

# ...from the bush

**Charlie Shingles**

**Number 22 May 2008**

In the last issue of **...from the bush**, I was happily chortling about how I'd recovered from the flu, pneumonia and gout and was about to go dancing off into the Spring sunshine. Well, do I have news for you!! Like four other people we know of round here, I've come down with a dose of the shingles.

Horror stories abound with this one, even more so than gout, and I can see why. There's this one person who's had it for two years now and can only sleep sitting up in a chair, it's so painful. Even our medical resource book, "Prescription for Natural Healing" by J.F.Balch and P.A.Balch joins the dirge. I won't tell you their worst prognoses lest I add to your already depressed mood.

Nearly everyone's had chicken pox and so did I, but I still carried the virus within me, saved for later on in life when I was run down and my immune system was low (like after a combined bout of flu, pneumonia and gout). Then it came back crowing, saying "Who's the chicken now?"

First, I had one single spot on my rib cage under my arm where I could hardly see it. It wouldn't respond to my bush creme in any way and by the time I finally showed it to Linda, it was no longer alone. Lots of little friends had joined it and my chest was beginning to hurt. Over the next 24 hours, while we puzzled out what to do, several other patches appeared and the pain began to eat up my patience with Linda as well as my ability to think.

When all else fails, read the instructions, so that's what we did. Balch and Balch gave a good description of the condition as usual and

then went on and on with various complicated and supposedly helpful suggestions but it was the very last one that really helped. This said that in most cases, a few drops of essential oil in a tablespoon of a carrier oil, olive oil for instance, would cause the lesions to "dry up and disappear within three to five days..." The list of essential oils included Bergamot, Eucalyptus, Goldenseal, Geranium and Lemon oil. Linda had Geranium oil compliments of area herbalist Colette's Aromatics and we had sunflower oil in the pantry, so that's what we combined; 5 drops to one tablespoon. When we put it on, BINGO!

I may have smelled like a flower, but the pain went down, the spots stopped spreading and I slowly, oh so slowly, began to improve. When I noticed scabs forming over the blisters and my skin pulled every time I moved my arm (OUCH!), I slapped some bush creme on them, which helped. However the real healing was in the Geranium/sunflower oil mixture. It seems to be able to soak down beneath the skin and heal the damaged nerves that cause the pain. I'm definitely getting better. I sure hope the healing continues, as Spring's finally here and my busy season's about to begin.

What happened to my winter's holiday? That's what I'd really like to know! I was sick, that's true, but this winter was ridiculous! Anyway, I might be finally on the mend now, especially as the first spring greens are showing in the garden. Bless you, nettles, I'll be polite when I pick you, so please don't sting me too badly. You're simply yummy fried in butter!

All the best from the bush, Charlie

The logo for BNS CORNER GAS is presented in a stylized, white, rounded rectangular shape with a black border. The text "BNS" is in a large, bold, sans-serif font on the left. To its right, "CORNER" is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font, and "GAS" is written below it in a similar font. The entire logo is set against a black background.

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# voice from the bush

**EARTH DAY**

**by Charlie Johnson**

The other day on the radio, I heard how this Toronto (?) man was celebrating Earth Day. He'd put up on his web site a list of 75 to 100 things "you" could do to stop Global Warming. You could even go back when you'd done them and score yourself on how well you'd done later. I'm biting my tongue as I write this. Just one new thing's quite enough for me; forget a hundred. I've worked up my own list and it's only four things.

It even has a memory tag, "**STEP**".

**Share what we have**

**Truth to power**

**Eat local**

**Pollute less**

I'll talk about these one at a time.

**Share what we have**

One thing I love about this community's the way people share what they have with others who're having temporary difficulties. We haven't forgotten what it's like to be without and always give what we can. When our old truck died, our neighbour lent her car to us straight away and friends helped pay for our new truck just like that. This community raises funds for CAT Scans, for Trails, to lighten the load when people are living with cancer or have had an accident. The local service clubs have bought dental care for people we know and have contributed to Linda's garden project this summer. We'll keep sharing here Temiskaming. We are all in this Life together.

**Truth to power**

It's always been hard for me to speak up to authority figures when they're in the wrong, because I could never stand up to my father. I was terrified he'd kill me if I did. It's easier now I'm retired and he's gone, but it's still scary. Linda was in a situation once where she was uncertain what to do (it doesn't happen to her often!). She called a friend, a United Church minister, for an answer and this is what he

said. "If it will not benefit you in funds or friends and, in fact, may cost you, then it is probably the right thing to do." She addressed the situation head on. We want things to change for the better so we'll all have to speak up.

**Eat local**

When we lived in town, I bought a package of pre-chopped salad mix, shipped from California. Two weeks later, during a fridge-cleaning binge, we threw it out even though it was still crisp. Now when I pick a lettuce out of our garden here, it wilts within a couple of hours. I don't want to know what the Californians did to that lettuce in a bag, but it must've been bad. And the lettuce isn't alone.

Large scale apple producers spray a finish onto their fruit to keep it looking shiny in the store. This paint washes off and goes down the drain all the way to the St. Laurence River, where it causes minnows to change gender and become infertile. What does it do to the kids who eat the apples?

Some people in Vancouver tried eating food grown within 100 miles of home. This was O.K. until they looked more closely at "local" crab's legs. Although they'd been caught in B.C. they'd been flown to China for processing and then shipped back for sale, a journey of 20,000km. Buying local, in season and packaging ourselves (canning, freezing & drying) keeps the mileage down on dinner.

**Pollute less**

Plenty of people've been talking a lot about this so I'll cut to the chase. We have to take control and recycle everything 100%. Ourselves. The technology's there; the political will isn't. Individual sanity must replace corporate greed.

There you are, folks. **Share what we have, Truth to power, Eat local and Pollute less.** That's what we try to do out here, anyway.

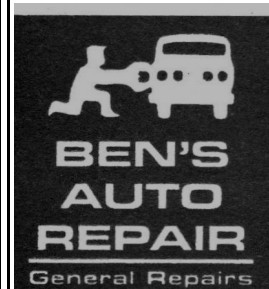
All the best from the bush, Charlie

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by Charlie Johnson

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# CRAFTS...from the bush

Beaded Pin Bracelet

by little bear

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Everyone who saw the quill bracelets I made last month wanted one! I've made quite a few since then and one night, as I looked at my dwindling supply of Porcupine Quills, I remembered all the beads I had in the cupboard. It is impossible for me to throw away beads so I've always got a selection of "too few" beads. They are, however, perfect for this project and I've had great fun finding combinations of beads that appeal to me.

There will be a bunch of them available for purchase at Stitches & Treasures by the time you are reading this. I am always telling the people who say "I can't make things" that, without them, there would be no room to sit down at my home! We all have different talents and abilities. I am, for example, absolutely in awe of the area Quilters, Spinners & Weavers. It is mind boggling to me that they are able to commit to such long term projects! So if you can't make it just buy one!

If you have some time to sit, and are able to do it, here are the basic instructions for making a Pin Bracelet along with a couple of photos. I edge bead the hide ends and have found some old buttons to use as clasps.

## SUPPLIES

You will need sharp scissors, a bracelet clasp or flat bead and 105 small safety pins for full bracelet or 55 for half

Sufficient seed beads and/or bugle beads for full bracelet or half bracelet.

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

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

**Collect** your supplies and set out your beads in two or three saucers.

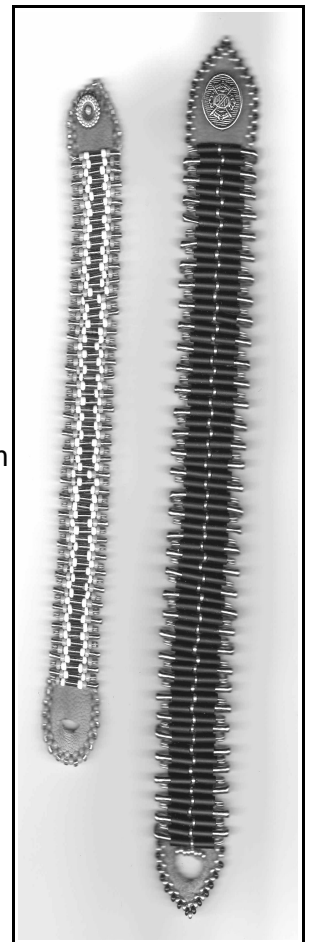
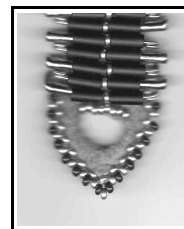
**Experiment** with the look by putting five or six finished pins (\*alternating them one with the head up and the next with the tail up) onto your strip of hide, ribbon or elastic. By alternating the direction of the pin your bracelet will remain straight up and down.

After finding a pleasing pattern **just make a bunch** and put them on the bracelet base.

**Complete** enough pins to go around the wrist partially or fully.



**The clasp**, as you can see on the close up photo on the right, is simply a small button hole cut to fit the bead or button sewn on the other end. I also make them with a loop of beads as shown on the left. If you are using ribbon I suggest finishing the end with the loop. If you are using elastic just sew raw edges together when you've reached the right size.



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# ...from the cave

The Silver Moccasin

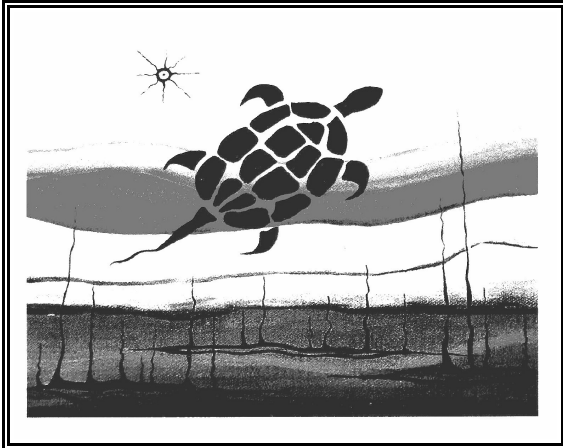
by little bear

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About the time I was having to say goodbye to working with chemically tanned hides, Connie Boyd, a longtime Cobalt resident, was organizing her store "The Silver Moccasin" at 38 Silver Street in Cobalt. I had an opportunity recently to talk with Connie about her endeavors and was overwhelmed with the beautiful things she has collected in the space.

When I asked about her reason for opening a store devoted to Native Arts & Crafts Connie explained that there were, in fact, no other stores specializing in her type of products in the area and that she knew there was a client base. Connie gained valuable experience during her time with Country Born Artisans. Her skills in purchasing and display are evident throughout the store and there are samples of Connie's own work as well.



Here are two of her paintings made accessible as "all occasion" cards. I am limited by our "gray scale" format and, although you can't see her vibrant colours in these examples, the grace and style come through.



A wide variety of cards, rock paintings and framed original art are on display by Connie and several other artists. The sculptures, wall hangings, natural objects and one of a kind items will provide area residents and tourists alike with unlimited gift ideas for all occasions! I especially like the bears....

Connie explained that, on the business side of things, she received much needed assistance through the Service Canada "Self Employment Program" as well as Aboriginal Business Canada. The knowledge gained and financial boost provided have allowed her to set up a firm foundation from which "The Silver Moccasin" can evolve. No stranger to retail management, Connie knows it will take some time for people to find her tucked into her cozy spot just south of Cornmeal's Restaurant in Cobalt and it is my hope that people who appreciated Little Bear Crafts will find the Silver Moccasin a great addition to the area.

Connie's easy to reach by calling **679-5353**, by visiting **38 Silver Street in Cobalt** during business hours and by finding her site on line at **shop@silvermoccasin.com**.

Oh, one more thing...she has lots of moccasins, too!

Happy Shopping....from the cave.

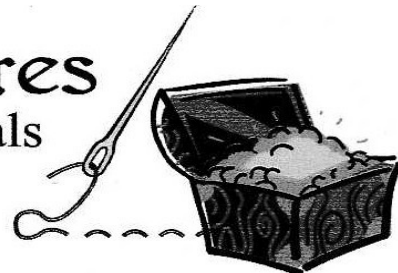
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# Herbs & Recipes...from the bush

## **Fiddlehead & Ham Casserole**

from Linda Gauthier's copy of Earthy Delights Recipes

Spring is the time for cleaning. We air out the home, wash the windows, clean out the garage and the basement and generally shake off the dust of winter. The foods of early spring, high in minerals and full of nutrients, are also great cleansers for our bodies. I strongly recommend that people wait for spring to do cleansing fasts, herbal cleansers and general detoxing of their bodies. Since toxins leaving the body cause stress on our systems (kidneys & liver especially) it isn't wise to start that process until Spring weather has us outside, cleaning & breathing the fresh air of a new growing season. Spring foods like early nettles, asparagus and fiddleheads are rich in the nutrients we need to clean out our own cobwebs as we dust the corners of the basement. The following recipe is similar to one of our staple meals here. I like those one pot dinners!

### **FIDDLEHEAD & HAM CASSEROLE**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

4 tbsp. butter  
4 tbsp flour  
2 cups milk  
½ tsp sea salt  
1 tbsp parsley -chopped  
1 tsp chives -chopped  
1 ½ cups ham -chopped & cooked  
3 cups fresh fiddleheads  
                    -steamed til cooked but still crisp  
                    buttered bread crumbs

#### **PREPARATION**

Make a smooth white sauce of the butter, flour, milk and salt.  
Add the parsley and chives to the sauce.

**In a casserole**, alternate layers of ham, cooked fiddleheads, and white sauce until the dish is filled.

**Complete** it with a layer of the white sauce on top and cover with the buttered bread crumbs.

**Bake** at 350 degrees F until the sauce is bubbling and the crumbs are brown..30 minutes or so.

**ENJOY!**

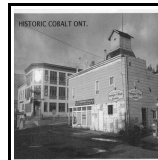


Fiddleheads are a great source of nutrients, of course, but they are also a great reason to spend time exploring the wild places.

We are so lucky to live in a part of the world where it is still possible to harvest the wild foods of our First Peoples.

It may be possible to find fiddleheads on the menu at **Cornmeals** so here are the **Summer Hours** now in effect.

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# OPINIONS from the Bush

ethanol revisited

by A. Buschmann

**The other day**, we heard about the major food crisis now going on in the world. So far this month, there've been food riots in Egypt, Haiti, Indonesia and Ivory Coast, among others. India, which normally supplies 30% of the world's rice, has stopped exports of rice except for the high end Basmati variety.

The prices of rice and wheat have doubled in the last little while, which has forced the medium poor people to cut out one of their meals in the day. Even more of the very poor are dying of starvation. The World Bank has noticed. Its chairman has called for \$500 million to be made available to the World Food Program. At the most recent meeting of the World Bank, one of the ministers attending is quoted as saying "Bio-fuel is a crime against humanity."

I agree with that thought. There can be no doubt that diverting grain to ethanol production has caused a price increase in all grains. Sure, there are other factors as well, such as crop failures and changes in farming practices, but the simple rules of supply and demand make the results of any such diversion very clear. Less grain means higher price. It doesn't matter that the preferred grain for ethanol is corn, the price increase overlaps onto wheat and rice. That's why their prices have doubled, too, and why two thirds of the world is now in trouble.

I'd like to make a brief summary of the facts about ethanol as I know them.

◆Ethanol has 60% of the fuel value of gasoline.

◆The automobile engine is not designed to use ethanol as a fuel.

◆The Federal Government's own scientists at the National Research Center have shown that ethanol is less efficient and makes more greenhouse gases than gasoline.

◆It takes 3 bushels of good quality corn to make one U.S. gallon of ethanol. At the present legislated level of 15% ethanol in the gas at Ontario pumps, every fill-up means I've added 3 bushels of good corn to the tank. I wonder how many families that would feed.

◆I strongly suspect, and local farmers will know, that more gasoline or diesel fuel is used in making those three bushels of corn than the one gallon of ethanol they create.

◆Ontario cannot produce enough ethanol to meet the legislated level, so it is imported from the U.S.

The reasoning behind the politicians' decision to replace some of our gasoline with other people's food is beyond me.

I suppose it's consistent with the decision to feed the third world's fish catch to our pigs and our farmed salmon & tuna while leaving the people without cheap protein. I can choose to eat organic pork and leave the salmon and tuna tins alone, but when they force me to burn other people's tortillas and bread in my truck, I get mad.

I often wonder, as I try hard to live right, if the people making these decisions ever think about their own children or grandchildren.

They show no sign of it.

At least at's my opinion, A Buschmann

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

**After** I'd written and digested my article predicting the imminent demise of five billion people, I was a little depressed. "What's the point of it all?" I was thinking. Then a Zen Bhuddist story came to my mind, A monk was out walking one day when he came face to face with a man-eating tiger. He turned to run away, but saw he was trapped between the tiger and a precipice with a raging torrent at the bottom. Just then, he spotted a beautifully ripe strawberry. 'How nice' he thought and ate it. I'm sure all you Zen Bhuddists out there are busy clapping away with one hand at that little gem.

My point is better made by the next story, a true one that I saw on TV before we left town. A church choir in the Mid West somewhere held their practice on a Wednesday night at 7.30 pm. They were all very keen singers and usually showed up well before then, so the church janitor would open up the hall at 7.00, go home and come back later to lock up. One night, there was a gas leak at the church that blew up at 7.28pm, made a terrible mess and would have killed anyone inside. It just so happened that every single member of the choir was unavoidably late that night so the hall, instead of being full of people, was empty. Some maybe couldn't get off the phone, perhaps others were held up at a railroad crossing or had a minor traffic accident. I suppose it's true what the film star said about Las Vegas: "Nobody dies here who isn't supposed to."

I saw an inspirational calendar this year that opened with this thought. "Nothing is beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies beyond the will of God." Hey, I can relate to that. After all, I try to end my every prayer with "Thy Will, not mine, be done." After all what do I know really?

At one point in my spiritual journey, I believed that if I only had the 'right' woman in my life, everything would be fine. A sort of Goddess worship I suppose. I fell in and out of love on a regular basis until I heard someone say "God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him." Since my attempts had been less than successful, I paid attention to this and sat back and waited. The women around me were suddenly a lot safer and my trips to the looney bin got a lot fewer. By the time Linda showed up in my life, I was saying things like "If I can be a better agent of Yours, God, with a partner, then send her along. If not, we'll keep on working together, no problem."

The truth of the whole thing is simply this. None of us really know what is going on here on the grand scale; politicians, climatologists, whatever. My experience has been that if I try to do the right thing, then my own personal Higher Power will fill in the gaps that my human-ness inevitably makes. When all is said and done, He or She sees the big picture, certainly I don't. Asteroid or desert? God's problem. Right or wrong today? Hey, that I can do!

The choices continue, Charlie



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