

BLENDING

By Fred Hobbs

In so many aspects, the simple process of blending produces a superior product. Blending flavors and colors in cooking and in mixed drinks, blending flowers and plants to create new varieties, blending colors on the artist's palette.

In the animal world, for example, improving the strength, the looks, and sometimes the behavior of dogs by blending of certain traits from separate breeds.

Some purists will insist that the thoroughbreds, animals bred from supposedly "the best blood", are superior. Perhaps that is sometimes true, if, for example, the goal is to produce a champion racehorse. But, for household pets, give me a mutt for a dog or an offspring of an alley cat any time. Better behaved, more loveable, more trainable. They tend to be less nervous and generally have fewer health problems.

In considering the concept of blending in the human race, look first at the alternative. Numerous studies and mountains of anecdotal evidence show the folly of attempts to create "pure strains", supermen, a "Master Race". The monster Adolf Hitler failed miserably. Some royal societies have tried to protect royal bloodlines by inbreeding. Scientific studies show that inbreeding poses threats to a population such as reduced fertility and increased deaths of children, plus a variety of mental deficiencies. The possibilities of inheriting undesirable recessive genes are greatly increased in the practice of inbreeding.

A much more common and less clinical look at the notion of blending occurs when Americans, especially, are involved. We are a nation of peoples from all over the world and the blending has been going on now for over 300 years.

While many Americans like to hold on to some of the traditions of "the old country" and pride in ancestry is common, the truth is we are mostly blended already and the blender is still set on the fast cycle. And that's good for all of us.

My wife was a pleasant blend of German practicality with Irish beauty and charm. On my side of the family, it was English, Welsh and the contribution of a mysterious Frenchman at some point down the line. It is my extended family, though, that has produced the most exciting blend of backgrounds. A grandniece married a handsome Thai producing a strikingly beautiful little brown-eyed girl named Luna. Another grandniece married a South African of Dutch background.

The family of my son-in-law, John, brings a key element in the make up of our special blend. His mother was English. She married an American GI. Both were white. Complications arose and they went their separate ways.

John was born in the U.S. His older brother was raised by relatives in England. His mother later married a black man and three beautiful girls were born from that union. So, today we have what one of those girls (aptly named Joy and now in her 30s,) calls "My Beautiful Rainbow Family". She published a book about her experience which includes this short rhyme: "My cousins are diverse and come from different places. They are different colors, different faiths and have very different faces. But when we are together it's actually the differences that seem to unite us as one fabulous team."