



## Reg Rep Rap

by Dave Stubbs



Here we are at the start of another new year. For many of us, it's that time of year when we are inundated with notices reminding us to renew organization memberships and magazine subscriptions. For many of us, it's also time to renew our Mensa Canada membership (unless you renewed for two years at the beginning of 2008).

As you know, unlike most other organizations and publications, Mensa does not mail out a separate renewal notice at the beginning of the year, but, rather, prints the renewal form in the November and January editions of MC2. While this saves the organization several thousand dollars a year in processing and mailing costs, it does mean that members often overlook the renewal request and don't realize they haven't paid until Lumens and MC2 stop showing up in the mail.

To make sure your Mensa publications do not suddenly disappear on you, drop whatever you are doing right now and complete the Membership Dues Renewal form on the back page of your most recent MC2 (in fact, it is the back page). As noted, you can renew by regular mail, email, fax, or phone; your choice. In addition, this page also shows your membership expiry date, which is great for those of us who can never remember this sort of detail. The membership fees are unchanged from previous years, \$60 for one year and \$110 for two years. Renew your Mensa membership now.. ☺

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## Leo's Lot

by Leo Jung



### Speakers Group:

### Dr. Udo Erasmus

Food for the Soul  
and Food for the Body:  
A Wholistic View.

Wednesday, February 25th, 2009  
730 - 915 pm

*Please note longer meeting time.*

Dr. Erasmus was one of Dave Suzuki's grad students who was encouraged to take his PhD in genetics. Udo chose instead to take a PhD in the metabolism of fats and oils (lipids) at the U.Chicago. Udo is the inventor of Udo's Oil. At his last presentation to us, he was creating a health food chocolate!

Author of several books, Udo has lectured to audiences on all continents, and made several thousand media appearances. Udo was raised in a rural environment, and almost died of pesticide poisoning at a young age. This led him to contemplate the things which are really important: both spiritually, and physically. Please join us

**Brainstorming Topic:** *Implications of a Cashless Society.*  
Date to be announced, but likely a weekend.

Stephen Hollander, Coordinator, Economic Crime Studies, Centre for Forensic and Security Technology Studies at BCIT, and one of his students from HSBC, approached me to host a brainstorming session on a Cashless Society.

Discussion topics could include: influence on business, F/X, security, philanthropy eg: no coins to give, and criminal activity.

If anyone is interested in presenting views or brainstorming ideas, please contact me: [LeoJung@Lynx.net](mailto:LeoJung@Lynx.net).

# Editor's Letter

by Lisa Le Blanc



*Ah, to love, as if to never live again.*

Is there any other way? February is the month for lovers. Tucked into that trench between the twinkle of Christmas lights and the first cherry blossoms of Spring is the opportunity to pause and remember those we love. Maybe we need an excuse to burrow under the covers, to revel in the bosom of soul-searching satiety.

Maybe we just need a reminder to reach out to those who have spiced up our lives. Send flowers and chocolates to those who matter most. Reach out and forgive those who've lost the struggle to care.

As I watch a cluster of purple crocus bloom next to a fading heap of snow, I'm reminded that life reaches out to grab hold of us by the shirt collar, even as yesterday pales. Like hummingbirds, we must hover at the gaping maw of that sweet blossom that is life.

Drink deeply. Savour every last drop of nectar.

And love, like you'll never see light again.

Till next time...

*Looking forward to hearing from you.*

*Lisa*



## Here's another fine mess you've gotten me into...



### A Little Canadian Humour by Jeff Foxworthy

Forget Rednecks, here is what Jeff Foxworthy has to say about Canucks:

- a. If your local Dairy Queen is closed from September through May, you live in Canada.
- b. If someone in a Home Depot store offers you assistance and they don't work there, you live in Canada.
- c. If you've worn shorts and a parka at the same time, you live in Canada.
- d. If you've had a lengthy telephone conversation with someone who dialed a wrong number, you live in Canada.
- e. If 'Vacation' means going anywhere south of Detroit for the weekend, you live in Canada.
- f. If you measure distance in hours, you live in Canada.
- g. If you know several people who have hit a deer more than once, you live in Canada.
- h. If you have switched from 'heat' to 'A/C' in the same day and back again, you live in Canada.

# Fed up to the Back Teeth

by Sheila Gair

Lisa has put out a call for those of us who love to write as there is some empty space in Lumens. Sure I could send something in, but what? Not a book review, though we have just read Steinbeck's Cannery Row and each of us in the book club loved it – by the same token we did not speak kindly of Graham Swift's Ever After – a total waste of time, and what on earth was it all about anyway? I said I was fed up to the back teeth with authors who wrote book after book, cashing in on their success with a first book.

So I thought I might have a moan and call it 'I'm fed up to the back teeth with . . . . . ' and see what I could come up with. If you are completely disinterested, check the rest of Lumens, but I am sure some of you could finish that expression quite readily.

I'm fed up to the back teeth with cell phones – or perhaps I should say cell phone abusers. Nobody, but nobody, needs to be tied to a phone twenty four hours a day.

I drove over the Burrard Bridge the other day behind a cyclist – on a cell phone. The bus I pulled alongside at an intersection had a driver with a phone in his left hand and he was tex-

ting. They are at Safeway in the deli section, in London Drug down with the pain killers and at Canadian Tire among the tools – all jabbering away in voices heard easily at ten paces, and for what?

They are even in the library! Picking up kids from school – half of them exit the building and pull out a phone, and they all line up at the bus stops, cell phones at the ready. Who hasn't been in a meeting when one rings? My doctor's office bans them, and still people talk.

My choir rehearsal bans them – and the kids get very miffed if you say 'turn that darn thing off please!' I sincerely hope we ban them in moving cars, whose drivers are so involved that they wander across lanes and slow down



– getting in my way.

I'm fed up to the back teeth with the Olympics which do not have my support, and will not separate me from a single penny if I can avoid it. No pins, no splashy sports wear, no licence plates and no crazy little animals made in China. I won't buy!

We are being held hostage while the city is torn apart and every traffic route barricaded. We have buildings erected or renovated at great expense and people pushed out of their homes so others can make money. And now the Olympics top brass want us to take a holiday and stay off the streets so that paying visitors can make it to all the sold-out venues.

Or we could work for the Olympics and have our generous bosses pay our wages anyway. Our universities and colleges are closing and donating their parking lots – while students can be volunteers and help out. Stop the Insanity is a phrase already coined, but I will re-activate it and I also feel justified in using the Bah Humbug phrase. All this multi billion dollar hoopla for two short weeks of winter sports. We have gone mad.

Time to stop the rant – give us your two cents.:

## That's a good idea, Ollie, tell me that again...

- i. If you can drive 90 kms/hr through 2 feet of snow during a raging blizzard without flinching, you live in Canada.
- j. If you install security lights on your house and garage, but leave both unlocked, you live in Canada.
- k. If you carry jumpers in your car and your wife knows how to use them, you live in Canada.
- l. If you design your kid's Halloween costume to fit over a snowsuit, you live in Canada.
- m. If the speed limit on the highway is 80km, you're going 90 and everybody is passing you, you live in Canada.

- n. If driving is better in the winter because the potholes are filled with snow, you live in Canada.
- o. If you know all 4 seasons: almost winter, winter, still winter, and road construction, you live in Canada.
- p. If you have more miles on your snow blower than your car, you live in Canada.
- q. If you find 2 degrees 'a little chilly', you live in Canada
- r. If you actually understand these jokes and forward them to all your friends & others, you definitely live (or have lived) in Canada.



# Think Tank: Israel-Palestine Conflict

by Canon Bryan

The Vancouver Local SIG has been discussing this topic on-and-off for some time, with considerable opposition of viewpoints.

With this superficial essay, I would like to bring some information into view of our membership that are interested in this topic, and present my own assessment of the situation.

Israel's statehood, though a positive socio-political endeavour in the twentieth century for persecuted minorities, is being utilized as a pawn in a geo-political scheme by Western powers, particularly the United States, because of its geographic proximity to vast strategic reserves of fossil fuels in the Middle East. Criticism of Israel is rebuked under the banner of anti-Semitism, which is certainly a red herring when closely examining the nature of the activities in the theatre of conflict.

Israel gained independent statehood in 1948 as a response to the Holocaust during World War II. The newly-minted sovereign nation was immediately thrust into conflict by surrounding Arab nations who were far from pleased with the United Nations mandate<sup>1</sup> - not

altogether surprising given that the area occupied had been the home of indigenous Palestinians for centuries. It is my view that the creation of this sovereign nation, though beneficial to the persecuted Jews, was itself an invasion and an unwanted occupation of indigenous Palestinian land. However, this is tangential to my thesis.

Israel is surrounded by the most oil-rich nations in the world. Data provided by the US CIA shows, as of 2007, 15 states that lie within a radius of 2,000 kilometres of Israel control reserves of 806 billion barrels of oil, or over 60% of the total global supply<sup>2</sup>. By contrast, the United States is the largest global consumer of electricity and fossil fuels by far, with a comparatively meagre reserve of 21.8 billion barrels (in steady net decline), or 1.6% of the total global supply.

There will be few in this group, I believe, who would dispute that the United States has waged a global effort for the control of oil reserves, particularly since the end of World War II. The true import of the US' current adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan can barely remain

veiled, even by top propagandists. The Middle Eastern states have been a beacon for America's oil-seeking activities, citing the usual themes.

Is it so difficult to believe then that Israel should not play a part in the American's objectives in the Middle East?

Is it possible that America's interest in and friendship with Israel is altruistic?

To answer these questions, it may be useful to examine the levels and nature of aid provided to Israel by the United States.

It is a fact that Israel has received far and away more military aid from the US than any other country, every single year since 1976. Aid to Israel occupies its own special category, with 17% of all US foreign aid being earmarked for Israel. It is currently at \$3 billion per year, with \$81.3 billion being given, since 1949<sup>3</sup>. The vast majority – on average, over 84% – goes toward military expenditures. These funds are largely used to purchase US weaponry and training, but this is besides the point.

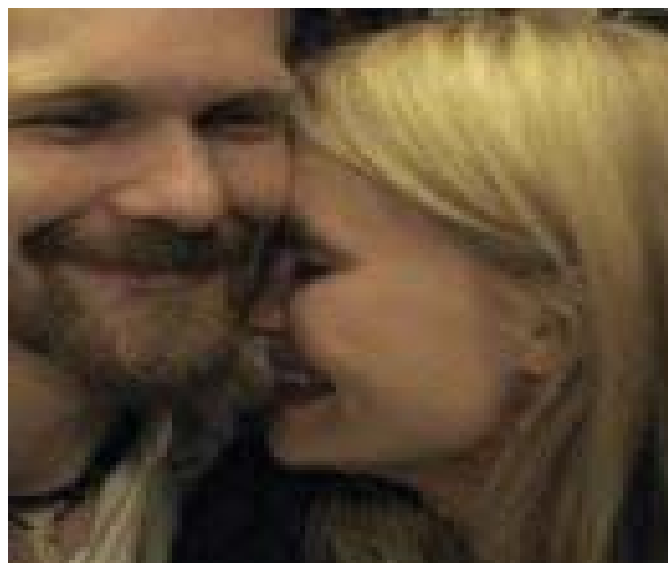
**Please come to our  
AGM**

March 21, 2009  
Saturday, 4 pm

At Sheila Gair's home  
14372 Ridge Crescent,  
Surrey, BC

Potluck to follow

*Jesse & Lina*



# Think Tank: Israel-Palestine Conflict (Cont.)

by Canon Bryan

This is hardly my idea of altruism. It is more plausible that the United States ensures the heavy mobilization of Israel in the event that it sees its opportunity to “stabilize” the Middle East region -- in other words, to invade oil-rich nations at the first hint of trouble, real or imagined. This is much easier and quicker when a beachhead is already established.

It is argued often that Israel is forced to launch attacks against its neighbours as a means of self-defence. If this is true, why it is that throughout the Israeli-Arab conflict in the region, the casualties of Israeli forces and civilians are always significantly lower than those in the neighbour states it has invaded “in retaliation?” The fact is that Arab casualties as a result of fighting with Israel outnumber Israeli casualties by a factor of 3 to 1. Furthermore, Arab casualties are overwhelmingly civilian<sup>4</sup>.

On any pretext whatsoever, Israel has pushed its territorial lines outward, into Palestinian territory, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon or Egypt. And they have done so with great force, including the

wars of 1967 and 1982, each time, and on many other occasions, without the approval of the UN Security Council<sup>5</sup>. The UNSC vote is always the same: the entire council disapproves, while two members approve – the same two members each time.

It is also useful to examine the conditions of Palestine vis-à-vis Israel. If Israel’s motives are so pure for peacefully defending its statehood, why must Palestine and its people be kept in perpetual segregation and lockdown<sup>6</sup>, conditions that are worse than in South Africa during Apartheid? Palestinians have no rights in Israel, and are systemically hated by Israelis, reminiscent of Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany. (An in-depth study is warranted here, but beyond the scope of this essay. For further reading, please see “Fateful Triangle” by Noam Chomsky.)

Palestinians represent to the United States a defiant stance to their grand plan of effortlessly controlling the region and its oil. It is for this reason that they, Palestinians, and any other neighbours, must receive swift and lethal punishment for any perceived

act of misbehaviour. The US record of response to insurgency against client states is well-documented in El Salvador, Vietnam and elsewhere.

I submit that if Israelis wish to force their claim in the region, they must disavow Western military aid, at least down to levels that are comparable to aid received by other states outside of the Middle East; and they must immediately allow a free sovereign Palestinian state to be formed and self-ruled without restriction or interference -- as is clearly mandated in dozens of UNSC Resolutions.

If Israel cannot abide by these basic rules of international relations, then they must relocate their state to a place in the world that has no more or no less access to strategic global resources than the average sovereign state in the world. Canada perhaps.

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

<sup>2</sup> CIA World Fact Book

<sup>3</sup> Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance” Mark, Clyde, R., Congressional Research Service, 2005

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia – Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Library (UNSC Resolutions 235 and 520)

Congrats!

To Esme Mills of Pender Island. She’s our new editor for MC2.

Here’s hoping you’ll enjoy your new post.

We look forward to our next issue.

## Calgary Regional Gathering

Mensa Calgary will be hosting a Regional Gathering in Banff, Alberta on September 11, 12 and 13, 2009 at the luxury Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel.

Please visit our website for registration details.

[www.mensabanffrg.com](http://www.mensabanffrg.com)

# If It Feels Good, Do It

by Don Graham

Remember that mantra from the 60s? They got it wrong. It should have been “If it feels *right*, do it.” Some might say if it doesn’t feel right, at some level it won’t *really* feel good either. True enough, but why add the extra step?

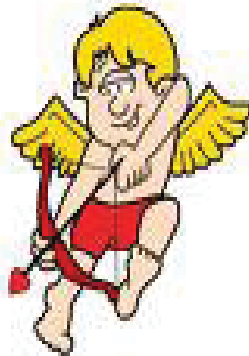
All creative people have come up with variations on this theme, from Polonius’ *First of all, to thine own self be true* to Aleister Crowley’s *Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be the Whole of the Law* to Bob Dylan’s *Don’t Follow Leaders* to the hippies’ *Do your own thing*.

Crowley loved to be provocative (who else would have the balls to call his memoirs an autohagiography, and to include the extraordinary statement, “Like all truly great men, I have never lost my humility” – and *get away with it?*). Although at first sight his “law” seems to advocate behaving without restriction regardless of consequences, when examined in context it becomes clear that it is a variation on the Wiccan Rede “An it harm none, do what ye will,” so that it means not superficial desire but deep responsibility.

Perhaps the most eloquent statement of this principle comes from John Steinbeck in *East of Eden*:

“And this I believe: that the free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world. And this I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it wishes, undirected. And this I must fight against: any idea, religion, or government which limits or destroys the individual. This is what I am and what I am about. I can understand why a system built on a pattern must try to destroy the free mind, for that is the one thing which can by inspection destroy such a system. Surely I can understand this, and I hate it and I will fight against it to preserve the one thing that separates us from the uncreative beasts. If the glory can be killed, we are lost.”

Fortunately, the age of censorship is (mostly) long past, at least here, and all that is left is a disagreeable



memory of controversies that today seem merely quaint: *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*; *Howl*; *Tropic of Cancer*. In 1963 Alberta became the laughing-stock of the country when its censor actually banned – *banned!* – the utterly benign (and hilarious) movie *Tom Jones*, which of course only increased its appeal and prompted entrepreneurs to organize busloads of movie tourists to go to Vancouver to see it. It won four Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and is now shown on TV at times when children can watch. Today’s youth must wonder what kind of idiots these censors were that their parents and grandparents had to deal with. The late, great, George Carlin’s *Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television* is now hopelessly outdated. Decades before Carlin, Bertrand Russell expressed contempt for those who considered uttering a vulgarity to be more immoral than an unkind act.

The modern nasty descendant of censorship is political correctness, which followed “middle-class morality,” and is particularly insidious because so many of its dicta seem reasonable. But if you look at its vulnerable underbelly, you see that labelling something as politically correct or incorrect is someone’s way of sneaking their personal agenda past critical examination. Racism is politically incorrect (unless it is anti-white), religious intolerance is politically incorrect (unless it is anti-

Christian), and sexism is politically incorrect (unless it is anti-male).

The problem with Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* idea of allowing only what we now call politically correct language is that it is self-defeating. When a derogatory (or merely disapproved) term is replaced with a politically correct one, the new term eventually *becomes* derogatory, and has to be updated. *Idiot*, *imbecile*, and *moron* used to be technical terms for people in specific IQ ranges. Children now jeer at those with *Special Needs*. Replacing *handicapped* with *disabled* seems harmless, if somewhat pointless (the change being based on an etymological misrepresentation), but replacing *disabled* with *differently abled*? That’s just *too* precious, as is describing an old person as so many years *young*. And is anything sillier than the non-word *womyn* (which, I am encouraged to see, my spell checker just flagged)? *We need* strong language to express strong feelings.

I am appalled by teachers who try to protect students’ self-esteem at the expense of educating them – while conveniently forgetting that genuine self-esteem comes from moral integrity and genuine accomplishment. We all experience failure, and where better to start learning to deal with it than the simulated environment of the classroom, where the cost is relatively low?

As the hippies used to say, tell it like it is.

What is right for you? Piss on what anyone thinks. It’s your life; no-one has the right to tell you how to run it. When I was a boy, my father used to tell me: “Dare to be a Daniel; dare to stand alone,” but what he really wanted was for me to stand with him. I wonder if he would have appreciated the irony of my having done what he told me to do, rather than what he wanted.

Don’t stand with anyone. Ask yourself what deep down is *really* right for you, and the rest will take care of itself.

# Book Chat Pot Pourri

by Sheila Gair

I think I last wrote an article about the Bookchat reading list last July so here's an update for those who follow along, and perhaps do go out and choose the books we have selected. Do your reflections on the books match ours, or I should say, mine?

*Gentlemen and Players* (Harris) was based at a public school in England, where the child of the porter, ostracised by the upper crusty students, came back as a staff member to seek revenge. Wonderful twist in the last few pages, and a tale well told.

*Arlington Park* (Cusk) which I had submitted as Chatelaine had mentioned it (we learn from our mistakes) turned out to be a thinly disguised Maeve Binchy formula involving the lives of women in an upscale subdivision. Don't bother!

*Careless in Red* (George) rescued Lynley, suffering incredible grief after the murder of his wife and unborn child. He roams the county of Cornwall, and is pulled into a murder investigation. About half a dozen plots intertwine and the Cornish names are hiccoughs as you read! *The Girls*

(Lansing) about conjoined twins left me cold but others were enthusiastic.

*Cannery Row* (Steinbeck) was a revelation. These survivors are to be emulated in our time of recession, or depression – proof that the human spirit is indomitable. *Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck) which followed in the December session is also an uncomfortable book. Does 'I am my brother's keeper' really entail a mercy killing. Good points for discussion here and another look at how life unfolded when things got tough decades ago.

*Ever After* (Swift) left me floundering. What was all this about, covering stories set generations apart? After *Last Orders*, none of Swift's books have made a hit with me. *The Madonnas of Leningrad* (Dean) deals with the siege of Leningrad as recalled by a Russian immigrant to the USA now suffering from dementia. She once supervised the art galleries of the Hermitage and memorised each and every picture before they were hidden, and in her mind, her life was part of those pictures.

This month we are looking at *At Swim Two Birds* (O'Brien) which

to me was written in another language! I persevered on three separate occasions, and got absolutely nowhere. What on earth was it about?

And *The Birthday Present* (Vine) I felt was not up to the usual Rendell/Vine authorship. The abduction of a girlfriend as part of a birthday celebration backfired and many lives were impacted. When you are a member of parliament in England, at least you should have some common sense along with the job.

Off the list I have read the *Private Patient* (James) – a slow and careful plot with her usual attention to detail and *The story of Edgar Sawtelle* (Wroblewski) (before I found out it was an Oprah choice!) which has a thread of suspicion/mystery/tragedy running through it, and has some of the most expressive language

I have read in a long while. I have just closed *American Wife* (Sittenfeld) a tale of a fictional first lady's life from her childhood in Wisconsin to residence in the White House. Completely believable, topical and totally interesting – a page turner. That's it for now.

## *A Capital Affair*

We welcome everyone to the 2009 Mensa Canada National Annual Gathering, July 10 - 13, 2009 which we've dubbed "*A Capital Affair 2009*". We're inviting you to find out more about this fabulous event. Information and registration can be found at [www.mensa-ottawa.org](http://www.mensa-ottawa.org)

.As with other annual gatherings, we're featuring a broad assortment of speakers and presentations, with something to suit almost every taste from the sublime to the mundane. There will be a games room, hospitality service, a great location near some of Ottawa's busiest attractions, and the traditional AG Saturday Night Banquet complete with music. With so much going on, why don't you come to the *Capital Affair* to remember?

Check out [www.mensa-ottawa.org](http://www.mensa-ottawa.org) and check in to a great Canadian AG in the heart of Canada's National Capital Region.

For further information, head over to the ACA 2009 website at [www.mensa-ottawa.org](http://www.mensa-ottawa.org)

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*Lumens*

[www.lumens.ca](http://www.lumens.ca)

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## Mensa and Editorial Policy

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