

THE MARTIN FAMILY

CARMENSTRASSE, 48

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SWITZERLAND

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Dear Reader,

i hope that you are well and happy. We're enjoying an early summer in Zürich, but we're also in the midst of a drought. Predictably, global warming has been blamed. In Switzerland, this standard refrain is accompanied by a reiteration of the country's commitment to green energy and the elimination of nuclear power plants. A friend explained how this works.

".... and so the lake water behind the dam causes the turbine to rotate which, in turn¹, generates clean, green, hydro-electric power."

"Sounds good - except we're in a drought. What do they do when the lake runs dry?"

"That, Dan, is the beauty of this approach. They generate hydro-power during peak daytime hours when they can sell it for a high price. They use cheap, off-peak nuclear power to pump the water (uphill) back behind the dam at night."

"You're kidding! Besides, aren't they're going to close the nuclear plants?"

"That's right! And that's why they buy the nuclear power from France."

"This solution is green? It's absurd."

Spousal Interrupt: "How do you know?"

Author response: "It takes more than one megawatt of electricity to recycle the water used to generate one megawatt."

Spouse: "How do you know that?"

Author: "The laws of thermodynamics..."

Spouse: "Do you think that your readers care about thermodynamics?"

Author: "Oops"

Turning quickly to vegetables: The European challenge of the week involved vegetables flavored with E. Coli. The German government began by blaming Spanish farmers.

"See Nazy," I said shamelessly taking advantage of a medical disaster, "we should not eat vegetables."

"Which vegetables?"

¹ rotate & turn: get it?

"Cucumbers, sprouts, lettuce. Anything that is green or has leaves."

"I thought that problem was only with Spanish vegetables."

"Nope! Now the German government says it could include Danish and Dutch produce. For the sake of safety, we'll have to forgo anything leafy. Let's go to McDonalds!!"

"There was no warning about Swiss vegetables. Right?"

"No," I replied reluctantly. "*E.Coli is probably illegal in Switzerland*," I thought.

"In that case, I'll make a giant Swiss salad - just for you."

Over the last week, the German government has successively shifted the blame from Spain to a Hamburg restaurant, to bean sprouts and finally to a single organic farm. For some reason, the constantly changing official proclamations, eh, fictional stories, have engendered distrust of governmental veracity. Constantly changing updates also featured in JAPAN's governmental updates on the reactor problems.

Faithful readers, relieved by the news in last week's letter that the aquarium is being refished, asked about the neon tetra residents:

"You told us the names of the new Angelfish, but said almost nothing about the Neons. Don't little fish count?"

Seven neons (see photo) were acquired. I proposed obvious names: "Greed, sloth, pride, gluttony, envy.."

"No!" Nazy interrupted.

"What's wrong with the seven deadly sins?"

"How about: Monday, Tuesday..."

"Boring."

We finally agreed on Doc, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, Bashful, Sneezy, and Dopey.

"Now," I said, "we just have to find a fish that can be named Cinderella."

"Snow White."

"Whatever."



Readers of recent editions of The Weekly Letter have asked about Darius and his trip to China. I am happy to report that he has safely arrived in China. There was never any doubt: Darius always reaches his goal.

"Are you feeling okay?" Nazy asked.

"Darius does always reach his goal - at the very last minute. I wonder if he turned off the stove at his apartment." I replied.

"Don't worry. He never turns it on."

"I wonder if he knows how to turn it on," I thought.

One of the first things Darius did in China was to buy a SIM card for his iPhone. Even though we haven't yet spoken to him, we can already tell the difference. In Lebanon, a phone "repairman" installed an iPhone battery that cannot be charged. As a result, the mobility of Darius' iPhone was significantly reduced. (It only worked when plugged into the wall and, even then, was non-functional during the 3 hours a day when the electricity shut down.) If we called Darius when the phone was not plugged in, we got a variety of messages from the Lebanon mobile phone company:

"The mobile phone you are calling is out of the area." [*Good Grief! Did he go to Syria?*]

"The phone number you are calling does not exist." [*Good Grief! Did he lose the phone?*]

"There are network problems." [*Naturally.*]

"Thank you using Telecom Yemen." [*Yemen? No, no, no.*]

When we call, eh, try to call him in China, the message is more believable: "The telephone you are trying to call is turned off." [I wonder if China has assigned a personal spy to Darius.]

On a completely different topic, while researching an employment opportunity, I discovered several internet articles that alerted me to a talent shortage in my field.

"It's not surprising," I told Nazy. "Consider the management 'talent' that I dealt with at HP.

"You were management talent at HP, Dan."

"I was talented talent, my dear. That's why I didn't fit in."

More background about the talent shortage is available on my blog:

[http://danmartininternational.com/
danmartininternational/Blog/Entries/
2011/6/8_Talent_Shortage_-_Why.html](http://danmartininternational.com/danmartininternational/Blog/Entries/2011/6/8_Talent_Shortage_-_Why.html)

Finally, the photo provides proof that the plants and flowers flourished under my care while Nazy was away.

Cheers

Dan

