

# ...from the bush

**Charlie Predicts**

**Number 20 March 2008**

Over the holiday season there were better, more interesting programmes on the radio, possibly because the regular hosts or the on-mike editors were away. One of these shows was an interview with an eighty-year old scientist who'd been studying the Earth's climate changes all his life.

He'd realised two main things. First, we have a very stable climate, kept that way by many life forms interacting and cooperating with each other. Secondly, there are two stable states, a warmer one and a cooler one, with a short transition time of a couple of hundred years between the two. He reckoned that we were in the middle of going from the cooler state to the warmer one right now, and would be done the change by 2050. By then, crocodiles will be swimming around at the North Pole, just like they were a few million years ago before we cooled down again. That's why there's oil under the Arctic ocean -- it wasn't always cold up there.

His theory is well supported by a string of facts, such as the way it describes how the iodine in the sea gets itself onto the land, where it's needed for life to happen. However, like all theories, no matter how accurate they are, other factors may pop up that upset his prediction of deserts on the way.

There's three more factors to confuse the issue on top of this. First, the artificial demand for ethanol-enriched fuel is driving the price of grain through the roof. Second, the loss of the bees' pollinating skills on our food supply has yet to be fully realised. The failure of the blueberry crop last year and its attendant bear and partridge problems may well be typical of a lot of human food crops, too. Lastly, the 14th century prophet, Nostradamus, reckoned there would be a war starting this year, lasting for three years. He also foretold 911.

Is it possible for us simple bush dwellers to

plan ahead for all these eventualities? Well, no, but we're going to have a go at some of them. Taking the nearest one first, World War III. Likely between NATO ( read USA) and some combination of Russia and China. Its first effect would be to stop trade with these countries. Better get those flat screen TVs now, folks. The second thing'll be the rapid drying up of 'Strategic Supplies'. This'll be fuel for sure and likely any metals. We hope to stock up on nails and barrels of Kerosene, just in case. The loss of civilian use of GPS systems won't bother us as we don't go out unless we have to.

As far as the bees go, I'll have to brush up my pollinating skills for those plants that'll need it. A lot don't. Grains, for instance, are wind-pollinated, so they should be in good supply, or would be if our Government hadn't legislated putting the grain into our gas tanks. In any case, our local grain prices shouldn't rise too much as Ontario can't make Dalton Mcguinty's ethanol anyway so US prices'll be more important. I'd better get as much as I can while it's around, just in case.

As for the Final Apocalypse, if God chooses the desertification approach, all I can do is catch as much water as possible for the drier gardens that are on the way and kiss my tush goodbye. A three-year winter? Well, that's different. Our water system here's sufficiently flexible that we should be able to manage, which leaves food and heat. Can, can, can those jars, no problem there, eh Linda? But the firewood!! Oh my future aching back!! The prophecies say that's another day, however. They say God's off the hook until 2012 for that decision. Until that happy day, I'll be bringing in the logs and helping people and saying "Thy will be done, not mine" even more than I am already.

All the best from the bush, Charlie



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# voice from the bush

**SANDPAINTINGS**

**by Charlie Johnson**

This morning, when I went outside to do my chores, the whole world was white and still. There'd been a frost during the night that made all the tree branches white. It wasn't an ordinary frost, though. The trees were covered with long needles like ice thorns, some as long as an inch, all pointing towards the west. They were so beautiful that I didn't want to break them off as I went about. This was silly, really, as there were millions of them. The frost was all through the bush and when the sun comes out, they'll all melt into water drops anyway, but how beautiful they all were in the crisp of the morning!!

I was strongly reminded of how close life is to a sand painting, carefully made with different grains of coloured sand throughout the day, only to be swept away in the evening. The closest I've come to seeing this happen in real life was when I was touring in Florence, Italy, as a student. A lot of famous paintings hang in the galleries there and these are copied by pavement artists on the sidewalks outside the great galleries. Although these chalk paintings were walked on by passers-by all day and washed away by the street cleaners during the night, the artists would be back the next day to do another one.

This idea of "All that work" in a sidewalk drawing being washed away in the night ties in with the concept of "The Indispensible Man" that floated around the office when I was working as an engineer. The idea is this. If you want to know how

much you're needed at your work, take a bucket of water and put your hand in it. Splash around as much as you want, stir it up, whatever, and then take your hand out. The size of the hole it leaves represents the degree you'll be missed when you leave.

I think this is a lot closer to the truth than the idea I operated on for a long time, that the world would stop turning without me getting my way. I've done that to its logical conclusion and only ended up in the psych. ward. Most depressing and unsupportive of my Save The World policy. Didn't those doctors know who they were dealing with? I suppose they had a better idea than I did, being as how I was insane at the time.

As I ponder my present position of retirement and what I'll do for the rest of my life, this line of thinking seems most rewarding. Clearly, this newsletter's fun for me to write and for you to read, but the earth-shaking novels I've written and planned, I'm not so sure about.

Like the ice crystals this morning, beautiful though they are, or were by now, what I've written has been done before. If there's a real need for my novels out there, then "Way will open" as the old Quakers used to say. I'm not going to lose any sleep over them.

Until then, I'm going to live in the beauty of today, enjoying those ice crystals before the wind takes them away. Even when that happens as it will, there'll be something else just as beautiful along in a minute. All the best from the bush, Charlie

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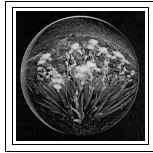
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## ...from the community

### Pure Gold found in Cobalt!

Residents and visitors to Canada's most famous Mining Town already know that the quirky streets, prospectors' cabins, craggy vistas and eccentric residents of Cobalt create the perfect inspiration for paintings and poetry. In fact, Cobalt has spawned more than its share of creative residents!

**Next month the town celebrates the life and work of one of its famous Poets, Dr. William Henry Drummond, by inviting Area Poets and Guests to the**



*spring pulse poetry festival*  
*festival de poésie pulsation de printemps*

The dynamic force behind the celebration is David Brydges who met with me, over some home made soup, at Cornmeals Restaurant in Cobalt. The Restaurant itself speaks to the wonderful history of the area and will host the "Poetry and Pancakes" breakfast. Dates and times for all the events can be found on the website. But back to the visit. David tells me that the idea has been brewing for a while and that he and Tyna Silver, a well known leader in promoting local arts & culture, have been able to secure sponsors, partners, volunteers & some funding to help in producing the Festival.

Their vision of a Festival that brings Poetry into every aspect of Life, from Pancakes to Painting, was illustrated beautifully by the Show at our new City Hall. The Palette & Brush Club presented an incredible range of talent and translation as they brought written words into the visual realm using paint, ink, canvas and paper. I was especially moved by the Art of Anne Denise Mejaki and Tyna Silver who's subject matter, the human face, is close to my own heart. I am inspired.

I was thrilled by the range of Events planned for the Festival and have decided to make a real effort to attend some of the celebrations. Charlie will be entering the Poetry Competition and will have a book of his poetry, *Wild Songs of Freedom*, available for purchase at the Classic Theater. Other Poets, including David Brydges, will have Collections available for sale as well. I've been browsing our signed copy of David's book, *Windfire on the Lakeroad*, and enjoy his unique use of language. Poets still have time to submit their work.



**Dr. William Henry Drummond Poetry Competition**  
**Deadline for submissions is March 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**For Submission information and Up to Date Events Schedule go to:**  
[www.springpulsepoetryfestival.com](http://www.springpulsepoetryfestival.com)

We have such a rich vein of talent running through this area. In the past our early residents found lots of silver around Cobalt but the **Spring Pulse Poetry Festival** looks like it will be mining pure gold.

Hope to see you there! Linda

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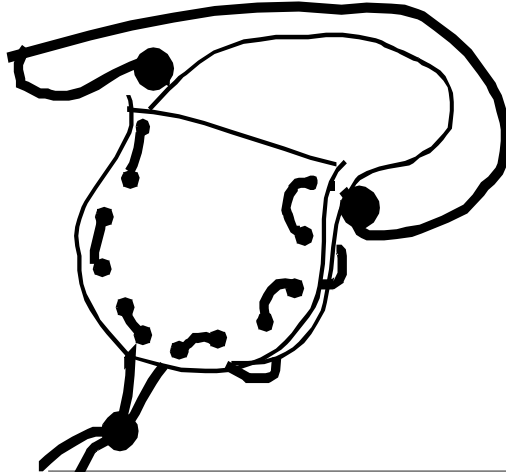
# CRAFTS...from the bush

Sew some Spirit Help

by little bear

## Medicine Pouch

Carry Spiritually relevant objects in a pouch worn around the neck or on a belt; materials can vary and the following instructions leave a lot of the work to you! Be brave; starting from scratch is only hard the first few times. However, if it is too stressful to make your own, and the need is there, pouches and other traditional Medicine objects can be purchased at the Silver Moccasin in Cobalt!



1. SEW UP SIDES BY FIRST PUTTING ANY BEADS ON THE STRAP THAT YOU WISH.
2. THEN MATCH HOLES FRONT AND BACK ON POUCH AND PUSH THE STRAP THROUGH FROM BACK TO FRONT AS SHOWN. (MAKE HOLE BIGGER BY FORCING A PEN THROUGH THE TWO HOLES TO MAKE THREADING EASIER)
3. EXIT AT BOTTOM CENTER AND LEAVE ENOUGH OF THE STRAP AT TOP END TO GO OVER YOUR HEAD AND AT THE BOTTOM END TO HOLD SOME BEADS FOR DECORATION.
4. TO MAKE BELT LOOPS INSTEAD OF NECK WEAR JUST TIE LOOPS AT EACH SIDE AT THE TOP AND RUN THE CENTER OF STRAP UNDER FLAP OF POUCH
5. PAINTING ON FLAP, SEWING BEADS OR A FOUND OBJECT WILL ADD YOUR OWN MARK TO THE POUCH. Have Fun!

Pattern piece A

Pouch Pattern can be altered to suit your needs with one pattern piece for back and flap (A) and the other for the front (B).

Mark holes to match at 1/2 inch intervals on body of pouch B.

Use hide or non-fraying fabric for materials and, if hide is used, punch holes with nail and hammer on a back board or with leather punch.

Pattern Piece B

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# ...from the cave

our daily bread

by little bear

I've had to pay attention lately to food preservatives and the huge list of ingredients on packaged and preserved foods. Eating out has become risky and I have come to depend more and more on our own food and less on time saving and "treat" foods. I won't get into the technical aspects of preservatives except to say that information is readily available for those of you who are interested. The need for me to change came, as usual, painfully and the willingness is, also as usual, gained grudgingly. So cutting down my remaining purchased food, along with more walking, is a necessary next step in my "healthy lifestyle".

I've really enjoyed our once a month lunches at Corn Meals Restaurant. I did a write up when they first opened but felt it was important to revisit the philosophy of food as it applies to real life.

Our friend Linda, the owner of the restaurant, spends all day cooking, shopping, planning and researching food. She has a web site now and is working on a plant identification guide whenever she finds a spare minute. Linda plans ahead, has a menu and works with pre-made main dishes for her special of the day. Linda also has started her own traditions with Spaghetti night on Wednesday, just call for the latest!

The rest of us, with jobs, families, personal hobbies and events to attend, usually approach the subject of what to eat tonight about a half hour before dinner. Meal planning by crisis is the order of the day in most modern homes. Finding creative energy to sit down and plan the week with input and cooking commitments from the rest of the family is required if healthy eating is to become possible.



I decided to take a lesson from Corn Meals. Menu planning and foods that can cook without much supervision, like casseroles and crock pot recipes, using our jars of preserved foods have really helped. We discovered that Charlie is good at the pressure canning while I am able to make the big pots of soups, sauces and meats to be jarred up for health eating later. I have yet to get Linda's Salmon Pie recipe!

Since we do sacrifice some food value in the high heat required for safe canning we make sure we start out with good ingredients and, whenever possible, arrange for foods we can't grow ourselves to come from local people. Effort equals reward! We've found a local grain farmer and goat milk and cheese producer to help us on our way. The Farmer's Market is well represented in our winter pantry, too.

Lately we've canned soups and find them a real good solution for the days we can't find the energy to put a meal together. Tonight I made a casserole from all of our own preserved food, both dried and canned. Along with today's fresh baked bread, grain compliments of the farmer I mentioned, we will be eating well.

Like everything else worthwhile in my life only time, practice and effort are required.

Oh well, what else is new...from the cave.

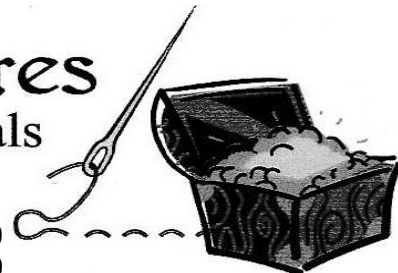
		<p>Tues. to Fri. 8am to 8pm Sat. &amp; Sun. 8am to 2pm</p>
<p>50 Silver Street in Historic Cobalt 679-1175 or on the web at <a href="http://cornmeals.blogspot.com">cornmeals.blogspot.com</a> <i>Home Cooked Meals with a Traditional Taste!</i></p>		

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# Herbs & Recipes...from the bush

**YOGOURT**

by Charlie Johnson

My mother was the cause of my insatiable curiosity. When I was a child and full of questions, she answered every one the same way: "Because that's why." This method of child-rearing made me question everything and, after a few bad experiences, look to prove that the information in front of me was wrong. It usually was. How I survived my formative years, I don't know, other than God looking after little children. For instance, I developed a close relationship with the English variety of electricity, at 250 volts, that caused me to treat the North American variety, 120 volts, with less than the respect it deserves. It didn't have half the kick of the "Over 'Ome" stuff. It's probably just as well that we only have a twelve-volt supply out here!

I still have that probing mind, so the other day, when I read in one of our health books that a cup of yoghurt every day'll slowly replace all the bad bacteria in my system with the good variety and so build up my immune system, I thought I'd better check it out, if for no other reason but to prove it wrong. Another thing, every second time I go to town, I pick up whatever new bug's drifted in from Toronto or where-ever, so anything that'll slow down these tramp infections has my attention. With these two motives in mind, I gave it a try.

I checked out the various labels on the yogourt pots before I bought them and quickly found that you can't judge them by their shape or prettiness. Most of the varieties offered under the name "Yogourt" have jellifiers, sweeteners and other non-milk products in them and are definitely not the stuff that Ghengis Khan ate as he conquered all of Asia. One variety, Astro, did have a line with only milk products and bacteria, so that's the one I chose for my Great Experiment.

The first couple of times I ate it were a bit strange but soon I found myself gobbling up the

stuff every day. Delicious! Over the next week or two, I felt weird as my whole system adjusted to the changing populations in my stomach, but the "Good Guys" are definitely winning. I'll tell you how I know.

The last time I was in town, I went to my doctor's office, a place where sick people gather, and of course I got the latest thing going. When I got home and felt the effects, instead of needing one of my fire-breathing cayenne pepper sandwiches to shake it, a cup of thyme tea (1/2 tsp per cup of boiling water) was all it took to set me to rights. Thyme tea did nothing for me before, likely because my insides were a seething mass of negativity, but the yogourt seems to have turned things around.

Both Linda's book and mine strongly advise taking some yogourt if you've been prescribed a course of antibiotics. The antibiotics knock out nearly all the internal bacteria, both good and bad, and then it's a race between the few survivors as to which'll dominate the system first. Yogourt will definitely improve the good guys' odds!

My book says it's easy to make, but I haven't found this to be so. I think they've done something to store bought milk that stops the yogourt bugs from growing. When my children kept goats, I had no problem with that milk setting up. Anyway, rather than playing games with chemicalized bags of milk, we're planning to support Astro until we get milking animals of our own and then -- look out!

If you see a strange man riding around town on a yak, it'll be me!!

All the best from the bush, Charlie

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# OPINIONS from the Bush

Insanity

by A. Buschmann

I once made a dare with a fellow amateur actor that if she went to see a play on Broadway, New York, then I would go and see my hero, Peter Ustinov, play King Lear at Stratford. We both followed through and compared notes afterwards.

Her trip to New York was a great success and she had a wonderful time. I, on the other hand, didn't fare so well. I found myself sitting in a world-class theater watching one of Shakespeare's best plays being performed by an extremely famous actor and I was bored. The whole company, other than Ustinov, was wooden and stiff, way worse than a bunch of school kids. My friend explained that King Lear is all about insanity. "You were bored because the acting profession is, in itself, so close to insanity that to play a lunatic is too close for comfort. They were so afraid of losing it they couldn't act properly."

This agrees in a general way with my theory about what insanity is, which is that it often occurs when someone's trying to be what they're not. This conclusion comes after many, many hours on my part trying to figure what this condition's all about. My various and separate mental diseases can be divided into two types, the 'Chemical Imbalance' one and the 'Trying To Be What You're Not' type. Of my two chemical imbalances, one coming from being bombed in the womb is corrected by psychiatric medications and the other, from a lack of zinc as a child, which I correct by taking a zinc supplement. I don't expect either of these conditions to go away.

The second type is the Shakespearean one of pretending that I'm someone who I'm basically not. My mom wanted me to be the best in the world at whatever she chose for me and my dad wanted me to please my mom, provided I didn't do it better than him.

My Higher Power wanted me to just be

me. My problems circled around two facts. My mom didn't want me to do the same thing my Higher Power did, and I was smarter and better at most things than my dad was. As a result, I was torn three ways and went nuts on a regular basis until I resolved some of these conflicting issues for myself. Even after all the hospitalizations and hours of talk therapy, it's still taken me five years after their deaths to exorcise their ghosts and do my own thing for the Glory of God. Even now, though, their ghosts still creep in but I can usually scotch them fairly quickly.

A lot of people are afraid of insanity, I believe, for two reasons. Some suffer from an already unstable mental condition that's controllable under most circumstances and are afraid of what would happen if it exploded. The other group has a fear that if they lose control, they won't be able to get that control back even with medical help. Both groups' fears are usually groundless but we all know someone who's had mental health problems and the toll it takes on them, and their families, is enough to support a large dose of fear.

I don't know the statistics but probably more of us have heart attacks than have mental breakdowns yet we don't have the same level of fear when the "organ in question" is the heart. There's something about losing the mind that is very scary. I've been very lucky that way as modern psychiatry, for all its faults, is a lot better than it used to be and I've come back from the realm of madness many times.

Even with help I couldn't start to get well until I caught onto the fact that the basic problem was me, so the solution had to be mine and I had to accept help to get better.

The alternative was unacceptable!

At least that's my opinion, A. Buschman

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# S P I R I T U A L I T Y

## CHOICE

The other day, I turned down a chance to read some of my poems at the Poetry Festival in Cobalt this April. Now there are two aspects to this. First of all, they're not my poems. I merely held the pen while the Muse on my shoulder told me what to write. I just wrote them down, tidied them up a bit and forgot 'em. When the Great Muse left and went to sit on someone else's shoulder, my poetry skills left with it. So they aren't 'MY' poems.

The other aspect to this is how I decide what I'm going to do in a day. When I was in charge of my life, I managed to scrape together a University degree in my area of incompetence, lose my jobs on a regular basis, go through a divorce and end up in the booby hatch over a dozen times, wanting 'Them' to cure me. Since I started working a 12-step programme I've only been hospitalised a couple of times to get some help with my problem. I've been in a stable relationship with Linda for over 14 years, and own my own home outright. I also write which as it turns out, is my true vocation. The difference between Before and After? I don't manage my life any more; my Higher Power does.

The other day, though, when I chose to turn down this opportunity because I didn't want the emotional upset it would cause me, my Higher Power disagreed. I could almost hear Him saying "O.K. You don't want to do it? Then you won't do anything." Suddenly, there was no point to life. I couldn't get out of bed. The chickens got minimal rations and we didn't get any eggs. The dogs went for the shortest walks possible and the house was heated with our emergency supply of wood that we keep for ice storms. All this because I'd made a wrong choice.

As soon as I reversed my decision the chickens were fed so we had eggs again along with happy Linda, happy dogs and happy Charlie. So I have a somewhat scary poetry reading coming up in the first weekend in April? Booga, booga, Charlie! My life has that edge of uncertainty again that makes getting up in the morning worth while. Since then, I try very hard to listen to what my instructions for the day are when I greet the morning with the dogs, instead of mumbling "Thy will be done, so long as I get to do what I want, too."

If I'm right about these being The End Times then we all have to choose a side soon or we'll have one chosen for us. As far as this poetry thing goes, I was lucky because I had time to change my mind. I could get from "Myself before others" to "Others before Myself." Had I not been able to switch back, I don't know what would have happened, but it would have been bad.

Talking about it with Linda afterwards, she reminded me that I have a daily reprieve from a killer condition as long as I maintain my spiritual progress. This means doing the scary thing, choosing risk over safety and trusting my Higher Power to see me through. He always has before, so why would He stop now? Even after twenty years of trying this way, I doubt Him from time to time? What is wrong with me? Well, my humanness and my fears do creep in and I go "Waah, Waah!" but not for long. And then my life becomes exciting again.

I can't make anybody else choose the risky, right path, I can only say that I've never regretted doing so for very long. I had a taste of the smooth slippery slope the other day and I sure didn't like that at all.

The excitement continues, Charlie.



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