

# On the fringe

Let's be clear, the Express discourages me from impersonating a bona fide news reporter, because the contrarians I interrogate don't waste their time at public meetings, reading newspapers, indulging TV talking-heads or corrupting their viewpoints with pertinent particulars. They respond to cross-examination on a visceral level, knowing innately the difference between perception and malarkey. They consider indisputable facts, fabricated implements of the New World Order, spearheaded by the Federal Reserve System and the Bank of England. What do these intuitive Adirondackers say about current regional quandaries?

I asked Al Dente of Forge Street his opinion of the 2008 TOW real estate assessment fiasco. He said he didn't really give a squat, since he was leasing kennel space from Stuart and Jimmy at Feathers & Boughs. He's provided two feedings a day, complimentary Milk Bones and unlimited off-leash exercise. Al did offer that according to his ditsy sister, Anita Drink from Virginia, TOW assessments weren't any more cockeyed than Fairfax County, where valuations on land and dwellings were flip-flopped this year to catch up with supersized undeveloped land values. Anita related, Fairfax County Executive Gerry Connolly's \$1.5M home was revalued at \$70K while his lot value tiptoed from \$100K to \$1.7M. Needless to say, Gerry ordered his assessment masterminds back to the drawing board to come up with a plan that in some way resembled a plan. Al's now convinced all real estate assessors are Bank of England covert operatives.

I asked Azalea Bush of Uncas Road what she thought about annual regional meetings to brainstorm additional means of stimulating the local winter economy. She complained they never produce any novel ideas, just new ways to pander to the biler industry, suggesting more trails, more signs and employing shamans to incite Boreas, the snow god. She related how the tiny town of Lockhart was recently christened the Barbeque Capital of Texas. Although Lockhart has barely 12,000 residents, they draw a quarter million bbq-binging visitors year-round to six greasy goldmines. Azalea wondered aloud if our local visionaries have inhaled too much carbon monoxide over the years to come up with innovative ideas. She thinks



## One Oar Short!

by Stan Ernst

local politicians should invite Donald Trump for lunch at the Muffin Patch and pump him for economically invigorating ideas. Azalea then suggested we become the potato pancake capital of NYS. Yum!

I asked octogenarian Moe Mentum of Limekiln Road what he thought about the Bti program to dominate pesky black flies. He complained locals had become wimps and it sure wasn't like the old days when men were men and the women were, too. He thought nothing of spending a day in Limekiln Swamp during black fly season collecting native brook trout and magic mushrooms while donating four units of hemoglobin to the bloodthirsty buggers. He used to dash out to Limekiln Road when the DDT fogging truck passed by to "get those damn vermin outta my toupee." He added, if you ain't being eaten alive by black flies, you ain't catching any trout either. Moe poured me some freshly brewed Amanita muscaria tea, but I could barely slurp it through my Orvis Buzz Off head net.

I asked Dr. Pepper, La-Z-Boy University PhD in Environmental Suicide, if pollution has doomed the Adirondacks. He responded in the affirmative. Look, he said, the entire Pacific Ocean from Hawaii to California is nothing more than a circulating toilet bowl filled with more suspended plastic fragments than plankton. As for the Adirondacks, loons and lakers are so tainted with mercury and PCB's, you can hang em from the floor joists to illuminate your cellar. You might wanna start promoting the herring gull as your Adirondack wilderness symbol. Industrial empires utilize billions of plastic containers that endure for centuries, while the stuff that's sold in them is consumed in 30 seconds. We're all screwed, pal. He then asked me what kinda phones turtles use? Shell phones. This guy was a 55-gallon drum of laughs. Is it any wonder I consume copious quantities of adult beverages from recyclable glass bottles? Just doing my part, folks.

I next asked Summer

Camp of Number Four, how she copes with the unremitting anxiety associated with being a local. A dozen night crawlers, gallon of milk, pack of cigarettes, and gallon of gas all at/or approaching six dollars, a large plain pizza almost twenty bucks and still no fennel at local groceries. Summer responded by sticking an index finger in each ear, closing her eyes and babbling hysterically, "I can't hear you, I can't hear you." Geez, I never even mentioned the next generation leaving town for the big city, locals working multiple jobs to make ends meet, rich outstators gobbling up real estate at exorbitant prices or the perpetual local/cyclical, love/hate relationship. Sadly, I'm not a reporter so I couldn't legitimately badger her with mean-spirited follow-up questions. Summer eventually mellowed out after being sedated with a Secretariat-size dose of equine tranquilizer.

My interviews left me a tad despondent until I asked Rosie Outlook of Ferd's Bog about the future of the Adirondacks. Rosie said she always looks on the bright side. She asked rhetorically, "What's the worse can happen?" I mean look at Chernobyl twenty years after the meltdown. The babushkas are still vanquished, but the iridescent wildlife is flourishing. Sure the quadrupeds have five legs, but it just makes them speedier. Chernobyl hosts more ruble paying tourists today than they ever did in their pre-radioactive days. Maybe we oughtta look to the future and build a four-reactor plant on Raquette Lake. Be cheap electricity and awesome winter bullhead fishing around the warm water discharge pipe.

I tell ya, my fringe dwelling sources know what's really going on around here and they're determined to persist despite repeated muggings by the New World Order and Bank of England real estate assessors. Curiously, they're also convinced Steven Spielberg's extraterrestrial thriller, "Close Encounters of a Third Kind," is a documentary. But that, my friends, is another scoop. Cheery-O! J

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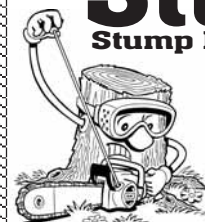
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