

...from the bush

Charlie Recovers

Number 1 April 2008

I finally caught the current variety of flu going around, Yoghourt and Birkenstocks notwithstanding. I've had flu lots of times before and thought I knew how to handle it, but not this time. I made the cardinal error of doing too much too soon. We had a home crisis that required one of us to go to town, and that particular morning, it looked like I was in the better shape to go, even though I was only just beginning to get my strength back from the bug. With 20/20 hindsight, this could have been the wrong decision.

You see, flu by itself is not that dangerous a disease, it's the complications that are the killers. It can degrade into pneumonia very quickly, and that, I think, is what happened to me. I came back from town with a raging fever, a chest-ripping cough and absolutely no energy. Straight to bed I went and shivered and shook and coughed my poor little throat out.

Linda figured that Catnip was the best herb to control the coughing spasms, followed by mullein tea to help repair the breathing. The tea she made tasted OK but was by no means strong enough for what I was going through. I went straight to the jar and chewed on a bunch of dried catnip, pulling out the twigs as I came across them. The things you have to do to survive in the bush, eh?

Aaand.....it worked. I could sleep at last.

After a week in bed and disjointed meals, along the "Starve a fever, feed a cold" line, I found out the hard way what my regular breakfast of grains, nuts and seeds had been doing for me all these years. I suddenly had an attack of gout in my right foot. I was going to say "a **bad** attack of gout" but I hope I never live to see the day I have one of *those*. This one was quite bad enough, thank you very much.

Our book says that gout's caused by eating too much rich food, which produces an excess of uric acid, which then crystallizes in the joints, usually of the big toe. A meat-free diet for two weeks along with soft, red fruit was recommended, with a cayenne pepper and oil plaster for the affected area. Linda made up this mixture and smeared it onto my foot, covering it up with a plastic bag and a sock. As the stinging from the cayenne went down, so did the pain from the gout. She next appeared beside my bed with a bowl of strawberries and cream that she'd got from somewhere. Delicious! I was also busy eating bowls and bowls of cut barley, whole buckwheat (amazing B vitamins there), rolled oats and all the nuts and seeds I could lay my hands on. In a couple of days, I could at least get about and do my chores. Pretty good, I'd say.

The cough, however, was not so good. I was starting to get worried. At one point, I had half a dozen different herbs lined up, hoping that one of them would crack it, but none of them seemed to work.

Linda and I discussed what Western Medicine would likely do with me if we let them and thought it would be some sort of anti-biotic. My favourite anti-biotic herb is yarrow. I'd once suggested it to my sister-in-law for her daughters, who had an allergic reaction to the antibiotics given to them in hospital and had been discharged in worse shape than when they went in. It worked for them so it was time for me to take my own advice. My coughing subsided to a dull roar, and is fairly easily controlled with coltsfoot tea, a spoonful of honey and the occasional chew of catnip. Looks like I'll make it! Yeah!!

All the best from the bush, Charlie



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voice from the bush

HERBAL EVIDENCE

by Charlie Johnson

My recent bout of flu and my panicky search for the right combination of herbs to bring my mess of sicknesses under control shook my faith in herbal medicines a little. It needn't have. Herbs have made a big difference in my life and for people around me.

The first time we used them was when Linda got bronchitis and was delirious with a fever with it. She drank a couple of cups of yarrow tea and the fever was gone, yes, gone, within 24 hours and there was no need to take her to the Emergency Department just down the road. She went on to cure the cough with cups of tea made from the Coltsfoot plants that grew just outside our apartment in Hamilton.

Herbs made another big impact in my life was when my minor psychiatric medication stopped working and a cup of lemon balm tea effectively took its place. That's when I learned for myself that herbs needed to be respected, as some are stronger than others. I found out that if I was worked up enough to need the herb, it did a good job, but if I just thought I was, or afraid I would be, then the tea would make my heart rate go through the roof. Memo to self -- always use common sense with herbs.

When we left Hamilton for our new life up here, I had a recurrence of my childhood skin condition, eczema, caused by the stress of the move. My herb book said a creme out of Goldenrod, *Solidago*, would help and it did. One of Linda's moccasin sewers got wind of this and took some for her five-month old baby, who had been plagued with skin rashes all his life. I made up a milder cre`me by boiling plantain leaves up in oil thickened a bit with beeswax and gave her a jar of that, too. She soon gave us the good news that the baby's cradle cap fell off in his bath water and within 24 hours, he was completely rash-free!! Wonderful. Another mom tried the Goldenrod cre`me on her hockey-playing son's feet that were deeply cracked with eczema and was

thrilled when it didn't hurt as she applied it. His feet were effectively cured in a couple of days, too.

Another herb that's very interesting to me is Shepherd's Purse. One lady had serious problems with broken capillaries behind her eyes that were so bad that she couldn't stand to be in the daylight for any length of time. She tried this herb with great success. I last saw her standing in the sunlight waving goodbye to me. What a change!

Finally, I want to tell you about Calendula creme. Linda had to stop making moccasins because she developed an allergy to the chromium used in the leather tanning process. She developed a bright red mask on her face whenever she touched a bit of leather, and the condition caused her facial skin to thicken and break out with surface capillaries. By staying away from food, herbal supplements and drinking water contaminated with heavy metals and applying Calendula creme religiously, her skin's well on the way to recovery. It's also been used to help "White Hand Syndrome" which causes cold hands from poor circulation. I've used it to completely heal a bad burn on the back of one of my fingers, too.

When I touched the stove-pipe, my lighting-fast response wasn't quick enough to stop the blister forming on the back of one of my fingers. I slapped some Goldenrod creme on as fast as I could, which took a lot of the pain out of it, and it slowly began to heal. Despite constant wetting as I went about my life, I kept the Goldenrod creme going. Once the scabbing had healed up enough, I started with the Calendula creme. Some three weeks afterwards, I don't even have a scar and my sexy hair follicles on the finger are thriving again.

Like I said at the start, I really don't need to doubt the healing properties of herbs, sometimes they achieve miracles, at least they do for me.

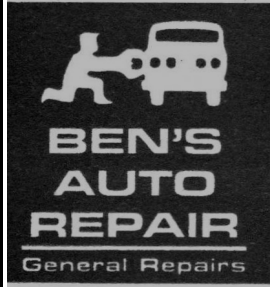
All the best from the bush, Charlie.

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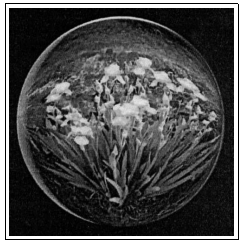
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...from the community



The Spring Pulse Poetry Festival was GREAT!

Congratulations to Tyna & David
and the many volunteers that made this Festival possible.
For information on Contest winners and next year's
events just check the website!

www.springpulsepoetryfestival.com



Wild Songs of freedom



by Charlie Johnson

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Last Saturday Charlie had the opportunity to read a few of his poems at the Festival. We arrived at Cornmeals at 10am and found a full house of poetry lovers and a reading in progress. The aroma of pancakes reminded us that we hadn't had breakfast yet and we were served immediately by Linda's son, and right hand man, Mike. The pancakes were delicious, the poems were great, friends were there and I had a wonderful time. Of course I wasn't reading my poems since I don't have any; so I asked Charlie how it was for him.

Charlie, how was the poetry reading for you?

Well my poems are not light and i was quite worried about how the'd be received. I am also 6 feet plus, a real presence and was nervous so when I got up to read I chose my spot in the room carefully.

I started with what I thought was the most suitable opening poem from the book. It was "The Old Quarry". This being Cobalt, I knew I had a room full of rock hounds and the poem was well received! Instead of reading the whole book I thought I'd just read a couple more that meant a lot to me; "My Grandad" and "A Psalm". I read them and then thanked everyone and let another poet have the spotlight.

What did you think of the other poems you heard?

That was kind of weird because we all seemed to come together on the same topic. That is that we are not alone and together we can do it! There was a high level of understanding of the human condition in the other poems with which I strongly identified.

Did you have fun?

Cripes.....(a long pause here)...YES! That is unusual for me.... I will certainly look forward to digging out more of my poems in time for next year's Festival!

Hope to see some of you there next year!

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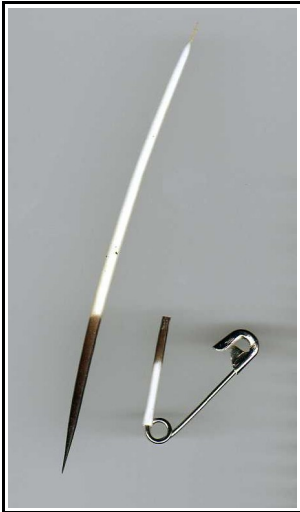
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CRAFTS...from the bush

Porcupine Quill Bracelet

by little bear



You will need sharp scissors, a bracelet clasp or flat bead and **105 small safety pins** for full bracelet or **55** for half as shown (silver metal works best as the copper ones turn my wrist green)

105 Porcupine Quills for full bracelet or **55** for half (as shown)(sorted for the size appropriate to your pin size)

10 inch piece of moose or deer hide cut to fit inside the length of the pin between the bottom and the closure.

OR 10 inch piece of elastic of a width to fit inside the body of the pin.

Collect your supplies. Thank the Porcupine then wash & sort it's quills to the appropriate diameter for your pins.

It is now time to cut the quills to the right length and fit them on the pins.

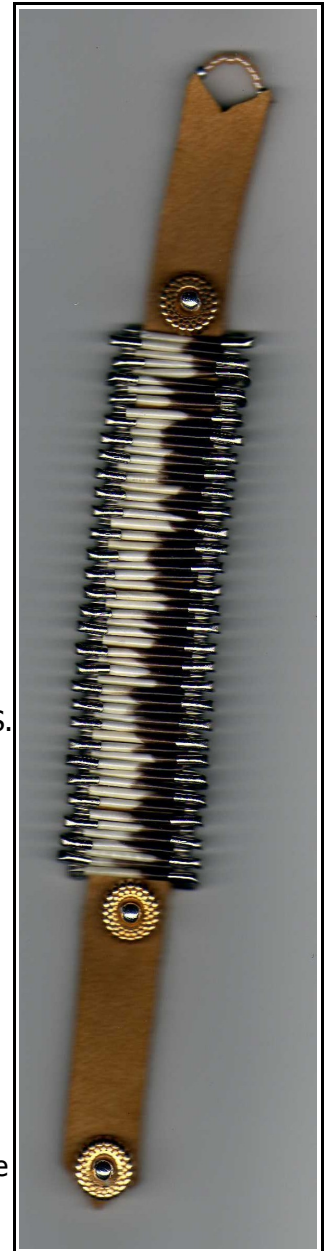
At this point I suggest two saucers. One for the quills with the brown starting at the TOP of the PINS and one for the quills with the brown end starting at the BOTTOM of the PINS.

By alternating the pins, one with the head up and the next with the tail up, your bracelet will remain straight up and down on the elastic or piece of hide. In other words, in order for the brown end of the quill to always go in the same direction on the bracelet, the pins must alternate direction.



Taking quill in hand, gently push it, brown end first, onto the pin. Stop at the bottom of pin and do not push further or quill will rip. Cut off the remaining quill at the tip of the pin and close pin. Complete pins.

For the reversed quills it is necessary to cut them roughly to size before starting them on the pin. Push the white side of the quill gently onto the tip of the pin until it reaches the end of the pin. The brown tip should fit properly into the closure at the head of the pin. If it does not then remove the quill and cut excess off from the white end so you don't lose too much of the brown end of the quill. Complete pins.



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...from the cave

PORCUPINES

by little bear

QUILL BRACELET CONTINUED

Having completed the pins and quills they should then be strung on the piece of hide or the elastic which should fit the inner space of the pin you've chosen. Slide the pins onto the hide and be sure to put a stopper of some kind (like a pin actually pinned onto the end of the elastic or hide) so the pins don't all slide off of the end. (Yes, it did happen to me...OK?)

Alternating the pins from each saucer, ONE UP then ONE DOWN, will produce the effect as shown on the picture. Dramatic effects can be made by varying the amount of brown quill left showing. The sample shown has a subtle rough edge but I've seen them done with a very rigid pattern by a practised quill worker.

CLASP can be made as shown sewing a flat bead on one end and cutting a V into the other side, then creating a loop with the hide and seed beads. This method is best done when using the hide.

ELASTIC can be sewn together (with sewn side on the inside of the pin so it will be smooth against the wrist. Do this by stretching and turning elastic inside out before sewing. If elastic is too stiff then just overlap and stitch raw edges together using a buttonhole type stitch.

The Porcupine's Quills are a great reminder of its wonderful message.

PORCUPINE MEDICINE

Porcupines are gentle beings and only use their impressive weaponry when attacked. Their medicine teaches faith, trust & innocence. I have a photo of myself at a year old, sent to me by my mother just before she went to sing Karaoke in Heaven with Elvis. On the back she wrote that she sent it after receiving a photo of Charlie & I in our new home in the bush. She said she was amazed at how much my photo at 50 looked like my photo at 1. Since one of my goals for moving back to the woods was to recover my childhood self I was thrilled to see the truth of my mothers observation. I look just like me!

Porcupine's message of wonder and play, of trusting and of having faith that things really do work out has become a part of my life again.

I hope it is or can become part of yours.

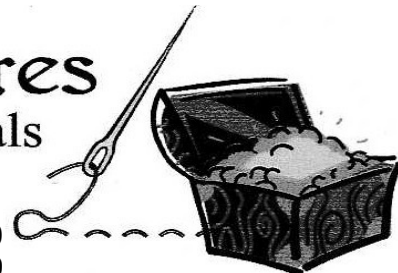
All the best from the cave, little bear

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Herbs & Recipes...from the bush

Salmon Pie

by Linda Gauthier

We've reached out for some help and this month are featuring that great Salmon Pie I keep raving about! While I was at the Pancakes & Poetry event I was able to ask Linda for the Recipe and was amazed to read the story behind the recipe.

Linda's uncle John (Jack) O'Connor was memorialized in a cookbook assembled by his family. Jack, the self described "Irish Indian", and I share a birth date as well as our First People's ancestry. After the Poetry readings I spent some time leafing through the book and I copied down the promised SALMON PIE recipe. Charlie was able to find some tips on smoking fish and I expect we'll be asking to see the book next time we're in Cobalt!

Remember, if you don't have the time or energy for the Salmon Pie just call Cornmeals. Linda will let you know when she will be adding it to the menu!

Jack's Salmon Pie

INGREDIENTS

2 CANS	SALMON (7.5 oz. ea.)
½ CUP	CELERY (finely chopped)
¼ CUP	GREEN PEPPER (finely chopped)
¼ CUP	GREEN ONION (finely chopped)
½ CUP	CHEDDAR CHEESE (grated)
1 tsp.	DILL WEED
1 tsp.	GARLIC
½ tsp.	TARRAGON
	PEPPER (to taste)
3 tbsp.	MAYONNAISE OR SOUR CREAM
and finally	PASTRY DOUGH (for 2 crusts)

DIRECTIONS

MAKE double shell pastry dough.(or purchase frozen!)

DRAIN Salmon

PLACE bottom pastry shell in pie plate.

MIX all ingredients and place on bottom shell.

COVER with top shell.

BRUSH with Salmon Juice or Milk.

SLIT top shell to allow steam to escape.

BAKE at 375 F. For 30-40 minutes or until pastry is golden brown.

LET STAND for 5 minutes before serving.

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For those of you with hydro I bet this pie could be made on the weekend and frozen for a delicious and nutritious choice on those nights you just can't cook!

If you have a **RECIPE** to share please mail it to:

Linda & Charlie Johnson,
RR#1, North Cobalt, ON P0J 1R0

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OPINIONS from the Bush

Politics

by A. Buschmann

The other day, I came *that* close to breaking a cardinal rule of this home, and incidentally of this newspaper too, and almost made a political complaint to our illustrious local Liberal M.P. He himself averted a terrible scene at his office by giving a statement over the local radio which I heard on my way into town. He told us that Canadians didn't want to waste \$360 million on an election in these "times of scarcity", after NOT stopping the Government of the day from spend Billions on the Military, Billions on "National Defence", Billions on Bureaucracy, Billions on reducing the GST, etc., etc.

A further ten minutes down the road, I realized that the chances of our M.P. leading or even participating in a palace coup to give us some sort of Opposition were nil. I wouldn't be able to get anything through to this man, especially with his front-line worker running interference for him.

I've calmed down since then and have been able to look around at Canada's political scene a bit. When I first arrived here in 1969, a guy I worked with explained that the Conservatives made pro-U.S.A. decisions and when the Liberals were in, some pro-Canada stuff got through. This was just after Trudeau had squeaked past Stanfield to become our Canadian Statesman. A little research on my part showed what he had been talking about.

Diefenbaker, a Conservative, destroyed the A.V. Roe aviation firm by smashing up the Avro Arrow, a plane that was well over twenty years ahead of anything else in the air at that time. The only people who benefited from this loss were the Americans.

In fact, Conservative policies, throughout my time observing them, have usually benefited the American government of the day often at the expense of Canadian loggers, farmers, and cross border shoppers.

I suspect that our willingness to allow ourselves to be abused by successive Conservative Governments has to do with our national insecurity complex. We just don't seem to see our own great worth.

Take this brief list of Canadian achievements, for example. We invented the light bulb, and then sold the rights to Thomas Edison for \$5,000. The telephone was one of ours, together with the first telephone exchange in the world. A while back a Canadian plane with Canadian pilots rescued that sick doctor from Antarctica after the Americans couldn't do it. Vimy Ridge, anyone? And its sister battle in WWII, the Canadian assault on the Hitler Line in Italy... More recently the U.S. Government had to lean quietly on its own judiciary to settle the Blackberry patent case somewhat in favour of the Canadian owners (probably out of fear of its citizen's withdrawal symptoms!).

Our Inferiority Complex is definitely not deserved but it's a fact of life. Like many sufferers of low self worth we regularly vote for a Prime Minister who puts his own personal interests before the needs of the average Canadian. It's classic abusive relationship behaviour writ large.

That's the real reason why I didn't give our Liberal M.P. a piece of my mind the other day. I'd have been vexing myself for nothing. The best I can do is stick to my boundaries and change things within 'em. As long as I don't look outside them I don't hurt my eyes.

After all I only have one vote and my life remains relatively unaffected by the huge needs of Politicos and their shady allied deals.

I sure appreciate that great gift from the present crew "on the Hill"; the two GST pennies out of every dollar I spend.

Puts a whole new meaning to the term "my two cents worth" doesn't it?

At least that's my opinion, A. Buschmann.

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

THE ENDTIMES

Since one of my less dangerous insanities was a "Save The World" complex, I've had my eye open for prophecies of how and when it'll happen. It looks like we're really getting close to The End so I thought you might be interested in some of the scenarios I've come across.

All of them, except the Christian one, involve a wonderful Earthly restoration of some kind or another. The most hopeful one, maybe because I know the least about it, is the Tibetan one. This predicts that around the year 2000 AD, an army of people without uniforms or weapons will rise up and set the whole world to rights. Like I say, I don't know the details nor do I know how to find the recruiting office.

The Mayans are just hanging on to their own culture as best they can until some cataclysmic event wipes the Spaniards and their descendants off the face of Central America to let them get back to the way they were before they were so rudely disturbed by Columbus and Cortez..

Ragnarrok, the Storm of The Gods, is my favourite as I'm almost certainly a descendant of the Vikings, both physically and spiritually. This predicts that just about everyone kills everyone else in one great big battle, at the end of which a few survivors climb down the Tree of Life and start over again. Beauty's restored to the land and Indecisiveness becomes the most powerful godhead, thus forcing us humans to solve our own problems our own way, which is usually for the best anyway.

The Native North American ones I've come across vary almost as much as the original cultures did, which I suppose isn't surprising. There's the Return of the Buffalo thundering across the Plains again during the time of the White Buffalo, which is definitely now, by the way. There's the rising up of a whole bunch of Rainbow Warriors, the return of The Ancestors, not necessarily belonging to any particular tribe, or even race for that matter, who again'll put the

world to rights. Mother Earth'll hiccup and the ozone layer'll be restored and all will be well once more. I don't suppose that all this'll happen without some sort of monumental global disturbance, but, hey, you can't make an omelets without breaking eggs.

I understand that the Judaic one includes the Restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem and the coming back together of the Lost Tribes of Israel to their homeland. Apparently, these tribes are not so much disappeared as dispersed and'll reappear when it's time. Presumably peace will then reign in the Middle East, although I don't know how the Muslims expect the world to end and the new one to begin, and how Israel fits in.

The Christian predictions seem to be the least hopeful for us poor sinners and unbelievers. They say there'll be a division between the Good guys and the Bad guys that'll last for Eternity. It may not be as simple as that, however, as the next Pope's predicted to be the last one and he'll take the name Peter, like the first one. If *that* happens, then all kinds of horrible things follow, like Rome ringed with fire! Not the happiest outlook for the losers.

All these predictions are dependent on one thing, however. If we change, they'll change, too. This is what the people of Ninevah faced when Jonah, after the whale spat him out, went to deliver God's message of "Change or else...". He sat on the hillside waiting to see the Lord destroy this beautiful city of sin, but the residents heard his message and changed. Nothing destructive happened.

It doesn't have to happen to us either, provided we change how we do things. We all know what to do and how to do it. The sooner we start changing, the easier it'll be for us all and the less damage there'll be to recover from.

Pitter patter, let's get at her, folks, by the looks of the world these days there's not much time left.

The changes continue, Charlie



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