

# ENJOY THE SEASON #8

by Marcy Waldie

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## Party Animals

Look at this title a moment. Are you conjuring thoughts of National Lampoon's Animal House? Your wild high school or college days? Perhaps the bashes at Ken and Aileen's? Well, stop. This is serious. It's an election year. The future of our country and all that.

Although I loathe history, (I was "taught" by the memorize and regurgitate method) I thought it would be fun to research the birth of the Democratic and Republican party mascots. After all, these animals are having a party at our expense, so we should get to know them more intimately.

I did recall that the Democratic Party sprouted its first roots in the Deep South. Party members were pro-slavery. The Republican Party popped up in Lincoln's time. Party members were anti-slavery. That was as far as my memory took me, so I headed to the library.

The two ladies at the reference desk at the Spring Valley branch eagerly asked to help me. After hearing my question, one of the ladies decided that it was time for her Oreo cookie break. The other gal babbled, fidgeted and blurted, "Our computers are down. I'll have to check these books." After flipping a few pages in huge volumes on her desk, she shook her head and had me follow her to the stacks. She handed me three books, told me to look in two other sections and shot out of sight.

I pored over that dry rot until images of my sophomore history teacher materialized on the pages. It was definitely time to split. Besides, school had ended for the day, and the library was

being overrun with junior high schoolers. On school days, libraries must replace shopping malls as the centers of teenie bopper activities.

Make this easy on yourself, I thought. Call the local Democratic and Republican party headquarters. Their volunteers act as though they know everything. This should be sooo easy.

Alas, my attempt to query was futile. Instead of an enthusiastic voice of some young zealot at the other end of the line, I got a recording. No one was minding the shop. On a weekday at 4 PM. Less than two weeks prior to a partisan election. Absurd.

I could have pursued my quest. In a way I feel guilty that I didn't. After all, researching for an APA V zine does rank up there with a doctoral thesis. Let me off this time, and I'll try not to disappoint again.

If anyone who knows how and when the party mascots came to be LoCs this piece, please enlighten us.

## Cats and Ducks

Cliches. Do people really know what they're saying when they use cliches? A lot of people don't know what they're saying when they don't use cliches. Back to the point. One phrase especially gets my goat. (What in hell does that mean? I suppose that I would know if someone stole my goat. If I had a goat.) Every time I hear the following statement, I proceed to educate the person from whose mouth the ridiculous words were uttered.

"It's raining cats and dogs."

Think about it. Pretty silly, huh?

Now, there have been documented accounts of it "hailing" frogs and fish. Hailstones form when raindrops are caught in alternating updrafts and downdrafts. On each downdraft the droplets collect moisture and are then hurled upward where the moisture freezes. That's why hailstones are layered. During these violent drafts that precede severe storms, frogs and even fish that live in the surface layer can be sucked upward into the storm cell. When the drafts subside and the hail falls to the ground, the frogs and fish are released as well. There. A logical explanation.

Here's one for the cats and dogs bit. I learned this from good, strong Scandinavian stock whose forepeople settled in the rich farmland in the midwestern United States.

In early America when it rained on the farms, the only animals visibly affected were the cats and the ducks. Felines would race for cover from the cold, uncomfortable wetness. They usually scooted into the barns. Any ducks that weren't already outside waddled from the barns into that with which they were most comfortable - water. So, when it started to rain, one of the family members would inevitably utter what became pat statements: "It's raining. Cats in, ducks out."

Over the years, we urbanized Americans slaughtered the ducks in favor of "man's" best friend - the dog. It then became, "It's raining cats and dogs." These words make no sense at all.

I think that I would fall short of the goal to get the accurate phrase and explanation to every American. Each would probably say, "How interesting", and continue to favor the dogs. It would be like beating a dead horse. I might as well let sleeping dogs lie.

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by Marcy Waldie  
6980 Wedgewood Way  
Las Vegas, NV 89117-4418