



THE

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Every Saturday I say to myself, in total agreement with most people around me, that I will start a diet on Monday, I will be more careful with what I eat and drink and I will lose at least twenty kilos. That's every Saturday, because on Monday, under the week's peruse, I forget, dive into a juicy bacon burger and double cola - no ice - and regret it on Tuesday, with the excuse that I don't have time to eat something else. By the end of the week, I find my trousers are tighter and I need a new shirt, which means I the decision to start a diet on...Monday!

What's best for my diet is an issue all about food. That was Asa's idea, since the new site is not ready yet - we are still changing and changing and changing. We had a different provocative theme but we decided to keep it for the next issue. For this one we go with food since it is number eight = ate!!! That's totally vocal and I had Asa screaming in my ear 'eight - ate!' Ok lad, I got it!

One thing that is definitely not on a diet is Ovi Magazine. Ovi is getting bigger fast, not only in size but in the number of readers and the number of reactions as well. Most of them are really nice and kind, they definitely motivate us to do more and more. There are the ones who don't like what we are doing but the only excuse they have is, "Who the hell do you think you are?", but these motivate us more.

We know who the hell we are, we are ourselves, truly and passionate about our work, sensitive to what's going on around us and determined to make a magazine we love to work for and read. After all, that's the beauty of the electronic

media; they can make a choice, if they don't like it they don't need to read it.

In this issue, we have for a guest a pure talent, Linda Lane with her photographs; I hope that in the future she will add some of her articles. Tony Butcher adds to his usual financial self with a very clever article about food, clever and funny enough to make his brother turn green with envy, and there are some more creations from Jan Sand. Oliver from Mexico is so sensitive when it comes to environmental issues, so he really shakes the boat this time.

Finally, Asa and I are sometimes serious and sometimes light, we serve you with dishes of opinion from New Orleans to China. From this issue we start a new column called iBite with lots of ideas that will take a better shape over the next couple of issues. Asa strikes again with some really good iKritics, although after eight issues I believe that we should rename it into Asa's critics!

Enjoy the eight/ate issue and as Asa says: do one job for us: share Ovi's existence with a friend.

Bon appetite!

Thanos



Ovi thoughts have turned to food, a tasty subject that you can really chew upon and feel your waistline increase with each paragraph. Grab the tracksuit bottoms, the ones with plenty of play in the elastic, because this issue could make members of WeightWatchers weep into their salad, there is no calorie counting here; so let your eyes feast upon issue eight.

Eight issues and over 300 articles is an impressive statistic. Averaging about 40 articles an issue is a sure sign that we are thoroughly enjoying what we are doing and the drive is not waning. Thanos and I discuss Ovi every day and we are never bored, even the strangers we meet show an interest that motivates us further.

Last month we were interviewed by an on-line radio show* about our aims with the Ovi project, we were told that we sounded self-assured and confident talking about Ovi and that has driven us on even further. Every bitchy comment or envious swipe reminds us of an Arab proverb: Love sees sharply, hatred sees even more sharp, but Jealousy sees the sharpest for it is love and hate at the same time.

Are some people frightened by the juggernaut known as Ovi? The truth is that I am at times. This project has taken on a life of its own, it has exceeded our hopes at the planning stage and taken twists that neither of us dared hope for. The new site is on the horizon and we will be waving a fond farewell to the multi-frame layout as soon as possible.

This issue has a number of guests offering a variety of styles, from Linda Lane's fantastic food photography to Jan Sand's creative prose.

My brother, Tony Butcher, upset me by being particularly creative with his '40 Questions' article in fART and Oli maintains his emotional outrage at the destruction of our planet, plus chooses the ten words in U Do – I Don't.

Naturally, Thanos and I have been the busiest researching, writing and shaping the pages of Ovi 8 for your pleasure – or maybe jealousy! Food is our theme and you'll find a variety of theme-related articles dotted among the sections. Be sure to read Thanos' 'Bacon and Chicken', my dig at Finland's supermarkets in 'Ayran Vegetables' and the new iBite section in the S#&T Happens section.

Thank you for reading Ovi, but do one job for us: share Ovi's existence with a friend.

Asa

Aryan vegetables

By Asa Butcher

We have all heard about the crazy bureaucratic rules and regulations that the European Union has been imposing upon fruit, vegetables, cheese, meat, eggs and, well every conceivable type of produce, but have you ever wondered where all the crap ends up? You would assume that it is recycled, tossed into mass compost heaps or fed to pigs, but my personal belief is that it is shipped to Finland and distributed to the supermarket chains.

Every week the selection includes golf ball-sized white onions, mouldy red peppers, squashed tangerines and bruised apples, what is going on with the import policy in Finland? The only produce that is ever edible are the ones that have the little Finnish flag sticker, for which you have to pay outrageous kilo prices. Finland is supposed to be a part of the EU, or have they misunderstood and are 'apart' from the EU?

The EU is aggressively promoting an 'Aryan' master race of fruit and veg; they are advancing the ideology of a pure selection of root crops, the elimination of 'defective' stone fruit and ridding the world of genetic deficiencies in citrus fruit. We all remember EC regulations 1169/93 and 3596/90 from 1998 that governed the size of peaches. It was illegal for greengrocers and supermarkets to sell size-D peaches, which is 2 - 2.2 inches in diameter and not the bra cup size.

Other measures included carrots having a top measuring 20mm in diameter; certain varieties of apples being at least 65mm in diameter; plums requiring a minimum size of 35mm to be classified Class 1; and bananas being at least 13.97cm long, 2.69cm in diameter and do not have "abnormal curvature".

Initially I was totally against Brussels obsession with imposing correct size and weight upon items. It was forcing the closure of generation-old businesses, it was raising the prices in the shops, fines were being imposed and chaos was reigning. However, all of these anal directives are old news to the British who had to deal with the bureaucracy when it first started to appear in the mid-90s, but it is about time somebody enforced quality control in Finland.

During one of my summers, I worked as a vegetable packer that supplied three of Britain's major supermarket chains. We were instructed to throw away produce that I now regularly find on sale at my local Helsinki store. I cannot understand why a major food store would have trouble obtaining quality food goods, when small greengrocers in the UK can stock their shelves with goods that look edible, although perhaps not always meeting EU guidelines.

Finland's government and the Finns need to start complaining about the quality of their imported fresh produce to their EU representative before the fines begin rolling in. On the other hand, perhaps Finland knows no different and believes that the coconuts and bananas are grown up in Lapland.

Weird dishes

By Thanos Kalamidas



Since this seems to be the issue of food, plus I will follow Asa's example of top ten, here are the ten strangest dishes I've ever tried.

Micronesian Fruit Bat Soup

A thick soup with lots of onions and salt. The meat is a sort of jelly with many fibres. Here I have a personal issue with mice, I hate them, so I just tried to 'taste' the soup, but not eat it.

Spider soup

I never understood why, when it comes to the weirdest dishes, they are soups and always decorated with many vegetables. Spider soup with rice was served in India and, once I'd managed to push away the idea that I was eating spiders, I found the soup tasty.

Fried bugs

The Sahara, I mean just the place must make you suspicious of what you eat, but when I saw bugs on a small plate in front of me and everybody around eating them with their fingers and having such pleasure, I had to try. Lot of sugared tea helped.

Haggis

I do know that Scottish people like it, but I didn't say love it. I do know that the tradition has it that people were poor and they had to eat every single part of the animal, but I think the Scots pushed it a bit too far. I managed a mouthful and this is where I stopped.

Elephant stew

Central Africa and another stew. I found out that the people were drying the meat for nearly two months before they start cooking it. I mean start because cooking elephant meat takes over 48 hours. It wasn't bad; it just made me realize how much I love cows, even the mad ones.

Camel

North Africa. It was actually slices from the hump. I ate them fried with potatoes. The meat was smoked and I have to admit that even though it was too salty, they were very tasty. I have never drunk more water in my life than after that meal.

Crocodile

Served with roast potatoes in Australia. It was like a very chewy steak. I ate it just because I wanted to try crocodile and find out what else you can do with this animal except make shoes and handbags. I enjoyed the roasted potatoes more.

Cobra, with vegetables

China. I have already written about this in another article (>>>>), including the ritual the cook uses to kill the snake and cook it.

Goat balls

On offer in Turkey. Ok, it was just the idea, like with most of them. I did eat them and everybody around me had a funny smile on their faces, but they all seemed to enjoy them as well.

And something for the desert:

Eel ice cream

Japan. It was tasty, even though you could not understand that there was an eel somewhere in there. The Japanese people love anything that comes from the sea, so I suppose that it came as no surprise to learn that they know thousands of ways to cook everything.

Thinking about it now, I can remember some more strange dishes I have had, but the main thing is that even though I have always been ready to try anything, I always thought that nothing compares to a plate of bacon and chips, roast beef with Yorkshire Pudding or a Greek souvlaki.

Bon appetite!

Cultural voyeurism

By Asa Butcher

Attempts to build the Sami's reputation and overcome racist abuse from their fellow Scandinavians is an immense task, but the Sami have faced a growing problem of anti-Sami propaganda in press releases issued by an extremist section of the Sami.

The Lappalaiskulttuuri - ja perinneyhdistys r.y. (Association for Lapp Culture and Traditions) has sent the Lapin Sanomat, Lapland's largest provincial daily, Helsingin Sanomat, Finland's most-popular daily, and a national news agency messages with racist undertones that have been systematically broadcast in their name.

These extreme members of the Sami registered the group and now actively work against the cultural autonomy by eroding the identity of the Sami minority. Allegedly driven by the desire to bring disrespect to the Sami, undermine all that has been achieved and enjoy the economic benefits of abolishing the Sami culture.

Faction groups within indigenous groups are not rare with this association setting its agenda in direct opposition with the majority of Sami, while the majority of mainstream media agrees with their ideology, especially within Sweden. Methods used by the association have included public threats of civil war and violence, spreading lies and defamatory comments about the Sami nation, obstructing the Sami Parliament and demanding the publication of the Sami electoral register, which records sensitive ethnic information.

Anti-Sami literature has always been part of Sami life whether Sami or an external racist group publishes it, but one form of publication that appears on the surface to be promoting the Sami in a positive light is through brochures, leaflets and other tourism material. Sami culture has been the victim of cultural imperialism carried out by economically driven tour operators who are turning the Sami nation into a commodity.

Tourists searching for the unspoiled paradise where the natives live as they did hundreds of years ago are being attracted to the Arctic Circle to witness: "A mysterious, shamanistic people who live in a sort of teepee, transporting themselves around 'Lapland' with sledges pulled by reindeer and practising all kinds of rituals at every possible occasion."

Stereotyped for the exotic experience, ridiculed through cultural voyeurism and their lives distorted through dolls, lunchboxes and wilderness trips, which mainly happens within Finland. Finnish tourism has exploited the Sami culture more than most by taking the Arctic Circle line and inventing Sami ceremonies: "One of the most popular experiences offered is the exciting ceremony of crossing the Arctic circle, which throws light on the ancient Lappish mysticism and legends."



One of the Sami websites devoted to locating these false cultural extravaganzas, such as this, stated that 'the Arctic Circle is an arbitrary set line with no special features...neither does it have any special significance in Sami mythology or spirituality.' Tourists are being presented with a Las Vegas image of the Sami and this is damaging to the fragile cultural identity that exists at present. Many of those participating in the tourist industry are not Sami, they are emulating and exploiting a culture that is not legally recognised as indigenous or receiving any percentage of profits gained at their expense.

Tourist traps that are 'exploited for the dollar' are becoming common all over the globe; one example of this can be found on the island of Hawaii that shares similar problems with tourism as the Sami. Few natives are happy at the way their traditions have been hi-jacked with total disregard, a lifelong Hawaiian native Doug Chang explained, in a television documentary, how the tourism industry should behave: "Harmony with the culture, does not take advantage of the culture, provides for its people and promotes the preservation and continuance of the culture."

The Chinese invasion

By Thanos Kalamidas

Living in Finland and reading the local news makes you occasionally feel like you live on another planet, which communicates occasionally with a main command post called the EU. It seems we are on a small isolated island in the middle of the ocean and you get the news of the outside world occasionally from a CB radio. Unfortunately, the leaders of this country make this feeling even stronger.

One of the latest comments from the Finnish Prime Minister proves exactly that. I have intentionally isolated this comment just to show how this "isolation" works in Finland. So, the Finnish Prime Minister believes that European and American fears of China's commerce invasion is exaggerated and that growth in China promotes well-being in Finland.

Now, and as I said in the beginning if you live in Finland, you will probably think that China is far, far away. If you live anywhere in Europe and especially somewhere in Italy, Spain, Greece, Germany or France and you are into clothes retail you will probably think that the man is delusional.

Five years ago, the Chinese decided to change their approach in modern politics and the world of commerce. Firstly, they invested correctly in the cheap workforce and totally controlled the market. Textile cost prices were increasing sometimes up to 400% in Europe; the Chinese were providing a solution with prices at the level of the early-70s.

The second step was the cooperation of many European textile giants, with equally gigantic textile workshops in China. The natural next step was the production of Chinese textiles. After all, the Chinese people have the tradition and the knowledge of textiles.

In the beginning, the EU and US tried to stop the flood of the Chinese textile products by increasing the import tax, something that totally failed since that with the taxes the price of the Chinese products was barely reaching a third of the price the European or Americans could have. In this case, we are not including the label products but the ones that the majority of people buy.

Then the two market partners tried to put some constraints on the quantity of the importing products but this was contradicting the whole globalization idea, so the two parts (EU and USA, plus China from the other side) had to reach some kind of compromise that allowed Chinese products to still flood Europe.

I'm not going to use numbers in this article since it is very easy to find them in the reports from the EU, but the next natural step for the Chinese invasion was the shops to have only Chinese products.



Now, perhaps Mr. Matti Vanhanen lives with the illusion that Finns buy only clothes with labels like Trusanti or Armani. For the rest of the real world inside Europe, where unemployment and the level of poverty dramatically increases, people buy their clothes with only one element in mind: price. The cheaper the better.

From their side, the Chinese have well realized a very old rule in commerce, I won't be surprised if there is a saying about that in China that quantity brings the profit. They keep their prices low and they sell. They sell a lot. More Chinese product shops open, often next to shops with local or European products. The next step? The shop cannot compete, so after a while it closes leading to more unemployment and more poverty.

The phenomenon has expanded to every kind of product, including electronics to automobiles. Do you know that you can buy a replica of a classic Harley Davidson motorbike for less than 1,000 euros? I'm sure some people are already checking the price lists on the internet trying to see if their Finnish credit card works in China.

Coming now to the second part of his comment, Mr. Vanhanen must have been confused somehow. Nokia, due to the high cost of workforce in Finland and the high taxation, has threatened to move to Asia, not bring Asia here. Coming to mobile phone sales, it is well known that the failure of Erickson only three years ago and, step by step, Nokia moves in the same direction due to all the restrictions the Chinese government has put over importing mobile handsets - just to protect...their own products.

The only logical explanation I can have about all this is that during his last visit to China, the Finnish PM saw the flea markets and he thought that this is the reality of the Chinese market. Perhaps he mixed the identity of the prime minister with the identity of the happy tourist when he was there.

Ending the bull run

By Tony Butcher

The results are in from the German Elections but it may be some time before any formal government is announced. The cynical tactics resorted to by Gerhard Schröder, in order to bring about the earlier than expected polls, have left him facing the political exit.

At some points during the campaign, he had been facing a heavy defeat to the Christian Democrat Party (CDP) headed by Angela Merkel, Germany's own 'Iron Lady'. Now with most of the regional results announced, it seems the Iron Lady has squandered the comfortable lead and the CDP are looking for a slim majority and working out which coalition Government would be acceptable.

Even the possibility of a Grand Coalition Government between the CDP and Gerhard Schröder's Social Democratic Party (SPD) has been discussed. However, it seems they are unable to decide on who should be Chancellor. Germany, the largest economy in Europe, has been suffering from lacklustre growth and escalating unemployment in recent years.

Many commentators had been hoping the elections would bring about the change required for economic reform and a catalyst for economic growth in the last quarter of the year and into 2006. It looks like a period of political and economic stagnation could ensue, as uncertainty spreads across the markets.

The reaction from the German Stock Market (DAX) the morning after was to fall 2.2% in early trade, this did recover slightly before the close, but the possibility of months of uncertainty could spell an end to the impressive bull run that the markets have enjoyed since the elections were called.

Another likely consequence could be the weakening of the Euro. The US Dollar strengthened against the European currency in the immediate reaction and this trend could continue as the situation drags on without a viable solution in sight. Jean-Claude Trichet, head of the European Central Bank (ECB), remains adamant that current interest rates are appropriate and he believes structural reforms are required from the member states in an effort to maximise European growth.

Germany had headed a group of countries putting pressure on the ECB to cut interest rates as a simple solution to their floundering economic growth, but there are no such thoughts of interest rate cuts across the Atlantic in the United States. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan continued his back-to-back rate rises and there is no conclusion in sight, at present.



September saw another quarter point rise in the Chairman's "measured pace" policy as they seek to head off the threat from Inflationary pressures building in the economy. Some speculators in the market had suggested the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf of Mexico states would be enough to prompt the Fed to pause. However, only Fed Governor Olson dissented and voted for unchanged rates.

The environmental uncertainty is still rumbling in the Gulf of Mexico, as Hurricane Rita seems to have been kind to Texas and the Oil Refineries in the local area. New Orleans saw levees breached again and renewed flooding in some areas. The threat of another storm sent oil prices soaring during mid-September, even with OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) increasing their output quotas.

The main disappointment is regarding the type of oil OPEC are able to produce, it is not a type of oil easily refined to ease the current gasoline price rises seen across the western economies. The issue of refinery capacity seems to be an ongoing problem because it is unable to keep up with the heavy demand. The recent shutdowns due to Hurricane Rita have only compounded the problem, although the overall effects should be slight.

World Stock Markets have recovered sharply in reaction to the less than expected damage caused by Rita and are now looking towards the Economic and Sentiment data due out during the first weeks of October. It will be interesting to see how well the markets can continue to shake off the uncertainty and push higher in the run up to the year's end.

Oiling the prices

By Thanos Kalamidas

One of the major financial problems of the last couple of years has been the price of oil. Prices have increased to record levels, being blamed on the oil companies and oil producers, as usual, but there are two more truths about this problem. Truths that seems everybody tries to avoid mentioning. Who really profited from these prices?

With this, I don't want to say that oil companies and oil producers are innocent; on the contrary, they used and manipulated the markets for their best interests. The ones who made the real profit were the governments. After alcohol and cigarettes, the highest taxed product in every country is oil, and for the EU, if you add the VAT, the prices reach dizzying heights.

Here we must make clear exactly what VAT is. Despite what most people believe, only a very small part of this money goes to the EU, the rest stays in the same country in exchange for stopping the indirect taxes. The indirect taxes are still there for most of the countries, just under a different name. The other thing is that VAT goes to all the consumers, products and services without separating poor from rich, necessary or luxurious. We pay VAT on milk and bread, for the new Volvo or a second-hand Mercedes Benz.

The increase of oil prices by up to 10% means that at least 40% of that has gone to the countries themselves. Amazing! Some of the European countries took some extra measures to relieve the poorest from the weight of the expenses, but still this looks like a naïve move. The increasing prices of petrol mean increasing prices for transportation, which means increasing prices for all the basic goods including milk, bread and baby food.

The warning is use private cars less is another joke, but it reminds me of something a decade before when everybody was warning that deodorant spays destroy the ozone, while nobody was saying anything about the big industries. Yes, spays have their share, but we should do something more about the industries first, and yes cars have their share, but what about the car industries in the States?



Another thing that came as a surprise was the comments of the Saudi Arabian oil minister in an interview. He said that it doesn't matter how much the oil producer countries increase their production, since they can produce up to 15 million barrels a day, the problem is that there are not enough oil refineries to produce the final product for consumers.

To emphasize the problem, he noted that most of the refineries that exist and work now around the world are using old technology; they are not good enough to cater to the demands in ecological friendly oil. To add to that, the United States, due to the latest events in New Orleans and Texas with the two hurricanes, Katrina and Rita, have had to close down 17 refineries for an undetermined period.

The governments are now worrying about the poor, which sounds a bit hypocritical since they managed to put some extra money in their treasury, while still avoiding modernization - another thing that they mainly control.

Statistically cultural

By Asa Butcher



In 2001, 7.5% of people living in Britain were born outside the British Isles and some 9% of people are non-white, which are both very respectable figures for a European country and prove that the UK can claim that arbitrary title of 'multicultural'. To put these percentages into perspective, the latest estimate of Britain's population is 59.8m; for those who struggle with mathematics, 10% is just shy of six million.

Six million is almost the equivalent of the population of Finland, although the percentages don't match up in quite the same way. 7.5% of Finland's population would equate to 412,500, but the actual number of immigrants in 2004 (three years more) was 108,346 (1.8%).

Finland has been rightly criticised for allowing such a small number of asylum seekers to stay, excluding resident permits and family reunification, Finland's Directorate of Immigration granted asylum to 154 people over the last twelve years, which is probably far less than the number entering Britain on a weekly basis.

In 1990, aside from asylum seekers and refugees, Finland had 26,255 foreigners and over 14 years the number has increased by 130% (82,901 people). In a shorter time period, Britain saw a 36.40% rise in people born abroad between 1991 and 2001, which shows that Finland is accepting foreigners, especially from Russia, Estonia and Sweden, but their immigration policy is extremely harsh and has faced severe criticism from a number of organisations.

The migration traffic has not been one-way, with Finns heading to Britain in large numbers over the past decade. In 1991, there were a mere 5,397 Finns living in the UK, but that had doubled to 11,228 in 2001 - a rise of 108.04%. In the survey by the BBC, there were eleven countries with increases over 100% and Finland was number eight, behind Albania (1374.03%), ex-Yugoslavia (242.41%), Sierra Leone (170.25%) and Greece (142.11%).

The survey also investigated the economic status of different nationalities living in the United Kingdom, splitting them into low earners (earning less than £149.20 a week, which is half the UK median wage) and high earners (earning more than £750 a week). Over 75% of Finns are employed in the UK, with 10% in the low earners category and nearly 14% in the high, which makes a quarter of Finns either students or unemployed.

New New Orleans

By Asa Butcher



A wall, they need to build a wall. After stabilising the levees and making sure that the city will never flood again, they need to build a perimeter around New New Orleans. Why not? A few of the huge multinational media corporations could group together and make New Orleans into the perfect American city. Okay, that would be perfect with inverted speech marks.

How many times have you seen a futuristic movie in which the city is isolated from the outside world? The inhabitants have lived for generations away from the society outside the walls and know no different, perhaps a select few could takeover the restoration of New Orleans and build their paradise - you know, one that doesn't have any of those annoying looters that were shown on TV.

I guess that idea is preposterous, since the American public may not appreciate losing access to the French Quarter, especially Bourbon Street, and the delights of Mardi Gras. There is a viable alternative to the isolation idea and that is the transformation of New Orleans into a Disneyland-style theme park. Disney and Time-Warner could pool their financial resources and buy up the property in Downtown New Orleans.

Think about it, the flood damage, the disease, the death, the personal loss, these are all perfect for multinationals to move in and snap up the plummeting property prices in this ghost city. People may not want to live in The Big Easy anymore, but who could resist a week in New New Orleans, with its haute cuisine Cajun restaurants, luxury hotels, chic jazz performances and Mickey Mouse fronting the Mardi Gras?

What the future of New Orleans will be is open to debate, already Dennis Hastert, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, has suggested that a city below sea level, wedged between a huge lake and one of the world's mightiest rivers, should not get federal funds to rebuild. No federal funds, then maybe the scenarios above could come into play, albeit not so far-fetched.

According to figures, over 150,000 properties were damaged or destroyed by wind, water and fire, while others have been damaged beyond repair by their long immersion. There are chemical and biological contaminants, such as leaking oil and chemical facilities and toxic dumpsites, plus the removal of an unknown quantity of dead. Who will see the potential in investing or living in New Orleans and ensuring that its history and cultural heritage will live on?

The Boat

By Oliver H.

When I think of the world, I think of it as if it were a huuge boat; probably the best and most complex boat ever! Humanity occupies only one part of the boat. The rest are living species, like plants animals and maybe some tiny things we haven't discovered. Anyways... it is not a bad idea to compare the earth, our world, with a boat. Maybe that would help us to start thinking of what we are doing to the boat and ourselves.

We can't go on ignoring things like racism, capitalism, all the bad words ending in 'ism' and, most importantly, the right of every living species to live. That's why living species are called that! Because they live and want to go on living, but again we just pretend that animals and plants don't have knowledge about life, because they just happen to speak another language that our little brains will never understand.

Did you ever hear about the number phi? Well... maybe our intelligence isn't just more than a result of this "intelligent" life structure. We have to ask ourselves...can we compare what we do to our earth with what wolves do to a rabbit. A cat to a mouse. Cannibal monkeys to each other.

If we are able to abuse everybody surrounding us on this boat, using our knowledge of carving furniture, cooking meat, creating strategies and punishing criminals...why the hell aren't we able to notice that the deeper our oil holes go, the closer they get to the bottom of our boat. The more we abuse, the more we abuse ourselves. Come on! We have the knowledge to shorten life or make it last longer.

We know chemistry and physics. We can tell how every little piece of our body works, and still we just lay there lazily demanding that more animals are born to satisfy our stomachs...but are incapable to appreciate the plants and animals that are part of us and to look forward to other solutions that could save these lives that just want to live! I haven't asked them, but something in me says...they do want to live.

Sincerely...if you (MAN) meet a nice young lady. Looong legs. Nice firm breasts, hair that only a mother could take such good care of, lips that say all your fantasies without even moving...would I be lying if I said that probably the first time you saw her, you had a small fantasy looking at her naked body... maybe more? What's important here is that all men have fantasies; at least all normal young men because I can't talk for people older than me (20).

Am I lying? I don't think so, but the point here it's a fact. A fact that nobody would be facing in public, in front of his mom or just because we have complexes built into our minds since we were little. Clothing is a big part of this. You think some Mexican Indians that walk naked all day have fantasies when they see a naked woman. Maybe...but I bet not as much as somebody that is surrounded by clothes.

Well...it would be "inappropriate" if I say the truth in front of this nice lady. She'd be probably upset and would look at me as though I was a bad perverted guy. The truth is I'd be only sincere. Ok...here's the point. If you can't stand for what you think, then you will probably not stand for the responsibilities and actions behind your thoughts.

What would you think if I'd tell you to stop cleaning your ass with paper? Crazy? Nuts? Would you even bother asking me 'why?' or 'with what else you could clean it?' Hmm...let's say you do ask more and don't judge me like a crazy person that just talks some crazy shit. Hee-hee...nice sentence.

More than 170,000 trees in one day have to die and won't provide shelter or a living medium for indigenous Indians somewhere out there where our brain doesn't come close to, or couldn't care less what's going on there, while all these 170,000 trees are ONLY there for one purpose: PAPER. If it's a book, your toilet paper or nice colourful gift paper, it just has a small tiny cost of 170,000 trees a day.

Every year the statistics grow. It is the same with petroleum (oil, gasoline, plastic) and the same with everything else. Have you ever seen how Kentucky treats their chicken employees before they serve their purpose? Have you ever heard a pig make this horrible sound of screaming desperately? A cow? A cat? A monkey? A violated child? EVER??? Well...I have.

Let me tell you that with these kinds of noises the only thing I think about isn't the nice way ecologists try to open your eyes with explanations; it's the way of revenge, like the "glorious" USA. You kill one of ours, then we kill ten of yours. Yep, that's the only thing I agree with them in these cases. Now the only problem here, like everywhere else, is to find those responsible. Is it the butcher? Asa Butcher, maybe?

Is it the people that pay their bills at McDonalds and Burger King? Or is it the parents that take the kids to these places...or is it TV that just ATE up all your brains??? At least I can't go crazy and throw an atom bomb into the crowd (my name is not the USA)!!!

Anyways...that's my feelings and they have nothing to do with reality because I won't do anything more than sit here, cry with all those souls that in this moment are going through pain thanks to us...and will hope you appreciate our boat more. It's a nice boat, but someday if you don't become aware of killing it, you will get more than aware when the water is up to your neck! :) sooo...I won't worry.

I know at the end we all pay. And at least I'm aware of my mistakes, I stand up for them and I remember myself everyday that I have to change. At least be part of the change. My first step here is to write you my thoughts in Ovi. Hope you enjoyed them.



40 years of invisibility

By Thanos Kalamidas

The -60s changed a great deal of things around the world, although a new and young President brought out a darker side of the United States of the other America: Black America. The whole world was discovering Black literature, Black painters, Black poetry, Black cinema and discovering that black is beautiful.

That doesn't mean that racial hate events stopped, on the contrary. In some places around the States, especially in the south, they became worse. The difference this time was that there was a reaction from the other side. There was a peaceful reaction from people like Dr. Martin Luther King and his dream, louder from people like Malcolm X and the extreme, like groups such as the Black Panthers. The remarkable point is that something was going on.

In the meantime and for forty years, it seems that this America got lost somewhere in the back streets of the big cities, drunk on cheap bourbon and stoned on crack. It is not that black literature, art, music and the dream disappeared, it just blended between the naïve peace mission of reverent Jesse Jackson and Mr. 'Black-or-White' Michael Jackson.

The United States became a superpower in every sense. They dominate fashions and ideas. They start wars just to protect their interests and demolish countries in the name of protecting their interests. In this new world, the black people of this country disappeared, as though there was no space for them. That brought the anger.

This social invisibility and anger came out with a natural disaster and expressed itself in one of the worst ways of self-destruction. The looting of shops, rape and murder, the flooding of New Orleans is bringing a tsunami of the worst human behaviour. The victims of the tsunami in South Asia displayed an unprecedented display before solidarity in front the destruction, exactly the opposite of what happened in New Orleans.

What happened in the capital of Louisiana is just the tip of the iceberg and it is the end of the constant reduction of American urban life and the destruction of the state. The government/state - in the sense of the common wealth and prosperity - has disappeared in the name of the individual's success and wealth, leaving behind it thousands of people who live on the limit or under the poverty line.

The most disappointing part will be that the administration will try once more to blame somebody instead of finding a solution, in the same way they did with Iraq and trying to blame terrorism and everything that came out of it, with Saddam supposedly hinting other agendas.

The real problem this minute in the United States is the social structure and their identity. The reinstatement of the welfare state in every level is the necessity. The central government, with its inability to face these crises, proved its incapacity to face every day problems. The whole thing proves that the United States has lost its ability to face the world realistically on both fronts, inside and outside.

The authorities of Louisiana were surprised to find out that the majority of the black majority homeless victims didn't have a car or a credit card, with which to cover their first expenses and escape from the city. Their surprise shows the distance that separates the middle-class American family from the working class. Their surprise is proof for how unprepared they were for what followed.

In Europe, with of its mistakes, the poor have their space inside the urban life and again, with all the mistakes, the state/government tries to help by firstly recognizing their existence and need for dignity. Perhaps this example could be a good beginning for the necessary change in American life.

Unfortunately, the American Dream over the last decades has become a nightmare for thousands of people. Give them some dignity and hope, at least - follow the example of the people in South Asia who showed a sense of solidarity in front of the common enemy, the destruction of human life.

Prejudiced minorities

By Asa Butcher

When you immigrate to a new country religious and ethnic minorities of our native land are left behind and one flight later the positions have been dramatically reversed. You arrive as a minority, endure countless culture shocks and face the same discrimination the media back home often mentioned. It comes as a slap in the face for the unprepared, but a darker problem lays in wait from somewhere quite unexpected.

Prejudice and discrimination between fellow minority groups is a sad and cruel irony that the participants fail to see. Instead of supporting one another in a shared situation, they continue their shameless bigotry against minorities from their homeland. Racism between minority groups is micro racism and is the nastiest element of immigration, due to its hypocritical and unexpected appearance.

Nationalities from around the world have chosen to live in Finland and, when the issue of racism is raised, you naturally expect to hear their horror stories about intolerant Finns, but instead you listen gravely about their treatment at the hands of other foreigners. Their anecdotes reveal that they were given a job and treated like a slave, physically attacked or verbally abused by a fellow immigrant, which stuns everybody, especially if any Finns are present.

Generalising that the majority of a population are racist is lazy and only serves to further the myth. The term 'racist' is frightening governments and people into proving they are not before being accused because once the accusation has been thrown it is virtually impossible to dispel it. Financial support is given to fund race awareness programmes, educate the public and aid integration, but this is outrageous when some minorities make no effort to integrate.

Sanctuary is found within their Diaspora. Many socialise within their own cultural group, ghettos create a small slice of their homeland, they build their own place of worship, their own shops and businesses; they can live their whole life without interacting with the host country. Nothing has changed, which means that their own inner dialogue concerning their own prejudices also remains the same.

Escaping to a new country is supposed to allow a fresh start from the tyranny of a government, shadow of a civil war, personal reputation or many other reasons, so why not re-evaluate your approach to cultures and nationalities that you hate? Recreating your homeland is provides comfort and practicing your religion strengthens your faith, so why not integrate among the general population and the other minorities and alter your perception of them?

Every country has different political, historical and cultural bonds with one another and this has shaped stereotypes and relationships. For example, when a Greek assumes a Finn in a Greek market in the centre of Athens is Russian they are being complimentary because human nature does not usually tend to insult complete strangers and the Greek is oblivious of the tensions between the two nationalities.

Back in our native lands, Canadians are aggravated by the Americans, the Australians have the New Zealanders, India has Pakistan, England has Scotland, Greece has Turkey, Finland has Russia, and the list goes on, but mainly the rivalry is playful and we are friendly to each other outside of our homelands.

Fearful of losing your own sense of nationalism forces you to adopt a caricature of your identity. As a minority, you begin to

fear that the dominant Finnish culture will override your own and you will lose that unknown quality that makes you French, Taiwanese or Bolivian. Criticism of your country's foreign policy or lack of sporting achievements breeds your own disparaging remarks about Finland with which to do battle.

Here lies the danger. Excessive nationalism mutates from patriotism into feeling contempt for other nationalities, including the host country. One extreme example is the Iranians who bitterly complain about racism across the world, yet in their own country there are people joining dozens of online communities, including the "Adolf Hitler SS Army Fan Club" and an "anti-Jew" community, which advocates death to all black people.

When it comes to Iranians living in Finland, many prefer to describe themselves as Fars and totally dispute the Ahwazians, who claim to be of 'perfect' Persian origin. You will never see an Ahwazian shake hands with an Arab, especially Saudi Arabians. Once again, you have two minority groups in a foreign country divided by the prejudices they felt back in their homeland.

Finland has organisations, such as Caisa Cultural Center, and online communities, such as the International English Speakers Association, which aim to unify foreigners living in Finland and organise gatherings in which they can meet one another. During the get-togethers, the multicultural groups try to stick to light-hearted subjects, such as the weather, but you can occasionally see the friction between nationalities.

For example, a Serbian student casually chats to a Greek entrepreneur about holidays to the former Yugoslavia, but the Serb becomes alarmed when a

Croatian becomes offensive in Slavic and they are then joined by a Turk, who alarms the Greek. However, the night ends with a small group consisting of an Englishman, Irish woman, a Finn, a Russian, a Kurd full of 'appreciation' for the Turks, an Armenian, a Jew and an American genially talking about the Finnish weather.

Due to the Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan or PKK), a controversial organization that fights for Kurdish independence, Turks in Finland severely dislike the Kurds. There is also the case of the Sudanese civil war, where the Muslim north fights with the Christian south, that has now moved from within its borders to communities in other countries because being an immigrant does not mean that you choose were to go without facing the other side.

The majority of foreigners form cordial relationships and attempt to place their prejudices behind them, yet the stubborn actions of the minority of the minority that damages everybody's reputation. Facing racism from a native is one thing, but being treated like shit by another foreigner may cut deeply in some and arouse dangerous emotions of radical nationalism in others.

The aspect that many often ignore and fail to realise is that should all the immigrants put aside all their differences and join together then we could effect real change in Finland. There are over 120,000 immigrants living in Finland, all of them have a vote in the elections, many are eligible to run as a candidate and one day it is possible that a second or third generation immigrant will become Prime Minister.

Le Métèque

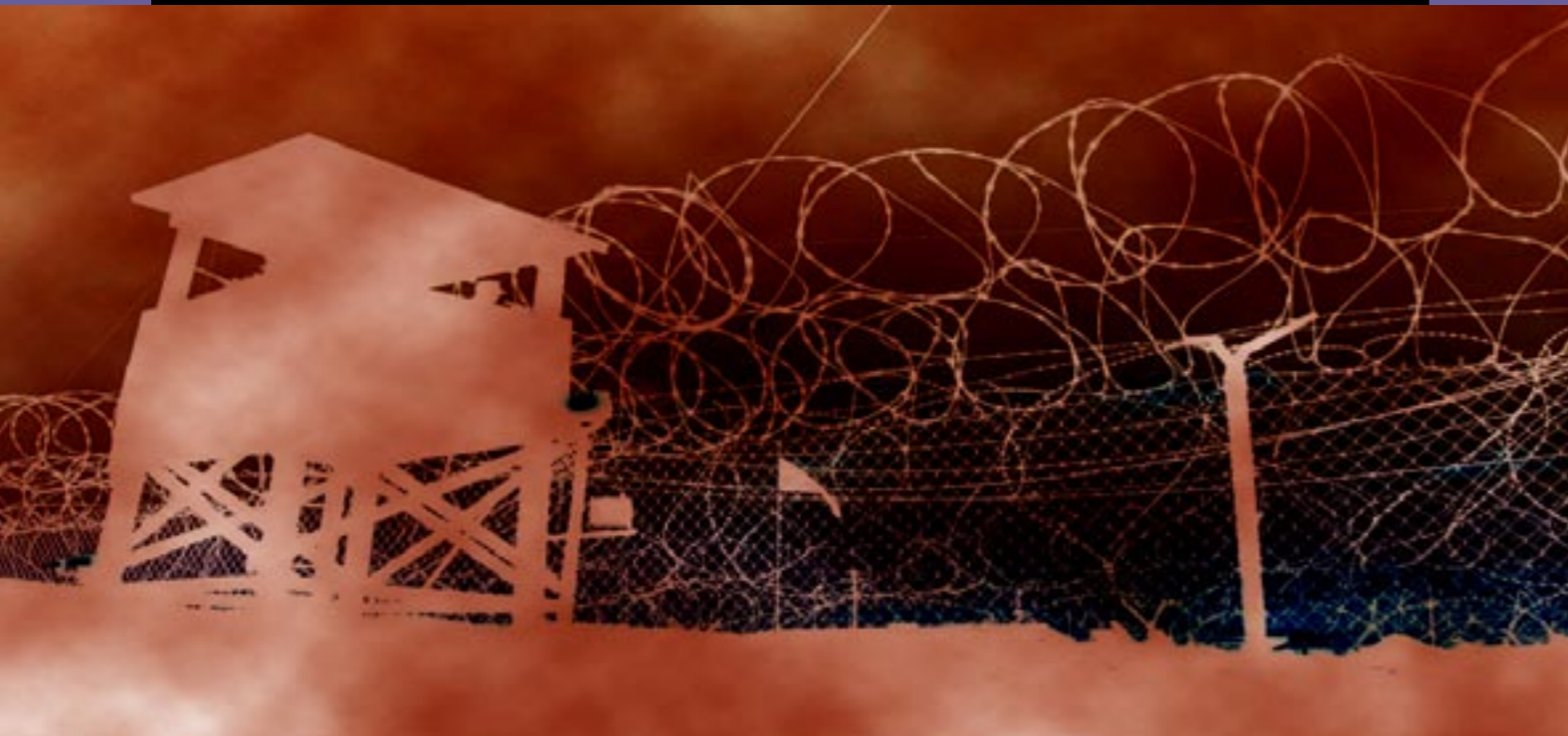
Check our inside magazine



How many frogs have you kissed today?

Witches of Capitol Hill

By Thanos Kalamidas



While the huge climate change makes its presence more and more obvious around the globe with New Orleans as the latest victim, the President of the United States and his political surroundings have started a new witch-hunt – its victims this time are scientists. They are the ones who dare to talk and prove that there is a global climate problem.

The president is using a real McCarthy clone; Joe Barton is a Republican Congressman, who is the chairman of the Energy & Commerce Committee and also a member of the Science Committee.

Joe Barton is the man of the oil companies and with his vetoes he has stopped any serious try for a change in the American environmental policy in Congress. His best achievement will be his medieval and micro brain behaviour towards scientists.

Lately, he has called three scientists in front of his committee asking to find out details their funding and their research from the beginning of their career, in full. This includes all the publications they have done since they were students.

Incidentally, all three scientists have spent most of their career talking and writing about climate change and the Greenhouse Effect, including the role of the release of carbon dioxide from industry into the atmosphere. Coincidentally, the three of them were members of the 2001 report for climate change that made many world leaders change their mind and support the Kyoto agreement.

Joe Barton uses every method to prove the three scientists are liars and untrustworthy, without including any real facts; he just throws dirt at their lives and research, using Goebbels' methods, saying a lie all the time, until people believe it in the end.

The good news is that even members of the Republican Party have started reacting to his methods and the whole scientific world, along with the media, have rejected the man.

If nobody will stop this modern Goebbels, don't be surprised if in the future we'll see known professors of universities like Oxford becoming guests of Guantanamo charged with promoting environmental terrorism.

For a bloody rock

By Thanos Kalamidas



When you watch the news, you feel like you live in a war zone. Some countries really surprise you when you find their names in any kind of conflict, much worse when this conflict is between them. This time, the names of the countries are Canada and Denmark. The reason? A bloody rock near the North Pole.

But we'd better take the story from the beginning. In 1972, the countries were mapping their borders between Greenland, which belongs to Denmark, and Ellesmere Island, which belongs to Canada. In the middle of the two is another island, it measures 1.3 square kilometres, is named Hans Island and is the centre of the dispute.

In 1984, a member of the Danish government, feeling patriotic, sailed to the small ice rock and placed a Danish flag and left a bottle of brandy. They stayed there until a few months ago when a group of Canadians sailed to the very same island and, after they 'honoured' the brandy, they replaced the Danish flag with a Canadian Maple Leaf and left a bottle of Canadian bourbon.

To make it worse, the Canadian defence minister Bill Graham decided that Hans Island was a good place for birdspotting, or something like that, because nothing else can explain why he decided to visit this rock in the middle of the nowhere. Now Denmark had to somehow respond, so they lodged an official complaint accusing Canada of invasion!!!

The whole thing sounds like a joke, but it is not because Canada sent three battleships to protect the island. I mean, to protect it from what? The birds? The rock is no strategic position for either country and it does not have any oil below it. It's just politics.

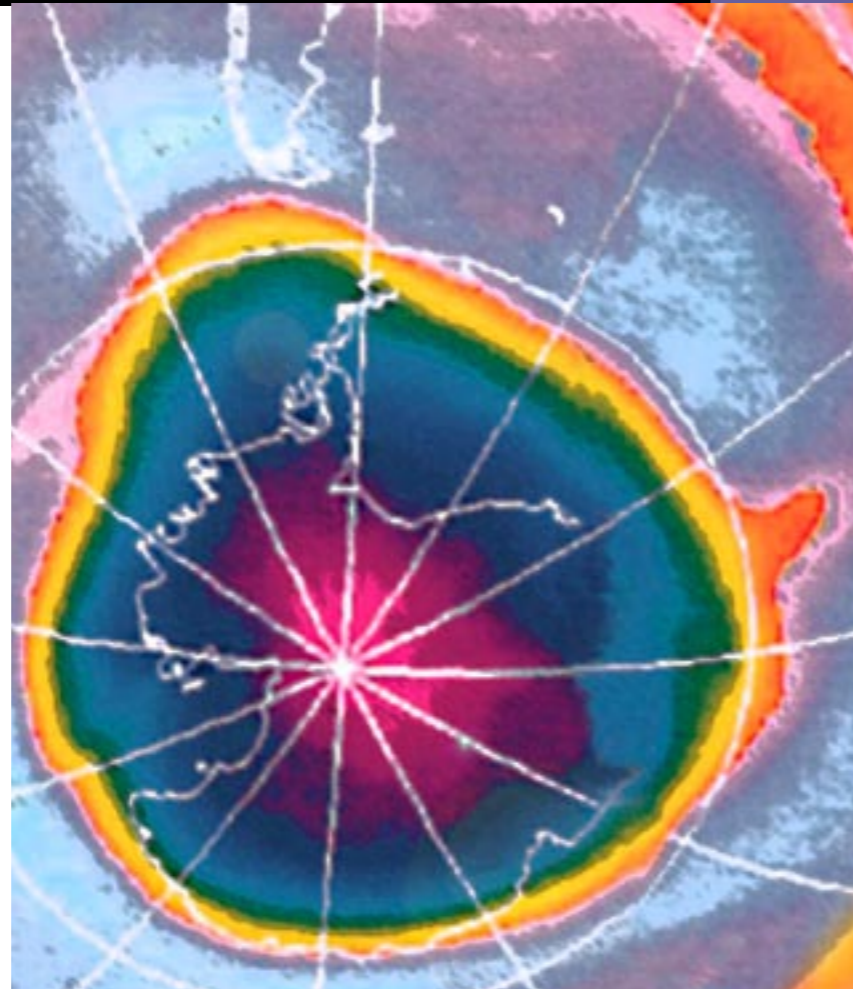
However strange it sounds, this is a result of climate change and the melting of the ice in the Arctic. Suddenly new grounds have appeared with both countries having the biggest part over the Arctic Circle demanding their share. These new lands have appeared in all the places, including Russia, Norway, Denmark, Canada and USA.

All the countries suspect that there are endless deposits of oil under the ice and the only thing these two countries are doing is exhibiting power. If they are not willing to back up when it comes to a tiny small rock, they will never move when it comes to the places with the deposits.

The ongoing issue of Hans Island has reached the UN and is now due for discussion sometime in October. The most amazing thing is how much environmental changes influence international geopolitics. This influence is strong enough to bring countries like Denmark and Canada to the front door of a conflict.

Ozone Whole

By Asa Butcher



Have you heard the latest environmental news? The World Meteorological Organization, an agency of the United Nations, announced that the hole in the ozone layer will probably be slightly smaller than the all-time largest of 2003. Does this mean that taking steps to ban and control a harmful substance, such as Chlorofluorocarbons, actually makes a difference?

The scientists are probably feeling smug and world leaders probably believe the two are unrelated, but there is no escaping the conclusions of Geir Braathen, an ozone specialist at the WMO. The hole above Antarctica measures approximately 27 million square kilometres (the 2003 peak was about 29 million square kilometres) and the WMO expects it to stay this size for a few more years before beginning to shrink again.

Providing conclusive proof that the ban on CFCs and the reduction of the ozone hole are connected maybe impossible in a political arena, but we can only hope that those world leaders refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol will be convinced. Once again, scientists have highlighted the connection between the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases with global warming and the melting ice caps.

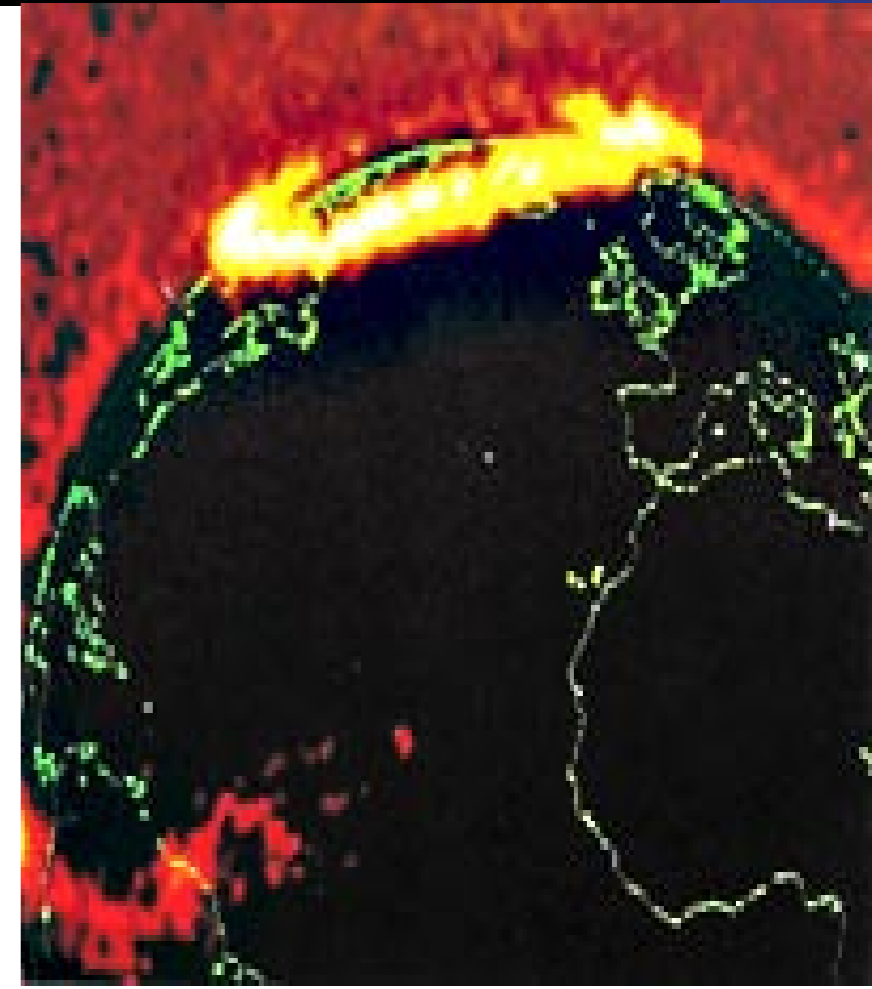
A footnote attached to Braathen's statement warns that it was too early to celebrate the restoration of the layer because...global warming has begun reversing

some of the positive developments. Those of you beginning to suspect that environmental activism is a futile exercise will have your fears confirmed when you learn that some environmentalists do not believe that even if the Kyoto Protocol is ratified it will not sufficiently reduce emissions enough.

The process feels as though the world takes two steps forward and one-step backwards wheezing from the effects of polluted air, but is there any other way when politicians of the world are tackling the issue? The Montreal Protocol, the treaty banning CFC production, came into force within fifteen months of being opened for signatures. Was the speed of that process due to white goods manufacturers not having as much political muscle as the automotive industry?

Don't leave the door open

By Thanos Kalamidas



When we talk about this ozone hole, has anybody ever understood what we are talking about? Eighteen years after the Montreal Protocol, when the whole world became aware of this new natural threat and most of us became aware of our responsibilities, with help from all kinds of media.

We learnt that there is the good ozone, the bad ozone and the ugly...the good protects us from the Sun. The size of the ozone hole keeps getting bigger every year, or according to the scientists, every single day. According to these same scientists, it is too early yet to say what happened for 2005 and how big the hole will be by the end of the year.

The same scientists remind us that with our acts, we have managed to destroy over 5,000 megatons of ozone in the north hemisphere and nearly 10,000 in the southern hemisphere - and that was only during the -90s. Amazing numbers.

Mediterranean countries, California, South Australia and Chile are more in danger of these changes. Already people in the Mediterranean countries have started talking about the long and extremely hot summers, plus the unexpected floods in the winter. Radiation has changed dramatically as well. Ultra-violet radiation from the Sun has increased from 6% to 14%, which gradually comes closer to dangerous levels.

From my poor understanding and equally poor knowledge, I can see that the ozone that was there protecting us from the Sun and, at the same time, keeping our atmosphere tight has a hole and, as a result, the radiation becomes more dangerous and probably the texture of the air we breath is changing.

Coming back to the first question, have you got any idea how big this hole is? It is two and a half times the size of Europe. Two and a half. Twice the size of all these mountains, lakes and huge capitals. Two and a half times the size of the world's second-smallest continent in terms of area.

Imagine in the middle of summer leaving all the doors and windows open. Don't tell me that the atmosphere inside the house won't change. Imagine now that outside your house there is a jigsaw of all the possible highways, including the famous and constantly busy M1 in UK. Now take a deep breath.

That's what's going on in our house that we call Earth. That's how big that hole is. The best thing I can come out with is 'good luck to all of us!'

Pro or meta

By Thanos Kalamidas



A few weeks ago, Asa and I visited an exhibition, which is something very rare for me because of a series of good reasons. One of them would be that I live in a country of the copycat, where everything that has achieved some kind of success in any of the western cities arrives a bit later in Helsinki...along with some tiny little changes and a new artistic star is born.

Another reason is that I'm tired of all these artists going around and the only thing they have done is cover the canvas with colours, and then back it up with a lot of philosophical and artistic bullshit, using sophisticated and composite words, like neo-modern, post-punk and many others that make little sense, but they sell.

When you stand in front of a William Blake, you cannot think of any words, you just stand there in awe trying to hold back your tears. That in my poor mind makes art. When you stand in front of a Roy Liechtenstein you can think of only one word: Wow! And Roy cleverly used that word for one of his most famous painting.

When you stand in front of a gallery in Helsinki - and believe me Helsinki is not the exception nowadays - you probably think 'wow', followed by 'what the hell am I doing here?'

The people who usually go to these sort of galleries are the sort of people who look carefully at the painting and use all their neo-something or pro-something vocabulary. The next words to leave their lips are, "Do you think this painting will look nice with our blue curtains or shall we put it in the billiard room with the green ones?" That's what I enjoy nowadays in the galleries. I enjoy it after I spent a long time getting angry at the ignorance of these people!

In this certain exhibition, a man in his late-fifties nearly had an orgasm in front of one painting trying to explain that this was the next step of neo-modernism, in addition to the pro-baroque style - god help us all. A woman was gossiping with another about the hairstyle of a third and a man was half-asleep, while pretending to focus on a painting.

Finally, it was the turn of the artist. Asa approached him and introduced himself, after a quick chat the artist asked him what he thought about the exhibition. Asa came up with a question that I found very natural, he asked him if the way he works is a combination of photography and street art.

The man looked at him the way only 'artists' look at us the common mortals and said, "Of course street art is part of my influence, but this is more a personal artistic expression." Jesus! I had to ask a question that had nothing to do with the exhibition because my other solution would be to start screaming.

The majority of these indifferent and grotesque artists believe that art is for the few who can 'understand' it, meaning that if you are ignorant you will go to the gallery and tell the artist how wonderful they - referring to their hairstyle and their Armani jeans, and not the paintings. The rest of the world is just...common people with no idea about real art.

One afternoon in the Tate Gallery in London, an old man was sat next to me looking at a William Blake painting. After a few minutes, he said quietly to me, "You know, I don't know much about art, but these painting make me believe that there is a God." I think that this man has more idea about art than all this rubbish that dances around all the galleries of this world, including all the artists and their new meta-stupid ideas.

Losing your memory

By Asa Butcher

Are we losing our memories? This isn't about amnesia, dementia or Parkinson's, but the fact that we are losing the ability to remember our past in whatever way we wish. Many of us now own a digital camera or video camera that allows us to capture virtually every moment of our lives, leaving the imagination unemployed when it comes to recalling the day.

The total documentation of birthdays, weddings or summers has taken away our chance to embellish a story, improve an anecdote or slip a little white lie into our reminiscences. There is 100% photographic proof that the day went accordingly or we can pause, then rewind, the precise moment something went wrong instead of recounting the tale.

Over the past decades, we have always tried to capture the true moment on film, along with bad haircuts and the decade's fashion, but we were usually limited to 36 exposures or sixty minutes of wobbling camera footage. Now we can take over 2,000 photographs and create an animation with them if we wish.

I was born in 1978 and in the family album there are barely fifty photos of little Asa from that year. A few years later, my Dad purchased a Cinecamera, but it wasn't until 2000 that the reels were transferred to video and we could watch them teary-eyed one Christmas. My daughter was born in July and we have taken nearly 3,000 photographs – many, many, many bad ones – in just three months and sent digital video clips around the world hours after her birth.

Family 2,000 miles away can watch her grow up and we have a document of her first weeks, but how will looking at those photographs in twenty years match my memories? Will I feel as though I did not pay attention because they do not match or irritated if somebody corrects my nostalgic ramblings?

Part of me is thankful that we did not film her birth because I can edit the highlights in my head and create a showreel of the moments I want to remember, in the way that I want it to be. The event was shared by my wife, two midwives and I, the moment of my daughter's birth does not exist anywhere else except in four memories.

The past was never as good as we like to believe, but when we finally have some control over time, albeit the past, why shouldn't we reconstruct it to make us happy? Nostalgia is a great method of exercising the imagination, so why spoil it with the truth?



40 questions about food

By Tony Butcher



Photo by Linda Lane

Do you feel hungry? Is it dinner time yet? What should I eat? Will it make me feel better? Will it make me feel guilty? How can food make you feel so many emotions? When does eating go from pleasurable to unpleasurable?

Have you ever been fed while blindfolded? What did you eat? Did it make you feel excited or scared? Do you see what I mean? Is it the foods we eat that make a difference? Why should I feel bad about eating chocolate? Doctors say it's good for you, don't they? How much chocolate can I eat before I feel sick? Why do I only find out when I actually feel sick?

So is it all right to be fat? Are you fat or thin? How do you feel about it? Why should other people put pressure on you, or decide how you should feel? Has someone else's weight ever affected your mood? What did you do? Am I ready for my next meal now?

What do you want to eat? Is it good for you? Does it contain the correct vitamins and minerals you need? Can foods we eat really affect our moods? When I don't eat, why am I grumpy or short-tempered? Are you still hungry?

Why can some people eat unhealthy foods and not get fat? Don't you hate them? Do you think they exercise all night instead of sleeping? Should we be jealous? Would I be healthier if I exercised instead of sleeping? Will I start to feel guilty about sleeping? Should I go to sleep and dream about food instead? That won't make me fat, will it?

Why did I only ask only 39 questions? Was it something I ate?

The movie diet

By Asa Butcher



"Last time I was at the movies, I was thrown out for bringing my own food. My argument was the concession stand prices were outrageous. Besides, I hadn't had a barbecue in a long time," jokes Steve Wright, an American comedian, and he is not far from the truth. A few years ago, a regular-sized carton of popcorn and a soda drink were the staple diet of a moviegoer, but now the waistband revolution has arrived.

Buckets of cola, barrels of popcorn, John Holmes-sized hot dogs and bin bags full of pick 'n mix have audiences crunching, chewing and slurping for 100-minutes upsetting those of us trying to watch My Big Fat Greek Wedding and not listen to a big fat geek movie muncher. The cinema has become a Delicatessen for people to make up for a skipped Breakfast at Tiffany's or a forgotten Naked Lunch.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, well nobody because they are all choosing to eat at the cinema. What happened to a simple 200g bag of peanut M & Ms or a bar of Chocolat? Those days are long gone and it won't be long until ushers are offering menus to patrons changing the cinema into Waiterworld. We'll be offered chicken Souperman, followed by medium-rare Steakout, with Lord of the Onion Rings and Erin Broccoli-vich, and for dessert perhaps some Rocky Road I-Scream.

Maybe there is a conspiracy between the cinema chains and Hollywood when it comes to naming films, thereby implanting subliminal messages in the viewer's mind. Big Fish, Silence of the Lambs, Space Jam, Hamburger Hill, American Pie, Mystic Pizza, The Dish and Fried Green Tomatoes are all aimed at reminding cinemagoers that they have forgotten to eat and will need to make a pit stop via the concession stand.

At the cinema, the selection is often very unhealthy and the choices are either packed full of sugar or destined to head to your waistband. To maintain a balanced diet, you should opt for movies that are inspired by vegetables and fruits, so that you can keep a clear conscience while stuffing your mouth full of buttered popcorn. There are plenty of vitamins in A Clockwork Orange, Herbie Goes Bananas, The Grapes of Wrath, James and the Giant Peach, Blueberry, The Great Waldo Pepper and Bean: The Movie, so if you suffer from spots you can avoid an Outbreak.

Despite all the problems of eating in cinemas, I believe that somebody is fighting back by supplying 30-minutes of trailers and advertisements that allow half of the auditorium to finish their picnic baskets before the movie begins. The one problem that remains is those with weak bladders, but maybe we can leave that in the hands of Flush Gordon.

Global calories

By Thanos Kalamidas



When we started talking about this issue of Ovi Magazine and different kinds of food, the first thing that crossed my mind was my travels around the world. I'm not a big fan of photography, but I still have a nice collection of photographs from all the places I've been. Most of my memories from all these places, even the places I stayed only for a couple of hours, is what I ate. Oddly enough, these are my most clear memories.

At the beginning of the -90s, I used to travel to Milan often and I once stayed there for three months. Due to my work, I've been in a few factories and exhibitions, I had the honour of watching an opera inside the world famous La Scala, but what I will always remember is a small restaurant in a piazza just 500 metres from the opera house.

It was a very small place, with five or six tables. It had a home wine that had a fantastic soft and full of flowers taste, but mostly I recall its full plates of macaroni with mussels and soft pepper red sauce.

Then I will always remember Paris for another small restaurant in Isle l'Adam in the cellar of an old bakery and near a beautiful jazz club. There is another small place with a very fat waiter, who has a very stylish Salvador Dali style moustache, where I had the best garlic mushrooms under the name 'Greek mushrooms' and the best tartare steak ever.

Going into the heart of the French Alps, there is another beautiful city, Grenoble. Here I woke up many mornings at six o'clock to have a fresh hot pie a raisin from a nice baker's shop on the corner; I can feel it in my mouth, even at this very moment.

If you haven't tried a 'Schrippen' in Berlin, you have no idea what bread rolls are. I must not forget to mention white sausages and cold beer in Wiesbaden. Do you know what is 'Rheinländische Sauerbraten'? It is a traditional dish from Bonn, a sweet-sour marinated veal stew served with applesauce.

Being Greek, I'm not going to say anything about Greek food, even though I can take you on a tour around Greece with local dishes and local wines, and I'm not going to mention anything about Finland, the country that hosts me, except to say that my experience of salmon soup and reindeer with potatoes is unique.

Let's go a bit more exotic. I had snake, not just any snake, but cobra, in Shanghai at a small restaurant in the marketplace in the city centre. The man let the snake, which he had just picked from a glass box half-alive, roll around his arm while he was holding the head. Suddenly, in one move he cut it using a razor and let all the meat from inside drop on to a burning hot iron table in front of him. After playing for a bit with some knives and mixing it with vegetables, I found myself eating cobra. I cannot say it was the best thing I have ever tried, but still seeing all this and eating cobra was...wow!

Japan, tempura and sushi. Near the financial sector in the middle of Tokyo there is a back street full of small fantastic bars - that's how they call them, since drinking for the Japanese people cannot happen without the company of food. They serve chicken, duck or veal in small pieces stuck on sticks of

cane with vegetables and you eat them standing up and drinking Saporito beer.

Once New Orleans is built again, you will understand what French cousin means and experience real cream cakes. In New York, have a real hot dog, with lots of onions and homemade ketchup and mustard, from this famous Greek in the middle of 51st Avenue. When going to Mississippi, you must - and this 'must' is with big flashing letters - try the apple pie; it is something you will find even in the most isolated inns on the highways.

Please don't even think to go to Mexico without trying...just everything. If you love spicy food and it just happens that I love it, then this is heaven. Whoever said that food in Chile is boring has no idea about real grill. I mean huge grilled steaks and when it comes to fruit, even somebody like me who only eats watermelon and melon, can have great fun with the fruits there.

Africa is the continent of many faces. You must try couscous in Algeria and Morocco, and veal in South Africa. In this same issue of Ovi Magazine, I talk about the people who are starving in Africa, although this definitely didn't happen to me, it stops me writing about food there.

The Middle East and Lebanon have pies with salads and fantastic sweets full of syrup. Seftalia is Lemessos, Cyprus with its home white wine... watching the full moon at the seaside accompanied by the nostalgic sound of a guitar.

Travelling north, hot soup and piroshki in Moscow, with heavy amounts of vodka, while my favourite Russian dish is buglama; lamb stewed with spices, huge amounts of spices and the vodka helps a lot.

To complete the full circle, near to France and Italy is Spain where I had paella in another small restaurant in Madrid with olive bread and strong red wine.

You see, that's what I mean, the strongest memory from every place is food in the end. And this minute I'M HUNGRY!!!

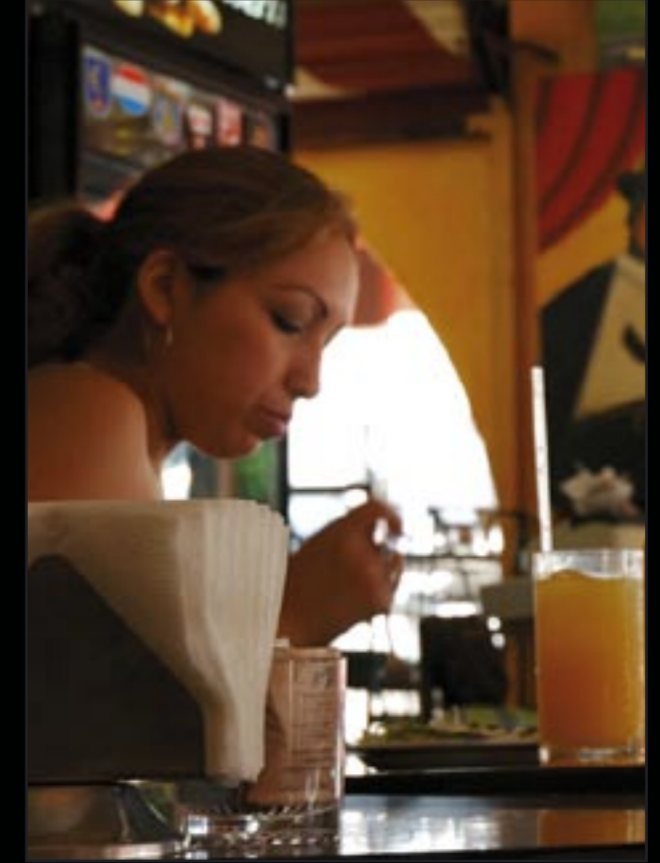
Linda Lane's Food Photos

With 16 years experience Linda Lane works co-operatively with technical, management and design teams to plan and evolve web applications for software firms such as Microsoft, EDS, Pandesic, Premera, RealNetworks, and others.

Recently Lane helped to launch MSN Spaces blogging software. Prior to that she and her teams reviewed and supervised the release of more than 50 enterprise level e-Commerce sites, which earned in excess of a million a month, for companies such as adidas, animation, Beverages and more, eCompany store, e-vineyard, hifi.com, and Oshkoshb-gosh, working as what is now termed a "Technical Release Manager".

In between larger projects, she and small teams work with a variety of smaller companies and non-profits to help them grow their business via designing and scripting websites, including ecommerce, designing and planning information flows, updating or creating logos, shooting the photography and creating easy to edit sites.

For fun Lane paints fine art, writes, makes films, does interior design, and travels to Asia (India, Nepal, Thailand), Mexico, and Alaska.



Predictable Premier

By Asa Butcher

A combination of factors including saturation television coverage, tickets prices, negative tactics and predictable results are blamed for the fall in Premier League attendances. As a football fan, I would hardly say that Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool finishing in the top five for the past five seasons is predictable.

Is it boring for football fans to see Chelsea, Arsenal and Manchester United sharing the Premier league trophy over the past five years? These three have not been alone in the top five, since the basic mathematician can tell you that five teams are needed. Sharing the other spots have been four clubs, Newcastle United three times, Leeds United twice, Ipswich Town and Everton last season.

Once again, math tells you that five seasons multiplied by five top spots have offered 25 positions, filled by a mere eight different clubs; tell me how that is boring. Over the space of five seasons, the games in which these eight clubs have participated have amassed over 2,600 goals, which includes both for and against tallies*; this is a very respectable total and proves that goals are being scored.

However, in the previous two seasons (2004/05 and 2003/4) there has been a marked drop in the total number of for and against among the top five. The 2001/02 season saw 560 hit the back of the net and there were 554 in 2002/03, but the top five total dropped dramatically when Chelsea moved into the top five. The number of goals scored in these games fell by 80 to 478 last season alone, which is a dramatic drop when supporters want goals as well as victory.

Supporters also want excitement; they want tight championship battles and they were getting those back in 2000/1, 2001/02 and 2002/03; the point difference between first and fifth averaged 18 across those three seasons. At the end of last season and the season before, there were gaps of 37 points and 34 points respectively, which sucked any exhilaration out of the final games in April.



Chelsea, Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool may vehemently argue that this is due to improved defenders, better tactics and new rules, but the evidence is now showing that the fans are not happy and are staying away. This analysis is of just the top five; a top five that sees success, goals, three points and TV coverage far more than the clubs below them in the Premier League.

As of September 6th:

After approximately six games of the 2005/06 season, Chelsea and Manchester United are already in the top five, while Liverpool could join them with their two games in hand. There is also a seven-point gap between first and fifth, is this starting to look predictable?

*Some goals may be counted twice - so Arsenal 1 vs. Man United 1 would be four goals in the 2,600, but I'm sure you understand my meaning.

About basketball

By Thanos Kalamidas

I was writing about Greek football and the national football team, when another Greek national team came up with a gold medal. The national basketball team of Greece beat Germany 78-62 in a fantastic final game without any big surprises.

Basketball is a very fast game that lasts for forty-minutes and every striking team has 20 seconds to make their strike. That means that the players are young and they are finishing their career pretty early. You will never see a forty-year-old player, I doubt if there are many over thirty-five anyway.

The beauty of this Euro Championship was that most of the teams were young in age, except some very bright exceptions, the average age was around 23, which means that these young men have the time to change and reshape European basketball.

Why change it? Over the last fifteen years, something dramatic has happened in the European basketball. Most of the good players play for the American NBA, while most of the European teams employ old American players. Even Dennis Rodman, long after the end of his career in the NBA, has come to Europe to play for an unknown Finnish team.

Because of this, players-movement to the States, the teams that embody European basketball and the national teams have weakened. Old strong teams like the national team of Yugoslavia, Russia or Spain have disappeared - now hoping for the fourth or fifth place in the tournament and when they get it they are happy.

Greece is one of these team. Over fifteen years ago, it was supposed to be one of the strong teams with European medals and they were in the first three of every single European championship for over a decade. Back in early -80s, a group of young men, who had made a career in the NBA, came back to Greece to staff the teams and the national team.

What these men brought was a good knowledge of the game and the need for a medal with the mother country. And they did it. Most of them were at the end of a long career, so after their retirement came a dry period. The state and the sports responsible carry a huge part of the blame, but the good news is that these young men never left basketball.



It took them over a decade to move from the position of the player to the position of the manager and the coach; this is exactly what we saw with the Greek national team. The captain of that glorious team of the -80s is the coach, the middle player is the manager and some more of the players are coaches or managers for other Greek teams.

These people, having learnt the hard way, worked to build a new basketball reality, where young boys, 22 and 23, are leading the sport into the future. Please do not forget you cannot play forever.

The Greek national team is not the exception that proves the rule, but fortunately the rule lately in Europe. France did the same with Germany following, there was no surprise that these three countries shared the first three medals of the last European championship.

The only thing we can hope is that this hard work will continue and it will continue in the rest of the countries around the continent. Basketball is the second most popular sport in Europe, after football, and it would be a pity to see it waste away.

As far as the Greek national team, it was really touching to see the captain of that glorious team of the -80s with tears in his eyes holding the cup in 2005.

Don't spurn Verne

By Asa Butcher

Journey to the Centre of the Earth
(Voyage au centre de la Terre, 1864)
By Jules Verne

My own journey into the world of literature continues with this literary classic from the famous French author and pioneer of the science fiction genre, Jules Gabriel Verne. His novel Journey to the Centre of the Earth was the third of his 54 Voyages Extraordinaires that were published in his lifetime and it was the first Verne book I have ever read.

Verne is another of those authors who I knew a great deal about and had seen many film adaptations of his work, such as 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and Around the World in Eighty Days, but for no good reason he had escaped my attention for all these years. When I stop to think about why it took so long for me to read a Verne book, I am baffled. The films are always exciting and feature themes that are still topical today, so naturally the books should be the same.

Journey to the Centre of the Earth was the same and I thoroughly enjoyed the adventure detailed within. Jules Verne seems to have had the foresight of the birth of Hollywood because this novel is written as an action-packed blueprint for a movie. How this novel much have captured the imagination of the Victorians is something I envy after years of blockbuster movies and special effects pushing my expectations.

Despite the story of Journey to the Centre of the Earth being a little outdated scientifically, it is still science fiction and a chance to escape the humdrum reality of science. Pre-historic animals, subterranean oceans and gigantic mushroom forests all make an appearance during this attempted journey to the Earth's centre.

The research that Verne has undertaken for this novel is amazing, especially when you take into consideration the period in which he wrote the book. The amount of geological, mineralogical, archaeological and scientific information that is packed within such a short space shows the attention to detail that made him the forefather of the science fiction genre. Not only is there copious amounts of facts but he blends them into the story in such a way that you understand everything.

The expedition is undertaken by Professor Otto Lidenbrock, an eminent German geologist and naturalist, and his nephew, Axel Lidenbrock, who narrates the story from a firsthand perspective. They are assisted by an Icelandic guide named Hans, who is the hero of the story and one of the best literary characters I have encountered this year – and he barely says a fifty words!



A great twist in the book is the headstrong, determined and impatient Professor, who will go to any lengths to achieve his goal, making his nephew look ever reluctant and poor Axel suffers the most. The relationship between Axel and his uncle and Axel and the Professor seems to bring a fourth character on the expedition. Otto Lidenbrock's split personality is a delight to follow and you soon feel such sympathy for Axel that you feel as though you are there with him.

There have been a couple of film versions of this book over the years and Treat Williams' four-part TV movie that was recently broadcast inspired me to read the book. In many of the films, a female character is added to the expedition, whereas the novel only has two women and they feature at the start; one is the Professor's maid and the other is Axel's beloved. Strangely, I enjoyed the interaction between the three men far more without a female changing the dynamic.

After completing Journey to the Centre of the Earth, it was not hard to believe why he is the most translated novelist in the world - 148 languages, according to the UNESCO statistics. My journey with Jules Verne was fantastic and I guess it my next step should be to patriotic and read the British Jules Verne, H. G. Wells.

Blue hair and pyramids

By Asa Butcher

Immortal (Ad Vitam) (2004)
Directed by Enki Bilal

"Enki Bilal! We must go and see his film!" gasped an excited Thanos a few weeks ago. I nodded in that uncommitted way that usually accompanies an outburst of his Greek enthusiasm and then stupidly asked, "Why?" Rapidly, I discovered that Bilal is from the world of comic books and is simply fantastic. Silently cursing Bilal under my breath, I agreed to watch Immortal (Ad Vitam) at a showing in Helsinki's Love & Animation Festival.

My prior apprehension proved pointless because the film was 'simply fantastic'. Even though the film was part of an animation festival, it used two real actors acting on a digital set. The backgrounds and the remainder of the cast were computer-generated and the overall effect was excellent. I have yet to see Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, Casshern or Sin City, which also employed this technique so sadly I can't compare.

The plot certainly mixed a number of plots and subplots that were almost all resolved by the closing credits, although I can't say for sure. The film is set in New York 2095 and a strange pyramid is floating in the sky, in which the gods of Ancient Egypt allow Horus one week on Earth. A eugenics scientist takes a young woman with blue hair into her care, a man named Nikopol is prematurely released from prison and the story unfolds from there.

It appears that Bilal adapted the film from his Nikopol Trilogy (La Foire aux Immortels, La Femme Piège and Froid Équateur), for which he does the artwork and the text. As I have said, I was thoroughly impressed by the visual aspects of the film, but the dialogue was painful. Perhaps it was Linda Hardy, a French actress, and Thomas Kretschmann, a German, speaking English that damaged the script:



Nikopol: You piece of shit! Your objectives are shit, your filthy rapist god ambitions are shit! You are so full of shit, Horus!
Horus: Coming from a human, remarks like that don't carry much weight.

Ouch! Despite the screenplay being poor, the two lead actors (the only actors) were great. Kretschmann as Alcide Nikopol had a hardened appearance that captured my imagination and the best prosthetic limb in any movie, while the make-up on Linda Hardy was breathtaking, especially her hair and the blue tears. It was strange that the computer-generated characters were so poorly done when they were obviously going to be stood next to real people.

However, the CGI characters did have charisma and the imagination behind the eugenic humans was stunning. In addition, Bilal's backgrounds, futuristic technology and locations must have inspired the Bladerunners, Stargates and Fifth Elements of the movie world. I read that Producer Charles Gassot, who's a fan of Bilal's work, invested over twenty million euros in this film and I believe he made a wise investment.

By Asa Butcher

Chocolate, the mere mention of the word has drool pooling upon the keyboard and the withdrawal symptoms subtly coughing for attention. The craving I have for chocolate is like no other, I don't smoke, I don't drink often and my sex isn't that kinky – I just live for the milky goodness of a bar of chocolate.

As a teenager, I experienced the vicious circle of chocolate's delights and cruelty. I suffered from both spots and acne, which naturally depressed me. Therefore, in an attempt to cheer myself up, I would eat copious amounts of chocolate and enjoy the brief high. Despite what doctors' claim, chocolate did give birth to more spots and enflame the acne, thus the cycle began again.

My addiction to chocolate has led to some embarrassing incidents, such as vomiting the half-digested remains of Easter Eggs all over the bedroom carpet, although one of the lowest points of my life was one Christmas many years ago. Cadbury had produced the 'World's Biggest Chocolate Bar' weighing in at 1kg and the story goes like this:

I purchased one bar for my own consumption and my brother thought it would make a great gift for our Dad, which he entrusted to me for 'safe' keeping. My self-control collapsed and I consumed both bars, two kilos of chocolate, in under an hour, which would have remained a secret except that I couldn't replace the bar because it had sold out. The horror, the family shame, the endless teasing...they were all worth it!

I was shocked to discover that according to current research chocolate is a weak stimulant due to its content of theobromine and caffeine, but it creates effects in humans that are on par with a coffee buzz. I tend to agree with the idea that chocolate is more than a food but less than a drug because when you place chocolate under the microscope it has no real point in life.

It has no medical properties, it won't be bringing world peace or uniting nations, it just removes the coins from our pocket as we impulse buy a bar at the supermarket check-out. I guess one positive aspect of having a chocolate addiction is that I don't breathe secondary chocolate fumes into other people's faces or pass out in the street from too many chocolate liqueurs.

What is the deal with chocolate liqueurs and chocolate limes? Why do the manufacturers ruin them with these unnecessary ingredients designed to upset the pleasure of the choc addict? I have been offered these choc-covered disasters many times only to find I am spitting it out in disgust at the shocking contents. My Dad used to joke that I would eat dog shit if it was covered in chocolate, but it would have to be well packaged.



Whether it is dark, light, milk or white, I will gladly sell my soul for a cube, a bite or the whole bar. My wife has returned home to find her present half-eaten or strangely missing from the fridge and she will look at me with utter pity in her eyes and her fists clenched in anger. I can't help it, I am addicted and if she wilfully leaves chocolate in the fridge unattended, then I can't be held responsible for my actions.

To this day, I still have nightmares about a chocolate footballer that my brother received for Christmas over 15 years ago...he never ate it. It remains in its box, laughing maniacally at me in my dreams and mocking me with his survival all these years.

Another horrific memory followed a dream-come-true visit to Cadbury World in England, where we could fill our pockets with as much chocolate as we could carry. I refused to place it in the boot and it all melted in its foil wrappers during the three-hour drive home. I was crushed, especially when my brother opened the boot and pulled out his pristine choccies.

A statistic claimed the consumption of chocolate in the UK is about 10kg per person year, which must have dropped now I live in Finland, but at least Finnish chocolate consumption statistics will benefit. Cadbury's loss is Finland's Fazer gain; I have reluctantly swapped Boosts, Double Deckers and Dairy Milk for Suffeli Puffi, Dumle and Tupla, but I still have my sources supply me from England.

Just to let you know how bad I really am: When I began this article I had just opened a 400g bag of peanut M & Ms, the empty wrapper is now in the trash. I spy chocolate? Not for long!

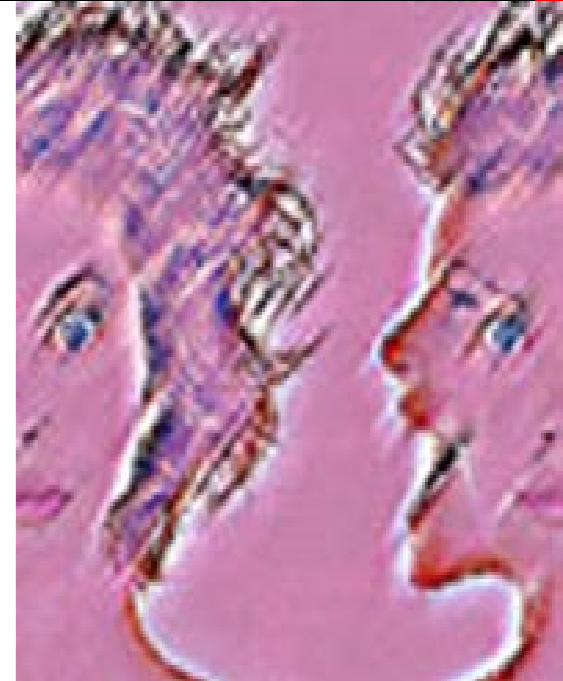
By Juliana Elo

You leave home willing to buy acetone. You check every store at the mall, and you end up sneaking in to that fancy cosmetic store, full of Cliniques, Biotherms, Diors, and even the shop assistant in her uniform dresses better than you do. You look all around, no sign of acetone. You do the inevitable, you go to ask the shop assistant, who've been following with the corner of her eye every step you took since you got in the store, if they've got acetone.

There she comes with the remover without acetone. You explain that what you want is in fact acetone. She comes with another polish remover; she says it's the best. But what you want is acetone, the cheap one, the one used to refine cocaine – the attendant open her eyes wide. You show your whitish nails, with last week's nail polish rests, that didn't leave with remover: - It's to take of my nail polish. Finally she understands, and comes back bringing that pitiful 60 cents cheap little bottle.

This world became a hostile territory: no sugar, no salt, no lactose, no carbohydrate, no conserving, decaffeinate and depressed.

The store assistant even washes her hands after touching that little bottle, but you go back home happily. You've got acetone, finally.



Você sai de casa disposta a comprar acetona. Entra em cada loja do shopping, e acaba entrando naquela perfumaria chique, cheia de Cliniques, Biotherms, Diors, e até a balconista, de uniforme, se veste melhor que você. Procura que procura, e nada. Você faz o inevitável, vai perguntar à balconista, que acompanhou cada passo seu na loja com o rabo de olho, se eles têm acetona.

Lá vem ela, com removedor de unhas sem acetona. Você explica que o que você quer é acetona. Ela volta com outro, também sem acetona, que ela diz é o melhor removedor de esmaltes que existe. Mas você quer acetona, daquela barata, usada para refinar cocaína – a balconista arregala os olhos. Você mostra as unhas esbranquiçadas, com resquícios de esmalte da semana passada, que não saiu com o removedor: – É pra tirar o esmalte. Finalmente ela entende, e vem com aquele potinho furreba de 60 centavos.

Este mundo se tornou um território hostil: sem açúcar, sem sal, sem lactose, sem carboidratos, sem conservantes, sem cafeína e sem graça. Tanta gente bebe, tanta gente fuma, você não. Você usa acetona.

A balconista até lava as mãos depois de tocar no potinho, mas você vai embora feliz. Acetona, finalmente.



Baby tales

By Asa Butcher

Have you seen how much infant cosmetics cost? Of course you haven't, they are so hard to find. I am joking...a quick Google search can provide a selection of stores worldwide. As a parent, I am beginning to discover that there is very little you cannot buy for your new child. Most fashion outlets cater to the 0-6 month range and I am sure Ferrari offer a miniature version for their special 'short' clients.

The world of baby is infectious; I try to wait for somebody to ask before boring them rigid with stories about how much Katie laughs when I stick out my tongue. Seriously, she thinks it is the funniest thing in the world and when she smiles her face lights up into the most beautiful...ok, I'll stop.

Thankfully, Katie is a pretty baby and nobody has to disguise that sharp inhale of breath that usually accompanies being presented with an ugly baby. We have strangers comment upon her sweetness and we are asked all the usual questions, "No, seriously! Are you really the father?" For the hundredth time, Mum, yes!

Trips to the doctors have been a revelation. They happily comment that she is gaining the standard 20 grams of body weight a day, to which I reply, "If all my meals were served through a women's nipple, I would be gaining more than that!" They frown and look concerned when Katie is below the Finnish average growth rate, but we have to shout down their stethoscope and remind them that she is only half-Finnish. Anyway, what is average?

Baby books helpfully provide the answer to any baby-related question, such as why a baby's head may become wet when they are feeding – is it leaking milk from its ears or could it be sweat? However, they draw a blank when it comes to telling you how much to dress your baby in 15C and at what angle the baby can sit.

My next issue is with the mobile makers (the baby ones, not Nokia). Do they research the most annoying tone and melody, and then program each one

with it? "I know a song that will get on your nerves, get on your nerves, get on your nerves, I know a song that will get on your nerves..." We have one that plays 'When you wish upon a star' in, what seems, the same note, the baby still doesn't fall asleep and we have the tune in our head for the remainder of the night.

While the tune echoes around your head, you still have to entice your baby into dreamland. Does the baby fall asleep while you are sat down? No. Does the baby fall asleep while you stand up bouncing? No. Does the baby require you to bounce around the house like Tigger on ecstasy? Yes. If she falls asleep and you put her down, does she wake up? Yes. Am I going to get any marital loving tonight? No.

It truly is a joy. Honestly. Cross my heart. Every day of the past two months have been great, whether I have been humming irritating tunes or walking like a Slinky toy, with the man jam levels dangerously high, it has been fantastic. Roll on the next two months...

iBite

Collected by the Ovi Team

It sounds like a joke, but it is true. An amateur British archaeologist thinks that he has found Homer's Ithaca, the home island of King Ulysses where he spent ten years upon his return. Apparently, it was not Ithaca, but the neighbouring island Kefalonia.

I'm speechless, what's next? The Acropolis is not in Athens but in Salonika?

In an interview, the Brazilian foreign minister said that it is Brazil's obligation, since it is a big country, to have an embassy in every single country, adding that the USA is doing the same.

Imperialism in the form of embassies and diplomatic personnel is something I haven't seen since the Cold War. Is Brazil dreaming of taking the place of Russia, and what are they going to offer - samba and topless dancers?

The joke government of Iran announced that they will stop giving oil to the countries that voted against them in the Security Council.

Sorry for asking doc, but did you give that oil for free? And if you did, why didn't I get any?

Turkey said that if the EU continues putting more rules on their membership in the EU, they will not accept the invitation.

Who the hell invited them?

A new reality show in Greece has begun called Big Mother. Five boys and five girls, with their mothers, are locked in the same house for two months.

Now you know how the Third World War will start.

Three people were arrested during a raid on a massage parlour in Birmingham. Nineteen women were led from Cuddles on Hagley Road by a special task force of female officers.

Why? Did anybody see the parade? Doctor, doctor I need a massage!

A Brazilian judge has been jailed for 15 years for killing a supermarket security guard in the north-eastern town of Sobral in February.

Are they going to open an embassy or a supermarket?



As human deaths from bird flu begin to mount in Indonesia, the Indonesian authorities are faced with a serious dilemma.

What? To eat the damn chicken or not?

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger followed through Thursday on his promise to veto a bill that would legalize same-sex marriage in California, saying the issue should be decided by voters or the courts.

What's the matter Arnee? Feeling insecure with your sexuality?

Five people were beaten to death in their Georgia homes were likely targeted because they were immigrants, police say.

What? Native Americans started killing everybody again? Who's not an immigrant in the USA? Maybe Chief Sitting Bull is still alive.

"Actually, I - this may sound a little West Texan to you, but I like it. When I'm talking about - when I'm talking about myself, and when he's talking about myself, all of us are talking about me." - George W. Bush, in May 2000

No comment!