

THE LONDON YODELLER

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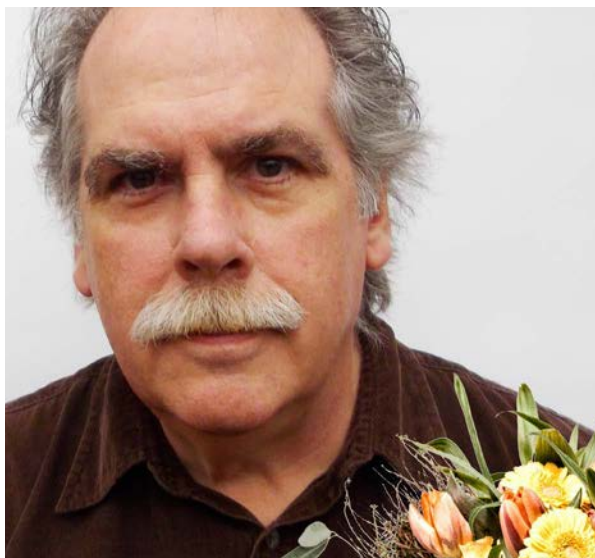
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Not to boast but my driving record is perfect

Herman Goodden

HERMANEUTICS



Shortly after my 16th birthday I did the expected thing and applied for a learner's driving permit. As part of that process I attended one lecture/slide show about the perils of driving and passed some sort of cursory exam where I had to identify road signs and answer questions about road safety. Next, like my three brothers before me and all of my friends, I was supposed to head out for a series of test drives with my dad sitting to my right giving pointers and support and then, when we felt I was ready, I would take the much more elaborate test and earn my driver's licence.

But it was at that point that I did a most unexpected thing. I did nothing. I didn't head out in the family sedan for a single test drive. I let that learner's permit lapse and have never applied for another one. I didn't want to drive because I didn't like machinery. I used to earn pocket money by cutting neighbour's lawns with a whole range of finicky power mowers. I could operate all the machinery in industrial arts class without losing any digits or blinding myself. But I knew I lacked that affinity and fascination for machines and cars that most boys seem to develop. And figuring I'd be a mediocre and inattentive driver at best – the kind of lug who'd clog up the roads and get in everybody's way - I decided to do the world a really big favour and not become a driver.

The only times I've ever regretted my decision were when our kids were really young and required a lot of ferrying about or more recently when my wife and I head out on extended treks on our own and all the driving falls to her. "My God, I wish you'd learned to drive," she's been known to mutter on such occasions. Though perhaps not uttered as often, I've also heard her say, when watching me ride my bicycle on rainy days with umbrella held aloft or trying to get a strange coffee-maker to work, "Man, I'm glad you don't drive." Anyway, the die was cast long ago and around the time of my 60th birthday I actually entertained the possibility that maybe I'd be one of those lucky folks who made it through life without ever being in a car crash.

Well, earlier this year, on a gorgeous May afternoon heading north through the intersection of Ridout at Baseline (just outside the childhood home of my friend Roger Baker) our number came up. My wife was in the driver's seat of our Toyota Matrix. I was in the suicide seat which might have been all too aptly named if my wife hadn't sharply swerved left as a woman accelerated her way through the red light heading west, clipping the rear panel on our right side with sufficient force that she all but took off the back bumper and sent us spinning 180 degrees clockwise in the middle of Ridout Street so that we ended up facing south.

We were incredibly lucky. There were at least four other cars within our pretty immediate radius and none of them got swept up into our melee. A wonderfully thoughtful man in a pickup truck pulled over, gave us his name and number if we needed him to act as a witness and instructed us in our scatterbrained state of shock about what we needed to do right now – ie: get our car off the road, exchange information with the other driver who had now pulled over and was making her sheepish way over to talk with us

and then get ourselves out to the accident reporting centre. This was news to me. I expected that accident participants should stay put until the police came to them and straightened everything out but those days are gone. Some old family friends happened upon the scene about five minutes after the collision, recognized us and stopped to help us arrange for a tow truck to cart our car out to the centre and then take it on to a repair shop.

Physically all the accident participants were fine and remain so half a year later. Though our car was pretty mashed up, the accident's impact on our own corporeal frames was no worse than what we quite enjoy experiencing on the Dodge 'Em cars at the Western Fair. ("That was fun. Let's go smash into somebody else.") The airbags didn't deploy. The car's alignment seemed

to hold. There was no leakage under the chassis, no geyser of steam belching out of the hood. The car's CD player even continued to play Cecil Armstrong Gibbs' Lyric Sonata, Op. 63, for violin and piano without a skip or lurch; the music's unflappable serenity providing a sweet counterpoint to our own adrenaline-saturated nerves.

And the other driver, our accident's perpetrator, couldn't have been nicer or more abjectly apologetic. She confessed to her wrongdoing right away, her insurance policy was up to date and had just been renewed the day before and all was fixed and paid for within a few weeks. Perhaps as an explanation of how she could've been so inattentive as to run a red light, she speculated that perhaps the abundance of four way stops in that neighbourhood had lulled her into a routine of coming to a stop, letting that car go through, now you proceed . . . "I know it's no excuse," she said. "I should have been paying attention but perhaps that's what I was thinking . . . or not thinking."

My heart went out to her. She was just the kind of driver I would've been.

Our friends dropped me off at home where I got to work cooking for a dinner party we were hosting that evening. My wife was out at the accident reporting centre at the same time as the lady who smashed into us and as they were concluding their business, she enquired whether my wife needed a ride home.

"It's very sweet of you to offer," my wife replied, "But I think I'll get a cab."

The editor is IN
and fielding your questions...
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It's a Cat Fight to Defend the Honour of Mayor Ford

Mary Lou Ambrogio

political heat

That's it! I'm throwing down the gauntlet and am publicly challenging Megan Walker to a duel over Rob Ford's honour.

He doesn't seem to have a lot left so it shouldn't take but a moment. Turn and draw Ms Walker!

Rob Ford is no paragon of virtue nor is he the kind of innocent that Knights of old were duty bound to protect but still there are some deeper principles present in the Battle of Rob Ford that are worthy of defending. Bob Metz has aptly described the chaos

surrounding the embattled Mayor as "Mob Rule without the rules," so first and foremost there is the rule of law, an important principle in a liberal democracy. Secondary issues include questions of double standards and a fair process. Even among the criminal class there is an expectation of an even-handed process that will result in a fair outcome as captured in the phrase, "fair cop".

Before daring to defend Ford publicly, I'll give the obligatory qualifier and acknowledge that the man is the maker of much of his own misery and I don't condone drug use, drunk driving or inappropriate language.

But, is anyone surprised that a right of centre fiscal conservative who could win an election for Mayor of Toronto while running on a mandate to stop the abuse of taxpayer money, might also be a stubborn and bloody-minded individual? Only a scrappy street fighter could enter the fray in the first place.

Conservatives who say they like his fiscal policies but would prefer to have a more genteel warrior carrying their flag into battle, are deluding themselves if they think that such a person exists. Assuming the existence of this perfect person, they'd likely be rendered ineffective before they'd even finished tying their laces, let alone left the starting line. Let's at least admit that the individuals whose fiefdoms Ford's policies threatened, made him a target well before the race for Mayor was concluded. Not many would have had the stomach to begin or end this fight.

Speaking of stomach, the left like to decry the loss of civility in politics and yet in the case of Ford (or any conservative) they are the first to get personal and ugly. The constant references to Ford's weight and all the fat jokes, were they about anyone on the other side of the political divide would constitute a national crisis which would have the NDP demanding that the federal government take action to invoke a National anti-bullying strategy.

Ford has acknowledged that he's battled his weight all his life. The mind boggles at the ease with which Ford's enemies pull out the ad hominem instead of sticking to facts. Even before the nasty words have left their mouths, they know this kind of attack is unfair so they attempt to frame the nastiness in a more palatable manner by psychoanalyzing Ford and suggesting that his weight problem is an outward manifestation of a lack of discipline. Everyone knows that a weight problem suggests someone who gives in too easily to their base appetites, right?

I don't know about base but I do believe he's a simple man capable of doing rudimentary math and the members of Ford Nation love him for it. To state the obvious, Toronto is a big city with infinite needs but finite resources, hence why some believe that the best person for the job is someone who can do simple math.

Too often the case against Ford is heavy with innuendo and light on proven, relevant facts and Walker has not been an exception in her public comments about Ford. She makes baseless assertions which in the end leave us with very little of substance to chew on and I'd say this is less about Ford the man and more about an aversion to his brand of politics.

This is after-all, the woman who told CJBK radio host Andy Oudman earlier this year, "What we want to do is basically try to fundamentally end patriarchy and oppression around the world".

Huh? What patriarchy? You mean the one where more girls than boys are graduating from university? The one where women under 30 are out-earning their male counterparts? The one where the suicide rate among men is three times higher than that of women? The comparative statistics in many categories are dire for men. If this is the patriarchy powerful men have designed for themselves, they

aren't very good at it and they'd probably do well to ask an expert like Walker for assistance in learning how to game the system in their favour.

Ford may lack guile but she personifies it. Who else could have so masterfully hijacked the one and only month that was finally set aside for men? Does anyone else find it odd that "Mo-vement", a month meant to bring awareness to men's health issues, has now been completely emasculated and will henceforth be just another month when men must tone it down and share the purple spotlight?

Far too often during this media circus, allegations against Mayor Ford have been disproven but still get repeated in subsequent media coverage. In a fair fight, it is common practice to use descriptors such as "alleged" or "purportedly" but somehow for Ms Walker and the rest of the Ford haters, it is not necessary to qualify one's assertions.

During what has come to be known as "Ass-gate", wherein competing Mayoral candidate Sarah Thompson accused Ford of grabbing her backside, it was discovered that Ms Thompson had attempted to set the Mayor up. He didn't take the bait and in the end (pardon the pun), Thompson admitted her skullduggery and Ford was vindicated. Megan Walker however continued to refer to this event in a manner that suggested that Ford was guilty, adding to it another lie about Ford having been charged with uttering death threats and assaulting his wife.

When a caller to Oudman's show made the point that there was no evidence of the alleged crime, Walker's very weak retort was, "Well, we don't have any evidence that it didn't happen either". Just like that she turned the concept of 'innocent until proven guilty' upside down on its head.

The left is infamous for cloaking their actions behind a hazy veil of do-gooderism and those like Ford who insist on lifting the veil and exposing the do-gooders for their paucity of good results, invariably earn the wrath of these gentle tyrants and their fellow ideologues in the media.

I suspect that Ms Walker's real objection to Rob Ford is that he is that rare politician who is willing to expose the special interest groups who have been making themselves fat on the taxpayers' dime and if you're like me, that's the only kind of fat you're interested in talking about.

dappled things Ford Derangement Syndrome

Paula Adamick

Well, hi-fives all around. The politician who's been so annoying to lefties in Toronto newsrooms appears to have been squashed at long last. In the name of 'truth' and 'justice' a media anvil has been dropped on a pesky puppy who never seemed to know his proper place in the municipal scheme of things.

The question now is: will Rob Ford survive FDS – Ford Derangement Syndrome?

Modelled after PDS – Palin Derangement Syndrome which, like BDS (Bush Derangement Syndrome) spread through many parts of Liberal America in the presidential race of 2008 – this mental illness has been endemic in places like Manhattan and Hollywood where the mere mention of certain names causes liberals to foam at the mouth like Pavlovian dogs.

Take Martin Bashir who, just days ago, lashed out at Sarah Palin with a rant described as the most disgraceful ever against the former Alaska governor.

Besides calling her 'America's resident dunce', Bashir suggested that someone should defecate in her mouth and urinate in her eyes.

"We end this week in the way it began – with America's resident dunce, Sarah Palin, scraping the barrel of her long deceased mind, and using her all-time favorite analogy in an attempt to sound intelligent about the national debt," said MSNBC's Bashir, who gained fame in the UK with his sensational 1995 interview with Princess Diana.

The Palin comment that so roiled him? "Our free stuff today is being paid for by taking money from our children, and borrowing from China. When that note comes due ... it's going to be like slavery."

Though there are many economists who would agree with her, that was too much for Bashir: "It'll be like slavery," he sneered. "Given her well-established reputation as a world class idiot, it's hardly surprising that she should choose to mention slavery in a way that is abominable to anyone who knows anything about its barbaric history."

Bashir was forced to apologize, but he keeps his job. Unlike Ford, who apologized and also kept his job ... but just, and in name only.

But that's FDS for you. Barbaric.

And this time, the disorder, emanating primarily from the Toronto Star newsroom and infecting the tonier sections of Toronto, has gone global ish. That is, it has spread breathlessly from CTV to CNN, CBS and late-night talk shows to Comedy Central where Jon Stewart has been treating the Ford story as comedy gold.

That won't last, of course. Now that the Toronto mayor has been stripped of most of his powers by a politically correct city council which felt they must rein in this global embarrassment, it is expected the Ford Brothers will soon slip out of TV news line-ups and off the front pages.

But will they?

Will the reassurances of fellow politicians vying for attention by denouncing the mayor and demonstrating how much they 'care' about voters be enough? Will they ever recognize, particularly blinkered news editors and editorialists, the other elephant in the room?

That is, the potential for real backlash which, in Canada, would be unprecedented. Still unable to understand the 'Ford Nation' or why Ford beat their candidate, the drug-familiar George Smitherman, they appear incapable of comprehending the mayor's popularity or what that popularity is *really* about.

It's *that* aspect of the Rob Ford story that may yet sting the smug elitists who populate North American newsrooms.

What they don't seem to get is that the Ford Nation is feeling 'played'. Rightly or wrongly, the Ford Nation senses their guy is being purposefully and viciously attacked and that it's *personal*. And the result could be a substantial backlash.

Call it a feud between downtown 416 and suburban 905. How else to explain the huge outpouring of support for Ford when he had the unmitigated gall to attend the CFL final between the Hamilton Ti-cats and his beloved Toronto Argos, in which his team lost? How else to explain the street interviews by reporters visibly frustrated by the apparent 'dimness' of 905-ers who still back Ford. "Are they THAT stupid?" they harrumph.

What they don't seem to *get* is what Ford supporters think and feel: that is, though their guy messed up personally and may be obtuse with media, he has *not* been wasting their money on feel-good liberal causes. To them, liberal 416-ers are hypocrites who, for decades, have been falsely assuming the moral high ground, wasting their money with impunity on endless boondoggles, lightly treating the moral foibles of liberal politicians if at all, and looking down their noses at non-liberal voters as too stupid to know what's good for them. All without any consequence to themselves.

And if their palpable glee over the cancellation of **the** Ford brothers' single episode Ford Nation news magazine on SunTV November 18 is anything to go by, that assumption continues.

Commenting on the Fords' hour-long TV show, liberal commentator Warren Kinsella described the brothers as 'dead men walking'. Was that fair comment or typical of the liberal hope that the Fords disappear? And fast?

Time will tell.

What's obvious is that Ford supporters deeply resent the media malice they feel is aimed towards their guy who behaved like a flawed, inept but sincere human being rather than a media-trained cyborg mouthing a script by handlers. They see liberal media as exploiting their positions and power to shape the news and influence opinion and determine its outcome. They see them as peddling a line, promoting an ideology, acting as press officers for the favoured and as inquisitors for the unfavoured. In other words, knowing more and knowing better than the average schmuck in the suburbs who goes to work, pays his bills and fights ever harder to make sense of the liberal world he's been dumped into.

As to where this will go, who knows?

What we *do* know is this: regardless of his foibles and missteps, Rob Ford is a scrapper who doesn't give up or give in. And if he's still around next October, expect to hear loud support for him from the Toronto rim along with their contempt for his opponents who they regard as a bullying pack of wolves whose personal lives wouldn't withstand the same public scrutiny their guy has been subjected to.



Original photo by Shawn Merritt

'Tis the Season for Giving at City Hall

Barry Wells

Since I've been assailed in some quarters for being too critical of our civic leaders at 300 Dufferin over the years, I've decided to soften my approach during the 2013 Christmas season. After all, who among us is perfect and undeserving of a temporary reprieve, a little holiday cheer?

With this in mind I've suggested a variety of Christmas gifts for each of our 15 members of London city council.

MAYOR JOE FONTANA: During his first term as chief magistrate, Mayor Joe's had a bumpy ride. Unable to sell London Hydro from under us in Sept. 2011 and soon to be tried (trial date to be set Dec. 10) on three criminal charges stemming from 2005 when he was a Liberal MP ~ fraud under \$5,000, breach of trust and uttering a forged document ~ Joe's re-election chances are iffy. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A donation to Mayor Joe's favourite "charity." But remember, if you donate to his rejigged non-profit, Trinity Global Support Foundation, don't expect a tax-deductible receipt since Canada Revenue Agency revoked its charitable registration status earlier this year.

WARD 1 COUN. BUD POLHILL: An auto mechanic by day and hot-rod guy by night, Bud's never seen a set of lug nuts he didn't want to tighten. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A gift certificate for Bud and his wife Hazel from the famous Billy T's Tap & Grill at 1600 Highbury Ave. North. In 2014, the devoted couple will be celebrating 51 years of blessed marriage.

WARD 2 COUN. BILL ARMSTRONG: Bill's been fighting like a pitbull for a noise attenuation barrier ~ preferably a brick wall ~ for east-enders living along Veteran's Memorial Parkway, with mixed results. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** The 11th studio album by Pink Floyd, The Wall, featuring the hit songs, Another Brick in the Wall, Parts 1, 2 and 3. Go retro, go vinyl.

WARD 3. COUN. JOE SWAN: Dubbed Joe Swantana™ by yours truly a few years ago in recognition of his outstanding work as Fontana's obedient wing man, Swantana has evolved into a first-rate apple polisher and master of the homily and platitude. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A shoe-shine kit complete with boot black and buff cloth.

WARD 4 COUN. STEVE ORSER: Known as "Din-Din Boy" to his growing fan club, Steve is well-known for giving taxpayer-funded fridge magnets and City of London umbrellas to constituents standing at bus stops in the rain. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A new junk truck for 2014.

WARD 5 COUN. JONI BAECHLER: Nicknamed the Velvet Hammer™ 13 years ago by media wag Butch McLarty, Joni knows her stuff and is a formidable opponent. If she ran for mayor, she'd win by a landslide. Alas, she'll likely be the best mayor we never had. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A set of brass knuckles to use on Swantana.

WARD 6 COUN. NANCY BRANSCOMBE: Two-term Nancy is the only council member who's announced she won't be seeking re-election in 2014. Bright and ambitious, she wants to replace Liberal MPP Deb Matthews in London North-Centre. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** An 8-by-10 glossy of Cheryl Miller tossing Tim Hudak under the campaign bus.

WARD 7 COUN. MATT BROWN: Teacher Matt Brown, always bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, has had an excellent first term on council and is rumoured to be sniffing around the mayor's swivel chair. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A steel pry bar from Copp's Bulldozer.

WARD 8 COUN. PAUL HUBERT: Accused of sticking his "snout" into Ward 4 affairs by Steve Orser, Paul is doing a bang-up job on the board of the Old East Village Business Improvement Area, a seat Orser foolishly refused to take in 2010. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A succulent Honey-Bee Ham.

WARD 9 COUN. DALE HENDERSON: Rookie councillor Henderson is a go-fast business whiz who often appears frustrated during snorefest meetings. An electrical engineer by trade, he's admitted to having trouble finding the washrooms at city hall, until a janitor told him they're in the same spot on every floor. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A hot-water bottle and pillow combo from Phantastica on Dundas.

WARD 10 COUN. PAUL VAN MEERBERGEN: Paul is a no-nonsense, bottom-line type guy. He likes hard municipal services such as roads, curbs, gutters, sewers and bridges, including the historic Blackfriars Bridge. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** Complimentary tickets to Orchestra London and the Grand Theatre.

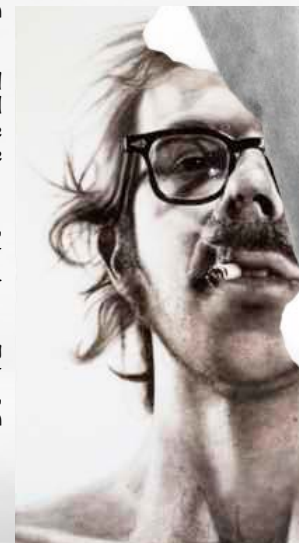
WARD 11 COUN. DENISE BROWN: Denise appears to have regained the bounce in her step since she left Aboutown Transportation Limited after more than two decades in corporate sales. Good for her. Now she's a consultant for SDI Builders Limited on Riverside Drive. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** Cab vouchers from London Yellow Taxi.

WARD 12 COUN. HAROLD USHER: Mr. Sensational is obviously proud of his Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal mentioned on his website. Like several other council members, it's unfortunate he had to nominate himself to receive the hardware. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A framed certificate of merit from the Dollar Store.

WARD 13 COUN. JUDY BRYANT: Downtown Judy is a big fan of the arts, culture and urban design. Never one to be drawn into the unseemly spats that often develop at council, Judy maintains a stiff upper lip during the mud-slinging. Pity. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A box of tea bags and gingerbread cookies.

WARD 14 COUN. SANDY WHITE: After landing in the soup for using a "bad word" during a council meeting, Sandbox Sandy landed on her feet during a subsequent media conference on the doorsteps of city hall. Recently, she only lost becoming the chair of planning committee to Joni Baechler by an 8-7 vote. **SUGGESTED GIFT:** A copy of the Planning Act

yodelling in the canyon



The Yodeller Interview with Salim Mansur Continues

Mary Lou Ambrogio

Salim Mansur teaches in the department of political science at Western University in London, Ontario. Salim is a journalist, author, Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute and Vice President of Muslims Facing Tomorrow and is frequently called upon for his expertise in foreign affairs.

He is the author of *Islam's Predicament: Perspectives of a Dissident Muslim* and *Delectable Lie: A liberal repudiation of multiculturalism*.

In Part One of our interview, Salim surveyed the history of Islam and its impact on the world. In Part Two the focus shifts to Canada, Quebec and London.

Q: Seeing things like "Islamic History Month" in Canada, it all sounds very nice but when you look at the people and organizations who are involved with this, I think there's cause for concern. For example groups like Islamic Circle of North America, Muslim Association of Canada, etc.

A: If you ask the average person on the street about this, they would have no concerns and no idea of a problem. The mainstream media doesn't tell any negative stories about these groups you mention. Naturally, every institution and every organization everywhere tries to put forward its best face, and that is how these groups will be reported. So the selling of Islamic History month is something that is supported with money, some from abroad especially after 9/11, and the mainstream media in Canada readily reports the stories without any critical perspective. Those Muslims who know the darker reality of Islamic history – for instance, Muslim thinkers of the past now being celebrated were abused and hounded by Muslim fundamentalists in their time just as Muslim thinkers in our time who oppose "Official" Islam are hounded, abused, and even killed – will be excluded by these organizations and the Canadian public will be served up an airbrushed version of history as propaganda.

Q: A few years ago we had an event on freedom of speech with you, Kathy Shaidle and Ezra Levant. In your speech, you talked about when, as a result of the quashing of open debate, the lights went out across the Muslim world. Was that the time that Ijtihad or independent thinking officially closed or ended?

A: It's a complex history but technically, "Official Islam" representing Muslims in power and Muslim religious authority agreed some time around the eleventh century of the Christian era that the foundation and structure of Islamic law (the Shariah) had been worked out and that there could no longer be any room for independent thinking on the subject. Since then anyone questioning Shariah, or relying on independent thinking to propose reform, or disagreeing with "Official Islam's" interpretation on the life and traditions of the Prophet, was silenced, and that's how the lights of independent thinking and reasoning started to go out. The people holding power have been, as in the Muslim world, shutting the lights off – which means no more free thinking is allowed. Free thinking means both right and wrong ideas get to be expressed. In an open society, the wrong answers and erroneous ideas are liable to be corrected via free discussions. But when free and open discussion is prohibited or penalized, the erroneous ideas are simply pushed under the surface, and there they fester and poison the society from below. And even worse is when wrong ideas, ideas that are hurtful and damaging to the positive evolution of people and society, prevail through coercion of those holding them in power, and over time this invariably brings ruin. This is what occurred in the Muslim world. It occurred in Spain with the Inquisition, and Spain fell behind other European states that embraced the ideas of Enlightenment. It occurred in Russia when the Communists took power and ultimately brought ruin for all Russians. And these examples are warnings for all of us in a society, such as Canada, of the damage done when free speech is coercively prohibited for whatever reason.

Q: What are your thoughts on the Quebec Charter of Values? There seem to be competing principles there.

A: It's a very complicated situation. On one level there's the question of the freedom to maintain one's religious beliefs, and this is a core value of a liberal democratic society. There can be no freedom if individuals cannot freely practice their religion, maintain their values openly and freely. In liberal democracy no authority has the right to impose or shame or punish or coerce the feelings and beliefs of an individual. Along with freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, and in Canada these freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution, there is the right of how a person wishes to be seen in the public, of the right to dress in keeping with their religious values. Hence, according to the proposed Charter of Values any religious symbol or dress that has a religious significance will not be allowed to be worn in public by those in public service is very disturbing, and this naturally has generated a lot of resistance within Quebec among people who see the Charter as a breach of the core values of liberal democracy.

But on another level we also need to understand that the Quebec government, fairly or unfairly it will be argued, is trying to address a serious problem and that is the situation with those Muslim women going about fully veiled, faces covered, in public. How does the society at large, even a liberal democratic society, accommodate this segment of the population, women attired in burqa or niqab (the full face covered dress)? How do you recognize that person, how do you establish the person's identity, how do you provide service to or receive service from such a person who is incognito? At the end it is also a question of security, of how does a society such as ours, more or less open, free, liberal

and secular, allow an individual not to be identified in public? This is a very significant question, and certainly within North America, Quebec is the only jurisdiction that is openly striving to deal with this problem.

Quebec's previous Liberal government tried to pass a bill to ban the burqa without success. There was the effort initiated by the same government to work out some sort of "reasonable accommodation." But there was no satisfactory resolution found to the problem. Now Quebec under a Parti Quebecois government has taken the proposed measures to deal with the problem under its Charter of Values. Quebec is also somewhat unique within Canada. The Conservative government in Ottawa under Stephen Harper recognized Quebec as a nation. What makes Quebec a nation? The answer is Quebec's distinct French language and culture. This means Quebec is a far more cohesive and clearly defined society, thus different from other provinces within the Canadian federation. Quebec's citizens value their nationhood, take pride in their cohesiveness as a society and though this generates some negative feelings outside of the province yet inside Quebec there is a sense shared by the majority that Quebec must maintain this cohesive identity if they are not to lose their language and culture within the larger North American reality.

Quebec has a history about this struggle. Canada is officially bilingual to accommodate Quebec's linguistic reality. But Quebec passed Bill 101 restricting the rights of English-speaking citizens of Quebec, and many left as a result. I believe the PQ would like to make this Charter of Values an issue by insisting they are defending Quebec's cohesiveness. And when English Canada berates and criticizes Quebec, belittles Quebec's nationalist sentiment by denouncing it as ethnic nationalism and xenophobia, then such disapproval only benefits the politics of PQ and its ultimate goal of winning a snap referendum for separation from Canada. Moreover, Quebec values its historical and cultural links to France. France has banned the burqa and the niqab, so Quebec thinks it is right to do what France has done.

As an immigrant society Canada is open to accommodating immigrants; but Canadians also need to ask the question, doesn't the host society have a right to demand immigrants also accommodate the culture of the host society? What is so wrong in expecting that "reasonable accommodation" can only work reasonably if both sides accommodate each other's expectations? There can be no "reasonable accommodation" if the host society does all the accommodating and immigrants do all the pushing of their cultural demands.

This is a discussion which English Canada is refusing to have due to its dogmatic attachment to Multiculturalism. Meanwhile, Official Islam is taking advantage of our liberal democracy. I have said not all cultures are equal, and the idea that all cultures are equal deserving of equal treatment embedded in the official doctrine of multiculturalism is untenable and a flawed idea. Quebec is a liberal democracy, but it is also assertive and free debate over an issue or problem that has been haunting liberal democratic societies since 9/11, the demands and threats from a culture, which emanates from the world of Islam and is incompatible with the values of liberal democracy. English Canada doesn't want to have this debate for the wrong reasons, and to denounce Quebec for going ahead with this debate is counter-productive.

Q: Given all of the news recently about young London boys going off to faraway lands to commit acts of terror, would it be reasonable to expect our local and national press to ask more pointed questions of the Muslim community and not accept, "We don't know", as an answer to questions about how these boys may have become radicalized?



A: I will say that it has been a spectacular failure on the part of the London media to inform Londoners – let me be charitable and say that probably our media has decided it has no role in educating the public on matters of public concern, particularly when it comes to public safety – on the nature of the real, or imminent, or proximate threat of home-grown terrorism emanating from within the Muslim community in the city. The story of young Muslim men from London found to be with al Qaeda-linked terrorists engaged in a terrorist attack inside Algeria in which they were killed was, and remains, a big story. It was not the first time that some Muslims from London were found to be involved in activities that linked them to terrorist organizations such as Hamas in Gaza, or connected with the former Libyan dictator Muammar Gadhafi. In other words, the London media failed to connect the dots, which then would have shed light on how young Muslim men were found either dead or in prison in North Africa due to their involvement with Muslim terrorists.

There is a global war being waged by radical Muslims, or Muslim extremists, or Islamists against freedom-loving Muslims, against Muslims who want to be part of the modern world and at peace among themselves and with their neighbours, and against the West. The most recent report from Public Safety, Government of Canada – 2013 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada – spells out in detail this war waged by Islamists, and the young Muslim men from London who set out for North Africa were engaged in this war on the side of the Islamists

against the West.

The bigger question that remains unanswered is, were these young Muslim men acting alone, or were they part of a larger network of radical Muslim activists in London with links to the diverse global network of al Qaeda? I believe that these young men, and others like them elsewhere in Canada, were drawn into the politics of "jihad" or "holy war," not merely by watching videos or reading material extolling "jihad", but also by older men or authority figures in their communities propagating the extremist politics of Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hizbullah, Saudi Wahhabism, Salafism, Talibanism, Khomeinism or some other variant of radical or extremist Islamism.

It is the responsibility of the media to probe deeper into these matters, to draw out links, stories, personalities, sources of funding, connecting the dots, etc. The Public Safety report spells out the imminent threat to Canadians from Muslim terrorists, and it is for the media to bring these matters of public concern to their reading and viewing public. But the disease of political correctness has turned the London media, or a part of it, into self-censorship, to engage in denial of the problem of home grown terrorism instead of putting the spot light on the problem and illuminating the problem for the public.

We need to be warned and to be alert, despite the failure of the London media in doing what is supposedly their job, that if young Muslim men from a Canadian city can be found engaged in terrorism half-way across the world, then they can also do the same right here, and that such attempts were planned in the recent past though very fortunately intercepted and broken by our security agencies.



pegg's world

Graphic Underground: London 1977 – 1990 – The flip side

Robert Pegg

According to London punk-scene catalyst Mike Niederman, there were three events that led up to the birth of our local punk movement in late 1977. As he notes in the catalogue to last fall's art exhibit *Graphic Underground: London 1977 – 1990*, the first was a three-night booking of English band, Eddie and the Hot Rods at Fryfogles in November. Second was the first punk concert at the Forest City Gallery featuring Toronto all-girl band The Curse a few weeks later. And the third was the first public appearance by Demics in Niederman's downtown studio around Christmas.

I'd been under the impression I had been there for all three events. But now that I have a 'printer's proof' of *Graphic Underground* in front of me, I realize I wasn't at Demics' legendary first gig. Turns out Niederman's studio was over top a shop on Dundas Street. That explains why I don't recall a 'riot' on Dundas afterwards. The show I attended was not long after in a third-floor



A book launch for *Graphic Underground* will be held at The APK, 347 Clarence Street, Saturday December 7th from 2:00 to 7 p.m. Rekidds will be spun by DJ Lucky Pete Lambert and What Wave Dave.

loft above the Trajectory Gallery on the long-gone Talbot block.

I know all this because gig posters for both shows are reproduced in the catalogue to *Graphic Underground*. I recognized the one that had lured me downtown that Friday night all those years ago. The address and date weren't the same. Missed it by two months.

But what's burned into my memory is climbing all those stairs, trying to get a view of the opening band - and seeing a buncha teenaged girls banging out a loud primal cover of 'You Really Got Me,' by The Kinks. Almost better than sex. They were *that* good. The band later became known as The Zellots. And if not for a photocopied poster stapled to a downtown telephone pole - likely torn down the next day - I would have missed it.

As Brian Lambert, curator of the McIntosh Gallery exhibit (but shown at the Forest City Gallery) notes - back then the only way for a punk band to advertise upcoming shows was to plaster the downtown with posters.

Posters were cheap and regardless of artistic talent, anyone could design one. Thankfully, here in London, many of our punk bands contained at least one artist

- or at least were friends with someone who was. And most of them lived downtown.

Downtown was an important factor in all this. As many contributors in the catalogue point out, London's punk scene in the late 1970s was a community of like-minded young people. This wasn't exactly anything new. In the 1960s, we had a visual-arts scene so strong it warranted a national reputation. In the 1980s, the scene was alternative music. For the past decade, the central thrust has been a healthy independent theatre scene. I've no idea what people were doing in the 1970s or '90s. Probably poetry or bowling. All indications are that the next big scene will be stand-up comedy or interpretive dance.

Lambert does a commendable job of putting all this into historical context. In a series of essays by himself, Niederman, various participants and scholarly types, it's clear that it wasn't just a matter of a shared interest in a particular kind of music and alcohol that fueled this downtown community. The two biggest influences on the style of posters from that seventeen-year period range from comic books and pop-culture to U.K. punk iconography, particularly the collage/ransom-note lettering style of Sex Pistols' artist Jamie Reid.

According to Dave and Rena O'Halloran, publishers of the zine *What Wave* and consultants on *Graphic Underground*, there were over 250 local bands performing in London over this period. As Lambert writes, "The result was an overwhelming production of graphic works related to the London music scene which makes it difficult to talk about the individual styles and idiosyncrasies of the many and varied artists."

You can say that again. The strongest posters are those of working artists like Niederman and Lyndon Andrews who designed for Uranus and Demics in the early days. In the later years, Chaz Vincent and his Beal art-school friends were prolific in both posters and zines. At *What Wave*, fellow 'Yodeller' Dave Clarke was resident artist. Then there are those done by the designated designer in the various bands. Scott Bentley, Pete Tangredi, Dan Rudbal, Kerry Piper, Paul Wootton to name a few. And Brian Lambert - who at the time performed with The Enemas and later Nach Dem Tode.

All in all, the catalogue to *Graphic Underground* contains the work of 87 artists represented in about 450 reproductions of posters and zine images - gratefully, all arranged in chronological order. Forty-seven photos from the period of band members and dancers in action - mostly taken by Bob Gliddon and Reg Quinton - bring the whole experience alive.

Due to the nature of gig poster-art, it's surprising that so many still exist. They were not created for posterity. They were made for the sole reason of catching your eye as you walked by and hopefully inspiring you to check out the band in question. Their 'best before' date was the one in big Letraset on that 8-by-11 inch/ten-cent library photocopy. As such they were the ultimate in disposable art. A day later, they would be ripped, ripped off or covered up by a poster for another band's next show.

All of which makes this catalogue a permanent validation for everyone involved. That what they did had value. The fact that it happened here of all places is especially important. As far as I know, London is the only town with a major gallery exhibition and book celebrating the poster art of our punk scene from thirty-five years ago. And isn't that just sooo us?

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Five Questions for Dallas Good of The Sadies

The Sadies have a strong local following and a history of fantastic shows here . . . Is there some sort of London magic happening here?

Well, we've been playing in London forever. Tony from Call The Office brought us to town in like, 1995 or '96. The band and music was very different then but he always supported us. Not so much the case everywhere. Tony and Grooves and that hamburger/falafel stand that's always open . . . That would be the 'some sort of London magic happening' of which you speak.

You guys have backed some top notch artists from Andre Williams to Neko Case, John Doe and Jon Spencer. Do you have a favourite collaboration?

We spent a couple days rehearsing with Mike Nesmith but nothing came of it. That was really fun but they are all fun. We don't collaborate for any other reason . . . well, fun and hopefully saving the world, as was the case with the Andre records.

How did you become involved with the Ed Big Daddy Roth documentary?

Ron Mann asked us to do it. He had been hanging around a lot at that time and luckily for us, he felt we could fit the part. It was a great opportunity for us in many ways. Thanks Ron.

I know you guys are big record collectors. We always looked forward to having you drop in to the Grooves record shop, which I co owned before I retired last year. Any favourite LP scores you have made lately?

Congratulations on retiring. Yes, I love Grooves and old records. Can you still get me a discount? I finally got a copy of Jackie Shane's live album. That took a while. I just got a cleaner copy of Christmas' Heritage LP. I haven't been looking too hard in the last couple weeks.

There's a strong spaghetti western influence in many of your tracks. What's your favourite spaghetti western?

I guess most are good before the 70's. I like Lee Marvin or Jack Palance more than Clint or Django. And I guess if it counts, 'Once Upon A Time In The West' can't really be f . . . ed with as tops. Great movie, great soundtrack and no Dirty Harry.

AROUND TOWN

Dave Clarke

CALL THE OFFICE DECEMBER 7th - THE SADIES

The Sadies burst onto the music scene almost 20 years ago with their country and spaghetti-western sound. Fronted by siblings Dallas and Travis Good and backed by longtime rhythm section of Mike Belitsky and Sean Dean, the Sadies have been the go-to back up band, collaborating with Andre Williams, John Doe, Jon Spencer, John Langford, and Neco Case, just to name a few, as well as side projects the Unintended with Blue Rodeo's Greg Keelor and Eric Trip's Rick White. Oh yeah they've also put out a slew of albums including an all instrumental soundtrack for a documentary on cult artist and custom car maker Ed "Big Daddy" Roth and this year's latest release "Internal Sounds". Chronic tourers, they've managed many a memorable visit here including this summer's Home County Folk Festival, where they shared the stage with a few of their relatives, the Good Brothers. Each time I've seen them play they seem to top the previous performance, so if you have any sense catch them at Call the Office. Tickets are \$15.00 or \$20.00 at the door

APK DECEMBER 7th - GRAPHIC UNDERGROUND LONDON 1977-1990 BOOK RELEASE PARTY

Come out and get your graph fix December 7th at the APK. Earlier this year the Forest City Gallery through the auspices of McIntosh gallery curator and aged punk Brian Lambert hosted this very popular display of gig posters and fanzine art from London's punk scene from the 70's to the 90's.

A book with these images was promised, and you can pick up a copy this Saturday and catch some sounds of the times courtesy djs Whatwave Dave (archivist and contributor for the show and book) and Pete "Lamborghini" Lambert (brother of Brian and drummer extraordinaire for too many punk bands to mention)

LONDON MUSIC CLUB DECEMBER 18th - RON HYNES

Newfoundland folk troubadour Ron Hynes graces the London Music Club stage on December 18th.

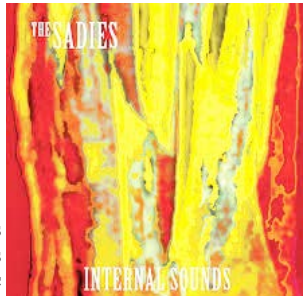
A 30 year plus veteran of the east coast music scene, Hynes has won numerous East Coast Music Awards, as well as a Genie for the song "The Final Breath" from the 1992 movie "Secret Nation".

His best known composition "Sonny's Dream" has become a Celtic folk standard, covered by such international music luminaries as Christy Moore, Jean Redpath, Hamish Imlach, and Liam Clancy.

Tickets are \$22 advance or \$25 at the door. The concert gets underway at 8pm in the Big Hall.

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The Sadies
Internal Sounds
Outside Music

Appropriately called “The First Five Minutes” the opening track to the new Sadies’ album “Internal Sounds” has one foot in the garage and the other in the barn, with an opening ear-grabbing Shadows of Knight riff and then segues into a country style rave up. Next up the hurtin’ country ballad “So Much Blood” one of my fave tracks. It wouldn’t be a Sadies album without a little instrumental action, so check out the majestic spaghetti- westerner “The Very Ending”, and the waltz-time “Lesser Key”. Other highlights for me were “Story 19” cowritten with garage revivalist Mike Stax, and the closer collaboration with Buffy Ste. Marie on the east meets west raga blend, “We Are Circling”.



Michael Fennelly
Lane Changer
1973 Epic

The poster child for cultish obscurity, Michael Fennelly, first came on the scene as part Curt Boettcher’s studio collective, that spawned 60’s psych pop bands Sagittarius and the Millennium. He then fronted the band Crabby Appleton, penning their almost big hit “Go Back”, but it’s his first solo lp ‘Lane Changer’ that is one of the great 70’s releases. Produced by ex Zombie Chris White and backed by various members of Argent, the album features great songwriting, blistering slide guitar and the high soulful vocals of Mr. Fennelly. Outstanding tracks include the fantastic ballad “Touch my Soul” with background vocals by Russ Ballard and Rod Argent, the Zeppelinesque “Won’t You Please Do That”, and the sweetest threatening revenge track “Over My Dead Body”. Other fine songs like “Shine a Light” and “Bad Times make this a great 70’s rocker.

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but we need some local flavours.
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THE RANT

Can't believe I'm sticking up for smokers, but what can I say some of my best friends are victims of the filthy habit. Being a non smoker I was so glad that it was banned from local bars and eateries, since it was a pleasure to come home just stinking of beer and not cigarettes, but now the latest ban on smoking on patios, (isn't that why patios started springing up everywhere), has got me bristling. Not so much on the impact it has on the weak nicotine addicted, but the impact it has on venues supporting live music in town. Smoking and drinking tend to go hand and hand and there seems to be a general trend in staying home for serious smoking and perhaps some pre drinking before heading out to the bars at a much later time. This cuts heavily into bar revenues, leaving less money to pay your favourite band what they deserve, if at all. So let them have their patios, I might even come out with you for some second hand smoke, or at least wave to you as you huddle together in the winter.

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9	Stage for Change @Aeolian						
10							
11	A Faylene Sky Drag the Lake Make Haste to Muting @APK						
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Memory Work

Jeff Culbert

theatre space

Some say that it's the ultimate cliché question that actors hear: "How do you remember all those lines?" I was asked that on a TV interview show once, and I had to size up the host for a second. Was he asking me as a joke, having a bit of fun to start the interview? Nope, his wide-open, eager eyes were those of a man standing in awe of a great mystery.

And to be fair, it's a pretty good question. It could be rhetorical – another way of saying, "That is such an amazing thing, to remember so many lines." (That's certainly not what you want to hear after a performance, though. If they are more interested in your memory work than in the characters and story, then something sure didn't go right that night.)

But what if we take the question literally: How do you remember lines? Do you have a bag of tricks?

Do you concentrate on the character's intentions, fudging the words at first and keeping a bead on the character's prime psychological directive? Do you start with a study of the rhythm of the language and try to stick closely to the text? Do you create mental images that correspond to the text and use those pictures to propel yourself along?

And what happens when it goes wrong? When you simply forget the words in the middle of a show? There are no prompters anymore, like they had in the bygone days, surreptitiously feeding you lines when you get stuck. It's amazing to me how seldom it happens, with all those imperfect people trying to remember all those lines.

When it does happen, it's an odd feeling. I saw, in Stratford, the first public preview of Richard Rose's adaptation of the novel *Tempest Tost*, by Robertson Davies. In the middle of a lengthy monologue, actor Richard McMillan simply stopped talking. A pause turned into a silence and then my radar kicked in. He's stuck. He's waiting it out; God knows what his mind is doing right now, if anything. We wait. We all know what has happened. Something else has to happen now. But it doesn't. We're all there with him, but none of us knows where we are. At long last, he speaks. It sounds familiar. He has gone back to an earlier part of the speech. He's taking another run at it. At least he's saying something. Now he's getting closer to the same perilous place in the script - the place where there lurks a void. He arrives. A pause. A long pause. He goes on! New words! Correct or not, it doesn't matter; we are moving again and the actor is once more a character, to our collective relief.

When they are in front of their first real audience - that's when actors find out just how deeply their lines have gone in.

I recently did a Shakespeare audition that required two monologues. I had a dramatic piece that I'd already worked up for an earlier audition (Friar Lawrence from *Romeo and Juliet*), so I wanted something funny, as a contrast. I decided on the character Launce from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. He has a great bit in which he enters with a dog and complains bitterly to the audience because, despite the fact that he was leaving



home and he and his whole family were emotional wrecks, bawling their heads off, the dog remained stoic: "That cruel-hearted cur shed not one tear!"

But it was a new piece for me and it wasn't going in very well. Now audition day is almost here, and I'm overtired and feeling stressed and irritable because it's not going down deep enough into my body. Every once in a while I nail it, but most of the time it feels like memory work and not acting. Down to the wire and it's still not feeling solid. So I bail out. I give up on the funny new one and pull out my only other Shakespeare monologue (Hamlet telling the players how to act) and start working on it. It's still there; it doesn't go away. I have lingering feelings of annoyance and disappointment - better get over that before the audition - but at least I'll be doing two pieces that I know quite well. Two *dramatic* pieces. No comic monologue this time, so no comedic roles for me in that production. My potential for landing a role is cut in half, but it still felt like the right decision.

On the bus back to London later that day, I rattled off the Launce monologue like I'd been doing it for years. "Nay, 'twill be this hour ere I have done weeping." Ah well, next time.

How good should an actor's memory be? British voice coach and guru Patsy Rodenburg said that in her experience, most actors say that they can learn fourteen lines of poetry in 45 minutes. She recommends that actors try to learn a new speech or poem every week, to keep their memories in shape. For her generation, this was a natural thing, because "memory work" was a rock-solid part of public school curricula. But such exercises in "rote learning" have come to be seen as mechanical and old-fashioned. The result, she says, is that actors come out of theatre school or university without a good foundation in this fundamental skill.

But forget about actors for a minute. What about the rest of you? Can you recite any speeches or poetry? Sing entire songs outside of karaoke? Do you know anyone's phone number anymore? Exercising your rote memory is said to improve neural plasticity, challenging and exercising your brain, developing your ability to focus, improving your capacity for learning and creativity, and staving off cognitive decline. So even if you never plan to step onto a stage, maybe it's time to give the oral tradition a little more attention.

All together now: "There are strange things done in the midnight sun by the men who moil for gold..."

THE HYLAND CINEMA: O Come All Ye Faithful

Jeremy Hobbs



Jeremy Hobbs runs the Black Room theatre company, hosts Retro-Mania at Hyland Cinema, performs with musical groups Exit 2012 and Audioforge, and reviews cult cinema for Rue Morgue Magazine. He spends his remaining time gazing into a never-ending chasm of existential dread.

Visit hylandcinema.com for additional information on screenings and events.

Psychologists often suggest that sufferers of substantial anxieties create a 'quiet room' – an imaginary haven, where they can retreat from the madness of modern life. For some it might be a cabin by the lake, for others a private library, its imaginary silence loud enough to temporarily drown the cacophonies of the outside world. My quiet room was a real place. It was called the New Yorker Cinema and it stood its ground at the corner of Richmond and York Street, from 1974 to 1998, and for a good while served as the city's only functioning independent cinema. I discovered this cinematic oasis as a restless teenager, who'd forever been yearning for an alternative to the mainstream Hollywood fodder that spewed from the multiplexes like CGI-rendered diarrhea. In an attempt to escape the trials of my less than idyllic adolescence, I would escape there two, sometimes three times a week, and lose myself in a never-ending array of vintage, foreign, or straight up 'art' films.

Week after glorious week, I would ride the Paris metro, glide across Artic snow, and sail down the River Nile, all from my static seat in this modest movie house. Sure it got pretty chilly in the winter, and one could do little to filter out the sounds of the York Street traffic, however such annoyances seemed a small price to pay for the privilege of traveling the world without having to leave the comfort of this one magical room. Yet sadly not everyone in town was as travel-happy as I. With the increasing phantasmagoria of cable television, less and less people were going out to the movies, and those that did seemed to favour gaudy spectacle over the challenging works that ran the independent circuit. And then finally on December 30, 1998, the New Yorker closed its doors for good.

The sudden implosion of my quiet room sent me spiraling headlong into a harsh and vulgar reality once again. Our Church of Celluloid had been plundered, leaving the filmless congregation to wander the city streets at 24 frames per second; and if that wasn't enough, the building was promptly gutted and converted into yet another downtown watering hole – one final middle finger to the cultured masses that had existed within that framework for such a time. My Friday nights became exercises in victimization, as Michael Bay and his high-octane brethren thrust their swollen capitalist crotches in my terrified face. For a while the Rainbow Cinema attempted to ease the pain by hosting a weekly arthouse series, however the screening of one single film per week on a tiny screen did little to assuage the loss of the constantly alternating rolodex of international provocation, displayed on a luminously large screen in full 35mm glory. Indeed the passing of the New Yorker left London's indie film community in a barren wasteland of uncertainty, yet as the saying goes: It is always darkest before the dawn.

Said dawn arrived in December 2004, when Ali and Moira Adlan purchased the single-screen, 400-seat movie theatre located at 240 Wharncliffe Road. The cinema had originally opened as The Elmwood in the 1930s, and existed as such until 1959 when it was bought by Odeon, who changed its name to The Hyland. The Hyland enjoyed a fair degree of success throughout the next decades, even attracting some controversy when local religious groups picketed the venue's screenings of Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*. However the steady rise of multiplexes in the late 1980s put an undue strain on business, and in 1989 they finally threw in their Technicolor towel. Strangely enough, the space was subsequently reborn as a 'film ministry' of the Christian Centre of London until their final hymn was sung in 2001, once again leaving this substantial space vacant.

The following year the Adlans purchased the theatre, repainting and upgrading the sound and projection systems with the help of former New Yorker projectionist Victor Liorentas, who had been working in the field since his early teens. They decided to resurrect the moniker of the Hyland Cinema, to pay nostalgic tribute to its lengthy legacy and perhaps remind any remaining patrons that their beloved movie house was back in business. The theatre re-opened on December 31, 2004, and has since been showcasing a provocative selection of internationally acclaimed films from across the globe. Adlan remarks that they resurrected the cinema in order to provide an alternative to the mainstream Hollywood blockbusters that rule the multiplexes, and provide local moviegoers with an opportunity to see more modest, independent works from both emerging and veteran filmmakers worldwide. These intentions were indeed noble, but in today's vast, green-screened ocean of IMAX action sequels, keeping the Hyland afloat would prove to be a difficult task.

cinophilia

There are several tyrannies involved in the independent movie business. Firstly, with the current options of cable and satellite television (including myriad online movie rental sites such as iTunes and Netflix) at one's fingertips, many modern consumers no longer see the point in 'going out to the movies'. Secondly, the advent of downloading amidst a generation of young, computer-savvy individuals has rendered the concept of actually paying for said entertainments nearly obsolete. And finally, the Internet and television stations are rife with such consistently bombastic advertisements for a never-ending barrage of vapid Hollywood insanity, that only the extremely determined can hope to hear of a modest, independent work – even when it has garnered substantial critical acclaim.

When a person can simply download a film onto their telephone before it even hits theatres, the urge to actually leave the house becomes minimal, especially when big theatre chains are now charging nearly \$20 for VIP/3-D/D-Box tickets, often preceded by 15 minutes of commercials before the trailers even start. But no matter how high the bitrate, nothing can truly compare to the rapturous experience of seeing a great film print, projected properly in a real live theatre. Incidentally, the Hyland does not play any corporate advertisements before their films, yet the fact that they are located outside of the downtown core, and not within the fruitful grounds of a well-attended shopping centre, has proven difficult for business (as many London citizens are simply unaware of the theatre's existence). To combat these setbacks, the Hyland Cinema has leant their supportive screen to several regional enthusiasts, most recently local filmmaker Jason R. Grey, who premiered his new short film *The Golden Hour* there this month. In addition to this, the Hyland has been presenting *Retro-Mania*: a monthly *Midnight Madness*-style series of late-night screenings, featuring a diverse selection of beloved fan favourites.

Indeed the Church of Celluloid has reopened in our humble town, but most definitely needs your help rounding out its new congregation. So next time you're about to download that new episode of *Sons of Anarchy* or shell out a small fortune to see *Fast & Furious 13* in unofficial IMAX, consider heading out Wharncliffe Road and experiencing something infinitely more substantial, that will hopefully send you home with lots to think about. The drinks are cold, the popcorn is fresh – can I get an amen?

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Kenojuak Ashevak - the last of the original Cape Dorset artists

Vince Cherniak

Earlier this year renowned Inuit artist Kenojuak Ashevak died at the age of 85. Raised in a traditional hunting lifestyle, residing in igloos, sod huts and skin tents on the southern coast of Baffin Island, she eventually moved off the land and began a new life as a printmaker and sculptor. Her work was seminal in bringing international attention to the Cape Dorset artist's collective. An early print, her iconic *The Enchanted Owl* from 1960 is arguably one of the most recognized works in the Canadian art landscape. Remarkably, she produced prints for every annual Cape Dorset print release since its inception in 1959, including the most recent which Londoners had access to at the InnuIt Gallery at 201 Queens Ave.

Now celebrating its 30th year in business, The InnuIt Gallery was chosen by the Cape Dorset Co-op to receive the first set of prints for the October sale. Many of the 32 prints in this year's release were sold on the first day of the exhibition, say gallery co-owners Janet Evans and Howard Isaacs, but there is still an interesting array of works on display by new and established artists.

Isaacs says *Owl Chicks* by Ningeokuluk Teevee, a gentle line composition that suggests northern landscape as much as birds, was very popular with the crowds at the opening. Evans was particularly smitten by a new artist, Saimaiyu Akesuk, and her lithograph *Luminous Bears*. "It's a bright and light hearted look at the polar bear. It seems childlike in its simplicity, but is very powerful in its interpretation," she notes.

There are also some menacing and humorous moments in this year's release. Ningeokuluk Teevee's *Tulugak's View* has monster birds descending, a la Hitchcock's classic film, over a northern settlement, but you can also read their prominence as protective, or sheltering and nourishing. This is a constant theme often represented, but worthy of repeating: the dualism of nature manifest as nurturing and potentially destructive. Equally, Qavavau Mamumie's *Lucky Man* is unclear about the nature of luck or what it entails: the subject is carrying a stack of \$100 bills on his back, but are they counterfeits, or is pursuing money itself a burden with its own back-breaking pitfalls for those more attuned to an economy more directly related to nature's bounty?

Elsewhere in the shop - which is one of the most attractive gallery venues in town, with full floor to ceiling glazing letting in an abundance of natural light - works range from a variety of Inuit stone sculpture and prints, hand crafted jewelry and First Nations pottery. While some shops peddle a ubiquitous cliché of soapstone work, often gifted as some sort of Canadiana, expect to find some gems here of playful and provocative form, and attention to detail often at very affordable prices, making it a good place for both first time and seasoned collectors alike.

Look at This! will be looking at visual culture. Got something to look at? Send suggestions to vrcherniak@yahoo.com

Presently notable is a stone piece entitled *Transformation* by Joanasie Manning from Cape Dorset, where a solid planted hoof takes an elegant turn into a neck and head of a bear. Also of note are some provocative pottery pieces by Six Nations artist Steven Smith. He carries on a ceramics craft learned from his mother Elda Smith and explores Iroquois geometric patterns and designs with distinctive etched surfaces and brash colours. And, good value: I had to do a double take at the price list of these one of a kind, conversation-starter pieces. You can easily pay more for mass-produced, non-descript decorative pots out at any suburban big box retailer.

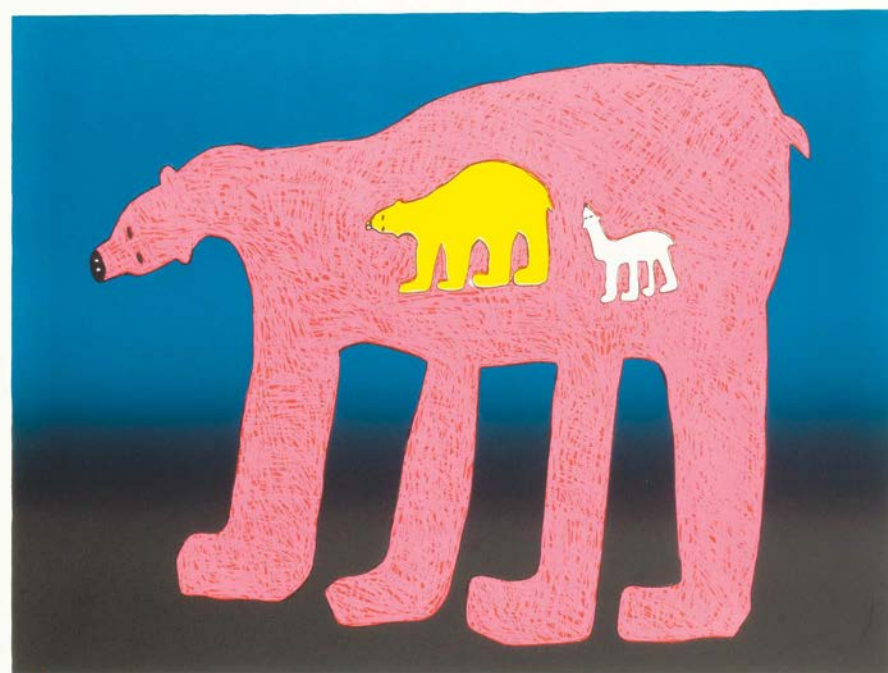
There are seven Kenojuak prints in the latest Cape Dorset show, and they are surprisingly assured in their design considering she was frail and infirm, lying on her stomach on a mattress in her living room to produce the drawings they're based on. There's still an energy brought out in taut lines and symmetries, and her trademark palette and stylization of the natural world, with a focus on birds, is as vibrant as ever. Evans points to the print *Fine Feathers* as an example of an abiding joy present in Kenojuak's oeuvre: "This bird is proud of itself displaying all its feathers boldly and brightly. It is saying 'I'm here, look at me.'"

"Her lyrical and fun-loving approach had an assurance that conveyed sincerity," writes Paul Machnik in the print release catalogue. "On one occasion, I asked her if she would tell a story about her life. Her quick reply was brief and to the point: 'I don't draw people.' She then proceeded to draw the forms of birds and animals. She once said, 'Birds make me happy.' Indeed, it was this reverence for the natural world that gave her iconic imagery its unique power and transcendent quality. So often did she attempt something in a new medium, trusting in the process in a way that often allowed things to become magical. Even towards the end of her long life, with her eyesight failing, one could feel her determination as she drew within inches of the plate to express herself. Her absence is felt by all."

The last of the founding artists at the Cape Dorset printmaking studio and mentor to the next generation, she will be sorely missed. Her work might be looked upon as rather "safe" in its representations compared to more recent indigenous artists like Annie Pootoogook, who explores the realism of social problems and drug abuse issues in the north. But Kenojuak's legacy will be, as John Houston, son of Cape Dorset co-op founder James Houston, said earlier this year, "an inextricable part of our self-image as Canadians."

Not to be missed is an excellent documentary produced by the National Film Board in 1963, *Eskimo Artist: Kenojuak*, directed by John Feeney. It traces the journey of Kenojuak and her family traveling by dogsled from their winter camp to the Cape Dorset settlement, and her creative process is fully illuminated, from sketch to final print.

LOOK AT THIS!



You can look at it here:
www.nfb.ca/film/eskimo-artist-kenojuak

London's Most Over-Rated Restaurant? That would be Michael's on-the-Thames

Chuck Knor

For thirty years and counting, Michael's on-the-Thames has been regarded as London's 'celebration destination'. Thus the big sign out front announcing whatever birthday, anniversary or retirement celebration is going on inside. The perennially popular eatery situated at the southeastern foot of the York Street Bridge remains the first place many Londoners think of when they hear the phrase, 'fine dining,' and is the venue of choice for people looking to commemorate a special event or who just want to, as they say, 'put on the dog.'

The old cliché tells us that there is a time and place for everything, and for Michael's that time is obviously the year they opened in 1982. I'm told however that all of that is about to change. Fortunately on a recent visit I was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of what all the fuss was about before any renovations were made. Surprisingly, it wasn't so bad. Even with the standard throwbacks of purple walls with highly varnished wainscoting, tuxedo-wearing wait staff, a mix tape playing songs about eating sung by famous 50's crooners, and a sign designating 'Captain's Quarters' which made me chuckle even though it would've made more sense in a 'Red Lobster' restaurant than here. Regardless, the place has many attributes, including a great view from a sort of balcony area if reserved in advance, free parking and a wheelchair ramp that's so big, it makes the word 'accessible' sound like an understatement.

All these touches that echo the 80's are further augmented by even older menu items. The fare at Michael's does not challenge the predilections of the culinarily cautious but affirms them. Cliches wouldn't become cliches if they didn't appeal to us and if there wasn't a strong element of truth behind them. And it was certainly true that I've never seen more clichés crammed onto one menu in my life – including such pre-20th century war-horses as duck à l'orange, steak Diane and Cherries Jubilee. I am not impervious to nostalgia's call and found that I was rooting for Michael's, even after choosing my repast from their menu card of yore.

I started with the daily soup, which anyone could have guessed was cream of broccoli with lots of cheese, cream and a slight hint of broccoli, finished with a dash of grated cheddar that missed the bowl. For a main, I had the 8 oz. 'butcher block'. When it arrived, it looked great and I could get around the compulsory sprig of thyme sticking out. The baked potato was a baked potato and the vegetables were decent, as it is common for cooks to make them either too greasy or overcook them, or both. Upon closer examination of my snow peas however (which, by the way, were not tailed) there was a dirty blonde hair. An unchewable snow pea tail that tickles the throat as it goes down can be forgiven but a human hair amidst the veggies - not so much.

Aside from that, my steak was well seasoned and delivered to me on a warmed plate at just the state of medium doneness I had requested. However I was a little chagrined when the group of six at the next table was offered the cod special – an option that my waitress hadn't mentioned to me - which was too bad, as I love cod. As interested as I was in the thought of a waiter igniting his tie from a Cherries Jubilee gone wrong, I had to pass on dessert.

Michael's isn't alone when it comes to the old-fashioned style of the place. Restaurants all around the world still exist with time warp atmospheres and menus featuring such 19th century dinosaurs as Oysters Rockefeller and Sole Meunier served tableside; however most of those places now offer up such fare with a sense of irony or even self-lamproving fun.

Even more ironic is the fact that Michael's, although they unknowingly missed it, had stood still for long enough that they could have caught the crest of a full-circle trend in the market. Seven or eight years ago, pork belly, charcuterie, stuffed liver, braised tripe, cassoulet, boudin noir and the whole "nose-to-tail" thing became all the rage and could be found next to some of the same items that still appear on Michael's menu. These long neglected dishes were offered once again while others were either revitalized with a modern take or discarded altogether.

But really, why bother tampering with dishes that are good enough in their own right, and often better than the dishes featured in some 'fine dining' restaurants? Once you strip away the ambience and formality and replace it with a casual atmosphere, presenting food that is not only far better but also often cheaper, the significance of 'fine dining' becomes elusive.

As far as the old school professional waiter goes, I don't mind tableside cooking provided that it reflects the time period of the dishes, and of course is done well.

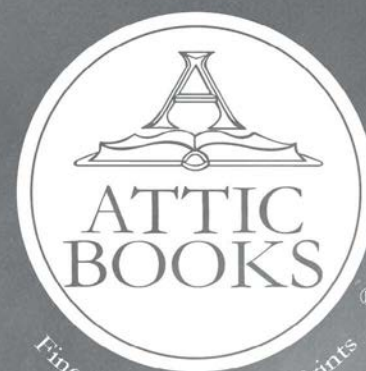
If you're going to make a point of walking around in bell-bottoms, then I would hope that you'd be able to tell me everything there is to know about 70's rock. Limiting the majority of your sauces to demi-glace (which technically isn't a sauce) and incorporating butter, booze, cream and batter into nearly all your menu choices doesn't convince me you know your rock. And this is where Michael's falls short for me. They dress the part but they can't deliver the goods. All their effort goes into the presentation of a façade.

The chefs at some of the best restaurants in the world refer to themselves as 'cooks' and admit they still have more to learn. That bespeaks a far healthier attitude than being told that \$30 for a fish with a 10-inch long chive sticking off it isn't too much because it's 'fine dining.' Once you reject the notion that fine dining is determined by how high you can stack food or by a table-side flame produced by your waiter, you'll find that you can eat at some of the best restaurants in the world for less money. You can update trends, styles, interior design and tableware as much as you want, but if the food doesn't add up, we're back where we started. Michael's downfall is that they give up too soon before making the food the best it can possibly be. If only they'd put more of their attention on the food and less on the sizzle, Michael's on-the-Thames could offer Londoners something much finer than 'fine dining'.



the two f words

"A LITTLE BIT STIFF."



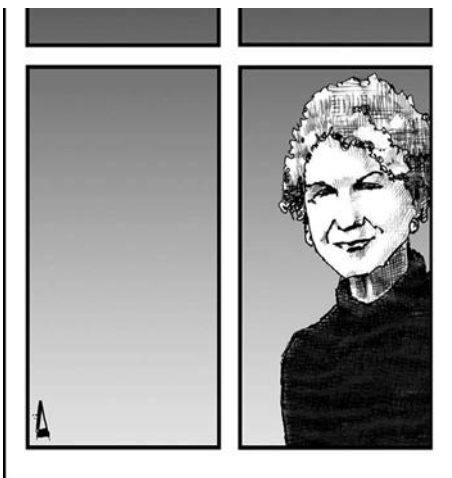
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On the thrill of having a Nobel Laureate in the neighbourhood

Jason Dickson

book culture



An archive cartoon by Terry (Aislin) Moshier of Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro looking out the window on the world.

The Gazette, Montreal

I don't know if many of you have noticed but recently a Canadian writer won the Nobel Prize. This to me is a really big deal, much like the day I woke up to hear that Pluto was demoted as a planet. No longer were there nine planets in our solar system. No longer were Canadian writers not part of the Nobel constellation.

Nationally it is obviously a big deal too. But it also means something personal, fellow Southwestern Ontario residents. This nice lady from Wingham, Ontario (known in Clinton, her current home, as, "that nice old lady down the street who writes those stories") set her work in Huron County just North of here. They don't take place in the rural South. They don't take place in the Russian winter. They take place up Richmond Street.

This is important to us, friends and neighbours.

In the few conversations I've had about her win this point has not come up. Sure, Munro is Canada's most successful writer (critically speaking at least). She writes circles around most people. But I wonder if it has really hit folks around here that the stories just awarded the most famous prize in literature - in art, even - are mostly set about an hour away. "What does that matter?" you might rightly ask. And I'll answer it happily.

When I was a kid everything that I read took place in Thorndale, Ontario, a very small town about twenty minutes north-east of here. I grew up there. It didn't matter if it was *The Dead Zone* by Stephen King or *To Kill a Mockingbird*. If it wasn't Hercules or some other obvious fantasy world - or Ghostbusters - it took place in Thorndale. Sometimes it took place in Toronto. I went to see Phantom there on a class trip and it made an impact, so sometimes things were set in Toronto.

As I got older and learned about, you know, "The World", the books that I read took place elsewhere. So *The Brothers Karamazov* (couldn't finish it) didn't take place in Thorndale, it took place in Russia, or rather some cartoon version of Russia my brain made up. Ghostbusters continued to take place in New York and Hercules continued to take place in Asgard or wherever it takes place. Greece?

With Alice Munro, Thorndale returned. And actually what happened finally, in my little, feverish brain, was what happens to Romantics who finally, truly fall in love. They've spent their whole lives reading and hearing about beautiful thing after beautiful thing happening to their romantic cultural avatars in literature

and music and movies and now, finally - finally! - it is actually vvhappening to them.

When I read Alice Munro for the first time I realized that I never had to pull that conceptual trick again. What I was reading *did in fact happen here*. All of it. These uncannily, eerily well-written stories were partly pulled from physical existence in and the ether of Southwestern Ontario through the awesome brain of a lady who lived not fifty miles from here.

That had a colossal impact on me, as I imagine it did on other people. And furthermore, it blew my mind again that people elsewhere were reading it and having some cartoon version of SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO in their head. *Like what is that all about!* And because I grew up here, I could just use what was in my head already - my neighbours, my neighbours' houses, their backyards.

It was the back stoop at my aunt's house that she was talking about. It wasn't just any stoop, in another country, it was this country, maybe this county even. When I got into a car and drove down the back roads, I was passing through "Alice Munro Country." The personal roads of my life, the drive to the Lake, that bit near Exeter (with the tiger on top of the gas station, you know that place?) all of that was now a bona fide literary region.

I didn't have to pretend anymore.

The London connection is significant as well. Munro published her first story ever in the UWO journal *Folio*. Her name was then Alice Laidlaw. The story was called *Dimensions of a Shadow* and her bio read, "Eighteen-year-old freshette, whose story in this issue is her first published material. Graduate of Wingham High School. Overly modest about her talents, but hopes to write the Great Canadian Novel some day."

Beautiful.

We had the *Folio* issue for sale at Attic Books for a dog's age. No one would buy it. I offered it to customers, literary dealers, nothing. I offered it to major Canadian libraries. No bites. The week she won, it sold immediately.

Now I can already hear people moaning at my attempts to tie myself to her story. Fine. Moan all you like. The truth remains that many writers look to people in their own country and culture for guidance. Hell, I grew up in Thorndale and didn't have the slightest clue what to do. There were no writers in my family, no one with a university education. I hung out in the ball diamond dugout and wrote stories in a ringed journal.

At least now there's someone from around here who did it. Who did it right. Who won the bloody Nobel Prize for Literature. Just thinking of this in the context of Thorndale makes me very happy and giddy. I honestly can't believe it. Whether or not you like an autobiographical approach to literature, whether or not my life or anyone's life in reading means much in your final estimation of a book's value, it can't be denied that books have intimate relationships to readers, and that these relationships are what keep the whole grand enterprise going. That clothesline in Munro's books was the clothesline outside of my childhood house, bought at the Canadian Tire in town. This was an inescapable, immeasurable fact. I don't know if Ms. Munro meant to give this as part of her work. But it was her gift to me and I can't thank her enough. Personally, I love that from now on, a young Canadian writer will never be born who doesn't know that it is possible to win the Nobel Prize.

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David Mason The Pope's Book Binder (Biblioasis)

reviewed by Ian Hunter

readviews

Ian Hunter is Professor Emeritus
in the Faculty of Law at Western University.

Have a review?
editor@londonyodeller.ca

David Mason sold his first book (a Somerset Maugham novel) for 75 cents on a ferry to Ward's Island; since he had bought the same book that morning for 25 cents, he had a triple. Although never in the book trade for money (who in his right mind could be?), it confirmed the neophyte in the conviction that he had found his calling. Only one problem: "I didn't really want to sell the Maugham because I had intended to read it that night. In the forty-five years since that day I have countless times faced the same dilemma; wanting to keep a book which I should actually be trying to sell."

David Mason has been selling books, in different Toronto locations, since that first triumph half a century ago, and (full disclosure) I confess that I count myself among his contented customers, having bought from him more than my fair share of books. His just-published memoir, *The Pope's Bookbinder* is like the man: boisterous, endearing, and engagingly blunt. It is a book to delight that endangered species, the book collector, ever on the prowl for the elusive "must-have" title.

Born in Toronto in a bookless house (his father was a bank manager), Mason discovered his passion in a public library; I often reflect that the only uncorrupted good the State has done in my lifetime is to fund libraries and I rather suspect David Mason might agree. Anyway, in his case it was the St. Clements branch of the Toronto Public Library; as things turned out, his alma mater.

A frequent truant, and eventual high school dropout, Mason got his first job at Eaton's ("I am constantly amazed at how many Canadians I've met who also started their working life at Eaton's"). But he soon left and, like many restless dropouts in the '60s, headed for Europe, living temporarily in London, Paris, Morocco and Spain. In Spain he got a job in a small bookbinding plant: "I stayed at the plant a year and a half . . . Probably the highlight of that early phase of my binding career was when we bound a book for the Pope . . . Back in Canada . . .

I thought of having a card printed up . . . 'D. Mason. Bookbinder, by Appointment to His Holiness, Pope John XXIII.' In the end I decided that might appear a touch vulgar, although everywhere one looks one sees people presenting credentials no less fraudulent than mine."

Mason got a break when he apprenticed with a legendary Toronto antiquarian dealer, Jerry Sherlock of Joseph Patrick Books. A few years later Mason opened his first shop on Gerrard Street.

Mason does not just sell books, he collects too; several of his collections grace University libraries. Is there a conflict of interest? Mason thinks not; "A dealer who does not collect cannot experience the emotional passion which fuels all collecting, thereby omitting from the equation its very essence. And with that lack of perspective he loses the ability to emotionally connect with clients – and for that matter, even with books."

The antiquarian book trade is rather like a three-legged stool; the booksellers depend on "scouts", who find the books, and collectors, who buy them. Remove any leg and the stool collapses. Mason devotes chapters to the art of scouting, to auctions, and to appraisals. Avid collectors will find here arcane tips to improve their fortunes.

Mason also introduces some collectors, none as enduring perhaps as Joe Brabant, a lawyer who collected Lewis Carroll, with a sub-specialty in Mad Hatter memorabilia. Brabant once invited David Mason to visit his large apartment on St. Clair Avenue; inside was a desk, a chair, a wooden bed, and books. Books lining every wall, devoted to Alice in Wonderland and her relations. Then one day Brabant appeared in Mason's shop and announced that he had less than six months to live. After he died, Mason was one of the estate appraisers; when the appraisers thought they were finished, the value of Brabant's books was calculated not in the thousands but millions of dollars. "[Then] we thought we'd just better check the closets". In the closets were a couple of suits, one ratty tweed jacket that Brabant habitually wore, and another \$100,000 worth of Lewis Carroll posters, pictures, and related memorabilia. The Brabant collection ended up at the University of Toronto.

After half a century in the rare book business, what does David Mason think is the point? "Our main contribution is the salvaging and retention of important artifacts of our civilization." To which I say, Amen.



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THE LONDON YODELLER 17

Racists, Wife-Beaters and Bullies

Vanessa Brown

I usually describe myself as a centrist, a moderate, with strong left-leaning tendencies. To both sides of the spectrum, this makes me a chinless pansy. I was raised in a fundamentalist Christian environment where not standing up for the unborn and thinking gays were okay was like saying you were going to eat your baby. I've spent my life having unpopular opinions in my social circle.

I've known our controversial editor, Herman Goodden, for years. Believe it or not, I had no idea he was known as a conservative jerk-off to my left-wing urban friends. His daughter, a feminist and granola chewing visual artist, gave me no reason to suspect it.

On Facebook, in response to his article on Megan Walker's Purple Lights Campaign, Darlene Edwardson assumed he must be a wife-beater because, "usually when people are spouting off about things like Herman has, there [are] a few skeletons in the closet." He's also a homophobe and a Rob Ford fan, apparently. Matthew Elliot suggested that Goodden is an anti-Semite: "I double dog dare the LFP to commission a column from him asking his opinion regarding who indeed bears ultimate responsibility for the death of one J. H. Christ." This only shows Elliot's ignorance. We all know Jesus was crucified by Mel Gibson.

London artist Jamie Q decided that this newspaper, employing local writers and promoting local arts, should be cast aside because of Herman: "I CANNOT SUPPORT THE WEEKLY with this guy involved in any way." Musician Paterson Monday declared: "I don't know how to feel. So mad at the London Free Press, so mad that someone thinks BLACK FACE is ok. So upset with London right now."

It's funny she mentioned the black-face incident and our editor in the same sentence. I found this explosion of Facebook trolling right after interviewing Hooch Parkins, the man at the centre of the black-face incident. He's the singer for local legendary band, the Matadors. Inspired by a Hallowe'en show with the Salads, who dressed up as Van Halen, Hooch and his bandmates decided to crib Motorhead for the Movember show at Call the Office, but discovered during a jam session that they were awesome at Jimi Hendrix and could play over 20 songs. Parkins knew that dressing up as Hendrix would be controversial. He was counting on it for publicity. He posted a picture of himself in dark makeup, wearing an afro wig, on Facebook.

He admits it wasn't the best decision. "I didn't go about it the best way . . . I thought, people will get upset about this, but then in a day I can say, 'This is just part of a costume. I'm actually doing Jimi Hendrix.'" He defines black-face as "portraying a person of colour as derogatory or stupid", but I wasn't doing that."

While Hooch has a long history of saying controversial things online - which I have found offensive more than once, not to mention size-ist and rather misogynistic - he was still taken aback by the backlash. People called him a racist, a homophobe and a woman-hater. They threatened to call Children's Aid. Activists pushed a Calgary venue to cancel his gig. Hooch says of his detractors, "Way to score a point for humanity."

He knows some people find him obnoxious, but he doesn't consider himself a racist. "I wouldn't go to a black-face show. I wasn't painting Jimi to be a pimp or a thug or whatever sort of derogatory thing people would do when they do black-face . . . I'm a very outspoken and loud person. If I were a racist, you'd have known it by now. I would be the loudest goddamn racist you've ever heard."

The same online sources that make Hooch's general audacity so accessible is what gives his critics their platform too. "Social media makes it really f***ing easy for people to be a superhero . . . to drop their little 26 characters and walk away and say, 'I've saved the world and you're a piece of sh** and I feel really good about myself.'"

When talking to Hooch, I mentioned another controversy with local bar APK and a Jewish comedian named Ari Shaffir who performs as a character called the Amazing Racist. Of the contingent of activists who had that show shut down, Hooch acknowledged, "It's the same people."

Researching what happened at the APK, I discovered that the postings made by activists online had been subsequently removed. Thomas Cernak, the innovator behind LondonFuse.ca, an incredible website for regional arts and culture, told me that those who generated the

content were the ones who took it down. As such, there is no record of the crusade to exorcize the coals from London's hot bed of racism at a local LGBT-friendly bar.

All you can find are two sets of closing remarks from Joan Brennan, bar owner. She reflects on how constructive debate quickly descended into madness. "I sincerely apologize for anything we may have said to contribute to this disintegration of polite discourse . . . Once something hits the internet, it is forever." She said to me recently, "I cancelled [the show] when the fire-storm became so intense I really thought I wouldn't have a business at the end."

For the record, let me say that I do not agree with Herman on a lot of things, including his stance on the Purple Lights campaign. I think what Hooch did was foolish, brash and unnecessary. I've never seen Ari Shaffir's act, so I have no opinion about that. Still, none of this really matters. What is revealing is the connection between these three events - three outspoken individuals and one friendly bar owner who came up against a cohort of left-wing activists, were persecuted and (except for Herman) forced to relent after aggressive, mean and downright unfair campaigning, tantamount to bullying, in online media.

This kind of activism is the enforcement of censorship via shunning, the use of social pressure to tear people down who, while you might not agree with them, were really only worthy of an eye-roll.

A battle of conviction should be fought with dignity. The cultural contributions of these three individuals, regardless of subjective opinion, are only by-products of a greater dialogue that is too easily shut down with mud-slinging. These attacks rob people of a voice—the voices of those at the centre of the controversies, and those on either side of the argument who might have something constructive to say.

red headed snippet



*Quit riding the pine
and get in the game
editor@londonyodeller.ca*

London Middlesex Roller Derby



LMRD is an amazing group of women who aim to promote roller derby in all its forms through fun, fitness and friendship. Founded in 2013, our league is comprised of our Juniors and Ontario's flagship LOCO chapter (2010). As part of LMRD, your derby needs are met from the age of 9 + whether you skate low-contact and part-time, or full-time

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Sean Twist

As the leaves fall around London, they gather.

Hunched against the wind, men and women whisper secret passwords* in various locations around the city. Heavy oaken doors are pulled open, admitting them to dark chambers adorned with the arcana and totems of their shared obsession. Shaking off the chill, they sit at tables scarred with fire, knives and blood.

Almost immediately the arguments start. Fists pound tables. Claret is spilled. Voices are raised, fingers point. Then someone will shout “But Sakura is your *waiifu*, isn’t she?”

A silence will fall then. Then, the real carnage begins. Yes, the fall season of anime is now in full swing. With over forty new shows premiering between September and November, it’s no wonder the tensions among London’s anime community are running so high. How to keep up with all the new shows? How to have an opinion on everything? How to find the time to log onto the currently fashionable forums and complain about it?

Like many anime fans of advanced years, I’ve learned one thing: it will strip you of your humanity to even try. Your soul will shrivel like a Gelfling beneath a Dark Crystal. And yet, I can’t look away. I see the tsunami of robots, magical girls, vampires, and spaceships with sarcastic personalities and have to sample at least some of it. I mean, hey! Who needs a soul?

So, here then, is what I’ve liked out of the current fall season. I have not seen everything but I have missed several sunny afternoons and time with my few remaining friends in order to see *this* much.



© Teashima, Yuji Kodansha / Production Committee, TV Tokyo “A Diamond”

ACE OF THE DIAMOND

Is This About Ace Frehley? No, sadly. It is a charming anime about baseball, though.

Because a KISS Anime Would Totally Rule. Oh, no question.

What’s It Based On? A manga called *Daiya No A*. It’s won awards in Japan for being so awesome.

But It’s Sports! I hear you. I’m not a sports guy, but this won me over. Partly because it’s nice to have an anime where there are no giant robots, the universe isn’t about to end, and someone’s not going to be eaten by a nude giant. It’s just kids playing baseball.

So No Huge, Giant Battles? The baseball games are the battles. And I’ve been told this show gets the baseball right. I wouldn’t know. Those big sticks are called bats, right?



© TRIGGER, Kazuki Nakashima/Kill la Kill Partnership

KILL LA KILL

What Is This One About? A girl called Ryuko, armed with a giant scissor, seeks revenge for her father’s death in a totalitarian high school. That’s ‘scissor’. Half a scissor. The murderer has the second half. Cutting edge drama! (apologies).

What’s It Based On? A deep seated need to blast viewers from their seats and through any nearby windows and/or walls.

Are There Any Classical References? In the opening episode, there are some nods towards Orwellian Ingsoc as Satsuki, the despotic high school president, proclaims to the terrified lower classmen that ‘*FEAR IS FREEDOM!*’ and ‘*CONTRADICTION IS TRUTH!*’ and that they should “*surrender to those truths, you pigs in human clothing!*” So both of Orwell’s Greatest Hits get some play.

Is This A Quiet Reflection on Totalitarianism, Then? Uh, no. *Kill La Kill* is a visual explosion of anime tropes, slapstick, and surprise. The speed at which it moves is reminiscent of old Warner Brothers cartoons from the Forties before they were edited – cut - with scissors, one assumes. (Is that what the scissor mean?) And each frame is just packed. Careful eyes can see naughty cats and even the cast of *Pulp Fiction* lurking about. A normal human can only watch two episodes without needing to lie down for at least an hour.

That Costume Ryuko Wears...Is Something. That’s one of those tropes I mentioned earlier. It’s scanty and ridiculous (like many anime costumes) and Ryuko hates it. People comment on its inappropriateness all the time. And the suit is sentient and a bit of a perv. But she still wears it. So, yeah. There are *layers*.

So Is This Good? For me, it’s the best of the season. It’s the Shaolin Soccer of anime. Don’t miss it.

And yes, Sakura is totally my *waiifu*.

*Genshiken

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LOG HORIZON

What’s It About? During a game update to a MMO called *Elder Tale*, something goes terribly wrong. Suddenly 30,000 gamers find themselves whooshed into the game, becoming their game avatars, with no apparent way to get back out.

What’s It Based On? A novel by Mamare Touno, which first appeared online. So hey! Self-publish kids! You might get lucky, too!

Could This Really Happen? God, I hope so.

Are There Any Classical References I Can Talk About to Impress My Girlfriend? Outside of a riff on the Holy Gyax Treatises on *Dungeons and Dragons*, not so far. Sorry there, sport.

Who Are The Characters? The main character is a guy called Shiroe. He’s a grad student in the real world, and an enchanter in this one. He’s pretty laid back. His friend Naotsugu is more of a tool, macking on all the girls he meets. There is also a cat man called Nyanta. He wears a cravat, can cook, and defines cool.

Who Is The One Everyone Will Go Crazy Over? That would be the ninja assassin Akatsuki. She has this tender habit of kneeling Naotsugu in the face when he starts to run his mouth. It’s heartwarming.

So Why Is This Good? While the characterizations are broad at first (anime does paint in wide strokes, after all) the writers are deft enough to start reining any sense of horror of being trapped in this world. Instead, it focuses on how people would survive and change in this new environment. What do your actions say about you if there are no (clear) consequences? How would you act?

Like all good speculative fiction, it asks questions while still providing cheerful escapism, full of exploration and discovery. You know, it’s *fun*.

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