

The Canadian Templar



September 2016
Newsletter



Editor's Letter

As usual I bring you news of the happenings in the Grand Priory of Canada and the International order as well as our own Grand Prior's Report. To this I also add my usual mix of International stories, the Canadian Update and my regular Religion section and more.

In particular I like to feature a story that makes me wonder if Canada could do something similar and in this issue I bring you the story of the Amma canteen: Where an Indian meal costs only seven cents. This made me wonder if Canada couldn't produce something similar.

Discussions are ongoing on what fighter aircraft Canada is going to purchase so have added a couple of stories to provide more background information.

Ongoing articles on what is happening in the Holy Land and the general plight of Christians in the world. Some information offered on Brexit and what it could mean both for the UK but also Commonwealth countries like Canada.

I've also profiled the Parables in our Religion section and how you might read one each Sunday and ponder its meaning.

Also in this edition you will find a long article entitled "Our Girls are not for sale" which is a Human trafficking story that comes from the Chatham Voice newspaper. It was serialised over 2 issues and as St James Priory is making this a major cause for support I thought it relevant to bring this entire story to you.

When I took on the role of newsletter editor it was for the term of 3 years to support of our Grand Prior. When he decided to go for a fourth year I reluctantly decided to carry on but as he's now announced he is going to run for a fifth year I have decided I need to move on and make way for some new blood.

The role of editor is something that is personal and certainly reflects the person you are so a new editor will bring their own style with them. This newsletter can simply report the work of the Grand Priory of Canada so there is no need to go into all the extra information that I have regularly added to this newsletter. I'm not even sure if it was of interest to you or not but it's something I was prepared to do and did. So whoever takes over can get guidance from the Grand Prior as to what he would like to see included.

And so it's been a pleasure communicating with you through this newsletter and I've enjoyed the experience. I wish my successor all the very best and at time of going to press have learned that Sir John Tomlinson has agreed to take on the position of editor and Dame Ruthie Kivinen will assist him.

Do remember that most pictures in this newsletter are just smaller versions and if you click on the picture a larger one will show.

And as a final thought... why don't we as an order in Canada create an Online Priory which would be a first for OSMTH. Individual members would need to be invested in person at one of our Priories but after that could join the Online Priory and could thus use the Internet to keep in touch. We could also create a PayPal account where all members could view our account transactions and also pay their dues into it. They would however not be allowed to pay out any money from the account as only the actual account holder could do that. We might also create a social forum but equally we could create our own web site where we'd add the ability to comment on any of the pages of the site.

As Canada is such a large country it can be hard to travel across it so this would seem to me to be a way forward.

As this is my final newsletter it is a bit of a bumper edition but I hope you enjoy it.

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News and Report from our Grand Prior

I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer. The last long weekend of the summer prepares us for all the new activities of the fall.

Our Grand Chancellor, Dame Rev. Nola Crewe has accepted the role to coordinate the Grand Priory of Canada's celebrations of the 900th anniversary of the Knights Templar. Around the world OSMTH is starting to put anniversary committees together to highlight our Order's past and present. There are many possibilities that each of the Priories can get involved in, either as a group or as individuals. You will see that she is reaching out to contact those who are wanting to be involved or would like more information. As these committees gather momentum, there will be regular updates. It's another opportunity to get involved.



The Priory of St. James will be celebrating their Investiture on Saturday September 24. At that time, Prior Nick Migliore will hand over command to Chev. George Jackowski. Thank you Nick for all your hard work and dedication as Prior. St. James Priory has grown and succeeded under your watch. Well done. You will have seen a comprehensive bio on Brother George in our previous newsletter. I encourage you to attend this event to thank Prior Nick for all that he has done during his term as Prior, and to show support for Chev. George. Information on the event is below.

In my June newsletter article I highlighted the Syrian refugee crisis and some of the initiatives and responses of our Order to help Christians at risk in the Middle East. Last weekend, Vicar General Matthewman and I were invited by the Grand Master to attend a series of meetings in Chicago to hear firsthand about the refugee crisis by leaders of our faith.

The first presentation was by the Very Reverend Father Nabil Haddad, of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, and Director of the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Centre, an NGO based in Amman, Jordan. He has been instrumental in bringing together the leaders of all Abrahamic faiths in the area, to reconcile differences and discuss how they can live together in a peaceful coexistence. He emphasized that these differences cannot be achieved by military means but by education focusing on human dignity and by talking about citizenship. He is well known in Jordan and internationally for the pioneering work he has done in interfaith relations, primarily between Muslims and Christian groups in the Middle East. For his devotion to 'walking the walk', Father Haddad was received into the Order of Merit. He went on to Washington where he is taking part in the conference 'In Defence of Christians' with other Christian leaders. This newsletter has previously included some news articles on IDC. Father Haddad is very intriguing and he indicated that he would be very pleased to come to Canada to speak of his experiences. If he does, I encourage everyone to try to attend.

The second day we heard from the Right Reverend Dr. Munib Younan, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holyland, and President of the Lutheran World Federation – (85 million strong, the largest non-Catholic Christian denomination in the world). Many of you may know that we are very honoured that Bishop Younan is our Order's Chaplain General. He himself is a Palestinian Arab Christian refugee, living in Jerusalem. Although the Christians are very much a minority in numbers in the Middle East (less than 2 %) they do not accept or display a minority attitude. Instead they have a determination to remain in their birthplaces and contribute proudly to their countries through their faith. Financial assistance is always needed and welcomed, but he stated that there is a real need for the physical presence of other Christians to come to their lands and

display their support and encouragement. They want to know that they are not alone in their fight to keep the Christian faith alive in the land of Christ. He has asked that we all keep them in our daily thoughts and prayers.

His Grace, Bishop Younan, has been invited by Pope Francis to jointly host an ecumenical meeting of Christian leaders in Sweden on October 31. The goal will be to break down the barriers, perceived or otherwise between the various denominations, and to be united in one Christian faith. More to follow.

Next month is the General Magisterial Council meetings in Sofia, Bulgaria. Information has been circulated previously, but Alastair has done a nice job putting it in the newsletter. Bulgaria has the fastest growing Grand Priory in OSMTH and I expect they will put on a grand event. There is still time to register, only for another week or so.

This edition of the Canadian Templar is our editor's last. Chev. Alastair McIntyre agreed to be editor for three years and has actually served for four. From all of us Alastair, especially myself, thank you for a job well done in producing a high quality, first class newsletter. Your efforts have been greatly appreciated. Chev. John Tomlinson, who has a very rich background in media, has agreed to become our new editor and Dame Ruthie Kivinen has agreed to assist him. Thank you both for taking on these new responsibilities. Of course they would be looking for any others who would be willing to help out.

There is much need out there in our communities and abroad. How can you help?

Blessings,

Cdr. (ret'd) Peter L. Kelly
Grand Prior

News from the Priory of Ascension of Our Lord, Windsor

Summer Social 21st August 2016

Your editor attended this most enjoyable event at the Beach Grove Golf and Country Club and took a load of pictures and three videos. I met up with our Grand Chancellor Nola Crewe and drove down with her from my home in Chatham.



Grand Chancellor Rev. Nola Crewe

Videos...

Our Grand Prior Peter Kelly at
<https://youtu.be/MGX5Hd-Y0tg>

Our Vicar General Ron Matthewman at:
<https://youtu.be/MLKITkjmy3M>

Our Invited guests, The Hospitallers at:
<https://youtu.be/jz5Y9ZGGi3M>

Pictures...

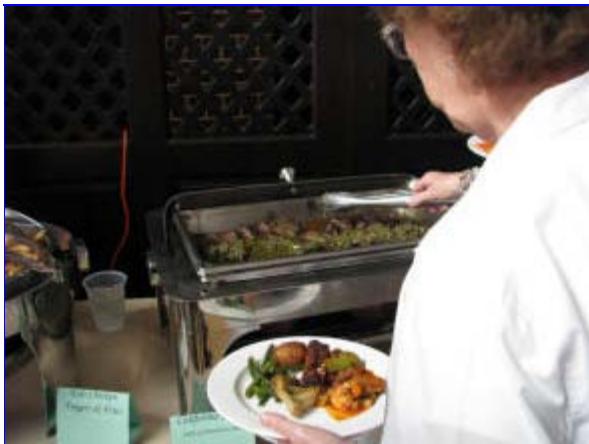
The Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem were invited guests to this event and here is a group picture...



You can learn about their order at <http://hospitaller.ca/>

The Buffet was excellent and here are some pictures of what was on offer...

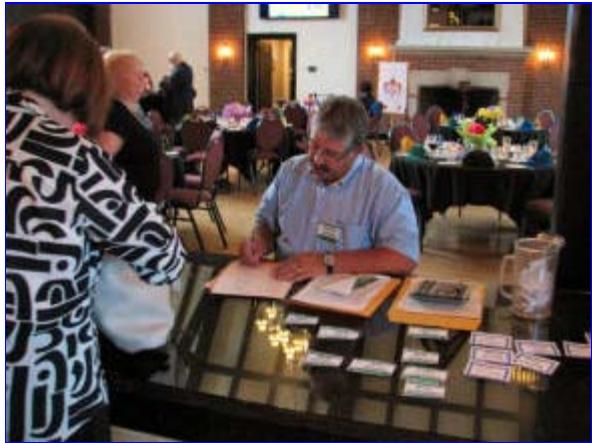






And all that for just \$32 a head.

And here are some other pictures from the event including some from Windsor's own Chancellor Sir Walt Pastorius...





The fabulous Beach Grove buffet



The view of the dining room from above

Our AGM



The hard working staff in the kitchen preparing for the pasta fundraiser and
The Priory Of The Ascension Of Our Lord AGM in progress



The very delicious pasta buffet dinner at our AGM and
The Vicar General HE Sir Ron Matthewman, sizes up his birthday cake



The Knight before Christmas painting with our auctioneer Sir Terry Fink, Chaplain Sir Lance Smith
and the lucky winner of the painting Dame Sue Phillips



Residents of Huron Lodge seniors residence enjoying Boccia Ball with the assistance of Prior Roy Embury, Eleanor and Madison Embury. This is a new venue for our Boccia ball initiative and it is going very well!

WHERE IS GOD IN ALL THE TRAGEDY IN THE WORLD?

Prior Roy sent in this note in which he refers us to a video... He said... "This is, in my mind, a great addition for the newsletter".

And so you can watch this video at:

<https://vimeo.com/148643920> which is entitled "The End Of Prayer Shaming".

I might add that there are other videos to watch when you go to this site.

Donations given out this quarter...



From left to right Prior Roy Embury, Glenda and Connie of Maryvale and Chancellor Sir Walt Pastorius.



Chancellor, Sir Walt Pastorius Reverend Rielly McLaren and Prior Roy Embury presenting cheque for
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the Chaplaincy program at St. Leonard's house.



From left to right- Prior Roy, Alexandria and Catherine from Family Respite Services and Chancellor Sir Walter Pastorius.

The Military Institute of Windsor

Editors Note: I was sent in a copy of their July-August 2016 newsletter of which your Prior is Vice President and thought you might like to have a read. It can be downloaded at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/MIWJuly-Aug2016.pdf>

As I was just completing this issue I also got in their September 2016 newsletter which you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/communiqueSept2016.pdf>

A word from your Prior

During the summer months, our Priory members have taken some time for a well deserved respite, but in the final days of August we have gotten together to celebrate our annual Summer Social at Beach Grove (photos above) and more recently our Chancellor and I have had the opportunity to deliver charitable donation cheques to worthy and appreciative local organizations.

We will have more cheques to deliver in the near future and we are looking forward to be able to assist other worthy local entities.

Future events in the life of our Priory include the all important Convent and Investiture to be held at The Church Of The Ascension on Saturday 05 November at 3:30 PM Sharp. All members are invited and encouraged to attend (for Ascension Priory members, if you need to be excused, it must be through the Prior).

Our event following our Investiture will be our highly acclaimed Christmas Social, once again held at Beach Grove and it will be on Sunday 11 December. We are looking forward to an excellent attendance as well as a splendid afternoon of camaraderie and Carol singing.

We wish our Sister Priories and Commandery very successful Convents and Investitures and plan to attend as many as possible!

"BEAUSEANT"

nnDnn

Major (ret) Roy Embury CD, GOTJ,

Editor's Note:

I understand that Prior Roy will be serving as Prior for an additional year.

News from St James Priory, Toronto

Our Grand Chancellor becomes the Chaplain of the RCMI Pistol Club

Abbreviated Club History by John McColgan Sr. can be read at:
<http://www.torontorevolverclub.com/>



Nola also won this Lee Enfield Rifle at their Banquet and a group picture

Summer social at the Royal Canadian Military Institute Templar Gathering at the Long Bar July 2016.



**No one loves a warrior
until,
the enemy is at the gate.**



KNIGHTS OF THE FREE COMPANY

The Priory of St. James

ANNUAL
Investiture
2016

*Saturday September 24th
at 4:00 p.m.*

St. James' Cathedral
65 Church Street, Toronto

- Dinner to follow at The Royal Canadian Military Institute.
426 University Ave, Toronto ON M5G 1S9
- Cost for Knights and Dames (Included in Annual Fees of \$255.00) Guests are \$150.00 per person.



PLEASE RSVP SM@TRGOCCOM AND NOTE ANY DIETARY RESTRICTIONS
DRESS CODE: FORMAL (BLACK TIE)



The Priory of St. James

2016 Investiture Dinner



Menu

Appetizer

*Maple Roasted Butternut Squash Soup
cinnamon drizzle*

Entree

*Surf & Turf: Slow Roasted 5oz. AAA
Striploin & Brochette of Cajun Marinated
Shrimp
herb roasted creamer potatoes*

Dessert

*Lavender Creme Brulee
Ontario berry compote*

6.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. Cocktails | 7.00 p.m. Dinner
RCMI | 426 University Ave. Toronto, ON M5G 1S9
Dress Code: Formal (Black Tie)



Though the dinner is optional the actual ceremony in the church is mandatory for all St James Knights and Dames to attend unless you have approval from the Prior not to attend.



The above Templar Swords are now on sale and if you are interested email Ed at erayment@me.com for details.

Editor's Note:

I would just like to say that our Prior's term will be complete at this months investiture. Nick has done an amazing job organising the annual ball and has probably raised more money for the order through that than any other fund raising event. He has also done a great job in supporting the work to eliminate human trafficking and if you read the article on that in this months edition you will realise how important this work is to us in Ontario.

It is not easy to run a Priory in Toronto as any event can involve a 2 hour commute depending on where you live in the Toronto area. Under his watch he has re-organised the Priory so that our accounts are now bang up to date and our membership has now been clarified as to who is a member and who is not. So he has now made it possible for the Priory to go forward in a much better shape than it has been for some time.

I think he should be commended for this work although I know he has been a touch disappointed in not getting more support from our Knights and Dames. This is in part why I recommended an online Priory in my Editors Letter as that might be a way forward.

So thanks Nick for the work you did in getting our Priory into better shape and we wish our new Prior, Sir George Jackowski, every success in taking us forward.

News from the Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa

While the summer months have been quiet in Ottawa, the Templars have been busy mostly getting ready for a busier autumn. As a result of illnesses, our Convent and Investiture were postponed last spring and we are scrambling to hold it on 23 October. Details will be released shortly.

Once again as a result of some illnesses, our ward at the Perley-Rideau Veteran's Health centre has been mostly "off-limits". Our vets are frail and have been ravaged by a succession of stomach flu's and other contagious bugs. We are meeting this week with the administration there to see how we can be of assistance without actually attending. More on that in the future.

A shipment of six palettes of hockey equipment left Ottawa in early July bound for the North West Territories. There is no word on its arrival but since movement beyond Edmonton is by volunteers, patience is necessary.

A committee is meeting next week to plan fund raising activities and feelers are out to the "Sens Foundation" to raise funds so we can do a better job of getting our donations beyond the Arctic Circle.

The ladies at the homeless shelter were once again feted with a lasagna lunch and some interaction from our Templar volunteers and all enjoyed the lunch hour on July 31.

Chaplain's Corner

From Archdeacon Ron Matthewman, Vicar General of OSMTH-I

I was asked to come up with a prayer for peace which is now featured on the main www.osmth.org web site.

OSMTH Prayer for Peace

Almighty God, the Creator of all, we remind ourselves daily, in our ecumenical Christian and chivalric Order, that the psalmist of old bids us to "Pray for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem and of all peoples". With broken hearts, bruised bodies and wounded souls, we come before you, praying for peace to reign in the hearts and minds of all people throughout the whole world.

We remember that we are born of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Help all nations and all peoples to put away the crimes of war, the tyrannies of terror, the battles of bitterness and cruelty of one person to another. Help us to see all people as members of the great family of humanity, under God, in a fellowship of peace; with love one for another in the dignity of the human form you have created.

Lord Jesus, you died in the midst of crisis on Calvary's Hill. You were laid in the Sepulchre of Jerusalem and rose above it all to free us from sin and death. Let us now, as Children of God, Sons and Daughters of Abraham, and People of Faith, be dead to the sins of warfare and cruelty; and let us follow a new life of peace, justice and unity.

This prayer we offer through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, and the Author of our Salvation. And to that we say: Amen, Amen, and Amen.

June 2016

You might wish to use the final paragraph of this prayer in your own communications.

Editor's Note: I understand that our Vicar General will be retiring after the International meeting in Bulgaria. I'm sure we all wish him a happy retirement.

Grand Chancellors Corner

Census

As Templars, we need to know more about each other. To that end I am asking you to complete this questionnaire (much of which I have shamelessly borrowed from the Priory of the Ascension of Our Lord).

Download the census at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/ktcensus.pdf>

Greetings fellow Dames and Knights . . .

Subject: 900 YEARS SINCE OUR ORDERS FOUNDING

Our 900th anniversary is on the horizon and the time has come to decide what we want to do to celebrate this wonderful link with our history . . . and ensure that we do not distract from projects currently underway that you deem to have priority.

Sir Peter and I have discussed a number of ideas: ranging from offering to host an international

meeting to a competitive membership drive to a commemorative badge. And I know our members can come up with many more (and better) projects.

But we need to get moving!

Please survey your members to find out their interests and the name of a Templar willing to be your representative (more than one is fine) on the Organization & Communication Committee. Please send the names and contact information to me as above. Once the names are in, we will convene an on-line meeting and get things underway.

Thank-you in advance for your help on this and if you could get back to me by 6th September I'd appreciate it.

Blessings
nnDnn

The 900th anniversary of our Order is rapidly approaching... and we need to find out how our members would most like to celebrate it and what their interests are...

MEMBERSHIP

The biggest challenge in front of Templar's, and virtually every other volunteer group, is how to engage our members in the life of their Priory. One of the things we have realized is that we do not know our own members . . . we know they chose to become Templars: but why? And who are they? Not their names, addresses and occupations . . . but what are their passions, interests, how they spend their spare time, what they want us to do and how they can contribute to our world?

All priories have questionnaires for candidates to complete when they apply for membership . . . but that only goes so far. Since their inception, the Priory of the Ascension has twice sent out questionnaires to their membership to get to know them better. Sir Roy is looking for a copy of their questions and will share theirs with us.

But, for a start, I would suggest that your Membership Committee divide up the Membership List and call everyone, asking:

The usual facts: ensuring that address; phone number(s); email, et al, are up to date and how they prefer to be contacted. And the 'getting to know them'...

- Why did you join the Templars?
- What do you want to get out of being a member?
- What interests do you have (i.e. history of the Crusades/Order; supporting specific charities (which ones); fund raising in general; social events (which ones); international activities; etc.)?
- What can we do to get you more involved?

Successful employers have "Exit Interviews" with employees who quit. I would like to suggest that the Prior or Chancellor take on contacting those who are no longer paying their dues and ask them why we no longer appeal to them... or what expectations they had, that we failed to meet.

Engaged members are long-term members. The challenge is to better engage the Dames and Knights or our Order.

Let's talk about your results so that we can be all that we can be!

Send your ideas, your concerns and (even) their compliments, to ncrewe@mtsinai.on.ca

CHALLENGE

On the 24th of each month, my datebook reminds me, "Prayers for Templar Values and those who are persecuted". To be honest, I don't know why the 24th of the month: or why I included it in my datebook. And then there are so many other dates... the arrest of the Templars... the last martyrdom... our founding saint's day... and then famous battles and so much more. We need a calendar celebrating our history. And we need someone to volunteer to put this together. I am sure

one of our history buffs could whip this together but... do we have a volunteer?

900th ANNIVERSARY

It is coming... what should we be doing?

What are you willing to contribute in terms of time, energy, ideas, et al?

Give me a call... 416 466 0311

BEING A TEMPLAR

Being a Templar means a life-time commitment to making our world a better place for those who will follow after us and those with whom we share this time. May God bless you in all you do to those ends.

God bless

AMEN

International News on the work of OSMTH

Our Grand Chancellor. Rev Nola Crewe, offers some spiritual thoughts to the Grand Priory of the UK.

We welcome this week the Rev. Dame Nola Crewe, Grand Chancellor of Canada, guiding us with some some Spiritual Thoughts.

God bless,

John.

John Harcourt GCTJ.

Deputy Grand Prior,

Knights Templar in the United Kingdom.

From the Office of the Grand Priory Chaplain General:
Spiritual thoughts from the Grand Chancellor of Canada,
The Rev. Dame Nola Crewe.

My Templar Brothers and Sisters worldwide, 10th June 2016.

Having left behind celebrations of the Season of Easter with its climax in the coming of the Holy Spirit, we are now in the "green" season where we return to the stories of Jesus' life, His parables, His friends, His travels and the miracles that He performed.

We marvel as we see the lame walk and the sick healed, the blind see and the deaf hear. But the challenges come when He performs the greatest of miracles: "Your sins are forgiven....Your faith has saved you". In the Gospels it is the Pharisees who challenged His power and authority to do so.

But for most of us, it is not about His powers: but about our own faith that we worry. Is our faith strong enough? How often have we heard these word, "Whosoever believeth in me shall not perish but have everlasting life..." those words are even scarier than "...forgive us our trespasses as we forgive..." and those are the two scariest concepts in Christianity. Can we love and forgive others? Well we can work really hard at loving and forgiving ... and then confess our backslidings and shortcomings: confident in God's loving forgiveness.

But faith ... believing in what you cannot see or touch or hear can seem to be overwhelming: so imperfect in its expression. And then, you remember the lack of faith of Peter who had walked and talked and heard and knew the living Christ. Yet Peter doubted Jesus' Word on the Sea of Galilee, denied Him three times on the eve of the Crucifixion and dismissed Mary Magdalen's message from

the Risen Christ. It is then that you know that however limited, crippled and imperfect our faith may be ... coupled with our Saviour's love, it will be enough.

Faith that moves mountains is not required ... but it is the faith that enriches our lives and comforts us in our darkest moments, that will bring us finally to those so longed-for words:

"Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

We ask that the faith of those walking across many lands escaping from terror and destruction be fortified with the spiritual presence of our Living God. Lord, be with them.

In your prayers continue to remember John Culley, Aiden Taylor, Fernanda Pinta, Amelia Reilly. Dame Jo Attride. Chevalier Scott and Dame Debbie Simon. Chevalier Vincent and Wendy Thompson. Fr John and Dame Stella Bernardi. Reverend Fathers John Hamilton, Barrie Williams, Peter Dewey, Andrew White. Chevaliers David Broad and Denys Le Fevre, and for others known to us individually who are in need of comfort and healing. We give thanks for those who are benefitting from care in hospital, their own homes, and in care homes. For hospital Chaplaincy teams, and cancer support groups.

Pray for the work of the volunteer organisations in the UK and in all countries who join with us as Templars in a never ending chain of prayer, and for the good of others.

God bless,

Nola Crewe.

The Grand Priory of Knights Templar in the UK.

From the Office of the Grand Priory Chaplain General:

Fr. Michael Brain

17th June 2016.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When we joined the Knights Templar, we effectively took up the Crusader Cross of Christ.

As with the founder Knights of the nearly 900 years ago, vows were taken based on the principles of the Rule of St Bernard of Clairvaux. If you look at one of our service books, the 4th part of the Modern Rule says 'Be mindful that you are on the Crusade of the King of Kings'; And goes on to say 'Do not be afraid to confess the King who is like no other king' and further on 'may the red cross remind you that sacrifices must be made'.

In 1250 King Henry 3rd decided to help revive the interest in the Crusades, so he Took the Cross. The Pope then appointed Richard, Bishop of Chichester, to effectively support the King's effort by ordering that he set out on a preaching commitment throughout southern England. Richard did this, although he himself was in poor health. His duties took him as far as Dover, but it was there on the 3rd April 1253 that he died.

In his will he asked that he be buried in Chichester before the altar of St Edmund in that cathedral. The people of Sussex already regarded him as a saint, but it was only 9 years later in 1262 that the Church formally canonized him and he became St Richard of Chichester.

In 1276 on the 16th June his body was carried ('Translated') to a splendid new shrine behind the High Altar, and so from then on that day was dedicated to him, and he is remembered for his devotion to Christ, and for his simplicity and holiness whilst on this earth.

St Richard's Prayer:

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,

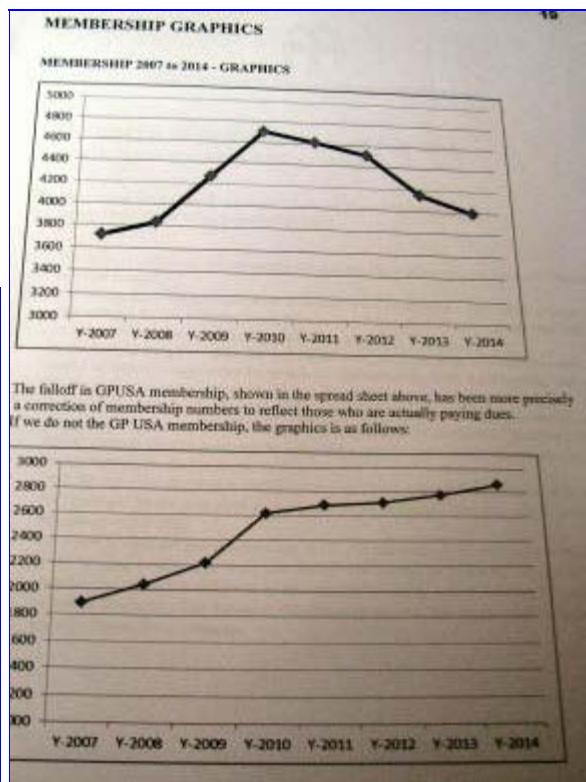
For all the benefits which thou hast given me,
 For all the pains and insults which thou hast borne for me;
 O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
 May I know Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly,
 And follow Thee more nearly. Amen.

In that prayer he speaks of how Jesus bore pains and insults for us, especially our Lord's agony on the cross. In this modern world Christians are still being tortured and killed for their faith, the Faith of our Fathers. Let us continually think and pray for them, the martyrs of today.

We ask that the faith of those walking across many lands escaping from terror and destruction be fortified with the spiritual presence of our Living God. Lord, be with them.

Membership of the Order

Got in a picture of our membership numbers although rather poor quality it is readable and gives us an overview of how we stood as at 2007 and how we've progressed through to 2014 where we record some 4,000 members worldwide.



The order actually states that it's not the numbers that count but the quality of the people.

OSMTH Grand Convent General Sofia, Bulgaria 12-16 October 2016

I wrote to the Grand Prior of Bulgaria to see if he could provide some information on his order and Bulgaria for this newsletter and got in a reply...

Dear Brother Alastair,

Thank you for your interest in Grand Priory of Bulgaria and our country in general. After seeking the opinion of the Grand Prior of Grand Priory of Canada, HE Chev. Peter Kelly, we are sending you attached some materials concerning the Fall 2016 GMC meeting in Sofia and general Bulgarian history.

Regarding the activities of Grand Priory of Bulgaria, I would like to share, that on 18th of August 2016 were turned 8 years since the recognition of the Grand Priory of Bulgaria as full Member of the international Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani. On that occasion on 20th of August 2016, in the island-park "Freedom" in the city of Pazardzhik was held the official celebration of the

Anniversary. Host of the event was Commandery "Saints Constantine and Helena".

The program of the event included solemn procession of Knights, Dames, Postulants and guests headed by the banners of Commanderies of Grand Priory of Bulgaria. Wreaths and flowers were laid at Aleko Konstantinov's memorial. The culmination of the celebration was the open air ritual Convent attended as well by citizens of Pazardzhik, in the shade of the raised in the park in 2005 monumental, metal cross. The ritual included receiving of Postulants and extending by the Grand Prior of traditional annual Grand Templar Blessing towards all Knights, Dames and Postulants. For the first time, Knights and Dames, Members of Grand Priory of Bulgaria, were awarded honorary long standing membership in the Order medals - 10 years. The concluding element of the program of the official celebration of the Anniversary were the spectacular fireworks.

As a glimpse to this memorable experience I would like to share as well some photos from this event.

For more information on the activities of Grand Priory of Bulgaria, feel free to browse our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/OSMTH.GRAND.PRIORY.BULGARIA>

We are always looking forward to welcoming Brothers and Sisters from all over the world in Bulgaria for the FALL 2016 GMC meeting in October!

nnDnn

Best regards,

Svetozar Stefanov GOTJ
Grand Secretary
Grand Priory of Bulgaria
OSMTH

The attachments he sent included a selection of pictures some of which I include below...





And you can download the History of Bulgaria at:
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/religion/historyofbulgaria.pdf>

WELCOME TO SOFIA - THE WISDOM CITY

For the last 137 years Sofia [sofija] has been the capital of Bulgaria, one of the oldest European lands and Sofia as an ancient settlement already 2800 years old.

If you wonder why we call it the Wisdom city, obviously you must be a foreigner, a stranger on the Balkans.

For us it is easy. Sofia comes from the Greek word sofia [sofia], which means wisdom. Sofia is also the name of the Saint Martyr Sofia, mother of Faith, Hope and Love. You might read that Sofia is named after the late antique cathedral "Saint Sofia" and in the Orthodox calendar the feast of Saint Sofia and her three daughters Faith, Hope and Love is September 17 also celebrated as the Day of the city of Sofia.

Sofia under its Latin name Serdica is well known as well for being the place where the Roman emperor Galerius created and probably issued his Edict of Toleration on 30th of April 311 AD, thus ending the so called Great Persecution of Christians. If you have a present day map of Sofia at a glance, you will easily recognize that the Wisdom city is still a tolerance model with the four temples - Orthodox, Catholic, Synagogue and Mosque, located within 100 sq. meters in the city center. The Christian Orthodox churches in the city are well preserved, not mentioning the 14 Orthodox monasteries in the vicinity, and more than 25 other religious temples.

The motto of the city is "Growing but never getting old". The slogan turns out to be completely true. The capital is one of the few cities which population is constantly increasing, nowadays 1.5 million, but the largest group of inhabitants is between 20 and 34 years old.

Sofia is a rich European capital with its 49 mineral springs with total capacity of 480l / second and temperature of 30 to 90 degrees Celsius.

Sofia is a very interesting and modern European city. The biggest one in Bulgaria and center of political, cultural and business life is also a place which hosts many international events. Sofia has the dynamics of a big city, but also the convenience of a compact center where all the main sights can be visited on foot.

There are more than 30 museums, 23 theaters, 40 art galleries, 31 theaters, 490 libraries, 116 community centers, 18 universities, more than 297 schools.

The city has an excellent atmosphere, glorious nightlife and offers a variety of opportunities for entertainment.

The valley of Sofia is surrounded by five gorgeous mountains Vitosha, Lyulin, Plana, Lozen and the Balkan. Ski resorts are easily accessible in 30 minutes from the city center. The average altitude here is 550 meters. The climate is humid continental with an average annual temperature of 10.6 °C (51.1 °F).

Usually end of September, beginning of October the daily average temperatures are between 11°C (52°F) and 22°C (73°F). Autumns in Sofia are relatively short with variable and dynamic weather, intensive storms, sudden cold or heat. The Indian summer in Sofia is called Sofia Golden Autumn. Usually warm and sunny with the trees gorgeously dressed up in gold.

Very important to mention is that we use Cyrillic alphabet. You most probably won't be able to read in Bulgarian, because some of the letters are the same, but pronounced totally different.

You could be easily mistaken if you read for example the word BAPHA and pronounce it correctly in English, it means nothing in Bulgarian and we pronounce it VARNA.

Bulgaria is the homeland of the Cyrillic alphabet. It was written in 9th-century by the "Apostles of the Slavs" St. Cyril (Constantine) and St. Methodius. Their monument in Sofia is placed in front of the national library next to the Sofia university and every year we proudly celebrate the day of the Cyrillic alphabet on 24 May.

If you have never been to this part of Europe – do not miss it.

Sofia is one of the hottest hearts of the Balkan Peninsula, where life is hot, blood is hot and our temper is hot. I am sure you will find out that, among other characteristics, we speak quickly, with gestures, and we are hospitable and compassionate people – all qualities in harmony with the principles of OSMTH.

Chevse. Maria Stefanova GOTJ
Grand Liaison Officer with the Holy Lands
Grand Priory of Bulgaria
Co-chair of the 900th Anniversary Committee OSMTH

For information about Sofia and the meeting agenda download the pdf file at:
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/religion/2016sofia.pdf>

To register, please go online at www.osmth.org. If you are already credentialed to enter the website, please register. Payment can be accepted via wire transfer or PayPal. If PayPal is utilized, there will be an additional processing fee.

Please note registration costs will increase on August 1st and I urge you to register as soon as possible to obtain the best rate. Also please remember to contact the hotel direct for reservations. The event is being held in the Hotel Marinela Sofia.

If you do not have credentials to login to the members only registration site, please contact your Grand Prior so that our Webmaster can issue appropriate credentials to you. If you are already credentialed and are having difficulty accessing the website, please contact the Webmaster General Kathleen Watson at webmastergeneral@osmth.org for further assistance. I am looking forward to meeting with all of you in Sofia.

Very Truly Yours,

Chevalier Dale J. Starkes, GOTJ
Secretary General, OSMTH

Canon Andrew White

I've been advised that the UK charity regulators are investigating him as to using charity funds to ransom girls held in slavery. Due to this the Order suggests that no more donations should be sent to him until this is settled one way or another.

The thought behind this is that any ransom payments go to fund the work of ISIS and thus promotes terrorism.

Your Editor's understanding is that it costs \$7,000 to ransom a girl and return her to her family. Canon White claims he erred in a statement which lead to this charge.

My overall view is that he is one of the few that do real work in this terrible conflict and his work actually makes a real difference.

There is an article about this at:

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/vicar-of-baghdad-andrew-white-suspended-from-charity-over-buying-back-sex-slaves-from-isis-165857/>

Vicar of Baghdad Documentary
This is a 3 part documentary produced in 2014 which you can view at:
<http://frme.org/vicar-baghdad-documentary-part-1/>

International News

La Linière

The first in a series of despatches from a refugee camp in France by Nannie Sköld, a former delegate of the International Young Scotland Programme.

This is a report from the Scottish Review which I thought you might find interesting...

Nannie Sköld, who works for LIVED (www.livedprojects.org) and is a former delegate of the International Young Scogland Programme organised by the SR team, is responsible with a colleague for running the school for children over the age of eight at France's first-ever internationally recognised refugee camp at Grande-Synthe. She will be sending SR regular despatches from the camp.

17 August

Being in a refugee camp for an extended amount of time, there are certain absurd things you get used to, other absurd things you didn't realise were absurd until someone explains the meaning behind it to you, and other things that take you completely by surprise and make you doubt everything.

It is frightening how quickly you get used to hearing stories about people you see every day risking everything at night to get to the UK. You hear stories as you enter the camp and meet people on their way back from trying, stories as you are standing in line to get lunch, and stories as you are sitting down with friends in their homes and they tell you what really happened last night.

And then there are things you didn't understand at first, but come to realise the true extent of. When we first started working in the children centre, Alex and I were overwhelmed. It happened very quickly and unexpectedly, and everything was new. But we had never worked in children centres before, and had very little to compare it to. We were told that volunteers with a background in teaching often find the situation more shocking, because they can compare the children's behaviours to those of the children they have worked with before, and realise how big of a difference there often is.

For me, this realisation came from individual stories. Two art therapists came in to volunteer for a day and were taken aback when they saw how the children were painting. It's not normal for children to use so much red and black paint, they said. Children almost always choose bright colours. In the camp, they saw children using bright colours and painting happy pictures, and then taking the red and black brushes, and destroying what they had just painted. The first painting I saw a child make in the school was an A4 piece of paper, completely covered in thick, black paint.

21 August

There has been more tension than usual in the past week. Things are changing, quickly, and often for the worse. It is difficult to know what is happening and why – there is a fine line between information and rumour. Through friends, we learned that there was a big fight last Saturday evening. We learned that there was gunfire on Sunday night. We learned that more people were shot on Monday night.

We are told that it is fighting between smugglers and between the mafia. We are told that you are safe if you stay away from trouble, at least if you are a volunteer.

Yet, entering the camp, everyone you meet seems more on edge. There are more reports of men beating their wives. And for women living without a husband, it can be even worse. Families are scared to let their children out of sight when night approaches. Children realise the changes in behaviour, and the anxiety of people around them. Children become more agitated.

Coming into school on Monday morning, we found the glass from the window shattered and the whole building perfectly covered in a layer of fine, white powder. The kids' weekend adventure had been to break into the school and set off the fire extinguisher.

For most of the day, we were sweeping and dusting and washing, trying to restore the school to its former state. Many children wanted to help, and as two children, three and five years old, were soaking magnetic numbers and letters in soapy water, a girl a few years older insisted on helping us

sweep up inside. Perhaps the mischievous adventurers realised the consequences as well, because six days have now passed without a break-in.

27 August

The last few days have been above 30 degrees, sunny, and full of bubbles and water games. Tuesday was the first day of the heatwave. Probably entirely coincidentally, Tuesday was also when we started hearing about several of the children having successfully made it to the UK. All in all, this week has been a good one.

Thanks to a new volunteer, the school was given a water rocket. Although standing in line and taking turns can be a struggle, it has been immensely popular. We like to think that the children are learning about physics, but any excuse to play outside with water is welcome.

One afternoon, two girls pulled me away, saying: 'Come, my friend, come! Little black eat!' Confused but curious, I was led to a hidden corner of the camp full with blackberry bushes. We started picking and eating and trying to avoid the thorny branches.

One of the girls then found some cardboard and made an improvised box for us to put the blackberries in to bring them back to all the friends at school. (Side note: we found a beautiful shady spot on the way back to take a rest, and ended up coming back to school full but empty-handed.)

If any readers are interested in volunteering, please contact: dunkirkchildrenscentre@gmail.com

The New Horizons mission has reshaped our understanding of Pluto
The New Horizons mission has reshaped our understanding of our dwarf planet Pluto, and with it our ideas about our entire planetary neighbourhood.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20160831-how-pluto-is-changing-our-understanding-of-the-solar-system>

10,000 migrants saved off Libya coast

Many of the 6,500 people rescued in the Mediterranean earlier this week have started arriving at ports in Sicily, as Ed Thomas reports.

See a short video at:

http://www.bbc.com/news/video_and_audio/headlines/37228416

Libyan former MP lashes out at international community

Mahmoud Jibril, the former Libyan prime minister and head of the National Forces Alliance, places a great deal of the blame on the international community and the major powers for what is happening currently in Libya. He believes that Libya is meant to be the courtyard to dump the terrorist members from around the world. Despite the harsh outcome of the Arab Spring, Jibril strongly rejects "the nostalgia for previous regimes" and believes that "had it not been for the performance of the fallen regime, we would not have gotten to this jungle of mass murders."

Read more: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2016/08/libya-former-pm-jibril-international-community-terrorism.html#ixzz4lpp1NfxQ>

Lights are Going Out All Over Europe

Here is the speech of Geert Wilders, Chairman, Party for Freedom, the Netherlands, at the Four Seasons, New York, introducing an Alliance of Patriots and announcing the Facing Jihad Conference in Jerusalem. He is a Dutch Member of Parliament

"Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for inviting me. I come to America with a mission. All is not well in the old world.

There is a tremendous danger looming, and it is very difficult to be optimistic.

We might be in the final stages of the Islamization of Europe. This not only is a clear and present danger to the future of Europe itself, it is a threat to America and the sheer survival of the West. The United States as the last bastion of Western civilization, facing an Islamic Europe.

First I will describe the situation on the ground in Europe. Then, I will say a few things about Islam. To close I will tell you about a meeting in Jerusalem.

The Europe you know is changing. You have probably seen the landmarks. But in all of these cities, sometimes a few blocks away from your tourist destination, there is another world. It is the world of the parallel society created by Muslim mass-migration.

All throughout Europe a new reality is rising: entire Muslim neighborhoods where very few indigenous people reside or are even seen. And if they are, they might regret it. This goes for the police as well. It's the world of head scarves, where women walk around in figureless tents, with baby strollers and a group of children. Their husbands, or slaveholders if you prefer, walk three steps ahead. With mosques on many street corners. The shops have signs you and I cannot read. You will be hard-pressed to find any economic activity. These are Muslim ghettos controlled by religious fanatics. These are Muslim neighborhoods, and they are mushrooming in every city across Europe. These are the building-blocks for territorial control of increasingly larger portions of Europe, street by street, neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city.

There are now thousands of mosques throughout Europe. With larger congregations than there are in churches. And in every European city there are plans to build super-mosques that will dwarf every church in the region. Clearly, the signal is: we rule.

Many European cities are already one-quarter Muslim: just take Amsterdam, Marseilles and Malmo in Sweden. In many cities the majority of the under-18 population is Muslim. Paris is now surrounded by a ring of Muslim neighborhoods. Mohammad is the most popular name among boys in many cities.

In some elementary schools in Amsterdam the farm can no longer be mentioned, because that would also mean mentioning the pig, and that would be an insult to Muslims.

Many state schools in Belgium and Denmark only serve halal food to all pupils. In once-tolerant Amsterdam gays are beaten up almost exclusively by Muslims. Non-Muslim women routinely hear 'whore, whore'. Satellite dishes are not pointed to local TV stations, but to stations in the country of origin.

In France school teachers are advised to avoid authors deemed offensive to Muslims, including Voltaire and Diderot; the same is increasingly true of Darwin. The history of the Holocaust can no longer be taught because of Muslim sensitivity.

In England sharia courts are now officially part of the British legal system. Many neighborhoods in France are no-go areas for women without head scarves. Last week a man almost died after being beaten up by Muslims in Brussels, because he was drinking during the Ramadan.

Jews are fleeing France in record numbers, on the run for the worst wave of anti-Semitism since World War II. French is now commonly spoken on the streets of Tel Aviv and Netanya, Israel. I could go on forever with stories like this. Stories about Islamization.

A total of fifty-four million Muslims now live in Europe. San Diego University recently calculated that a staggering 25 percent of the population in Europe will be Muslim just 12 years from now. Bernhardt Lewis has predicted a Muslim majority by the end of this century.

Now these are just numbers. And the numbers would not be threatening if the Muslim-immigrants had a strong desire to assimilate. But there are few signs of that. The Pew Research Center reported that half of French Muslims see their loyalty to Islam as greater than their loyalty to France. One-third of French Muslims do not object to suicide attacks. The British Centre for Social Cohesion reported that one-third of British Muslim students are in favor of a worldwide caliphate.

Muslims demand what they call 'respect'. And this is how we give them respect. We have Muslim

official state holidays.

The Christian-Democratic attorney general is willing to accept sharia in the Netherlands if there is a Muslim majority.

We have cabinet members with passports from Morocco and Turkey.

Muslim demands are supported by unlawful behavior, ranging from petty crimes and random violence, for example against ambulance workers and bus drivers, to small-scale riots. Paris has seen its uprising in the low-income suburbs, the banlieus. I call the perpetrators settler's. Because that is what they are. They do not come to integrate into our societies; they come to integrate our society into their Dar-al-Islam. Therefore, they are settlers.

Much of this street violence I mentioned is directed exclusively against non-Muslims, forcing many native people to leave their neighborhoods, their cities, their countries. Moreover, Muslims are now a swing vote not to be ignored.

The second thing you need to know is the importance of Mohammed the prophet. His behavior is an example to all Muslims and cannot be criticized. Now, if Mohammed had been a man of peace, let us say like Ghandi and Mother Theresa wrapped in one, there would be no problem. But Mohammed was a warlord, a mass murderer, a pedophile, and had several marriages - at the same time. Islamic tradition tells us how he fought in battles, how he had his enemies murdered and even had prisoners of war executed. Mohammad himself slaughtered the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza. If it is good for Islam, it is good. If it is bad for Islam, it is bad.

Let no one fool you about Islam being a religion. Sure, it has a god, and a here-after, and 72 virgins. But in its essence Islam is a political ideology. It is a system that lays down detailed rules for society and the life of every person. Islam wants to dictate every aspect of life. Islam means 'submission'. Islam is not compatible with freedom and democracy, because what it strives for is Sharia. If you want to compare Islam to anything, compare it to communism or national-socialism, these are all totalitarian ideologies.

Now you know why Winston Churchill called Islam 'the most retrograde force in the world', and why he compared Mein Kampf to the Quran. The public has wholeheartedly accepted the Palestinian narrative, and sees Israel as the aggressor. I have lived in this country and visited it dozens of times. I support Israel. First, because it is the Jewish homeland after two thousand years of exile up to and including Auschwitz. Second because it is a democracy. And third because Israel is our first line of defense.

This tiny country is situated on the fault line of jihad, frustrating Islam's territorial advance. Israel is facing the front lines of jihad, like Kashmir, Kosovo, the Philippines, Southern Thailand, Darfur in Sudan, Lebanon, and Aceh in Indonesia. Israel is simply in the way. The same way West-Berlin was during the Cold War.

The war against Israel is not a war against Israel. It is a war against the West. It is jihad. Israel is simply receiving the blows that are meant for all of us. If there would have been no Israel, Islamic imperialism would have found other venues to release its energy and its desire for conquest. Thanks to Israeli parents who send their children to the army and lay awake at night, parents in Europe and America can sleep well and dream, unaware of the dangers looming.

Many in Europe argue in favor of abandoning Israel in order to address the grievances of our Muslim minorities. But if Israel were, God forbid, to go down, it would not bring any solace to the West. It would not mean our Muslim minorities would all of a sudden change their behavior, and accept our values. On the contrary, the end of Israel would give enormous encouragement to the forces of Islam. They would, and rightly so, see the demise of Israel as proof that the West is weak, and doomed.

The end of Israel would not mean the end of our problems with Islam, but only the beginning. It would mean the start of the final battle for world domination. If they can get Israel, they can get everything.

So-called journalists volunteer to label any and all critics of Islam as a 'right-wing extremists' or

'racists'. In my country, the Netherlands, 60 percent of the population now sees the mass immigration of Muslims as the number one policy mistake since World War II. And another 60 percent sees Islam as the biggest threat. Yet there is a greater danger than terrorist attacks, the scenario of America as the last man standing.

The lights may go out in Europe faster than you can imagine. An Islamic Europe means a Europe without freedom and democracy, an economic wasteland, an intellectual nightmare, and a loss of military might for America - as its allies will turn into enemies, enemies with atomic bombs. With an Islamic Europe, it would be up to America alone to preserve the heritage of Rome, Athens and Jerusalem.

Dear friends, Liberty is the most precious of gifts. My generation never had to fight for this freedom, it was offered to us on a silver platter, by people who fought for it with their lives. All throughout Europe, American cemeteries remind us of the young boys who never made it home, and whose memory we cherish. My generation does not own this freedom; we are merely its custodians. We can only hand over this hard won liberty to Europe's children in the same state in which it was offered to us. We cannot strike a deal with mullahs and imams. Future generations would never forgive us. We cannot squander our liberties. We simply do not have the right to do so.

We have to take the necessary action now to stop this Islamic stupidity from destroying the free world that we know.

Why Bibi is rejoicing as Obama's term nears end

The most recent chapter in a series of meetings that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been holding with journalists and other media representatives in Israel took place Aug. 23. His audience consisted of ultra-Orthodox journalists, representatives of a vibrant press that serves more than a million people. The briefing lasted 5½ hours, with a "cigar break" in the middle. Netanyahu may have the most challenging job in the world, but he acted as if he had all the time in the world.

Read more at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/08/israel-netanyahu-rejoices-over-obamas-end-of-term.html#ixzz4IMgC0d77>

Milk may replace plastic when it comes to wrapping our food

The best way to protect your leftover food? By wrapping it in more food. According to new research presented at the National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society (ACS), we'll soon be doing away with that pesky cling wrap that seems to stick to everything but what you're trying to cover (and apparently, doesn't do that great of a job of keeping your food from spoiling, either).

Read more at:

<http://www.digitaltrends.com/home/milk-based-food-wrap/#ixzz4IHAC04ij>

What will be Turkey's toll for a second chance with Russia?

Although he brought together a million people at an Aug. 7 rally in Istanbul, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan still doesn't feel safe in his own country. He might feel safer in Russia, although the countries were on the brink of war after Turkey shot down a Russian fighter jet Nov. 24.

Read more at:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/08/turkey-russia-second-spring-what-will-be-the-toll.html#ixzz4H9H0zc4Y>

South China Sea Ramp-Up

New Chinese Aircraft Carrier's Shocking Combat Features.

Beijing has told its people to prepare for war, and the state-run People's Daily urged the regime to undertake a violent assault on Australia, for their position on the South China Sea dispute. The increased combat capabilities of the Liaoning show that if China chooses to fight, it has the technical capability to dominate on a battlefield.

Read more at:

<http://en.ria.ru/asia/20160810/1044110574/china-beijing-aircraft-carrier-defense.html>

Italian Banks on Verge of Collapsing Entire Eurozone Financial System

A stress test conducted a few days ago by the European Banking Authority confirmed the poor condition of many credit institutions in Europe. Italian banks and Germany's Deutsche Bank are doing the worst.

In recent months, Deutsche Bank shares have lost 25% of their value, French bank Société Générale — 23%, and Italian giant UniCredit — almost 30%. According to Société Générale's Chairman of the Board Lorenzo Bini Smaghi, the entire financial system of the Eurozone is under great pressure.

The problems in the European banking sector have accumulated over a long period of time; the Brexit referendum gave another powerful impulse, said RIA Novosti analyst Dmitry Dobrov. The referendum sowed panic among foreign investors and undermined confidence in the financial markets. Under these conditions, investors are afraid to invest money in all countries with weak economies, including Italy. That is why Italian banks were affected by the crisis in the first place.

The Italian banking sector has about 360 billion euros of "bad" shares, which is about 20% of the total loan portfolio. About 200 billion euros of those are "irretrievably bad," said Dobrov. The course of shares of Italian banks has fallen by more than half since the beginning of the year, and this aggravates the situation even more.

According to data of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), Italian banks have approximately 550 billion euros of loans from around the world, including 250 billion euros from French banks and 90 billion from German ones. In the event of a collapse of the Italian banking sector, Deutsche Bank alone would lose 30 times more than if Greece went bankrupt.

The oldest Italian bank, Monte dei Paschi di Siena, is on the verge of bankruptcy, the expert said. The absolute amount of the bank's "bad" loans amounted to 47 billion euros, which is more than 40% of the loan portfolio. Monte dei Paschi di Siena is not an isolated case; there are dozens of such financial institutions in Italy.

The government of Matteo Renzi seeks a review of Eurozone banking regulations in order to direct the taxpayers' money to save the bank. Renzi cannot allow depreciation or curtailment of bank deposits of Italians — and that is exactly what the new EU financial rules provide.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel stands categorically against Renzi's plans. Merkel says she does not intend to change the rules "every two years." Renzi, apparently, is ready to go to the end.

German and French bankers are supporting Renzi: the government must participate in rescuing the bank. According to a leading economist at Deutsche Bank, help in the amount of 150 billion euros from the European Central Bank could save the situation. It would plug the holes in the European banking system, especially in Italy.

This action would allow the attraction of public funds as an exceptional measure, though in violation of EU banking rules. This refers to the common European solution that in the event of a bank's collapse the responsibility falls on its shareholders and investors, not taxpayers (or the state). But now banks demand the state to pay as well.

Germany and its ruling parties are strongly opposed to Renzi's plans to use public money to rescue Italian banks. They called the Italian government's plans "unacceptable" and accused it of not planning accordingly after the negative bank stress tests in 2014. Such decision jeopardizes the stability of the whole monetary union, they continued.

According to the decisions taken by the EU after the crisis of 2008-2009, public funds cannot be used to rescue banks. Shareholders, private investors and bondholders are the ones who must pay. In Brussels, the president of the Eurogroup, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, said the new aid package for Italy will not happen.

Meanwhile, the IMF, which fears the crisis could spread to other euro zone countries, took on the side of Renzi. The Fund urged Rome to reorganize its banks as soon as possible. In its statement, the IMF stated that "the reform of the Italian financial sector is crucial for the recovery of the Eurozone's

stability."

Now the Italian government is holding tough negotiations with Brussels and Frankfurt. There have been signals that the European Central Bank could provide some assistance on the condition that bank investors allocate money as well; but there is no single word on state support. A compromise on the Greek scenario is not ruled out, too, Dmitry Dobrov said. The state could be allowed to buy back shares of Monte dei Paschi, but the European Commission in response will force investors to sell a share of their bank assets and conduct layoffs. At the same time, investors will lose some money, but the financial collapse can be avoided. But for how long?

The nature of Italy's problems is structural, the analyst said. After many years of recession, economic growth did not come to this country; growth forecasts are reduced to 0.8% this year and 0.6% next year.

Since 2008, Italy's economic indicators have deteriorated sharply, and industrial production reduced by 25%. According to the rating of the World Economic Forum (WEF), Italy takes the 43rd place in the world in terms of competitiveness.

Transparency International has put Italy in 61st place out of 167 countries in terms of the level of public corruption, following Greece, Romania and Georgia. With such prospects against the backdrop of rising unemployment, more factors indicate that the "doubtful" loans will never be repaid.

Matteo Renzi's government has started to carry out economic reforms, but they have not been developed properly; the country cannot crawl out of recession, the expert stated. Observers believe that if Renzi does not solve the financial crisis by October, he should resign.

Modern slavery: Theresa May vows to defeat evil
My Government will lead the way in defeating modern slavery

A year ago the Modern Slavery Act that I brought forward as Home Secretary came into force.

The first legislation of its kind in Europe, this Act has delivered tough new penalties to put slave masters behind bars where they belong, with life sentences for the worst offenders.

It has created a vital policing tool to stop anyone convicted of trafficking from travelling to a country where they are known to have exploited vulnerable people in the past.

Read more at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/30/we-will-lead-the-way-in-defeating-modern-slavery/>

Going hungry in Venezuela

It's one thing to talk to people you've never met before who are suffering from hunger, and it's a completely different thing when they are from your own family, as the BBC's Vladimir Hernandez discovered when he returned to his native Venezuela to report on its failure to get food on people's tables.

Read more at:

<http://blog.acton.org/archives/86883-explainer-what-is-going-on-in-venezuela.html>

Merkel's Open Door Refugee Policy Spells Doom for Germany's 'Golden Age'
The upsurge in violence in Germany has marked a watershed in the history of Chancellor Angela Merkel's leadership and Germany's "golden age."

Angela Merkel's political career is seemingly on the wane and so is Germany's golden age, Konstantin Richter, a German novelist and journalist, underscores.

Amid ongoing economic stagnation in the EU, Germany is also showing "some signs of frailty," Volkswagen and Deutsche Bank, two of the country's flagship companies, are in trouble.

Predictably, the European migrant crisis and a surge in violence have added fuel to the fire,

prompting Germans to point the finger of blame at their Chancellor, citing her flawed open door policy.

Read more at:

<http://en.ria.ru/politics/20160728/1043720420/merkel-germany-refugee-policy.html>

Can Syria's Kurds realise territorial ambitions?

When the Syrian protest movement started in 2011, it was young Kurds in Amouda, in the north of the country, who took to the streets, calling for freedom and democracy.

President Bashar al-Assad soon announced he would recognise some of the rights demanded by the Kurds and allowed them to register as citizens and hold an identify card, a right they have been deprived of since 1962.

But the Kurds rejected the concessions, saying they would wait to get their rights once all Syrians achieved freedom and democracy.

Five years on the scene is different. As the war has dragged on in Syria, Kurdish groups have taken the opportunity to gain more power.

Read more at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36773195>

Series of scandals rocks Israeli Orthodox Zionism

First there was the "Gays are Perverts" speech by Rabbi Yigal Levenstein, one of the leading educators of the younger generation of Orthodox Zionism. This was followed by the disturbingly unenlightened ideas expressed by Col. Eyal Karim, who is designated to become the next chief rabbi of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Then came Orthodox former commander retired Maj. Gen. Gershon HaCohen's defense of Orthodox Zionist Brig. Gen. Ofek Buchris upon being accused of rape. All of this should compel Orthodox Zionism to engage in some serious soul-searching.

Read more at:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/orthodox-zionist-eyal-karim-gays-speech-ofek-buchris.html#ixzz4FX768vqS>

The real reason the EU can't stop human smuggling from Libya

The European Union is taking steps to beef up its struggling efforts against human smuggling and trafficking from Libya, but until the country is politically stable, the changes aren't likely to be sufficient.

The EU naval operation launched in September, called Operation Sophia, is designed to combat people smuggling humans from Libya and surrounding countries to European shores, mainly Italy. Its main stated aim is to "board, search, seize and divert vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking on the high seas, in line with international law," as stated on the EU Council website.

However, instead of successfully targeting the smugglers and their networks, the whole operation has turned into a search and rescue effort. More than 50 suspected smugglers had been arrested as of June — but they were mainly low-level operatives, not the real ringleaders. Some 80 wooden boats have been confiscated since the operation was launched, but the smugglers have since switched to using more dangerous rubber dinghies.

As the weather is improving with summer, thousands of people are expected to try to reach Italian shores. On just one day recently, June 23, the Italian coast guard rescued 4,500 migrants from dozens of boats, many coming from Libya. According to the International Organization for Migration, as of June, more than 18,000 migrants and refugees had reached Italy so far this year, compared with about 10,000 in the same period in 2015.

A British parliamentary report published in May called Operation Sophia a failure. The report acknowledges that the operations have become mostly rescue work, succeeding in saving some 9,000 migrants.

The main reason the mission has failed is that there is no strong central government in Libya with

effective coast guard forces capable of patrolling the country's 1,900 kilometers (1,180 miles) of ocean shoreline. Libya's ambassador to Italy, Ahmed Safar, was quoted May 31 by London's The Telegraph as saying that the internationally recognized Government of National Accord in Tripoli does not exercise "full control over certain territories," referring to parts of Libya that are under the control of militias, including Sirte on the coast. Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have been supporting Gen. Khalifa Hifter, who has established his forces in Tobruk and refuses to recognize the UN-backed government in Tripoli. The rift has allowed the Islamic State to establish itself in Libya.

Read more: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/eu-coast-guard-stop-people-smuggling-libya.html#ixzz4EsWvD5W9>

South China Sea: Tribunal backs case against China brought by Philippines
The Permanent Court of Arbitration said there was no evidence that China had historically exercised exclusive control over the waters or resources.

Read more at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-36771749>

What do recent attacks mean for future of Egypt's Christians?

Tensions have long simmered between Muslims and Christians in Egypt and sectarian attacks have escalated since the Arab Spring. In recent weeks and months, there has been a marked increase in religiously motivated violence — a cause for growing concern for rights groups and Egypt's estimated 9 million Christians (the Middle East's largest Christian community). The rising tide of anti-Christian sectarianism in Egypt has generally been underreported by the country's mainstream media, which has been peddling the official narrative that "Muslims and Christians are one people, united by a common history and destiny." Police, meanwhile, deliberately downplay the sectarian strife and at times, and even cover up attacks on Christians by not documenting them as such. Moreover, the perpetrators of such crimes often escape justice. In the last five years, churches and homes of Christians have been burned and entire families have been forcibly evacuated from their villages or have had to relocate to flee persecution. During the period of Islamist rule in Egypt, increased insecurity and fear of persecution prompted thousands of Christians to leave the country, seeking safety and greater freedoms overseas.

Meanwhile, a fresh spate of attacks on Christians in recent weeks has left the country reeling from shock. On June 30, a priest was shot and killed by a gunman outside a car repair shop near St. George's Church in the North Sinai town of el-Arish. It was the latest in a string of attacks on Christians in the volatile region where the military has been fighting an Islamist insurgency since the ouster of President Mohammed Morsi in July 2013. The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the priest's death in a statement published on social media, describing him as a "disbelieving combatant."

The fatal shooting and the subsequent IS claim of responsibility were a grim reminder of the February 2015 IS beheadings of 21 Egyptian Christian migrant workers, earlier abducted in Libya. The fact that the priest in this latest attack was killed by IS on home soil raises the alarm over the increased vulnerability of Egypt's beleaguered Christian community at home.

Read more at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/egypt-tensions-christians-copts-killings-sisi.html#ixzz4E7MIM7cm>

Jabhat al-Nusra 'al-Qaeda's largest formal affiliate in history'

Amnesty International released on July 5 a groundbreaking account of the "reality of life" for Syrians living in Idlib and Aleppo under the rule of Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's affiliate, and other armed groups, including those backed by US regional allies.

In a news release, Philip Luther, Amnesty International's director of the Middle East and North Africa Program, said, "In Aleppo and Idlib today, armed groups have free rein to commit war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law with impunity. Shockingly, we have also documented armed groups using the same methods of torture that are routinely used by the Syrian government," which is responsible for the majority of human rights and war crimes committed during the war.

The report titled "Torture was my punishment" provides a grim and unsettling account of abduction,

torture and summary killings, including the deliberate targeting of journalists, lawyers and even children, by members of the so-called Aleppo Conquest coalition, which includes Jabhat al-Nusra, Shamiya Front, Nureddin Zengi Brigade and Division 16, and the Ahrar al-Sham Islamic movement in Idlib, which is allied with Jabhat al-Nusra in Jaish al-Fatah (Army of Conquest).

Amnesty International pulls no punches in making clear that some of these groups “enjoy support from powerful backers such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the USA.”

The report comes as the United States continues to weigh potential cooperation with Russia against Jabhat al-Nusra, as Laura Rozen reports.

Rozen cites congressional testimony June 28 by Brett McGurk, US special presidential envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL (Islamic State), that while the Islamic State “is losing territory in the east,” Jabhat al-Nusra is “gaining ground in the west, putting down roots in Idlib province along the Turkish border. … With direct ties to Ayman al-Zawahri, Osama bin Laden’s successor, Nusra is now al-Qaeda’s largest formal affiliate in history. … This is a serious concern, and where we see Nusra planning external attacks, we will not hesitate to act.”

With its increasing emphasis on both the potential for US-Russia cooperation and the threat from Jabhat al-Nusra, the Obama administration seems to have brushed aside the course advocated by a “dissent” cable deliberately leaked by anonymous State Department diplomats calling for US military escalation against the Syrian government. As we noted in this column before, among the cable’s many failings was that it did not even once refer to Jabhat al-Nusra, and therefore, it seems, its authors were either ignorant, or dismissive, of the administration’s own grave assessment of the threat from the expansion of Jabhat al-Nusra, in addition to the crimes of those armed groups allied with the al-Qaeda affiliate.

Rozen adds, “While US officials have expressed understanding for the Syrian opposition’s concerns that more pressure on Jabhat al-Nusra could threaten their position vis-a-vis [President Bashar al-] Assad, the US officials indicate that President Barack Obama feels he has the duty to deal with the threat to US national security interests posed by Jabhat al-Nusra and to do so quickly.”

Obama deserves credit for keeping the focus exactly where it should be: on the threat to the United States and its allies from the expansion of terrorist groups in Syria. We have consistently taken the line that there should be no “understanding” — absolutely none — for those who ally with al-Qaeda’s Syria affiliate. Last week, we referred to a Washington Post editorial that cited “several experts on Syria” arguing that US-Russia coordination would be a bad deal because “Jabhat al-Nusra forces are intermixed with other rebel units.” As these “experts” seemed to have missed the numerous UN Security Council resolutions penalizing any cooperation with al-Qaeda and its affiliates and al-Qaeda’s well-known record of global terrorism, perhaps McGurk’s testimony and the Amnesty International report will finally force The Washington Post to reconsider who it consults on Syria. Giving al-Qaeda a pass, for any reason, should rule you out of the “expert” category.

The Amnesty International report also helps clarify a twisted and dangerous misunderstanding about conditions in Aleppo and Idlib, and what it might mean for the course of the war. As Al-Monitor wrote in January, “Aleppo, which is mostly Sunni, was sold a sectarian bill of goods by the opposition. And it has been a disaster for the people of Aleppo. The Syrian government’s barrel bombs and relentless sieges added to an unbearable existence. … If the Syrian army, backed by its Iranian and Russian allies, retakes Aleppo, the city’s liberation will come by directly defeating terrorists and armed groups that are already deserting the battlefield. A government victory would be of a different order and have a different impact than the negotiated departures of besieged armed opposition forces in Homs and around Damascus. The people of Aleppo would experience a flat-out victory by the government and a defeat, and exodus, by the armed groups. A good question is whether the Syrian army would be received as liberators by those Syrians, including Sunnis, freed from the reign of Islamic law and armed gangs. The answer might surprise … a Syrian government victory in Aleppo could be the beginning of the end of the sectarian mindset that would have been alien to the city prior to 2011.”

Al-Monitor

This is a publication that your editor reads on a regular basis as one of his sources for news in the Middle East.

Launched February 13, 2012, features unmatched reporting and analysis by prominent journalists and experts from the Middle East, including through its Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Turkey Pulses.

Al-Monitor's content is regularly referenced in The Wall Street Journal, Time, Reuters, Le Monde, The New York Times, The Economist and many other publications.

The Washington Post has called the site "invaluable," The Huffington Post referred to it as "increasingly a daily must-read for insightful commentary on the Middle East" while The Economist recommended Al-Monitor's Egypt and Iran coverage in its What To Read section.

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Read more at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/about#ixzz4E72yl11m>

Christians in Iraqi Kurdistan complain about land seizure

BAGHDAD — Christian citizens in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq issued complaints in court June 15 that Kurdish residents are attacking and seizing their villages in the provinces of Dahuk and Erbil. They also accused the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of neglecting the crisis and failing to take serious action to resolve an issue that has been going on for some time.

On April 13, the KRG had prohibited residents from eight Christian villages in the Nahla area in Dahuk province from accessing the KRG's headquarters to protest and demand that an end be put to the encroachment upon their land on the part of Kurdish individuals and populations. However, some of them managed to make it to the sit-in location and stage a protest as they held a banner that reflected the deep sorrow plaguing Christians in the region. "Our [Christian] people's lands are encroached upon across the Kurdistan Region," the banner read.

On April 22, a Human Rights Watch report highlighted the hardships facing Christian citizens in the Kurdistan Region amid restrictions by the Kurdish authorities preventing them from peacefully claiming their right to restore these territories.

Read more at:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/christians-kurdistan-iraq.html#ixzz4DkBtPrGZ>

IS turns its attention to Jordan

AMMAN, Jordan — Prior to the month of Ramadan, Islamic State (IS) spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani called for increased attacks worldwide in an audiotape released on May 21. "Ramadan, the month of conquest and jihad. Get prepared, be ready ... to make it a month of calamity everywhere for nonbelievers," he announced. IS executed this threat by launching attacks across the region including a June 21 suicide truck-bomb attack on Jordanian forces, killing seven and injuring 13 in the Rukban border area.

Read more at:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/isis-attack-jordan-message-syria-policy.html#ixzz4DYMe2K1D>

Millions of Iraqi children repeatedly and relentlessly targeted, says UN Unicef report says 3.6 million children face risks including death or sexual violence, and 4.7 million need humanitarian aid as a result of the conflict.

Read more at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jun/30/millions-iraq-children-repeatedly-relentlessly-targeted-says-un-united-nations>

Queen of Jordan: Better Data Is Key to Helping Female Refugees
How can we help them if we don't know what their realities are?

What's worse than being a refugee, forced to flee your home, your community and your country; leave behind those whom you love; and, all too often, be pushed into poverty and an uncertain future?

Being a female refugee—a girl or a woman who, as well as enduring the horror and heartbreak that defines a refugee's wretched existence, is at risk of intimidation or trafficking or sexual slavery or forced marriage or violence or life-threatening complications from pregnancy if, as is often the case, health services are out of reach.

I say "or"; I could just as easily use "and." Abuse is rarely a singular, one-off event.

Read more at:

<http://time.com/4381490/queen-of-jordan-refugee-crisis/>

How this young Yazidi is bringing hope to IS victims

AMSTERDAM — Pari Ibrahim, 27, was a regular law student in the Netherlands who had a job in a library until she received a phone call at 5 a.m. in August 2014 that would change her life forever. A family member from northern Iraq called to inform her that the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) had invaded Sinjar and had killed the men and kidnapped the women and children. "We are being massacred, we are heading for the mountains," the family member said.

Ibrahim, who belongs to the Yazidi community, had fled Iraq with her parents in the 1990s and now lives in the Netherlands. After receiving the phone call, she frantically started searching the internet for information, but was not able to find news. Slowly it became clear what had happened in Sinjar. Thousands of Yazidi men had been killed or disappeared and 6,000 women and children had been enslaved by IS, including 19 females and 21 males who are Ibrahim's relatives.

The women and girls, some as young as 9, were traded and sold as sex slaves, the boys were forcibly converted to Islam and were brainwashed to serve as fighters. The men were massacred and dumped in dozens of mass graves. To separate the boys from the men, IS militants looked at their armpits — if they had hair, they were killed, Ibrahim explained to Al-Monitor.

From that moment onward, Ibrahim decided to fully dedicate herself to the plight of the Yazidis.

Read more at:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/yazidi-foundation-iraq-europe-justice-isis-victims.html#ixzz4Dk5ycLhZ>

Editors Note: When you read the full article you'll be amazed at what one person can achieve which in my mind begs the question... "How does OSMTH efforts compare to this woman's achievements?"

Amma canteen: Where an Indian meal costs only seven cents

I thought I'd bring you this story as it could be a model on how a Canadian organisation might be able to do something similar.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa's "amma canteens", which serve cheap meals to hundreds of thousands of people daily, have become immensely popular with the poor and the middle classes. The BBC's Geeta Pandey samples the treats at a canteen in Chennai (Madras).

It's just a few minutes after noon on a hot summer day as I join the queue of lunch-goers at the amma canteen in Pallavaram town, just outside the state capital, Chennai.

The menu today includes hot sambhar rice (rice cooked with lentils and spices) and curd rice (rice cooked in yogurt with curry leaves). The former is selling for five rupees (seven cents; five pence) a plate while the latter costs just three rupees - a fraction of what the dishes would cost in any other restaurant.

I'm famished so I buy a plate of each and move to one of the tables in the centre of the room to eat.

If you're after a fine dining experience, this place is not for you.

The heat and the humidity can be a bother and the sambhar rice is a bit too spicy for my north Indian palate.

But my fellow diners, men and women who include poor daily wage labourers, housemaids, college students, and middle-class office workers, are not complaining.

The portions are big and most describe the food as "delicious".

Lakshmi, who works in the neighbourhood as a housemaid, is a regular at this canteen.

"Earlier, my employers would give me leftovers, but now I come here for breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. For less than 20 rupees, I can eat three meals here," she tells me.

"This food is really good. I like all the dishes. My stomach's full and I'm happy," she says, patting her belly.

What's on the Menu?

Breakfast (served from 7am to 10am) - idli (steamed rice cakes) for one rupee or pongal rice (rice cooked with lentils and peppercorn) for five rupees.

Lunch (served from 12 noon to 3pm) - sambhar rice (rice cooked with lentils and spices) or lemon rice or curry leaf rice for five rupees each and curd rice (rice cooked in yogurt with curry leaves) for three rupees.

Dinner (served from 5pm to 7:30pm) - two rotis with daal (handmade bread with lentil soup) for three rupees



Raju, a construction worker from Punjab, was introduced to the canteen by his co-workers.

"I earn 400 rupees a day. Before these canteens came up, I used to spend at least 150 rupees on food per day. Now I spend only 20 rupees a day," he says.

The canteens were first started in 2013 in Chennai by Ms Jayalalithaa, who is popularly called amma (mother) - hence the name amma canteen - with the aim to provide subsidised meals to the public.

Today, there are more than 300 such eateries in the state - at least half of them in Chennai alone. They serve simple breakfast, lunch and dinner every day of the week.

"The food is prepared hygienically, it's very well made and it's tasty," says CR Saraswathi, spokeswoman for Ms Jayalalithaa's All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) party.

"Our chief minister started these canteens to provide good, cheap food to the people. It has also generated employment for thousands of women. The canteens are run by women who cook, clean and serve."

And the scheme has served Ms Jayalalithaa well too.

The canteens have helped poor and lower middle-class families massively slash their food bills and freed the womenfolk from the daily drudgery of cooking and cleaning. And their gratitude has often translated into votes for Amma.

A year after the scheme was launched, Ms Jayalalithaa's party won 37 of the 39 seats in the 2014 parliamentary elections.

In April, her party was re-elected in the state assembly polls and analysts say the canteens are among the reasons for her victory.

At the canteen, I come across S Shweta and S Pavitra - two young women who work as salesgirls in a telephone showroom nearby.

This is their first visit to an amma canteen and to mark the occasion, they are taking a selfie with their plates of rice.

The photograph, they tell me, will be uploaded on their Facebook accounts.

"This is a great initiative. Where else can poor people eat a full meal for five rupees? We support amma," says Ms Shweta.

As the popular saying goes, the way to a man's - and presumably also a woman's - heart is through the stomach. And Ms Jayalalithaa knows it well.

Many businesses are only just jumping onto the bandwagon of virtual reality (VR) and utilizing the manner in which immersive content can enhance audience engagement. However, the porn industry seems to have got there earlier in grasping the scope of user involvement with VR tech.

Now, beyond just enhancing engagement factors for the masses, there are also benefits to be found with the availability of a new content initiative launched by leading VR porn service BaDoink called 'Virtual Sexology'. The aim being to broaden erotic entertainment just that little bit deeper.

Porn stars will now also have the chance to use their expertise for teaching their audience.

So be it virtual or not, becoming a better lover is a reality everyone can now acquire... so no more excuses!!

Read more at:

<http://en.ria.ru/society/20160803/1043904255/vr-sexology-porn-education.html>

Why Netanyahu quietly applauds Brexit

Tissues are not in great demand in Jerusalem these days. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not shed any tears over the decision by the residents of the United Kingdom to withdraw from the European Union. According to the rules of Israel's zero-sum game in the international arena, the weaker the gentiles, the stronger the Jews. The greater the anxiety in Brussels, the lower the tensions in Jerusalem. The governments of Europe are competing with the US administration, goes the thinking in Jerusalem, for the championship of the Israel-haters league. The EU's clipped wings improve the prospects of removing from its agenda the European threat to thaw the diplomatic freeze with the Palestinians and freeze construction in the settlements.

As far as the prime minister is concerned, the timing of the shockwaves that rattled Europe could not have been better. It happened in the same month that France woke the long-dormant "peace

process" that had been idle for more than two years, ever since Secretary of State John Kerry waved a white flag of surrender and folded up his peace initiative. This was also the month that an international conference took place in Paris, raising from the dead the problem of the Israeli occupation and its West Bank settlements. In June 2016, the European Council recorded in its minutes that 28 foreign ministers voted in favor of the French initiative and pledged to support it. Implementation of the Brexit decision will bring down the number to 27.

Britain is not simply 1/28th of the EU. The standing of the United Kingdom is not like those of Poland or Greece. Britain is one of two European permanent members of the UN Security Council and the closest and the most loyal partner of the United States on the continent. France, the EU's second representative among the five permanent members, was very open about its efforts to thwart Brexit. The failure to stop it has eroded what was left of French President Francois Hollande's popularity. Nor did the UK referendum help German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the third party in the top European leadership, recover from the Syrian refugee crisis. Her name, too, is included among the losers in the move.

Britain's pullout will also damage the Middle East Quartet, whose members include the EU, the United States, Russia and the UN. Netanyahu has devoted significant efforts in recent weeks to soften the criticism of Israel's policy in the territories contained in a special report compiled and soon to be published by the Quartet. A diplomatic source who asked to remain anonymous told Al-Monitor this week that authors of the report were privy to a document prepared by foreign consular representatives in Jerusalem containing data about a marked increase in the extent of Israeli construction in the territories and human rights abuses against Palestinians. However, the Quartet's report is expected to resonate less with the EU, busy licking the wounds of Britain's amputation, and the United States busy with the most frenetic election campaign it has known in generations.

Netanyahu may have reasons to celebrate Britain's farewell to the EU. But ordinary Israeli citizens have no reason to cheer the downfall of the EU. The European Union is hostile to the policies of the Israeli government, not to the State of Israel, and proof can be found in the archives of the European Council of Ministers. In December 2013, the council proposed upgrading Israel's ties with the EU to the status of special privileged partnership, the highest level that can be reached in the EU by a non-member state. The upgrade was supposed to include an "unprecedented" package of economic, diplomatic and defense aid for Israel, as well as for the Palestinian state that would be established at its side. The package includes better access to the European market, a strengthening of cultural and scientific ties, increased trade and investments by EU members, encouragement of cooperation between the European private sector and the private sectors in Israel and Palestine, a deepening of the diplomatic dialogue and defense cooperation with the two states.

The European package deal stands to provide thousands of jobs and an infusion of billions of dollars. All of this, of course, comes in addition to a significant improvement of Israel's international and strategic standing. This generous offer was clearly not generated by a clandestine organization of lovers of Zion and members of pacifist clubs. International organizations are not in the habit of doling out freebies to developed countries like Israel. The resolution underscores that "the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a fundamental interest of the EU."

The package comes with a price tag: a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine. The heads of the EU, like many Israelis, know that construction in the territories at the heart of the conflict does not advance the agreement. Over the past year they have not only issued press releases condemning the settlement enterprise, they have switched from words to actions. The first move was the EU's decision to label settlement products. The next was a vote of support or abstention by EU member states on the UN Human Rights Council decision to endorse the compilation of a blacklist of companies operating in the settlements.

Israel's Foreign Ministry rushes to issue sharp reactions to every negative word emanating from Brussels about the settlements. The prime minister rushes to protest a peace initiative originating on the European continent and insinuates that it reeks of anti-Semitism.

On the other hand, the incentive package that the EU offered Israel was greeted in Jerusalem with a yawn. The attitude of Israeli politicians toward Europe is basically "don't do us any favors" — as long as they don't disturb us while we drag our feet in the peace process and accelerate the settlement

project.

On reflection where might Brexit take us? 1st July 2016

Your editor has been campaigning to leave the EU for a number of years and obviously the Brexit decision to leave the EU is a welcome one from a personal perspective. I thought you might like to read an article I have circulated through the press on my take on the decision to "leave".

See this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/brexit2.htm>

Theresa May, New UK Prime Minister

You can read a brief profile of her at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-36660372>

Greece Slams Quran Reading in Istanbul's Orthodox Christian Cathedral

The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned on Monday the decision by the authorities of Turkey to read the Quran in Hagia Sophia Orthodox Christian cathedral in Istanbul during Ramadan as a regressive and bordering on fanaticism.

Read more at

<http://sputniknews.com/politics/20160606/1040887672/quran-greece-turkey-orthodox.html>



Why Turkey's beaches are empty

It was once the world's sixth most popular tourist destination but visitor numbers to Turkey have slumped by around 40 percent amid security threats and a row with Moscow after a Russian jet was shot down by Turkey in 2015.

Learn more at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36556431>

The myth of a tripartite Iraq

Since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003 and breakdown of the Iraqi state, ethno-sectarian partition has become a popular political mantra. The assumption is that a federal state based on three autonomous regions — Sunni Arab, Shiite Arab and Kurd — is the most realistic way to stabilize Iraq and keep its borders intact. This claim has revived alongside the devastation and communal distrust created by the Islamic State (IS) and the territorial, demographic and political changes resulting from the campaign to counter IS.

The problem is that a tripartite Iraq has little bearing to realities on the ground, particularly in a post-IS context. Sunni Arab, Shiite Arab and Kurdish communities may be religiously and ethnically distinct and concentrated in particular regions, but they have also been dispersed across territories since the IS onslaught and are deeply fragmented. Internal boundaries and the uneven distribution of resources remain disputed between and within groups, creating additional challenges to reordering borders along clear ethno-sectarian fault lines. Instead of three self-sustaining regions, Iraq has become an amalgam of hyper-localized entities seeking self-rule and self-protection, while remaining dependent on Baghdad and prone to proxy conflicts.

A deeper look at Iraq's three main communities reveals the complexities of reordering internal boundaries along ethno-sectarian lines. The Kurds may have gained extensive territories in the anti-IS campaign; however, their de facto borders have been drawn in blood and not through negotiation. Key Sunni Arab groups that largely populate the disputed areas, as well as Yazidis and Assyrians, regard these territories as their own, and demand some form of autonomy. Some seek integration into the Kurdistan Region while others want to remain tied to Baghdad. None want to see strong regions emerge alongside their own borders.

Among the Kurds, divisions run deep over claims to territories and their resources. Although the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has gained de facto control over parts of Kirkuk and its oil fields and considers these territories an essential part of the Kurdistan Region, the Kirkuk governor, a Kurd from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), is calling for an autonomous region that may or may not be tied to the KRG. In the disputed area of Sinjar, the potential for conflict has emerged between Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and groups affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) that are present in the area, including the People's Protection Units and some Yazidi forces. Underpinning these tensions are disagreements over KRG political priorities. While the KDP presses for an immediate referendum for Kurdish independence, other groups such as the PUK and Gorran focus on institution-building and greater decentralization within the region.

A single Sunni Arab region is even less likely to come to fruition. Iraq's Sunni Arab community, which has profound grievances against the Baghdad government, is deeply fragmented and without a common leader or political agenda. Except for former Nineveh Gov. Atheel al-Nujaifi, who seeks a distinct Sunni Arab entity in Nineveh, most other Sunni Arab groups demand different forms of self-rule within existing or newly created provinces to reflect post-IS realities. These demands affirm their ongoing distrust of Baghdad, as well as fear of retaliation by Shiite, Kurdish and other Sunni Arab tribal groups in IS-liberated territories. Intracommunal distrust coexists with Sunni Arabs' sense of Iraqi nationalism and their commitment to Iraq's territorial integrity.

Nor do Shiite Arab communities seek their own Shiite region. To be sure, Iraq's southern provinces continue to challenge Baghdad's authority. People living in Basra insist on greater control of their oil resources and revenues and want privileges similar to what the KRG has enjoyed in Iraq since 2003. The Shiite religious establishment, or marja'iyya, also protects Shiite communities and has important sway over southern Iraq, reinforcing a distinct sense of Shiite identity and regionalism.

Still, Shiite Arabs, who comprise about 60% of Iraq's population, are deeply fragmented. The political chaos in Baghdad is largely driven by competing Shiite power centers tied to local religious and political leaders, some of whom are influenced by Iran and others driven by Iraqi nationalism. The marja'iyya also continues to play an important role in bridging sectarian divisions at the societal level in an effort to overcome Sunni-Shiite Arab fractures.

The hyperfragmentation of the Iraqi state and society leads to fundamentally different challenges to stabilization than does a tripartite end-state. Competing groups are not only seeking greater self-rule, but are engaging with regional actors, namely Turkey, Iran and the Gulf states, to advance their political agendas and economic interests — while they also remain legally and financially dependent

on Baghdad. These dynamics are reinforcing fragmentation, further hindering reconciliation and encouraging proxy conflicts and regional tensions.

Under these conditions, stabilization efforts should focus on strengthening state institutions and determining how the various component parts can live together. They should prioritize territorial federalism and decentralization, particularly by enhancing local institutions and the capabilities of provincial and regional administrations. This effort may also require creating new provinces and districts to reflect territorial and demographic shifts and the deep distrust that has emerged within communities. At a minimum, it will demand new revenue-sharing, development and security arrangements that empower local leaders in coordination with Baghdad, and which encourage the necessary deal-making across communities.

DENISE NATALI

Columnist

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Can you get the benefits of exercise by having a hot bath?

We all know that exercise is good for us, but can you get the benefits without actually doing the exercise, asks Michael Mosley.

Having a hot bath or a sauna is a good way to soothe your limbs after exercise, but what happens if you do it instead of exercise? Dr Steve Faulkner of Loughborough University asked me to take part in an experiment comparing the relative benefits of having a long, hot bath versus an hour of hard pedalling.

For this study I join a group of volunteers who have all been fitted with monitors which continuously record blood sugar levels. Keeping your blood sugar levels within the normal range is an important measure of your "metabolic" fitness.

We are also fitted with equipment to measure how many calories we burn and rectal thermometers to constantly measure our internal, core temperature.

The first part of the experiment is very relaxing, consisting of having a long, hot bath.

While I sit in the bath, which they keep at 40C, Steve closely monitors my core temperature. Once it has risen and stayed there, I am allowed out.

A couple of hours after my bath I have a light meal.

Since we want to see how having a hot bath compares with exercise we repeat the experiment, except this time instead of a bath it's an hour's sweating on a bike.

So what's the result?

"One of the first things that we were looking at," Steve says, "is the energy expenditure while you're in the bath and what we found was an 80% increase in energy expenditure just as a result of sitting in the bath for the course of an hour."

This is nothing like as many calories as cycling for an hour (which comes out at an average of 630 calories) but we do burn 140 calories, the equivalent of a brisk 30-minute walk.

But what about our blood sugar levels?

"Where we started to see differences," Steve tells me, "was when we looked at your peak glucose output."

Your peak glucose output is the amount that your blood sugar goes up after a meal. It's a risk marker

for type-2 diabetes and other metabolic diseases.

"What we found," Steve says, "was that peak glucose was actually quite a bit lower after the bath, compared with exercise, which was completely unexpected"

In fact our volunteers' post-meal glucose levels are, on average, 10% lower after the baths than after the exercise.

But why does this happen?

Steve thinks that it may be partly due to the release of heat shock proteins which are, as the name implies, proteins released in response to heat. Their release can also be triggered by other forms of stress, such as infection, inflammation and exercise,

Heat shock proteins are part of your defence system. They help protect your body against damage, but animal studies suggest they may also help divert sugar from the bloodstream and into muscles. Keeping blood sugar levels down is important because persistently high blood sugar damages arteries and nerves.

Steve wouldn't suggest that having a hot bath or sauna should replace doing exercise and he recommends that people try to do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise a week. He sees this "whole body heating" research as being potentially most useful for people who struggle with controlling their blood sugar levels and who find it hard to exercise.

So getting hot turns out to have surprising benefits . But what about doing something called motor imagery? Can simply imagining yourself doing a particular exercise make your muscles stronger?

Motor imagery is not a crazy as it sounds. It's widely used by top athletes. To find out what effects it would have on a group of relatively sedentary Trust Me viewers we ask Prof Tony Kay from the University of Northampton to do an experiment.

He starts by taking some base measurements. These include testing how strong their calf muscles were by asking them push as hard as they could against a heavy plate linked to sensors. Next he uses ultrasound to measure their calf muscle size. Finally, to assess just how much of their muscle they are actually using when pushing as hard as possible, he gives these muscles a small electric shock.

Once he's got his baseline measurements Tony asks the volunteers to spend 15 minutes a day thinking about the pushing exercise they've just done, imagining doing it.

So what happens? Well, much to my surprise, just thinking about exercising their calf muscle really does improve their strength. When we repeat the test a month later the group's calf muscles are, on average, 8% stronger.

It isn't because their muscles have got bigger (they haven't) - it's because by the end of a month of thinking about a particular exercise they are using more of the muscle fibres than they did at the start.

"They got better at recruiting the muscles in an orderly fashion," Tony says, "so they could activate a larger percentage of the muscle. That produced more force and so they became stronger."

Tony thinks that as well as helping top athletes, mental imagery could be a useful way to avoid losing strength if you're injured and can't exercise.

Hugo Swire: Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
The Commonwealth is no relic of the past

Sometimes the Commonwealth is seen as a relic of the past. I argue passionately that it is nothing of the sort. The test is always the same – would we invent the Commonwealth today? The answer is that we would. It is an important organisation for the present and the future.

My visit last week to New Zealand and Canada, and last month to Sri Lanka, demonstrated that fact more clearly than ever. The warm receptions I experienced were that of a good friend. Not only old friends with important shared history, but like-minded partners today and for the future.

The UK's relationship with New Zealand is full of energy. It covers trade, science & innovation, and defence. Our people share a sense of humour and passions for sport, education and business. With New Zealand now on the UN Security Council, it is a great opportunity to promote international peace and security together.

With Canada too, our relations are as strong as ever. We are ready to confront security and humanitarian challenges around the world, including terrorism, climate change and strengthening the Rules-Based International Order. As partners in the Commonwealth as well as the G7, G20 and NATO, our relationship is unique.

Our friendship with these two important partners demonstrates that Commonwealth is as important as it has ever been for the UK – a collection of more than 50 influential nations across the globe with shared values and objectives. It represents a third of the world's population, including more than a billion under 25s.

As well as values, these countries share language and systems of law and order. And that means they also do business together very well.

The Commonwealth includes some of the world's fastest growing economies – India, South Africa, Malaysia, Nigeria and Singapore – alongside long-established powerhouses like the UK, Australia and, of course, Canada.

A huge amount of trade already goes on between Commonwealth nations – more than \$592bn in 2013 – and the amount continues to grow. It is expected to reach \$1tr by 2020. And it makes sense to do so: Trade is estimated to be 19-20% cheaper as a result of shared legal systems and language.

In the UK, we have already started developing our approach to trade within the Commonwealth. One example is our support to the new Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC), which is helping to build business links between member governments.

The UK's commitment to the Commonwealth should never be in doubt. Relationships with our Commonwealth colleagues are essential to us and we will continue to build them and thrive as equal members of an important partnership.

That's why I am delighted that we have now been confirmed as the next hosts for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in 2018 – a key gathering of heads of state, where many crucial issues will be decided.

The CHOGM meeting in Malta late last year demonstrated the strength of the Commonwealth. Major agreements were made on issues from climate change to counter extremism.

It was at CHOGM that 53 nations pledged to mobilise worldwide efforts to keep the increase in global average temperatures "below 2 or 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels" – a move witnessed by the French President and UN Secretary General, which paved the way for the UN pledge that followed it a week later.

It was also where the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau paid tribute to HM The Queen's "constant presence in the life of Canada" since her first official duty there at the age of nine, and made headlines by making Her Majesty "feel so old".

The conference saw the announcement of:

- A £5million fund for a new Commonwealth counter-extremism fund.
- £5.6million to help small island developing states to preserve their marine environments and tap into maritime resources to drive sustainable economic development.
- £15million to extend an international disaster risk insurance fund to the Pacific Islands, helping those

countries access rapid finance in the event of natural disasters.

- £5million to establish a global facility to provide technical assistance on risk management and disaster planning.
- £1million to provide small island developing states with access to technical expertise to help them access development and infrastructure finance.

We want to host CHOGM 2018 because we believe the Commonwealth makes a real impact on the world stage. And the United Kingdom's long-term security and prosperity depends on a stable, rules based, international system that reflects the core values of democracy, the rule of law, open, accountable governments and institutions, human rights, freedom of speech, property rights and equality of opportunity, including the empowerment of women and girls. I look forward to celebrating Commonwealth Day on 14 March, with this year's theme of "An Inclusive Commonwealth".

We'll use Britain's world-leading soft-power to strengthen the member institutions, encouraging further participation by growing powers. The ideal of the Commonwealth, a worldwide partnership of diversity and shared values, embodying what we believe the international system should look like, can be realised. We plan to make sure that it is.

Unleaded Zeppelin: Why Airships May Again Start to Compete With Planes

This week's presentation of the Airlander 10, a huge plane-airship hybrid, which was towed from Britain's largest airship hangar in Bedfordshire, has prompted experts to speculate that we may see a return of the dirigible, according to the Russian newspaper Vzglyad.

Read more at:

<http://en.ria.ru/science/20160813/1044230264/airships-planes-competition-factors.html>

See a video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FUpUy6sXjs>

See a more technical review at:

<http://aviationweek.com/greene-tweed/hybrid-hopes-inside-look-airlander-10-airship>

Can't find a job? Try this simple advice

University graduation has come and gone and despite all the talk of it being the hottest job market in years for new graduates, you're still on the sidelines.

You've sent out dozens of CVs and submitted countless applications. Still, nothing.

Panic sets in. You start to think all that study was for nothing.

With little real experience on your resume, what can you do to increase your odds of landing your dream position and to make yourself more attractive to employers?

Read the full article at:

<http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20160729-cant-find-a-job-try-this-simple-advice>

Audrey Rose Walker

And you think you have problems...

Diagnosed 1st Ultrasound severe heart disease.

Parents told she would be born dead, or if lucky live and needing immediate life-saving surgery

Miracle – born pink and 'looking' like normal baby.

Actually, conditions:

Tetralogy of Fallot

Pulmonary Atresia

No pulmonary artery

Pulmonary stenosis

Missing right ventricle valve

Hole in septum (middle) of heart

Bi-lateral Anophthalmia – no eyeballs

MAAPCA veins
Low blood oxygen lung transfer

Subglottic Stenosis - throat closure' - minutes from killing her / saved by doctor who 'just happened to be walking by (Dr. Colta)

Only child in the world known to have these two devastating, severe disabilities together

3 Open-heart surgeries some lasting 11 hours (at 7 months)
Several catheterizations and many dozens of associated procedures

Dr. Frank Hanley – Stanford Children's hospital – ONLY doctor in the WORLD who could save Audrey's life, and he did.

Second open-heart surgery - it took over 60 'sticks' to get a vein for an IV. I had to order them to stop.

Audrey accomplishments:

Started talking at 7 months

Could sing 7+ songs completely at 12 months old

On stage at Colin Kaepernick's charity 'Camp Taylor' at 5 years old
www.youtube.com/watch?v=PW4q-MnFJ7K

Audrey sings National Anthem for Santa Clara County Gang Task Force Training Conference
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBlaJtLgV20&feature=youtu.be>

7 years old – Onstage in front of over 400 people attending / eating dinner at Colin Kaepernick's "Against All Odds" 2nd Annual Golf Tournament fundraiser. Audrey had no idea what was to happen, (cold turkey) and WOWed the crowd to cheering exuberance and laughing with her comedy and uniqueness!

It was here that Audrey asked Colin to marry her. She is still awaiting an answer. Daddy told her she could wait the 10 years to be old enough to 'date' him!

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVnUiWlvsWQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVnUiWlvsWQ)

Audrey Rose sings the National Anthem at the NINER EMPIRE's Second Annual Empiree Awards, with Dennis Brown broadcast Worldwide

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4Af6owCd_c&feature=youtu.be

Our 19-month-old daughter - completely blind - sings 7 songs!!!

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TliH1hVW6I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TliH1hVW6I)

KMEL Radio Audrey pics Antoine Bethea Softball fundraiser

<http://kmel.iheart.com/photos/main/antoine-bethea-celebrity-softball-game-with-452285/>

Audrey's fun and motivating INTERVIEW on FORK TALK including Colin Kaepernick, Scottish Heavy Athletics, hosted by HOSS and BIG Daddy from Washington! <http://youtu.be/8m2w4LTnNGg>

Audrey Rose inspires people all over the world when they see her video with Colin or her singing our National Anthem.

You can support her by a donation at <https://www.gofundme.com/2a5xeb6c>

Editors Note: I have known her father Jim Walker for many years as he's very active in Scottish events in his home state and will usually email me if he finds something of interest in the Scots Diaspora in America.

Canadian Update

New Canadian Army Flag Unveiled
Ottawa, Ontario —



The Canadian Army (CA) will advance into the future under a new flag that reflects its proud past.

The flag was unveiled July 14, 2016, during a ceremony on Parliament Hill in which CA members welcomed their new Commander, LGen Paul Wynnyk.

The flag traces the evolution of the CA's identity, reinforcing the link between the brave veterans of Afghanistan and the Cold War period with the heroes of First and Second World Wars and Korea. In doing so, the new design reflects the Canadian Army of today while respecting tradition by combining elements from several past Canadian Army flags.

The white stylized maple leaf was worn on the collar of the majority of the soldiers who fought up Vimy Ridge to victory in the First World War and it remembers all Great War soldiers as we approach that national centennial. This same maple leaf flew on the Headquarters flags of the fighting Divisions of the Second World War and it remains a vibrant symbol today, flying on our Army's Division Headquarters across Canada. Superimposed on the white maple leaf is our Canadian Army badge worn during Korea and during the Second World War symbolizing Canada's victories and sacrifices in 1939-45.

"These changes are collectively directed at promoting the Corps traditions that shape our Army. Our symbols and history increase the pride that each soldier feels in their trade and duty within the CA," declared LGen Paul Wynnyk. "Soldiers fight for their regiment and Corps. Maximizing that regimental and Corps identity is key to their personal and collective esprit de corps."

The Canadian Army name was restored in 2011 following several decades in which all three military branches were known collectively as the Canadian Armed Forces. The CA Divisions and Corps began restoring their identities in 2013 and there have been several additional restorations of Army badges and rank designations since. Note no change to the official Canadian Army flag was made from 2013-16.

The new Canadian Army flag will be featured at the Canada Army Run this coming September.

By Pat Bryden, Army History and Heritage and Caroline Fyfe, Army Public Affairs with files from Steven Fouchard, Army Public Affairs.

How Justin Trudeau plans to deliver on deliverology
PM a devotee of Michael Barber's result-oriented management theories

From early on, Trudeau's government, laden with myriad promises, has been taking guidance from the teachings of Michael Barber, a British political adviser whose theories of result-oriented management have come to be known as "deliverology."

Barber, who has attended each of the cabinet's three retreats and made at least one visit to Ottawa, preaches establishing "delivery units," setting priorities, measuring outcomes and methodically reviewing progress — a process that, ideally, drives a government to fulfil its commitments and produces meaningful results for the public.

The prime minister's priorities are styled as "growing the middle class," "improved relationships with, and outcomes for, Indigenous peoples," "stronger diversity" and "international engagement that makes a difference in the world" (the last of these seems to focus generally on international priorities).

"We think, in short, that's our mandate, that's what we got elected to do," says the government official. "And it's all interrelated."

Read more at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/wherry-trudeau-deliverology-1.3735890>

Canada's economy shrinks 1.6% in 2nd quarter
Alberta fires caused oilsands production shutdowns and mass evacuations.

Statistics Canada left no doubt about the main reason for the contraction in the April-to-June quarter. In large part, it blamed a 4.5 per cent drop in exports — especially energy products — as the Alberta fires caused many oilsands operations to curtail production in May.

But while the performance for the second quarter as a whole was poor, the economy bounced back to growth in June.

Read more at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/gdp-q2-statistics-canada-1.3742437>

Tim Hortons expanding into England, Scotland, Wales
Tim Hortons is heading across the Atlantic in hopes that British tea drinkers may warm to the chain's coffee and doughnuts.

Restaurant Brands International, the parent company of Tim's, said Wednesday it has reached a deal with an investor to expand the Canadian restaurant chain into England, Scotland and Wales.

"This deal is part of our growth plan to take the iconic Tim Hortons brand around the world," said Daniel Schwartz, chief executive of Restaurant Brands International.

Great Britain is an attractive market with a strong and growing coffee culture, Schwartz said, calling it "a natural fit."

Reports indicate the expansion will begin in 2017, although no details have been provided on the number of Tim Hortons outlets planned.

Bloomberg reported that Tim Hortons will face competition in the British market from McDonald's Corp., Starbucks Corp. and Dunkin' Donuts, which are established there already.

Ex-PM Harper quits Canada politics

Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper has given up his seat as an MP, leaving Canadian politics after more than 20 years to focus on his businesses.

The news comes 10 months after Mr Harper lost the election to Justin Trudeau and then resigned as Conservative leader.

He said representing Calgary in Parliament had been an honour.

He was first elected as a Reform MP in 1993 and later led the Conservative Party to three election victories.

In a written statement, he said: "Friends, we did a lot together, but I know the best is yet to come."

Canada's Mounties allow women in uniform to wear hijabs

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, known as the Mounties, is to allow women in uniform to wear hijabs.



Government spokesman Scott Bardsley said the move was to reflect the diversity in Canada's communities and to attract more female Muslim officers.

The iconic uniform, famed for its wide-brimmed hat, has barely changed since it was introduced two centuries ago.

Recent figures show women make up about a fifth of the RCMP but it is not clear how many this measure will affect.

Three types of hijabs were tested before one was selected as suitable for police work, local media reported.

According to the Montreal newspaper La Presse, an internal memo said the hijab could be removed quickly and easily if needed, and did not encumber officers.

The policy was introduced quietly earlier this year, though it was not prompted by any requests from officers, according to the AFP agency.

Some 30 officers had asked for a relaxing of the rules for religious or cultural reasons over the past two years, La Presse reported.

In most cases, the requests were from male officers wanting to grow beards.

Sikh officers have been allowed to wear turbans since 1990.

The uniform, with its red serge tunic, leather riding boots and felt campaign hat, dates back to the 1800s - when mounted police were sent west to police American whisky traders.

Inspired by British military uniforms of the period, it has since only undergone minor changes.

The RCMP has become the third police force in Canada to add the hijab option after Toronto and

Edmonton.

Wind blows 1,500 American boaters into Canada

More than a thousand Americans accidentally "invaded" international borders after high winds carried their rafts and boats into Canada.

The US boaters were part of the Port Huron Float Down, an annual event on the St. Clair River, which divides the US state of Michigan and Canada.

Police in Sarnia, Ontario, said it took hours to transport the stranded revellers back to the US on Sunday.

Read more at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37157478>

Rare Siberian Mineral Revealed to Be Analogue of Advanced Synthetic Polymer

Russian and Canadian chemists made a surprising discovery: the natural analogue of a man-made polymer.

The scientists have discovered that minerals called stepanovite and zhemchuzhnikovite, first discovered by Soviet geologists in Siberia in 1942 and 1963, respectively, exhibit structures similar to those of Metal-organic Frameworks (MOFs) – advanced synthetic polymers developed in the 1990s, according to a study posted in *Science Advances* magazine.

The porous structure of MOFs provides for a variety of possible high-tech applications, including the storage of gases such as hydrogen and carbon dioxide, along with gas purification and separation.

The discovery was in fact made by chance as Tomislav Friščic, an associate professor of chemistry at McGill University in Montreal, stumbled upon the description on minerals in a Canadian mineralogy journal and realized that their properties are similar to those of MOFs.

Seeking to confirm his theory, he eventually managed to come in contact with Sergei Krivovichev, a professor at Saint Petersburg State University, and Professor Igor Pekov of Lomonosov Moscow State University, who helped him obtain the original samples of two minerals and confirm his suspicions.

The researchers are now trying to find out if other, more abundant natural materials possess a similar porous structure and could be used for the same purposes as MOFs.

Olympics Rio 2016

Some highlights on Canadian's at the Olympics...

Note that our target was to reach 12th place in the medal count and we met that and more by achieving 10th place! Well done Canada!!!



Team Canada's Entrance at the Opening Ceremony

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2qyWjvNujs>

Canada's Rosie MacLennan Wins Gold in Trampoline

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0c1BWVqsA>

Women's Artistic Gymnastics: Individual All-Around Final

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVpeGB8Dbw8>

Canada's Silver Medal Race in Women's Rowing Lightweight Double Sculls

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qitS-zDHGyU>

Penny Oleksiak's Gold Medal Race in Women's Swimming 100M Freestyle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeJ6QDEoZzk>

See a write up about Penny Oleksiak n the BBC web site at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37062640>

Canada Wins Bronze in Women's Synchronized Diving 10M Platform

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAIMsPRCUdc>

Canada wins bronze in Women's Rugby Sevens

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DK_npcdbVpQ

An unforgettable 24 hours for Canada in Rio

<http://olympics.cbc.ca/video/vod/unforgettable-hours-for-canada-rio.html>

Canada's Women's team pursuit track cyclists

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canada-s-women-s-team-pursuit-track-cyclists-react-to-their-olympic-bronze-1.3720686>

With an Olympic bronze medal, the ride for Andre De Grasse has only just begun

<http://olympics.cbc.ca/video/vod/andre-grasse-discusses-winning-his-first-olympic-medal.html>

Derek Drouin wins gold in Olympic high jump

<http://olympics.cbc.ca/news/article/derek-drouin-wins-gold-olympic-high-jump.html>

De Grasse anchors Canada to bronze after U.S. disqualified

<http://olympics.cbc.ca/news/article/jamaica-wins-relay-gold-canada-finishes-4th.html>

Canada's Catharine Pendrel wins Olympic mountain bike bronze after early crash

<http://olympics.cbc.ca/news/article/canada-catharine-pendrel-wins-olympic-mountain-bike-bronze-after-early-crash.html>

A compilation of the best moments from the Olympic Games set to The Tragically Hip's "Ahead By A Century." can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4Dqs4dpdw0>

Canada had its best ever summer medal haul at a non-boycotted Games.

It was also fitting that on a Canadian team with its largest ever percentage of women, for the first time in 40 years, those women won the majority of Canada's medals.

But those weren't the only interesting stats and stories. Here's a look at some of the Team Canada numbers at Rio 2016:

<http://olympic.ca/2016/08/21/by-the-numbers-team-canada-success-at-rio-2016/>

Canada Olympic House design unveiled

Primarily serving as an oasis for family and friends of Olympians in competition, the house will be located in the Leblon area of the city and expects to host over 20,000 visitors during the Games.

Read more at:

<http://olympic.ca/2016/06/02/rio-2016-canada-olympic-house-design-unveiled/>

Canada 150 Countdown

Message from the Governor General on the Occasion of the 150-Day Countdown to Canada's 150th

OTTAWA. Today, we mark the 150-day countdown to Canada's sesquicentennial.

For 150 years, we have built strong communities and we have been innovative and compassionate because we desire a better country. Getting there means imagining the Canada of tomorrow and doing what we can to make that a reality.

I look forward to welcoming all Canadians to Rideau Hall in Ottawa and the Citadelle in Québec next year because celebrations will happen here! Both official residences will host some fantastic public events and ceremonies honouring Canadians who have made this a great nation.

What a year 2017 will be! Not only will we celebrate Canada's 150th, we will also mark the 50th anniversary of the Order of Canada and the 125th anniversary of the Stanley Cup.

Our stories shape our country, and it's our duty to share them far and wide. In celebration of Canada's 150th birthday, I invite Canadians to share these stories and to get involved in the celebrations as a gift from one generation to the next.

Let's get ready to celebrate this momentous occasion, 150 years in the making!

David Johnston

The video version of this message can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/wZxjZJkO6Fw>

Reputation Institute votes Canada to 2nd place

Despite dropping to second on the list, Canadians speak more positively than ever about their home country, especially as the government continues an "arms wide open" approach to Syrian refugees.

"There's a national concern to ensure that those who have suffered so much can rebuild the lives they deserve," said Jeremy Arnold, a native and frequent Quora author on life in Canada. "The average Canadian is defined by their zeal to see our inclusive and communal way of life protected. We love seeing the videos of Syrian immigrants enjoying their first Canada Day."

Canada also scores high for being one of the world's safest countries. That doesn't mean it's without its problems. "It isn't a utopia. We have crime. We have gangs," Arnold explained. "But we also have a strong social safety net and a shared commitment to values like mutual respect and joyful multiculturalism."

Almost all Canadian residents live in cities that are within 100 miles of the US border, making it especially easy for American expats to come and go. "We also have fairly open visa policies for member countries of the Commonwealth of Nations," Arnold said. Vancouver and Toronto are perennial favourite expat spots, but many choose to live near friends and family or where previous generations of a country's expats have settled.

While both Vancouver and Toronto are expensive cities relative to world prices, Canada in general is relatively affordable compared to many other developed countries. Even the big cities can be navigated affordably by living a little further away from main amenities, said Arnold.

One recent study by the Reputation Institute, a consultant and advisory firm specializing in reputation, sought to quantify the idea of the most well-thought-of countries. They measured 16 different factors -- including being a beautiful and safe place to visit, and having friendly and welcoming residents, progressive policies and an effective government -- via an online survey with more than 48,000 residents in the G8 countries, representing the world's eight leading industrialized nations. The 55 countries rated as part of the survey include those with the largest GDPs, largest populations, and countries with relevant events.

To find out if the reputation matched up to the facts, we talked to residents and expats living in the top five reputable countries.

1. Sweden

2. Canada
3. Switzerland
4. Australia
5. Norway

See the full article at:

<http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20160801-living-in-the-worlds-most-reputable-countriesNorway>

Walrus Talks National Tour in 2017

OTTAWA—The Office of the Secretary to the Governor General is pleased to announce that the Order of Canada will partner with the Walrus Foundation, a charitable, non-profit organization, to present The Walrus Talks Conversations About Canada: We Desire a Better Country—a national tour featuring 50 members of the Order and 50 youth leaders. One of Canada 150's Signature Initiatives, the Walrus Talks will mark the 150th anniversary of Confederation and the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Order of Canada in 2017.

"The 150-day countdown to 2017 has started!" said His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada. "Next year will also mark the 50th anniversary of the Order of Canada, one of our country's highest honours. Its motto, DESIDERANTES MELIOREM PATRIAM (They desire a better country), is the source of inspiration for this one-of-a-kind speakers' series. The diverse and compelling examples of excellence that it will showcase will inspire Canadians and invite them to imagine the Canada of tomorrow."

Featuring 13 Walrus Talks in 13 provinces and territories in 13 weeks, the national tour will bring vital conversations on the future of our country to communities and audiences across Canada. The events, a key part of Canada's sesquicentennial celebrations, will allow members of the Order of Canada to share expertise with and learn from the next generation of young leaders. The tour will run from March 1 to June 1, 2017. For more information about the Walrus Talks and tour dates, visit www.thewalrus.ca/canada150

Canada Ditches Super Hornet After Threats to Buy F-35 or Lose 10,000 Jobs
Lockheed Martin pointed an economic weapon of mass disruption at Ottawa and it appears that Justin Trudeau has blinked caving to the defense contractor's threats.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau rose to power last fall on a pledge not to purchase the defective F-35, an aircraft that he has said "does not work," is too expensive, and is wholly incompatible with Canada's defense needs pushing his country instead to move towards a deal to acquire Boeing's Super Hornet – a fighter jet with greater air maneuverability allowing it advanced performance in air-to-air combat.

That promise crashed along the shores of political reality this week as Canada reneged from its earlier proposal to acquire Boeing Super Hornet jets on an interim basis to plug the country's air defense capability gap after Lockheed Martin threatened to pull all of its operations out of the country which would result in a massive layoff of some 10,000 employees and potentially bankrupt portions of Canada's defense sector that benefits from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program.

Read more at:

<http://en.ria.ru/news/20160724/1043563386/trudeau-canada-lockheed-military-jet.html>

Canada still to decide on new Fighter Aircraft

I thought I'd bring you information on the F-35B Lightning II: Everything you need to know about Britain's new £70m stealth fighter.

You can read about it at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/0/what-is-britains-new-f-35-jump-jet-and-is-it-any-good/>

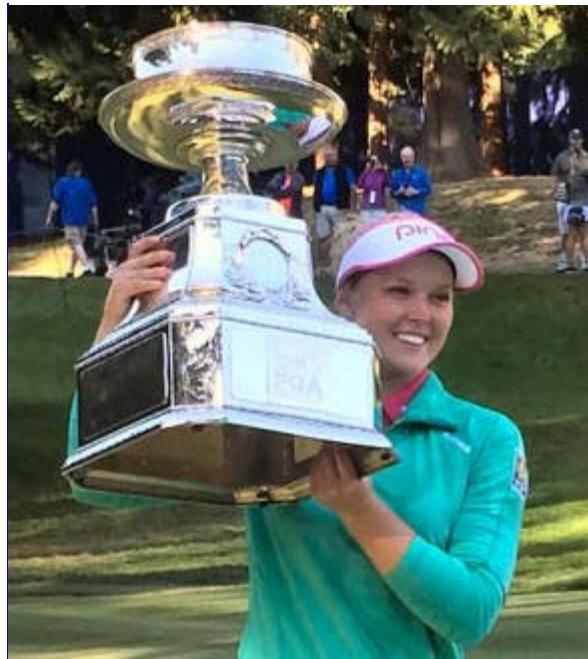
Brooke Henderson wins KPMG Women's PGA Championship
Brooke Henderson beat top-ranked Lydia Ko with a birdie on the first hole of a playoff Sunday in the KPMG Women's PGA Championship after

overcoming a three-shot deficit on the back nine.

The 18-year-old Canadian, ranked No. 4 in the world, closed with a bogey-free 6-under 65 — the best round of the week at Sahalee — to match Ko at 6-under 278. Ko finished with a 67.

In the playoff on the par-4 18th, Henderson hit her second shot from 155 yards to 3 feet, while Ko's second from farther back in the fairway left her with 20 feet. Ko missed to the left and Henderson tapped in to cap a week that started with a hole-in-one on her fourth hole of the tournament and ended with a major championship.

She has since gone on to win the Portland Classic. She is now ranked 2nd in the world rankings.



Canada's Brooke Henderson closed with a 4-under-par 67 on Saturday but it wasn't enough to reach the podium at the Rio Games.

Henderson made a late push with three birdies over her last five holes. The 18-year-old from Smiths Falls, Ont., finished at 8-under 276 overall. That's good enough for seventh.

Gordie Howe funeral in Detroit honouring Mr. Hockey

Hundreds of family members, friends and fans of Gordie Howe are saying goodbye to the hockey legend at his funeral services at Detroit's Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Howe, who was born in Floral, Sask., died Friday in Ohio at age 88.

The funeral follows Tuesday's visitation at Joe Louis Arena that drew thousands of people who paid their respects to the Hall of Famer known as Mr. Hockey. Members of Howe's family were there to greet the visitors.

The home of the Detroit Red Wings, Howe's team for more than two decades and four Stanley Cup championships, was opened at 9 a.m. ET and scheduled to close at 9 p.m. — for No. 9, of course — but so many people showed up that the visitation lasted longer than planned.

Howe shattered records, threw elbows and fists, and became an idol to hockey great Wayne Gretzky and many others while elevating the profile the NHL had in the U.S. With strength, speed and grit, Howe set NHL records with 801 goals and 1,850 points that stood until Brantford, Ont.-born Gretzky came along.

You can watch a video tribute to him at https://youtu.be/PZpxJU9_gU

Tragically Hip

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke briefly with the CBC's Ron MacLean about the Tragically Hip on Saturday night.

In the video conversation, Trudeau was at the arena in Kingston, Ont., for the final show of the band's Man Machine Poem tour and MacLean was in Rio. Trudeau said all week he was wishing he was in Rio for the Olympics, "but tonight I'm glad I'm in Kingston instead."

Trudeau said he had mixed feelings about the show, because it was a chance to both say goodbye

and to celebrate lead singer Gord Downie, who is battling terminal brain cancer.

Trudeau spoke about becoming a fan of the Hip in university and at one point wishing the band would make it big internationally, though now he's glad they've remained a Canadian staple, saying they are "an inevitable and essential part of what we are and who we are as a country."

Formed in the 1980s, the blues and rock band penned lyrics which explicitly referenced Canadian life, with a small-town charm that won the country over.

They started as a college band working the local circuit and then took off, but their success across 14 albums was mostly confined to within Canada.

Known simply as The Hip to many Canadians, their songs became part of a national identity.

Watch the video of the The Tragically Hip August 12 2016 Live in Toronto at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBX7TQqBAxE>

See also...

Tragically Hip: Why Canada was closed for the final farewell
From the BBC <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37148999>

and

Gord Downie | Tragically Hip | On Cancer, Mortality and Family
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4k57AZ92tM&feature=em-subs_digest-vrcs

The town where 100 young people have tried to kill themselves
From the BBC Magazine

When Justin Trudeau came to power in Canada, he promised to repair the country's relationship with its Aboriginal people, after centuries of discrimination. A disproportionate number of indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in recent decades, and suicide attempts have risen dramatically in some communities, writes Stephen Sackur.



Attawapiskat is hard to reach. Generations of Canadian politicians have never lent it a thought, still less a visit. But this ramshackle Aboriginal settlement south of Hudson Bay has been making national news over the past year for the grimmest of reasons.

Last October a 13-year-old girl, Sheridan Hookimaw, headed to the rubbish dump and hanged herself. Since then more than 100 of Attawapiskat's 2,000 First Nation people, most of them teenagers, but one just 11 years old, have attempted suicide.

Jackie Hookimaw, a Cree native of Attawapiskat, a teacher, and Sheridan's aunt offers to show me around.

We set off down a dirt track past wooden cabins with boats and tepees in the backyard. A teenage boy is loading containers on to a quad bike outside a shed.

"That's the water treatment plant," says Jackie. "It's the only place to get drinking water. The stuff that comes out of the tap is so toxic folks won't shower in it, let alone drink it. We get everything here from rashes to cancers."

The track takes us to a sports hall. There's a makeshift gym, dumbbells, a couple of weight machines and a fug of stale sweat.

I meet 19-year-old Skylar Hookimaw, his brow furrowed, biceps straining. Sheridan was his little sister. "It still doesn't feel real, like it didn't happen, but it did," he sighs.

There's a heavy silence. "Why is it happening so often?" I ask.

"Family problems, bullying, drugs, alcohol," says Skylar. "Kids feel like they've been left alone, like they don't matter."

Back in April, 11 youngsters tried to kill themselves over the course of one weekend. The day before I arrived, a teenage girl slashed her wrists and had to be airlifted out. The week before, an "at risk" boy tried to hang himself.

Jackie takes me out on a canoe on the Attawapiskat River. Her people have fished here, hunted goose and caribou, for countless generations. We glide past four girls playing in the water, diving, splashing, shrieking with laughter.

"You wouldn't know it, but those girls are struggling," says Jackie as she waves a greeting. "Our young people are lost. They don't feel valued. They feel disconnected from their culture and they need help."

Help, claims Justin Trudeau, Canada's youthful premier, is on its way. He's promised a fresh start in Canada's relationship with its 1.4 million Aboriginal citizens. He pledged more money for their communities, a new focus on education and mental health in First Nation reserves like Attawapiskat.

He's also launched an inquiry into another dark aspect of the indigenous experience in modern Canada - the shockingly disproportionate levels of violence directed against First Nation women. In the past 30 years more than 4,000 indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered.

Many of them fall through the cracks when they get to Canada's cities. The police, the courts, social services all have a shameful record of failure - failure to protect, to investigate, to prosecute and ultimately to care.

In prosperous Calgary, a western city grown rich on cattle and oil, I join a rain-soaked vigil to mark the death of 25-year-old Joey English. Her dismembered body was found in a city park in June.

A couple of dozen friends join Stephanie and Patsy, Joey's mother and grandmother as they sing and drum and remember. "It's like when you cut yourself and you can't control the flow of the blood, that's how I feel," says Stephanie. When Joey's grandmother speaks, the anger is raw. "I'm so pissed off with the justice system," she says. "I'm so tired of this. Our families, our sisters need help."

Beyond the small circle of mourners, Calgary's streets are packed with revellers in the city for the annual Stampede - it's all Stetsons and cowboy boots and a celebration of Canada's Old West - the pioneers who settled a vast empty land. Except it wasn't empty. It was the land of the Blackfoot, the Kainai, the Cree and so many more.

"We were taught to be silent," says Sandra Manyfeathers, whose sister, Jacky Crazybull, was murdered during the Calgary Stampede nine years ago. "But we're saying you're not gonna kick us, you're not gonna keep us down. No way are we gonna be quiet any more."

If you are affected by this issue The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention maintains a page of

crisis centres in Canada at:

<http://suicideprevention.ca/thinking-about-suicide/find-a-crisis-centre/>

Canada MPs back gender-neutral changes to national anthem

Canadian MPs have voted to change the lyrics of the English language version of the country's national anthem to make it more gender neutral.

The move would change the words "in all thy sons command" to "in all of us command" in the anthem, O Canada.

It was tabled by MP Mauril Belanger, of the governing Liberal Party, who is suffering from an incurable disease.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has focused on gender inclusivity since his election last October.

After the vote, MPs stood and applauded Mr Belanger, who sat in the House in his wheelchair.

The change now goes to the Senate, which is expected to pass it.

Chaotic Australian election is a stark warning for fans of electoral reform in Canada
Anyone who thinks electoral reform is great way to improve Canada should take a moment to digest the results of Australia's latest government train wreck.

A national election was held Saturday but the results remain unknown, and aren't expected before Tuesday. Counting ended with a virtual deadlock and the possibility of a hung Parliament. As Reuters reported Sunday: "Australia's political parties began horsetrading on Sunday to break an anticipated parliamentary deadlock after a dramatic election failed to produce a clear winner, raising the prospect of prolonged political and economic instability."

Horse-trading is what you get from systems like Australia's, which contains many of the elements of the "preferential ballot" system favoured by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberals. It wouldn't be fair to suggest Canada is heading towards a system exactly like Australia's, because there are so many variations on the model that seldom are any two exactly alike, but it contains many elements common to the type. For the record, Australia uses "a majority-preferential instant-runoff voting in single-member seats" for their equivalent of the House of Commons, and a "single-transferable proportional voting" for the Senate. Yes, they have an elected Senate. Seizing it from the hands of a small group of recalcitrant zealots was a key reason the election was called.

Before we get to comparisons with Canada, let's recap Australia's recent leadership history. Kevin Rudd, leader of the Labor party, became Prime Minister in 2007. He was ousted by his deputy, Julia Gillard, in 2010, who was in turn ousted by Rudd three years later. Fed up with Labor's shenanigans, Australians dumped Rudd three months after his return and replaced him with a Liberal coalition under Tony Abbott. One peculiarity of Australian politics is that "Liberal" means "Conservative." When Abbott proved too Conservative — and outright goofy at times —his party dumped him for Malcolm Turnbull, a former chairman of Goldman Sachs Australia, who was seen as a safe pair of hands.

Turnbull called Saturday's vote because he felt his agenda was being blocked by the Senate. Usually, Australians vote separately for the Senate and the lower house, but Turnbull gambled on taking both to the polls at the same time. He evidently lost the bet: his solid majority disappeared and, as of Monday, the two major parties were in a virtual tie. If Labor emerges on top, Australians could have their sixth prime minister in six years.

So much for the stability of ranked voting systems. Australians are required to vote by law, a feature Trudeau's Liberals are considering. Its employs a ranked ballot, which Trudeau is also said to favour. Australians mark their preferences in order: voters mark a "1" beside their top pick, a "2" beside their second favourite, and so on through the list of candidates. If no candidate gets a majority on the first go-round, the bottom candidate is dropped and the votes re-allocated until someone tops 50%. So the candidate in second place (or even third) could win if he/she has more support from the bottom of the list. Confusing as it sounds, Canada's Liberals like the idea because they figure they'll usually be picked #2 by NDP supporters, making it easy to regularly beat both the NDP and Conservatives.

Supporters claim this gives a more fair allocation of seats than Canada's existing first-past-the-post system. They don't like to get into the long list of liabilities, like, for instance, six prime ministers in six years. Australian parties oust a lot of leaders because they feel threatened every time popular opinion takes a turn. They also have to contend with numerous small, special-interest parties that carry outsized clout because they can swing the balance of power in the coalition governments that are common under the Liberal-favoured system.

Any candidate with a strong local power base can form a vanity party and hope to win enough seats to hold the government to ransom. In Australia there's the Nick Xenophon Team, the Jacqui Lambie Network, the Palmer United Party of mining magnate Nick Palmer, the father-son Katter's Australian Party of Bob and Rob Katter and — elected Saturday after a 20-year-absence — the radical anti-immigrant organization around Pauline Hanson, who has demanded a Royal Commission on Islam as her price for co-operation.

Sometimes the tiny parties team up to form a block of mini-interests. For three years, Xenophon, the Greens and the Family First Party were able to claim the balance of power in the Senate. A new arrival Saturday was 72-year-old Derryn Hinch, a former broadcaster and reformed hellraiser known as "The Human headline", who says he's never voted before but won a Senate seat for his Derryn Hinch Justice Party on the first try. Hinch, who believes he's the only Australian senator to have a liver transplant, champions a registry to collect and publicize information on sex offenders.

While either Turnbull or Labor boss Bill Shorten may emerge as prime minister, they will need to trade favours and make deals to cement their position, enabling small special interests to overwhelm the intentions of the vast majority of voters and obtain preferred treatment for their cause.

If that sounds like a better way to run a country than the relative certainty that comes with Canada's first-past-the-post system, by all means lend your support to the Liberal reform campaign. Turnbull had hoped for a mandate to confront a struggling economy that has suffered from a commodity collapse in mining much as Canada has felt the effects of the oil-price plunge. It's unlikely the new government will have time for that now. Whoever wins will be too busy taking demands from the likes of The Human Headline. If that's not a recipe for good government, what is?

This article came from The National Post written by Kelly McParland.

Abundant, affordable energy is (almost) within our grasp
Burnaby's General Fusion appears to inching close to a technology that could supply the world with abundant, clean energy from nuclear fusion.

This is not the first time that scientists have announced that a breakthrough in fusion is "right around the corner," conceded VP Michael Delage. The world has more or less lost count.

GF is developing full-scale subsystems to test a new approach to generate the heat and pressure required to sustain a fusion reaction that produces more power than it consumes.

We know that fusion releases huge amounts of energy — it's been working very nicely to power the Sun for quite some time. The trick is to create and control the conditions present in the Sun here on Earth in a confined space.

Such a success has the potential to profoundly change the energy sector, because fusion produces no long-lasting radioactive waste, releases no greenhouse gases and requires only minute amounts of deuterium and lithium fuel. Deuterium is easily extracted from sea water at a cost of 1/1000th of one cent per kilowatt hour, while lithium is relatively abundant in the Earth's crust.

"If the whole planet would run on fusion, we could extract that fuel from ocean and it would (be enough) for billions and billions of years," chief scientific officer Michel Laberge, a plasma physicist, told a Vancouver TEDx audience.

GF's backers are betting — \$100 million to date, including \$27 million in the past few months — that a hybrid technology being developed here in B.C. can fulfil decades of promise.

General Fusion is but one group in a global community of scientists working to solve the puzzle of affordable clean energy using fusion technology and there is no guarantee they will succeed.

But their colleagues in the local tech sector seem optimistic. The company recently picked up a gold medal for being B.C's most innovative company from The Digital Media and Wireless Association of B.C.

What are we talking about?

Fusion reactions are the source of the Sun's energy, caused essentially by the fusion of hydrogen atoms into helium, which releases energy.

Early attempts to heat plasma to the 150 million degrees C required for fusion reactions required about 10,000 times more power than the reaction generated.

"No matter how you approach fusion, you are going to have to put a tremendous amount of energy in to get the fusion reactions going before it pays the energy back," said Delage. "Until we have a technology that produces more energy than it consumes you aren't going to have something that is commercially useful."

More recent working models only require about twice as much power as they produce and the ITER reactor being built in France promises to produce 10 times as much power as it consumes.

Two competing technologies to create viable fusion reactors are being pursued at great cost.

The heart of the ITER reactor is a 10,000-tonne array of magnets in a doughnut-shaped reactor of the type that scientists have been tinkering with for more than 40 years to create a confined space for their plasma. Price tag: US\$14 billion.

Other reactor projects have used massively powerful lasers to zap fuel pellets that heat up so fast — about one-billionth of a second — that plasma would not have time to escape and then try to capture the energy released by the reaction. So far, it hasn't worked that well. Price tag: US\$3.5 billion.

"So, you have one technology that is all about confinement with magnets and one that is all about compression with lasers," explained Delage.

How will it work?

General Fusion has combined those approaches, employing less expensive magnets to contain the plasma and relatively inexpensive kinetic force from a spherical array of synchronized pistons to crush their plasma into fusion.

The energy captured would be used to create our old friend steam, which is used to spin a turbine to generate electricity.

Delage and Laberge want to get there for a tiny fraction of the cost of the mega-projects in the fusion field, using common industrial technologies, in order to compete with relatively inexpensive conventional fuels such as oil, coal and gas.

"We are at a point where we can turn from questions of fundamental science — can we create a fusion reaction? — to the most economical, practical way to build a fusion power plant," said Delage.

Capturing energy to create power has been something of an afterthought for the larger, more expensive projects, which have largely focused just on creating the fusion reaction, according to Laberge. Capturing and using the energy they create is very much at the heart of General Fusion's project.

GF will use steam not only to convert fusion energy to electricity, but also to run the pistons used to create the fusion reaction.

The irony of making a super-high-tech steam generator is not lost on Delage, but its time-tested reliability makes steam a perfect near-term solution for commercialization of fusion energy.

"We know how to make steam-powered systems," he said. "These are industrial technologies that we know how to make reliably and it delivers a lot of energy; that's why locomotives can drag an entire train full of heavy stuff. Steam can store and deliver a lot of energy at a low cost."

General Fusion's investors include the sovereign wealth fund of Malaysia (\$27 million), Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos (\$19.5 million) and infusions from government and a variety of venture capital firms and technology hothouse funds, including GrowthWorks Capital and Cenovus Energy.

Leaked Information on Negotiations between EU and USA to set up a Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Be prepared to be shocked by the revelations. And the same applies to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP),

Read the leaked report at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/TTIPLeaks.pdf>

This act if passed would cause immense harm to the Scottish people and our NHS. Leaked documents from EU / USA negotiations on the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) confirm the dangers threatened to health, environment and safety standards. The documents are from the twelfth round of negotiations in February 2016 (the thirteenth round concluded in New York on 29 April). The EU Commission had slapped a thirty year ban on public access to the negotiating texts at the beginning of the talks in 2013, in the full knowledge that they would not be able to survive the outcry if people were given sight of the deal.

The purpose of the two proposed "partnerships," TTIP and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which were drafted by global corporations, is to make corporations immune to the laws of sovereign countries in which they do business. Any country's sovereign law or regulations—whether social, environmental, food safety, or labour protection—that might adversely affect a corporation's profits is labelled a "restraint on trade." The "partnerships" would permit corporations to take legal action to overturn the law or regulation, and would also award damages to the corporation—paid by the taxpayers of the country that tried to protect its environment or the safety of its food or its workers. These "trade agreements" originate in the United States, because American global corporations and the American mega-banks are the largest players in the world economy. The agreements that the corporations push through this process give these companies economic hegemony over the countries that sign the agreements. The Trans-Atlantic and TransPacific "partnerships" are tools of American financial imperialism. The highly controversial investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism—and its successor, the Investment Court system—has proved particularly thorny. The United States wants to keep the arbitration system that allows corporations to sue governments for perceived loss of profits. The case is not heard in the courts of the country, or in any court: it is heard in a corporate tribunal in which corporations act as prosecutor, judge, and jury.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Come to Canada on a Royal Tour
His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, is pleased to announce that Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have accepted the Government of Canada's invitation to undertake a Royal Tour to Canada in fall 2016.

"Once again, Sharon and I will be delighted to welcome Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Canada," said His Excellency. "Their Royal Tour will take them to the beautiful province of British Columbia and the scenic territory of Yukon. Our true Canadian pride and spirit will shine and be at the very heart of this visit so they can feel at home."

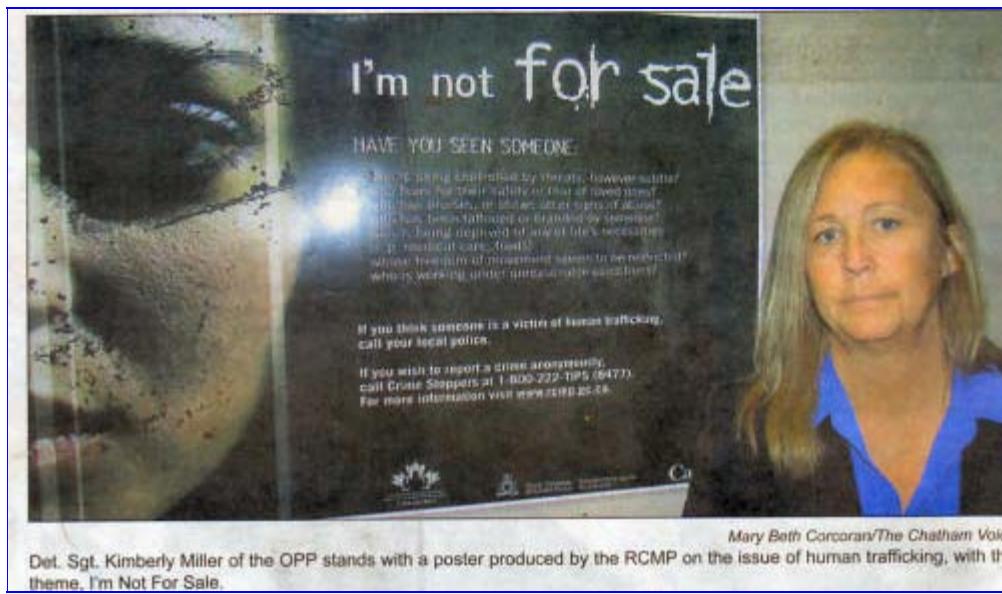
This will be the Royal couple's second visit to Canada. Their first Royal Tour was conducted in 2011 (June 30 to July 8) during which they visited Canada's Capital Region, Montréal, Québec, Charlottetown, Summerside, Yellowknife, Slave Lake and Calgary.

The detailed itinerary of the 2016 Royal Tour will be published at a later date by the Department of

Canadian Heritage.

Our girls are not for sale

By Mary Beth Corcoran



Mary Beth Corcoran/The Chatham Voice

Det. Sgt. Kimberly Miller of the OPP stands with a poster produced by the RCMP on the issue of human trafficking, with the theme, *I'm Not For Sale*.

Editor's note: This is part one in a two-part series about human trafficking in Ontario which was published in the Chatham Voice newspaper.

According to the Ontario government, human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes in Ontario, which accounts for 65 per cent of police-reported cases nationally.

And more than 90 per cent of the victims, mostly female, are Canadian-born, averaging 14 years of age.

That is not the picture most people have when they think of human trafficking, but those are the cold, hard facts of what is going on around us, here in our own community, along the 401 corridor from Windsor to Toronto. Our teens are being lured by promises of something better, someone who "gets" them, will love them, will buy them nice things if only they do them this little favour.

OPP Det. Sgt. Kimberly Miller, regional abuse issues co-ordinator for West Region, deals with human trafficking as part of her job, operating out of the Chatham detachment on Park Avenue, and she said the incidences are under-reported, making it very difficult for there to be any solid numbers regarding victims and perpetrators.

Awareness of the issue – that it is a reality in our country, our province and even our communities – is a key to keeping girls, and to a lesser extent, young men, from becoming victims. They are human beings with families and dreams.

"The reality of it is it is here in Canada, and girls from anywhere really, are who they target – kids from shelters, who have been in the system, who may suffer from depression or mental health issues, teenage runaways, immigrants, kids with addiction issues and migrant workers," Miller said.

"Some are lured by the 'romantic' pimp, who loves you, gets you to love him but makes you do things you don't want to do."

One such alleged Romeo pimp, as he is called, is currently in custody in Toronto awaiting trial. In an interview with a reporter from the Toronto Star, Matthew Deiaco, charged with trafficking, kidnapping, assault and forcible confinement, explained he believes there is nothing wrong with what he does. He said in the interview that he gets girls to fall in love with him because they are "broken" and "just want to hear someone say I love you," and gives them the illusion that she will have the dream, if she just has sex with other guys.

Miller said many of the girls in the sex trade don't grow up wanting to do this, they are forced into it. They never really had a choice for various reasons.

"I would encourage girls to listen to their instincts. If it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't," Miller explained. "If you have a guy promising you the world, it's easy to fall into the 'game'. If this same guy starts demanding that you have sex with other men to earn your keep or because you owe him for all the nice things he's purchased for you, I would encourage girls to get out before it's too late. That is not a healthy relationship."

With social media, Miller said it is so important to teach our kids to not give out information about themselves and watch what they say, as pimps target emotionally vulnerable girls online, at parties, outside shelters or anywhere they can find someone who may be susceptible.

In a case in Windsor, a young woman was communicating with a man on social media who convinced her if she went to Ottawa, he would show her a good time and have a good life, and when she consented, he picked her up, confiscated her identification and took her to Ottawa, where he forced her into the sex trade.

In another Windsor case in 2015, a pimp convinced a 16-year-old ward of the Children's Aid Society to become a prostitute, that it was easy money and she could quit any time. He met with her, convinced her he cared for her and introduced her to a prostitution website, where ads for sexual services can be posted. He created a website for her with pictures, services offered, prices and a false name. According to the news report, after two days, she wanted out, but he would not let her quit, eventually resorting to violence and isolating the girl.

In two months before she was able to escape, the girl estimated she slept with 90 men, earned about \$31,000 and was not allowed to keep any of it.

Miller said besides the Romeo pimps, teenage girls also recruit other girls into the sex trade. The pimp may have purchased her nice clothes or brand name items to keep her in the game. She then shows other girls how easy it is to have nice things and will introduce them into the dangerous lifestyle.

There are many warning signs that you, your friends and family should be aware of.

"If they start trying to isolate you, and alienate you from your friends and family or try to move you away, and it just feels wrong, trust your instincts," Miller said. "And if you feel you can't talk to a parent about it, talk to another family member, or a teacher or the police. We will listen."

Part of the awareness for the OPP also includes making sure the officers that patrol the highways are educated in what to look for when young women are being transported along major highways, like the 401 corridor between Windsor and Toronto.

"Through traffic enforcement, our officers have the perfect opportunity to engage with potential victims, gather information and offer assistance if the timing is right," Miller said. "It's very important that we work together with other law enforcement agencies and our community partners so that we can put an end to this victimization."

Miller said the public should have some understanding of what human trafficking is all about so that there are no missed opportunities to help save a girl from the life she never chose. In one case of human trafficking, it was a hotel/motel employee that alerted police to the potential situation. That is why it is so important to educate and raise public awareness within our communities.

"If you see something that doesn't look right, give the police a call and let us look into it," she said. "We need public support to promote public awareness. We're not trying to alarm any one, we just want to make them more aware."

A big problem, however, is that trafficking is a victim-based crime, and unless the victims come forward, there is not much the police can do, especially with child protection laws only covering youth

up to 15 years of age.

"We need victims to trust us and know we will listen with open ears and with compassion," Miller said.

Canada's hotbed for human trafficking

By Mary Beth Corcoran
mary@chathamvoice.com

Editor's note: This is the second part on human trafficking in Ontario.

"Human trafficking - the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by improper means (such as force, abduction, fraud, coercion, deception, repeated provision of a controlled substance) for an illegal purpose, including sexual exploitation or forced labour." - Ontario Women's Directorate,

June 30, 2016

The very definition of human trafficking is enough to make parents hug their teens just a little closer, but to know that the Ontario government acknowledges Ontario as a major centre for human trafficking in Canada -accounting for roughly 65 per cent of police-reported cases nationally - is a huge wake-up call.

On June 30, the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD) announced a strategy to end human trafficking, with a promise to invest \$72 million for increasing awareness, co-ordination, investigation, prosecution and supports for victims.

"Human trafficking is a complex and often hidden crime that results in serious and long-term trauma for survivors. Human traffickers prey on the most vulnerable in our society and use different tactics to control, abuse, exploit and profit from victims," the announcement read.

According to a spokesman for OWD, Deborah Lamb, Senior Communications Advisor, the strategy is a four-year plan.

"Drawing on feedback from stakeholders, expert analysis, research, successful initiatives from across the province and from other Canadian jurisdictions, the strategy rests on four pillars of action: provincial co-ordination and leadership, prevention and community supports, enhanced justice sector initiatives and Indigenous-led approaches to support new and existing culturally relevant services," Lamb said. "Work is getting underway on all the pillars and I look forward to sharing next steps ... in the coming months."

For Laurie Scott, MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and Ontario PC Critic for Women's Issues, what the Ontario government has promised since February is not enough. Scott introduced a private members' bill, Saving the Girl Next Door Act, 2016 to allow the courts to issue a protective order for victims over the age of 15 to protect against a trafficker for a minimum of three years, allow survivors to sue a trafficker as a form of restitution, and expand the provincial sex offender registry to include human trafficking as a sex offence.

Canada, as a whole, and Ontario in particular given the prevalence of the crime here, have been called out by the United Nations, several anti-human trafficking non-profit groups such as Voice Found, and the U.S. State Department for not doing enough to combat the crime and provide support for victims.

65% of cases take place in Ontario.

"In its 2016 annual report on Trafficking in Persons, the U.S. State Department singled out Ontario for its lack of child protection legislation for youth over the age of 15," Scott said in a statement. "Changes to the law are urgently needed in Ontario to protect our youth because as one survivor told me, 'No 16-year-old consents to being a prostitute.'"

Manitoba and Alberta have raised child protection laws to 18, and Scott said Ontario needs to follow

suit.

What Scott said also needs to be a priority is co-ordinated approach province wide to combat trafficking that includes all levels of law enforcement and a dedicated team of crown attorneys and judges, similar to the guns and gangs task force and Internet child exploitation team.

"In the announcement of the \$72 million, there are no timelines, no dates, no funding for police," Scott said in an interview with The Voice. "It is very watered down and very poor, and announcing it on a Friday of a long weekend is really a disservice to the whole issue."

She said a Freedom of Information request revealed that only \$190,997 of \$1.95 million committed in 2011 was actually directed to support community agencies fighting human trafficking.



The trafficking and sexual exploitation of young women is a scary reality in Canada, and specifically Ontario, including right here in Chatham-Kent.

With only a 7% conviction rate currently, and sometimes a three-year wait for court cases, she said victims need more support, from the time they are rescued through the court process and to building a new life.

"The bill is just one of many steps that need to be taken," Scott said. "It's been passed, but they have done nothing with it. The government could take immediate action, but have chosen not to."

"There are a ton of models out there (for victims of human trafficking), we don't need to re-invent the wheel. The victims need wrap-around support services; they can't wait three years for a court date. There is a patch-work of services out there and they need to be co-ordinated."

An example of the business community working to help combat human trafficking, Scott said, is the Greater Toronto Hotels Association which has training for staff to look for signs of possible victims, and the training for municipal clerks that issue licences to exotic dancers. Some municipalities even have programs for taxi services to report possible trafficking.

OPP Regional Abuse Issues Co-ordinator for West Region, Det. Sgt. Kimberly Miller, said community support is an important element in helping victims.

"The police can't do everything; we need community support and we need to have the supports in place for the victims to get the treatments they might need," Miller said.

Victims may need medical treatment, may suffer from —i post-traumatic shock, have addiction issues, children to care for and may need the basic necessities of life like food, clothing and shelter. Victims are often isolated, beaten, have food withheld, are threatened with revealing photos to their family, have family members threatened or fear for their own life if they don't do exactly as they are told.

"It's important to get them help and supports right away because you have no idea what they have been through," Miller, who operates out of the Chatham OPP detachment, added.

And while the crime has a victim and perpetrator, there is the third component to human trafficking - the "johns" or clients who are willing to pay for sex.

The clients don't fit any particular profile, she said, and can be from any walk of life willing to pay for sex.

Awareness and education at all levels - talking about it in our schools, around the dinner table at home - can help to stop our kids from becoming victims.

"The more people understand about it, the more sensitive they will be to it," Miller said. "Our area may not be destination, but it is a source. That's why our girls need to be educated and aware."

Anyone who may need police help, or who may know of a victim who needs help can call the OPP at 1-888-310-1122, your local police service or Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-8477.

Trafficking series an eye opener

Anyone who is a regular reader of The Voice knows I am the mom of a 14-year-old daughter. Yep, Bruce and I talk about her all the time because she really is a pretty cool kid. We thank God for her every day.

I think that's why doing the research on our series on human trafficking, hearing victims' stories and seeing the devastation this crime wreaks on these young girls hits so hard. I can't imagine that happening to any young girl, let alone my own child.

Brenna has listened to me come home day after day, blown away by what I've read and heard, especially so close to home. We've talked about it one-on-one and as a family, and with her friends – the dangers of talking to strangers on social media, giving out any personal information, alcohol and drugs at parties, and trusting no one who isn't well-known to them.

I don't want to scare her, but I also want her to be aware of the dangers young girls face every day, no matter where they live, just because they are girls. In our society, even now, females are viewed as sexual objects. We are encouraged, not just by men, but by other women, to be prettier and sexier; to use this product or wear these clothes to achieve those goals. And the females they target are getting younger and younger.

How an 11-year-old can be viewed as a sexual object by a potential john is beyond rational thinking, and for johns to be seeking girls in that age range, to me, is disgusting and depraved. Yet, the amount of child exploitation going on around us, in our own community even, is staggering – from child pornography to sexual assaults to being forced into the sex trade.

And what are we doing about it? We have people such as Det. Sgt. Kimberly Miller with the OPP and MPP Laurie Scott. They are people who are obviously very passionate about bringing awareness to the issue. We need a hundred more people just like them.

Non-profit organizations and faith-based groups are doing what they can in very creative ways, but we need more people to start looking out for their kids, their kids' friends, their neighbours' kids and any child that may be living in hell due to exploitation, be it sexual or any other kind.

As members of our community, we need to stand up for the vulnerable teens, be outraged at the ads for sexual services here in our own community on backpage.com, communicate with and educate our girls on how to stay safe, practice tough love and never give up on a difficult teen going through tough times.

Instead of judging teens with addiction problems or who we think are "boy-crazy," help them be safe and educate them on healthy relationships and wise choices.

And if you are not sure how to do that, ask for help. There are so many people and organizations willing to listen and assist.

Manipulating a young girl's emotions is easier than we think. Some of the stories you hear of survivors of human trafficking will make you break down and cry because they truly believed the pimp's "love" was the only kind they deserved or would get. Their bodies and spirits are broken by the traffickers, and healing is a long and difficult journey.

If there was ever a time to become an advocate for our teens, that time is now.

They need our love, our support, our patience and our protection more than ever in a society that continues to de-value human life and put greed ahead of everything else.

But I have faith. I would put an angry mother with a child to protect up against traffickers any day of the week. We have more power working together and a mom's spy network would put the CIA to shame.

National Acadian Day
August 15, 2016

Message from the Governor General of Canada
on the Occasion of National Acadian Day

OTTAWA—I am so pleased to mark National Acadian Day, a day celebrating a people that has faced adversity yet continues to thrive because of its rich and distinct culture, as vibrant today as ever.

As the tintamarre gets underway, Acadians will proudly wave the Acadian flag, a powerful symbol of their identity, and joyfully celebrate the richness of a heritage steeped in courage and resilience.

To all of you adding diversity to our great Canadian mosaic, I wish you memorable festivities!

David Johnston

Acadia - Missing Links of a Lost Chapter in American History
By Edouard Richard (1895) in two volumes can be read at:
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/acadia/missing/index.htm>

Expulsion of the Acadians
There is an audio video history that can be viewed at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x2Z3n96-a8>

Canadian History

Bemocked of Destiny
The Actual Struggles and Experiences of a Canadian Pioneer, and the Recollections of a Lifetime by Aenas McCharles (1908) (pdf).

A SACRED MOTIVE

I BEGAN to write these simple notes of my past life, not with any view to publication at all, but for a private, sacred purpose. My son and only living child was scarcely two years old when his mother died, and of course he would not remember anything about her. Then he has been brought up far away from me, and for over twenty years now we have seldom been together for any length of time. I, therefore, naturally wished to leave him a short memorial of her, and also a more detailed account of my own life. But, possibly, certain parts of the narrative, if preserved, may be found to possess a little historical interest at some future time, as affording true, if slight, glimpses of early pioneer life in different parts of Canada during the latter half of the nineteenth century, if for nothing else.

A. McCharles.
Sudbury, Ont., January 1st, 1901.

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/bemocked.pdf>

I have used my own web site research to bring you these historical accounts of Canada. There is a ton of information on all aspects of Canadian history, its Armed Forces, Religion, Pioneering, Makers of Canada, Industry, Lifestyle and more. It is also where I've stored older copies of this newsletter.

I have also added many videos about places in Canada and Canadian Life and I'd be more than happy to receive articles from any of our Knights and Dames to add to the site.

Our older Canadian Templar Newsletters are available at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/religion/kt.htm>

Religion

Parables

"He began to teach them many things in parables." (Mark 4:2)

THE USES OF THE PARABLES

The first impression made by our Lord's parables was unfavourable. Even His disciples wondered at them, being perplexed as to the reason for employing this mode of address. The wonder and perplexity have not been continued in later times. There is a complete contrast between the view taken in modern times of the value of the parables of our Lord, and that taken by the audiences to which they were first delivered. Even those' who are averse to accept Bible teaching have an admiration of these Gospel parables. To the great majority of Bible readers they are amongst the most attractive features of the written revelation; to those who heard them they were the most perplexing parts of Christ's discourses. To us they are as "the green pastures by the still waters" to them they were as stumbling-blocks and barriers lying across the path to the pasture-ground.

Mere contrast of position does not account for this. Difference of position may go far to explain diversity of view as to the words of forewarning bearing on the violent death which Jesus expected. It goes only a little way to account for the contrast of thought and feeling as to the parables. The main part of the explanation lies in the nature of the parable. Teaching in parabolic form perplexes at first. The parable has a dark side and a bright, giving it power to confuse and power to instruct. These contrary features belong to the very nature of parabolic teaching. Another thing is to be observed: the dark side is always seen first; and accordingly the confusing power is first experienced. On this account it happened that the disciples were surprised, and almost offended, at the frequent use of parables in the public discourses of their Lord. Coming, as these parables often did, in rapid succession, without the slightest expository remark, and giving strangely different views of "the kingdom of God," there is little wonder that the perplexity of mind was great before a discourse was finished. We have in the completed Bible a key which easily opens the door leading to the inner chamber of truth. It is therefore difficult for us to imagine how great was the puzzle for those who gathered about the door exercising their ingenuity in the attempt to effect an entrance. Those who had an eager desire to understand, were constrained to close around the Great Teacher, when He had finished, exclaiming, "Declare unto us the parable." Make it clear! If, however, the dark side is seen first, it is no less certain that when the brightness is once seen, the darkness permanently disappears. The dark side alone may be turned towards many beholders, but when any are led to the position where the brightness breaks upon the view, there is thenceforth nothing but brightness perceptible.

Each parable is a deeply-shaded picture, on which the full sunshine must fall before it can be rightly seen and appreciated. When the disciples were alone with the Lord, He threw fresh light on the scene. Immediately a new wonder displaced the old, as they saw His meaning. From that day till this it has been recognised that the Parable, when laid open to view, affords an illustration at once fresh and suggestive of some selected doctrine of grace. In our Lord's Parables the cross-lights of many analogies play freely over the wide region of revealed truth. Like the stars glistening in the sky, these parables in the firmament of Revelation are hung over our world as it lies in the darkness of sin, guiding the thoughts of men heavenward.

Even in the hands of our Lord Himself, the parable could not lose its double character. It could not fail to exert a twofold influence. As parable, it must be at once dark and bright; in its effects it must be

both beclouding and enlightening. The Divine Teacher meant that it should be so. He selected the parabolic form of address, not understanding the risk of perplexing some while instructing others; in part also, because it was capable of producing this double effect. His disciples were surprised at the use of a form of discourse fitted in any degree to confound. Hence the inquiry which came hurriedly from their lips when the audience had dispersed—"Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?"

This question He did not answer by referring to the poverty of ordinary language, or the insufficiency of more simple forms of illustration. He said distinctly that He meant both to puzzle and to instruct. There can be little doubt that this answer occasioned increased perplexity for a time. Their Lord intended to hide the truth so that men should need to search about for it. He meant in a way to bury the truth, so that men should need to dig under the surface for it.

He was not making His teaching as clear and simple as He might have done, but was even taking pains to wrap it in a covering fitted so far to conceal it. To the "why" of the disciples, this was the Lord's answer—"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." In this reply there is a double reason, harmonising with the double nature of the parable. There is a "because" which applies to the light in a parable, and a "because" which refers to the darkness in it. 'Why speak in parables? (1) Why speak thus to you? Because unto you it is given in these parables, and by their aid, to understand the mysteries of the kingdom,—the things of grace long hidden from men. Being first puzzled, you will be the better taught. But do ye ask, (2) Why do I speak unto them, in parables? Because unto them it is not given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. These parables, revealing the mysteries to some, really conceal the things of the kingdom from others.' The teaching of the Saviour wears this parabolic form, that it may carry in it reward to the inquiring and penalty to the uninquiring. And if both reward and penalty are carried in the one utterance, the result in each case agrees with the moral condition of those who hear or read.

To those who are seeking light, light is given. To those who do not value and do not seek the light, darkness not only remains, but is deepened. The Parables as set in the Gospels are illustrations of the great principle determining the distribution of spiritual good. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find." The true spirit of inquiry is a prayer for light. Ask that, and light will straightway fall softly on the eyes, discovering beauty and grandeur around and above. Ask it not —come to the source of it, and yet account it not worth asking—and thou shalt continue groping in the dark; thou shalt be even more uncertain as to truth than before. "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand" (Matt. xiii. 13). Or still more solemnly, even awfully (Mark iv. 12)—

"That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

There is something testing, we may say even trying, to us in the reception of this explanation. "We ourselves may have gladly received the teaching of Christ, enjoying that discovery of light before which darkness flies away. Still, we are left asking, Why should others be taught in such a way as to keep them in darkness? Why should the darkness be deepened, occasioning to them increased perplexity? Why should "the Word"—the Revealer of the Father—the Great Teacher of truth—open His mouth in parables to hide His meaning?"

Seeking an answer, we are reminded that there are moral conditions necessary for the understanding and reception of the truth. There is personal responsibility in this matter. A reference to this affords a fuller explanation of the uses of the parables. Amongst our Lord's hearers there were some who craved to be instructed, but there were many more who had no such longing. Some acknowledged their need, and looked to Him for help; others felt no need, and would make no appeal for enlightenment. No hearers were left to appeal in vain to this Teacher. But, as certainly, those who rejected His teaching found in His words a witness against them. Both results flow directly from the frame of mind which hearers cherish. In the parables, then, there is lying hid a reward for inquiry; while, perhaps more conspicuously, because on their surface, there is the punishment of indifference to the message they hear. These parables are ever repeating the Saviour's warning, "Take heed how ye hear."

There is mercy, however, mingled with judgment in the use of this instrument of teaching. The parable is a picture so far telling its own story. Men seeing the story in the picture become attracted. If only

they trace the lesson through the story, the truth becomes more clear and impressive. If they look at the picture and do not detect its story, the picture may indeed darken their eyes to the truth, and send them away thinking of nothing higher than the figures on the canvas, the colouring, and the artistic effects. As often happens with Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, the incidents of the story awaken interest, but the embodied truth escapes observation, and for the time vanishes like the breath of a speaker. And yet a picture will live in the imagination—a story will be brought forth again by the memory, when the simplest, most direct teaching lies unstirred. How effectually, for example, has the parable of the Prodigal Son preached in this way! Thus mercy appears in the use of parables, even though for a while they place truth under a covering. The story, so simple and natural, not understood at first, —possibly misunderstood,—coming again before the mind, a flood of light then falls upon it, discovering a significance unseen before. Then truth enters, hand in hand with the story, to find a welcome and an abiding place within the mind. "The eyes of the understanding being enlightened," God has become the teacher of the soul.

Such use of parabolic forms as a covering for truth is in perfect analogy with the ordinary moral government of God. The lives of men are full of parables. God is ever teaching us by experience. This is what we mean by the lessons of Divine Providence. One sees an incident, and solemnly reads the lesson. One, less inclined to be instructed, observes the incident, but perceives no lesson, and the event is allowed to pass. God does not interpret His providences. The lesson comes under the garb of incident.

To some the writing is invisible, to others it is conspicuous as the largest letters. To one there is no voice, to another the still small voice of God is distinctly audible—now sweetly attractive as the Sabbath bell, anon solemn as the bell swaying amid the heaving billows. Death enters a household, and the warning is given, "Be ye also ready." The sufferings of a profligate attract notice, and a voice is heard saying, "The way of transgressors is hard." A good man is suspected, his good name seems lost, but by and by his reputation is vindicated. The assurance is confirmed, "He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light." "Superstition," says one; "Mere fancy," says another; while many pass heedlessly by, having neither time nor disposition to inquire whether the interpretation is wise or foolish.

It fares with the lessons of Providence as with the parables of Scripture. The explanation, in part at least, is that the lessons of Providence are parables. Something of this there must be, indeed, in connection with all teaching, whatever its form or matter. Teaching implies learning, and this requires attention and labour. Some means of instruction there must be in order to convey truth; and these means must be carefully used, that truth may be received. Those who would know anything must at least open their eyes, and direct their observation. For the secrets of nature, we must search beneath the surface of things. Those who would understand Revelation must "search the Scriptures." The parables present no exception to the common demand. They are a touchstone for the inquiring spirit. They become lamps for the path in the hands of those who diligently search for truth.

The book from which I took the above text "The Parables of the Lord" can be read at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/parables_calderwood.pdf

For a list of the parables with short commentaries see "The Parables of Jesus" at
<http://www.rc.net/wcc/readings/parables.htm>

Proclaiming Good News in the Age of Political Correctness

If you take political correctness at face value, it is good. If being politically correct means that we treat people of different backgrounds with respect, then it is a just cause. In fact, it is the heart of Biblical Christianity. If being politically correct means that we do not stereotype people based on gender or race, we are doing exactly what the Bible teaches. Sadly, this is not the real intention of the modern politically correct movement.

The politically correct movement is designed to intimidate people to use language that they create and approve. It is designed to be an open door for thought police. It is a movement designed to suppress free Christian expression -- and we know this because this movement tolerates every ideology except the Christian faith.

The Gospel will always be foolish and offensive in the eyes of the world. But to dilute its offense is to

dilute its power. With Jesus as our teacher, we can learn how to walk in compassion, gentleness, and humility without compromising Truth.

Ultimately, we have Good News to share, and we must declare it openly, lovingly, and without shame. Society will pressure Christians to love as the world loves, but we are called to love as Christ loves. We must continue to declare to the world that Jesus Christ died for sinners, that they might have eternal life in Him.

In addition to changing the language, historical revisionists and liberal Bible scholars are trying to apply modern-day values to the Word of God and historical facts. They are trying to take out all of the pieces that they don't like. Whether it is in the church or with historians, we must be warned. If we continue on this path, we will end up following a false religion, and our children will not learn the Truth about the Word of God.

What are we to do? Scripture is clear. Take a moment to read 2 Timothy, Paul's warning to Timothy in similar times. We must not be ashamed to preach the Gospel. We must not quarrel over words but instead we must "preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

The irony of the politically correct movement is that it fails to produce the very thing it claims to foster: love. It is not politically correct to say that Jesus Christ is the only way, the Truth, and the life, but it is Truth. It is the only Truth that changes lives and unlocks the beauty of our full worth as men and women made in His image. It is the only Truth that changes our hearts so we can love our neighbors as ourselves. It is not politically correct, but we are unashamed to declare this Truth everyday through Leading The Way -- for "it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). It is the only way we can love the world as Christ loved us.

Infants Prayer Book With Texts and Simple Hymns for Infant Minds by Mrs. C. P. Traill (1873)

As in the early period of infancy little children require simple food for the nourishment of their bodies, so in like manner does the young child require simple instruction for the nourishment and growth of the soul.

Many young mothers confess that they find a difficulty in teaching their little ones to pray in words adapted to their infant minds.

It is with the view of helping the mother, or nurse, in this matter, that this little work has been written and arranged by one who has been the mother of a large family, and has known by experience how precious is the practice of prayer in leading the young child in the paths of obedience, of honesty, and of truth. "The fear and the love of God is truly the beginning of wisdom," and this the little one must be taught by easy steps.

The prayers in the first section are suited to the comprehension of the very young child. The verses and text such as can be easily learned and remembered.

The second part is adapted to children from the ages of six to eight, or nine years of age. The scripture texts and hymns are selected with care and adapted to the occasion, and are such as are brief and may be committed to memory with ease. The beautiful hymns at the end of the book were eagerly learned by the writer, and her sisters, at a very tender age.

Young children are great lovers of really good sacred poetry; and will usually select the best, if they are left to make their own choice.

The good seed early sown may, in after years, by God's grace, spring up and bear good fruit. Happy will those parents be who live to reap the harvest sown by their means. Their children shall rise up, and call them blessed.

That this little book may aid them in the good work of leading the little ones to their Saviour, and their God, is the earnest desire of the writer.

Catharine Parr Traill

Download The Infants Prayer Book from:
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/religion/prayers.pdf>

Catharine Parr Traill was an English-Canadian author and naturalist who wrote about life as a settler in Canada. You can read her other books at:

<https://archive.org/search.php?query=Catharine%20Parr%20Traill>

Video's worth watching

Dante Alighieri, The Knights Templar, and the Architecture of Ravenna Italy.
This is a teaser for a book out shortly about Ravenna including the Poet Dante Alighieri who wrote the Divine Comedy. Dante was thought by some to have been a member of the famous Knights Templar. Strangely Dante is interred in a Tomb that is included on what seems to be a reproduction of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Is it a reproduction or the model for the layout we see on the Temple Mount in some bizarre way. Is Dante telling us by his place of burial where Constantine is buried on the Temple Mount? Stay tuned for more.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xco8JJZWDQc&feature=em-subs_digest

Secrets of Noah's Ark

In 1948, a British pilot serving in Iraq acquired a clay tablet with an intriguing, 3,700 year-old inscription. The ancient writing tells the story of how the god Enki warns a Sumerian king named Atra-Hasis of a future flood that will destroy mankind; Enki gives him instructions for building a boat to save his family and livestock. If that sounds like a familiar tale, it's because this was one of several ancient flood traditions that, centuries later, would inspire the biblical story of Noah. But the tablet's inscription describes a boat very different from the traditional image of the Ark—it's said to be circular and made of reeds. Is this nothing more than a fanciful myth? Or could such a reed boat have carried Atra-Hasis' family of more than one hundred and his many animals? Join NOVA as a team of historians and expert boat builders investigates this fascinating flood legend and sets out to rebuild a tantalizing, ancient forerunner of the Ark.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNDSMZBpbdu>

Hugh's War on Waste

This is a 2 part video from the BBC that explores how much waste is being seen in the UK and especially in the food industry. I have an idea that this is also an issue in Canada. I would encourage you to watch it and then consider how we are doing in Canada on this issue.

View the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hvk31Yv9vlg>

Note: I found an article on Canada's food waste...

Food waste costs Canada \$31B a year, report says
More than \$31 billion worth of food is wasted every year in Canada and when energy, water and other resource costs are factored in the true cost could be up to three times that much, a new report suggests.

Consulting firm Value Chain Management International published a report this week that tabulates the total monetary cost of the millions of kilograms of food that goes to waste every year in Canadian homes, restaurants and grocery stores.

Read more at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/food-waste-costs-canada-31b-a-year-report-says-1.2869708>

A Wee Bit of Humour

Harry Worth

I was talking about the British comedian Harry Worth at our social evening in Toronto and no-one had heard of him.

I remember when a young fellow at home in Scotland my parents and I always looked forward to watching the TV show "Harry Worth" and I remember we all used to laugh until we were in tears. I was unable to find a video but the following link at least provides the audio of one of his programs which I hope you enjoy.

Here is one of his episodes at: <https://youtu.be/uwXmADdZPYc>

And I did eventually find 2 videos at:

<http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2kljm4>

and

<http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2kloqq>

Hope you enjoy them.

Book Reviews

The Great Deception

by Comyns Beaumont

For new readers who have arrived here without having voraciously devoured Comyns Beaumont's four previous volumes with their complex revision of history, geography, science and religion gently leading up to this final revelation, have no fear. You are floated rather than thrown into the deep end. Deep it certainly is, but it is less of an end than the beginning of an idea whose time has come round again, like the Great Year.

Before we summarise, let us be sure and remember that what we regard in today's virtual age as so commonplace that those who devise such damning labels have deemed it necessary, nay, essential, to refer to as 'conspiracy theory', was in the seriously establishment press of the second trimester of the twentieth century more akin to actual heresy. Comyns Beaumont was at that time an experienced and highly regarded Fleet Street editor, firstly at the Bystander and moving on to the Graphic, having begun as a journalist with the Daily Mail.

In later years, he shared his fascination for this material with Gabriel Toyne, his son-in-law, but he began the journey by questioning weather anomalies, because of extreme events at the time. He was a natural master of what is called, in our dumbed down days, 'joined-up thinking', but what was in fact the combination of the visionary who saw a bigger picture and a journalist who wanted to get to the bottom of it. As a linguist trained to seek out the underlying structures beneath surface representations, later obliged by circumstances to become a student of the esoteric, I was obviously hooked. Edinburgh researcher Andrew Hennessey inspired my hunt, the work of Dr Benny Peiser and Professor Mike Baillie encouraged it, and the enthusiastic assistance of Christopher Toyne miraculously guided it to a successful conclusion in 2015. The in-between parts are for another book!

Comyns Beaumont's studies of earthquakes, flooding, and other extreme weather events and their relation to the passage of Near Earth Objects led him to construct the theory of Meteorism which, officially rejected and subsequently publicly ignored, has long been taken quite seriously by former Astronaut Ed Lu at the B612 Foundation, and by NASA itself. Having observed a connection, he delved deeper, and illustrated the action of the now over familiar Law of Attraction as it occurs in nature, in a symbiotic relationship between cometary bodies and volcanic activity on the earth. The comets are initially attracted to certain energetic areas of the crust - usually approaching in a NE -

SW direction - causing the formation of chains of volcanoes, which in turn attract further celestial bodies.

He went on from here to see that the Flood of Noah was an actual historical event remembered over hyper historical periods through myth, legend, stone carvings and religious traditions. I would add that the memory of the event is embedded in the very language we must use to discuss not only these subjects but anything at all, for if at the time of impact the whole energetic electrical system of the planet - and wider 'space' - were upset by the electromagnetic pulse which he claims would result on entry into the atmosphere, then the systems in use on earth would of necessity be reset. We would be temporarily disconnected from the grid, so to speak, and would have to adjust to the new, skewed conditions. The 'confusion of languages' would be the primary consequence - aside from death by frazzling and drowning, and the mass submergence of half a continent along with its highly advanced civilisation.

He equates the Flood of Noah with the Deluge of Deucalion and the Flood of Ogyges, tracing the accounts in multiple sources to give a picture of an Extinction Level Event which had a devastating effect on the world - particularly the western world, whose history ended up being relocated, the stories of the refugees becoming attached over the years to the lands they moved to rather than the lands they had fled from. The history of what was formerly Hyperborea - described by Plato as Atlantis and by others as the Hesperides, Paradise ('para dis' - near the gods), the Underworld, Heaven and Hell - was thus transposed to the Mediterranean, giving us a distorted notion of the spread of civilisation.

Having spotted the connections between myths and Old Testament accounts, Comyns Beaumont examined these in great depth and concluded, like Tesla, that here was an advanced people, with sophisticated military capabilities. He examined the stories of the 'War between Men and Giants' - or 'gods' - and found that they joined up significantly with the arrival of the comet and resultant catastrophe, though he specifically did not associate these two events, regarding them as a coincidence, referring as he did to the relatively primitive weaponry familiar to him in the middle of the twentieth century. He did, though, work out the dates of these events, and concluded that they must have occurred in what is now Britain, leading to the next earth-shattering conclusion; that the Phoenicians, the Ancient Greeks, and most significantly, the Jews, are not what they seem, and did not live where we thought they did.

This brings us to the final apocalypse... in its true sense, that of 'revelation', for, if we accept that the events of the Old Testament and those of the New took place in the places we are told they did, and if we accept that the story of Jesus is an amalgamation of myths attached to the life of a British Druid in the land comprising Syria and Judaea (with Jerusalem in Edinburgh, Antioch in Lincoln and Babylon nicely centred in York), then those place-names must be re-attributed to the actual sites where the events occurred. Comyns Beaumont concludes that, as with prehistory, the history of Christianity has been uprooted and replanted in a distant land.

We can only surmise what may be the true significance of the area that Constantine gave his name to - Constantinople, now Istanbul - so that the history of Judaea and Syria (in reality the history of northern and southern Britain) had to be relocated there, but it is clear from the value placed upon Comyns Beaumont's work by those who have an inkling, especially those in high places in Scotland, that he stumbled onto something huge - so huge as to be almost, but not entirely, invisible: hidden, if not in plain sight, or in plain site, then certainly in plane sight (he suggests that the white horses on our hillsides may be markers for flying machines) - by taking a loftier view...

"Extending the horizon to a loftier view, I claim that Jesus of Nazareth was born and raised in Somerset, the most sacred ancient area in the world, did the world but know it, and where he first strove to make the world and his generation practise the virtues of love, charity, compassion, forgiveness and justice in a world then beset by passion and hatred and lawlessness."

You can read this fascinating book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/religion/greatdeception.pdf>

There is a Place

The author Cathy M. Donnelly writes... "I recently published a Scottish historical novel titled THERE

IS A PLACE set from the Battle of Flodden in 1513 to the year 1548. It mostly takes place around Inchmahome Priory, Alloa Tower (the ancestral home of the prominent Erskine family) and Stirling Castle. It is available in both paperback and Kindle, and the National Trust for Scotland stock the paperback at Alloa Tower."

Below are links to her website and the book on Amazon where you can read the full synopsis, first three chapters and also the reviews.

Website: <http://www.cathymdonnelly.com>

Amazon Author page: https://www.amazon.com/There-Place-Cathy-M-Donnelly/dp/1519344201/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1470127403&sr=8-1&keywords=cathy+m.+Donnelly

I did read the first three chapters on Amazon and purchased the Kindle edition and enjoyed the book. It also mentions the Knights Templar and a meeting with the orders Grand Master "Jaques".

Notable Upcoming Events

Canadian International

Saturday 24th September 2016, Toronto Investiture with dinner at the RCMI.

OSMTH Grand Convent General Sofia, Bulgaria 12-16 October 2016

Saturday 05 November 2016 Windsor Ascension Priory Investiture. More information to follow.

Sunday 11 December 2016 Windsor Christmas Social at Beach Grove Golf and Country Club. 3 PM – 7 PM.

OSMTH Grand Convent General Tomar Portugal, March 12-16, 2017.

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