

# THE COUNTRY GRIND



ISSUE #3  
SUMMER 2014

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**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscriptions and individual issues are available. Because we know it's especially easy to be hard up for cash in the country we choose to give a discount to rural addresses. Prices include shipping:

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Urban: \$5  
Outside of Canada and the USA: \$7

1 Year Subscription (4 issues)  
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Oh, and we still have a facebook page at [facebook.com/countrygrind](http://facebook.com/countrygrind)

**COLLECTIVE**

Gretchen Bonegardener, Ian Petrie, Celeste Inez Mathilda, Cat Meow, Shauna Lynn Russel, Eliot Fiend

**CO-CONSPIRITORS**

Dandy Denial, timeMOTHEye, Dylan, Kat Callen, Isaac Roylos

Cover Banner: Sean Fitzgerald  
Cover Drawing: Yann  
Fancy new logo/t-shirt design: Dylan

**CONTACT**

The Country Grind  
Box 266  
Ochre River, MB R0L 1K0  
Canada

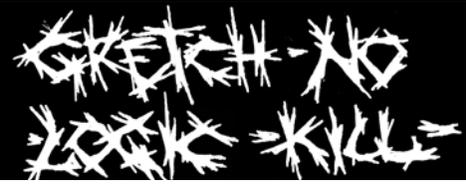
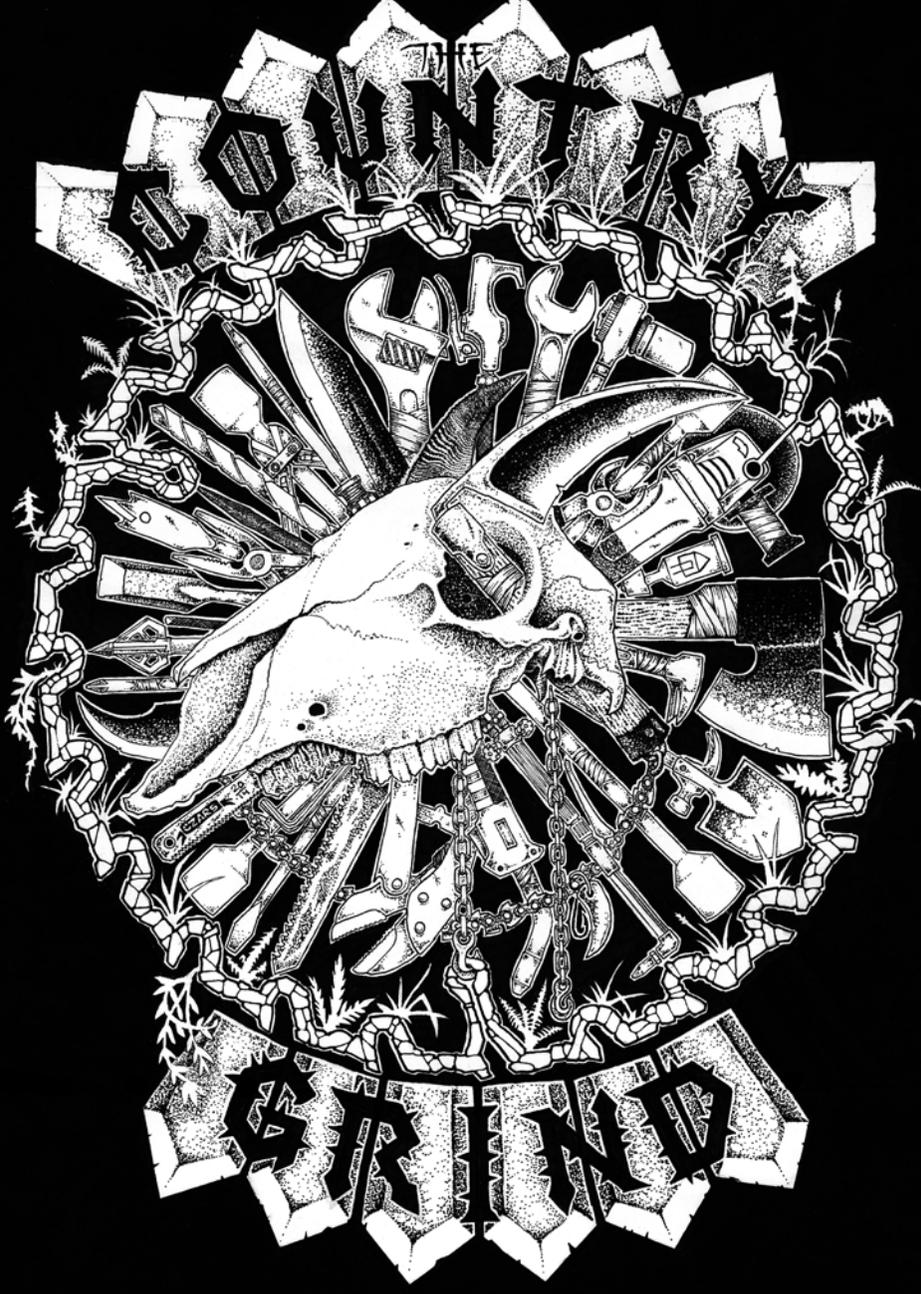
General info/Advertisers (Gretchen):  
[punx@countrygrind.net](mailto:punx@countrygrind.net)

Distribution & Propaganda (Cat):  
[distribution@countrygrind.net](mailto:distribution@countrygrind.net)

Submissions (Celeste):  
[submissions@countrygrind.net](mailto:submissions@countrygrind.net)

**SUBMISSIONS**

We are actively seeking submissions for future issues. We would love to read your articles, editorials, art, comics, poetry, fiction, book and music reviews, as long as it is relevant to rural punks and follows our guidelines (please, please read them first on our website)



Why hello there dear reader. How nice of you to join us for this issue of The Country Grind. This has been in some ways the easiest, and in some ways the hardest issue to release so far. Being our third issue we're finally starting to streamline some things and figure out shortcuts in editing and layout. But this is the first issue that isn't free, and adding finances to the equation is a whole new bag-o-donuts.

We had to start charging for The Grind for one simple and unexpected reason... This magazine became too popular. It cost me personally almost a thousand dollars to print and ship the first issue, and for the second issue it cost us over \$1,500, draining nearly all the funds we raised from all of you on our Indiegogo fundraiser. So because there are too many awesome rural punks out there, we can no longer afford to give it away. I feel like there are worse things to complain about.

Also, as I suspected, now that I'm finished school and back at home it has been a lot harder to keep up with the workload of running a magazine. Especially when everything you need to do involves using a computer and you don't have the internet or electricity at your house. So needless to say, I've been falling behind. This issue is coming out about two weeks late because both me and Celeste have been so busy.

We have formed a loose collective to help spread out the work, but we are still figuring out how best to do that being that we all live pretty spread out across the land and can't meet regularly. Soon enough we'll have our shit figured out, and I ask for your patience in the meantime.

On the plus side of all this, one of the reasons I'm so fucking busy is because I started the most awesome job ever. I'm now an apprentice Agricultural Equipment Technician (or "tractor mechanic" if you drop the fancy trade terminology) at my local John Deere dealership. It is seriously the best job ever. If I didn't need to worry about money I'd probably still do this job for free.

When I started with the first issue I literally knew fuck all about doing layout for a magazine. I had old copies of Profane Existence, Slug & Lettuce, Slingshot, and Maximum Rock'n'Roll to guide me, but no idea of how to actually get it to look like that. The first two issues had a steep learning curve, but I feel like with this issue I'm actually starting to make it look nice, and it's taking a lot less effort to do the layout.

So as I'm starting to wrap up this issue I've had to move into my friend's camper in his yard, because all the roads leading to my house are flooded out. The Rural Municipality of Ochre River (my home) is currently declared a State Of Emergency because of all the flooding. The amount of rain that we've gotten this spring in western Manitoba is fucking unreal. In the past four years this area has had three severe floods, a severe drought, one of the coldest winters on record and another that was one of the driest. Climate Change has always worried me, but I couldn't really get a grasp of what it would look like. I guess this is it. And it'll only get worse before it gets any better.

Before I let you go on reading the rest of this fine rag, I'd really like to thank the folks who contributed their art and doodles to spice up the text filled pages. timeMOTHEye (pg. 3,5,17) Dylan (pg. 4,15) and Celeste (pg. 6,13). If you would like to submit your doodles or drawing send them to me at [punx@countrygrind.net](mailto:punx@countrygrind.net) and I'll see what I can fit in when I'm doing layout.

~gretchen

Here Gretchen and Celeste are tabling at The Grid Pickers CD release show on April 26th in Buchanan, Saskatchewan with our huge fucking poster we made of Dylan's amazing drawing. Interestingly enough, all of the performers were from all over Saskatchewan and they were also all contributors to The Grind! Foto by Dandy Denial.



**WOAH, BABIES**

We at The Country Grind would like to give a right rowdy congratulations to Ragtime Rach and Haybale Mike McKerracher on bringing their newborn son into the world. The little punklet, Miles Royal McKerracher, was born at home on the farm in Buchanan, Saskatchewan on the June 20th, 2014. We wish all the best to the growing McKerracher family.



# COLUMNS

## Home Herbalism



Juliette Abigail Carr

### Make Your Own Herbal Allergy Syrup

Seasonal allergies can destroy an otherwise beautiful day, especially among rehomed city punx and those of us who have done a lot of travelling or have moved from one bioregion to another. Many folks turn to Benadryl in desperation, then waste the rest of what would otherwise be a lovely, productive day sacked out on the porch with a medicine-head high. While I understand the desperation behind reaching for the magical decongestants, I urge you to reach for home-made allergy syrup instead. You can make it yourself, and you can still drive the tractor without fear of passing out and rolling the thing. If you take it every day the intensity of your allergies may lessen over time. Seriously, the pharmaceutical companies will not take as good care of you as you can take of yourself.

**Allergies Attack!** Allergies are essentially your immune system overreacting and slaughtering innocent bystanders. Your immune cells have to tell the difference between things that belong in your body and things that don't, and then annihilate the intruders to protect the fortress. If your immune cells are lazy or drunk on the job, they could miss an intruder—and then you get sick—or they could overreact and attack cells that aren't really a threat. Pollen, dog hair, dust, and small children are not threats to your well-being, and yet some people develop allergies.

It's not clear what causes folks to develop allergies, but it's probably connected to an inappropriate inflammatory response resulting from chronic physical stress, especially from eating unhealthy fats, having chronic vitamin and mineral deficiencies, and being exposed to significant pollution. There's a reason allergies and asthma affect the urban poor more than other populations: if your body is in a constant state of hypervigilance (from pollution, junk food etc.), your immune cells are more likely to overreact because they're halfway to red alert already.

#### How to Eat Right, in 15 Seconds or Less:

Eat real food. Immune cells are made out of fat and need vitamins and minerals to work. If you're plagued by allergies, quit eating that processed garbage and focus on anti-inflammatory foods, especially omega-3 fatty acids ("good fats") like in avocados, nuts, and fish. Vitamins and minerals are found in fruits, vegetables, nuts, and animal products—in other words, actual food. If you eat like crap your cells will be made out of crap. Don't be a dumbass and buy into the myth that the FDA or big pharma has your back because they don't, fool—they directly benefit from your poor health choices.

**Honey, Nectar of the Gods/Bees:** Honey is a famous seasonal allergy tonic (something you take for a long time to reduce a chronic problem). I also use it as a formula base for other kinds of allergies and chronic inflammation including inflammatory autoimmune disorders. Promoting healthy immune function reduces inappropriate responses like allergies, so honey probably works because it's an anti-inflammatory and a probiotic **nutritive**. Honey contains vitamins, minerals, amino acids, bioavailable enzymes that aid digestion, and healthy bacteria that enhance the function of your

body. These nutritive aspects of honey are **anabolic**, meaning honey builds the body's reserves of strength and nutrition, enhancing overall structure and function. Honey is especially appropriate for folks who tend towards deficiency and are chronically frazzled or worn out.

Only use raw honey because pasteurization kills the probiotic critters and denatures many of the proteins that give honey its medicine. Use local honey exclusively; yes, honey from Brazil is cheaper than the fancy local stuff, but the fancy local stuff contains trace amounts of the pollen that's actually making you feel sick, and exposure to tiny amounts of pollen over time desensitizes your immune system. My favorite is wildflower honey, which is dark and rich with all that wild plant magic, but blueberry or tupelo or whatever is made in your area will do just fine.

So to make a really great formula against allergies, start with honey. You can keep it simple and just eat a tablespoon of raw, local honey every morning (darn), or you can add herbs to make it work better. Honey will help allergies eventually, but if you feel sick today you want something that will help right now—and that's where the herbs come in.

#### The Herbs

As always, I strongly recommend choosing herbs that grow in your bioregion. These examples have a wide range, but you're better off using a local substitute than ordering this or that miracle wonder herb from wherever. The land around you provides; figure out what categories (**herbal actions**) you need, and then find a local version. No sense in ordering something from Siberia when a fresher, cleaner version is growing in your neighbor's hedgerow. Remember to look up any herb you're planning to use to make sure its precautions are safe for you.

**Goldenrod:** High summer is the ideal time to make your allergy syrup because it's goldenrod's heyday. Goldenrod is a strong **astriagent**, so it sucks up extra moisture and tightens mucous membranes (mouth, sinuses, GI tract, etc.), giving an anti-inflammatory effect. When you take the gooey wetness and inflammation out of mucous membranes, most allergy symptoms disappear (also great for UTIs, but that's another topic). The beauty of goldenrod is that it kicks in right away: you feel sick, you take goldenrod, you feel better. If you don't feel better, take more goldenrod, and then you feel better. It's safe for your kids, too.

Poor goldenrod has a false reputation for being a major allergen. We can be allergic to pollen that floats through the air from wind-pollinated plants. Although goldenrod is blooming when folks are sneezing, it's pollinated by bees. Goldenrod pollen isn't floating through the air, hoping to land on a flower and make little goldenrod babies to continue the genetic line—the bees do that. The culprit is ragweed, a widespread wind-pollinated plant that blooms at the same time as goldenrod. Looking at the two plants side by side, it's easy to see that ragweed is wind pollinated, with its little green flowers hanging down from its armpits and swaying in the breeze, whereas goldenrod is covered in bees, who are in turn covered in its pollen.

There's a staggering number of species of goldenrod (*Solidago spp.*), and you can use any species for medicine as long as chewing on the leaf dries your mouth out unpleasantly right away. Harvest goldenrod by cutting the stem with pruners. Choose flowers that



are about to open; they will continue to open as they dry. Chop goldenrod up and tincture it fresh at 1:2 75%, or hang the stems in a dark, cool place to dry for tea.

**Nettles:** I'm sorry to repeat myself, but nettle is so wonderful against allergies that it would be herbal sacrilege not to mention it here. Nettle is a cooling anti-inflammatory strength-builder (like honey!) that is a famous tonic against seasonal allergies and allergies that manifest themselves in skin and mucous membranes. Using nettles in your allergy syrup requires some planning ahead, since we harvest nettles in the spring. I use spring nettles tincture in allergy formula, or you can use dried nettles. It's important not to harvest nettle leaf once it blooms, as it can have weird effects on your hormones and irritate the kidneys. Please see the article in Issue #2 for more about harvesting nettles.

**Holy Basil:** Holy Basil, also called Tulsi, Tulasi, or Sacred Basil, is an **adaptogen**, an herb that balances different body systems by changing how our endocrine system (hormones) reacts to stress. Different adaptogens work best on different body systems, called having an **affinity**. Holy basil has an affinity for the immune system: if the immune system is overreacting, like with allergies, holy basil will calm it down; if it's underreacting and you're sick all the time, holy basil will jumpstart it. It also has an affinity for the nervous system (stress, anxiety, depression, memory) and digestive issues related to stress or immune function, among other uses. You should feel something immediately, but its real effects take time to kick in. Taken daily, holy basil can help retrain your immune system's lousy response to allergens.

Harvest holy basil when it's in full bloom by cutting it part of the way up the stem, at an angle above a leaf node, to give it a chance to come back this season. Hang dry for tea, or tincture fresh at 1:2 75%.

**Some Other Adaptogens:** Adaptogens are one of the main types of herbs that people order from far away because of their supposed miraculous properties. Again, there's something in your area that will work, you just have to figure out what it is. I love holy basil for allergy syrup because it's delicious, effective, and it's insect-pollinated (meaning you're not allergic to it and it's got trace pollen). That said, there are a lot of other adaptogens that work well on the immune system, so if your growing season is too short for holy basil, try something else. Nice cold climate adaptogens include artist's conk (Northern reishi, *Ganoderma applanatum* or *tsugae*, which is milder), chaga fungus (*Inonotus obliquus*), licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota* or *G. glabra*), and schisandra (*S. chinensis*). If you can't grow holy basil, maybe one of these will be your herb.

**Custom 4<sup>th</sup> herb:** Choose a fourth herb that tailors the formula to your allergies, specifically. If you are prone to wet, drippy congestion, you can add a strong drying decongestant like bee balm or cayenne tincture. If you get all dried out, use an herb that will moisten and soothe mucous membranes, like violet, mullein or borage—use moistening herbs fresh or dried, but never in a tincture since the compounds you want are water-soluble.

#### Seasonal Allergy Syrup Recipe

In its simplest form, syrup is medicinal tea mixed with sweetener. This one is made to

work well and last for a long time. It contains tea, honey, and tincture, yielding a delicious, potent medicine. It tastes like medicinal candy and is safe for kids. Yields about 15 ounces.

#### You will need:

- 6 oz raw local honey
- Goldenrod, 2 T fresh
- Holy Basil, 2 T fresh
- Nettles, 1-2 T dried
- Your 4<sup>th</sup> herb, ½ T dried or 1 T fresh

1 oz each of the following tinctures:

- Goldenrod
- Holy Basil
- Nettles

#### Instructions:

1. Heat honey in the top of a double boiler over low heat.
2. Add ½ of each herb listed above to honey, total roughly 3-4 T herbs. This is flexible and should be adjusted to taste.
3. Cover and heat on low for at least 1 hour. Do not allow temperature to rise above 110 degrees. I infuse it all day, but this isn't strictly necessary. The longer you heat the honey, the better it will be.
4. As honey is infusing, put the rest of the herbs in a glass jar and pour in 6 oz of boiling water, then cover and steep (infuse).
5. When honey and water are both fragrant and you're sick of waiting, strain honey and infusion together into a quart jar.
6. Let mixture cool, then add tinctures. Volume can be adjusted to taste but syrups should taste like they have alcohol in them.
7. Label, cover label with packing tape so ink doesn't run, and store in a cool, dark pantry or the fridge. To prevent spoilage, only use clean spoons to reach into your syrup jar.

Read more about medicinal uses of honey, in-depth explanations of ideas touched on in this article, & a whole lot more about making your own medicine at [oldwaysherbal.com/blog](http://oldwaysherbal.com/blog).

Juliette Abigail Carr RN BSN is a clinical herbalist, teacher, and homesteader in rural Vermont. Contact her at [oldwaysherbal.com/blog](http://oldwaysherbal.com/blog) or [facebook.com/oldwaysherbal](https://www.facebook.com/oldwaysherbal)



"Janky Odd Jobs DIY Temp Service"

Well friends, it's about that time when we start concentrating on making money because your firewood's green, and it's past spring clean-up so your trash removal business has dwindled. And now you're broke ass.

We should actually call this series "get poor slower schemes". Anyways.

When I first moved rurally we found out that resumes don't mean jack shit and decided that we could make money doing odd jobs. It actually worked quite well and I started turning people away because I was too busy working. Even friends that were passing through town at the time could work and make some money.

is how we did it:

- You need a badass poster.

The more badder the ass, the better it works. Make it colourful, use a computer program or simply use markers to make your poster. Try to avoid it looking like a child's grade 1 classroom project or you will only get lawns to mow and leaves to rake, and that's not the point. You are looking to do work for money. Legit work for legit money. Make sure your phone number is written somewhere HUGE and say something like "We Do Odd Jobs". Always say WE, it makes it seem like you are not alone and some mysterious people have your back.

Don't bother with the little tear-your-number-off tabs, those things are bullshit. Make them write your number down. They are able, and then they won't lose such a tiny piece of paper. Now go fly your sign and wait for your first customer.

-You need a vehicle. (Or not)

Here is a funny one. You don't actually need a vehicle to do odd jobs. One of your stipulations could be that you must get a ride there and back. We have had people drive for 30 or more minutes to pick somebody up, feed them lunch, pay them, and drop them back off at the house. All in a day's work. You just have to negotiate and you never know, maybe you can work off an old truck in somebody's yard.

-Earn your keep.

Ask for a decent amount of money. Find out what the customer wants you to do, then determine your wage per hour. 15\$? 18\$? 20\$? Whatever you ask for, make sure you are worth that. Work hard, because in the country a good reputation is better than a resume. You will end up getting repeat customers. It might be a good idea to write down what you charge folks so you can reference it.

You know "Old man Wilson paid us 20\$ an hour for roofing his shed."

-Jump in over your head.

Dive right into any job. If you don't know how to do it, just ask. It is perfectly ok to not know something.

Pretending you know something you don't is a bad idea, and will make you uncool. Being willing to learn and being honest with your knowledge will teach you more than you can imagine. But enough with the life lesson. Let's go to work.

So your odd jobs business is bumping and you are doing things you never dreamed of.

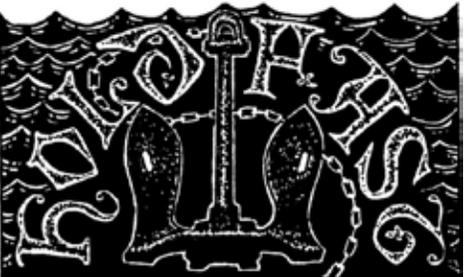
Grave digger, stone picker, wood chuckin' bar singer.

And you are making money. Not only that, but you are your own boss and can quit your job anytime you would like. It is perfect for the average patched up and broke country grinder.

"Remember kids, stay in school, don't do drugs or you will never get a job and amount to something"

H B

Haybale Mike is a darn hard barganin' gardenin' redneck. He lives in Eastern Saskatchewan with his family.



You're richer than you know.

Last issue, I talked about hybrid vegetables. They dominate the seed market, and they've been on my mind. To recap, hybrids are bred in isolation, from different parent varieties. The first generation offspring from the pairing—called F1 seeds, for filial generation one—may be bred for disease resistance, vigor, rapid or uniform setting of fruit, climate adaptability, color, and other characteristics; but they're not bred for taste and they aren't bred for nutrient density.

Hybrid breeding programs are mostly initiated by produce companies, the ultimate goals being extended shelf-life, improved transportability, less expensive pesticide and herbicide regimes, and identical-looking vegetables—all market factors intended to lower overhead costs and generate brand recognition. Grocery shoppers don't like "irregularity," like lopsided tomatoes, or peppers in different shades. Hybrids have been good for corporate shareholders.

But, as I mentioned in the previous column, the seeds produced by hybrids don't grow "true to type" due to the laws of genetics. Recessive traits stack up; in the second generation—F2—the genetics diverge or "segregate," like when two brunettes have a blond kid. With successive generations, the desired traits of the hybrid plant are statistically less and less likely to manifest. If you're down for a gardening adventure, this is no big deal. If you're trying to live sustainably, in balance with the environment, outside of the capitalist economy—or if you're just poor—this is a screw job. You have to go back to the seed producers year after year to get your blight-resistant, or whatever-resistant seeds. \$\$.

There's also the problem of reduced resistance to pathogen mutation; maybe I'll get into that in the next issue. One of the perverse twists of hybridization programs is that now, because of hybrids' success for industrial agriculturists, the original, naturally propagated varieties of fruits and vegetables have been severely neglected by commercial seed producers. Care of these old varieties involves continual observation, organization to prevent cross-pollination, and rouging out the weak or deficient plants. Maintaining natural, "open-pollinated" seeds isn't profitable enough in the inter-continental produce market. In many cases, such as broccoli, cabbage, squash, and cucumber, gardeners are better off growing hybrids because few people are bothering to look after the old heirloom varieties that fed Granny and Gramps, despite the superior flavor and nutrition of the old breeds.

The market factors surrounding hybrids also have seriously shitty ramifications for the biological diversity of our planet. In the middle of the last century, there were 7,000 varieties of apples grown across the world, now there are only about 1,000 left. In 1984, seed catalogs offered over 5,000 non-hybrid varieties, each with their own resistances and flavor characteristics, many perfectly suited for their native regions. Fourteen years later, 88 percent of those vegetables were no longer available. Some went underground—you can get 'em from old what's his name, if he has enough, and if he likes you—but many are extinct; a unique genetic expression,

like the Beothuk tribe or the passenger pigeon, gone forever.

Focusing on just a few profitable varieties has made seed company executives a lot of dough. Diversity for the sake of enriching the experience of life has no cash value. But open-pollinated seeds make you rich. The incomprehensible biodiversity of our celestial orb belongs to you. And me. All of us actually. Like oxygen and hydrogen, it is the shared asset of every Earth dweller—a COMMONS. It is life itself, sustenance, valuable beyond any estimation of monetary systems, and it's yours.

The crowding-out of nature started innocently enough, with traditional selective breeding taken to the next level. But the net effect of hybrid breeding has been to bring biological diversity, this birthright of us all, under the yoke of THE MARKET.

The market, in congruence with the regulatory powers of THE STATE, already influences so much of our lives, our interactions with each other and with our environment. Yet, in keeping with the model of capital growth—returns to the enterprise and dividends to the shareholders—the market will continue to consume our shared wealth, the trees, the water, the seeds; anywhere a tollbooth can be erected a fee will be collected. Proprietary hybrids represent a privatization of the commons, a patent on life. They're converting our inheritance into capital.

The commons surround us, but few people notice or think about them on the day to day. The most endangered commons are gifts of the planet—air, water, soil, seeds, crude oil, fisheries, forests—the elements upon which we absolutely rely in order to survive, or at least, the things on which our empires subsist. We share these things with our neighbors, and we are entrusted with their preservation for every generation that will come after. And not just for We the People, but for all the creatures: the capitalists, caterpillars, crocodiles, the sharks, socialists, and squirrels, apes and anarchists, narwhal and narcissist.

More numerous are the commons that society has wrought, the pieces of the world that make government and a "free economy" possible: sidewalks, roads, language, law, internet, the stock market; children's stories are a commons, and cultural myths, the sum total of human knowledge is a common asset. Even the electromagnetic spectrum is a commons, and in the familiar pattern, it has been taken, without compensation to the collective owners, and saturated with noise selling plastic dolls and tanks and politicians.

For most of us, the phrase "the commons" brings to mind English peasants of the Tudor era being walled out of the open land, on which they depended for farming, hunting, fishing, and grazing. With commoners evicted from the fields and their villages razed by landowners, the modern concept of "property" as an extension of feudal land tenure began in Britannia. Even against the will of kings, the enclosure of the commons persevered. Nervous at the thought of so many displaced and desperate plebeians, with idle hands and angry hearts, several anti-enclosure acts were introduced in the 1400s and 1500s. The period was fraught with agrarian revolts when these laws proved ineffective.

Enclosure took on its contemporary aspect with the introduction of the Factories gave those country folk somewhere a new form of economic enslavement was branded onto the body of humanity. The debasement of commoners continues today, and

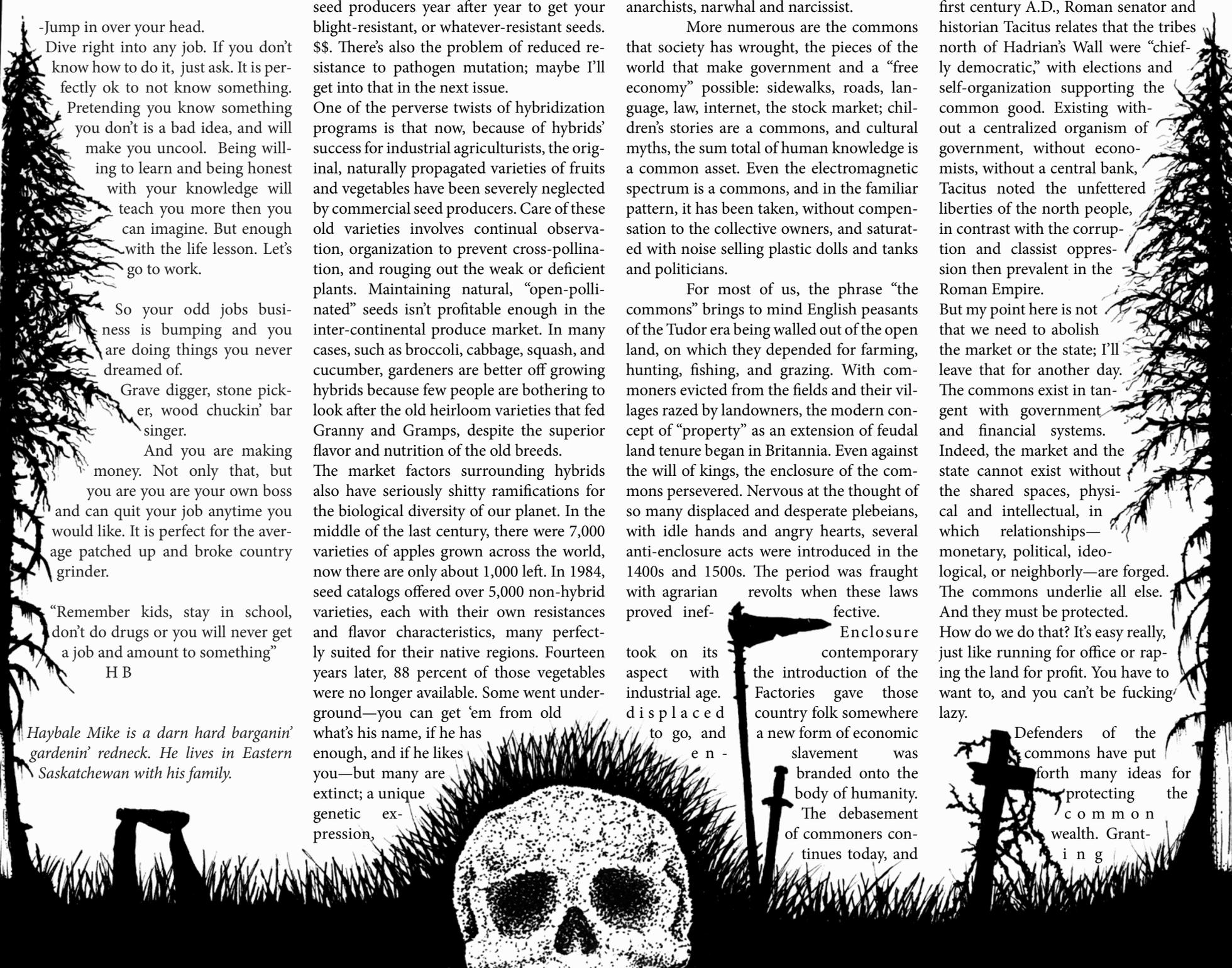
privatization has grown beyond the physical realm to control the flow of digitized data, intellectual property, and even verbs and pronouns (I'm Lovin' It).

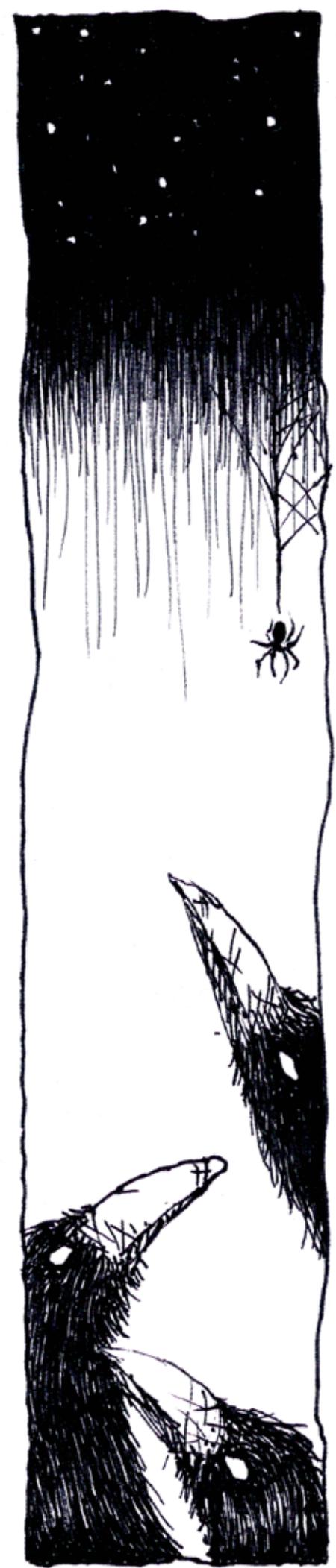
For many, mention of the commons also brings to mind ecologist Garrett Hardin's 1968 paper "The Tragedy of the Commons," which advances an oft-quoted but historically inaccurate economic theory decrying the commons as an unsustainable system. Hardin's concern with this paper was overpopulation, and he started with a sound assumption: people are fucking selfish. He argued that individuals would utilize the commons according only to their own self-interest, leading to overuse and, ultimately, the destruction of common resources. But Hardin's theory, like that of 19th century mathematician William Forster Lloyd, from which Hardin borrowed, was based on an algorithmic extrapolation of data that was taken out of context from the reality of agriculture on the commons. He rightly proclaimed that enclosures of the commons were infringements of personal liberties, but, with the arrogance typical of historians looking back on their wretched and unevolved forebears, he discounted his ancestors' capacity for self-management. In fact, use of the commons was heavily regulated.

The commoners had refined and practical codes. Of course they did. If there is one element that was abundant then, but scarce now, it's common sense. The villagers of old knew through observation how much was too much and how much was enough. Grazing and farming allotments were limited by community ordinance and enforced by community officers. Sustainability was not a watchword, but an absolute necessity for the continuation of life. Another now-rare element was in effect: responsibility, both personal and communal. Commoners cared for and protected each other, directly or indirectly, to preserve freedom and abundance, and because divided, they died, by famine, sickness, or predation. In his ethnography of Caledonia (in what is now Scotland) in the first century A.D., Roman senator and historian Tacitus relates that the tribes north of Hadrian's Wall were "chiefly democratic," with elections and self-organization supporting the common good. Existing without a centralized organism of government, without economists, without a central bank, Tacitus noted the unfettered liberties of the north people, in contrast with the corruption and classist oppression then prevalent in the Roman Empire.

But my point here is not that we need to abolish the market or the state; I'll leave that for another day. The commons exist in tangent with government and financial systems. Indeed, the market and the state cannot exist without the shared spaces, physical and intellectual, in which relationships—monetary, political, ideological, or neighborly—are forged. The commons underlie all else. And they must be protected. How do we do that? It's easy really, just like running for office or raping the land for profit. You have to want to, and you can't be fucking lazy.

Defenders of the commons have put forth many ideas for protecting the common wealth. Granting





know it, is the temporal commons. This is the time outside of that we spend plugged into the market economy, outside of *work*; it's the time we care for our families and neighbors, raise our children, and nurture ourselves with hobbies or books. Without these endeavors, the market and the state disintegrate. Time is our fundamental resource, our true capital, the basis of all freedoms, of all efforts. And the market consumes a larger percentage of our stockpile of time than ever before. Time banking is a way to reclaim our hours from the market. In this system, time is given, in babysitting, in yard work, in caring for the old or sick, and that time is returned when it's needed. Or better yet, donated to the people who need it more, not all life has to exist in quid pro quo, and the satisfaction of helping your community is it's own kind of reward.

There are a thousand ways to reclaim your wealth, too many to mention in this space, and more conceived every day. I highly recommend investigating the work of Jonathan Rowe, unadroitly paraphrased here, and Heather Menzies, to start, and I'll leave you with an introduction to a fascinating individual, a champion of freedom, a gardener.

Alan Kapuler turned away from a prestigious career in molecular biology and began saving seeds, eventually gathering many thousands of varieties. He went on to found Peace Seeds and a few other public-domain seed companies, and established breeding programs to increase the nutritional value of open-pollinated varieties and to develop plants hardy outside of their usual climates. He's adding to the biodiversity of the planet, without chemicals, and largely without machines. But there's another thing. He's reclaiming hybrids. Painstakingly, over many generations, he's unlocking the traits of those patented plants, establishing self-sustaining open-pollinated counterparts, and giving them back to the Earth. He is a hacker, working not in lines of code, but in the material of life itself. Alan is open-sourcing the animating essence, snatching diversity back from the clutches of THE MARKET, and multiplying the common wealth of us all.

Alan Kapuler is a true revolutionary, and he does it with dirt and some hand tools, and you can do it too.

It starts with seeing the commons, recognizing their value, and recognizing your connection to the rest of us. It starts with saving seed, and sharing time; with saving your money, with bartering, creating alternative economies, and shrinking the power of banks and industry. It starts with taking an active interest in *our* future, with seeing beyond differences and forging alliances. Small steps beget strong communities. In the most tangible sense, this is a fight for liberty; we'll have to work together.

*Thaddeus Christian is a journalist and homesteader living in Kansas. If you have a comment, hit him at [thaddeus.christian@gmail.com](mailto:thaddeus.christian@gmail.com).*



Insects are available in abundance in nearly all North American ecosystems during warmer seasons, and if you know where to look, colony-forming species can even be found during winter months. Insects are highly nutritious (they contain more protein per gram of weight than many livestock meats) and common species can be harvested in large quantities without endangering sustainable population levels. If you can work past the North American stigma against eating 'bugs', you will likely learn to enjoy their delicious flavours.

The groups of species I will be discussing are the grasshoppers, ants, and "grubs" (beetle larvae). I will leave it to you to research

which species in your area are toxic to eat, as one always should before trying a new food source. Spiders are the one type of insect that I have heard you should avoid eating as a general rule. I would also avoid centipedes and millipedes, and other types of insects that can possess a venomous bite or sting. I have been eating insects for a couple years, and will outline some tips for finding and preparing the previously mentioned edible varieties.

Grasshoppers can be harvested individually by hand, but a good method for quickly collecting larger numbers is to use a fine mesh net, or lacking a net (I've never had the need to buy or make one), an empty five gallon pail. Find a patch of knee-deep wild grasses, and while holding the pail horizontally, sweep the mouth of the pail through the grass. The idea is to shake the 'hoppers off the blades of grass and into your bucket. Grasshoppers can be eaten whole and raw, fried in stir-fries and curries, baked into casseroles, etc. My favourite way to eat them is to chop off the head to ensure death, impale on a thin twig or wire, and roast over an open flame. They have a delicious nutty flavour and are a good snack on the job site during hot summer afternoons, great with fresh picked wild raspberries.

I don't have a lot of experience eating grubs, but would like to mention them anyway because their exceptional flavour is at such odds with their bloated appearance and reputation for squirming, writhing grossness. The species I usually eat is the aspen borer beetle (*Saperda calcarata*) which I find in the sapwood of the trembling aspen, usually while splitting firewood. The grubs measure one inch in length and 1/8 inch in diameter, with a uniform yellow-white colouring, except for an orange-ish 'head' at one end. I eat them raw in summer and frozen in winter, straight from the wood. They are like grapes, having a slightly elastic skin, and very juicy flesh. However, their flavour has none of the tartness of a grape; they are sweet and have a refreshing character that reminds me of birch sap or a clear-flowing spring. My experiences with the aspen borer beetle have left me curious to try other larvae.

Ants are by far my favourite insect to eat. They are relatively easy to collect in large quantities, and both the adults and their unhatched young can be eaten. A simple and easy method for collecting unhatched ant 'eggs' involves only a shovel, a tarp or sheet of fabric, and an anthill. Spread your tarp out beside your chosen anthill and shovel the anthill onto the tarp, spreading the hill out loosely. Watch for pissed-off ants trying to climb up your shovel handle or into your pant legs. Ants bite, especially when you have just destroyed their home. Next take one edge of the tarp and lift it straight up, letting the debris slide away from you, until you have around a foot of clean tarp all along the edge you are holding. Fold the edge of the tarp you are holding onto inward and lay it flat, creating a long fold along one edge that has no anthill debris inside of it. Repeat this process on the other three sides of the tarp to maximize your yield. The adult worker ants will carry eggs out of the debris on the tarp and deposit them safely under the folds you have created. All you need do now is wait for the ants to sort their eggs out of the mess, and then scoop up the eggs for eating. Both the adults and eggs have a sweet-and-sour flavour, with the adults having a fuller flavour. One of my favourite surprises during the winter months is when I am splitting firewood and find tunnels full of frozen ants inside a log. They can then be picked out of their tunnels with the end of a twig, with no danger of being bitten. Like bees, ants try to survive the cold winter months by clustering together in their nests (in the ground or in tree trunks in the wild) for warmth. Keeping this in mind, one can find ant nests in the winter by learning to identify the particular species of trees, and which state of decay a tree is in, that your local species of ants like to inhabit. Here is a delicious recipe for Yam and Pea-

nut Stew with Ants. The particular species I like to use are 1/4 inch in length, with a red head and thorax, and a black abdomen (the ass end).

Yam and Peanut Stew with Ants  
 15 ml (1 tbsp) vegetable oil  
 1 large onion, chopped  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 15 ml (3 tsp) fresh ginger root, minced  
 10 ml (2 tsp) ground cumin  
 10 ml (2 tsp) ground coriander  
 5 ml (1 tsp) ground cinnamon  
 1 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cloves  
 3 medium tomatoes, chopped  
 Approx. 1125 g (2 1/2 lbs) yams, peeled and chopped  
 1 carrot, chopped  
 1 jalapeño pepper, seeds removed and chopped  
 1250 ml (5 cups) broth  
 5 ml (1 tsp) salt  
 250 ml (1 cup) peanut butter  
 0.5 ml (1/8 tsp) cayenne pepper  
 30 ml (2 tbsp) brown sugar  
 125 to 250 ml (1/2 to 1 cup) frozen adult ants, or raw ant 'eggs'

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Sauté the onion until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Mix in the garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, and cloves. Stir in the tomatoes, yams, carrot, celery, and jalapeño and continue to cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes. Add broth, salt, and ants. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Stir in peanut butter, cayenne pepper, and brown sugar and cook until heated through. Makes enough food for 4 to 6 people.

*Mad Yak is from the Mixedwood Boreal Forest in Manitoba, and hopes to one day be killed and eaten by wild animals'*

## GUEST COLUMN BY LUGNUT

This is hopefully going to be the first of a regular column on building. Building is what I do and I'm pretty passionate about it, so I have high standards and like to do things as best I can. My main reason for getting into building was as an understanding of how much our built environment can affect our mental health, and how empowering it can be to acquire the skills to change things for the better. I have seen a lot of enthusiastically built cabins that have lacked basic structural understanding or design ideas that could make that creativity and spirit go a lot further. I'll try to pass on some of what I know.

This issue I'm going to explain how to do a set of pier footings, which is the simplest and cheapest way of doing a foundation, but not necessarily the best. It basically involves digging a hole below frost line, filling it with gravel and plonking down some pre-cast piers. You will probably need the following tools: shovel, tape measure, small level, bucket, wheelbarrow and something heavy with a handle, e.g. a sledge hammer.

The siting and orientation of your building as well as the size and shape are major design issues that I'm not going to cover here, so let's assume you have a design for a cabin that is a 20' x 10' rectangle, and you have a flat spot for it to go on.

The first two things you need to know are the type of soil you have and the depth that the ground can freeze to in winter. What's underfoot can range from bedrock to gravel, sand, silt or clay and anything in between. The frostline can vary from nothing in

legal protections to forests and waterways in the form of trusts is one. These constructs would give the commons recourse to abuse, and reduce the economic viability of corporations that make huge profits by wasting or polluting our water, air, and land. If fracking outfits were to pay a fee to the populace, based on their consumption of unknown millions of gallons of fresh water, a common property that they plunder in their quest for shitty export fuels, their business model would quickly transform. The other side of that formula, is that the natural gas, the bitumen, the things they pull out of the ground so inelegantly, are not theirs to sell; the grids and fences of surface "property" have little bearing on the structure of bedrock and aquifers 3,000 meters below. In the state of Alaska, they've met the people halfway on oil. The Alaska Permanent Fund was established by constitutional amendment in 1976; a small percentage of oil revenue is returned to the constituency in the form of annual dividends. It's certainly not a perfect solution, and still less than fair to the future generations who will have no oil fields to work in and no bar oil for their chainsaws, but it's something.

Another form of the commons, more abstract but absolutely critical to society as we



Florida to over six feet deep in the Canadian prairies. The further you have to dig the more work your footings are going to be, so sucks to be you, Manitoba. [Editors Note: The editors happily live in Manitoba, and there foundations gave them no trouble. \*glare\* ~gretch] I am lucky enough to live in Sinixt territory in southern BC where our frostline is at about 30" so that is what this article is based on. You can check with your local building department for what it is in your area. When soil freezes, any of the water in it will expand, which will disrupt your footings, move framing, crack plasters and throw things out of level. It's powerful stuff and your hope of it not happening to you will be crushed by nature.

Rock doesn't really hold water but you need to make sure you are hitting bedrock and not just a movable rock, gravel drains really well, sand less so, and silt and clay will hold onto a lot of moisture and so make them highly susceptible to frost-heave. However, if you do have clay it could be a bonus for other phases of your building project. It's magical stuff but you don't want it freezing under your foundation.

So, what you want to do is decide how many footings you're going to need. Since a pier footing requires a framed floor, the spacing of the piers depends on what size beams are going to span the piers and hold your walls up. A good rule of thumb is one every eight to ten feet, so for this cabin you should do at least six piers, and make sure you understand what size your framing members need to be.

Pre-cast piers come in different sizes and look like truncated pyramids, some have holes, some have notches in them, some don't. I usually use the ones with holes so I can put a metal bracket in the hole for my posts. Using piers like this may or may not meet code requirements. If your building is unpermitted, great. If it is permitted you may want to look at getting it classified as a garage, out-building or seasonal cabin, which have different requirements than a year-round dwelling. The problem with piers is mostly to do with the crawl-space underneath the building. If you have short piers and run electrical or plumbing underneath and don't have enough space to get in and work on them, that can be a problem. Typically the code calls for a two foot minimum space. You can design your building so that your services run in the walls, or you may not have any, so let's assume that's the case. I recommend using the bigger piers, 12" ones, as it gives you more airflow under the building and a little more working space. The wooden frame should be at least 12" off the ground underneath the centre of the building to keep it away from ground moisture, and 8" on the outside to prevent damage from splashing rain and snow build-up. Your roof overhang has a big impact on these things too.

Once you've decided how many piers you want, you need to do a layout of where they will go. Measure the building out on the ground and mark the centres of the piers; make sure the diagonals of your rectangle are the same length or

else you will be building a parallelogram. Now put on a boy-beater, crank the mosh-core and start digging. This is best done during a summer heatwave, with no shade, water or hat. The diameter of the hole should be about twice the size of the pier. Keep digging until the bottom of the hole is below the frost-line, and then go to the next hole and dig some more. If you find bedrock near the bottom, great, if it's near the top, you'll have to do something completely different. If you're lucky enough to find yourself digging through gravel, stop and celebrate, you're done, but you have to make sure there's no soil or organic material in the hole.

Once the holes are dug, fill them back in with gravel. If you're buying it from a pit, it will be graded according to size. 3/4" is ideal, easy to shovel around and level, but might cost a bit more. Anything up to 6" can be used but you'll want at least some small stuff for the top to make your life easier. Keep tamping the gravel as you fill the hole to make sure it's all compacted and won't settle after you've started building. Tamping means beating it with something heavy until it doesn't move any more. Now plonk your piers on top and you are almost done. You should make sure that they are level and check their location again. The beauty of this system is that there is room for adjustment as you start framing. As you put your posts and beams in you can get a much more accurate picture of plumb, level and square and move the piers accordingly. Typically the posts are installed and plumbed and then the floor beams are attached level onto the posts, as opposed to adjusting all the piers to be level with each other. I'll leave the framing for another article. One thing that's really important to mention is to never attach wood to concrete without some sort of barrier between them. Moisture from the concrete will wick out into the wood and get trapped, causing it to rot. Major headache if you overlook this step. You can use sill gasket (a white foam sold especially for this), tarpaper, bits of old asphalt shingles or anything flat and waterproof to separate the two materials.

If you have suitable rocks on the land you may want to use them instead of concrete piers. You'll need to mortar them or dry-stack them together really well, and you'll have a harder time attaching your framing than with concrete, but if you want to do things old-school, go ahead, just make sure the rocks are big enough to distribute the weight, everything is solid and you have a plan for how your framing will interact with the rocks.

If you are building a bigger house, or want to have a floor that is connected to the ground rather than suspended in the air, I recommend looking into rubble-trench grade beams, which are similar to what I have described here but form a perimeter around the whole building. They also require formwork, rebar, and drain-tile. I'll try to look at that in detail another time. You can also do a dry-stack or mortared stone wall footing, which can look amazing and is the most traditional way of doing things, but will probably take you a couple of summers to complete. Perfect if you're planning on building a cob house by hand over ten years.

I'll finish with a section on making your own concrete. Wet concrete usually goes into wooden formwork in the shape of whatever it is you are going to build, which could be just about any shape, including piers. Concrete is made from cement which has a really high embodied energy and is one of the worst polluters in terms of building products, but is also one of the most useful. You have to make your own choices about how much you feel like using on your projects. The horror stories about how much CO2 it releases is mostly due to skyscrapers and dams, not punks building little shacks.

A basic concrete mix has three ingredients, Portland cement, sand and gravel in a 1:2:3 ratio. Portland cement comes from processing limestone in big horrible factories and is bagged and shipped to your hardware store. Gravel and sand are dug out of the ground, usually at gravel pits which will be dotted around the countryside. The gravel is generally clean enough to use as is, but the sand may or may not have organic materials in it; the pit person will tell you. You might want to rinse it before using it, depending on how picky you are. You might be able to get a mixture of sand and gravel straight from the pit that has the right proportions for you to use.

You can mix by hand or in a mixer. A wheelbarrow is often the easiest way to mix by hand. Add the ingredients with a shovel and dry mix together. Cement is highly alkaline and really fine and can burn your lungs, so don't breathe it in. When mixed with water it can also burn eyes and skin so make sure you wash it off eyes immediately and off your skin as soon as is practical. Gloves are definitely recommended. Once it's mixed dry, start adding water slowly and keep mixing. It's very easy to add too much water which messes your mix up, so add a little at a time and keep going until it resembles a thick soup that slops off the shovel but doesn't run off easily or have dry bits in it. Depending

on temperature and moisture conditions you probably have about thirty minutes to work it, so get it into your formwork, vibrate the forms to make sure it settles and doesn't have any voids and keep mixing, you don't want to get the last batch mixed and then find out your first batch is gone hard without having smoothed it out, so keep an eye on things. Depending on the size of your project, it can get stressful so extra hands are great. Mixing and moving concrete is heavy hard work, so don't overestimate how much you can do at once and be nice to your back. Carrying buckets and pushing wheelbarrows of wet concrete sucks big time. If you have a lot of concrete to do and have never done it before, you will probably greatly underestimate how much time and energy will go into mixing it by hand. Do yourself a favour and get a quote on having it delivered by truck and ask someone with more experience how much labour they think it will take to do your project before jumping into it.

Getting sand and gravel to your site can be a pain in the arse, so if you only have a small amount to do, you can buy bags of dry concrete mix at the store. The easiest way to mix this up is in a five gallon bucket. Add water, then the mix, then drill it with a powerful drill and mixing bit until it's the right consistency and carry it to wherever it's needed.

That's it for this episode, hope it helps, and feel free to email me building questions at [beyondthebale@gmail.com](mailto:beyondthebale@gmail.com)

Lugnut

*Sean Breathnach lives in Sinixt Territory, southeastern BC, and works as a carpenter and natural builder.*

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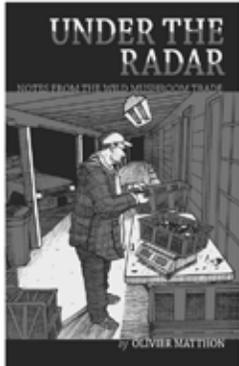
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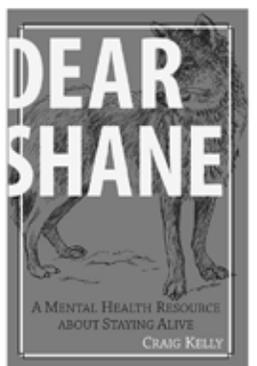
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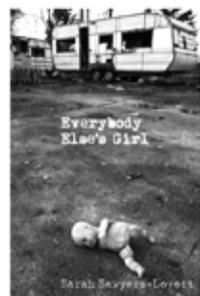
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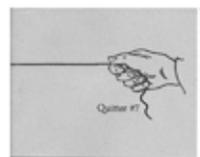
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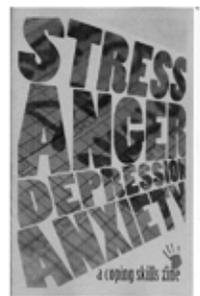
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# DIRT TAN REMOVAL 101: DIY SOAP MAKING

Dirt Tan Removal 101: DIY Soap Making  
By Shauna Lynn Russell

Rural punks aren't necessarily known for our immaculate hygiene, but everybody's got to scrub down and get that dirt tan off sometime, so what better way to do it than with your very own homemade soap. Making your own soap can be rewarding; not only is it a fascinating chemistry experiment but you get to know exactly what's in the stuff. Plus you can personalize every batch to match your preferences for color, fragrance and additives. I started making my own soap a year ago and I am by no means a professional but I have learned some of the in's and out's as well as some tricks and terms I am happy to share.

To get started there are a few basics you need to know. First off there are different techniques you can use at home. The most common is **cold process**, it's called this because it requires no heating once the ingredients are mixed together; the only disadvantage of cold process is it has a longer curing time than other techniques. The second is **hot process**; it involves heating the ingredients over a low heat for a few hours. The last is **melt and pour**, this is when you purchase a brick of already made soap and glycerin, melt it, and add your own ingredients. Its advantage is that you don't have to deal with lye which can be quite scary at first. (Although, I would like to make it clear that all soap contains lye or rather lye has been used to produce it.) Lye is a caustic chemical that can severely burn skin, but properly made soap should never do this.

So how does this chemical become soap? To explain that, you need to understand a little bit of chemistry; **Saponification** is the scientific term used to describe the chemical reaction of making soap, this occurs when you mix a fat or oil (triglyceride/ base) with lye (alkali/ acid) in a liquid carrier (usually water or mostly water). When you mix a base with an acid it will form a neutral (remember this stuff?). When this is done with lye and a fat or oil, the outcome is a salt (soap) and glycerin.

Now you that get the chemistry, I can explain the math! But don't worry, this part isn't hard if you use an online tool called a **saponification calculator**. This doohickey is used to calculate the amount of fat, lye and water you need to use to produce soap. Fats and oils all have differing **saponification values** (or **SAP values**). By punching in the weight of the oils and fats you choose, the SAP calculator will tell you how much lye is required to reach 100% saponification. However, you won't want all of your oils to saponify fully, this is why there is another calculation that can be made called **super fatting** or **lye discount**. In finished soap there always needs to be a little bit of oil or fat left over for moisturizing and lather properties; this leftover oil is called the **emollient**. This is generally expressed as a percentage; you will want to super fat around 5% and even up to 10% but any more than this can get tricky. If you super fat too much the oil left in your soap can go rancid. If your soap goes bad, you can tell by what is referred to as **dreaded orange spots** (or **DOS**). If you do not have access to the internet to use an online saponification calculator I would recommend relying on someone else's recipe; although I am sure it is very possible to calculate SAP value without this tool, I have no idea how to do it, and it probably involves a lot of real math.

The next thing you are going to need is equipment. All you need really is some old kitchen ware; although you should never use anything for soap making that you plan to cook with again, ensuring no caustic chemicals ever cross contaminate into your food. The first item you will need is an accurate

digital kitchen scale; getting exact readings will be necessary so don't fool around with a dial scale. Next you'll want a handheld immersion blender; it is possible to make soap by just stirring, but this takes a really long time, so to save yourself from sore muscles this is a necessary tool. You will need a vessel to hold your lye solution; it should be heat-proof such as Pyrex. Combining water and lye creates an endothermic reaction and it will get pretty hot; a good rule is if your vessel can stand holding boiling water for ten minutes it should hold up to the heat. Next is a pot to melt any solid fats as well as a mixing bowl, a spoon, couple of extra cups for measurement and a good thermometer; you can use a digital, dial or candy thermometer. Last of all is a mold and a knife. I use a cake tin lined with wax paper but you can get fancy and build a mold with detachable sides and make it the size you would prefer.

After you have assembled your equipment you'll need ingredients. There are a variety of types of fat and oil you can use, all of which will have different properties. Common ones are tallow, lard, shortening, coconut, castor, peanut, safflower, sesame or vegetable oil; these are available at grocery stores or pharmacies. Some others that soap makers use are palm oil, apricot kernel oil, emu oil and avocado oil but these may be less available. Fats like shea butter, cocoa butter and almond oil improve moisturizing properties and can be added in small amounts to recipes. You will probably want scent and color; for natural scents you can use **essential oils** or for a cheaper option go with **fragrance oils**. Color can be bought at craft stores and there are tons of different techniques for adding multiple colors which can be fun to play around with. Some natural colorants are coffee, turmeric, molasses, beet root, clay, spirulina and seaweed powder. Dried herbs or flowers can add esthetic value and for exfoliate, coffee grounds, pumice, loofa, lavender buds or oatmeal work well. If you are having trouble acquiring ingredients locally, there are tons of online soap making sites. Look around though, check health food stores and craft shops and ask if they can order things for you.

Now the last but most important thing you are going to need is lye, which can be a bit tricky to get your hands on. I buy mine from a local hardware store where it is kept behind the counter. The first time I bought it the not-so-shy store proprietor came right out and asked me if I was planning to make crystal meth. Shocked, I nervously explained I wanted to make soap and she has been happy to sell it to me since. That being said there are many places that have recently restricted the sale of lye and some stores no longer carry it. It is out there though, if you can't find it at any local hardware stores, try online or ask if they can order you some. You should always ensure that what you are buying is 100% pure lye; somewhere on the container it should state that it contains NaOH, KOH or both. It's sold in the form of crystals or flakes. Most likely what you will buy is NaOH or sodium hydroxide, also known as caustic soda; the other kind, KOH or potassium hydroxide is also known as potash, which is less available. Both will work equally well for soap making but KOH produces a softer soap. If you are feeling extra crafty you can also make your own KOH by building a leaching barrel and filtering rain water through straw and wood ash.

There are some precautions I should alert you of about working with lye; this stuff is a caustic chemical and can be seriously scary if mishandled. First off, you should always wear rubber gloves, safety glasses, an apron, long sleeves and closed-toe shoes when working with lye. Ensure that when you are mixing lye and water you are in a well-ventilated area and you have tested your vessel for heat resistance. Always have a sufficient quantity of vinegar within an arm's reach; if

it gets on your skin vinegar can be poured on affected areas to neutralize the chemical burn (remember *Fight Club*?). When mixing water and lye, measure out water first then **ADD LYE** to it. Adding water to lye could cause it to "over react" meaning it could splatter, explode or erupt out of the container. The same precaution should be taken when adding the lye solution to the oils. Never use any containers or utensils that are made of tin, zinc or aluminum as lye will react to these elements. I recommend you avoid using metal utensils, bowls or unlined molds at all as heat transfers through metal efficiently and there is a good chance you could burn yourself. Don't let the lye scare you off, just use common sense and be aware that you are working with a caustic chemical.

Alright, so now you are ready to put this information into practice! I will start you off with a cold process recipe that contains ingredients easily obtained at local stores.

Ingredients:

300 grams (10.58 oz.) lard  
270 grams (9.52 oz.) olive oil  
30 grams (1.05 oz.) castor oil  
78 grams (2.75 oz.) NaOH  
228 grams (8.04 oz.) distilled water  
30-60 ml (1-2 oz.) fragrance

Start by assembling all of your equipment and put on your rubber gloves and safety gear.

Now mix your lye and water together. Place the vessel in the sink, measure out room temperature water and add the lye to it. Stir it using a disposable wooden skewer or an old chop stick. The lye is going to get really hot really fast, so just leave it be for a few minutes to cool while you heat your lard, olive oil and castor oil. Put them in a pot on the stove on low-medium heat until they reach 110 F, and check your lye; both need to be the same temperature when you mix them together. Pour your oils into a mixing

bowl then add the lye. Get your stick blender and blend away! It is best to use the blender in short bursts alternated with stirring, this way you won't burn out the motor on the machine. Immediately you will see the mixture start to become creamy as saponification begins to take place. Keep mixing until the mix reaches a state called **trace**. Trace is the point where the lye, water, and the oils have been emulsified and will not separate from one another; test for this by lifting up your mixer or spatula and drizzling some of mixture back on its surface. If it is ready you should be able to see the line for a few seconds before it disappears. Depending on the oils you use and your mixing efficiency this can take between 5- 25 minutes; with a soap containing lard it may be on the longer end of things. Once your mixture has reached trace you can add fragrance, color and any additives you would like. Give the mix a few short bursts with your mixer to incorporate everything throughout. Now pour the soap into the mold. It may still be fairly thin but that's ok, it will thicken up as the process completes. Wrap the mold in a blanket and store somewhere warm for 24 hours. After 24 hours the soap should be formed but it will still be quite soft. Remove it and cut into bars. Lay it out someplace to **cure** in the open air. Curing will allow the excess moisture to evaporate from the soap and it will improve in this time. A standard curing time is about 4 weeks, but if you don't want to wait for your first bar it should be safe to use within 48 hours.

So there you have it, this is a good simple starter recipe but with a little bit of practice and experimentation you will be able to play around and see what works best for you. Now get out there and get good and dirty, even if it's for no other reason than to come home and clean up!

## RURAL MAINE COMICS BY ISAAC ROYCELOS



# BREAST-FEEDING OUTSIDE THE BOX

by Aura Laforest

"That's how you can tell who the Mothers are," the nurse at the Children's Hospital told her colleague in training, "they're the ones walking across the hall with a breast hanging out and oblivious to it." The observation was made as I brought my own little one into the blood test area. I was that Mother.

And it's true; I've stopped thinking of my breasts as sexual objects. Their existence no longer has anything to do with feminism and has everything to do with feeding. Now they're affectionately nicknamed "Boob Café," "Titty Trattoria," "Breast's Breakfast Bar" and "Momma's Milk Bar" (whenever I use that last one the décor from the Milk Bar in Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange" comes to mind).

Anyone who's been through pre-natal classes or by-passed them in favour of a Dr. Sears book has obtained their catechism at the school of "breast is best". Seldom however do any bother mentioning that breast, when you start at the very least, is not necessarily easiest or even possible. Before it becomes both a wonderful bond and feeling, it can be very, very frustrating.

When my husband and I decided we would breastfeed while I was pregnant, we figured that it was a "plug and play" alternative with a cheaper price tag and better health benefits than formula feeding. There were visions of breasts over-flowing with milk in my head and the notion that my beautiful baby would lovingly suckle, cooing and gurgling, taking his fill and then returning three or four hours later. Fantasy I tell you – pure fantasy. Reality was far harsher.

Reality was a newborn in the hospital howling for a full twelve hour night while he suckled because there was only colostrum to be had and he was hungry. Reality was the lactation consultant telling me that I had to get the areola into his mouth when scars from multiple piercings had left my nipples sufficiently big that just getting one into the baby's mouth was a challenge. Reality was a gastro four days after giving birth, not only miserable and taxing to my already fragile nether-regions: it also ensured sufficient dehydration to dry up a budding milk supply.

The reality-check truly bitch-slapped me in the face at the one-week weigh-in when faced with a shrinking, screaming, starving baby and a nurse sounding the alarm, "you're going to have to supplement with formula." All of my well-built sand-castles were washed away in that sentence, helped by the tears rolling down my cheeks carrying my wounded pride. I must be a bad mother, I couldn't breastfeed (or so the postpartum hormones told me).

Since that day, I have found again the proverbial grain of salt and spoken to many women who have survived motherhood and confirmed to me that they too had trouble with their milk. The women of yore that are paraded as examples during breastfeeding indoctrination, with their broods of children having happily thrived on the titty, are myth just as surely as the fantasies that pregnant women have of the parents they will become.

My eighty-some year old neighbour and veteran mother of six stated quite flatly, "thank goodness for the bottle. They would've all died otherwise." My husband's mother, pretty much of the same age echoed the same words. Another woman in her mid-fifties from the area confided, "I was finally able to not supplement and just do the breast once I got to my fourth child." Research also underlines that nurse-maids have existed since the dawn of times throughout the world and

across cultures.

When nurse-maids are not available, milk-animals have been substituted, some even nick-named for their nursing abilities: take the "nanny-goat" for instance. According to what Juliette de Bairacli-Levy writes in *Nature's Children*, "...animals such as goat, ewe, ass or mare, and in some regions, reindeer (are used). [The Roma], especially the Hungarian [Roma], are known to have bears suckle their boy children to enhance their courage."

So all these alternative perspectives, combined with my Sister's experience and advice helped me come to term with a mixed feeding arrangement combining formula and momma's all natural white stuff. In her words, "It's a breastfeeding relationship that you're developing and that is established over months, not days. You do that any way you want to, combining supplementary and breast feedings in any amount that is a good balance between your beliefs, capacity and sanity."

That's when I was finally able to rest while the baby dozed rather than waking up and poking my sleeping husband to ask him for the tenth time in the past two hours, "should I wake him up to feed? Should I go and pump instead? But what if he wakes up to eat and I've just pumped?" Surprisingly, once I was able to relax about it and thus get some much-needed shut-eye, my milk production improved and so did my husband's mood.

I'd be lying if I failed to mention that a steady consumption of natural galactogogues also helped fuel a modest return of milk. Fenugreek (*trigonella foenum-graecum*) specifically began to occupy a central place in my assortment of herbal friends. Previously a seldom used herb in my apothecary, it has become a go-to of late. Witness exhibit A in support of that statement: a full kilo of fenugreek seed still largely untouched after a year has now been seriously compromised in the space of a couple of months.

Fenugreek is a member of the pea and bean family (*Fabaceae*) that has been widely used to increase milk production in women although hard "evidence" of its ability to do so, as with so many other herbal treatments, is "anecdotal" if you believe the hard scientists. Given the overwhelming lack of research into whole herb treatment, as opposed to pharmaceutical creations, the mechanism of the small pea's action in the lactating body is unclear. It may be an oxytocic (stimulates the production of oxytocin in the body) although it is also possible that it simply works on the sweat glands. Like all herbs, it most probably does a number of things at once that are hard to pigeonhole into a single specific effect; a benefit to the herbalist – fallacy to the chemist.

Tangent aside, for those who've ever consumed straight fenugreek outside a capsule – you'll know that although it may smell kind of like maple and be used in the manufacture of artificial maple flavouring, it tastes nothing like the sweet elixir of spring tree. In fact it's quite bitter. Not the most bitter herb out there, it certainly doesn't measure up when compared to gentian or wormwood, it does however weigh in somewhere around the dandelion root level – perhaps a bit more.

So that whole above paragraph to say that being more of a "take your herbs as food" type than a "take another capsule" type, I've had to find lots of ways to incorporate substantial quantities of ground fenugreek into pretty much everything from shakes to yogurt, herbal candies, spreads and rice dishes. As a result my husband confirmed to me,

"Your pee smells like maple. I like this a lot better than when you fight off a cold with a raw garlic binge and I can smell you thirty feet away, though."

My old friend milk thistle (*silybum marianum*) seed also came to be re-purposed from its place as a stand-by for all things liver. I was looking for blessed thistle (*Cnidus benedictus*) actually, but couldn't find any in my area on really short notice. So I substituted with the only other thistle I had on hand (although it too has some anecdotal evidence supporting its use as a galactagogue) and was quite surprised at the improvement as a result. We're not talking Niagara Falls by any means, but we can say that the lone drips are up to a steady trickle. Night feeding no longer needs supplementation since the addition of milk thistle to the supplement roster either.

Galactogogues are all fine and dandy, but unless your nipple is being stimulated and your breasts emptied regularly, they aren't really worth diddly-squat. As a result, the second half of the milk production equation was the rise of the almighty breast pump and the establishment of a pumping station on the couch. I pump when Daddy bottle feeds the baby, or if he's available to take care of him following his regular breast visit, or if I wake up in the night, or any time looking at the pumping gear doesn't make me want to howl.

The hum of a motor, teats being expressed into a recipient for storage; no we're not at the farm half a kilometre over, we're in my living room and my breasts are dangling with plastic contraptions, wires and tubing. Pumping your breasts is an activity that allows you to feel like a milk cow and takes what little shame you have left after childbirth and throws it out the window. Particularly when you see the neighbour walk by that window and wave...

I haven't yet been able to steel myself for what's known as "the power pump": a solid hour of pumping, just for nipple stimulation's sake. Instead I compromise and do "the power feed": letting the baby hang off my chest, alternating from breast to breast, for up to two-and-a-half hours at a stretch – far past the point of no more milk. That's usually when baby gets frustrated with said breasts and can be heard screaming with his mouth full. My own frustration with all this hassle has semi-regularly over-flowed, usually onto my poor and unsuspecting partner who's just doing his best to help.

So for those who are considering it, having a child is not the way to save your relationship: it will challenge and test it. Choose to breastfeed and you'd better both be rock solid at the start to avoid divorce. For some, breastfeeding may be a simple and unilaterally rewarding way to go but in many cases, for all of the drama discussed above, it sends husband, wife, or both running to the pharmacy to raid the formula aisle. It also helped me understand why in the maternity ward all the first-time Mothers were breast-feeding their young whereas many of the more experienced mothers of multiple offspring were strapping their breasts into tight bras and flipping out the bottles.

For those who choose to persevere, it does become easier with time and for us by about week five postpartum the whole family was evolving into a semi-functional, more-or-less-regular routine. The baby was drinking more of my milk and so we found out that he was also more susceptible to the effects of what I ate. If I'm gassy because I love eating beans on a regular basis, I can deal with that both in smell and sensation. If baby's gassy because I ate beans, he thinks that the sensation is permanent and that the world

is coming to an end. His pain becomes our pain via sound waves and their corresponding decibels.

To keep the peace, beans, broccoli, cabbage, brussel sprouts (bloody hell, the whole damn brassica family), dates, figs, prunes and unfermented milk products have all been temporarily removed from my daily diet. Unfortunately, save the milk products, these accounted for a relatively large portion of my food intake. But faced with the choice of a restrictive diet or a wailing and miserable child – you pick the easier of the two. You also add every carminative (flatulence relieving) tea you can think of or read about since those are transferred to the baby via breast milk.

Keep in mind however that drinking a little cup of fennel tea once a day is probably not gonna cut it if you want to dose your child with herbs so that he or she leaves the gas behind. It's the herbalist in me here saying (and the mom in me who's done it backing it up) that it takes 3-4 cups of a medicinal-strength tea taken consistently, 5-7 days a week, for a positive outcome to be seen. Herbs that can be used include dill (*anethum graveolens*), anise (*pimpinella anisum*) and fennel (*foeniculum vulgare*) to name a few. The fennel also "anecdotally" helps with milk production, making it a particularly good herb to consider whether you like the taste or not.

In my personal experience and as per the recommendations of much of the herbal literature, it's also wise to combine carminative herbs with child-safe nerviness (nerve-nourishing and/or soothing) in equal quantity. Lemon balm (*melissa officinalis*), passionflower (*passiflora incarnata*), chamomile (*matricaria recutita* or *chamaemelum nobile*) and most specifically catnip (*nepeta cataria*) are all good choices. Not only do the nervines calm baby, induce deeper napping and less emotional fussiness; they also soothe Mom's frazzled nerves and after-birth hormonal edginess, making her more tolerant to said fussiness and less unpleasant to be around generally.

Six weeks postpartum now, some days I feel like my mixed feeding arrangement and my milk production are fine. Some days I feel like I'm losing my milk because of mixed feeding and an insufficient adherence to the pumping protocol. And sometimes I can step back, try and be objective and just figure that whatever's happening is fine the way it is (that's a combination of my husband, sister and therapist talking in my head).

I obstinately insist on continuing to develop a breast-feeding relationship with my boy not only for the nutritive reasons or because formula tastes nasty (yes I've done the taste test). As important are those moments when he falls asleep at my breast mid-afternoon or talks to it as he feeds in the middle of the night. It helps offset the disappointment from having him cry inconsolably at the end of the day when my milk production falls and he can't get enough. It's the eye-contact we exchange and the warmth of his little body against mine that are all an irreplaceable bond that makes it worth every ounce of trouble (and expressed breast milk).

Aura Laforest is a folk-herbalist and new mother living in Laverlochère, Québec. You can find her on FB or follow her blog (which she doesn't post in nearly often enough) at [aurereliemarie.wordpress.com](http://aurereliemarie.wordpress.com)

# KOMBUCHA A WHAT, WHY AND HOW-TO

- by Mama C.

Kombucha is a pretty fantastic thing; I'm sure a lot of ya'll reading this either have some brewing somewhere in your home-stead or have had a glass of it once upon a time.

**"What is it?"** Kombucha is often said to be a tea made from a mushroom or a fungus, but it is actually a symbiosis of healthy bacteria and yeasts. These yeasts and bacteria (also called the mother), left to sit in a strong sugary tea, create a slightly alcoholic (about 0.5%), carbonated, fermented drink.

**"What is it good for?"** Many say a key ingredient to kombucha tea is glucuronic acid, which binds up poisons and toxins and flushes them out of the body via the kidneys. This is something the kidneys and liver do naturally; kombucha simply boosts this process. It also contains vitamins B1, B2, B3, B6, B12, folic acid, usnic acid, and L-lactic acid. Kombucha is often called 'The Wonder Drink', as studies have shown it to aid in improving energy levels, hair and skin appearance, weight and muscle management, libido, diabetes, MS, yeast infections, HIV, AIDS, cancers, indigestion, ulcers, stress, migraines, arthritis, common illnesses... The list goes on and on. Drinking 4-6 oz before every meal gives the best results.

**"So how can you get some?"** Just about every health food store is sure to have a 'ready to drink' kombucha for sale, or you can get your hands on your own kombucha mother and brew it yourself. Ask your friends, I'm sure you'll find someone who has one to start you off, and if not you can use the internet to order one.

Once you have your hands on your mother, all you need is to be sure you have a clear glass jar/bowl big enough to hold about 3.5 quarts (14 cups) of liquid, another smaller clear glass bowl to hold the mother during transferring, a big box of either green or black tea bags (green results in a milder taste as black results in a stronger taste), a clean piece of fabric and an elastic band big enough to cover the mouth of your jar/bowl, a pot big enough to boil 3 quarts of water in, a funnel, and a clear glass jug/pitcher to hold your finished kombucha tea.

Before we get in too far let me give a quick do's and don'ts of kombucha.

**Do's:** Always use clean hands. Keep your kombucha tea and mother out of contact of direct sunlight, metal, and microwaves.

These things may cause it to break out in spots or even die. Keep things that may hold mold spores (house plants, dirty dishes, open food) away, as the mother is highly absorbent.

**Don'ts:** Don't use chlorinated water. Don't use herbal or earl grey tea (add your flavours just before drinking). Be sure not to use brown sugar or honey. Never leave your mother out in the air. You want it to always be hydrated as it will die if it's dried out.

Okay so you're ready!

1. Bring 3 quarts of distilled water to a boil.
2. Stir in one cup of white cane or white beet sugar, until dissolved.
3. Turn off heat and add 4 black or green tea bags.
4. Steep tea for 10-15 minutes, then remove tea bags.
5. Allow tea to cool to room temp.
6. Transfer cooled tea to a clear glass jar/bowl. Add 4-6 oz of kombucha tea (whomever you get your mother from will have given it to you floating in a small amount of kombucha tea)
7. With clean hands gently place the mother/scoby to float atop the tea.

Note: The mother has an upside and a underside. Have a look at the mother and you will see that one side is smoother, shinier and is lighter in colour. This is the upside.

8. Cover jar with a clean cloth (not cheese cloth) and secure it down with an elastic band.

9. Leave in a dim, quiet, ventilated space for 7-14 days, at 70-90 °F / 21-32 °C.

Note: The amount of time you allow to ferment depends on the temperature and your taste. The colder your home is, the slower it ferments. The longer you let it ferment, the stronger the taste will be.

10. So it's been 7-14 days and you are ready to harvest your kombucha tea! All you need to do is repeat steps 1-5. At that point get another clear glass bowl, pour 4-6 oz of your new kombucha tea into that bowl and float mother with it's new baby in this (every time you make kombucha the mother clones itself, making a 'baby').

11. Get a clear glass jug/pitcher that fits in your fridge and using a funnel, pour the rest of your newly harvested kombucha tea in. Pour slowly to prevent loss of carbonation and also try to avoid 'snots' (the mother lets go of bits of itself which settle in the tea leaving a totally edible, but grossly textured thing I call 'snots').

Note: If you like your kombucha to have some fun flavours like apple, ginger, citrus, etc., prepare a concentrate of this flavour

and add it to the glass of kombucha right before drinking it.

12. With clean hands, have a gander at the mother. You will see some layers. The topmost layer is the baby. You can either leave this on, resulting in a thicker mother (I do this once in a while if my mother is looking sickly, or just thinner than my liking), OR, you can gently remove the baby using your thumbs and fingers in a very similar way you skin hides off critters. Either throw the baby in your compost or save it in a glass jar with some kombucha tea, cover it with fabric, and give it to a friend.

13. Continue steps 6-9, after rinsing your clear glass jar/bowl.

Over time, every once in a while, your mother may look questionable. "Should I chuck it, or is it good to keep using?" I'm going to give a few examples of these and how to doctor it.

**Bubbles:** Don't fret if you find little bubbles or warts. These often are found on the underside of the mother and can be gently pressed away.

**Holes:** Sometimes when removing the baby we go a bit fast and can end up ripping a hole in our mother. It's unfortunate, but won't stop it from making perfectly healthy tea. You can keep a baby or two on and they should close up the holes.

**Mold:** I have never experienced mold on my mother but it is known to happen. Just dunk the mother in some vinegar and rinse with water. Some molds can be very dangerous, so using your judgement, decide if you should go get a new one or not.

**Snots:** Sometimes the mother can get a little rough looking. Rinse it in clean water and gently rub off any snots or little brown culture 'tags'.

**Over heated:** Not allowing your tea to cool enough before floating the mother atop it can cripple or kill it. If it sinks to the bottom this can mean the tea isn't cooled enough (sometimes the mother can also outgrow its container, keeping it from floating. Just take scissors and trim it to size.). Unless the tea was really hot, the mother should be fine, just take it out, placing it in some cooled kombucha and let the tea cool further.

**Worn:** If your mother starts looking darker than what you feel is normal, even after rinsing with clean water, it has become old and tired. It's time to get a new one. If treated with love and kindness your mother should last a lifetime.

**Crowded/thin:** You shouldn't keep the babies on the mother/scoby. I did say earlier that I sometimes do this, but this is usu-

ally when I get a new one for myself or I am making a new mother strong and healthy for a friend. You do not want your mother to be too thick (between a quarter and half inch is dandy). If you allow it to become too thick it can become starved of nutrients. Another thing you can do if your mother is too thin is let the kombucha ferment for double the time, or in a warmer temperature than you usually do and the baby will end up being thicker and you then can compost the mother and use the baby instead. If your babies are ending up really thin, check that your temperatures are correct. It can help to add more than 6 oz of kombucha tea to your new batch. If it's not too cold and you've tried more kombucha tea, check that there is nothing humming or vibrating nearby. They also don't seem to like cigarette smoke.

**Vacation:** If you're going away for a month or two and you don't have friends able to 'mama sit', float your mother in a 3-4 quart or larger clear glass jar/bowl of 'growing tea', keeping it in a dim cool place (a fridge works) 42-48 °F / 6-9 °C. On your return you can try the kombucha tea; if it's mega strong, chuck it, leaving the 4-6 oz and start your next batch.

**Freezing:** If you somehow freeze the mother, in your freezer or a cold home, it's dead. Find a new one to start over again.

**Drying:** Never allow your mother to sit dry; it can be in the air for short periods of time but leave it too long and the mother will die and you will have to get a new one.

If you know someone else who makes kombucha, you know someone who has a mother to give away every 7-14 days. So no matter what happens, you can always get a new one and try again. Also I like to keep in mind that folks have been making things like kombucha for hundreds and hundreds of years and I'm sure they didn't have everything that we are told "needs to be used". Don't freak out if you can't do this step by step exactly, but do your best to. If you have any questions I will do my darndest to help out. Email me at [callandramayhart@gmail.com](mailto:callandramayhart@gmail.com). Or you can buy the book I use, 'Kombucha Phenomenon. The Miracle Health Tea' by Betsy Pryor and Sanford Holst.

Happy brewing.

*Mama C Lives with her partner (Mad Yak) and their baby, in old growth forest just south of Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba. Making her cash with music, art, and odd jobs helping buds. Contact Mama C by email, [callandramayhart@gmail.com](mailto:callandramayhart@gmail.com) or by post PO Box 112 Erickson MB R0J 0P0.*

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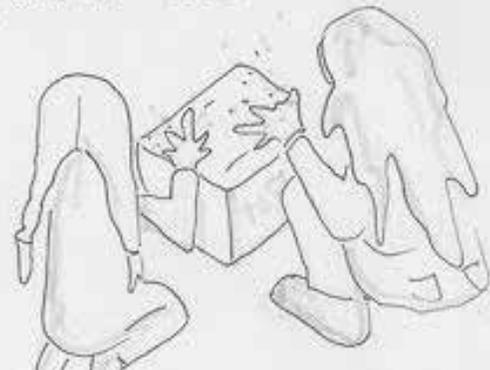
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**BEEES**

When I received my first box of bees, a 4 frame Nuc, ordered from some company in Georgia - it came thru the mail. I am sure the postal service was pissed. But I was excited about our new pals - the sisters - and I hurried to find my daughter, to show her our new home schooling adventure. I told her that the bees were very hungry and before I transferred them to their new home, I wanted to introduce us. So we spread honey on our hands, and immersed them into the hive so they could taste our essence. We didn't get stung, and it was awesome!

We also feed them herbal teas we made, in their water, to boost their immune system.

We also raised silkworms, and leaf cutter bees, which are tiny pollinators.



# THINKING OF BUYING A CHAINSAW??? HERE ARE SOME TIPS.

By Nicolas TheCatastrophiste

A good chainsaw can do a lot more than buck up firewood or fell a couple trees. A good saw can be one of the handiest tools you will ever own when properly applied. Ok, let's get started by going shopping! Until you've got some experience under your belt I strongly suggest going with a used saw for a few reasons.

- #1. If you kill it, you won't be out \$500 or more.
- #2. If you buy a used saw that is a popular model, chances are someone in town has a decent stash of parts lying around.
- #3. It's best to learn to mix gas and perform impromptu repairs on an old beater to help get past a couple learning curves without it getting too costly.

Brands and models:

## Husqvarna 262

This bad boy is a 62cc saw made from the mid 80's till the mid 90's. The older ones are heavier than newer saws but if you're bucking firewood or doing small jobs around the yard the extra weight is irrelevant. Good, strong saws, capable of any task.

## Jonsered 630

Almost identical to the Husqvarna above (many parts are interchangeable), I have two and I love them. They have a very forgiving power band and the 63cc engines are as bulletproof as it gets. They also made a model called the 630 super two and it's even more badass.

## Husqvarva 345

A smaller saw, the 45cc engine still has enough gusto to do a number on a pile of firewood but where this saw really shines is in the bush. If you're cutting a trail or clearing an area and you're gonna be on your feet all day, this lightweight saw is an ideal choice.

## Jonsered 2445 turbo

This smaller saw has a lot of snot for a 45.7cc engine. The "turbo" refers to a unique air intake system that also helps keep the air filter clean which cuts down on maintenance. Not quite as popular as the saws above as far as finding used parts the but definitely a good choice.

There are other good saws out there like Stihl and many more models but these are the saws I have had a lot of experience working with and gotten good performance from.

## Tools:

Unless you're going to get right down to the nitty gritty a chainsaw basically only requires two tools.

- a chainsaw wrench
- a chainsaw file

Both are available at your local chainsaw shop. Make sure you get the proper file for the size of chain on your saw!

As far as the options for bar length on a saw go, I highly suggest a 16" bar. It's safer, it's not as hard on your back and it's easier not to hit sand or rocks and dull your chain. A larger bar is not necessary unless you're felling some really big trees.

Wear protection! Especially if you're a beginner, a good pair of chainsaw pants can usually be found at a salvation army or a store of the like. I don't think I've ever bought a new pair. Pants or chaps have a special fiber in them that jams up the chain and stops it from spinning before things get really ugly. Chances are you will still get cut if you hit yourself so don't go all cowboy just because you have your fancy pants on. When it comes to boots there's two options. There's an ankle boot which have fibers in them like the pants do. They are heavy and often very pricey, usually in and around \$450. Boot option number two is a classic, the Viking or nokia brand rubber boot style saw boots are tough as nails, offer a large protection area and make great rubber boots when you're not using a chainsaw. They are a lot less expensive than the royers and are pretty comfortable with a pair of Bama socks. Bama's are available at any workwear store. A hard hat is a must if you're going to be felling trees. Wear hearing protection if you're not already half-deaf from concerts, and a face screen plus safety glasses really help keep sawdust out of your eyes, which is never pleasant.

Just a few tips:

Keep your wood off the ground! When cutting firewood it's important to keep it elevated so you're not cutting against the ground. This will help keep your saw sharp and is simply nicer to work with. If your logs are sandy for whatever reason (it happens) you are going to have a helluva time keeping your saw sharp so sweep them or hose them

down if you have the option. Filing a chain is an art of its own, it takes a lot of patience to learn. There are tools to help you figure these things out but if it's not your "forte" or you're just not going to do enough sawing to bother learning then go find someone who will tune up your chains for a 12 pack. If you are going to go cut standing trees either learn from someone with a lot of experience or go take a course, it's way too easy to get yourself mangled. It happens to pros all the time; without good instruction it's only a matter of time before you mess yourself up. Careful of kick back! This happens when the tip of the saw bar catches the wood and kicks straight up, it will happen when you least expect it and when your arms get tired. Keeping your forward hand gripping the top of the guide handle and taking a break is your best defense. This is what the saw brake is for but it's not a guaranteed safety mechanism so position yourself against this predicament by not looking straight down your cut. It happens most when your going at a pile of logs and the tip catches the log behind the one you're cutting. A pulp hook is an awesome tool that when used properly can take a lot of strain off of your back and hands. Mixing your gas properly is key to a well running saw. Too lean(not enough oil) and you will blow your engine. Too rich (too much oil) and your saw will run like crap and foul spark plugs.

Have fun out there, take your time learning. Take a break when your arms get tired and wear your gear. Get out there and kill it!!!

# USING WOOL AS INSULATION

By Reece Steinberg

A little over three years ago I built a cabin, and used wool for insulation. When I was looking for information on the R value, and other peoples' experience of using wool in cold climates, I wasn't able to find much information. I don't have a huge amount of experience, but here is what I know so far ....

## Why Wool?

I wanted to use a natural, local insulation. Lots of people grow sheep here, and wool was the only natural insulation I knew of that doesn't require clay (like cob, chip-slip, cordwood-clay). Clay isn't readily available locally. I also liked that there was not a rush to complete large sections of insulation in a certain amount of time; clay-dependant insulation needs to be done before the clay dries, and is easier with a group of people, where wool let me work on my own without having to hurry.

Other good things about wool is that if untreated it is very difficult for it to rot, and unlike fibreglass, if it gets wet during construction it is not ruined. For that reason, there is not the same pressure to install walls that prevent vapour from building up in the

insulation.

## Getting Wool

I got wool by asking farmers who had sheep outside, asking around at the farmer's market, and posting online on Kijiji. I asked for low-quality wool, and explained as clearly as I could that it didn't matter if there was some amount of shit, dirt, lanolin, etc. in the wool, and that it was for insulation not for knitting. Some people were willing to give me some for free. Others asked for some money, but not too much - \$4 - 13 per large feedbag of wool. A few were really interested in hearing about wool insulation, and one hoped to try it himself.

## Moth and Pest Prevention

I have heard conflicting things about mice and wool insulation. I heard from a few people that natural oils in wool repel mice somewhat. Websites for mass-produced "eco" insulation made of wool seem to sell their insulation by saying that the cleaning of wool is necessary to prevent pests. I have had mice, but nothing more or less than friends in the same area with fibreglass insulation, and nothing out of control.

To help prevent moths, I mixed cedar shavings with the wool. A friend who did wool

insulation used cedar fronds, but unfortunately there are virtually no cedars growing in the region where I live. The oil in cedar repels moths. I also mixed Borax (boric acid), a natural and harmless powder that is available at grocery stores in the detergent section. It repels various insects.

## How To Do It (briefly)

Installing wool in the walls is a little different than fibreglass, because it needs to be supported by boards or wood lathe (to be covered with plaster) as it goes in. It's not stiff or light enough to hold itself up inside a wall. For boards or lathe, the idea is to nail some wood onto your wall studs, and every 1.5' or so, stop and put some wool into the wall, mixed with cedar and borax. If the wool seemed compressed at all, I would pull it apart and fluff it up a bit before putting it in the wall. Then add a shelf so that the weight of the wool above is supported by the shelf, and does not compress the wool below it. Then more boards and more wool, up the wall.

Ideally, the wool should be sealed in the wall without gaps inside or out to let in moths. I sealed it off from the outside pretty well, but not that well inside.

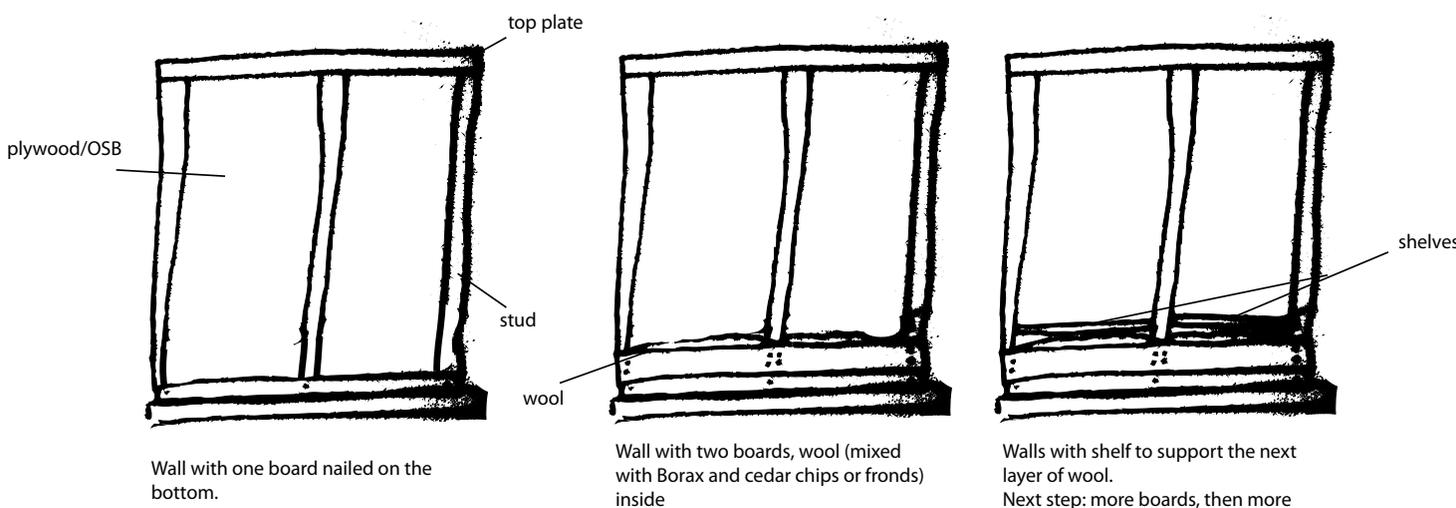
## Warmth

I built the original room of the cabin with 2x8s, so with 8" thick of wool. I think this might have been overkill, but I wanted to be cautious. My test was having a roaring, almost uncomfortably warm fire in the woodstove for a few hours, and then climbing up on the roof, where the coating of snow was not melted at all. I built a new addition this year just using 2x4s, and it heats up well with a fire, and retains the heat, but it is only November as I write this, so I might regret not going for 2x6s as it gets colder.

## Monitoring

Since I was building the addition, I got to gut one wall of wool, and that gave me a good chance to see how things were going after a few years. I was happy to find that there was very little evidence of pests living in the walls. I found a little mouse shit in one place, and no moth holes or other signs of moths. I had put little shelves to hold the wool up inside the wall every 4' or so in that wall, and the wool had settled a bit, leaving small gaps beneath each shelf, so I decreased the amount of space between shelves in the addition. The wool seemed to be in the same condition as it had been when I put it in the wall. I built a window into the wall so I can see wool in one area, and this is more for fun than anything else, but it does let me see what it looks like in one area.

That's about it. If you have questions or answers, or want to talk more about this, feel free to contact me at: [reeceaxl@gmail.com](mailto:reeceaxl@gmail.com) or 1828 Brothers Rd. // RR5 // Mt. Stewart, PE C0A1T0 or [peakes.wordpress.com](http://peakes.wordpress.com)



# FISH CHARGE

## GO FISH AND SURVIVE

By Dylan

As nice as a day on the water is; better yet if you can wrangle a meal outta the deal. Eating fish is incredibly healthy and delicious; the Omega-3 fatty acid found in fatty fish (like salmon and trout) is essential for metabolism/digestion, building brain cell membranes and a healthy circulatory system.

Fish are one of the simplest creatures to familiarize yourself with the process of killing, gutting and cleaning; vital steps for any omnivore interested in taking control of their sustenance, eating local foods, and having a productive, country punk hobby that combines a good ol' time in the outdoors and (hopefully) puts delicious, healthy, wild food on your plate. It's a great process to get to know your local bodies of water, or a reason to plan a trip to visit other ones. Fishing is a great reason to be out on the water, teaches patience and legitimizes your crusty ass drinkin' down by the river. And while you're out there, might as well take note of what kinds of pollution, dams and developments are affecting your beloved fishin hole as the greedy reptilian cannibals consume our planet with the tech-no-logic-kill juggernaut of capitalist in-destroy.

Take a quick minute to confirm the legality of your fishing session (I sure didn't used to); there are wrong seasons, places, species and bait (live/dead, single vs treble hooks, barbed vs barbless hooks) that can snag you an ugly fine or have your tackle confiscated. Know a few species of game fish in your area so you know what they eat, where to find them and what they look like.

### Tackle

Rod, reel and bait/lures are your basic fishing tackle. If you are fortunate enough to have a boat, a net is also pretty essential for landing your catch. Pliers are pretty handy for pullin out hooks, especially if you catch a toothy bastard like a pike. Forceps are even better.

**Rod:** This is the one piece of gear that I tend to skimp on. The first thing to break is the eyelet on the very tip of the rod so before you hand over your hard earned \$5 to the kindly folks at the garage sale, make sure to check the tip. You can do without some of the other eyelets, but this one-not so much. Check to make sure whatever mounting hardware for the reel is in working condition, I usually favor the 'threaded steel rings system' cause Steel is Real and Metal is the Answer.

**Reel:** Heres your money maker. Do not get a shitty reel or you will have a shitty time. Once again, the more metal the better. A

spin casting reel is your basic set up and can be either closed face or open. I never mess with closed face reels because they are more complicated, create more drag when you cast and are a colossal pain in the ass if you tangle your line. I feel that they are cheaply made and marketed as a 'fishing made easy-at the press of a button!' kind of swindle. If you take the time to learn to cast with an open face spin casting reel you will find it worthwhile.

Trolling reels are for designed for dragging bait behind a boat (canoe, kayak, sailboat...) and can be used with a down rigger; a cannon ball on its own line to compensate for the speed of the boat and get down to the lunkers in the deeps.

Fly fishing reels are a bit different again. The basic principle is that the line itself is weighted so the weightless fly can be casted.

Make sure what ever pound-test line you use it is not gonna break and leave you with nothing but a story. UV rays and general old age can cause fishing line to degrade so be sure to test it now and then.

**Lures/Bait:** I rarely use live bait because its boring to wait for a bobber to dip. Also cause I feel like an asshole if I spear a worm/minnow/tiny critter on a hook and then don't catch anything. Lures are sturdy, long lasting, cheap and won't turn into a gore grind album cover if you leave them longer than a few hours. Once you have lures, they are always at hand (barring snags); no fucking around with the garden hose at 3 a.m trying to catch goddamn worms from the lawn.

Nearly all my tackle (like most of what I own) is used. Garage sales and second hand stores can be great for this. Fishing is one of those hobbies everyone seems to accumulate gear for, which often ends up catching dust in the shed

Weather, season and time of day are huge fishing factors. In summer, fish seek cooler water, but the deeper they go the less oxygen is available. They are feed most actively in the morning and evening when the water is not too hot. A proper dawn fish is well worth staying (relatively) un-hungover for. The best fishing days are not too hot or too cold; cloudy days cause fish to leave their sunny day cover and search for food. Light rain is good because it washes insects and other food into the water, and can help hide you from fish (yes, they can see you).

Hit the water! If you are fishing a lake you will need a bit of depth, which can be tricky. Drop offs, docks and cliffs which continue underwater are good, a boat is really good. If I'm fishing a river, I look for cut banks and/or eddies and rocks where the water may be deeper and the current changes. Search for

any type of cover or structure in the water which fish will be drawn to, for shelter and to feed. Sunken trees, reefs, dock pilings, bridges, rocks, weeds, lily pads, rapids, etc. Look around for clues as to what fish may be feeding on. Some fish such as trout and bass often feed at the surface and will jump out of the water to catch bugs. There is no better indicator of where fish are. Some predators such as pike, can inspire enough fear into minnows that the little guys will jump out of the water en mass to try and escape. If you are at a well fished area, look around for lures that swine may have left and add them to your tackle box. Chances are they are effective in that fishin hole.

I grew up catching bass and pike in Ontario; I do mostly river fishing in Northern BC these days, and I've found fish are easier to locate from shore in a river than a lake. Facing the river, I cast about 10 or 11 o'clock up stream, and retrieve as slowly as possible (good strategy for lakes too) so the current takes the lure and provides resistance for the action of the lure, usually a spinner with a willow leaf blade. As you retrieve your lure, keep your rod tip up so when you feel a bite you can give it a sharp jerk to set the hook. If the line goes dead but tension remains, you've snagged something that is not a fish. Keep the rod tip up or you'll snap the line. Try to pull from different angles, a lot easier to do from a boat than the shore. You'll be surprised at how much tension the rod and line can take before the line snaps. If this doesn't work, get to strippin. Grab a pair of goggles and a snorkel (and the Hawaiian sling-just in case), and unsnag that lure! Losing tackle sucks.

Or, if the rod lights up like a waxed cardboard box, and your heart starts pounding like the drum barrage from a Bolt Thrower track, take a quick second to enjoy the adrenaline; this is the reason why the fuck you've been standing here for 3 hours. Keep the rod tip up so the line doesn't snap, let the drag play out a bit if you gotta, and let the fishing rod take the brunt of the brute.

Reel in the fish as quick as is practical-otherwise lines can snap and hooks can be spit. A struggling fish will produce lactic acid and taint the taste of the meat. If theres a net on hand, scoop the fish from the front; they cant swim backwards. Use a firm grip and keep the fish in the water as much as you can so it stays as calm as possible, hold the fish with wet hands, dry ones will remove the protective slime film. Don't pick it up by the hook in its mouth, be gentle. If you've got a large mouth bass, you can hold the fish by its lower 'lip'; sounds cruel but it has a paralyzing effect similar to holding a kitten by the scruff of its neck. Use your fingers, pliers or forceps to back the hook out of the fishes lip. Heres where you'll be happier if you're using barbless or single hooks, which are easy to make from trebles; use a multi tool to clip off two of the hooks and smush the barbs flat. Watch the fuck out if you're dealing with pike or walleye. My pops had a few plugs with vicious teeth marks in em, you don't want that to be your precious fingers.

Decide if the fish is a keeper; if not,

gently release it. If so.... Many people club the fish to kill it but I had an unpleasant experience with a hard headed pike when I was ice fishing and now I prefer a sharp stab to the brain, just behind the eyes, toward the top of the head. Fish have a strangely resilient nervous system; I have seen a fish that was dead and fully gutted for an hour, spasm zombie-like in its tin foil package beside the cook fire, so keep an eye on it until it is completely still.

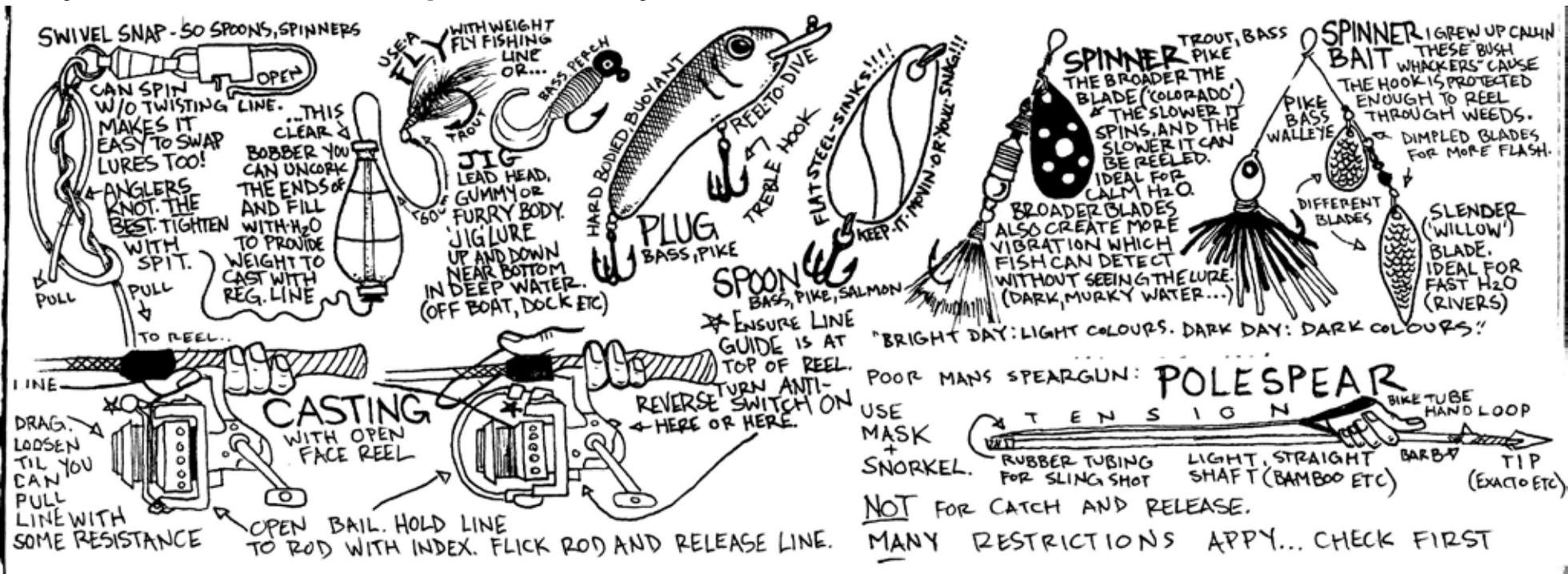
The easiest most efficient way to clean and cook a fish is to simply gut it and cook it whole, which will guarantee you get the most meat from your catch as it just falls off the bones. I prefer to gut the fish at the shore to save the mess from reeking up the kitchen and to return the entrails to the water from whence they came, patches to ashes, crust to dust. Alternatively, you could mail them to any corporate earth rape in-destroy headquarters in the area for mercury testing and pollution/chemical content lab analysis.

If the fish has large scales, remove them by scraping them off with the backside of a knife, like how you live; against the grain.

Make a shallow incision along the middle of the belly from the anoo forward to the bottom of the gills, try not to go too deep and slice the organs and mess up the meat. I like to do as much of this as possible in the water; seems cleaner and easier that way. The heart, a solid purple-red organ which is probably still beating and is located towards the front of the cavity should always be examined and eaten right away. It is beyond metal to eat a beating heart, a sign of respect and probably good for you as well. Empty all the organs from the body cavity and rinse the fish out; return the organs to the water. Many fish have a vein called a bloodline the runs along the spine inside the body cavity. This should be scraped out to avoid a bitter taste in the meat. You should be left with a surprisingly clean body cavity, and a well-earned feeling of accomplishment.

Slice the fish every couple of centimeters top to bottom on both of its sides and put butter and garlic (of course) and lemon with any spices you may fancy (dill is really good) into the body cavity and the slices; wrap in tin foil before cooking on the fire, BBQ or if you must, oven. Should take about 20 minutes to a half hour on the grill. Savor the meat you caught yourself and think about how you can ensure that you can continue to feed yourself this way. Waste nothing that you kill; eat the eyes and especially the deliciously rich little meat deposit in the cheeks. Enjoy!

Tackle shops and other anglers at the fishing hole can be really handy for tips; successful fishing depends on knowing a near endless array of factors and conditions- way more information than can be explained in this article. Hope it was helpful. Good luck and tight lines. czars13@hotmail.com for questions, feedback and fishing tales. Two rainbow trout and three whitefish were caught during the writing of this article. One trout was a keeper and it was delicious.



# PONDERINGS FROM THE SELF-RELIANT PATH

by Kat Callen

After thirty-eight years of going at the self-reliant lifestyle, there is still lots of work to do. While I definitely do not know it all, I have picked up a few useful tips along the path. Hopefully some of them may help you on your journey.

First, you need to understand the reasons why you want to learn things. Do you really want to do this, or just be able to say you did it? Needing acceptance, or to be cool, or because everybody else seems to be doing it are not good reasons.

Try not to be pushed (by yourself or others) into doing what everybody else does. Make your own choices. When things do not work out according to your plan, resist the urge to blame others for the choices you made. Take responsibility for your actions. Allow yourself to experience the consequences. Learn from these lessons. Grow yourself into a wiser self.

Be honest about what you know. And about why you want to learn something. Also about your determination to work hard to accomplish stuff. Be honest with others. But mostly, be honest with yourself.

*"While the future's there for anyone to change, still you know it seems it would be easier sometimes to change the past."* ~ Joan Baez

Be appreciative of the sacrifices others have made to help you get to where you are. It may not seem like much to you but it might have been a big output of energy for somebody else. Be thankful and mean it.

If you want to know something, ask. Let others help you. Yup, lots of us DIY folks are not too good at asking for help. In fact, some of us really suck at it. Try to get better at this.

Rural life can be lonely. Become your own best friend. Isolation can be tough for social butterflies. If flitting from crowd to group to packed bus to busy sidewalk is your thing, it may be frustrating to deal with being on your own. Develop some interests and hobbies that you can do alone. Be creative. Wake up your imagination. Doodle, make music, knit, dance, do Sudoku puzzles, fidget, do qi gong, write Haiku, whittle, sing, make gizmos - whatever floats your boat. Get happy being by yourself, and with who you are. And who you are becoming. Now that is exciting.

Keep having dreams, for sure, but try to be realistic about what is possible. Practically everything takes longer than you expect. And it costs more too. The usual roadblocks are time and/or money. You still need to sleep, and eat, and buy stuff that you cannot produce yourself, and most likely work some sort of revenue generating job. Be kind to

yourself and realistic in your expectations.

Do or learn one (okay, two or three) things at a time. Most skills need time to be learned. Try not to rush it. Develop patience and persistence. Taking the time, energy and presence to learn things properly can save loads of time later. Hesitate to do things in a half-assed way.

*"Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes."* ~ Henry David Thoreau.

Buy good stuff, the best you can afford. Even if this means you have to wait to get the stuff. Pay cash for everything. Do not fall into the credit trap. It will bite you in the ass. Patience is a virtue. The lifespan of good stuff will easily make up for the extra time you had to wait to be able to afford it. Having all manner of stuff to help you be self-reliant adds up to a whole bunch of stuff. It takes up a lot of room. If you have a small place, you are going to have to get real good at utilizing every possible bit of space. To hone this skill, I suggest traveling on a motorcycle for a year. That should do it.

Hesitate to jump on fad food bandwagons. It used to be peanut butter was the big evil. It was going to kill all of us. Actually it can be very bad for a few folks. And they should definitely stay away from it. But I think the rest of us can enjoy it. Nowadays, wheat is the new "bad" food. Personally I do not believe that all of a sudden a whole bunch of folks became allergic to wheat, although there are some folks that have trouble digesting it. Wheat is the most produced crop on this planet. If it was really that bad for humans, we would be extinct, right? The trouble is that loads of it are genetically modified, and sprayed with all manner of chemicals, and it hardly resembles good old wheat any more. Barring actual allergies to certain foods, you will not have trouble with your digestive system if you work to create and maintain a healthy intestinal flora. Find good sources for the foods that you cannot grow yourself.

If you are going to limit some type of food (meat, dairy, gluten, Brussel's sprouts or some such), try to have a damn good reason for it. Not just, it is the cool thing to do. I became a vegetarian as a teenager and was a staunch one for eight years. It had nothing to do with the animals. It was all about control over my food source. I like to know where my carrots come from, too. I still do not eat much meat but I know where it comes from. Be smart about your food choices.

*"Never apologize. Never explain. Just get the thing done, and let them howl!"* ~ Agnes Macphail (1890 - 1954), Canadian politician

Learn to eat what you can grow and learn to grow what you want to eat. And put the surplus by for the long cold winter. This is a fairly simple concept. You might be bored,

but you will not be hungry.

I have noticed that crops have a way of either failing completely or overwhelming you with abundance. Not a lot of middle ground here. Figure out a way to use that abundance. Eat it, put it by, barter it, but be sure to use it. Even if it is only going to feed a compost heap.

The summer before I came to Canada, I had put up lots of veggies from my garden. It was a particularly good year for beans. I had a bumper crop. So I canned lots of beans: green beans, yellow beans, and mixed green and yellow beans. I was eating them steady throughout the winter. Then I sort of fell off my plan of finishing them all before leaving. It got to where I had to eat three or four pints of beans each week in order to empty all the jars. Not too bad. But I kind of screwed up on that and soon it was a jar a day. Then it got to a point where I had to eat a jar or more of those damn beans for each meal. Well, as it turned out, I had about four dozen jars of beans plus quite a few jars of wild raspberry jam and salsa when I left. I put them in storage with a bunch of my stuff and took off for Canada. A couple years later, I was able to bring those jars of food here and it was great. Home canned foods keep for years as long as they are stored in a cool place.

Plan to work and work and work. You will make mistakes and you may have to do the same thing over and over. And perhaps one more time, until you get it figured out. There are so many different mistakes that you can make, it seems pretty silly to make the same one twice. So be prepared to work. Hard. Pretty much until you are dead. Really. Do not fool yourself into thinking that you can bust ass for a couple years (or even decades), get all set up, and then lay about chewing on a succession of wheat straws and pondering the meaning of life. Reality just does not work like that. I doubt it is possible to retire from a self-reliant lifestyle, but I can keep you posted on that.

Learn to compromise. You cannot do it all. But be wary of compromise when it comes to your values. Keep a tight hold on those.

Stop comparing yourself to others. Everybody has a skill set, even if you cannot for the life of you figure out what it is. You have a skill set. Yes, you do. Keep adding to it. Learn something every day. Before you know it, you will be so damn clever that you might even scare yourself. You will also amaze yourself with what you can accomplish.

*"We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are."* ~ Anais Nin

If you hear yourself telling others that you cannot do something because of this or that or whatever, then just shut up and . . . listen to yourself, figure it out, and then get at it. The self-reliant rural life is not for sissies. Not everybody is cut out for it. Give it a good try. If it is not for you and you move away from it, you have not failed. You have discovered who you are. Us rural folk need folks to sell our stuff to, so it all works out in the end. If everybody lived here, it would get crowded and we would have to move somewhere else.

No matter what you intend to do or learn - chop wood, grow veggies, milk goats, make bread, birth a baby, build a shack/shed/house, harvest wild plants, change a tire, use herbs, raise chickens, make great yoghurt, put up a good fence that actually keeps animals in, save your own seeds, tan a hide, brew beer, whatever - first you must believe in yourself. And your ability to do the thing you want to do. Trust yourself, and your body's ability to be successful at doing it. Be honest with yourself on this. You will have a whole lot of trouble trusting and/or believing in others if you do not make peace

with yourself first.

*"The future is completely open, and we are writing it moment to moment. There is always the potential to create an environment of blame - or one which is conducive to loving kindness."* ~ Pema Chödrön

Collect kindred spirits. It will amaze you how many there are and where you find them. Kindred spirits are your greatest treasures.

The community of fine and funky folks putting together, contributing to, and reading *The Country Grind* are there for you. Bringing you fabulous info (from clever and witty folk), opinions (everybody has one), ideas (stuff you may never have thought of), instructions (complete with diagrams), activities (exercise your brain!), laughs (ha ha), and a big fat dose of reality about rural existence. Keep supporting those folks that are supporting you as you travel this trail. Community building benefits us all.

*"Trust in the natural order of things and you will experience the integrity of this universe."*

May it go well for you.

[Kat lives in an off grid home that her family built by hand in the forest of west central Manitoba. She is a witch, a feminist, an herbalist, a fibre artist, a baby catcher, and the mother of four home born, breastfed, unschooled (now grown) children. They strive for self-reliancy by growing a big organic garden, raising goats and sheep, putting by food, and living lightly on our Earth Mother.]

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by Jenn-Ra

Cooking and eating tasty food has been a lifelong passion of mine. From the time I could sit up I was participating in the kitchen: rolling meatballs, mixing sausage and playing with dough scraps. I'm the kind of person that reads cookbooks and five star restaurant menus for ideas. I like talking about food, I like watching food-based TV shows and I love sharing my knowledge and experience with others.

A lot of folks tell me that they wish they could cook like I do. My answer is: you can. Next I'll ask if they have a sense of taste and smell; when they answer in the affirmative I tell them, "then you can cook". They'll try to argue with something along the lines of "I don't know what all those things are for," while pointing at massive herb and spice collection sitting by my stove (and in my cabinet). I usually start opening jars and bags urging the person to smell and taste them. Since I can't have all you lovely readers come into my kitchen at the moment, I'm going to do my best to explain what each of the wonderful herbs I use on the regular are for. And before you say to yourself that you don't have the money for all of these; everything I'm listing can be grown in the garden and the kitchen.

Preserving herbs is pretty easy. Use string to tie up and hang the fresh herbs to dry; use a needle and dental floss to string together peppers for drying. A blender, coffee grinder or mortar and pestle are handy for grinding dried peppers and seeds into a powder. Store in an airtight container.

**Ancho:** Dried and ground Poblano pepper. Slightly sweet and mildly hot. Use this as a base for making homemade chili powder.

**Cilantro/Coriander:** Cilantro looks like parsley, but tastes completely different. People are divided on this herb; some say it tastes like soap, others find it delicious. It has a bright, green flavor and is used in Mexican, South East Asian and Indian dishes. If the raw flavor is not to your liking, try it dried. Coriander is the ground seeds. It has a bright, citrusy flavor with a hint of spice and warmth similar to ginger.

**Cayenne:** Dried and ground Cayenne chili peppers. A great way to add spice and heat to all dishes. Experiment with other types of hot peppers.

**Dill:** Most commonly associated with pickles, this herb brings a bright, sour, sweet flavor to chicken, beef, fish and pork. Put it on a steak.

**Fennel:** The seeds of this plant have a sweet and somewhat licorice flavor. Most popularly used in sweet Italian sausage, try these in your meatballs, or curry.

**Garlic:** You know this one; it goes in nearly everything, tastes delicious and keeps pesky vampires away. Biggest tip I can give is don't burn it. It can go from awesome to awful in less than a minute, so be careful. Second biggest tip: to get rid of garlicky fingers, wipe them on something made of stainless steel (like your sink) when washing your hands.

**Ginger:** Citrusy, warm, and a little sweet; ginger root is something you will always want to have. Use in Asian and Indian dishes, fish and seafood, or anytime something calls for lemon or lime and you're fresh out. Ginger is fantastic for nausea, bloating and stress; steep a half inch chunk in boiling water for ten minutes for a healing tea. Snap off a piece of the root and plant it in a pot; ten months later the root will regrow. Store

the remainder of the root in your freezer and grate directly into the dish you are cooking.

**Oregano:** This herb is deep and woody in flavor and used in both Italian and Mexican cooking. Use sparingly in pasta sauce and a little heavier in pizza sauce.

**Paprika:** Dried and ground red bell pepper. Use to add color and flavor to any dish. Works well with eggs, seafood and Mexican dishes.

**Parsley:** Not just for making plates look pretty, parsley is fresh and green and packed with vitamins A and C. Used primarily in Italian cooking, it's a great addition in soups, salads and gravies. If you suffer from stank-ass breath, eat a sprig.

**Rosemary:** My go-to secret ingredient in everything: use on meat, roasted vegetables, gravies, sauces and especially cornbread. Before you add sugar for sweetness, try some rosemary.

**Sage:** Woody, bright and keeps evil spirits away; sage is best used with pork or poultry. Steep it in boiling water for a tea that battles stress and anxiety.

**Tarragon:** Careful with this one; go lightly or your food will taste like Jagermeister. Most popularly used in French cooking, it is amazing in chicken or sausage gravy, or a poultry brine.

**Thyme:** Woody and bright; try it on poultry or pork, pasta sauce, and in soups and stews.

### **When You Can't Grow Your Own: A Note on Spices**

As much as I'd love to grow all of my seasonings, climate just will not allow it. I am not going to forgo my curry powder, cumin, cinnamon and cardamom just because I can't grow it myself. I have to go buy it, but I don't want to blow my entire grocery budget doing so. Here are my tips for getting the most bang for your buck when it comes to exotic spices.

**Check the Hispanic section.** My tiny country grocery store has one and you can find whole and ground cumin seed and stick cinnamon (as well as all kinds of interesting chillies and their seeds) for dirt cheap. For some reason they also hide the gigantic bottle of curry powder here. I won't complain because I'm just happy I can find it and it's only \$4.

**Asian Markets.** If you're lucky enough to live in close proximity to an urban area, make sure you stop by the Asian/Indian market. If you don't, ask family and friends to pick some things up if they are planning a visit. This is a fantastic place to buy spices in bulk at rock bottom prices. Last trip I made I found a pound of cumin for under \$3. They also sell 25 and 50 pound bags of rice, so stock up on that too.

If none of these options work for you, you can always try the interweb.

Here are a few seasoning blends that you can start out with. The measurements are for dried herbs; if using fresh, double the amount, as herbs become more potent when dried. Also remember that food is about what pleases your personal tastes, so feel free to experiment. Have fun and happy cooking!

### **Mexican Chili Powder**

¼ C. Ancho Chili Powder  
¼ C. Cumin  
2 Tbsp Garlic (fresh diced or dried and ground)  
2 Tbsp Cilantro  
1 Tbsp Oregano  
1 -3 tsp Cayenne  
1 tsp Ground Clove  
1-2 tsp Ground Coriander

By Kat Callen

Litha, or the Summer Solstice, has arrived. The Sun has reached the peak of power. As our Earth Mother lounges lackadaisically in the heat, soaking up as much warmth as possible on this longest day of the year, She takes Her fill of the light. When She combines this with the frenzy of sacred play initiated at Beltane, She becomes sultry and swollen, increasing in lushness, moving towards the ripeness of Lammas and the abundance She provides.

Traditionally the young and young-at-heart leapt over the flames of the bonfire on Litha to ensure a plentiful harvest. The wise old womyn claimed "the higher the leaps, the taller the crops." Naturally the leapers exerted themselves fully for the benefit of the crops and the village.

The Sun enters the Cardinal Water sign of Cancer today. But do not let the Water dampen the celebration for, being ruled by the Moon, it feeds our cultural roots.

We can go with the flow as it nudges us to be receptive, increases our patience and intuitiveness, fosters our sensitivity and nurturing abilities, and frees our imaginations to soar to new heights.

As with last year's Litha, we are being called home. To be with our families, both blood relations and the kindred spirits that we embrace as our tribe. To be with them, if not physically then in thought and spirit. Water can help us on this journey. We can water our gardens, our own ancestral roots, and our hopes and dreams. The nourishing water will hasten the growth and ripening of many things - feeding our heart, mind, body, and soul. While in the glow of the shimmering summer, we can dance and sing and laugh. We can make plans for

### **Mike's BBQ Rub**

1 C. Brown Sugar  
2 Tbsp Garlic Powder  
2 Tbsp Cumin  
2 Tbsp Onion Powder  
1 Tbsp Dill  
1 Tbsp Rosemary

### **Jenn-Ra's Poultry Brine**

1 Gallon of Water  
1 C. Brown Sugar  
1 C. Salt  
2Tbsp Rosemary  
2 Tbsp Sage  
2 Tbsp Dill  
1Tbsp Thyme  
1Tbsp Tarragon  
1 fresh Onion quartered

Bring ingredients to a boil and let cool. Add bird of choice and refrigerate. For a whole bird, let sit between 8 and 24 hrs. For butchered bird, 3 to 8 hrs. Pat dry thoroughly before cooking. This brine works for roasting, grilling, smoking and deep frying.

*Jenn-Ra is a West Virginia refugee living in Rural Appalachian Kentucky on a seven acre homestead with three cats and a husband. Her inspiration for a farming life came from hearing stories about her Great Grandparents' Depression era farm throughout her childhood. (The video game Harvest Moon: Back to Nature may have also played a part.)* When not writing for *The Country Grind* she can be found working in the garden, chopping wood, cooking tasty food and photographing the little "presents" her cats bring her. Turn -Ons: Beer, Bubble Baths, and Beards. Turn -Offs: Fracking, Greed, and Dick Cheney. If you would like to contact Jenn-Ra you can send her an email at jenn-ra33@gmail.com and be on the lookout for her blog *Geisha in the Shack* coming soon in celebration of her one year anniversary of moving into her homestead.

actions that will allow us to create a vibrant and cooperative world where we can all be safe and happy and free. Then, come tomorrow, we will be prepared to leap into the waxing Dark as the Light is slowly overcome with the turning of the Great Wheel of Life.

The Moon sets the emotional tone as She transits through the zodiac signs, changing signs approximately every two and a half days. For Litha, the Moon is void-of-course most of the day until She moves into the Fixed Earth sign of Taurus at 22:03 CST. Void-of-course motion is when the Moon reaches near the end degrees of the zodiac sign that She has been traveling through. When the Moon makes Her last aspect, or energy connection, with another planet the void-of-course motion begins. This period of time is best for pondering and reflecting, for subjective avenues of involvement. It is best to avoid making major decisions, shopping, signing contracts and the like. Keeping this in mind you may be able to avoid difficult outcomes. Expect the unexpected.

The actual meaning of void-of-course is "nothing will come of it." The Moon takes a break, allowing nourishment and revitalization to occur, before the energy changes and She moves along to the next zodiac sign. This can be likened to the actual shifting of gears in a vehicle. There is a period of time when the gears must move through neutral in the transition. The energy is not as grounded and centered at this time so those who are normally a bit on the spacey side may have a tendency to get 'lost,' and find themselves losing track of time and space.

As the Moon takes a break in her daily ruling of the planets, take a 'time-out' period for yourself. Just go with the flow to avoid frustrations, wasted time and effort, delays, and problems later on. You can certainly think things through and weigh your options on upcoming important tasks and events, just avoid making actual decisions or actively beginning projects. Relaxation and fun can be maximized. No doubt, you too will be rejuvenated to the point of exhilaration.

A mere two hours before midnight CST, the Moon enters the fixed Earth sign of Taurus. Then it is back to the senses as we are once again grounded. It is easier to sink into the moment, be in the body, and enjoy the delights of the five senses. The Moon is exalted in Taurus, which is the slow mover in the zodiac, allowing us the opportunity to savour everything thoroughly. Whatever you choose to do - whether that be dance and truly feel the groove of the music, languish in the Sun, run barefoot through the grass, practice a craft or hobby, share frolicsome intimacy in a cozy atmosphere, partake of a tasty meal, deal with practical matters, spend time in a studio with your musical instrument, or relax with an afternoon siesta - rest assured Taurus will insist that you draw out the enjoyment.

Since Taurus is a fixed sign, the grounding nature helps us to be focused. Our capacity to go at something fully, to really flesh it out, is heightened. Beginning a new project, experimenting with new ways of doing things, immersing yourself in learning, or stretching your body and your mind will all go favourably while the Moon is in Taurus.

As I bid you a Leisurely Litha, ponder this point on pronouncing the word leisure. Although it does not roll off the tongue quite as lusciously, try to pronounce it this way - lezh-er, rather than the more common leezher. Remember that lee-zher rhymes with seizure, but lezh-er rhymes with pleasure.

Go well as we move slowly into the Dark.  
~ Kat

# THE HERMITAGE

## HOW I SETTLED DOWN FOR A MINUTE..

By Mel Roo

I can think of a million places on this planet where I would want to be right now. A nice party town for example, with a good, friendly, inviting punk scene, or maybe a secluded, relaxing sandy oasis, where I'd sit on dunes watching a sunset, even on a tropical beach sipping on mojitos, a vibrant lively city with lots of good shows, or swimming in an unnamed creek encased in vertical rocky canyon walls, far far away from humanity, etc. I want to see all types of places. And that involves traveling, and lots of it, which is my drive, my motivation. Believe in the journey, not the destination. Nomad forever. Or so I thought. Now I'm not so sure anymore because I never thought I would find some sort of happiness in growing roots and settling down for a while. But it turns out, all I had to do was move to the countryside... and it changed my life.

The last couple years of my life took me to the United States, Mexico, South America, Fiji islands, Australia and Hawaii. I would have kept roaming forever. I did not want to return to Canada. The only thing that did it and forced me back home was the old furry companion that I left behind, in good hands of course, with her pappa. My girly doggy girl who's been by my side for so long... She needed me, and I was back. Back (also) at the same difficult crossroad I keep encountering all along my life; it's where my two biggest passions keep clashing together, like two incompatible, opposite forces. Dogs and travels, travels and dogs. Eternal conflict; can't travel with a dog, can't travel if you have a dog. Especially an old dog like mine who was 14 at the time I came back. But really, there was no other way to deal with this situation; it was time for me to stop being selfish, stop traveling and give my best friend the best retirement plan she could get and BE there for her. And in Canada it would have to be.

After roaming around for a while and thinking about it, I found the perfect place to settle in the boondocks north of Courtenay, on Vancouver Island, squished somewhere between the foot of a big ski resort mountain and the Georgia Strait (Pacific Ocean). One quick visit paid to my old-time retired bush punk friends convinced me to have a go at the rural life. Ironically, I couldn't get there by myself; the land they live on being so hidden and tucked away down a dirt road, I couldn't find my own way in. Actually, nobody can, they all get lost coming here. You need an escort the first time around... and a good truck if you want to survive the road conditions!

And so I moved right in... well, I cleared a little lot area, dug up some ferns, climbed some trees with a chainsaw in hand, found a 1972 Dodge Superior RV for sale for \$1500, 50 kms away with a broken brake master cylinder and fell in love with it. Actually, it was the only one for sale at the moment and I needed a roof asap. So we drove this thing that barely brakes over the hills up to Courtenay and put her in her final resting place under the hemlocks and cedars. I quickly realized I got lied to: the propane fridge didn't work, neither did the oven or the water heater, shower was disconnected, etc. I have a lot to fix apparently! And to learn. Playing with propane scares the shit out of me... A big branch fell on the awning 3 days after I bought it and broke it. In the land of torrential downpours that we live on, this means a soaking porch...

After a few months of living here, I traded in my soccer mom's car for a 4wd Toyota 4runner with a 3" lift kit, learned how to ride a



Part of the awesome fun crew here at The Herm, including the local still!

motorcycle, traded in the old leather boots for some waterproof gumboots, and the old patched-up jacket for a plaid flannel one. I had truly joined the rest of the crusty crew at The Hermitage.

Dreamland for a lot of us, the Hermitage sits at the end of a dirt road, one that looks more like a labyrinth than a driveway, covered in giant trees everywhere, where a salmon-bearing creek runs alongside the whole back of the property. It's away from everything, super private, AND no one can find the damn place on their own, including the mailman or the cops! Directions to get here, when given to people, send them all confused and lost. It's a perfect party place where we can be loud and self-destroy peacefully!

You know you're home sweet home when you pass the distinct landmarks on the way: 5 curves, a toilet filled with ferns, a glow-in-the-dark skeleton hanging in the tree, about 4 giant piles of non-recyclable junk and rotten timber (may still be smoldering), a collapsed plastic garage, 4 or 5 dead vehicles waiting to be magically revived, 2 or 3 passed out drunks, the stench of dying rotting salmon (in the fall) and then you find us: a house, a log cabin, 3 trailers, one camper, one RV, 8 people, 3 dogs, 3 cats and 7 chickens. One big happy family! (Except we're down to 3 chickens now, thanks to the raccoons).

The Hermitage has an interesting history too. Right after World War I, the place was a booming logging and milling village called Headquarters, with the Hermitage being right in the center of a big 100+ workers' camp. The odd cast-iron woodstove and other old artifacts can still be found randomly around the property today... A creek water-powered mill was constructed 2 kilometers away from the property, on the banks of the Tsolum River but was never operative. The walls and floor of the main concrete building are still standing strong to this day and are sometimes used for the occasional rave parties, or as a canvas for graffiti artists... Sweet hang out spot either way! When the logging industry either momentarily died down or moved away some years later, two abbots/monks got permission in 1964 to develop a little hermitage retreat on the banks of the Tsolum River where people could come to meditate and undergo a vow of silence for weeks on end, under the supervision of an elder. They had to build their own shelter and provide their own food supplies. Then at some point some angry activist hippies started arriving in the 70's and are still here today; our awesome neighbours! Our friend Ludo is the youngest co-owner around and we are more than grateful that

he's sharing his land with us!

I seem to have adapted really fast to life in the countryside, despite the lack of drinking water, shower or toilet on the property. It didn't even affect me a minute. We have an old outhouse, we get our jugs filled up with artesian well water at the local general store and we shower whenever we can. In the winter, I just sneak in the Recreation Center in town once a week to wash myself. In the summer, we go swimming everyday in a different lake, river or beach everytime. Our neighbours have a pump running from the creek behind their house and connected to their bathroom but for 2 or 3 months in the fall when the salmon run is happening, the water gets real fishy!

A typical day at the Hermitage would start like this: Sometimes I wake up to the sound of ravens walking on the roof of my rv, then, as soon as I open my eyes, I look out the giant bay window at the rear of my rv and observe the little red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) living in the tree next to me. We share property and like to think we care for each other's presence (realistically, it's probably only one-sided though). But he's been missing in the last few days, maybe the neighbour's dog got him...life is brutal around here sometimes.. If so, then his bones will probably end up part of a bad-ass dragon sculpture that my friend is so damn good at making. Enough digressing here... So as my breakfast gets eaten and my senile old dog gets pooping all over the walking path outside, I usually find myself in the outhouse for a quick pit stop before leaving for work. From there, with an open view on the creek down below, I've witnessed (more than once) a bald eagle taking off from his nest way up in the douglas fir, dive towards the water in front of me, get himself a nice huge salmon between his talons, and return to the tree to share with his family. A very typical morning around here.

Another typical weekend day would be to spend all of Saturday gathering pallets and random scraps of wood and metal, build an 10ft-tall effigy, soak it in diesel, dress it up and watch it burn all night long while getting wasted on local moonshine and beers with a bunch of good old friends!! Then, on Sunday morning when you would expect a death silence, you walk around the property to a neighbor chopping firewood, another one is playing with a chainsaw and climbing gear, pruning and clearing trees 200 ft in the air (beer in hand), our friend on the other side would be weed wacking around his house, and so on. On a day like that, this motivated crew makes me feel guilty for feeling hungover (like they're not!) and I usually come out of my comfy shelter

and fire up some type of power tool as well. I've come to develop a strong intimate relationship with powertools, all of them really, since I moved here. I'm getting to know them all pretty good, by their first names even. Same with gasoline. Never leave home without her. Never light a bonfire without her either...

Then there's also bad stuff happening, all the time. Cars breaking down, house problems for example. I've learned so much about car mechanics and carpentry and electricity and propane systems and electronics and plumbing since I've been here. Hopefully I will be able to share some knowledge and discuss some advice and techniques about it in my future articles.

So basically, this is just a very brief glimpse of the little piece of paradise where I live, about which I want to write more and share with you all the daily adventures happening here at the Herm. Subsequent articles might include: "the science of making moonshine (and beers and wines I suppose)", "The Ultimate Building-with-Pallet guide", "How to grow Shiitake", "The local ecology guide", "The Redneck Punk Advice of the day", and many other practical (and some not-so-much) how-to guides.

On this, I stop and will go watch the local owl get mobbed away from the trees by the brown-capped chickadees while sipping on a cold one by the glacier-fed creek. Hopefully my senior dog won't stumble in the water. Peace!



# ONE OF OUR OWN FOSTERING ASSIMILATION OF FIRST NATIONS

by Tzomi Sara

*A note on terminology:*

*This article mostly deals with government policies towards the diverse Nations that have been trapped in Canadian border-lines.*

*While I love the term First Nations because it pays attention to the fact that the Nations are diverse and not just one society, by legal definition "First Nations" excludes Inuit and Métis people, who should not be left out of this article. Since the Canadian government has tended to view the First Nations, Inuit and Métis as one large group, in this critique of government policies I am forced to do the same. I have chosen to use "Aboriginal" because it best reflects the government's views without using the term "Indian". Whenever possible, specific Nations have been referred to by name. Please write me at tzomisara@gmail.com if you want to see my citations/sources, have a question, disagree with something I said, or want me to recommend some really great books on this subject.*

*What does this have to do with rural punx, you might ask? So, so much. Foremost, as people who live on land that is in a state of colonization, we have a responsibility to learn about, respect and work with the nations who have been so affected by our actions. Second, the majority of reserves are in rural areas, and it's important to know more about our neighbours, and at least be aware of the fights they are born into. Decolonization is hard, complicated, convoluted and confusing - but we have to start somewhere. None of us asked for this, but all we can do is try to make it better. <3*

\* \* \* \*

The failures of the Residential Schools have been a topic of discussion for over a century, though few describe the central problem better than Professor J. R. Miller, a historian in Saskatchewan/Cree-Ojibway territory:

"The root of the problem with Residential Schools was not religious instruction, inadequate teaching, insufficient vocational training, or any other specific feature of the schools' operation. The essence of the problem was the assumption of Euro-Canadians - churches, governments, people - that they, because of their racial superiority to Aboriginal people, *knew better* than the Native communities and their leaders what was in the best interests of those dependent groups. Is that attitude dead? Or has it been transmuted into something apparently different, though fundamentally the same?"

This question was published in 1996, the same year as the closure of the last Rez Skool (from now on called Rez Skools since I hate giving them the status of "schools"). At their peak in the 1940s and 50s, the skools had already been criticized for decades. They violated human rights, openly abused children, and failed to provide adequate food or sanitation, causing the death rates of the children there to sometimes be as high as 50% of all students. Between a culturally insensitive curriculum, inadequate supplies and funding, untrained teachers qualified only for their "fervent missionary spirit," and a total failure to respect students learning English as a second language, it is clear that in Rez Skools, effective instruction was not the highest priority. Activists speaking out against the Rez Skools led Prime Minister Stephen Harper to publicly apologize for their legacy in 2008.

The 1950s were a turning point in the history of the Rez Skools. Canada, in the midst of a post-WWII economic boom, had a burgeoning new crop of social workers that were anxious to begin their career in this new profession. The Canadian Welfare Council and Canadian Association of Social Workers lobbied against the Rez Skools in 1947, resulting in the 1951 amendments to section 88 of the Indian Act. The changes put Aboriginal people's health, welfare and educational services in the hands of the provinces, while the federal government remained financially responsible for status Indians. Essentially, this meant that the federal government would pay provincial welfare services for each Aboriginal child they took into care. Basically, this provided a pay incentive to pull kids out of their natural families. The statistics are staggering: Aboriginal kids jumped from being less than one percent of all children in foster care in 1959 to 30-40 percent (varying by province) by the end of the 1960s. These numbers are all the more shocking considering that Aboriginal people made up less than four percent of the total population at the time. This era came to be called "The Sixties Scoop," though it continued well beyond the 1960s.

One of the easiest defences (how to tell someone's racist?) of why Aboriginal kids were taken by social services is explaining that the children were living in bad conditions with their birth parents, so it was an attempt to make their lives better. But by the 1960s, many of the parents in question were Rez Skool survivors themselves, often going back multiple generations. They were carrying emotional and parenting issues stemming from intergenerational trauma such as depression, despair and self-destructive behaviour, the impacts of which are only today starting to be de-stigmatized. Although abuse or neglect was often blamed as reasons to apprehend children, there were just as many accounts of parents or grandparents losing their children to welfare agents because of poverty or euro-centric ideals, such as a lack of running water or bedrooms for each child. Bridget Moran, a social worker in British Columbia, summarized the true problem, explaining the families "had no resources that might conceivably have helped to keep families together, and children in their natural homes." The government chose to invest in Child Welfare Services instead of seeking long-term solutions for the damage caused to the people they had been "aggressively assimilating" (yes, that's a direct government policy quote) for over a hundred years.

Unfortunately, while the situation on reserves may have been questionable, there is little evidence that foster families were any better for the kids involved. The foster parents were possibly even less qualified to be parents than the religious leaders in Rez Skools had been to teach. The explosion of children in care necessitated such high numbers of new foster families that virtually no screening or monitoring process was in place. Many families took in a child simply for financial gain, to have extra help in the home, or for sexual exploitation. Ernie Crey (Sto:lo) remembers the year 1961, when he was the first of five children apprehended in his family of six, all of whom were placed in separate foster homes over the course of the next few years. In Crey's case, the mother and only remaining sibling looked for their disappeared family members for decades, writing dozens of letters that were kept in a file in an office and never delivered. He

lived with several different foster families and experienced a mixture of openly racist foster parents, beatings, and a welfare home for boys supervised by pedophiles making child porn in his teenage years (one was later arrested). Despite this, after hearing as an adult what his siblings had endured in their years in care, Crey strongly insists that he came out the luckiest of the five in the end. When speaking of sheer numbers of children to disappear into Child Welfare Services, the case of Spallumcheen, British Columbia is perhaps most disturbing. Edith Oram, a social worker in that region, admitted in 1989 to having apprehended more than fifteen children from that reserve alone between 1962 and 1966. Her successor, Mary Poggemoeller, outdid her, taking 50 children in just one year, sometimes ten at a time. This pattern continued in Spallumcheen until an entire generation was lost, sometimes leaving as few as fourteen children on the reserve. Paddy Walkus, chief of the Gwa'Sala-Nakwada'xw, described it as "Indian children [being] taken away like souvenirs by professionals who were supposed to be helping the whole family." The fate of these children from Spallumcheen Nation was adoption, mostly to Mormon families in Southern BC and the Northeastern United States.

As with the children of Spallumcheen, adoption was not an uncommon fate for other kids across the country. The screening process for adoptive parents was minimal, and overwhelmingly, children went to non-aboriginal parents. The children would be taken from their families without warning and, in most cases, never regain contact with their birth families again. The price for adoption was high: American families payed adoption fees anywhere from \$5000 to \$10 000 per child. Until 1982, social workers were also permitted to accept "extra incentives" for personal use as a bonus. This grim reality above all others contextualizes the motivation to seek out unfit Aboriginal parents with "too many children on their hands" - social workers like those in Spallumcheen and across the country must have made a killing.

Although the abuses and neglect lived by so many Aboriginal children in foster care have a very similar echo to the survivors of the Rez Skools, there is one very large difference: though discouraged from speaking their own language and socializing with siblings, the survivors of Rez Skools retained some sense of their cultural heritage and were always surrounded by children of a similar background. They also had the benefit of returning home for two months of the year. In foster or adoptive homes, an emphasis was put on treating the children as "one of their own," causing a complete erasure of cultural heritage: a loss of legal Indian status, knowledge of the Nation they had been a part of, and sometimes even their birth names. Sibling groups were intentionally split up in order to "maximize assimilation." The social workers left almost no paper trails of stolen children, leaving no trace of where the child had originally come from, or how they could contact their families again as an adult if they chose to re-trace their path back home. Effectively, an entire generation of children had vanished into the backseat of a social worker's car.

A legacy running from the mid-1800s until the final school was closed in 1996, the Rez Skools impacted both their students and their communities in complicated and

overwhelmingly negative ways. The government's public apology in 2008 put the issue into the public eye, hopefully creating more awareness of the systemic racism experienced by Aboriginal peoples that contribute to present-day social problems. However, awareness of the Sixties Scoop and the foster care/adoption system as it relates to Aboriginal peoples in Canada is still largely unrecognized. There is no doubt that the boom of Child Welfare agencies corresponded with the government's phasing out of Rez Skools in the 1960s, taking over the role of "caring" for children in "social need" - the Government of Canada proved that themselves in the 1996 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. The conditions experienced by Aboriginal children at the hands of Child Welfare services varied greatly, as they did within the Rez Skools, but the traumatic accounts of survivors of the two institutions are so common and so similar it is often hard to tell them apart. Is it the ongoing problems of the Child Welfare system that explain the Government's hesitance to publicly acknowledge the problem?

While the focus of this article has been mostly historical in order to give detailed context into this issue, the assimilation and abuse of Aboriginal children in foster care continues. Some important groundwork has begun in BC and parts of Nova Scotia, where the fostering of Aboriginal kids is largely run within the communities and social workers are taught in school about the tragedy of the Sixties Scoop. But there is still much to be done. As of 2010, there were approximately 27 000 Aboriginal children actively in state care, *more than double* the amount of students enrolled in Rez Skools at their height in the 1940s. Heartbreakingly, we may never know an accurate number of the tens of thousands of Aboriginal children put into care or adopted out before more accountability was called for in the Welfare System in the 1980s. However, more recent figures show that even in the last few decades, 70% of Aboriginal kids adopted went into non-Aboriginal families, and 70% of the time those mixed-racial family relationships break down. Abuses in foster homes are still common, and there is still very little screening and training of caregivers. A news search on the topic brings up a ton of recent examples (just search "aboriginal foster care" in a news site, I dare you). When I did, I found the March 2014 Report of the Auditor General of Canada revealing that of the approximately 1000 children receiving care each year in the Northwest Territories, 95% are Aboriginal, and a full two thirds of the homes are not screened in any way; and the report from January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014, that 500 children out of 750, *fully two thirds of those in care*, who have died in foster homes in Alberta were Aboriginal children - even though they make up only 6% of Alberta's population. I can't help but feel that history is apt to repeat itself. Therefore, in closing, I will reiterate J. R. Miller's probing question of the Rez Skools: "Is the attitude [of racial superiority to Aboriginal people] dead? Or has it been transmuted into something apparently different, though fundamentally the same?"

*Tzomi Sara lives in the bumbalow in greenwich, ns. hack gardener/fungophile/forager. schooling for sustainabilityblahblah. cranky old lady. hates: patriarchycolonialism, invasive species, pesticides. loves: being cranky, playing bananagrams with her dogs. tzomisara@gmail.com*

# ENSORORSHIP IS STILL ALIVE

By A.J. Middaugh

Living in a small town in the mid-west is something of a challenge, as of late, especially if you are - shall I say - a progressive personality. I imagine that it is worse in the south...though I also imagine that people down there are perfectly fine with the way things are. In the middle though, right on the tip of the Bible-belt, there are towns like the one I inhabit.

My town, you see, is one of those that seems to constantly contradict itself. It wants to move forward, to expand and attract a newer generation. However, it also wants to remain in its conservative past, preserved by the dusty elderly that makes up 60% of the population. Therefore you have two sides, constantly pushing against one another, creating friction disrupting the peace that small towns are supposed to possess.

Every once in a while, one side makes some change, pulling slightly ahead of the other. The progressive side of our town was able to get new technology for the local schools: laptops, for every student in every grade. They were even able to implement a very new idea, called E-Learning, where on days canceled for weather-related issues, the we were still able to do schoolwork, thus eliminating makeup days that would have been tacked onto the end of the year.

On the other end of things, a club created in my school to promote diversity was told to disband, due to the fact that it caused "too many issues". You see, many of the upperclassmen thought of the club as a way to promote homosexuality, and therefore made a horrifically homophobic counterpart, which later caused quite a bit of negative press-time for our school, in addition to causing a stir amongst the students.

Both of those occurrences seemed isolated though. Just a few things that had happened over a period of time, though no other incidents really coinciding with them. However, as of late, things have been picking up, the stakes becoming higher and the sides more prominent.

Personally, I blame the group of us currently in and graduating from high school. We are a forward bunch, curious and innovative. We want to see the world, to learn more about it and to change it for the better. Being unable to travel too far though, we pushed to bring change to us...which those set-in-the-old-ways people did not like in the least. Therefore, they became stricter, less lenient when it came to change, thus resulting in the huge rift between the two sides.

To sum things up, it had been a huge conglomeration, a terrible buildup of things piling on other things, that created World War 3 in our "humble" community.

The whole thing had, of course, been about books. Books, you see, are ideas. Whether books are fiction or fact, they

are centers for knowledge, spreading stories and truths around the world. Opinions are expressed, topics discussed, and everything that had ever been a thought could be developed into something completely new.

The problem about the books was simple: They were new. Innovative. Controversial. There were occurrences in some of the books that were considered immoral. There were ideas about people, and who should be allowed to marry whom, and ideas about the government. They had ideas in them, that were not agreed with, by that one side of the town.

There had always been a huge thing about what books should or shouldn't be allowed in schools in our town, ever since the book burnings in the early eighties. The librarian of our school at the time had refused to relinquish those books considered controversial, for most of them had amazing stories that didn't deserve to die. However, she was ordered to lock them away in the back room, and only bring them out to students upon request. She was angry about the books being locked away, but she had to follow orders, lest she be fired and no one be there to protect the books.

The books had remained in the back, some slowly trickling out into the main part of the library, as they became classics, or the like. Though the remaining books of the back room were pushed to be banned, it was never gone through with.

Then something happened. The school board made a simple request for the English teachers to send them a list of what books they planned to teach in the next six years. They had to include several things with the list of books (for instance: a summary of the book, genre, length, themes, other such things having to do with it being literature-related, etc.).

My teacher had been Mrs. S-- (as I shall call her). She created a long list of fiction and nonfiction books, both old and new. She knew many of the books (i.e. *the perks of being a wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, *Looking for Alaska* by John Green, *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher, etc.) were long shots, due to their subject matter and those who were on the school board not agreeing. However, she never expected what was to happen.

Upon turning in the list, she was immediately called into question, many people taking their insults to a personal level (one saying they did not believe the person who had picked out those books to be a suitable influence on their children). Needless to say, Mrs. S-- was upset, though not totally by the blatant disregard for the literature. No, she was most upset by the school board's unwillingness to defend her from such harsh comments, many people even agreeing full-out with those against her. One man, the board president, whilst seemingly neutral, stated that he "didn't believe in fiction in the classroom".

Mrs. S-- took that comment to heart. She felt she couldn't teach at a school, where the school board's president didn't believe in what she was teaching. You see, earlier that year, she gave an entire presentation (whilst teaching *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern) about why fiction is important - not only in the classroom, but in society.

It all comes back to the fact that books are ideas, or more likely, a bunch of ideas gathered up into droves of ideas for people to interpret as they will.

She sent in her resignation soon after that meeting, having secured a job at another school not far from ours. The loss might not have meant much to those parents who had been complaining, but it hit us, the students, really hard. Mrs S-- was one of the best teachers at our school, a favorite for many of us, including myself. When she announced her leaving to my class, we were devastated. It was like someone close to you had died, only worse - knowing that person was going to be so close to you, living on, but not being a part of your life.

She told us she wasn't "quitting", truly, not by a long shot. She was making a statement... and we understood that.

*A.J. Middaugh is a high school student from Indiana. She enjoys reading books (particularly "controversial" ones), listening to the one good radio station her area offers, and writing about anything and everything. She can be contacted at middaughaj@gmail.com*

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## LIVING IN CITIES, LIVING RURALLY, AND GOING IN BETWEEN

By Reece Steinberg

I lived in three cities - London, ON, Edmonton, and Vancouver before moving to a rural area on Prince Edward Island in 2010.

My transition from city to country stretched out over three years, from getting land to living here full time. After buying an inexpensive piece of land with my partner Travis, I stayed on the land for most of a year, building a cabin and getting settled in. Finally, having spent my savings on buying land and building materials, I needed a job, and wasn't able to find work as a librarian on the island. I applied to jobs all over the country, and ended up back in Vancouver.

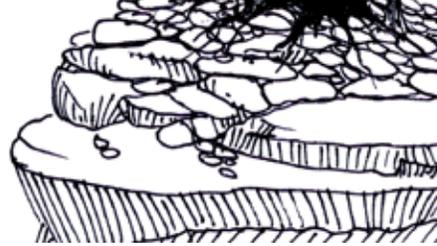
I never intended to go back and forth for work, but that happened, at first just for a year (with a 4-month break), and then another year and a third. I saved money and then cut the ties with my work in 2013, and have lived the past year rurally. Looking around to the punks and weirdos in this community doing the same sort of thing as us, coming and going (or just going) is a pattern. Of the 5 couples that make up or have made up a loose community here in the past 4 years, only one has moved to a piece of land and stayed put. Jobs/cash and relationships are the obvious and complicated threads that run through lives, sometimes pulling people away from living on land here.

Spending my first full winter here, I ended up feeling a lot more a part of a larger, non-punk community. Since so many jobs are seasonal here - the island's industries are agriculture, tourism, and fishing - summer is busy for most people. Winter is when people start organizing seed saving meetings, asking for help with working on their own projects, and taking the time to do something other than work. I helped put up the giant metal skeleton of a commercial greenhouse in frigid snowy conditions, and designed a website and informational signs for a watershed group. I helped put on a karaoke night at a rural bar, and went to community school - weekly scrappy classes taught by community members in a nearby village. I still get weird looks from people, but also some smiles and nods or hellos. After this winter I feel more comfortable here. My fear that homophobic jocks would set fire to the house (this happened to a gay couple not far

away) has pretty much vanished. Easing myself into this community feels a little like being around a shy child or animal who needs time to see that I am not dangerous, and that I can make small talk about the weather as well as anyone else.

The on-and-off country living isn't something I would particularly recommend to anyone - it's disruptive to be moving so much, and it definitely prevented me from settling in to any community. On the other hand, in some ways it worked out OK - I eased into living rurally for the first time by spending only part of the year here initially. That was helpful while adjusting to the different social, job and

community realities of many rural areas, and also adjusting to a different way of living - no electricity, a much smaller living space, hauling water, etc. Still, if I was going to do it over again, I would just jump into it and make it work. My two friends here who have done that have had some challenging times financially, but are more integrated into the larger community than I am. They moved here with no solid plan and not a lot of money, but are paying off land and working for the organic farmer they bought the land from. It was inspiring for me to see that was possible and that, as is often the case, if you don't have a back-up plan or a safety net, then things tend to work out.



# HOW ROADKILL BECOMES ART: TALKING WITH LISA PETRUNIA

Interviewed by Shauna Lynn Russell

Lisa is a multi-talented artist living in a rural community on the coast of British Columbia. She creates colorful and mystical art pieces from found plants, insects, animal bones, skulls and skins. Although she uses remains as her medium the theme of re-birth is apparent, rather than that of death. She possesses a deep respect for the natural world and a unique ability to breathe new life into every aspect of her work. I got a chance to ask Lisa a few questions about her art, her processes and the knowledge she has gained



about working with natural materials.

**Shauna:** Describe your art a little bit. What do your finished pieces portray?

**Lisa:** My art is a process in which I get to explore and take part in the cycle of the life/death continuum and mimic it on a small scale. My finished pieces embody that infinite cycle as temporary creations made from past forms, to exist as they are for a time until they no longer do and so on.

**Shauna:** So where do your materials come from?

**Lisa:** Lots of road kill. I keep a stash of garbage bags in my truck. I'm always grabbin stuff out of the ditch. I also find lots of dead stuff while I'm hiking or walking the beaches. I get tons of stuff given to me as well. People see or hear about what I do and save all kinds of things for me. One lady here in the valley found out about my art and in the past 2 months has given me 2 raccoons, about 10 -20 mice & rats, 4 pig heads, and her daughter's pet rabbit that passed. I never kill anything for my artwork, not even the bugs; everything is found dead.

**Shauna:** How do you get the bones and skulls in your work clean; what processes do you use?

**Lisa:** The technique I use to clean the bones really depends on what state I get the animal in. If it's a fully intact carcass I will skin it and tan the hide, cut away as much flesh as possible and throw that meat in the woods. I'll then treat the bones and skull as I do with things I find that have their flesh already decomposed or mostly decomposed, which is to use the process of maceration. I fill a rubber-made bin with warm water and every week or two change the water until the clean bones remain. I scrub them down at the end of the process to remove the smell of rot they acquire. I also bury things to dig up later. It takes the longest to decompose that way but when I don't have enough time to skin everything it's a great option. A new method I've found works well is to just leave stuff bagged up and it rots away on its own.

Opening the bags and sliding the bones out from the heap of rotted flesh can be overwhelming to the senses, but you get used to it. You get used to the smells, to blood and guts, to maggots and other helpful critters.

**Shauna:** Have you got any tips for someone who wants to try this out themselves?

**Lisa:** For anyone wanting to get into cleaning bones or tanning hides it's a really accessible hobby, it's free for the most part besides a few supplies. All you really need is to be dedicated to the time it takes. All methods do require patience to attain a nice finished product and there is a lot of trial and error involved in finding the best methods for you; it really depends how you like your bones and skulls to look in the end. Sun works well as a natural bleaching method to get nice white skulls. If you are looking to mummify something small like a baby bird or a mouse you can cover it with sea salt to dry it out. What else... well, every animal has enough brains to tan its own hide. If your specimen has suffered some sort of head trauma and doesn't have a head full of brains for you to use, cow and pig brain work well and can be purchased from a butcher if need be.

**Shauna:** I imagine it took a lot of trial and error to get the right outcome when you were first learning about cleaning bones, skinning animals and tanning hides; what are some things you wish you had known from the start?

**Lisa:** Bleach sux. I was a fan at first because of the convenience. You can just throw fleshy bones and skulls and 24hrs later... voila. The convenience has its price though. The bones become brittle and chalky and with smaller animals the bleach can eat away the bones completely. It has proven much better to accept the nature of the work, and let nature take its course. Sometimes it means getting elbows deep in rot and sawing away at smelly flesh but you learn to enjoy every part for what it is. I wish I had better technique for skinning animals from the get-go as I have torn a few nice pelts. I think that really just comes with practice, though. One thing



I have found pretty helpful in this area is to use a scalpel. I ordered one through a veterinary clinic and it's magic on small animals, especially birds.

**Shauna:** What is the thing you like best about using the types of materials that you do?

**Lisa:** I love that using found materials ultimately dictates what is made. I never know for sure what strange creature will be the next to emerge. I have ideas about what direction I want to take my artwork and I make sketches but that always ends up morphing based on what I find, and I really enjoy that. There's this endless potential for new creations that I just wouldn't conceive of entirely on my own. I also really like how finding the materials amplifies my time with and appreciation of nature.

Check our more of Lisa's art on her webpage: [www.deadandbeautiful.com](http://www.deadandbeautiful.com) or email: [speak-@hotmail.com](mailto:speak-@hotmail.com)

## a camera made out of a matchbox?!

A recent visit to my friends Mike and Rachel's place coincided with World Pinhole Photography Day, and thus, I brought with me my pinhole camera, to take a few shots around their place. What is a pinhole camera? A pinhole camera is a lensless camera, made from anything that can be sealed up against light (I've even seen a pumpkin used!), with a pinhole pricked in the side, hence the name. I made mine from a matchbox, using simple instructions I found online. Photos taken with pinhole cameras are unpredictable and largely beyond one's control. And to me, that's part of the appeal! -Dandy Denial

To see more pinhole photographs, and other work, visit: [www.digitaldenial.tumblr.com](http://www.digitaldenial.tumblr.com), or [www.flickr.com/photos/deesquared](http://www.flickr.com/photos/deesquared). To get in touch, email me at [denialdesigns@gmail.com](mailto:denialdesigns@gmail.com)



**Never Give Up On Your Dream** Word Search Puzzle by Kat Callen

This puzzle contains one hundred words that are applicable to rural living. They range from food to animals, tools to plants, ways of being to important issues, with a few whimsical words thrown in.

The words may be horizontal (forward or backwards), vertical (up or down), or diagonal. Circle the words as you find them. When all have been found, print the leftover letters in order (top left to bottom right) for an important tool to keep you informed and happy as you pursue the rural life.

**Word List:**

- |          |              |          |              |
|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| ACREAGE  | EGGS         | LADLE    | SEEDLINGS    |
| AIR      | ENVIRONMENT  | LAMB     | SELF RELIANT |
| APPLES   | FAIRIES      | LAND     | SERENITY     |
| AREA     | *FARM        | LID      | SEW          |
| ASH      | FARMER       | LOOK     | SHEARING     |
| BEE      | FIRE         | MEAT     | SHEEP        |
| BREAD    | FREE RANGE   | MILK     | SOIL         |
| BROKE    | FROM SCRATCH | NATURAL  | STAR         |
| BUD      | FRUIT        | NATURE   | STOKE        |
| CAN      | GARDEN       | NEVER    | STRANGER     |
| CARE     | GEESE        | OFF GRID | SUN          |
| CHEESE   | GIVE         | *ON      | TAN          |
| CHICKENS | GOATS        | ORGANIC  | TEA          |
| CHOP     | GOOSE        | PET      | TOOLS        |
| COTTON   | GRAINS       | PIE      | TREES        |
| COUNTRY  | GRIND        | PIG      | UP           |
| COW      | GRITTY       | PLAY     | VEGGIES      |
| DILL     | HERBAL       | RAIN     | VINEYARD     |
| DIRT     | HIDE         | RHUBARB  | WATER        |
| DIY      | HOG          | RUE      | WHEY         |
| DOOR     | HOMEBIRTH    | RUG      | WILDLIFE     |
| DREAM    | HOMESTEAD    | RURAL    | WOOD         |
| DRY      | HUMMUS       | RUT      | WOOL         |
| DUCK     | INDEPENDENCE | SACRED   | YOGHURT      |
| EARTH    | KID          | SAW      | YOUR         |

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

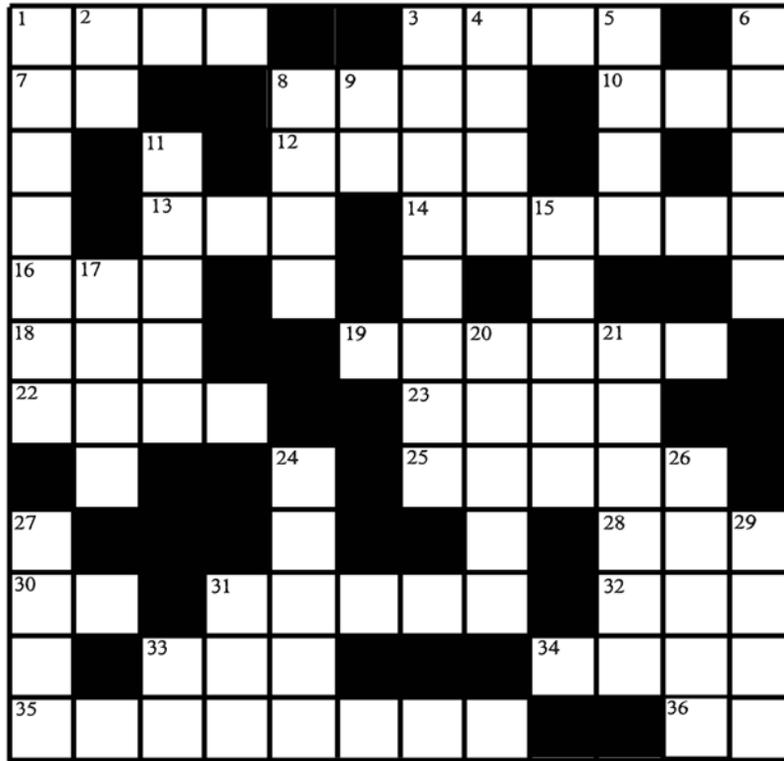
Important tool for rural living: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Stand alone words, not part of a longer word. For example, while FARM is contained in FARMER, the word FARM is in the puzzle on its own.

The Country Grind Quarterly  
**Crossword Puzzle**

**Across**

1. Not unkind
3. Like spinach, but more bad-ass
7. \_\_\_ Cetera
8. Type of insulation
10. Eureka!
12. Avoid farmer's tan:  
exercise right to bare \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Pee, cue, arr, \_\_\_\_\_
14. Put yr mead, milk, or water in it.
16. A soap ingredient
18. Yikes!
19. Yr kids won't be there this  
summer, or maybe ever..
22. An excellent addition to daily life- .
23. LOLspeak for "au secours!"
25. Photographer \_\_\_\_\_ Adams
28. Silent "yes"
30. "\_\_\_, i see."
31. A bug-free day is a \_\_\_\_\_ day.
32. The night before
33. An excellent accessory to  
summer life
34. Region
35. An excellent medium for making rural art
36. Railroad (abbr)



**Down**

1. An excellent herb for allergies and  
other maladies
2. Cousin \_\_\_\_\_
3. Our new favourite drink
4. As well
5. Look here for the sunrise
6. "Meet your \_\_\_\_\_"
8. Something you might do to yr clothes..  
or not..
9. Not Portland ME, but Portland \_\_\_
11. Delicious surrogate onion things
15. They'll help you build yr home and  
dig yr garden
17. Uh huh.
20. Snotrag
21. The first act
24. Crawl around suspiciously.
26. Sweetheart
27. Summer: an excellent time for a  
bike \_\_\_\_\_
29. The start of a letter
31. Some chewing gum, or some cash
33. Do, Re, Mi, \_\_\_\_\_

solution will be posted to  
[www.countrygrind.net](http://www.countrygrind.net)

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# RURAL PUNK CLASSIFIEDS

Are you looking for that special someone to share a rural punk life with? Maybe you're a lone punk looking for a place to settle down? Or maybe you have a few extra acres on your land and you're looking for just the right punk to share it with? Well, the Country Grind Classifieds are for you!

Also you can have ads for other things as well, i.e. selling a truck, buying/selling guns, getting rid of excess building materials, whatever. But if you have a distro or a blog or something that your trying to promote I'm going to say that you should just buy an ad, (\$10 for ad space is fucking cheap!)

Classifieds are totally free!! Please try to keep your ad brief. If it is too long/not straight to the point we will require you to edit it before publishing. Folks can have multiple ads about different things.

email us your classified ad at [punx@countrygrind.net](mailto:punx@countrygrind.net)

## Looking for some friendship when I go out hunting in the fall in Saskatchewan.

Last October I spent 2 weeks in a ti-pi while I was moose hunting. While living out in the bush is really rad, I don't really care for being alone. Experience doing this sort of thing would be an asset but not totally necessary. [meldrumjeff@hotmail.com](mailto:meldrumjeff@hotmail.com)

**We are a little bunch of Farm/Bush anarchist living on a 5 acres organic CSA farm in the marvelous Témiscouata valley in the Québec's Appalachian ridge.** We are living a couple km from the TransCanada highway where we know, lots of kids and travellers are passing by on their way either west or east. You are welcomed to stop and spend some time with us, work on the farm for some good fun and food. Just drop us a mail [jcaldwell1@hotmail.ca](mailto:jcaldwell1@hotmail.ca), or walk 6 km on the way to Squatec and watch for a greenhouse on the hill or your left

**SURVEY TIME:** I'm curious how country punks make their cash. What do you do for money? Email me with your inventive (or not) country hustle schemes. I need some creative thinking so I don't always have to be pretending to be normal. If enough folks email me I could submit the data to the CG so we can all be inspired. Please and thanks! [complicated.hai@gmail.com](mailto:complicated.hai@gmail.com) (to get you started, I'm a caregiver and a postal worker)

**Long shot:** has anyone converted a 4x4 1st generation Chevy LUV to diesel? I'm looking to do that this year. Contact me: [complicated.hai@gmail.com](mailto:complicated.hai@gmail.com)

**Calling all trailer tramps!** Yo. I'm about to move into a gutted out trailer and try to make a fuckin cute cabin on wheels. with a woodstove. What? You say you've done that too and have so much to share about your experience? I'm interested in connecting with anybody who's lived in trailers and has advice / valuable lessons learned about it. Especially interested in tips on winter comfort. [complicated.hai@gmail.com](mailto:complicated.hai@gmail.com)

**Dear dream-hunks,** Do you feel the itch to settle down, but aren't quite ready to scratch it? Does living on a houseboat/sailboat sound like a dream come true? Do you like horses, building stuff, feminism, and the idea of becoming a parent? Would people say that you're like a young Bruce Springsteen who dances like a young Patrick Swayze? If you answered "yes" to at least two of those questions, you should let me know: A. Grueleater 78 Meadow Plains Rd, Laramie, WY 82070 or [grueleater@gmail.com](mailto:grueleater@gmail.com)

**My dogs are singers too but they don't ever let me solo.** I used to pluck a lot of autoharp and sing loud, but now i have a piano and a little accordion too. Really love harmonies and folk/oldtime/bluegrass/old jazz/ragtime/polka/reels. Living in Greenwich NS (near Wolfville) and miss playing with folks. Come sing with me? Search roule avec stringband on the internets if you want to hear something first in case you hate it. [tzomisara@gmail.com](mailto:tzomisara@gmail.com)

**Do you love classified ads?** Recently defunct super freaky SF Bay Area BAITLINE!!! Free advertiser still has some back issues kickin around! Send trades or stamps. Practically guaranteed to raise an eyebrow if not a full belly chuckle. Ads may still be valid! Inquire at Baitline/Sy Wagon PO Box 54, Loma Mar, CA 94021 Also, if you are queer and/or might enjoy an explicit booklet depicting cartoon faggot unicorn orgies, let me know

**Do you have a trailer or a tent and a desire to live simply?** Come on over! We are a family of three (I'm an artist/musician, my partner is a carpenter/woodsman and our babe is 1 and a half and loves to dance) living in Manitoba, on a quarter section (160 acres) of old growth boreal forest, shared with three other families. We are in between two lakes and only a few miles south of the Riding Mountain National Park border. We live in an almost entirely off grid shack (we have a landline phone), we haul in our water, use candles for lighting, wood stove for heat/cooking, we have a small solar power setup, and bathe in a river a mile down the hill. We've got artist lesbians, bush men, feminists, punks, etc, as our rad neighbors. While you're here you could either get a job at the many places in town needing help, or you could hang out, work the garden, help build a chicken and goat pen, chop wood and general farm help. Contact us for more info or to let us know you're coming by. [callandramayhart@gmail.com](mailto:callandramayhart@gmail.com)

**Calling all trailer tramps!** Yo. I'm about to move into a gutted out trailer and try to make a fuckin cute cabin on wheels. with a woodstove. What? You say you've done that too and have so much to share about your experience? I'm interested in connecting with anybody who's lived in trailers and has advice / valuable lessons learned about it. Especially interested in tips on winter comfort. [complicated.hai@gmail.com](mailto:complicated.hai@gmail.com)

**Live in amerika?** Do you have experience with mining claims or BLM stewardship contracts? I, and some other babes, are trying to get a situation goin here. Give a holler if you've done it before and have tips or advice, please! Thanks. [complicated.hai@gmail.com](mailto:complicated.hai@gmail.com)

**Two baddass artist lesbos in love,** with two dogs (one wild) , a school bus and trailer need a place to call home, looking for somewhere in canada, middle of know where type of thing, off grid, and space to grow a garden and have some goats, clean water coming from somewhere like a creek or river. open to work trade (lots of farming experience), if my dog kills your chickens please dont try to kill her with a pitch fork. [bubzeela@gmail.com](mailto:bubzeela@gmail.com)

**Want to live in (or just visit) the middle of nowhere with other like-minded people?** Do you like the Northwoods? We're a young family of 4 + 1 friend with 60 acres in northern Minnesota trying to start a community/land share. Check out our IC listing: [www.ic.org/directory/long-haul](http://www.ic.org/directory/long-haul)

**Interested in connecting with like minds** .. even though i don't identify as punk, just old biker trash, hippie folk. Yeah, i can be crass, opinionated and abrupt... or maybe passionate, forthright and for real is more accurate. Cold sober and drug free for 25+ years. Looked upon as a non-conformist radical by many, but it's the older generation (70-90 yr olds) who understand me best. I have a mostly wooded homestead in maine, unconnected to the world except by a cell phone and a 1/4 mile wood trail driveway. In a solid construction yurt built with lumber cut onsite. Heat and cook with wood from the land, raise meat and vegetables (2+ acres garden space), goats. Get in touch! CISCO, 868 E. River Rd., Whitefield, ME, 04353

I saw your classified in the last issue of the grind. You didn't respond to the smoke signals from my homemade gunpowder. I even tried morse code explosive percussion blasts, and yet no reply. Do you not know of the 2 years worth of home canned food and ammunition in my bunker? My moat is newly flooded and the watchtowers on my stockade are nearly complete. I am working on some greek fire for my trebuchet, maybe that will get your attention.



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