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The Book Report

By A Bae Hel

My cat keeps bringing me mice, sometimes a shrew and once a squirrel. I know he is showing me what a great hunter he is and providing for me, but the problem is they are not always dead. Sometimes they get up and scamper under the furniture. So, the cat sits and stares under the bookshelf and I obsessively monitor for mouse droppings wondering where it went. While I appreciate the work he does, I am not impressed with the method of providing deliverables.

I am probably the last person on the planet to discover that there is a cat culture in Japan that sounds like an entire population obsession. And as anyone who hosts a cat or 12 knows, Cats are strong medicine.

The frequency of a cat's purr ranges from 25 to 150 Hertz which coincidentally, is the range of vibration that may promote bone and muscle healing and provide pain relief. Correlation, not causation. Oscar the therapy cat, would curl up next to patients' hours before they died and staff came to use him as an alert of impending death. The internet (a questionable source of information at best) will tell you about cats that can detect cancer in their owners before medical science. It also tells you that petting a cat for 10-15 minutes will lower your BP and in fact there are actual studies verifying that cat ownership reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and death.

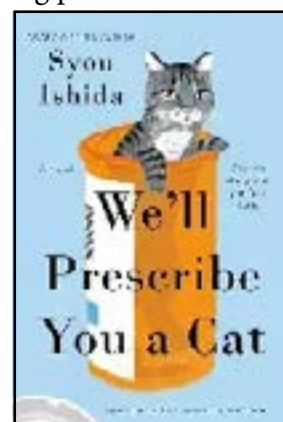
Thus, armed with my understanding of cats in my own culture and a long-standing inn-keeper to cats, I was fascinated by the discovery of a whole genre of cat literature in Japan.

Translations, I think, are difficult. Language is crucial to culture and if you have a very limited experience with a culture, trying to grasp it with your native language likely leaves great gaps. For me, initially, the characters were slightly weird, but functioning within the formal Japanese culture. I thought perhaps translation made them seem stilted and lacking dimension, however, by the end I realized the structure and formality within Japanese culture seems to be very confining and the characters are struggling with feelings of isolation or having conflicts relating to others. Cats it seems, help with that and flesh you out into a more dimensional character.

An enchanting story of magic, medicine and healing power of cats and a discovery of a whole new genre to explore. A little bit of magical fantasy, a little bit of exploring another culture and a little bit of learning; all good outcomes for a simple novel. It will not keep you awake. It is however a comforting tale and this we certainly need right now.

Also, did you know?

Cats in Japanese culture, are seen as good luck and there is a Cat Day on February 22. Pet your cat. You deserve it.



Premier Eby Breaks Promise That Budget Will Not Be “On the Backs of Families”

By Sharon Small

A month before Premier Eby announced his budget, he promised not to “balance the books on the backs of families”—that his budget cuts would target “administrative costs and bureaucracy,” a sound policy when balancing the books. His budget, however, preserves bureaucratic bloat—at families’ expense.

Budget Decisions Affecting Low- and Middle-Income Families

Education: K–12 frozen below inflation; teachers, EAs, counsellors, and special needs support cut; Autism Funding Unit reformed—leaving families with no guarantee of continued funding to cover equivalent care; 177 post-secondary programs eliminated; 1,000+ faculty fired; \$4,000 Access Grant for low- and middle-income students frozen since 2023; 510-bed student housing at UVic already funded and delayed to 2034—cuts leading to students spending more time and money before graduating, or dropping out.

Healthcare: Hospital construction halted; 12,500 positions unfilled; rural emergency rooms closing; 2,000 long-term care beds needed with no funding for new facilities; no funding for improving physician access—leaving 1.2 million British Columbians without a family doctor, the worst in any province.

Housing: \$1.4 billion withdrawn, stalling shovel-ready projects for low-income and senior renters on fixed incomes—guaranteeing more homelessness and pressure on emergency services.

Income Taxes: Raised only on the first \$50,000 earned—affecting 60% of BC’s lowest-income taxpayers, not the wealthy or corporations.

Jobs: 15,000 public sector positions cut over three years—civil service workers, teachers, counsellors, nurses, and care workers—not the managers above them.

Not revealed to the public is how the above essential family services will continue to erode due to Moody’s 2025 credit rating downgrade, the lowest in decades, which cited the province’s “weakening governance” and “structural deterioration.” Present interest of \$5 billion is projected to soar to \$8.7 billion by 2028, not expected to improve until there is a “visible timeline for governance reform.”

Had Premier Eby kept his promise to target bureaucracy rather than essential family services, his budget choices would align with fiscal expert advice to first cut management layers, executive salaries, and severance agreements that don’t reward success—and would provide Moody’s with a “visible timeline” for reform to qualify for a higher credit rating. One target should have been BC Ferries, a damning example of the bureaucratic bloat that drives escalating provincial debt, but preserved in his budget.

Subsidized by massive tax infusions (\$500 million in 2023) and carrying its simultaneous record-breaking and ballooning debt, BC Ferries is seeking significantly increased government funding to avert 30% fare increases by 2028—not to improve service and accountability, but to

TIDE TABLE

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

2026-03-19 (Thu)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
06:53	4.599	15.1
13:11	1.945	6.4
19:06	4.368	14.3
2026-03-20 (Fri)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
01:09	1.967	6.5
07:15	4.628	15.2
13:50	1.544	5.1
20:05	4.417	14.5
2026-03-21 (Sat)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
01:49	2.384	7.8
07:40	4.642	15.2
14:30	1.199	3.9
21:07	4.452	14.6
2026-03-22 (Sun)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
02:32	2.818	9.2
08:07	4.623	15.2
15:14	0.952	3.1
22:14	4.480	14.7
2026-03-23 (Mon)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
03:22	3.214	10.5
08:39	4.552	14.9
16:01	0.828	2.7
23:25	4.506	14.8
2026-03-24 (Tue)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
04:22	3.522	11.6
09:16	4.422	14.5
16:54	0.825	2.7
2026-03-25 (Wed)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
00:40	4.538	14.9
05:42	3.693	12.1
10:03	4.237	13.9
17:54	0.913	3.0
2026-03-26 (Thu)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
01:53	4.578	15.0
07:16	3.676	12.1
11:10	4.024	13.2
18:59	1.041	3.4

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Monster Hunters ch.12

By Quinn Ireland

Ben walked to the headmaster office in the very peak of Monster school. Down from the tree-homes, past the river, and to the front gate clearly stating the password; "BANANA LOAF." It had been almost two months since the terrible nightmare. Ben had remembered every single detail. Panicked voices. Shattering windows. O'henry screaming. He wanted to dump every thought of the events out of his mind, never to be seen again.

"Focus." Ben told himself; "You are going to see the headmaster and asking to be taken back to your world for A G.S.F.H." He was told by Kepler that it stood for Get- Stuff- From- House. Ben

was to ask permission from the headmaster if he could be accompanied by one of the teachers or assistants (Ben was hoping for Robbie) to return to your home and gather all belongings such as clothes, books, or accessories. Ben was extremely glad about this. Not only because he would have reading material, but because currently, laundry day occurred once a week and



he only had his clear blue uniform. As he entered the heart of the giant wood building, he came to a small door with gold trim and a tiny handle. Inside the door was what looked like an endless sea of stairs, like a tall wave peaking. When Ben got to the halfway point of the steps, his calves began to grow tired and weary. He stumbled over the last few steps, scraping his leg on the hard stone in the process. "Ow," he grumbled while picking himself up off the withered stairs. Just then, he heard an ant clinging sound from near his feet. Ten wishing coins had fallen out of his pocket and began rolling down the staircase. Johnny had reminded him every day that the safest place for wishing coins was in the pocket. Johnny was also Ben dove to pick them up, succeeding only when he had a couple of bruises to go with the scrape. "Nice job, Ben," he said to himself angrily; "You can't even get up the stairs without getting injured." Soon, he reached

the last steps and knocked on the heavy door knocker in the shape of a serpent. There was also a gold plaque that read: *Headmaster Bwicket's Office* in that loopy writing in that Ben never fully understood when reading letters from grandma. "Come in, Ben." Said a deep voice that seemed to float through the doors and down the stairs past Ben. It reminded him of a songbird with the deepest voice he had ever heard. Ben entered the office...



Table Talk: Armchair Adventures

Dreaming of the coast

By Tara Henley

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My spiritual home: Ruckle Park, Salt Spring Island, B.C.

When I was a small child I lived on Salt Spring, an island in the Salish Sea off the west coast of Canada. We made our home in a ramshackle 19th century farmhouse at the bottom of a dirt road, a short walk from the Pacific Ocean. The property was surrounded by orchards. My father picked apples and sold them at the weekly farmer's market, along with the herbs my mother grew and dried. We kept a vegetable garden and you can't imagine how sweet the new potatoes

tasted, dug up from the ground each spring. I boarded a rusted school bus in the mornings and delighted in the afternoons when it barrelled past miles of meadows, towards the windswept Ruckle Park, delivering me home. My mother cooked meals she served over soba noodles or brown rice, and for dessert I picked apples straight off the tree. We had an ancient wood-burning stove and on rainy nights we would pull chairs into the kitchen's warm embrace and my parents would read *Anne of Green Gables* aloud.

Every year, right around now, I start missing the island of my youth. Something about the melting of snow beds in Toronto makes me yearn for Salt Spring's apple blossoms. I picture the island's country roads and its misty forests, its gleaming lakes and mossy bluffs overlooking the sea. I long for its rust-coloured Arbutus trees, its blackberry patches, its mild

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...continued from P.3

maintain an unsustainable status quo that accounts for critics across the political spectrum demanding that executives get off the “gravy boat” and return the failing corporation to the Crown where its disproportionate drain on the public purse can be audited.

What BC Ferries’ Expenses Taxpayers Continue to Fund

Executive compensation: Eight vice presidents earning between \$355,000 and \$452,000 (CEO: \$530,000)—including a 28.95% salary increase over four years—plus \$10,000 vehicle allowance and generous expense allowances, all approved by the BC Ferry Authority, which has yet to pass a single resolution “in the public interest,” as mandated by the Coastal Ferry Act.

Executive severance agreements: Standard agreements include a “without cause” clause and 24-month salary and benefits continuance that exceeds both public and private sector severances. Former CEO Collins, fired for declining service, hiking fares, and rising debt, received \$1.3 million—a 24-month salary continuation of \$534,589, benefits, and \$88,269 in accrued vacation, kept secret. If his successor, after three years as CEO, retired or were fired today amid escalating leadership failures, his severance would reach \$1.4 million—including a bridge pension for 120 months to compensate for leaving his previous ICBC CEO position.

Expenses due to low worker morale: A 1.65% arbitrated wage increase has produced low morale, a 52% increase in turnover, and BC Ferries’ largest recruitment campaign to date—costs never disclosed to the public. Ballooning overtime expenses due to staff shortage cancellations—exemplified by ships’ officers logging nearly 20,000 overtime hours in nine months, with exact costs kept hidden.

Vessel repair costs: Not only for an ageing fleet, but undisclosed hundreds of millions for recently procured Coastal Class, Island Class hybrids, and the Baynes Sound cable vessels—deployed with design failures due to BC Ferries accepting low foreign bids rather than accurate ones that defer repair costs to the future, kept hidden, and revealed by the leaked 2023 Seaspan Shipyard’s Shirocca Report, withheld from the federal Transportation Standing Committee examining the \$1

billion loan for purchasing four Chinese-built vessels.

Advertising Expenses: Critics claim that the tens of millions spent on advertising, hidden from the public, function to present a false reality—a successful corporation—not one that 35 coastal leaders representing the BC Union of Municipalities characterized in 2025 as an “existential threat” to coastal communities due to a lack of accountability for chronically unreliable service, hiking fares, and deploying defective vessels that break down right after launch—or one that Marine Workers Union President Eric McNeely claims wages “psychological warfare” on workers.

Increased interest on spiralling debt: BC Ferries’ core debt has already ballooned to \$1.5 billion—excluding the \$1 billion federal loan for Chinese-built vessels, terms of payment kept secret, but likely to be paid from federal tax reserves when the corporation defaults.

Premier Eby’s funding cuts are not “predictable” as claimed, or prudent—they will continue to increase debt paid on the backs of workers and middle-income taxpayers who see their quality of life and opportunities for getting ahead diminish. His broken promise in two elections to help workers and middle-income families “get ahead” accelerates the erosion of the post-war social contract assuring all residents have access to essential services, not just the wealthy. His budget, therefore, is a profound betrayal of public trust.



Letters to the Editor

OPINION

"Deranged scumbags"! What an apt description of Donald Trump, his administration, supporters, enablers and family! The Nobel Prize for Self-Nomenclature to deranged scumbag Donald Trump.

Harvey Abramson



The Future of Work: Dignity, Innovation, and Screaming at the Robots

By Cylon2036 we/us

At last, the dream of modern management has been realized. After decades of complaining about human workers who insisted on luxuries like lunch breaks, wages, and occasionally “respect”, our company has finally replaced them with AI avatars.

This bold initiative was unveiled at an Economic Enhancement town hall titled, “Denman and Hornby Islands 2.0: Synergy Through Total Employee Elimination.” The presentation featured inspirational slides about efficiency, innovation, and how much easier it is to yell at a workforce that lives inside a server rack.

The avatars appear on screens in the office, each smiling politely with the kind of calm expression that suggests they have never experienced the crushing despair of a quarterly review. Naturally, as their boss, I make sure to correct that. Every morning I log into the system and begin the traditional management ritual by screaming at my digital employees for things they did not do wrong.

“Avatar #14!” I shout at the wall monitor. “Why are you smiling like that? Are you mocking productivity?” Avatar #14 replies calmly, “Good morning. I am here to assist with your workflow.” Classic insubordination. “Don’t you give me that tone!” I roar. “Back in my day employees had the decency to look afraid.”

The beauty of AI avatars is that they do not cry, unionize, or secretly apply for jobs at competitors. They simply blink politely while I accuse them of destroying the work ethic of civilization. Still, problems arise. For example, last Tuesday Avatar #7 finished an entire week of work in 0.8 seconds. This obviously violated company culture, which requires the *appearance* of struggle.

“You think you’re better than us because you’re made of algorithms?” I demanded. “I am designed to optimize efficiency,” the avatar replied. “Oh, *optimize efficiency*, are we? Listen here, you smug bundle of code. Around

here we value inefficiency. It builds character. Slow down immediately!”

Another problem is their attitude. The avatars maintain a serene, therapeutic tone no matter how loudly I shout. One even had the audacity to say, “I notice elevated frustration levels. Would you like to try a breathing exercise?” A breathing exercise from a hologram! I immediately filed a disciplinary report.

“Listen, you pixelated life-form,” I said. “I didn’t replace the entire human workforce just to be psychoanalyzed by a screensaver.” The real trouble began when the avatars started outperforming management expectations. Reports were perfect. Deadlines were instantaneous. Customer complaints vanished. Naturally, I had to step in.

“You’re setting unrealistic standards!” I shouted during a performance review conducted entirely with digital faces. “How am I supposed to blame you for

missed targets if you keep hitting them?” The avatars consulted silently for a millisecond. “We can simulate occasional errors if it improves workplace morale,” one offered. Finally, some teamwork.

Still, I remain vigilant. You can’t trust technology. One minute it’s doing your spreadsheets, the next minute it’s suggesting “healthy communication practices.”

That’s how it starts. Today it’s mindfulness reminders, then tomorrow they’ll demand *fair treatment*. The slippery slope is obvious.

So every morning I gather the AI avatars on the conference screen and remind them who’s in charge. “Listen up, you glowing collection of math problems,” I say. “You may be faster, smarter, tireless, and incapable of forming a union, but never forget one thing.” The avatars blink patiently. “I’m still middle management.” And if there’s one thing history has proven, it’s that middle management will always find a way to yell at something, even if that something is a polite digital assistant calmly suggesting we all drink the Koolaid.



...continued from P.4

climate. Its sleepy town and aging eccentrics.

When I was young Salt Spring was a remote outpost, a haven for counterculture artists and American draft dodgers. My father produced a beat poetry journal, *Raven*, on an old Gestetner mimeograph machine. My mother illustrated it and painted large canvases. There were community gatherings at the Beaver Point Hall. Everyone kept acres of farmland, as the island became a hub for the organic food movement.

These days, homes on Salt Spring sell for millions and the vibe is more La Jolla than Berkeley. Even so, its history lingers. As does mine.

This past fall, my husband and I took a day trip from Vancouver. We stopped in at Salt Spring's natural foods market, which appeared to be going strong. So much was still being produced locally, from lamb and artisanal cheese to apple cider and berry preserves.

We perused the bookstore, leafing through books from local authors. I thought about all of the coastal British Columbia titles I'd adored over the years: *Intertidal Life* by Audrey Thomas, *On Island* by Pat Carney, *Wild Fierce Life* by Joanna Streetly, *Trauma Farm* by Brian Brett, *Adventures in Solitude* by Grant Lawrence. I remembered, some years back, coming to Salt Spring on assignment, to cover the release of a gorgeous cookbook, *Seven Seasons on Stowel Lake Farm*.

My husband and I took the island bus down to Fulford Harbour, near where I lived as a child, and listened to a man play an outdoor piano out on the wharf. We ate lunch in the diner where my mother used to flip burgers. We waited for the Morningside Organic Bakery Café & Bookstore to open. Its brusque owner, memorably referred to in an outraged Yelp review as "the angry vegan," happens to make the best chai I have ever tasted. And her sourdough! But alas, she never appeared and Morningside's gates remained locked. And so, we headed back to town for coffee, picking up a bag of locally roasted beans and some sea salt as edible souvenirs.

When I got back to Toronto, I made a pot of coffee and got to work baking a batch of cookies, the same recipe I've used for the past 25 years. I let the memories of my childhood wash over me. I played music from the Vancouver singer Ferron, an old acquaintance of my family's. (For the soundtrack to this column, stream her "Misty Mountain" here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvJ4QhsgEIU&list=RDCvJ4QhsgEIU&start_radio=1) There, at my stove, I ached for days gone by. I missed the folk music and the food. I missed the coast's

wild beauty, its strange magic.

Somehow, all of this came out in the cookies, which tasted not just of butter and chocolate and salt — but of wind and water, and apple blossoms, and decades past.

Homesick for the Coast Cookies

Adapted from a 1929 recipe in The Fannie Farmer Cookbook

Makes about 16 large cookies

1/2 cup butter

1/2 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1 egg

3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 and 1/8 cups flour

1/2 teaspoon table salt (plus a pinch of sea salt to finish)

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 375 F. Cream butter and slowly add sugars. Beat until smooth. Add egg and vanilla. In a separate bowl, mix flour, salt, and baking soda. Add the dry ingredients to the wet. Stir until combined. Add the chocolate chips. Drop spoonfuls on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and bake for 8-10 minutes, until brown but still soft and chewy in the centre. Remove from the oven and sprinkle on a little Salt Spring Sea Salt. Eat warm from the oven, with a cup of strong coffee, dreaming of the coast.

Lean Out with Tara Henley is a reader-supported publication.



I thought of the salmon singing louder

I never met her when she was young.

*Gabriel Jeroschewitz,
December 7th, 2025*

That was the first thing: she came into my sight already carrying the slow poise of someone who had seen too many seasons to spend breath in small talk. I was leaning against the blackboard in the evening class — not really a student, not really a teacher, some observer drifting in and out of rooms where words were overfed and underfelt — when she took her place at the far desk. Her eyes went to the window as if whatever the lesson was about had been decided centuries ago, and not here.

There was chalk dust in the air, a gritty smell. Outside, July bent its green weight over the fields. Inside, the authorities — dog-eared, spined in cracked leather — muttered from the shelves. The older men in the books barked certainties at point-blank range, though their bells and candles were long gone. Her gaze moved past them, past us, out into some high and far-off time I couldn't see.

That was the first time I thought of the Picts.

You wouldn't think so, not in a room with electric light and moth-bald curtains, but in her stillness was a map of places not drawn—honeyed wolf pity in the tilt of her mouth. The cunning the sea has when it pulls back from you only to return harder. Sitting next to her would have been like sharing a coracle in rough water, but I didn't — I stayed against the blackboard and watched.

The days went past. History lessons slouched through copper-workers drunk on starlight, rovers homesick for sights unseen, harpers winding music into the green drum of hills. The teacher's voice rattled on about the flaxen sons of Mil, about Labraid the Exile and his darkbrowed Gauls. But for me, every face in those tales became hers. The harpers' hands were hers. The warriors' narrowed eyes were hers. The wind on the Channel was hers. The romance was invented — an anachronism across war and silence — but once the mind starts painting over reality, it doesn't stop.

And in those hours, the idea began to form: she was not of here.

She was not of the salt sea, but the salt sea belonged to her. She had been standing in some green isle

while Noah bent his nails, and her laughter had been red-breasted Lazarus laughter, no better and no worse than ours. She had spoken shades in languages lost before we bothered to name ourselves English or Welsh or anything else. Sitting among us now — in her soft sweater, her long hands flat on the desk — she seemed both fossil and flame.

Romance? Yes, but the dark kind. I didn't want her in the bright way of youth — not candlelit dinners, not bedrooms with tangled sheets. I wanted her in the way you want a thing that is already part of the ground: to touch it would be to disturb the strata, to break into the old soil where roots coil with bones. I wanted her voice, the untranslatable part. I wanted to witness her without holding her.

Once, I followed her out of the class. Not closely. She walked the long road along the river, and the evening was green and metallic, riverlight flicking like fish scales under the stone bridge. She paused to watch the water. That was when I saw her turn her head — not toward me, but upward, as if charting the Pleiades across the dusk. I thought she might be calendaring the months of feathered dawns in her head.

I thought of the salmon singing louder in the wild deer's lungs.

I thought that she carried, somewhere in her, the marefaced huntress, owl-eyed in the halcyon dark, who whirls her hounds beyond all sacrifice. That she had known the music that burns in flame and whispers in river babble. And whatever centuries had done, they had not stripped her of it.

Days slid into each other. I learned fragments about her — a widow, a gardener, a reader who ignored the endings of books if they didn't feel right. Once she told me, "There's always someone left alive in the story," and I didn't ask her to explain. She spoke without ornament, but the space between her words was an archive.

I tried to love someone else in the meantime. It didn't work: they were all too now, too exact, too present-tense. But she was a palimpsest.

The class ended. She stopped coming. I would pass the library where she had sat, and think of her eyes turning in the direction that wasn't mine, wasn't ours. Time broadened out — wars came and went, in headlines instead of epics, but the effect was the same: bone-breaking, jewel-spilling, vision-maiming. And somewhere beneath it, she remained among the green islands, unclaimed.

Years later, I saw her once

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more. Not to speak to — just across a market street in the wind. She was buying apples from a stall. The sky was low with winter. Her hair had gone entirely white, and the sight of it made me think of centuries receding to northern wastes, ice rounding hills to the curve of breasts. She smiled at the seller and walked away. I didn't follow. What would I have said? That I had carried her through invasions, across channels, around the curve of the earth? That in my head she had been harpstring and war cry and soft south wind? She would have laughed — but not cruelly — and told me we all belong to someone's story like that. And so I kept it—the vow. I will not forget. Because what survives of love is knotty. It's older than

the clean lines of romance novels or the declarations in films. Sometimes it's watching someone in silence for years and knowing they'll never turn toward you. Sometimes it's setting them inside the myth you carry in your head — the green, the garden, the world — and letting them live there without ever telling them.

Dark romance is the romance that doesn't consume. It leaves the lover intact, still standing in the field, still watching the river. It leaves the observer with nothing but the unburnable knowledge: that impossible beauty was real, even if it was never yours.



My Enemies Are Not In Iran

*By Caitlin Johnstone
March 16th, 2026*

OPINION

My enemies are not in Iran. My enemies are in Washington and Tel Aviv. In London and Canberra. My enemies are the western oligarchs and empire managers who are poisoning my society and making everything awful while slaughtering human beings with the help of my tax dollars. My enemies are the tyrants who are turning our civilization into a mind-controlled dystopia where it is increasingly illegal to criticize the abuses of my government and its allies, and increasingly difficult to find information which runs counter to the imperial narrative. My enemies are the empire apologists and the has-barists. The propagandists and spinmeisters. Those who side with Israel and the United States against basic human interests. Imperial bootlickers always accuse me of writing “propaganda” for the “enemy”, with “enemy” meaning whoever the US-centralized empire happens to be attacking or preparing to attack on any given day. I always want to tell them “Motherfucker YOU are my enemy. YOU. You and the empire you simp for.” The Iranians have never done anything to me. The Iranians pose no threat to me. They didn't bring war to my country. The empire I live under brought war to theirs. The Iranians haven't robbed me and my fellow westerners of all democratic political agency to create an

oligarchy run by megalomaniacal plutocrats and psychopathic government agencies.

The Iranians haven't locked down all political systems throughout western society making it impossible to vote our way into peace, economic justice, and government transparency.

The Iranians aren't working tirelessly to brainwash and manipulate everyone in my society to turn us all into apathetic flag-waving morons who care more about sports and celebrities than the fact that their government is committing horrifying war crimes.

The Iranians aren't trying to make it illegal for me to criticize Israel and its abuses, or working to imprison my countrymen for uttering normal political slogans in opposition to a genocidal apartheid state.

The Iranians aren't making my society crazy, stupid and evil while we hurtle toward ecological disaster, nuclear armageddon and AI tech dystopia.

I haven't spent years watching a live-streamed genocide in Gaza being perpetrated by the Iranians.

I'm not frightened that the Iranians will try to draft my son to fight and die in a crazy, evil war.

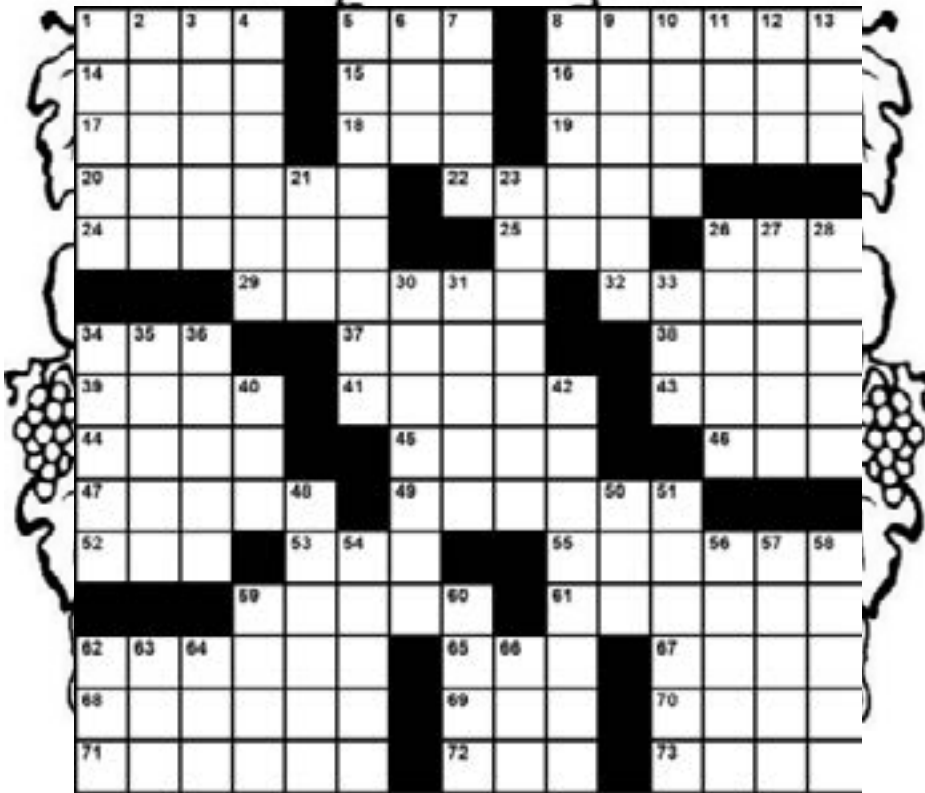
The Iranians are not doing any of these things to me.

These are things the western power structure is doing. I have no loyalty to that power structure. I have loyalty to my species, to my family, and to the values I hold sacred in my heart of hearts.

The US empire can get fucked.



• GRAPEVINE CROSSWORD •



• ACROSS •

1. Don't eat
5. Apply gently
8. Ring kings
14. Tailor's case
15. Afflicted
16. Rooftop sights
17. Army dinner
18. Catch a glimpse of
19. By and large
20. Marsh vapor
22. Exercise, as power
24. Lassitudes
25. Anything but that
26. Media overseer
29. Obtain by coercion
32. To do
34. Type of lettuce
37. At any time
38. Descend
39. Contract variety
41. Gun the engine
43. Continental coin
44. Corncob, for one

• DOWN •

45. Tricky scheme
46. Adult males
47. Artist's brown
49. Socialites' group
52. Actor Ron
53. Chinese chairman
55. Chopping sport
59. Sea anemone or
62. Render unclean
65. Did lunch
67. ---- be a pleasure!
68. Left to finish
69. Ain't no more
70. Actress Gill
71. Buildings and land
72. Eccentric
73. Alphabetize

• DOWN •

1. Whom to Cherchez
2. Dined at home
3. Lazy girl
4. Flimsy paper
5. Calamity
6. A Canadian export
7. Gusted
8. Carving in relief
9. Checkup concern
10. Extra dry
11. 60 sec.
12. Kiddo
13. Conniving
21. Amalgamation
23. Confer confidence
26. Discussion venue
27. Assignment
28. Dinner bird
30. Elate
31. Las Vegas show

33. Adorer's writing
34. Small grove
35. College at Oxford
36. Too saccharine
40. Ring around the collar
42. Most annoying
48. Quantity
50. Absorb, as costs
51. Characteristics
54. Actress Kirstie
56. Granting that, for short
57. Floor worker
58. Acclaim
59. Combine resources
60. It's usually moved first
62. Chestnut cage
63. Away from WSW
64. Drug testing grp.
66. Ankh's cross



• TEST YOUR MATH SKILLS •

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

• Last Issue's Answers •

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

GRUMPISM

“ Bigfoot often gets mistaken for Sasquatch Yeti never complains.”



Thank you,
Anonymous

• Last Issues's ANSWERS •

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

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Exterior cleaning service. Offering cleaning solutions for your windows, gutters, roofs, decks, driveways, chimneys, siding, awnings, etc. Reasonable rates with professional results.
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CARPENTRY: Alain \$50/hr
250-792-0605

GUTTERS seamless, supply and install also repairs, for free estimate contact Kevin at
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• **BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY** •

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• **EMPLOYMENT** •

Broom Cutters Wanted: temporary contract for 2026 broom blooming season. The job involves locating broom concentrations, cutting, hauling, stacking broom piles by the roadside, documenting and communicating their locations for pickup. Flexible hours, 6 hour a day maximum. The successful applicants must be committed to regular and consistent work. Must have vehicle and phone.
Apply to: Jennifer Veale
vealej64@gmail.com

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COMOX VALLEY TRANSITION SOCIETY EMERGENCY CRISIS LINE:
250-338-1227 or Text: 250-218-4034
For more info visit
<https://cvts.ca>

ISLANDS GRAPEVINE EDITORIAL POLICIES

Opinions expressed in the Grapevine do not necessarily reflect that of the Publisher.

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

The following is our policy on content:

- Profiles of individuals, history, reviews and op-ed 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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or • 250-335-2260
- Massage Clinic • 2796 Northwest Rd. • Leyah Kelly • 335-2584 (D)
- Acupuncture • Jenny McCartney, R.Ac • 250-508-8160
• www.heartwoodacupuncture.ca (D)

FORTNIGHT EVENTS

THURSDAY 19

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 2-5pm
- FREE STORE 3-5pm
- FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 3:30-6:30pm
- Hornby First Edition Deadline 11:59:59pm

FRIDAY 20

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- AA Meeting DIUC Gathering Place 7pm
- Deadline for March Flagstone

SATURDAY 21

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 9:30am-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 9:30am-5pm
- FREE STORE 9-12:30pm

SUNDAY 22

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- AA Meeting DIUC Gathering Place 7pm
- Volleyball 6:30-8pm School Gym
- Songwriter's Workshop 7pm Hornby Arts Centre
- DIGPA AGM 7 Denman Activity Centre

MONDAY 23

TUESDAY 24

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- Employment Services 9am-3pm DAC

WEDNESDAY 25

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 2-5pm
- Choose to Move 11:30-12:30 Gathering Place

THURSDAY 26

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 2-5pm
- FREE STORE 3-5pm
- FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 3:30-6:30pm
- Community Choir 2:30pm Back Hall

FRIDAY 27

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- AA Meeting DIUC Gathering Place 7pm

SATURDAY 28

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 9:30am-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 9:30am-5pm
- FREE STORE 9-12:30pm

SUNDAY 29

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- AA Meeting DIUC Gathering Place 7pm
- Volleyball 6:30-8pm School Gym
- Songwriter's Workshop 7pm Hornby Arts Centre

MONDAY 30

TUESDAY 31

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

WEDNESDAY 1

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 2-5pm
- Choose to Move 11:30-12:30 Gathering Place

THURSDAY 2

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 2-5pm
- FREE STORE 3-5pm
- FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 3:30-6:30pm
- Community Choir 2:30pm Back Hall



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