle wagons to the slaughterhouse" and "murdered with assembly-line efficiency" simply because they were Jews.

"Humanity went berserk," said Mr. Weiss, who was born in Pleshchyn, Poland, and now lives in Winnipeg. Millions in Europe were "silent bystanders" while the Nazis carried out their extermination program.

That the Holocaust could happen in 20th-century Germany should be proof genocide can happen anywhere, said Weiss, who has been a Holocaust educator since 1978. The responsibility of today's young people is to sound the alarm when they see intolerance and hatred, in their own communities or around the world, he said.

"That is what you are being asked today to help us with. We [survivors] won't be here for much longer. You cannot, and you must not, be silent observers," he said during a speech at the Canadian embassy.

For the students, Mr. Weiss's speech was a moving cap to 18 hours of intensive study that focused not only on the Holocaust but on ways to fight racism in the 21st century.

During a question-and-answer session, several students cited the ethnic genocide in Darfur as evidence that hatred still breeds mass killing.

"We always say the Holocaust should never happen again. But many things comparable to it are happening," said Adam Rudinsky, 15, a Grade 9 student at Vitzhak Rabin High School in Ottawa. "It is our obligation to stop this, to

stop the injustices of human rights violations."

Adam Naguse, 14, said he now has a better understanding of how racial slurs or ethnic jokes can spawn hatred — or worse — unless individuals take a stand.

"People have to act. You can't just sit around and talk," said the Grade 9 student at Toronto's Marshall McLuhan Catholic Secondary School.

"Racism is directly related to hatred, and hatred is one of the worst things in the world."

The students were equally moved by the exhibits at the Holocaust museum, where the story of six million victims is told in artifacts from the death camps, personal items of the dead and the words of survivors.

"It was just so emotionally overwhelming. My heart sank," said Adam Messinger, 15, another student at Vitzhak Rabin.

"To think how the world just sat back and let it happen and only intervened when it was too late. I think it is our obligation, as the generation now, to remember."

He sees parallels to the Holocaust in Darfur and said "countries all over the world have to take action before it is too late."

The Holocaust studies program was launched nine years ago by the late Israel Asper as a way to teach Canadian students, Jewish and non-Jewish, to promote tolerance by using the past as a lesson.

Mr. Asper was the founder of CanWest Global Communications, whose media holdings include Global Television and the National Post.

Since the program began, more than 5,500 students from 78 cities, 10 provinces and two territories have taken part.

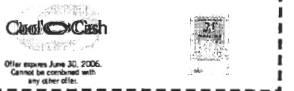
"It's a life-changing experience for many of them," said Moe Levy, the program's executive director.

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