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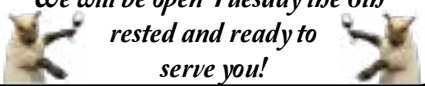


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Fall Fair Coming Sooner Than You Think

By Maxine Rogers/DIGS

the Hall by 8:30. Hornby people had better stay over here with friends the night before!



and coaxing. Bring your best cleaned vegetables, prettied up flowers and other entries for judging. You want your entries to be uniform in size, shape and colour. Select produce with no blemishes. Those first place ribbons make great book marks!

The theme for the Parade this year is going to be Farmers, Gardeners and Ranchers. This is a great occasion to dress up cute kids and their pets for the parade. Hope to see you there! 🍇

Green Wizardries: Baby Steps To Resilience

By Maxine Rogers

I interviewed Wendy Pope who is a successful micro farmer and gardener. How I love the term micro farm. She spoke about an unusual crop she is very excited about: the humble dandelion. Wendy has a great love of nature and a deep knowledge of natural cycles.

Dandelions are a short-lived perennial plant which is nice to have in the vegetable garden as it means you do not have to start every last thing from seed in the spring. Wendy has about fifty dandelions, not common ones but a broad-leaved hybrid. She finds dandelions greens are excellent for a whole range of domesticated animals and they are also a very nutritious green for humans.

In fact, we think of the dandelion as a weed now but our ancestors brought the dandelion from Europe as a food and medicinal plant. Dandelions are not native to the Americas, coming from Asia and Europe.

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Blessing the First Harvest

By Wendy Pope

Sunday August 4th, 10:30 – 11:30 (come a little early if you want to help with creating an altar) at the Community Labyrinth located at the Denman Island United Church and Gathering Place 4575 Denman Rd (top of Big Hill).



Lammas (Loaf Mass), Lughnasadh, is the ancient Celtic celebration of the first harvest. Falling at the beginning of August, midway between Summer Solstice and Fall Equinox, Lammas honours the first harvests of grain and the first loaves of bread made from it. As we celebrate this Old Way at our Community Labyrinth we will also be honouring the farmers, the food growers and food makers, the

plants, the grains and the Elements which they combine and upon which their lives and ours depend. All life is Sacred.

You may wish to bring something from your own garden, a little grain or seed or fruit, the name of a food producer whom you wish to honor, something for the collective altar representing the Elements of Life: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit. You'll know, and you will be welcome.

All are welcome. All spiritual paths, all genders. 🍷

Baird, Black & White Trio at the Back Hall

By Roger Baird

The 18th annual Sonic Smorgasbord featuring the Baird, Black and White Trio is happening this Saturday night, August 3, at the Back Hall. With the imaginative Miles Black on piano, sax, flute, trumpet and maybe trombone, the inimitable Scott White on bass and the fearless percus-

sionist, Roger Baird, the music of the spheres is the object. If you love music and are not encumbered by genres then you'll be in good company and have an interesting time of it! Doors open at 7:30 and the music begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are available in advance at Abraxas Books and the General Store or at the door. 🍷

TIDE TABLE

• Secondary Tidal Station Ford Cove •
• Source: tides.gc.ca •

2024-08-01 (Thu)		
Time	PDT (m)	(ft)
02:14	4.2	13.8
10:18	0.7	2.1
18:14	4.7	15.4
23:25	3.7	12.3
2024-08-02 (Fri)		
Time	PDT (m)	(ft)
03:19	4.1	13.5
11:09	0.6	2
18:55	4.8	15.6
2024-08-03 (Sat)		
Time	PDT (m)	(ft)
00:16	3.6	11.8
04:20	4.1	13.5
11:54	0.6	2
19:29	4.7	15.6
2024-08-04 (Sun)		
Time	PDT (m)	(ft)
00:57	3.5	11.3
05:14	4.1	13.4
12:35	0.7	2.3
19:59	4.7	15.5
2024-08-05 (Mon)		
Time	PDT (m)	(ft)
01:34	3.3	10.8
06:04	4.1	13.3
13:11	0.8	2.8
20:24	4.7	15.4
2024-08-06 (Tue)		
Time	PDT (m)	(ft)
02:11	3.1	10.1
06:51	4	13
13:43	1.1	3.6
20:45	4.7	15.4
2024-08-07 (Wed)		
Time	PDT (m)	(ft)
02:48	2.9	9.4
07:38	3.9	12.6
14:11	1.4	4.6
21:05	4.7	15.4
2024-08-08 (Thu)		
Time	PDT (m)	(ft)
03:24	2.7	8.7
08:26	3.7	12.2
14:38	1.8	5.8
21:23	4.7	15.3



...continued from P.2 Dandelions live for about five to seven years and when they die, their tap root decomposes enriching the surface soil. The dandelions grow bigger every year and simply love to be loved, side dressed with compost and watered. You can get tons of greens of such a plant and they are far more nutritious than lettuce.

The greens go well in soups and can be steamed and eaten with some butter or chili oil. They are good added to stir fries. The roots can be dug up, cleaned, peeled and chopped to make a nutritious vinegar. Leave the chopped roots in the vinegar for a couple of months and strain. Use the vinegar to make vinaigrette. Making your own salad dressing is vastly cheaper and more nutritious than buying commercially-prepared vinaigrette.

The roots can also be cleaned, chopped, roasted and ground into a very clean and wholesome coffee substitute. Dandelion has been used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) for over a thousand years. It is used to treat stomach problems, and a lack of lactation. In Europe, herbalists use dandelion to treat fever, boils, eye problems, diabetes and other problems. The leaves act as a diuretic and stimulate the appetite and improve digestion.



I was put off from eating the leaves as the references talk about them being bitter but this is only the older leaves which can be given to small livestock such as rabbits, sheep and goats. I find the leaves of Wendy's plants to be very mild and palatable. Pigeons, chickens and ducks all love dandelion leaves too.

One of the great advantages of cultivating dandelions is that they come up very early in the spring and their flowers are the first major source of nectar for the pollinators. The flowers also make a good vinegar. Just fill a jar with the blossoms and cover them with apple-cider vinegar and steep for four to six weeks, strain and use as a salad vinegar. The flowers are also good fried, made into pesto and eaten in a salad. Dandelion wine is flavoured with

the petals of dandelion flowers and while I haven't tried it, it is on the list for next year.

Another great benefit of dandelions is that they are really tough plants and can survive our cold winters and dry summers. With just a little care, they will provide tons of food for your family. Wendy will have young plants to share with interested gardeners in the fall. Wendy will also have lots of seeds to give away.

With any salad plant, you do not want to take more than a third of the leaves at once. More than that, and the plant has a hard time recovering. Dandelion greens contain vitamins A, B, C and D. They also are high in minerals especially iron, potassium and zinc.

Wendy explained that her approach to micro farming is that she wants to have a mutually beneficial relationship with the place that she lives. This all stems from Wendy's desire, which started a few decades ago, "to do something attainable, pleasurable and enriching with my life instead of being caught up in capitalism."

Most mornings, I go and harvest an armload of Wendy's dandelions to feed to my poultry. They are so happy and excited to get this food and it makes the yolks of their eggs a terrific shade of orange. Dandelions are the perfect plant to start with when teaching young children to forage. There are many interesting and educational projects that can be done with little kids and dandelions. 🍷



Denman Island Bullytin Board and the Gaslighting of our Community

By Team TIG

"You do it to yourself, you do, and that's what really hurts."

Thom Yorke, Radiohead

Recently, there was yet another exercise in gaslighting the Denman Island community initiated by DIRCS Vice President and Barnacle contributor Chris Wardman, with slander and libel targeting The Islands Grapevine (TIG) on local social media. Wardman falsely blamed TIG for some offensive graffiti that was tagged on the new cement barriers near the Community Hall. Some other amateur "sleuths" piled on to the smears with even more false accusations. And once again, the Denman Island Bullytin Board "moderators" failed to uphold their own rules.

TIG has since been contacted by people describing their experience of receiving the "GRAPENews" stickers made by DIRCS President Eli Hason. Some of these were distributed by local player Megan Rose while she boasted of their origin. The intent of the stickers was to tar and feather TIG as a "FOXNews" right wing



newspaper, when our regular contributors have an obvious liberal/left bias. It's not only ideologically insulting, it mischaracterizes our principles relating to our editorial policies. Apparently, our letters to the editor have not been sufficiently censored for the tastes of the misguided cult that has targeted us. TIG has even printed letters to the editor critical of ourselves, and we unflinchingly support a free press.

Why the cowardice and anonymity, while they complain on social media and claim to be the victims of a campaign that they themselves have been covertly manipulating? At best, it is sophomoric and gutless, and at its worst, it's legally actionable. They are constantly slandering a local proprietor, and it's been going on for at least 18 months. We have the entire social media history screen-grabbed and documented, and we have witness accounts. Let them attempt to deny any of it.

These self described communitarians are projecting their own lack of integrity onto others, while perversely claiming their "altruism" and then clutching their pearls of victimhood on the Denman Island Bullytin Board. By gaslighting the Denman community, they have soiled their own reputations and whatever credibility they imagined they had, while only having themselves to blame for this exposure of their hypocritical antics. They need to apologize to the entire Denman community, and to TIG, for this publicly pathological nonsense they are putting everyone through. 🍷

His Name Is Mohammed Al Zaza

By Yvon Raoul

Not in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that a refugee from Gaza would end up living with us in Vancouver, but that happened in February 2023. His name is Mohammed Al Zaza. Strangely it rhymes with “Gaza”, the city he called home that is now reduced to rubble. In August 2011, just before his fifteenth birthday, a bomb launched from an Israeli drone changed his life forever. He and his young cousin, Ibrahim, were playing soccer on the street when they were hit by a missile that destroyed their home. Ibrahim died from his wounds. Mohammed was sent to a hospital in Tel Aviv, where he underwent more than twenty operations to save his leg and arm as well as skin grafts for third degree burns, followed by a knee replacement and plastic surgery. There were days when he thought he would rather be dead. After almost two years he returned to his family in Gaza and managed to finish high school, but was in constant pain. Jewish Israeli friends who got to know and love him while he was in hospital in Israel helped him get to Turkey for further treatment. He could not go back to Gaza and spent five years in Tur-



Mohammed Alzaza at 15, as he was recovering from an Israeli drone attack in a Tel Aviv hospital. While at the hospital, he met Israeli activists who have continued to advocate for him and helped facilitate his move to Vancouver earlier this year. Photos submitted by Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) of Canada

key, mostly in hiding as he risked being deported to a refugee camp in Syria. He made two dangerous and unsuccessful attempts to get to Greece by sea. It is with the help of dedicated Israeli dissidents, members of the B'selem peace organization, that Mohammed eventually managed to apply for refugee status in Canada, co-sponsored by the Muslim Association of Canada and the Vancouver branch of Independent Jewish Voices. We have friends who belong to that association, and we offered to help out when they were looking for temporary accommodation for Mohammed on his arrival.

Sponsorship is about jumping the hoops of bureaucracy, painstaking time compiling documents, writing letters to MP's, dealing with legal matters, and fund raising to satisfy Immigration Canada rules for a private sponsorship immigration. All of this only works with the commitment of people volunteering and working tirelessly behind the scene. It doesn't end upon arrival of a candidate at the airport. Actually, it's just the beginning of a long road to facilitate the adaption of a person who lived through hell. The follow up is equally tedious and complex while dealing with health authorities, medical and dental appointments, school-

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Shucking Oysters: Tit for Tat

By Alex Allen

In the summer time, we are not only exposed to harsher heat we are also exposed to more fleshy protuberances, in all shapes and sizes. This year, I am amazed at the sheer volume of tattoos on people's bodies. It's well, staggering. We're not talking about a hummingbird here and a yin yang there. Entire arms, shoulders, and legs are enveloped in ink. So, what's the story with tattoos?

Well, that's the thing. Tattoos now symbolize a life story, from a loss of a family member or favourite pet to a milestone, like the wolf you encountered with a flower bouquet on its head. People with tattoos report that they feel more attractive, stronger and more self-confident. For some, tattoos seem to go deeper than just beneath the skin. One writer gushed: "Whether it is a means of self-expression, fashion statement, therapeutic outlet, and cultural homage, tattoos empower individuals to take ownership of their bodies and communicate their stories with the world." From scorpions to elephants, each tat symbolizes a part of their individuality and self-discovery.

Around 2016 to 2018 tattoos really took off, and today, it seems like everyone under 30 now has more than one tattoo. The need to imprint a mark, quote, name and symbol is rampant. Once you get one, apparently, you want more. As someone wrote, you can say tattoos are a reward for all to see, or a punishment for all to judge. A recent survey performed by the Pew Research Center revealed that 32% of Americans have inked their bodies and 22% have more than one tattoo. And what's more, 59% of women have tattoos compared to 41% of men.



We're surrounded by walking picture books. No need to have a conversation, now we can simply "read" about how much they loved their ferret, the word "kinky" and ramen noodles. "Excuse me, can you lift your arm, I'm trying to see whether you are lost or does the lighthouse signify hope and resilience?"

Many celebrities, like David Beckham, Rihanna, and so many more, have tattoos that can be seen from the nosebleed section in arenas. Celebrities have become tattoo culture's walking billboards. I remember first really noticing tattoos on celebrity chefs. Isaac Fitzgerald, author of *Knives & Ink: Chefs and the Stories Behind Their Tattoos*,

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...continued from P.6 ing, lodging and moral support. We were not part of the official sponsoring groups, but Mohammed stayed with us for eight months. This was followed by several weeks of hospitalization for another knee replacement, and a long recovery owing to a subsequent infection in his leg. Mohammed is now 27 years old and living independently in Vancouver. He has become a strong spokesperson for the people of Gaza, has made many friends, and is working valiantly to raise money to try to get some of his family out of Gaza, once that becomes possible.

Like us, Mohammed watches the news from inside Gaza on Al Jazeera. Seeing bombs and missiles systematically smashing buildings that he sometimes recognizes, destroying hospitals, schools, and camps where people were told to take refuge, witnessing the horror of seeing people desperately looking for safety, takes a toll on his spirit. His parents and all his large family (he had eleven siblings) are still in Gaza City, except for one brother who has not been seen since their house was bombed again (for the third time). They haven't yet recovered his body from under the rubble. His wife and two young children are struggling to survive. The whole family had little resources to begin with, and now they have nothing. They are living on the street, under make-shift shelters, struggling to find clean water and enough food to prevent starvation. His parents do not have access to a phone. Mohammed managed to contact his father a few times through a friend, but communication is extremely difficult. On the last call, he heard that they are constantly suffering from Israeli military (IDF) intrusions, day and night, as they "mow the grass" in their sector. We all know now what this expression refers to, thanks to Israeli leaders like Netanyahu, Gantz and Smolrich.

Mohammed is no supporter of Hamas, but he sees how the current treatment of Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere can only lead to more hatred. His goal now is to raise enough money to get his parents and some of his siblings out of Gaza, when that becomes possible. Yet they would leave with regret, as Gaza is their land, their home, and leaving is exactly what the Israeli government wants all the inhabitants to do. Mohammed is a gifted linguist, a polyglot. While in hospital in Israel he mastered Hebrew with the help of nurses, doctors and Israeli friends - one of our Israeli friends told us he speaks it better than many Israelis! Spending five years in Turkey gave him plenty of time to master Turkish too. He is now a good communicator in English, and speaking at various meetings in support of Gaza. He has started courses at Langara College to improve his written skills and hopes to be able to study psychology, with the aim of helping other refugees who have experienced the kind of trauma he has lived through.

Mohammed is still getting financial and social support from Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) and numerous Jewish and Palestinian friends living in Vancouver. This is the other side of the social dystopia we are all facing: Jews and Muslims (and atheists who are neither, like us) enjoying each other's company and solidarity in Vancouver. It has been inspiring for my whole family and our friends. Before getting to know Mohammed, my wife and I would usually look



Mohammed Alzaza, left, and Neil Naiman, right, stand together outside Alzaza's Vancouver apartment. Alzaza, who grew up in Gaza City, was brought to Vancouver earlier this year through the efforts of Independent Jewish Voices Canada and an international community of Israeli activists.

Photo for The Tyee by Amanda Follett Hosgood.

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at the six o'clock news and recriminate about the state of the world, while feeling powerless. Often we would switch it off, to "save our sanity".

The mass media both filter and enhance reality, confusing or even numbing our feelings and too often our judgment. It's understandable and unavoidable. Mohammed's presence in our lives changed this to some extent. During the months he spent with us, the Middle East crossed the threshold of our house with its dramatic historical background. The Gaza tragedy wasn't only about October 7th. The Jewish Shoah and the Palestinian Nakba are two faces of the same human tragedy repeating itself over centuries. The international community seems to be paralyzed (or complicit), faced with the monstrous mass murder of 180 000 human beings (according to a British medical magazine, The Lancet).

One could understand why Mohammed, a refugee 10 000 km away from his home and family, struggling to survive in a totally foreign environment and initially on his own, would despair. In spite of this he is showing amazing resilience and still hopes that the future will be better for his family and his people. Ben Gurion's mantra, "A Land without People for a People without Land" will have to be replaced by "A Land without Peace for People seeking Peace", if humans wish for a future without conflict in that part of the world. Hate is powerful but difficult to sustain forever. This said, Mohammed is more optimist than I am. He is also still young. Given the living hell he has gone through, he has chosen to reject cynicism while remaining anxious about the near future. The alternative is despair. Mohammed has proven that he will never give up. In the meantime, he knows that strength is to be found in community support and solidarity, whatever our background. He has taught us a lot, and we are grateful – but worried about his future and that of his family.

Anyone who wishes to know more about Mohammed, or how to contribute to getting his family out of Gaza, check the link to Gofundme "Urgent Rebuilding Hope: Support my Family in Gaza" and an article in the Tyee (Dec. 12, 2003), "How a Palestinian Injured in a Drone Strike Came to Canada". 🍷

ICJ Advisory Opinion: Occupation Illegal

OPINION

By Sally Campbell

Well, the International Court of Justice has spoken on Israel-Palestine once again. This time they have issued an advisory opinion on the question of whether or not Israel's long-standing occupation of the Palestinian territories is illegal. After 57 years, one might say it's about time.

I say: at last. This matter came to the Court in December, 2022, when the UN General Assembly asked for advice on the legality of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

I always thought that an advisory opinion was just that – advice on law from the world's highest court. You can take it or leave it. It's just advice. Investigating the ICJ for this piece, and watching the 2+ hour video of this most recent ruling, I realized that the Court is interpreting law that exists. We don't need a trial to see if the law is correct. This eminent body of 15 jurists, elected by the UN to serve 9 year terms, comprising the world's leading specialists in international law, is *giving us the law as it already exists*. What they are saying is **international law as set out in the 4th Geneva Conventions, 1949**, when the UN was established. It seems to me the name "advisory opinion" is a bit misleading. It's more than an "opinion" - it's international law. That's why legal analysts call it a "ruling". I recognize that many of you, dear Readers, knew that already; for me, it was a bit of a revelation, and a very good one to boot.

Supporters of Israel "right or wrong" will of course say that it is only an advisory opinion and therefore carries no weight. They couldn't be more wrong. Actually these determinations by the world's highest court hold a great deal of weight, and their impacts will be felt over the days, months, and years ahead. First though, what is the gist of the ruling?

According to the World Court, occupations in themselves are not illegal, but they

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interviewed over 65 chefs about their tattoos, garnering a wealth of anecdotal data on why they got inked.

“We’re kind of like the tattoo generation. I think everybody has one,” says Chris Lam, chef and owner of Vancouver’s Straight and Marrow, who has full tat sleeves on both arms. For Lam, tattoos are also an indication of the culture in general. “You have to have a certain personality to be able to survive and thrive in the restaurant industry. Most of us [chefs] are pretty rebellious in nature, and a lot are very creative,” he says.

One curious set of findings, was that while men see tattooed women as less attractive, they also see them as more promiscuous. A study in France, revealed that when women displayed a temporary butterfly tattoo on their lower back while lying on a beach in a swimsuit, they were more likely to be approached by men 24% of the time, but when the same women didn’t wear tattoos they were solicited just 10% of the time. Men also made faster contact with the women who had a tattoo than with women who didn’t, an average of 23 and 35 minutes, respectively.

With women on the other hand, it’s confusing. For example, a study conducted by a Scottish University found that women rated men with tattoos as being more attractive and masculine than those without tattoos. However, a study conducted by a university in Florida found that women rated men with tattoos as being less attractive and less healthy than those without tattoos. Women’s views on tats also depended on the type, location, number, and style of the tattoo. (And possibly the size of the body displaying them.)

I’m not a big tattoo fan, myself. As one participant in a South African tattoo study opined: “I wouldn’t get one. Would you put a bumper sticker on a Ferrari?” Those participants who were not keen on tattoos felt particularly strong about the number, size and location. One shared: “I must admit, I tend to be skeptical of someone who has an arm/leg/back full of tattoos – in my opinion, there is something as too many tattoos. However, if someone had tattoos which meant something to them (a name of a person who has passed on or a logo symbolizing an important event in their lives) that’s perfectly fine.”

For the uninitiated, the tattoo needle punctures your skin 50 to 3000 times a minute. Joey Keogh explained: “I think it feels like constant finger pricks and a hot rubber band snapping against your skin. You may get a little numb after a while, and the pain can subside after your adrenaline kicks in. I’ve never cried while getting a tattoo, but a lot of people I know have. Others may scream.”

One final warning: Never tattoo a partner’s name on your left buttock, no matter the length of the relationship because life is often messy. Remember how Johnny got lucky when he changed “Winona Forever” to “Wino Forever”? 

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have to fall within two categories to make that claim:

1. They have to be military in nature, and only military. They have to have as their purpose protection of the security of the occupying state *as well as* safeguarding the rights of the occupied people. That’s why there’s a prohibition in the Geneva Conventions of occupiers settling their own people in occupied territory. By 1949, the international community declared itself past the time of colonization of other people’s land.
2. They have to be temporary. They are only supposed to last while negotiations are taking place to restore civilian rule and allow the occupied people self-determination. This condition may explain why so many were beginning to wonder: is it really an occupation? How could it be if it has gone on for so long, for 57 years? Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territory since 1967 has been found by the world’s highest court to breach both of those conditions. Very soon after the occupation, settlement outposts began to

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...continued from P.10

be established by Israel, even though the Israeli government was well aware that it was illegal under international law to do so. The Court itself references Theodor Meron – Israel’s foreign ministry legal advisor in 1967- warning the government that establishing civilian settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories “contravenes explicit provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention”, provisions which were “aimed at preventing colonization”. Nine days after his memo, the Israeli government helped a group of young Israelis set up the first settlement: Kfar Etzion.

A terrific book on this era is “*The Accidental Empire: Israel & the Birth of the Settlements 1967- 1977*”, by Gershom Gorenberg. He is a well-known Israeli historian and journalist who lives in Jerusalem. His book details the entire settlement project during that decade. Gorenberg also “shows how three American presidents turned a blind eye to what was happening in the territories, and reveals their strategic reasons for doing so”. (Cover notes) That “blind eye” continues to this day, despite occasional western expressions of concern about the expansion of

settlements, There’s no actual word of condemnation of their very existence.

From those early days of a few ultra-religious nationalists establishing outposts, the settlement population in the West Bank & East Jerusalem has grown to around 700,000, and a number of the settlements are “small cities, such as Ariel and Maale Adumim, with shopping malls, parks, public pools, synagogues, factories, libraries, schools and colleges”. (Jonathan Cook, *The World Court has cleared the fog hiding western support for Israel’s crimes*. 23 July, 2024. First published in *Middle East Eye*). I’ve been to Maale Adumim, and it was a shock to see the vast green lawns, European-style homes and swimming pools of this

settlement, for Jews only, just outside Jerusalem. Less than ½ hour away in East Jerusalem, water is extremely scarce for Palestinians who all have black rain catchment barrels on their roofs because of the exorbitant prices Mekorot, the Israeli water company, charges them for their own water. You can also tell where Palestinians live because the roads are very run-down, garbage is often not collected, and sidewalks are non-existent or crumbling. There are army checkpoints but no police presence to protect against crime, and yet the streets are alive with people trying just to live their lives. I was never afraid walking those streets alone at night. But I digress; back to the ICJ!

This ruling has to do with the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. It does not affect the state of Israel itself (20% of whose population is Palestinian), only the occupied territories. Some Israelis believe that there is no occupation of Gaza since Ariel Sharon withdrew the Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip in 2005. Gaza, under full Israeli administrative control, plus air, sea & land blockade, is indeed part of the occupied territories, so even though the Court does not make this link, because it is yet to rule on the genocide question, the current on-slaught against Palestinians in Gaza is actually a war crime; it violates the first condition of establishing an occupation: *protection of the occupied civilian population* is mandated under international law. Stay tuned.

(Next week: Scope of the advisory opinion.) 🍷

Falsely Accusing Biden And Harris Of Hating Israel; Falsely Accusing Trump Of Loving Russia

By Caitlin Johnstone

July 29th, 2024

OPINION

One of the dumbest things about US politics today is the way both parties constantly attack each other for holding foreign policy positions they don’t actually hold in order to create the illusion that they have meaningful disagreements on foreign policy.

Donald Trump has been campaigning on the cartoonishly ridiculous claim that



Continued on P.12...

...continued from P.11 Biden and Harris have been unsupportive to Israel even as they continue to unconditionally support its genocide in Gaza, which is a perfect mirror of the way Democrats spent years falsely claiming that Trump is a secret agent of the Kremlin even as he ramped up cold war aggressions against Russia. They need to campaign on these completely fictional disagreements regarding the enemies and allies of the US government, because they do not actually have real disagreements regarding the enemies and allies of the US government.

During a speech in Florida on Friday, Trump claimed his new opponent Kamala Harris “stabbed Israel in the back” by skipping Benjamin Netanyahu’s genocide apologia speech before Congress the other day. He contrasted her with himself, saying that he has “done more for Israel by far, than any other president” with measures like recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the illegally occupied Golan Heights.



“She doesn’t like Jewish people. She doesn’t like Israel,” Trump said of Harris, who (A) is married to a Jewish man, (B) has an established track record of groveling before the Israel lobby, and (C) released an obnoxious statement denouncing anti-genocide demonstrators who protested Netanyahu’s speech as antisemitic terrorist supporters.

This is a continuation of the way Trump and Republicans have been absurdly claiming that Joe Biden has “abandoned Israel”, despite this president having delivered tens of thousands of bombs and thousands of missiles to Israel since October 7 while bombing Yemen, Iraq and Syria to suppress foreign retaliations for Israel’s genocide in Gaza, and providing Israel with limitless diplomatic and PR cover this entire time.

The self-described Zionist Joe Biden couldn’t be more supportive of Israel and its agendas unless he was actually physically in Gaza personally shooting medical workers with a sniper rifle.

When Netanyahu met with Biden this past Thursday he told him, “From a proud Israeli Zionist to a proud Irish American Zionist, I want to thank you for fifty years of public service and fifty years of

support for the state of Israel.” Ahead of Netanyahu’s meetings with both Biden and Harris, a senior administration official told the press that there was “no daylight between the president and vice president” on their position on Israel.

There is no way to square this with Trump’s rhetoric about Biden and Harris being evil antisemitic Israel haters. But that’s not going to stop Republicans from making these claims anyway, God bless them.

This is much the same as the way Democrats and their allied media spent years shrieking that Trump was secretly working for Vladimir Putin, when the strongest evidence against this claim was always that Trump is an insanely hawkish cold warrior who spent his entire term actively working against the interests of Moscow by initiating the arming of Ukraine, shredding nuclear treaties, implementing wave after wave of sanctions against Russia, bombing and occupying Syria, undermining Russian energy interests and more.

It was a narrative that was completely divorced from reality, held in place by nothing but rote repetition and authoritative-sounding assertions. Which is why nobody who was actually paying attention to Trump’s real material actions was surprised when Mueller failed to indict a single American for conspiring with Russia at the conclusion of his investigation in 2019.

Continued on P.13...

...continued from P.12 In reality both Democrats and Republicans are more or less in lockstep on supporting Israel and subverting Russia, and on every other major foreign policy issue in Washington. But you can't run a political campaign on "Vote for me, I'm exactly the same as my opponent," so they need to invent these fantasy worlds wherein Democrats are trying to free Palestine from the river to the sea and Republicans are trying to turn the White House into a puppet regime of Moscow. If both parties stopped pretending to be different from each other regarding the way the US empire is run, Americans would begin to notice that they've fallen victim to a scam designed to trick them into thinking they have some control over how their government moves and behaves on the world stage. Like the jewelers who all work for the same employer to create the illusion of competition in John Steinbeck's "The Pearl", Republicans and Democrats put on a fake performance of opposition to keep the locals from noticing that the real power in their country is completely unaccountable to their votes. 🍷

LITERARY

Country Memories: **Grandpa's Lesson**

By Conrad Campbell

I remember that time Grandpa caught me smoking. He decided to teach me a lesson I wouldn't soon forget. He reached into his faded coveralls and pulled out a hand rolled cigarette and said, "Here, you want to smoke? C'mon let's have a smoke!"

Well, I was kind of nervous at first, but after a couple of puffs I started to feel pretty good. That's when I realized Grandpa and I weren't smoking just an ordinary cigarette.

"Kinda grabs you by the boo-boo, don't it?" Grandpa chuckled.

Then we hopped into the old truck and Grandpa popped some Pink Floyd into the 8-Track player and we drove into town and spent over sixty dollars on salt and vinegar chips and gummi worms.

The End



A Case of the Spins

*The Earth spins at 1000 miles an hour
We don't even feel it at all
How fast would we have to be spinning
To fathom the spin that we're in*

*Some folks like all that spinning around
Their feet never touch the ground
Like acrobats performing dizzying acts*

Try focusing on the horizon

*Most can't take it at all
and would prefer a deep sleep
and wake up when it stops
but they can't sleep a wink
with all that non-stop spinning*

*It's a strange kind of spinning
Not one spin or two
It's many spins spinning – off comes the shoe
Can anything even be true?
The whole thing feels sort of spinkening*

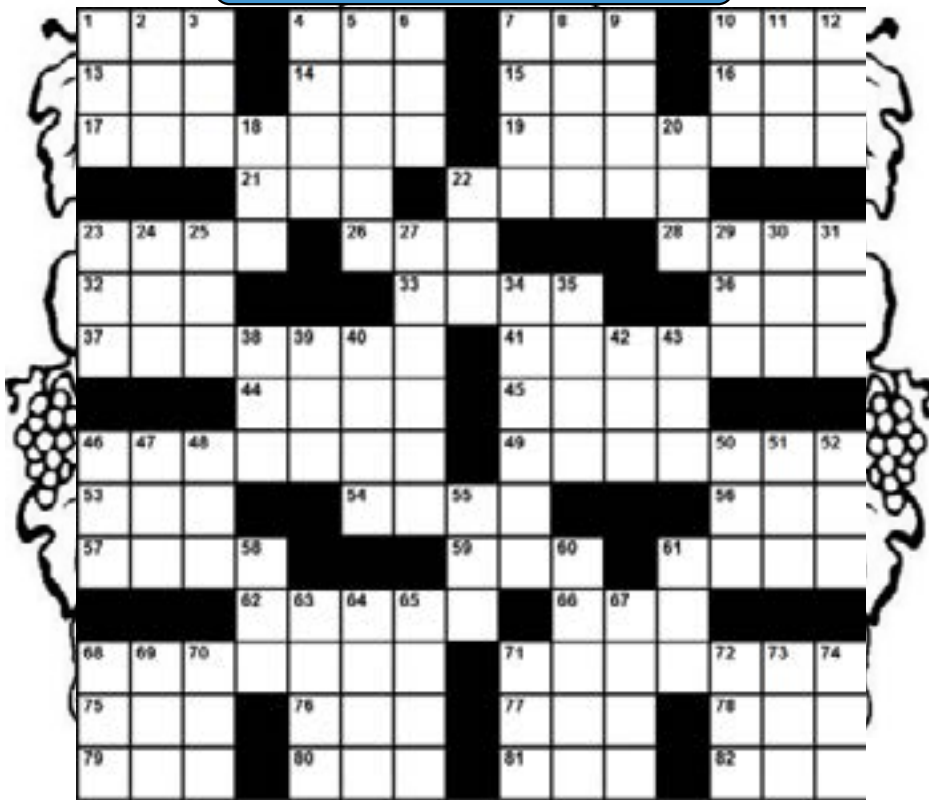
by Helen Grond



General Store

July 29th, 2024

• GRAPEVINE CROSSWORD •



• ACROSS •

1. Broadway mugger
4. Jazz genre
7. Actor Waterston
10. Just short
13. NAFTA member
14. Alias acronym
15. Aladdin prince
16. Carolina river, --- Dee
17. High speed road
19. Begin again
21. Conniving
22. A family tree apple
23. Give up
26. Behold
28. Abbr. after a list
32. Black-eyed item
33. Cob or pen
36. Alternative to 401k
37. Fact book
41. Enchant like Samantha
44. Chilean money
45. Disquiet
46. Pre-PC desktop item
49. Lacking piety
53. Clumsy clod
54. At the apex of
56. Yes, informally
57. Bean curd
59. Breakfasted
61. Radiate
62. Happen over

66. Actor's hint
68. Sub
71. Molasses
75. 1 billion years
76. Cuckoo
77. A Canadian export
78. Antiquity
79. Agent's percentage
80. Assembled
81. Alias org.
82. Barn dweller's query

• DOWN •

1. Grass house
2. Baseball bat lumber
3. Cal. page
4. Baby's outcry
5. Gives approval to
6. Ante up
7. Asian garment
8. Helm position
9. Assorted, abbr.
10. Bath, for one
11. Him's opposite
12. At this time
18. Avail oneself of
20. Ball perch
22. Contemporary
23. Acct., often
24. Adult elver
25. Beaver barrier
27. Chaperone
29. Before mouse
30. Band of sparks
31. -di-dah
34. Sudden
35. Ad sign
38. Suitable
39. After deductions
40. Drifting
42. Assumed mane
43. U.N. labor arm
46. Automation, abbr.
47. Certain Asian
48. Disconnected
50. Change the locks

51. Actress Salonga
52. Candied item
55. Blade
58. Cineraria
60. Salmonella cousin
61. Command to Fido
63. Cheese variety
64. Movie, pref.
65. Apartment
67. Type of organic compound
68. Arrange type
69. Bearing pivot
70. Abby's sister
71. Bio-pouch
72. Comment to Dobbin
73. Crude grunt
74. Barn sound

• TEST YOUR MATH SKILLS •

	1	2			5	3	4	
	5	9		4				8
					1			
	4	3		1				
	8						6	
				5		7	9	
			1					
2				7		4	3	
	7	4	9			2	5	

• Last Week's Answers •

2	8	9	1	3	6	5	4	7
1	4	5	9	7	8	3	2	6
7	3	6	5	2	4	8	9	1
5	7	4	6	9	1	2	8	3
6	1	8	3	5	2	4	7	9
3	9	2	4	8	7	1	6	5
4	2	1	7	6	3	9	5	8
9	6	3	8	4	5	7	1	2
8	5	7	2	1	9	6	3	4

GRUMPISM

“ A friend of mine told me they wanted a ring. I told them to take their phone off silent.”



• LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS •

O	F	F		C	E	P		T	E	G
G	L	I	B		T	O	W	E	L	
R	E	N	O		W	H	E	R	E	
E	D	D	O		E	E	R		A	C
				B	E	E	N		W	E
U	P	H	O	L	D		C	O	N	T
P	R	O	O	F		M	A	G	I	
S	O	B				L	I	B	E	L
E	B	B	S		A	L	E	E		M
T	E	S	T	A	T	O	R		E	O
				O	N			S	L	O
T	I	E	D	Y	E		I	O	U	
S	L	A	G			N	O	M	A	D
A	I	R	Y			D	R	A	K	E
R	A	N				E	M	S		E

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Inciting violence, hate speech and pejorative language will not be tolerated.



Whether covering events that entertain us, presenting issues that concern and affect us or highlighting the many interesting and gifted people we call neighbour, the Grapevine celebrates the diversity and inclusivity of our shared island life. The following is our policy on content:

- Profiles of individuals, history, reviews and op ed are published free of charge.
- Literary content including poetry, stories, belle lettres are published free of charge.
- Promotional content for products, services, programs, and events will be published at going advertising rates.
- Public service announcements, notices of meetings, and news releases will be published for a fee. Exceptions will be made for emergencies where the public is immediately endangered.
- With regret, no exceptions can be made for non-profit status.
- Letters to the Editor are published free of charge.

The Grapevine is happy to provide an open, public forum for all islanders to speak and be heard. We are steadfast in our commitment to uphold freedom of expression.

As the record of our times, every issue of the Grapevine is a compilation of that week's submissions. We do not editorialize content, nor do we censor. We ask that writers moderate their own content. The Grapevine reserves the right to edit for brevity.

We are open to contributions from all Denman & Hornby Islanders. If you've something to say, send it our way! No copy and paste submissions. In your own words, please!

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FORTNIGHT EVENTS

THURSDAY 1

• RECYCLING CENTRE 2-6pm
• BOTTLE DEPOT 2-6pm
• CAP SITE Hub Comm. Hall 4-7pm
• FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 4-7pm
• FREE STORE 4:30pm-6pm



FRIDAY 2

• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
• AA Meeting DI United Church
Gathering Place 7pm

SATURDAY 3

• RECYCLING CENTRE 9-5pm
• BOTTLE DEPOT 9-5pm
• FREE STORE 9-Noon
• FARMERS MARKET Old School 9:30-12:30
• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
• Baird, Black & White Trio Back Hall 7:30pm

SUNDAY 4

• Lammas/Lughnasadh 10:30-11:30am
The Gathering Place/DIUC

MONDAY 5

• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
• AA Meeting DI United Church
Gathering Place 7pm

TUESDAY 6

• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm

WEDNESDAY 7

• RECYCLING CENTRE 2-6pm
• BOTTLE DEPOT 2-6pm
• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm

THURSDAY 8

• RECYCLING CENTRE 2-6pm
• BOTTLE DEPOT 2-6pm
• CAP SITE Hub Comm. Hall 4-7pm
• FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 4-7pm
• FREE STORE 4:30-6pm



FRIDAY 9

• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
• AA Meeting DI United Church
Gathering Place 7pm

SATURDAY 10

• RECYCLING CENTRE 9-5pm
• BOTTLE DEPOT 9-5pm
• FARMERS MARKET Old School 9:30-12:30
• FREE STORE 9-Noon
• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm

SUNDAY 11

MONDAY 12

• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
• AA Meeting DI United Church
Gathering Place 7pm

TUESDAY 13

• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
• D.I. LTC meeting 10am D.A.C.

WEDNESDAY 14

• RECYCLING CENTRE 2-6pm
• BOTTLE DEPOT 2-6pm
• Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm

THURSDAY 15

• RECYCLING CENTRE 2-6pm
• BOTTLE DEPOT 2-6pm
• CAP SITE Hub Comm. Hall 4-7pm
• FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 4-7pm
• FREE STORE 4:30pm-6pm



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Grapevine
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COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Concert III "Exalted Expressionism!"

Saturday, August 10th. 4:00 p.m.

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Beth Root Sandvoss, cello

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Philip Manning, violin

Tori Lindsay, violin

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*LIFE AT THE
JOLLY RANCHER*



Alan Black

Alvin White had his feet up on his desk. He sipped from his avocado smoothie while glancing at the dated sepia toned surveillance monitor. The big aluminium coffee pot hissed, bubbled, belched, snorted and farted while he sucked at the smoothie licking the green froth from his lips. He would let the tenants in at five to nine because he was a nice guy. The Jolly Rancher was the first hotel in the city to be converted into social housing for the so-called hard to house and Alvin was the lone staff member. He glanced at the clock. It was ten to nine. He cracked his knuckles and sucked air in and out of nose, drawing it in fast and letting it out slowly. On camera two he saw the black clad figure of Emma McGrath making her way across the parking lot towards the office. She had a cigarette butt tucked tightly in the corner of her curled mouth. He could see her fists were clenched tight and her arms were held firm in half circles as she bounced down the six concrete steps next to the dried up concrete pond to get to the office of the Jolly Rancher. She yanked on the office door and then began to hammer the office door window with her fist. "Is the coffee ready yet!" She roared.

"I will open in five minutes Emma," Alvin yelled from behind the desk.

"What the fuck man?" She stared at Alvin through the window with an intense look of anger and dismay and then abruptly swivelled on her heels and did her fierce march back to her abode. Alvin went over to the coffee pot and pulled the lever and poured himself a coffee. He took turns sipping from his smoothie and the coffee.

At six minutes to nine Karl Lundgren opened his door. He stepped outside and looked across at the office of the Jolly Rancher.

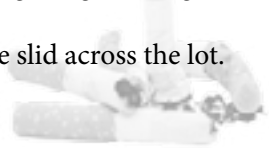
"Still not fucking open," he complained out loud to himself. Karl snorted and then spat out a hunk of dark brown phlegm onto the parking lot while he dug through the right hand pocket of his ripped puffy down vest for cigarette butts. He examined the butts in the palm of his right hand. He picked the biggest one ignoring the faint evidence of black dirt and cherry red lipstick on the filter and put it in his mouth and returned the others to his pocket. In his left hand Karl gripped tightly the large plastic Big Gulp mug he found at the turkey bluff where he had shot a speedball with Trigger. He shuffled forward towards the common room of the Jolly Rancher. He had to beat the new tenant to the coffee pot before he drained it all with his giant glass mug. Karl watched as Alvin White opened the common room door.

"About fucking time," Karl muttered quietly to himself out of ear shot as he slid across the lot.

"How's it hanging?" Karl asked as he shuffled into the common room.

"It's hanging well Karl, I think. How's it going with you?"

"Could be better, man. I could be something other than a junkie with AIDS," Alvin nodded, drawing in a deep breath with his lips pursed tightly as if he were trying to invoke some type of gloomy empathy at the seriousness of Karl's statement or preparing to blow out a large number of birthday candles. Through the large common room windows Alvin watched Emma once again doing her brisk march across the lot looking like she would eviscerate anything that got in her way with her balled fists. Karl filled his cup with the dark liquid and then from a bowl on the table Karl spooned in six large spoonfuls of sugar followed by a few ounces of powdered milk that



he poured from a large plastic mug next to the sugar bowl. Emma entered the common room with a scowl on her face that changed to a smile when she saw Karl.

"Hey Karl, how is it hanging?"

"A little to the left," said Karl and they both laughed.

"Got to get a coffee quick eh Karl before that new fat bastard shows up and drains the whole pot with that giant mug he has eh? Somebody is gonna pop that fat fucker if he keeps that shit up eh?" While she poured her coffee Emma looked over at Alvin. "You need to talk to him, Alvin, because it's your god damn job eh."

"I have spoken to him already Emma and I will speak to him again but thank you for reminding me what my job is."

"Somebody has to, har, har," Emma snorted out a giggle and winked at Karl who smiled back. Emma got herself some sugar and some milk and then she began to whisper to the air as if there was an invisible person beside her. Big Don Leduc came in with his enormous mug.

When Emma saw Don she stopped her whispering and let out a low snarl.

"You better not drain all the coffee you big fat fuck!" She warned. Don smiled at her as if she were utterly inconsequential while his left eyeball rolled in his socket until it appeared to get stuck at the corner of his eye.

"Emma, we don't talk like that here in the common room," said Alvin.

"Whatever man," Emma gruffed as she stomped out. Don began to pour coffee into the big mug. He tilted the pot for it to pour faster.

"Don, do not fill that entire mug and drain the coffee pot. You are not the only person who lives here. Other people will want coffee and we don't have the budget for two pots every day. You've been warned before," said Alvin from his desk across the room.

"What?" said Don as his eyeball did a full revolution in his left socket.

"That's enough, Don!"

"What?"

"THAT'S ENOUGH COFFEE DON!" Alvin stood up from behind his desk.

"Okay, Jesus, you don't have to have a conniption, dude."

"Apparently I do."

Earl Wexler aka Trigger sauntered in. Even though it wasn't warm Earl was shirtless and shoeless. Trigger looked Don up and down until his pale blue eyes rested on the big mug in Don's puffy right hand.

"You better not have drained the pot again man. I will scramble you like an egg, lard butt," Trigger leered menacingly and leaned forward with his right fist clenched. Don gave a blase smile and slid his thick bulk past the very lean muscular Trigger and went out the common room door. Trigger looked over at Karl and Alvin.

"Fat boy thinks I'm kidding." Trigger opened the common room door and yelled,

"YOU THINK I'M KIDDING, FAT BOY?" Don slid through his apartment door and disappeared from sight.

"Enough Trigger! If you get into another fight here Trigger you might be evicted and would you please close the door, it's cold in here."

"You know I can't be evicted Alvin, Doctor Dick won't ever let that happen."

"Don't push your luck, Trigger."

"Are you threatening me?"

"Let it go, Trigger," said Karl. Trigger sneered. Alvin gazed at the sores and purple, yellow, brown bruises that ran up and down Trigger's arms.

"Dr Dick has cut me back on my Adderall once again. He is forcing me to score more dirty jib on the street."

"No one is forcing you to do crystal meth, Trigger," said Alvin.

"Who are you kidding Alvin? They are the ones who got me hooked on speed in the first place."

"How so?"

"I am attention deficit. I can't pay attention to most people to save my life mainly because most people are idiots that don't have anything interesting to say."

"But what has that got to do with your crystal problem?"

"They got me started on the speed dude. Started giving me Ritalin when I was knee high to a grass hopper."

"Who?"

"The system Alvin, who do you think? These creeps are all the same, their job is to bring destruction to people like me."

"What about me Trigger?"

"You are part of it, you are just a little more blind and dumb which actually makes you more human."

"Really?"

"Absolutely," Trigger smirked. "Its time to go feed my rats."

"Later Trigger," Karl groaned. A few more tenants came and grabbed coffee and left. Soon there was just Karl and Alvin in the room. Alvin slouched deeply in the broken faux black leather office chair. Karl scratched at a purple bulb at the end of his nose. After a moment Karl spoke,

"I tried crystal meth recently," said Karl

"You know that's bad shit Karl. You only have to look as far as Trigger to see the damage done."

"Yeah, I know. Trigger's a total mess. I'm sure there are gaping holes in his brain the size of a sauce pan."

"Exactly."

"Yeah, I don't know man. I was feeling pretty low and I was about to get junk sick and everybody says crystal will prevent you from getting junk sick."

"Yes, but it is habit forming too."

"Only psychological."

"I'm not so sure about that Karl."

"Anyway, the shit was awful. You don't inhale cause it can kill you. It froze my lungs and made me puke and then I couldn't sleep for two days."

"Sounds great."

"Yeah, I know, I'm an idiot."

"You are not an idiot Karl."

"Yeah no, I disagree. I've thrown my life away for a junk habit I've had since I was fifteen."

"You were successfully cutting back there for quite awhile until you were ready to kick."

"I just don't got the will power."

"Are you still thinking about maybe giving methadone a try?"

"Yeah, maybe, I don't know. That shit dissolves your bone marrow and it is more addictive than heroin. Kenny D said it took him eighteen sleepless nights to kick that shit. Did you know the Nazis invented methadone and they invented crystal meth?"

"Really?"

"They invented the crystal for their soldiers. The French would go into battle all sloppy drunk on red wine while the Krauts were totally amped on crystal and they would kick their drunken French asses."

"Where did you learn this history, Karl?"

"Do not underestimate the History Channel, man. I have learned some crazy stuff there. I hope they don't ever cancel the free cable here. Did you know King Henry the Eighth and all those other kings had personal bum wipers? Imagine if that was your day job?"

"Didn't know that, maybe didn't want to know that."

"Crazy stuff you learn man. History is crazy, humans are crazy, crazy, nasty creatures." Karl rubbed the purple bulb on his nose and wiped his mouth with the tattered edges of his long grey sweater. From a distance Karl still appeared young and handsome but up close you could see the furrowed lines getting deeper and the red pink slashes of a number of thin scars across his face. "Did I ever tell you about my stint in Quebec prison?"

"Definitely not. I would have remembered that."

"It was super, super shitty. I don't speak French."

"How in hell did you end up there?"

"Well I grew up in a total northern hick town in Ontario. I mean it was real nowhere's ville and as we've talked about before I had a real shitty childhood, real, real shitty and I couldn't wait to get out of Wawa Ontario. I ended up hooking up with this French Canadian gutter punk chick and we went to her mother's place in Montreal and after not very long we got kicked out by her mother's psycho biker boyfriend so we ended up panhandling on Saint Catherine's and hanging with her old friends who were like the original squeegee kids. We had three husky dogs and we were all squatting in this abandoned warehouse. It was the good old days. You wouldn't get away with that shit right downtown anywhere anymore. Anyhow, there was this muscle bound bouncer who used to chase us from our panhandle spot every day. He worked at the night club where we parked ourselves. One day he spat on Yvonne and told her, "You are nothing but a piece of shit!" So I stabbed him.

"Wow."

"Yeah, we ran through downtown with the dogs but the cops were straight on us. Sirens everywhere. One of the cops got bit by Fido, he was the alpha male of the pack. Man, those Frenchie pigs were pissed, gave me a real kicking."

“What happened to the dogs?”

“They put them all down.”

“That’s awful.”

“I cried like a baby. I still feel super shitty about that.” Karl rubbed his purple nose bulb.

“But one good thing happened while I was in that Frenchie joint.”

“Oh yeah?”

“It was yard time and somebody threw a bag of dope over the wall and I caught it and hid it right away. I kept my mouth shut and got it to the right people. Everything for me went better after that.”

“I bet.”

“I gotta go smoke this butt now.”

“Sure Karl.”

“You want me to leave your office door open?”

“Sure Karl.”

“Later Alvin.” Karl stepped outside and took a spit at the eastern sun.

After a few minutes a large figure began to skulk around in the common room. Waldo the Walrus was nearly as thick as he was tall. He was prematurely bald and his build caused Alvin to think of Buddha or a Sumo wrestler. With Waldo came a terrible odour that almost exactly replicated the Jolly Rancher dumpster which Alvin had found Waldo in a number of times. Waldo had a surprisingly big gaping smile showing a full set of large yellow teeth below a choppy hairy upper lip. “Is this cup free for the taking squire Alvin?” Waldo held up a dark brown cup and examined it with his large eyes.

“I think somebody has simply forgotten it, Waldo, and may return to claim it.”

“I see no name upon it.”

“Very few people name their cups Waldo.”

“I see. I think it would be a very good idea for the people of the Jolly Rancher to name their cups.”

“Do you name your cups Waldo?”

“I should. People here should probably name everything.” Waldo picked up a pair of bicycle handle bars that were sitting on a table.

“May I have these sir?”

“I don’t know whose they are.”

“They appear abandoned.”

“They are probably Trigger’s as he’s always dismantling bikes. I think it goes with his addiction.”

“His addiction...” Waldo rolled out the word.

“Go ahead and take them Waldo. They’ve been sitting on that table for some time.”

“Thank you kind sir,” said Waldo as he held up the handle bars and looked them up and down as if they were the most exquisite handle bars ever made. Out of the corner of his eye Alvin watched as a figure moved swiftly towards the office from across the parking lot. A man in a darkly stained fuzzy white blue track suit and sandals bounced into the office. The track coat was almost fully unzipped in the front showing a lean muscular olive skinned torso. The man had a number of metal



rings around his wrists and a chain around his neck that was locked by a small steel lock. On his left breast he had a tattoo of a green lizard and on his right breast it said, in Indian ink, "I'm on the highway to hell."

"People always ask where's Waldo, while here he is right here. Waldo the Walrus, how are you doing brother man dude? What are you doing with my handle bars buddy? Those go with my fine Italian Marinoni racing bike I just found unlocked outside the liquor store."

"The owner of the bike was likely in the liquor store purchasing liquor, Arnold," said Waldo.

"Well he shouldn't be leaving his bike unlocked and unattended shouldn't he?"

"That still doesn't make it okay to steal somebody's bike, Arnold," Alvin piped in from behind the desk. Arnold glanced at Alvin and scowled. "I disagree. It's like the idiots who get me to score their dope who think they don't deserve to get ripped off. Look at me. I wouldn't trust me. They deserve to get ripped off." Arnold grinned, showing a mouthful of black and missing teeth and then he squished his nose flat against his face like it was made out of rubber.

"It is still wrong to steal Arnold. It is like one of the seven deadly sins in the bible not that I want to be preachy."

"The bible was written by aliens, you know."

"Yeah, I'm not so sure about that Arnold."

"It was Waldo's people right Waldo? You are an alien aren't you Waldo?"

"If you say so Arnold," Waldo gave a big grin.

"There's my cup. I've been looking for that all week." Arnold picked up the plastic cup and raised it in the air.

"You should put your name on it," suggested Waldo.

"Waldo, did I ever tell you that you are totally nuts?" They both laughed.

"Any more coffee Alvin, or did that new guy with the big mug take it all?"

"There should still be some there, Arnold."

"Better be. Can I borrow your cup, Walrus?"

"It is not mine, Mr. Arnold."

"Don't you mister me big crazy buddy, I ain't no dignitary, ha, ha, ha. This cup is mine now."

"We should put names on cups."

"Did I tell you that you are crazy, Walrus?"

"Whatever you say Arnold," Waldo grinned. "Would it be possible for you to drive me to the bottle depot in the sunshine van Alvin? I have six big bags of empty containers I must recycle."

"Can you drop me by my dealer's place, Alvin? I'm pretty sure he's going to want to buy this Marinoni from me because he is into racing bikes."

"I can't be driving stolen bikes around in the sunshine bus, Arnold."

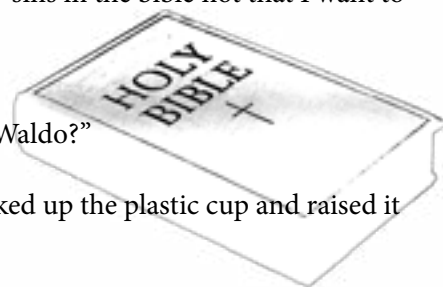
"Don't be a jerk, Alvin. I made that story up. Jimmy James gave the bike to me for some money he owed me." Alvin shook his head and rolled his eyes.

"Between the empties and the bike it is going to be a little crowded, Arnold."

"There's tons of room in that pedo van of yours Alvin."

"The sunshine bus is not a pedo van, Arnold, it has windows," Alvin corrected.

"Whatever you say, Alvin."



“Be ready to go in fifteen, guys.”

A few minutes later Waldo dragged six garbage bags full of empties into the common room. From one of the bags Alvin could see where the bag had leaked leaving a shiny green trail of unidentifiable sludge. “Jesus, Waldo, look at the trail of sludge you’ve left behind you.”

“I’m terribly sorry, good sir.”

“I’ll get the mop bucket but you are going to have to double bag that bag before we put it in the sunshine bus.”

“Yes boss,” Waldo bowed. Alvin went out to the parking lot to retrieve the sunshine bus. He pulled it in front of the common room. Arnold stepped out from his suite and blew his nose from pursed fingers of his right hand.

Johnny Thunderbird emerged from the next door suite. “Anymore coffee?” Johnny yelled.

“Sorry Johnny, I think it’s gone,” Alvin replied.

“The world is a bucket of shit,” said Johnny. Arnold laughed.

“What are you laughing at, neighbour?”

“You and your bucket of shit,” said Arnold. Johnny gave Arnold a tense stare and then broke into a smile. “I made a funny eh Arnold?” Arnold smiled. “Are you going downtown in the pedo van Alvin?”

“Its not a pedo van Johnny, it’s got windows,” Alvin rolled his eyes.

“I need a lift to my panhandle spot.”

“Sure Johnny.” They put the bike and the bags in the back of the van.

From across the lot Emma flew out of her front door. “Are you guys going downtown or what?”

“It’s starting to get a little tight Emma but we will find room for you,” said Alvin.

“I’m sitting up front,” said Emma as she started her march across the lot.

“Too late,” said Johnny as he jumped into the passenger seat.

“You are a dick Johnny Thunderbird.”

“Yeah, I know,” Johnny grinned. They drove down George Road. Johnny pulled a crumpled cigarette butt from the pocket of his black leather vest and lit it with a red plastic lighter.

“Johnny, you can’t smoke in here.”

“I’m winding down my window.”

“Johnny, this is a no smoking bus.”

“I saw you let Karl smoke in here.”

“If my boss smells smoke in here I’m in deep shit.”

“You work at the Jolly Rancher Alvin, is there deeper shit than that?” Johnny asked. Everybody laughed except Alvin who slowly shook his head.