

Something to crab about

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"A feast for crabs! Hey, that sounds like fun!"

Lexington Park, MD - Americans have been ranting in epic fashion lately. If ranting were an Olympic sport America would easily win the gold based on their performance the last few days. They've had two high profile funerals that created plenty of grist and Nike has raised the bar to a new level. As Americans take aim at famous people in the major political parties, vent against highly paid athletes and corporations, one organization that truly deserves to feel the wrath of the nation is getting off pretty easy. We are speaking, of course, about PETA. Yes, they call themselves People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. That treatment doesn't seem to extend to the top animal in the food chain—humans. It's humans that PETA wants to leash and muzzle like, like some sort of—animal! The organization's mantra is "animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, use for entertainment or abuse in any other way." By now, every Marylander is aware of PETA's latest folly. As part of their "pro vegan" campaign, PETA bought billboard space in Baltimore. The image of a Chesapeake Bay blue crab, claws extended as if pleading for reason is seen next to the words "I'm me, not meat. See the individual. Go vegan." The billboard drew the ire of the local restaurant and seafood industry. Those entities have made their livelihoods from the harvesting of creatures like crabs.

I know lots of people who have—very discretely—adapted to a strict vegan diet. Most are not preachy about it. It's a personal choice they have made, mostly for health reasons. It's not a friendship deal-breaker. We can all get along. We can sit down at the same table and enjoy eating different food.

It doesn't appear as if PETA practices such congeniality. In 2013 a member of the group "covertly" recorded a video from a "Lobster and Crab Slaughterhouse." It was truly horrifying. They showed masked individuals wearing smocks, rubber gloves and what looked like shower caps in a large kitchen preparing crustaceans for packaging and sale. For added effect, they slowed down the voices so that the perpetrators—uh, kitchen workers—sounded like Darth Vader. The crustacean butchers used profane language. As PETA describes it on their web site, the dismembered shellfish were "left in bins to die in agony." When I saw this I thought—"bisque!!" Readers are then asked to fill out a written pledge to never eat crustaceans. I must have forgot to fill mine out.

I'd like to say this organization is rife with lunatics, but that wouldn't be fair to the normal, lovable lunatics of society, like the ones who obsess over UFOs or think pro wrestling is a real sport.

Since the beginning of time, humans have always had an inconsistent, tempered, tentative relationship with other animals. There are some we ride, like horses; some we put to work, like camels, oxen and mules; some we milk and some—like cats and dogs—we keep for companionship. Some, like a variety of birds, provide us with songs and soothing sounds. However, there are also animals we hunt, those we raise and slaughter; and others who meet their demise when they are deemed to be pests and carriers of disease. Unlike man, all animals aren't created equal.

In grade school, teacher told us man was a different animal. Humans have minds to think and wills to choose. The other animals simply don't. Right now, my mind is thinking that I don't know what to choose—the whole Maine lobster or the jumbo crab cakes.

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