

# Personals from *THE RECORD*

## Volume 3

**2004 thru 2008**

To provide a bit of levity in the paper when it was purchased in 1995 a few lines of satirical and comic comments were inserted into the Announcements section label as Personals. This project took on a life of its own as contributors joined in with responses and the Personals eventually became a separate section of the paper chronicling the fictional, wild adventures of the Zorq family and friends.

**2004.01.14**

Dear Bogash,

Thank you for your concern about my safety, dear cousin. So far I have managed to elude the men in black, our new found relatives, Vincenzo and Guido Zorqaggia.

I have invented a new high tech device that may help to ease my movements around the country. I expect there will be a great demand for my new enterprise. Everyone will want my Personal Pocket Royalty Counter. The instant a royal personage is within range the PPR Counter will emit a series of tones, or a musical barrage if you will, of the main chorus of the 1812 Overture, replete with canons firing. Although some (such as Mumsy Anastasia) have suggested a few synapses may be misfiring in this Zorq grey matter.

And so it seems I have missed a number of Kodak moments this holiday season. I trust the Solstice rituals, Twelve Days of Christmas and New Years Day family gatherings were highly successful for another year. Did Mumsy attend? What about my sister Harpy? I have heard from neither recently.

I suspect Mumsy was a prime mover and shaker doing the Dance of the Thousand Pin Feathers. She has a particular soft spot for our Irish cousins Kildonia O'Zorq and the Kildettes.

As for Harpy, I would guess she led the polar bear dip into the bay. Although, getting into hot water is more her style.

Ground Hog Day will soon be upon us. Perhaps this would be a good time for me to come out of hiding. My birthday will follow soon after that as does Harpy's and Mumsy's. I think I should start planning our festivities. I can tell you, Cousin Bogash, Mumsy Anastasia has reached the unregal age of 35, and I must say it does show.

So wait for my invitation...I'm thinking of Sumatra as a probable locale. and I've got dibs on the Temple of the Fire Goddess.

Pyrogenically yours,

*Pandora*

**2004.01.28**

Dear Pandora,

Morton would like to know if he could negotiate a dealership here for your PPRC. He is also wondering if there are settings on it for various degrees of pedigree? Sometimes one only wants to be warned of a king or queen, mere princelings and distant cousins can be such a bore at times.

Preparations are under way for the annual Ground Hog Day celebrations. No ground hogs around here, though, so we are looking for a reasonable substitute to fill the role. Last year Fenster tried to do the rituals with a badger. Bad idea, that. The critter wasn't coming out of his hole as required so Fenster poked a stick in the burrow to stimulate some action. He got plenty. Not only did the badger chew the stick right up to end, he also took off Fenster's sleeve, half of his boot and was making a move on his knee cap when Horton used the 12 gauge to dispatch him to his next reincarnation.

Fenster made a cute badger skin cap from the pelt. Air conditioned, too, where the buck shot passed through.

Anyhow, it gave us something to talk about around the camp fire for awhile. Many a discussion about which was the most exciting, Fenster's badger event or the time cousin Wilberdorn was in charge and used a skunk.

We are all excited about Anastasia's birthday party, but advise against Sumatra. Things are a bit dicey there at the moment. Helena says that she can set you up with cousin Ponchito Zorquista down in the Yucatan. He has the contract for several Mayan temples and would be happy to make one available for the affair.

Renaldo said he would make up a special batch of pulque for the family in Anastasia's honor. Ponchito's wife Carmelita makes a pulque and harbanero frappe that US weapons inspectors would classify as a WMD. Anyone who drinks one while eating the local frijoles con carne del pero might be considered a WMD for at least six hours afterward.

Vaya con cerveza mi amiga,

*Bogash*

**2004.02.11**

Dear Bogey and Assorted Kinfolk,

Thank you to Helena for recommending the Yucatan Mayan temples for Mumsy Anastasia's birthday bash. I think cousin Ponchito Zorquista may be on to something. However springtime in the Yucatan is just filled with commoners on Spring Break. If you still want to do this I suggest we move the gathering south to Palanque. I love Palanque. Don't you just love Palanque? Everyone just loves

Palanque. Why is it every time we go there we have to bribe the locals? Royals should not have to commiserate bureaucrats with gratuities.

Does anybody know if Yma Sumac is still doing tours? I last saw her at a Royal Command Performance at the Albert Hall. She is positively Anastasia's favourite vocalist. You should hear her sing "Happy Birthday Mr. President." It moved everyone.

Patented "Royal Spotter Satellite Technology" is extremely sensitive and our product is guaranteed to detect up to 1/54th Royal DNA. There are no franchises for my Personal Pocket Royalty Counter. All sales are final, lifetime guarantee.

Anastasia would like to encourage Renaldo and Carmelita to do their best to prepare their contributions for consumption. After that we won't need the Sumatran Fire Goddess.

Looking outside the box....

*Pandora* (in the presence of Anastasia)

## **2004.02.25**

Dear Pandora, Planque Princess:

How is the pulque in Planque? if Renaldo can't make the celebration we will still need a good source of pulque. Parties without good pulque are plain, placid, pathetic. What kind of birthday bash would it be if we couldn't get plastered on pulque, especially in Mexico?

We don't know about Yma Sumac, but Panchito says that he can provide a great mariachi band, Los Hombres de la Pulqueria. We can vouch for them as we had the good fortune to hear them play a couple of years ago down in the Sonoran Desert at the Muchachas Con Fuego celebration. What a bash that was. Los Hombres nearly created a riot with their theme Siempre Caliente.

It turned out to be a pretty caliente event for Fenster, too, who got too close to one muchacha con mucho fuego. The poor boy was burning up for weeks before the penicillin finally cured him. Ay carumba, eh? He should have stuck to the pulque.

In anticipation of the bash Morton and Horton are busy at the Chicken Ranch kitchen working on a special dish in keeping with fiery theme, Pollo Volcanico. Whole chickens stuffed with a mixture of five different chili peppers, horseradish, wasabi and ginger root blended with corn meal and three types of beans and marinated in some of Renaldo's double distilled pulque. Karakatoa was a minor event compared to some of the reactions that are possible from ingesting this piece of culinary adventurism. A large, personal ice bucket is recommended.

I must report that Ground Hog Day was a bust. We decided to use a weasel, but couldn't find any. Seems the Premiere has appointed them all to his cabinet.

Otra vez, amiga

*Bogash*

**2004.03.10**

Dear Bogity, Bogity, Bogash,

The Pulque Renaldo provided for my birthday party at Palanque was positively "poached" to perfection. I still haven't recovered from the percolating effect of the party punch on my ocular orbs. But I can tell you it has given me a pulchritudinous patina of my personage. He must patent this pink pearly potion of pulque I do believe he has discovered the Fountain of Youth (again).

Thank you for helping Pandora arrange for the most phenomenal birthday fete. The Fire Dancers were my favourite of the arranged festivities. Flaming Pollo Volcanico by Morton and Horton was never presented in such a pyrotechnic way before as by those Fire Dancers. I certainly enjoyed the mariachi band of your choice, Los Hombres de la Pulqueria. They were all they were fired up to be. I was a tad disappointed though, when Pandora told me she had tried to get the Peruvian Princess Yma Sumac to sing her songs to the fire gods and Yma was still touring with her troupe of musical muchachos from Machu Pichu. Palanque was not in her plan for partying even for my milestone birthday bash. Other delicious dishes included the Chichen Itza Chicken with Yucatan Yams. But it gave me Tulum Tummy. The repast was delightfully concluded with Caramel a Cozumel.

It was most pleasurable to see the Zorq clan again. Even daughter Harpy extricated herself from the Pacific Flotsam and Jetsam business as well as from a few other countries that have been in her pursuit of late. Everyone must actually adore Anastasia!

I'm sorry to hear your Ground Hog Day did not live up to your expectations. However, maybe you could use those weasels for St. Paddy's Day. Perhaps the Premiere will lend them to you for the day. You know, I think they are very good at speakin'more than a wee bit of the Blarney.

Your Yucatany Yammy Yummy Mammy

*Anastasia*

**2004.03.24**

Dear Anastasia:

St. Patrick's Day was quite an event at the Chicken Ranch. In honor of the good Saint's most noted feat Horton and Morton decided to hold a snake rodeo. Things got off to a pretty slow start. There were no contestants for the rattlesnake juggling, and bobbing for garter snakes drew no interest until Fenster dumped the water and filled the snake tub with some of Renaldo's pulque.

That drew too much interest. One could hardly find a place at the tub to get one's head in, and in the excitement not only was all of the pulque consumed, most of the snakes got swallowed as collateral damage.

Hernando Zorquilla came up from Columbia and brought a python. It swallowed Morton's dog, Wizzle, before Horton fixed it with the 12 gauge.

We had a pretty good traditional Irish feast to end the day, though, a seven course dinner consisting of a potato and a six pack of Guinness for all.

*Bogash*

**2004.04.07**

Dear Bogash,

We will be away for the forthcoming traditional spring holiday. I will be in pursuit of the elusive ungulate so associated with this season. I am speaking, of course, about the Easter Elk. Here on the Island, we think that the docile bunny is passé. The Roosevelt Elk is the perfect mascot that so epitomises our strength and tenacity of character. "Tough as nails" one might say in the vernacular. None of this delicate hip hopping around as not to break the eggs, for us! Teddy (Roosevelt) bears won't do. Nor teddy bunnies.

Pandora and Harpy will be with me in full pursuit. They hope to collect the discarded elk velvet to line their own baskets, and their pockets of course. It will be a new product offered at their Pacific Flotsam and Jetsam enterprise; something to offer the tourists directly from the heartland of the Island. "Vancouver Island Velvet" is sure to be a winning holiday accessory. Spring velvet may be elusive as the elk to find. But I'm sure the hunter and gatherer girls will check the willows and salmon bushes.

And so, Dear Cousin, I'm off to track our forgotten mascot. We hope to be back in time to share our antler antics with all.

From the Velvet Ungulate Underground,

Wapiti Woman,

*Anastasia*

**2004.04.21**

Dear Anatasia, Velvet Vixen,

How fared you in the seasonal quest for the valued strewings of the mighty elk? Indeed an Easter Elk has so much more to recommend than a wimpy little bunny. Roast bunny is but a pitiful morsel compared to a well braised haunch of the mighty elk, and bunny stew isn't worth the pan it is poached in. Poaching the might elk, on the other hand, is a different story, one that both Horton and Morton have advised me not to relate.

I hope that our cousins did well in their search for the prized velvet. Fenster would like some to pad his drawers if you have any excess. Bunny fur is not near as appealing to his exotic tastes. Morton also wonders if the ladies picked up any elk berries along the trail. He could use all that you can spare. He has developed a thriving business with the tourists painting them and making necklaces which he claims possess magical powers derived from the essence of the ungulate.

Life here on the remote chicken ranch is somewhat tenuous at the moment. Barricades are up to protect the flock should any over zealous chicken inspector come to raise havoc because of the bird flu thing that is going around.

Horton treated all of our feathered friends with a mix of camphor balls and fresh alfalfa. A sure antidote, he says, to combat malignant viruses. Of course now we have eggs with green yolks and a very distinctive flavour. Too bad Saint Paddy's Day has passed. Green eggs would have been a hit, and Guinness would kill the taste of anything.

Speaking of fowl, plans are being laid along with the eggs for a gala plucking contest this year in conjunction with the Summer Solstice. It is hoped that chicken pluckers from around the world will come to compete for the grand prize, a feather boa made from a blend of Rhode Island Reds and Plymouth Rocks, and once used by Phoebe LaZorque in the dance halls of Dawson City.

Por Deus et Pulli

*Bogash*

**2004.05.05**

Dear Bogash, Purveyor of Pullets,

So something is rotten in the state of Denmark....and your remote chicken ranch. Camphor balls and fresh alfalfa is sure to keep away bird flu and those pesky Environment Canada inspectors. Now, in the matter of those green egg yolks...have you considered celebrating a Dr. Seuss style "Green Eggs and Ham Day" at the ranch?

Speaking of ham, I have recently had correspondence from Dogfish Boy. Do you recall that rascal that was so unceremoniously escorted from Helena's Fish

Farm and Party Barge a couple of years ago? It seems he found himself in Hawaii last month to attend the 2nd Annual Waikiki Spam Jam street festival.

The master of mayhem was part of the team that entered the competition to set a new record for the Guinness Book of World Records, making the world's longest Spam musubi. Dogfish Boy and team beat the current record of 300 feet using 140 cans of the luncheon meat, 600 feet of seaweed wrap and 800 cups of rice. He says he can't look another can of Spam in the eye after that. For his accomplishment he won a trip for two to Spam's hometown of Austin Minnesota and a tour of the Spam museum.

In order to lessen the effects of his Spam overindulgence, I suggested he offset the nausea by carrying his prize winning Spam sculpture in his favourite lunch pail. The metal lunch box is adorned with his childhood radio heroes Dick Tracy and the Green Hornet. This grand idea did not impress the haughty security people at the airport. Dogfish Boy was last seen on the beaches of Waikiki, lunch pail in hand, thumb out and a large sign around his neck - "Minnesota or Bust."

And so, being busy on the beach as he is, Dogfish Boy did not answer my epistle inquiring about the health of the Hawaiian royal families. It has been so long since we last got together celebrating our royalness.

I plan to attend your Summer Solstice gala chicken-plucking event. I am in need of a good feather boa and one with such a family provenance as belonging to Phoebe LaZorque. I hope you were able to remove the tar after her last performance at the dance hall.

*Anastasia,*

Who is gambling on Feather Futures.

**2004.05.19**

Dear Anastasia,

The Mother's Day party was a fiasco and we are still cleaning up the mess. Fenster is in the dog house, but what is new. The police are here along with the animal control people and they say I must stop writing now, so I will report later.

*Bogash*

**2004.06.02**

Dear Bogash,

Is nothing sacred or safe? Fenster's fiasco for Mother's Day certainly exceeds all previous blowouts at the chicken ranch, even for you. I can only dare to muse

what will happen for, or to, Father's Day honourees. And what type of doghouse is Fenster in? And what about Naomi?

I have heard, by way of the royal grapevine, that the Akimbeau Twins were also present. Apparently they used their considerable combined talents to contribute to the arrival of the aforementioned local constabulary and animal control people. Arms, (the senior of the Twins) won't reveal the exact nature of the event, but Leggs insists a new gymnastic routine had nothing to do with it.

Several of the attending Cirque du Soleil members were arrested, so I hear, when the Akimbeau Twins tried their new blueberry pie-in-the-face act. Does Martin's Criminal Code cover blueberries? Perhaps Arms and Leggs Akimbeau really only know the veracity of the law for sure.

And so My Dear Cousin, you really must give me the whole truth about the event. I know how Zorq family festivities are sometimes to good to be true. I won't want to miss the next one. Speaking of missing one...what has happened to our dear Morgane and Helena? They must not miss the summer social season.

*Anastasia, Arms and Leggs Akimbeau*

**2004.06.16**

Dear Ms Akimbeau,

Recounting the sins Fenster committed on Mother's Day has been prohibited by a court injunction. Suffice to say yet another chapter of family history has been written that our descendants will spend generations living down. It is not quite as bad as when Granpa Rooster Zorq.... well, maybe we should forget that. I can tell you that the lad invited the Mothers of Malfunction to the celebration and it went down hill from there. The dyker bikers, though quite at home here on the chicken ranch, did not make a good impression on the neighbours when they came roaring through the local village on their Harleys. Maybe it was the nose rings and tatoos?

They certainly got on fine with your twins, and with the Cirque people, too fine as it turns out. Perhaps if they would have done the getting somewhere besides a public place there would have been less of a commotion, but enough said on that as I press the court's envelope too much. Fathers Day awaits with trepidation.

*Bogash*

**2004.06.30**

Bogash, or if may I use the name you were actually given at your birth, Aberswythe Daunton Bauggache Zorque.

Consider yourself exposed, you are Royal Blood, and The Royal Consort to Queen Alexandra of Maugstein-Sax-Gotha. We never jumped ship with Great Uncle George V, and changed our name to something politically correct. We are not commoners. If you continue to besmirch our Name, like some lowbred neurologist, you can expect to be cut off with a shilling.

The family has considered the probable outcome of your behaviour, and We command you to act in accordance with your true Station and Birthright, to resume your rightful place among True Leaders of Untitled Subordinates.

Do you remember, how as a young gentleman, you did not flinch from delivering the proper punishments, in person, to those decrepit hooligans who called you Abby-doo-doo? How you were able to bring the full weight of Canadian Law down on them, and got them 25 years in Her Majesty's Prison, by proving that they were guilty of treason against the Crown, by calling you malicious and hurtful things? Well Done, Lad. The fact that all 9 of them were 11 years old at the time of their sentencing, only shows the Power that we so deservedly wield. It stands as a warning.

Let the reader consider how they may admire, and change their behaviour, now that it is told to them. The readers of this humble note, I am sure, are thrilled to be let in on Great Things. As their unstable minds are reassured by deeds of Humility, they may go to their hovels and smile at this memory.

Your Grand Uncle,

*Viscount Fauntleroi-Quimby-Zorque*

(whom you know affectionately as "Uncle Soggy")

**2004.07.14**

Dear Soggy,

I assume from the fact that I have received correspondence from you that you have managed to get out of Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay, or Gitmo as the Marines call it. The family of course was not the least bit surprised that you were picked up in Afghanistan by the New Romans. What could anyone expect given your rather unique lifestyle? Setting up a tourist trap in Kabul to separate GIs from their pay cheques was not a very good idea given the current mood in the American Empire. But, getting a franchise from the Taliban was plain stupid.

I guess it must have been your connections at Whitehall that secured your release. Being a distant cousin of the Queen does have some advantage. Too bad that you lost your inventory. Fenster was particularly interested in the lockets you had containing hairs of the Prophet's beard. He wanted one to hang on his piece of the True Cross that he picked up in Rome some years back.

Morton says you should drop by and visit us at the chicken ranch this summer. He will fix your favourite dish of chicken livers boiled with cabbage and parsnips.

If you come in August we hope to have some big salmon from Helena on the floating fish farm and party barge. Horton is working on a special new recipe for salmon haggis which should be a treat.

Word comes from Sask that the tourist season in the Kootenays is in full swing. We don't expect to see him around here until the snow flies in the fall. The good news is that he has recovered from last season and most of his hair has grown back. Spooking firemen on out of control wildfires was not one of his best ideas.

The lovely Morgane seems to have dropped off of the radar screen as of late. We hope that she is alright and look forward to hearing from her again when her latest adventure is concluded. Perhaps the nefarious Viktor has captured her again. He can be such a pest.

Regarding the royal blood, it is no longer of any consequence to us. Such things were rejected by Great Uncle Vladimir Karpovik Zorqoff during the 1917 Revolution when our branch of the family joined the struggle to liberate the oppressed masses. Granted, the options for Vlady were pretty limited at the time, struggle or be strangled.

Give our regards to Aunt Frozillia,

*Bogash*

**2004.07.28**

Bauggauche Zorque!

The Blood Royal is of no consequence? Let me tell you a thing or two. Genetics are the reason you are Who You Are. Not this façade of being a low- life. The real reason you have chosen to identify with the uninformed, the drunken, the slovenly is that ....just like Your Royal Father, you are expressing the "Hedonist" gamete, chromosome 44, allele 102.

Although He did indulge, every day in "the delights the local village" AT LEAST HE COULD AFFORD IT. And you even look exactly like Him. Stop denying who and what you are. No good ever came of living a lie. Get out of the gutter and take your place among Rightful Gentlemen.

Come back to the Club, even if only for the sake of old Battsley, the coat check man. He asks every night if there's any word of "Young Master Daunton", as he always called you. He's nearing the end of his service, and as you know only death is a suitable retirement. He rambles on about the times you and he had, mumbles about love, and breaks into the most anguished sobbing, and won't be comforted.

Are you happy now? Is breaking a surrogate father's heart something you relish? All is forgiven. There is a handsome, no, an indecent amount deposited in Barclays of London for you, and Her majesty made the largest contribution, like She always does, when it's a family member's life at stake. Even I will break my

Manly Protection and say “I l o v e You”. There, it’s uttered. See what you’ve done? Maybe now?

Salubrious salutations:

*Uncle Soggy.*

**2004.08.25**

Dear Soggy,

You should know the truth about Battsley, but I can not relate it here in such a venue. Perhaps Inspector Throckmiester Crogibbon-Aldenswyth at the special crimes unit would fill you in. One has to wonder what dark secrets old Batty holds that keeps the trustees from firing him as it should have been done decades ago. I do miss Ms Monique, the hat check person. I often wonder how she has been faring all these years. The cloak room was always my favourite part of the club.

Life here on the chicken ranch is winding down from a busy summer season. We expect Glendolyn and Sask to visit soon after his contract expires in the Kootenays. I know that Sask looks forward to just sitting around and enjoying some quiet time after spending the last few months running through the trees and raiding picnic baskets and such. We are sending Fenster away to make sure nothing untoward occurs to raise the excitement level.

*Bogash*

**2004.09.08**

Dear Bogash,

The Labour Day bash on the floating fish farm and party barge was a blast. Too bad that you missed it. Horton brought a keg of his special mushroom mash, I can’t begin to adequately describe what happened here after we drank it dry. In fact it is probably a good thing that none of us can remember much at all given the state that we found the barge in when we came to the next morning. Needless to say the laundry services were taxed to their limit. The biological consequences of the event are yet to be determined.

Highlights of the party were the SLice of Life cook off where everyone made their favourite sea lice recipe, and the fish flinging contest. Figburt won the cook off with his unique sea lice chile seasoned with fermented bull kelp and sun dried salmon roe. Fenster, meanwhile, won the fish flinging contest, tossing 400 mortis into the mort boat before collapsing from exhaustion.

What a day dear cuz;

Helena Hanbasquette

**2004.09.22**

Dear Ms. Helena Hanbasquette,

I was cheered by your description of your Labour Day Bash and it reminded me so much of the good time the pulp gnomes and I had at our own Jour du Travail in the fine Parque des Chats Grands. There was the usual sacrificial charcoal BSE rumps, plus elongated gut parts in tight plastique and our favourite fermented mash. The greatest thing on the menu, however, was the Zea mays. It has never been so sweet! Everyone had at least two cobs.

The event would have been as perfect as the weather, but I heard that some fool crone had been taking pictures of kernels caught between people's teeth and... ..Excuse me, but one of the gnomes is tugging my webtrain... What's that you say, Gumpy? The "fool crone" was none other than myself? Ahem. Well! That was only because I recently acquired one of these new-fangled point'n' punch'n'pour-into-your-'puter photo units. I am still learning how to operate said unit! A few errors can be expected!

Now Gumpy tells me that the Gnome Leader is quite upset with me for making him appear twice his size in the Gnome Association Gazzetini. It wasn't my fault! Moe the Mouse moved my hand on the Enlarge icon and the screen froze, but the printer still printed. A fait accompli!

Apparently, he plans to sue me for Definition of Caricature. I do not worry, though, for a few free gallons of liquid mash fermented to his taste will mould him into the very shape as stated in the newspaper before the case gets to Courtenay.

I must say, Dear Helena, that my curiosity was piqued, by your mention of Sea Lice Chile. You wouldn't, by any happy happenstance, have the recipe? If so, would you please share it with me? I have been wondering what to do with the lice-ridden coho I caught and stuck in my freezer last month.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my request.

Yours truly,

*Lilium d'Alluvienne*

Concierge

La Lumiere Rouge, Port de Pulque, Frigon Islands

Dear Helena, Bogash and Assorted Cousins,

You will forgive me for missing the summer festival season at the Chicken Ranch and Fish Farm and Party Barge. I have just returned from a Greek Island cruise, having popped into the Olympics to catch a few competitions.

Ports of Call, being what they are, Athens was the best, My Glorious Cousins. Oopa, I say! The Australian Contingent could give the Zorq Family stiff competition on how to do a fantastic fandango. They went for the Gold in

Zorba's Dance. While not achieving the Olympic Gold they did set a new world record for the Guinness Book of World Records.

Morton and Horton would do well to take note of the Aussie's version of the "Butcher Dance" when they next contemplate the menu for the next party extraordinaire at the remote Chicken Ranch. I completely sympathize with the boys though. There were 1200 Aussies all whooping (or oopa-ing) it up on the promenade deck while Horton and Morton will have to do with a few Zorq hangers-on, parading around the chicken coops.

We could always recruit Cruise Chef Christos to whip the chickens into shape. I mean Horton and Morton here, not their fowl friends. If Chef Christos kept Cruise clientele in a rapturous state with his Summer Olympic Olive Oil Oopa dish, he could surely delight the discriminating palates of Figburt and the Party Barge and Chicken Ranch Crew.

My daughter Pandora could not accompany me on the Cruise, this year. She was busy defending her world title in dropping Pooh Sticks from the bridge. Although, I think they moved the event to Mt. Olympus for this auspicious occasion.

I must take my leave now, Dear Cousins, with feet firmly planted in Terra Firma, whilst gazing Heavenward. The Harvest Moon is almost upon us. I must find my best Loony apparel to prepare for the Harvest Festival and Loon Leering Gala.

Till then,

Your Dancin' Queen Cousin,

*Anastasia Zorba Zorq*

**2004.10.06**

Dear Anastasia,

Your Olympic adventure and cruise sounds like quite the experience, one of mythic proportions. It reminds me of the time I spent as an acolyte at the temple in Delphi during my wandering years. I was taken in by my uncle Pyronious Zorquopholous who was hanging out with the Oracle at the time. Her visions and prophecies tended to vary depending on the amount of Ouzo that was involved in the process, and with us Zorqs in her entourage there was usually copious quantities to be had.

In the end Pyronious and I were both escorted out of town by the city fathers who were afraid that an Ouzo soaked oracle was bad for the tourist trade.

It was just as well that we left, the internecine strife between the followers of Apollo, Gaia, Themis and Dionysus were a bit much to take. Of course, forced

to make a choice we would have joined forces with Dionysus whose parties were the best west of Istanbul.

I left Uncle Pyro on the island of Kefallinia and went on to Rome where I resumed my studies of the Classic Era, particularly that of the Vestal Virgins and their role in both ancient and modern Roman society. But, that dear cousin is a story for another day, perhaps over a jug of Chianti and a platter of Morton's Chicken Pot Pasta. Don't ask about the pot part. Needless to say that the last time he took the dish to a community pot luck the partakers got a bit out of hand and he was lucky to slip out during the raid.

Time now to go hunt for shrooms.

*Bogash*

Dear Liliu,

So good to hear from you. You sound like almost one of the family, must be some Zorq blood in your veins from somewhere. Are you related to the d'Alluviennes of Beziers? Legend has it that several of that clan fled to the Frigon Islands a few centuries ago to steps ahead of the King and a boat load of creditors. There is also the story that the Duc de Pointliz placed a curse on the family when his twin daughters, Clarisa and Cleptidia, fled with them and went on to become internationally famous throughout the fleets of the world and turned Port de Pulque into a favorite port of call.

You may find it interesting that our latest experiment on the Floating Fish Farm and Party Barge is to start a pulp mill that uses salmon morts instead of wood for its fiber source. The coast now has more morts than trees. There are lots of issues to be worked out, but Fenster assures me that most of them can be surmounted with the right attitude. I will keep you informed.

As they say in Nihon, gambatte,

*Helena Hanbasquette*

**2004.10.20**

Dear Helena,

Thank you for your sweet recognition of my Zorq and Bezier ancestry. But I must assure you that my family did not come to the Frigon Islands to escape any King or Creditors, but to hide from the dreadful Pteryduckbill -- the de Pointliz curse to which you referred in your letter.

In fact, just last Foul Moon, the aforementioned bird-like beast swooped down on the Port de Pulque wharf and taloned onto an entire Billy Pugh basket, replete with a ton of albino loon feathers (Brilliant White 106+) and several barrels of Pulque Retude Rose.

As you may have heard, Dear Helena, Retude Rose is the Secret Ingredient in our pulque that has put Port de Pulque on the map, along with the classical talents of the twins Clarisa and Cleptidia, whom you also mentioned in your missive. (I must tell you, though, that Cleptidia suffers from the same compulsive disorder as her father and things have gone missing, like the visiting Vestal Virgins, but that is another story...)

Needless to say, the pulp gnomes were chagrined, for the loss of many moons' worth of Pulque Retude is more than the economy of the Frigon Islands can bear! Those who witnessed the theft reported that the Pteryduckbill took a trajectory towards his native Transylpsychopathia and he was just about out of sight when a strange thing happened....

At that very moment, the Thunderbird, who resides atop Snow Saddle Mountain, awoke from her century-long nap. As can be expected, she was very hungry, and there, flying right by her big beak, was the much smaller Pteryduckbill, struggling with his stolen loot. So the Thunderbird easily overtook him, devouring him in a single swallow -- Billy Pugh, Pulque Retude, loon feathers and all!

It only goes to prove the old Zorq adage that, even though you may be mean, big and ugly there is always something meaner, bigger and uglier than you, ready to gobble you up!

So, now that our local pulque product is in deep doodoo, the pulp gnomes are most interested in Fenster's assertion that salmon morts make good pulp. They are desirous of learning the technique involved in this process. Would you mind terribly sending us Fenster's e-address or cell number? The gnomes thank you in advance! Would you be so kind, Dearest Helena, to forward Bogash's e-mail, as well? I want to ask him if he has Morton's Chicken Pot Pasta recipe. The twins and I will be needing the particulars on the pot part, however, for we will be entertaining a bargeload of Steely-eyed Sylvacutters and will surely need something stronger than Retude-less pulque to offer them!

Since you did not send me your Sealice Chili, am I to assume you do not wish to share this recipe? If that is the case, I do understand, for I feel a tad territorial about my Cat Litter Cake recipe I recently acquired from Anastasia. It is absolutely delicious, and its litter-look tends to deter pixilated pixies from picking at it before dessert time!

I heard that you will be attending the Wican Festival near Elk Falls Park on October 24th! 'Twill be a gala event -- just the right occasion to wear my new tattered black spidersilk ensemble and Essence de Moisi Mungue perfume. Can hardly wait to meet you, Dear Helena!

Sincerely yours,

*Lilium D'Alluvienne*

Concierge, La Lumiere Rouge

Frigon Islands

My Dear, Dear Helena,

What, if I may ask, has been going on at that Fish Farm and Party Barge?

Our tranquil Thanksgiving repast was turned into a rude and crude version of a Reality Show when Dogfish Boy had the audacity to arrive, with great fanfare, here in Port Paradise.

He allegedly arrived from the FF&PB. But that is not my total concern. Between courses of the Salal Berry and Shroom Salad of our autumnal day dinner, Dogfish read to us from the Users' Manual of his latest indulgence. This Man/Boy took every opportunity, between great gulps of the Autumnal Avian, to describe his new Toy.

Oh, my Dear Cousin. Did you know that Silver Birch is no longer considered a tree? A favourite tree of my youth, I might add. No, Silver Birch is now the name of the colour of Dogfish Boy's new vehicle. His mighty mean machine, his new "See the USA, in a Chevrolet", his Port Paradise Passion.

Just as we were approaching the end of our, what was, delightful delectables, Fishy produced one of his famous puerile pouts. He deduced that he had to return his deal on wheels to the dealership. One wonders how he could have made the quantum leap in his mind to this conclusion by consuming copious amounts of gobbler goodies.

Dessert was digested while Fishy pondered his "error" in selecting the magnificent metallic machine. When he finally realized it was still under warranty he set his mind to returning it the next day. While I, and our guests could see no flaws in the beastie, Fishy was determined to return the merchandise.

He explained that he decided to purchase this silver birch beauty because it was surrounded by girls, in the parking lot. When he got it home, somehow, all the girls disappeared.

His Babemobile was no more. His Chick Magnet lost its draw. The Land of the Silver Birchbaitmobile was kaput. No planned parking in Port Paradise. To the Silver Scrap heap it goes.

I offered Fishy a doggy bag of dinner to try to quell his disappointment. He so graciously offered to take me for "a spin", as he says.

I think there was more than one turkey in that truck this Thanksgiving.

From the Land of the Silver Birch,

*Anastasia*

**2004.11.03**

Dear Lilium and Anastasia,

We hope that this correspondence finds you well and reasonably recovered from the All Hallows festivities. We had a few exciting moments around here. For months Fenster has been working secretly in the barn on a project he refused to discuss. As it turns out it was a sort of weapons program. For the festivities he unveiled his rocket propelled egg launcher or RPEL. When he heard it mentioned, poor Horton confused RPEL with Ripple and began to salivate, which betrays his age, but that is another story.

Anyhow, this device that Fenster designed and created was supposed to be able to launch multiple eggs in rapid fire. He should have done more testing before putting it into action. I won't bore you with the details of how the mechanism combined an egg with a cherry bomb in a PVC tube and fired it. Suffice to say that end results were not quite as the young lad anticipated.

Its first application as well as first test firing was conducted against various rural mail boxes, passing cars and hapless pedestrians in our vicinity. At least that was the plan. Not wanting to expose himself, Fenster insisted in a mobile operation whereby he fired the weapon from the safety of deep inside the ranch's van as he sped by the target.

The idea was that the RPEL would use the force of the cherry bomb to launch the egg intact out of the tube towards its target. In reality the bomb pulverized the egg and launched a half cooked, well blasted omelette with an effective range of about two feet. Of course the automatic portion worked fine and the first and last burst used up over a dozen eggs before it could be stopped. The inside of the van has the appearance of a sticky and unwashed souffle pan. Too bad he didn't throw in some green onions and spices, at least it would have been tasty.

Helena says that Figburt is working on Fenster's design, having seen some possibilities with salmon morts and other fish farm effluvia. She also passes on her greetings to you both, but is unable to write at the moment as she is currently here at the chicken ranch helping Morton develop a new fish food from chicken entrails and other assorted parts.

Renaldo has asked me to let Liliam know that should the Frigon Islanders require, he has a reserve supply of Pulque con Chile that he could send to ease the pain.

Semper pullus,

*Bogash*

**2004.11.17**

Dear Liliam, Alpine Flower,

I am delighted to hear that you found my Cat Litter Cake Recipe quite delicious. It is one of my favourite feasts for feline fetes. Knowing that you are a feline aficionado, the name Liliam came to mind when I acquired this taste treat. I am

sure the Frigon Island felines and Pulp Gnomes thanked you for providing this delightful dessert diversion. If I may say so, I think this sweet selection is even better than the Dirt Cake Recipe that I sent to you, about a decade ago. My how time, and Dirt, flies! No need to feel territorial about either recipe, Liliium Dear. Please feel free to Dish up the Dirt.

With Much Affection,

*Anastasia*

Dear Bogash,

Thank you for that riveting account of Fenster's new rocket propelled egg launcher. I was quite taken and amused with the REPL, so I passed along his accomplishments to my dear daughter, Pandora.

Pandora wants to know how Fenster got several dozen eggs from the chickens without eggsacting mortal injuries. It seems Pandora has taken part time employment, twice, to supplement her income from the Flotsam and Jetsam Salvage business here in Port Paradise, leaving her sister Harpy to tend the home fires once again. One such endeavour finds her chicken chasing. Yes, chicken chasing, Cousin. I suppose it is in the DNA. She has been hired by Fly-By-Night Enterprises to capture the foul fowls and send them off to Chicken Valhalla. Of course the sweet child had no idea how hard it is to capture a flying squawking avian from Hades. I am sorry to speak of your Chicken Ranch resident relatives in such a manner, but those talons only served to score Pandora's extremities and give Road Island Red a whole other meaning.

I encouraged Pandora to visit you and Fenster for chicken chasing tips, but the Independent Islander defended her right to Chicken Chase in a manner of her own choosing. So when not pursuing pullets, she is Mud Marching, fortunately not at the same time.

Answering an ad in the local Gazettini, Pandora is also mixing mud in barefoot fashion. Does the apple fall far from the tree, Dear Cousin?

Mud Marcher's Mother,

*Anastasia*

My Dear Bogash,

I must say that the pulp gnomes were thrilled with Renaldo's generous gift of pulque con chile, and they feasted furiously forthwith, but how fetid became the air in Gnome Hall, especially as the gnomes have no place to go but Gnome Hall these days! No pulque is being prepared, thanks to Pteryduckbill's theft of the Secret Ingredient, Retude Rose.

Although grateful that Thunderbird ate Pteryduckbill, we Frigon Islanders remain retudeless, and our livelihood, precarious and impecunious. Many

gnomes are in debt to Bea Ness Wolffe, and she's been appearing on Mound doorstoops, howling for the First Born. Very scary!

Although we Frigon Islanders had Insurance, apparently there is a prerequisite two-week "waiting period" before we can even file for it! What are we supposed to be waiting for? Foreclosure? Our First Born Wolffed down?

Primal Munster Svet Shippe, the CEO of Pulque Retude Insurance Corporation, is responsible for this outrage. By short-falling gnomes, he garnered 60 BILLION loon feathers so he could look good to his drone wasp friends. Well, he'll get his downfall, one day, if the wasps don't turn and sting him first, for Thunderbird has him in her sights. She thinks he's a bird, instead of the pork-eating gnome he is!

You should be warned that Gumpy, in direct defiance of the Pulp Gnome Leader's directive, contacted Fenster regarding the omelette catapult. Gumpy has vain hopes of omelettapulting Dooblavay the Soodeggull who has been pecking our Mounds looking for Pulquena Oil. Although we told the birdbrain that our Mounds never have any oil, but ooligan, yet he and his wife Cheznee still rip holes in our homes in search of this increasingly rare substance. The thing is, the fowl pair have defecated over any Pulquena Oil they've found elsewhere, rendering it unfit for providing the light and heat they so want for their gigantic nest. Why they insist on living in such a huge nest is a mystery—especially since Cheznee is long past egg-laying age. (Mercifully, I might add. Her last flock had her looks and his brain!)

I must tell you that Frigon Islanders commiserate with you over the Powdered Wiglets' disastrous decision to discard your excellent Riviere d'Or Zapzap in favour of the Duchy of Duncan's wimpy single-celled Buzz. Never fear, Dearest Bogash, for the Maypole Celebrations will bring you new contacts. I also wish Helena and Figburt luck with their fish effluent enterprise. By the way, the gnomes may soon have an effluent treatment system for sale. The Loyal Frigon Island Centaurs are investigating that possibility, if no retude rectitude can be found.

Semper parata, ergo semper chocolate

*Lilium d'Alluvienne*

Conciergerie de la Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2004.12.01**

Dear Anastasia,

Thanks for reminding me about that good old Dirt Cake recipe from our Gnominette Guiding days. Just for old times' sake, I dug it up and found it to be as delicious as ever! Especially the blue and red worms. It's hard to believe that

our own earth could taste so exquisitely divine! Gumpy and I sat down on a large pine mushroom and ate a whole flower pot each.

We plan on digging up a few more for the impending Winter Equinox and Waste-Water Treatment Festival. It should be a success this year, especially because...oh, I guess you haven't heard our good news! The Loyal Frigon Island Centaurs have chased the Pirates of Pointliz away, including the twins' father and siblings! We have no need to fear them anymore.

No more raids on our Mounds--well, except for the perennial Soodeggulls -- Dooblavay and Chez-nee, always circling overhead. The Centaurs also believe that we may be able to get our pulque retude rose returned to us that Pteryduckbill stole! They suggested we hire Bauer Rah-rah Chapman to sniff it out for us. Apparently, his sense of smell works even underwater. Strange for a dog, don't you think?

So, the metal fabricators and welding gnomes are busily making a long suction device to attach to my industrial vacuum cleaner to slurp up the retude out of Davey Jones' Locker when Bauer locates it for us. Oh joy! It should work, for the ad on the machine promises, "This thing sucks."

And here's Bauer coming up the path to the Mound now. I laid out the red carpet for him and everything. I see he has a motto on the silken cloth draped over his back: Nullum quod tetigit, non peonit...Latin for "Nothing that he touched, he did not p..." Oh NO!

Excuse me, Dearest Anastasia, there is something I must attend to immediately!

*Lilium d'Alluvienne*

Conciergerie de la Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

Dear Lilium and Anastasia,

Be aware that young Fenster was last seen on the highway hitching a ride to Port Paradise. It was inevitable once he heard about Pandora's escapades as a chicken chaser. Ever a chaser, that boy, and into feathers, too, not to mention the egg fetish. You should see him soon if all goes well. The last time he headed your way some years ago he was waylaid in a gay loggers bar in Port Hardy. It was quite the experience, so he has said.

Horton and Morton have been moved by the plight of the Frigon Islanders and are sending their collection of Gideons gathered from hotel rooms far and wide during their younger years as vagabonds and itinerant chicken pluckers. Should Gideon not provide sufficient solace to ease the Frigon pain, a case of KY jelly was also included in the shipment.

We are having a gala extravaganza this year to celebrate the Winter Solstice. Both Mama Been Longin and the Taliband as well as Al Nino and the Downpour will be on hand to provide the tunes. Glendolyn and Sask are coming

in from the Kootenays, and bringing a keg of special order brew custom made to old Zorq family specifications by Sask's employer in Creston. If it is as good as the Dew of Life that Great Uncle Von Zorqenburg used to produce for us in the old country this will be a festival to remember.

Helena is also attending, and bringing a vat of her special salmon roe fermented with oysters and harbenero chiles, and coagulated in chicken fat. Served with tortilla chips it puts a whole new outlook on one's attitude toward nachos. Of course there will also be the tradition salmon haggis, this year specially stuffed with sea lice and seasoned with assorted chemicals, anti-biotics and growth hormones.

As usual there will be the midnight bonfire and ritual snow dance. We have found a good source of blue clay recently, so it will be provided this year. No need to bring your own.

Renaldo, however, will not be making an appearance this year. He has been caught up in a study group searching for the hidden secrets in the Book of Revelations. Their current issue deals with the rapture. They are trying to determine how the saved will ascend to glory when the trumpet sounds. The question being whether the called shall rise as they are, or fly off into the wild blue yonder buck naked as they were born. Much debate has resulted around this topic. The au naturel faction, including Renaldo, is currently staking out the Convent of The Sisters of Perpetual Obligation, hoping to solve the mystery should the great arising happen in the near future.

Perhaps, dear cousins, the good Frigonites, or is it Frigonians, can help with the research once the works of Gideon arrive from the Chicken Ranch. There is a financial incentive. Horton is putting together a Rapture Kit to market to the faithful so that they will be truly prepared when the occasion presents itself. The question of raiments, of course, is crucial in deciding what might be appropriate for the kit. Should the Frigonese help solve the dilemma Horton is willing to establish his manufacturing facility in Port de Puque and employ a number of the locals under very generous conditions.

Vaya con cerveza,

*Bogash*

**2004.12.15**

Dear Bogash,

We did indeed receive Fenster into our midst, here at the Port. Even though he was not waylaid this time, his arrival was not in time to participate in the Chicken Chasing endeavour with Pandora. She has moved on to yet another enterprise that managed to equally capture Fenster's fancy.

In anticipation of, and preparation for, the upcoming Winter Solstice gala extravaganza you have planned, Pandora will be acting as chauffeur and tour guide to the distinguished guests and tourists alike. She has persuaded Fenster, without much ado I might add, to don the apparel of a Beefeater. She and Fenster, like Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum dressed alike, will herd the masses into the tour bus. The sight should appeal to the historic sensibilities of the Gala entertainment, Mama Been Loggin and the Taliband as well as Al Nino and the Downpour.

Pandora feels she is well prepared. She trained on the double-decker buses of Victoria. Not to dismiss her time spent on the subways of Japan, learning how to push and shove and properly load a train car. Even the Tronna Transit Commission has given her an award of excellence for Riding the Red Rocket in style. Her previous experience as a local library mascot worm led her to this path...the way of the Beefeater. I'm sure Fenster will be willing to forego feathers for this gig.

Not to be outdone by Pandora and Fenster, Dogfish Boy did not return his silver babe magnet on wheels to the dealership. Although, by his own admission, the babes still have not appeared. Noting P and F's snazzy new apparel, he is now the proud owner of a black and yellow team jersey. The team seems to be a "no name", but no matter to Fishy. He figures he cuts a fine figure in his bumblebee shirt and the babes should be swarming to him for the honey.

Perhaps it is best that we all don the blue clay you will so graciously provide for the Gala this year. That way we will have no designer label rivalries while doing the ritual snow dance around the midnight bonfire.

Until the Solstice,

*Anastasia*

**2005.01.12**

Dear Anastasia,

Avian flu has hit the chicken ranch, los pollos muy enfermo. It was quite an ending to the combined Solstice, Christmas, Kwanza, New Year's movable blow out. Some got more blown out than others, particularly those who ate Morton's special bean and cabbage chowder made with scraps of fat left over from the Christmas goose. Combining that with mal de pollo made for exciting moments around here.

Lilium was fortunate in that she was unable to attend this year's festivities, being called away to visit Sask and Glendolyn in Kootenays. No doubt she will have some stories to relate about that adventure when she returns. Horton is hoping she brings him a dirndl as a souvenir on her way back to Port de Pulque, the rest of us will settle for a crate of knackwurst and bockwurst.

How is Pandora recovering from the celebration? We made Fenster destroy the video so she won't have to worry about that clouding her future. It must have been the effect of Fishy's bumble bee outfit that got to her.

Helena left here after the party and went to Hawaii to recuperate, leaving Figburt in charge of the floating fish farm and party barge. She reports that at some of the bars in Maui you can now get a special new drink called the Premier. It is a shot of everything the house has to offer served in a thermos, and only available at the drive up window. They have such quaint things out there in the Pacific. Uncle Bjorn Zorquist used to tell tales of his adventures in the Fijii Islands where they had a special dish called Prime Minister. It was only served when a missionary came to visit. Tasted like pork, he said. Our only experience out there was with kava, but that is another story.

Still recovering,

*Bogash*

**2005.01.26**

Dear Bogash,

We do hope you have well and truly recovered from the December debacles that are the Zorq hallmarks of the festive season. Life here in Port Paradise has settled into a "quiet" mode, or downright "dull", as some may say. With the post holiday departure of Liliium, Fenster, Pandora and Dogfish Boy I find myself seeking social events. What is the pop psychology phrase for it - "cabin fever"?

Liliium is enjoying her stay with Sask and Glendolyn in the Kootenays. She reports that she has been introduced to the culture and the cuisine of the Kootenays and is enamoured with the stroganoff and the Splatzi in the Platzl. She finds herself snowbound as her All Terrain Vehicle has frozen solidly and so has taken to making snow angels in her snakeskin cowboy boots. We will hopefully see her in the spring on her return to Port de Pulque, no worse for the wear, we hope.

We are most grateful to Fenster that he has destroyed the video of Pandora's escapade as a tour bus mascot. Dogfish Boy's bumblebee shirt most definitely influenced that girl's judgement, and not for the better, I might add.

"Cabin Fever" must be running rampant in these climes. Fishy has suddenly taken the notion to take the train across Canada to the Quebec Winter Carnival. The mascot thing must be driving him to distraction, just like Don Quixote and his windmills. Fishy wants to be Bon Homme! But of course, timing is everything. Didn't anyone tell him Bon Homme is on strike?

Poor Fishy! Well I guess if he can't be Bon Homme, a stay at the Chateau Laurier Hotel will soothe his disappointed soul. Personally, I would choose to stay at the Ice Hotel, myself. We have had enough of the five star amenities and

crave the adventure of a location that melts each spring and reappears next winter, an entirely new entity. I just may do that. The thought of a hot-tub, sauna and deer-pelt covered bed makes a girl just swoon in anticipation of the decadent luxury.

I am sorry to hear that the Avian Flu has struck your chicken ranch. Poor pollos! We can only imagine how you manage to attend to the chickens while under the Festive Flu yourself.

Ice Palace Princess,

*Anastasia*

**2005.02.09**

Dear Bogash, Anastasia, Helena, Figburt, Pulp Gnomes et al,

Alas, the avian flu struck the Kimbuktuleys, too! It was apparently carried by coyotes who devoured an entire farm of foul fowls from the Lower Braindeadland. A transport truck overturned in Avalanche Pass, halfway between Nez Sanguine and High Altitude Aneurysmia, and all that escaped cargo of cluckery caught the attention of a pack of coyotes. Alas, all animals and humans in the entire region have suffered the avian misery ever since. No Solstice parties, never mind Kwanza or New Year's Blow-outs! Christmas was barely done. In fact, my elfin partner and I had quite an experience hunting for a sacrificial Pinus. Any Abies would have been OK, too, but not the local Picea--too prickly, although plentiful.

As you know from ancient tomes, evergreens have magical powers that enable warm-blooded life forms to withstand the life-threatening powers of darkness and cold, as long as you get 'em into the abode and dressed before Christmas. So we had to work fast on Dec. 22nd!

Alas, the trees sensed our intentions, and "morphed" before we could grab them. We'd spy a perfect, full-limbed victim only to find the tree was missing branches by the time we approached. I have no idea how they did this! It was twilight before we finally managed to sneak up and bag a sleeping fir.

My carriage wheels have seized, so I have been unable to return home. Besides, the unicorns have not yet returned from the North Pole, having been commissioned by an obese elf for delivery services on Christmas Eve. I have not even been able to see Gwendolyn and Sask, nor have I found a dirndl for Horton! All I've been able to do is ski! Such is life.

However, it seems my # 2 son and his fairy princess have become betrothed and will spill their vows on Reality TV, all expenses paid, shortly after the wane of the full moon. So I must get a reception party together! I was most interested in the special drinks you mentioned, dear Bogash---the "Premier" and the "Prime Minister." I hope Helena got the recipe when she was in Hawaii! The drinks

would be very strong, and if the guests are suitably plastered, they will not notice that Jimbo Elf and I are not suitably dressed, being in ski gear. We've had no time to shop for wedding garments. However, we did manage to gather knockworst, weinersnitzel, red cabbage and spatzel from the Platzl en route from the ski hill --all strapped to our skidoos. Not to worry--we are taking along a crate of Febreze, to clear the air in case the guests commit gluttony. And a bottle of Wolffblast, just in case it doesn't.

I will let you know how it all turns out!

*Lilium D'Alluvienne*

Concierge, La Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2005.02.23**

Dear Lilium, Bogash, Helena and Assorted Zorq Hangers-On,

I have been usurped!

A new Women's Movement is sweeping the Port. Clad in Royal Purple with Red Hats, these women had the impudence to lay claim to moi's royal presence. There is even one who claims title to "Her Majesty".

WE are not amused.

Her Majesty held court at a local establishment of Fine Dining, at which her court proceeded to drink a toast to every pronouncement of HM. By the end of the repast, it was evident that the new royal proclamations would be forgotten by morning. After each new utterance by HM, their Red Hats would tip and bob, brims brushing. There seemed to be no mission or vision statement, or even raison d'etre for this group of Royal Rowdies. How audacious! How frivolous to have FUN!

They held a strange induction ritual involving candles, causing the proprietor to go into fits of apoplexy. I was told, after this Red Ritual, the Royal Regalia was thrown into the air, like mortarboards on graduation day and everyone received a new Royal Red or Purple Name. I must search for the Ladies Garnet, Vermillion, Carmine, Magenta, Ruby, Rose, Lavender, Amethyst and Alexandrite and find out when they next plan to plot...

With Hattitude,

*Anastasia*

Dear Anastasia & Lillium,

The flu has flown the chicken ranch and all are well and hearty once more. Robbie Burns day was celebrated in style with a couple of kilos of salmon haggis which Helena brought over from the floating fish farm and party barge. A special treat this year was the addition of macadamia nuts and guava to the stuffing of the haggis. Kind of a Hawaiian twist added by Helena in memory of her recent vacation. The grass kilt and coconut sporrans were a cute twist, but not as amazing as Auld Lang Syne sung in Hawaiian.

The annual Ground Hog Day celebration was once again a case study for anthropologists and psychiatrists. As you know we have no ground hogs around here so each year a substitute must be found. This year Fenster borrowed a Vancouver Island marmot from the high country. He was keeping it in a cage in the chicken coop, to be placed in a hole in the pasture on the morning when the meteorological rites were to be performed. Alas, Morton found it beforehand and thought that it was a huge guinea pig, so he used it to prepare a festive Peruvian banquet. The meal was tasty, but we have no idea whether winter will continue or not, and now there is also a small matter to settle with the Conservation Officer.

Preparations are under way for the St. Patrick's Day festival. Horton is cooking up a special beverage for the occasion, sort of like Guinness, or maybe motor oil, hard to tell the difference. Morton on the other hand is working on a new recipe for corned beef and cabbage pie, kind of an Irish pasty. We do hope that you will be able to attend. Helena is bringing a vat of here special whisky pickled salmon.

Plans have just begun for an Easter extravaganza. This year it was decided to have a bunny bash. Contrary to what some of our neighbours are saying, this will not feature the entertainers from the local drinking establishment. It is not those kind of bunnies.

We are gathering as many varieties of rabbits as we can find, and Morton will be preparing them in an array of unique concoctions to tickle the palate. Bunny-on-a-stick is a favourite with me. To make Lillium feel at home after her Teutonic interlude we will also have bunnywurst and bunnybrauten. And of course we will do the bunny hop.

*Bogash*

**2005.03.09**

Dear Anastasia and Bogash,

It is with deep regret that I will not be able to attend the March 6th due, and will miss your bunnybrauten et al, Dearest Bogash!

It looks like I've come down with something more odious than the flu -- a job. Soon, I will be flying my broom (augmented with a 1994 Dust-buster and Dirt-

Devil backup), heading to Fort St. Longjohn, to attend sick and injured gnomes on various Oil and Grease Patches. (Horton and Helena would find appreciative recipients there for their special beverages.)

Probably this is for the best, for my skiing career came to a crashing end over a precipice misnamed Left Dean. The sign should have said: Left Dead. There's not much snow anymore, anyway, and my elvin friend and I had been scraping over ice, twigs, roots and rocks for some time now.

There is another reason for going North, besides bruises and impecunery, Dearest Anastasia. I, too, am being aggressively courted by Teutontuley's Red Hats and Purple Gown Gnominettes. For some reason, they thought I was old enough to join them! In retrospect, I should have availed myself of Millwright Peeko Gnome's kind offer of a face lift, using a "come-along" and a towmotor. I did, however, find a wizardess in Kimbuktuley who mixed up her magic to remove some unsightly grey matter that leaches out of my brain into my hair from time to time. (I hope she plugged up the holes that allows this outrage to occur!)

How I miss the Frigon Islands! With my chariot still 'malfunctioning' (as Scottish Don used to say, after sipping too much of the Homeland Elixer), I am hitching a ride with my elvin friend back to Port de Pulque for a brief sojourn and Morton's pie, before my embarkment to freezing points North!

See you soon!

*Lillium D'Alluvienne*

Temporarily in Kimbuktuley in the Teutontuneys

Dear Anastasia,

Your latest adventure involving Red Rituals and the tossing of the hats sounds like quite a tea party, though I suppose tea was not among the refreshments preferred by the ladies in question. Did you stand before the looking glass and perform the ceremonial passing down the rabbit hole? It has been a long time since we have held those rituals here on the Chicken Ranch. We used to employ a real hole and a March hare, but the last time out Fenster brought a ferret to the festivities whose dietary habits deprived us of key elements in the celebration, bringing the whole gala event to a bit of a messy conclusion.

Helena has sent us an invitation to attend her at the Floating Fish Farm and Party Barge. Glendolyn has come in from the Kootenays and they are preparing a beach ritual with many oysters. O' oysters, come and walk with us as the recitation goes. Morton is preparing a special dipping sauce for the occasion. It should be an adventure in Wonderland.

Viva las ostras con salsa y cerveza,

*Bogash*

**2005.03.23**

Dear Bogash,

Thank you for so kindly forwarding on Helena's invitation to her Oyster Extravaganza at the Floating Fish Farm and Party Barge. The beach ritual is new to me, but I hear it has something to do with emerging from the sea riding the waves on the half shell. Then later everyone bobs for pearls. Although, speaking with Glendolyn, it wasn't clear if the bobbing takes place in Morton's vat of dipping sauce. I think a loaf of bread is what we chiefly need. Pepper and vinegar besides are very good indeed. Maybe a pleasant walk, a pleasant talk, along the briny beach. This adventure in Wonderland will be a welcome change from the last two colourful events I have been party to.

The Red Rituals morphed into Green Games for St. Paddy's in Port Paradise. My daughters Pandora and Harpy bedecked the hall with all things of the vert hue. I can understand their enthusiasm for using their wares from the Pacific Flotsam and Jetsam salvage business, but the kelp and seaweed ribbon party favours were perhaps not to everyone's Vert Event expectations! Needless to say, this St. Paddy's Day produced many a party pooper. I am still green, and not from envy.

We do hope you can get away from the fowl business at the remote Chicken Ranch and join in the fun at Helena's. It will be a very shellfish thing to do, but you do deserve a break, dear Cousin.

Bobbing for those Pearls of Wisdom,

*Anastasia*

Dear Lillium,

So, you are off to see the Oil Well Wizards of the North. I wish you well.

Do take care, my friend. Having visited there for eleven years, I found the Muskeg can draw you in to stay longer than expected or Gumbo can be a Girl's Best Friend.

Gumbo face masks to be most refreshing. Mix two parts Oil Patch Grease Gumbo with one part Peace River Ground Ground. Carefully grind the Ground (to a pulp like consistency), mix gently and apply liberally. Leave on until Spring Break Up on the Peace River.

I do hope you will be able to attend Helena for her Oyster Extravaganza at the Floating Fish Farm and Party Barge. I am looking forward to the Pearl Bobbing in the vat of Morton's oyster dipping sauce. Perhaps it will be as invigorating as the Girl's Gumbo as a facial. Perhaps we should grind those pearls into powder too, to complete the spa appeal.

Mother of Pearl,

*Anastasia*

Dear Dos Muchachas, Lil y Ana:

Saint Paddy's Day at the chicken ranch was one celebration for the books. In fact several of our guests were booked by los Federales as a result of some of our more exciting events. Legal prerequisites bar us from describing those particular events in detail as the cases are currently before the courts and a gag order is in place. Of course, without the gag order, dear cousins, you would truly be gagging if I were to relate the more quaint aspects of the charges being laid.

Anyhow, as I know the culinary aspects are always of interest to you, I can say that Morton cooked up the traditional seven course Irish feast, a boiled potato and a six pack of Guinness for everyone except Figburt who insisted on the more civilized fare of salmon haggis and apple jack. Always the odd ball, that one.

Mama Bin Longin and the Tali Band played for the occasion. The sweet sounds of Irish melodies rendered by tambourines, castanets and pan pipes was unforgettable, to say the least.

The Spring Equinox passed with only a few obligatory rituals this year as many of the crew were still indisposed due to legal matters arising from the Irish blow out. Still, we did manage the Midnight Dance of the Nubile Blossoms and the ritual chicken rendering in the cross roads.

Currently we are all busy preparing for the Easter Bunny Celebration. Morton and Horton have been busily painting eggs, hopefully all are hard boiled this year.

*Bogash.*

**2005.04.06**

Dear Anastasia and Bogash!

Alas, I have missed not only St. Paddy's Day, but also the Oil Well Wizards of the North and the melting muskeg which passes for Springtime up there. (Must partake of the Piece River's face gumbo next time I'm up! Sounds exciting!)

I had to nurse a Sprite in Parksburg. (You've heard of Parksburg, haven't you? It was voted Tacky Capital of Wet Coast Island for the 10th year in a row! Oosoyusedup in the Okeynoggin put up some real competition when it concreted its entire beachfront and axed its last tree over three feet tall. (Gnome feet, at that!). But Parksburg's latest architecture--Maalox Manors--was pretty impressive in the Tack department. Added to that edifice's tack score was the extensive razing of the trees on both sides of the Old Isle Cart Pathia, especially around Takki Trailer Park. Now, all of Takki is visible, assuring Parksburgers of their prize for yet another year. Crankbook in the Teutonootneys is getting pretty tacky, too. But I digress from my sad tale about the Sprite...

Alas, as you know, Sprites are Sprites, and you can't keep a close enough watch on them, for they will escape to the Next Dimension, ASAP. Or, which

happens all too often, they wind up wandering endlessly down the halls of the Would Grope Mall in Nan's Eye Mow! Especially if they weren't having enough fun in this Dimension! All I did was slip away to break my fast and enjoy a spray of hydrogen, oxygen and chlorine--rubbed down with a little lavender lye. By the time I returned to check up on my Sprite---she was gone, already! She even took the sun! How we shall miss her! Sprites are rare creatures these days!

Yes, Bogash, let us all hope Morton and Horton hardboil those eggs this year! I can't take another disaster!

*Lilium D'Alluvienne*

Temporarily in the Viper's Inn, Parksburg,  
Room Ssss (St. Pat forgot about this place, it seems!)

### **2005.04.20**

Just a quick word of salutation as I have just returned from the Tying of the Windsor Knot.

Cousins Lilabet and Phil hosted a magnificent reception for Charles's nuptials. Of course all were famished after the Royal Vows, so partaking of the Tea Cakes was indulged as a Royal Ritual par excellence.

We were all admiring Cousin Cami's regal feathered diadem when my dear daughter Pandora had a very unbecoming, unregal moment. Having just a wee dram or two of the Pepsi Punch in those tiny teacups caused her to consume copious quantities of the soft drink. Flinging back teacup after teacup of said refreshment, she flung a little too far. One would have thought she had forgotten her morning ablutions the way she liberally doused herself in the Royal Refreshment. Her own feathered headgear became a millinery monstrosity as fowl feathers flopped in her face. Pandora's plumage (from your very own remoted Chicken Ranch, Bogash) plunged in Pepsi Punch, stole much of the attention from Cousin Cami's featured feathers.

Pandora's Pepsi Feather Folly has us off the Royal Roster for at least until Lilabet and Phil visit us here in the colonies in the next few months.

A Merry Wives of Windsor Wannabe,

*Anastasia*

**2005.05.04**

Dear Anastasia,

Some weeks ago, one of my Loyal Subjects presented to me, your letter in The Record.

WE are amused!!!!

I did hold court at our local establishment of Fine Dining and yes we did toast a few Royal Proclamations!!! The beauty of a forgotten Royal Proclamation is that I will have the opportunity to Proclaim once again. The beauty for my Loyal Subjects is that they will also have the opportunity to toast and bob and Brim Brush is accordance with My Royal Proclamations!

It is good to be the Queen!!!

I might add that the proprietor has recovered from his “fit of apoplexy” from our candle ritual. He now understands the importance of subjects dipping their Tapers of Temptation into the Flame of Frivolity! Let it be known that By Royal Appointment of her Majesty the Queen, his Establishment of Fine Dining will have the honor to display our Official Seal. All subjects are hereby commanded to design an Official Seal and present them to the Queen for approval.

It is good to be the Queen!!!

Usurped though you may be Anastasia that is no reason to not use our official motto. You closed your discourse with “With Hattitude.” Wrong! We are not amused! I am a Kindly and Forgiving Queen so of course I grant you forgiveness!

It is good to be the Queen!!!

Live Life With Hattitude!!!

Her Royalness

*Good Queen Rose Red*

**2005.05.18**

My Dear Good Queen Rose Red,

Thank you for the Royal Epistle. We stand corrected for the grievous faux pas of the misuse of the Hattitude motto.

To atone for such, I have composed a motto to accompany the Official Seal that will be presented to the proprietor of the local establishment of Fine Dining.

With my permission, the Royal Reds may use the following on all official documents:

Vetula Petasus Rufus - Roughly translated as Aged Female Red Hats. Or more to the character of this particular grouping: Vetula Petaus Fervens - Red-Hot Aged Females with Hats

We are glad you are a Good and Forgiving Queen as we may not have heads left on which to flaunt the Rufus Petasus.

We caution you on indulging in too much dipping of the Tapers of Temptation into the Flame of Frivolity. We want to have enough energy and stamina to celebrate our Cousin Victoria's birthday in the coming week.

Have you arranged for the entertainment? Our family relishes the "bobbing" for things games. Perhaps bobbing for Pine Cones in Purple Pulque? You really must contact Renaldo, Master of Pulque for Parties.

We really must be off to other Royal Appointments and Engagements now. I do hope you have been appeased by my Purple Peace Offering of Platitudes.

With Humbled Hattitude,

*Anastasia (Amethyst) Zorq*

Dear Bogash, Poultry Potentate,

We have not heard much news from the Remote Chicken Ranch of late. We hope you are in fine fowl format. I have not been in correspondence with our Cousins for a fortnight and hope that you could inform them of our upcoming Victoria Day BBQ and Bobbing Event.

It has been a long and taxing winter and I am looking forward to exchanging Dishes of Dirt, so to speak, with our many kinfolk. Helena must have some news of Figburt. The Kootenay contingent should have some good tales to relate of Liliium's winter sojourn. Surely Horton and Morton have not been silent and inactive. And what of Dogfish Boy and Morgane?

In Anticipation,

*Anastasia*

Dear Cousins:

Spring at the Remote BC Chicken Ranch is always a busy time. Barely recovered from the St. Paddy's celebration we plunged into the Easter rituals with much gusto, if not a clear mind and firm hand. This year's theme was Resurrection Rodeo, a fun filled day of chicken wrangler sporting events with a Biblical twist which required all to dress in First Century attire as they competed for prizes.

Our variant of the Easter Egg hunt was the painted egg sucking contest, the prize going to Figburt for sucking 37 eggs dry in under 3 minutes. Helena took the Bunny Bopping event, swacking 13 of the critters with her riding crop. It would have been 14 if the judges would have allowed the swacking of Fenster who dressed up in a bunny costume just to get a few licks.

Horton and Morton retained their title as the Tag Team Champs in the Chicken Plucking event. They really had the feathers flying in that one. Dogfish Boy bested Glendolyn in the Chocolate Bunny Ear Eating Contest, and Renaldo came up from Nevada to perform the Eucharist with special pulque and mushroom wafers. Many went back for seconds.

The highlight of the day, of course, was the Easter Banquet featuring fresh salmon nailed on a cedar cross, roasted over an alder wood fire and served up with a side dish of chicken stew, a by-product of the plucking contest. For us it was but yet another fantastic feast, and celebration of the fine life that we have found here on the ranch. For the chickens, alas, it was the last supper.

Lilium has sent us a note saying that she is back in Sask's neighbourhood. Hopefully we will see her by Solstice.

*Bogash*

**2005.06.15**

Dear Lilium and Bogash,

I just dropped in to see what condition my condition is in. After the aforesaid Mayday Book Mound toppled, I thought I should take stock, restock the stacks and take account. As the airline advertising is wont to say, "I need a Vacation".

I thought a leisurely cruise to Porta-Vi-Alice would be the elixir of life and the sea breezes of the temperate isle would sooth this soul. However, I was misinformed. The residents have taken up new rituals since my last landing at the dock and it was hardly the quiet unassuming berg of the past.

My head in the mountain mists, as it were, when I disembarked, I was whisked away on a stretcher by a team of Search / Rescue Paramedics. They thought I was their team ringer for the Annual Feta Frenzy, cheese chasing contest. Apparently the new town sport is to chase an 8 lb. wheel of Feta cheese down the local mountainside. The prize is the cheese.

Why they thought I would be particularly fleet footed for this Feta Foot Race still confounds me. So there I was on my litter and ceremoniously dumped at the starting gate, ready to roll. And roll I did.

Feta, it seems, can be fatal. Between me rolling and the Feta revolving, we wiped out several of the competitors. And there we were at the bottom of the mount. The cheese stood alone as it crossed the Feta finish line. Keeping my eyes on the prize, I grasped the goat cheese. "My" team joined me in the Royal Victory Dance.

I'm told they have already signed me up for the Bundt and Baklava Blow out on Dominion Day.

Garnished in Goat Cheese,

*Anastasia*

Dear Anastasia (and, of course, Bogash, Queenie, et al!)

(I cannot remember if I mailed this to you before or not, I've been so busy! If so, just read the last couple of paragraphs.)

It was wonderful seeing you atop the Port de Pulque Book Mound on Mayday, Anastasia. As you were unable to attend the Gnome Hall Meeting, I must tell you that we pulp gnomes now suspect that our missing secret ingredient for our Pulque--the famed Retude Rosé-- did not fall out of Pteryduckbill's beak into Neuroses Inlet, after all! Apparently, it splashed into a vat of Lemonhart on the deck of the Slime Eel Sister, a tugboat owned by the gremlins of Restless Bight .

One of the Pirates of Lapointliz twins, Cleptidia, whispered the whole thing to Adonis Gnome in ...well... shall we say a "pillow moment"? (The walls of La Lumiere Rouge are pretty thin, and I couldn't help but overhear them.)

The proof -- 100% proof, that is --was in the quality of the Gremlins' garbled speeches at the last Mound Meeting. No one gets into that kind of shape without assistance from Retude Rosé! Of course, the Gremlins denied it, but there was no mistaking the smell of the Red Liquor on their breath. Red liquor, as you know, is THE main ingredient of our Retude Rosé!

So the Pulp Gnomes have been shadowing the Gremlins, trying to find the cache of our Retude Rosé. It's been hard on Gumpy, though. He got the first shift and followed them into Helen of Troy's Boys' Steak and Spinach Pie House. There was a cover charge, so poor Gumpy had to drink as long as the Gremmies were there. By the time they were done, so was Gumpy, and totally unfit to mount my broom, never mind climb into the trusty rusty chariot. Even Grandma Gnome's hangover soup didn't cure him , and the next day we found him laid out hugging porcelain. A pathetic sight, indeed! The Gnome Leader took his place, and we haven't seen him since...

Right now, Gumpy and I are attending a Pre-Hospital Spells and Medicine Seminar in Crankbroke in the Middle-aged Kookeneys. Participants were most interested in my poultice for dustmite bites and spider spittle. It's a simple mix of eye of newt, wing of bat and Varsol, but it works well. (Naturally, one must douse with water afterwards, and follow that with Flamazine and 9 days of bed rest-- steps all too many patients miss, unfortunately.). I most enjoyed the session entitled Of Human Bandage put on by Wizard Summer Sett's Mom, but I developed a few nasty bruises during the hands-on workshop when Gumpy got carried away fastening me to a surfboard with strips of linen. I survived, however, with the help of a neck brace and crushed poppies, and I have yet another diploma to hang on my Dungeon Wall.

Love to all,

*Lilium D'Alluvienne*

Absentee Concierge of La Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque, Frigon Islands

**2005.06.29**

Dear Liliium, Anatasia and HRH:

The solstice event was a hoot this year, we went to Helena's floating fish farm and party barge so that we could properly do the Ritus Marinus with real sea water. Unfortunately we found out that things are not what they used to be. We almost lost poor Fenster who fell into a fish pen while performing a rather animated incantation. We pulled the poor lad out as quickly as possible once it became apparent that the wailing and flailing about in the fishes was not a part of the program, but the damage was done. Dear cousin Fens was covered head to toe in sea lice, all merrily munching away anywhere that they could get a grip on warm flesh.

Lucky for all of us this happened early on in the festivities. Both the seadoo rodeo and the skinny dipping social hour were cancelled as a result. Instead we all smeared ourselves with blue clay and had a wild satyr and wood nymph dance fest around a huge bonfire on the beach. Renaldo brought up a special blend of pulque del mar made with some unique secret ingredients added for that extra kick. We liked it so much that none of us can remember much that happened after the first cask was broached. and there were many casks. What we do know from the detritus strewn about that we awoke to in the morning is that we are truly glad that there was no video equipment present.

Still in the recovery stages,

*Bogash*

**2005.07.13**

Dear Bogash and Zorq Family Revellers,

We hope you have reached the final stages of your recovery from the Solstice event. Although we were not able to grace you with our presence at such, we did return to the scene of Cousin Fenster's dippity -do in the fish pens and had our own Dominion Day Doings at the Fish Farm and Party Barge.

Helena's hospitality at the Barge was tested as the travelling Red Hat Ladies arrived for Helena's pancake breakfast to start the daylong partying for Canada's own Red and White Day. The six member contingent ate their way through piles of purple pancakes and bowl(ers) of Red River Cereal, (colours befitting their regalia) all quaffed back with the remainder of Renaldo's Pulque del Mar left from the Solstice. Apparently, you neglected to locate the one remaining cask, camouflaged in salmon skin and sea lice.

Fortunately, I was able to infiltrate the RH Ladies and escape the threatened Baklava and Bundt Blowout scheduled social time. Perhaps I should have indulged. As a result of my avoidance behaviour I met up with Dogfish Boy doing his own version of Fenster's Sea Lice swim.

Instead of munching sea lice, Dogfish Boy met up with munching maggots. Mr. Macho overestimated the power of the water pressure hose and blew fish offal to kingdom come, the flying farmed fish landing squarely in his prominent proboscis. Turning the hose on himself was the only way to rid the sneezer of the offending awful offal. Live bait continued to fly through the air with the greatest of ease, shall we say. By now, everyone hit the deck trying to avoid Fishy who demonstrated a new dance for Dominion Day called the Maggot Mash. Apparently he doesn't need Renaldo's Pulque del Mar to provide entertainment for all. Fishy quickly departed in his Silver Birch Babe Magnet on wheels, leaving the rest of us to scratch our heads and other offended body parts.

As Always,

*Anastasia*

**2005.07.27**

Dearest Anastasia, et al,

Summer has come at last to the remote BC chicken ranch, and Morton and Horton report that chicks in bikinis are a much more pleasing sight than chicks in overcoats. Fenster is not sure about that, however, preferring plaid shirts and designer caulk boots to either, a taste that he perfected from hanging out too much in the bars in Port Hardy.

Fishy dropped by after fleeing the soiree at Helena's. He was still reeking of eau de mort and carrying various companions about his body that do not bear mentioning in polite company. Morton fixed him up with a dunk in a tub of sheep dip and turpentine then drug him through the local car wash on a skate board. His BO problem is somewhat abated, and to our amusement the thorough scrubbing revealed some very interesting tattoos. You should see the one with the snake, kangaroo and Miss February. It makes it plain why he is barred from almost every public pool that he has tried to swim in.

We were going to head down to Nevada for a spell with Renaldo and his brother, the famous Ronrico who we all call El Ron, but the weather has been so hot down there that the cacti are evaporating and spit vaporises in mid air, long before hitting the ground. So, instead they came up for a visit in their new RV which has a special place allotted for El Ron's cupboard. As you know that cupboard is a cornucopia of exotic delights and instruments of mystical properties, including enough pieces of the True Cross to make two or three complete crosses, and a goblet said to be the twin of the Holy Grail.

El Ron's cupboard is also said to hold the Shroud of Tureen, which is said to have covered the soup bowl of Pope Alexander VI, and an assortment of gold and silver tablets related to a variety of re-incarnations in various hemispheres. Particularly interesting are some personal items that are claimed to have belonged to the Pope's daughter, Lucrezia Borgia. Renaldo wants to turn the whole thing into a travelling exhibit to raise some cash, but El Ron is reluctant to offend any of the many deities that are represented in his collection.

Speaking of the super natural, Morton flipped a pancake that resembled an image of the Angel Moroni, trumpet and all. He was going to stick it on E-Bay and make a mint before he found out that unlike some Catholics and assorted mystics, Mormons are not into mystical manifestations, at least not much since the time that Joseph Smith received the Golden Plates on the Hill Cumorah. So, Moroni went down with butter and maple syrup, and now with a book of the pictures of the Saints in hand, Morton is flipping away, hoping for something more saleable. All of the rest of us are praying that he does not flip a likeness of Mohammed or Gabriel, we wish not to have our own Salman Rushdie in residence on our otherwise peaceful piece of sylvan paradise.

Sask has invited us out to the Kootenays for the equinox this fall, we gather quite an event is being planned with cousins coming from all of the provinces, most states, and several places in Europe and Asia. The exact location has not yet been released as the organizers do not want to give Immigration Canada any advanced opportunities to cause trouble.

Hope to see you there,

*Bogash*

**2005.08.24**

Hi Bogash, Anastasia et al!

I just returned to Port de Pulque yester eve! Great to be back to cool summer nights, familiar bugs bites and green things that stay right.

Great, also, to be back among my beloved Res quisquiliae! My beau Elphin denigrates it as "effercio scrutorum." Gumpy calls it junk. A fie on them both! It's all marvellous research material. They have no idea how much effort goes into collecting newt eyes, distilling bat guano and rendering chicken pox pustules down to usable poxels! One of these decades, I will mix my potions in just the right combination, and Voila! The cure for cancer of the coccyx, carpal tunnel-little-itis and haemorrhoids might be at hand! We'll be rich and famous and up to our axillae in Pulque (sans Rétude at the moment)! Maybe then the Elf and Gnome will appreciate my efforts and my collections!

I hope, Bogash, that you and Fenster have quite recovered from your escapades and detritus expulsions of a few moons ago. If not, I will send Gumpy over with a cauldron of Grandma Gnome's fine Hangover Soup. I trust, Anastasia, that you have recouped from last month's Dominion Day debacle, and did not overwork this time?!

Ciao for now!

Lilium D'Alluvienne

Concierge Lumière Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

Dear Bogash,

I am doing the Dance of Delight after receiving your last epistle to the Cousins. Just the thought of spending the Autumnal Equinox in the Kootenays makes a girl swoon in anticipation. Excellent hosts that they are, I know Sask and Glendolyn are going to pull out all the stops, or at least move the mountains, for this fall extravaganza of tilting of the earth and the meeting Cousins thereof. I have a feeling there will be much tilting among the usual suspects in attendance.

It seems there is more to report on the mysterious and somewhat enigmatic Dogfish Boy. Fishy thought he might emulate Fenster's favoured mode of dress and has adopted the red plaid shirts, designer caulk boots and has added his own twist to make it his own. Red suspenders have now topped the red plaid turning him into Monty Python's beloved Lumberjack, thumbs in suspenders singing the familiar "I'm a Lumberjack and I'm Ok."

What he didn't anticipate was doing a modified Log Driver's Waltz down the Inland Highway in his much ballyhooed "babe magnet" on wheels. Fishy's silver-birch coloured choice of transportation has a doppelganger as it were. Seems a much-respected member of the local Constabulary has decided to give Fishy a run for his motor and has purchased the same single-cab silver chick magnet. This purchase has proven fortuitous to Fishy. He can now speed along the highway, doing his Waltz at 160 and the Feds think it's their Sarge on the way to a crime scene.

Please forgive this short communiqué. I must go prepare for the Labour Day Picnic, the season's social highlight here in Port Paradise. Hopefully this year the entertainment committee will take my advice and do Bard on the Beach re-enactments of MacBeth.

Until then, on the Beach,

*Anastasia*

**2005.09.07**

Dear Liliu et Anastasia:

It is good to hear that fair Lil is back in Port de Pulque, the town is such a dull place when she travels abroad, and the light at the Lumiere Rouge shines a little dimmer. Sailors have been known to fling themselves off of the government pier in despair when coming ashore after months at sea only to discover her absence.

We hope that the Labour Day Fiesta went well in Port Paradise, and we read with amusement the tales of Fishy and his four wheeled hoochy. Perhaps Fishy could do a Pied Piper for Lil and lead a parade of nubile young things down to Port de Pulque, all starry eyed and enchanted with his seductive display. Perhaps then fewer sailors on the short pier would be inclined to take the proverbial long walk.

We visited the floating fish farm and party barge last month, and can report the Helena and Figburt are in fine fettle. Figgy has a new recipe for aqua salmo, that special brew he makes from the fermented carcasses of the morts. He won't divulge the new ingredients, but I can tell you that it can not be served in paper or plastic containers. Smoking anywhere within ten feet of it is also an act of sheer foolhardiness. Rumour is that Renaldo has had a hand in this.

Enroute to Helena's we stopped by Gold River for the 40th celebration. Among some of the delights that we sampled was a bit of BBQ Barramundi from down Oz way. It is a delightful and tasty fish and brought back fond memories of a trip we once took to visit cousin Rory "Matey" McZorq. We had a great time in the watering holes of Darwin, and although we did not have any Barramundi on that occasion we did meet an exciting young entertainer named Bara Mindy and her cousin Coober Patty. Unfortunately I am not sure how their act ended, as somewhere between the Tasmanian Devil Dance and the Crocodile Crawl I overdosed on KB Gold and yawned a rainbow before falling into the arms of Morpheus.

*Bogash*

**2005.09.21**

My Dearest Mumsy Anastasia,

I thought I should tell you that this year, I decided to forgo my annual foray into the Land of the Poop Decks and skip my usual raid upon Helenas Fish Farm and Party Barge during International Talk Like a Pirate Day.

Speech of the uncouth who wield cutlasses is so pass. But sometimes I find myself slipping into the vernacular ye wicked wench of a mother!

I has decided, Me Mother, to dip the doubloons in chocolate this year during the upcoming Celebration of All Things Chocolate, here on the coast. Thy Pacific Flotsam and Jetsam Salvage Business will be painted with a coating of the Aztec Ambrosia and hope that the autumnal solar rays won't have their way with it.

Ye Chocolate Coated Primo Offspring,

*Pandora*

Yo Mom!

Pandora, like tells me, shes gonna do something weird with, like CHOCOLATE! She calls it Culturally Modified and is gonna dip smoked salmon in cauldron of the boiling bean.

Mom! You cant let her do that! Shes turning everything, the business, into, like, Hansel and Gretels house!

Undipped,

Harpy

**2005.10.05**

Dear Cousins:

The Autumn Equinox celebration this year is one which shall be recounted over and over again at family gatherings long after all of the participants have passed on to the promised land where wine bubbles from the rocks and sausages grow on trees. We must say that Pandora was a big hit with her mobile hot tub filled with chocolate. It gives a whole new meaning to the phrase a dip in the road, and more I can not tell you without much blushing and acute embarrassment.

As you must know by now there was a bit of an industrial accident on the fish farm and party barge during the celebration. I can happily report that no serious injuries were incurred. There has been much study done lately on the effect of cattle and methane gas related to pollution. What is little known is that there is also a methane problem with salmon farms. This is particularly true when feeding the fish meal that contains bean parts.

During the height of the festivities a rogue wave hit the barge and dumped much of our vittles into the pens, including 50 gallons of chili beans and a wash tub full of sauerkraut. The fish fed, then the water started boiling with methane being produced by the salmon. So much that when Fenster lit a cheroot there was a huge flash and many eyebrows and other exposed hairy parts of the revellers were turned to smoke. What an experience.

*Bogash*

**2005.10.19**

Dear Bogash,

I heard via the Infernal Netted grapevine that Anastasia has gone to the Big TO - a place people usually flee from, not fly to. But to each her own!

I heard via the Infernal Net that The Hound is still interested in retrieving our Rtude for us, so we may be able to go into production of our special Pulque again, hopefully by the next Equinox. There are a few strings attached, however. Hound wants to be total owner of the pulque factory! Also, he wants to pay the Pulp Gnomes less than before, claiming that they are half-sized and so should get less. The Gnomes aren't buying this, for they know the work load won't be halved, so they'll be revolting ere long, maybe joining the Mindmolders on the picket line. Everyone should.

Honestly, Bogash, I don't understand why the Autumn Equinox celebrations haven't been banned, as were the Woss Lake Logger Sports Days. Oh, those were the daze! The never-ending flow of fermented hops and Baby Duck. The bronzed brawny bodies glistening in the sun the same bodies that would become bloodied and bruised in the gladiator games which invariably followed the food fight at midnight. The band always tried to quit at 2 am, only to be beaten or

bribed with booze and what all else to stay. Later, we were finally lulled to sleep by the occasional whiff of wacky floating through the campsite and the muffled sounds of...everything else...that went on well into the morning. Dawn was always, alas, colourful. Fortunately, I always brought my cures: a quantity of cold cacao mixed with bicarbonate of soda in buckets of water, ground willowbark and Hangover Soup. I dont miss that part of the festivities.

In my quest for Life-Sustaining Sustenance (money), and escape from my enemies (the Bank), I came to roost for awhile in an enchanted part of the Kookatooneys. The darling village of Nakedcups nestles in the basin of several mountains that make those surrounding the Frigon Islands look shrunken in comparison. One behemoth south of Somewhat Lake actually threatened me as I flew by its belly, but I evaded its boulders deftly, thanks to the addition of a Dirt Devil my loyal vassal Gumpy affixed to my broom handle. This motor is in addition to the Dustbuster he attached several eons ago. I now have fraternal twin engines and I am twice as fast as before, as my creditors can attest.

I am staying in a Mansion Mound, having an entire suite to myself and...Oh dear! I cannot tell you more, for Sandman has arrived with my allotted soporifica. As I must yet make my way through the maze of shaman craft books, new newt parts and secondhand bat wings to my shroomy bed, best I get started before the stardust overtakes me!

Nighty night!

*Lilium D'Alluvienne*

absentee Concierge of the Lumire Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2005.11.02**

Dearest Cousins,

Lilium's grapevine news is correct. I have just returned from my annual sojourn to the Centre of the Universe - also called Hogtown or a kinder, gentler version - Tronna.

We were in attendance at several social and cultural events, soirees, and received guests, celebrating the autumnal and eternal, nuptials of our young cousin Aristotle Zorqopolous.

The bride's clan embraced the Zorq's and Zorqopolous' families and showered us with gold bangles and chains while the music destroyed the hearing of the fresh-faced groom's aunts and uncles of a certain age.

We have discovered that the Greeks and Sikhs have more in common than you might imagine. The revelling became so wild the Manager for Emergency Services for the Metropolis declared the venue a contaminated site and set up a

“decon” centre at the local university campus. From there, Library bookmobiles took us evacuees to concrete bunkers. Madame Emergency Services took pity on us poor partyers and served us crudités on cheese themed china service. To keep us from totally missing the wedding festivities, she organized a “Scarbble” competition. I think she meant “Scrabble”, but even I, Anastasia dared not question the Metro Matron.

We were finally released to resume feting the newlyweds. I changed into my evening attire and wore Train Travel Chic (black and pearls of course) for the commute back to the banqueting hall. We left, this time, relatively unscathed, except for the henna tattoos on our extremities.

Tattooed in Tronna,

*Anastasia*

**2005.11.16**

Dear Anastasia,

Your recounting of your recent adventure in the Smoke of Smokes (which makes our Big Smoke more like a Little Smoke which no doubt leaves some city fathers and tourism fanatics somewhat smoked which could be frustrating for them since public smoking is now a proscribed activity) reminded me of an escapade some time ago on what for obvious reasons shall remain an unnamed Greek Island.

It all happened when the whole Chicken Ranch crew along with Helena and the gang from the Floating Fish Farm and Party Barge accepted an invitation to help celebrate the 50th birthday of cousin Zorbina Zorqotheos. On arrival at the Hellenic homestead we were greeted with a round of Retsina for all and soon moved on to a tasting extravaganza featuring the many variations of locally produced Ouzo. It was a welcome transition as the licorice flavour wiped out the linger taste of turpentine left by the Retsina.

Uncle Morton, of course, was in seventh heaven, picking up many pointers from the local masters on brewing and distilling techniques, while young Fenster was enthralled with the artwork on the labels.

How many different varieties of Ouzo are produced there, I have no idea. The supply seemed endless, and never a glass was empty, nor a bladder for that matter. Sometime during the festivities, nothing is quite clear after the first hour, a huge tub of BBQ lamb, calamari and Kalamata olives marinated in oil, garlic and rosemary was put before us and attacked with gusto. A sight to remember since by then the whole assemblage was attired in the traditional costume of ancient athletes and oblivious to any thoughts of social restraint. Fortunately the local authorities were not only accustom to such revels, but also on the guest list.

Someday, perhaps, the authorities in the Frigon Islands will be so enlightened.

*Bogash*

**2005.11.30**

Dear Bogash,

Thank you for refreshing my memory about the Grand Tour to celebrate cousin Zorbina Zorqotheos' 50th birthday. Do you remember, I stopped off on the way, at the Goat's Milk Spa and never did find my way to that Greek Island? Just as well, I suppose. I would not have faired well doing the Retsina Rumba or the Fermented Foxtrot of Frigon Island, for that matter. Goat's Milk Ambrosia has stood us well over the duration.

We have been keeping a low profile here in Port Paradise since our return from the cultural rituals found in Ontario. Just contemplating the round of social extravaganzas for December has made me take to my litter to be transported around the berg. We hope that you will summon us, Dear Cousin, to share in the Fowl Fest for this joyous month. I am looking forward to sampling all the culinary fare the Zorq's are apt to concoct for our pleasure.

Lilium will delight with a variety of her witch's brew and caldron cookies. And Helena always has a new fish fandangle for our supping and participatory pleasing. Has Renaldo perfected his cranberry- mincemeat pulque? I will not inquire as to the culinary offerings of young Fenster. I would rather he not divulge exactly what he is doing with the "57 varieties of the eleven secret herbs and spices with special sauce, cheese, pickle, tomato on a sesame seed bun." I would rather not have to ask him to identify the animal protein as in "Where's the beef?"

And so I await your kind invitations to join in the seasonal merriment.

The Lady in Waiting,

Anastasia

**2005.12.14**

Dearest Anastasia and Bogash,

I will, indeed, be bringing my Witch's Brew for the Fowl Festivities, but as for the Cauldron Cookies, I am chagrined to inform you that the entire lot was confiscated by the Royal Cavalier Mound Protectors. They suspect the sweet green treats are chock full of some kind of contraband, and they've sent the cookies off to The Big Smoke for analysis. The Cavaliers have the nerve to tell me charges may be pending!

It gets worse. Remember that new Hound who came to our Village Mound, looking for our Pulque Retude? Well, the beast turned out to be every bit as monstrous a dinosaur as PteryduckBill! At first, he wagged his tale and licked everybody's face, and when they succumbed to his charms, he bit their noses. That would be bad enough, but he has a disease, something akin to Hydrophobia, but worse than HIV. This disease, Hairy Ava Reese Disorder is highly contagious. Once infected with HARD, the virus spreads rapidly to the

spinal cord and brain, mashing it up so no critical thought can occur. All body hair turns into downright fur, thick and long. The virus then travels down to the hands, scrunching them into perpetual claws. I've noticed the deleterious effects on the Pulp Gnomes, even from this distance here in Kimbuktuley, and the Gnomes were hairy enough, already! The Gnome Leader tried to warn them, but their mashing brains have prevented them from heeding him. So, I will have to bring my spells and incantations to reverse this lethal situation before the Gnomes' brains dissolve into doggie-doo, and their hands are rendered useless, while the Hound disappears with their funds, as in the PteryduckBill case. It will take more talent than I have to remove the excess body fur, however.

It's terrible when the Fowl Fest is upstaged by a Foul Pest!

Maybe it is time for Thunderbird to rise again...

Sincerely,

*Lilium D'Alluvienne,*

Concierge of Lumire Rouge

Port de Pulque, in the Frigon Islands

(visiting in the Kookatooneys)

**2006.01.11**

Dear Cousins:

I am dispatching this missive via a rather circuitous route for reasons the details of which may not be published. What I can say is that the best interests of the clan at the moment are served by several of us remaining incognito and beyond the reach of several organizations who wish to interview us in a most unpleasant way.

The holiday festivities were a hoot, probably too much so as we started on Solstice and nary let up until the 12th Day of Christmas, and it would not have ended then had we not been forced to take the current road trip for what might best be described as "health" reasons.

It is with regret that I must inform dear Lillium that despite her wishes the Thunderbird will not be rising again any time soon. The poor fellow made the mistake of rising in front of Morton at the Solstice dance and BBQ, and Morton treated him to a 12 gauge attitude adjustment and a marinade bath before introducing him to the BBQ pit. T Bird may be an exotic fare, but certainly isn't very gourmet. Our recommendation for future festivities is to stick to the salmon and turkey and other delights which are far more palatable.

Horton misses Lillium's Cauldron Cookies, too bad that they were confiscated this year. He has made up a big batch of mushroom sherbert and left some in the

freezer at the Chicken Ranch for her, should she get by that way before we return. Hopefully that will not be too long.

From somewhere East of Eden,

*Bogash*

**2006.01.25**

Dearest Bogash,

How wise of you to discern our clan's need for a low profile after the holiday festivities and other events. I was most distressed to hear of Thunderbird's demise by Bar B Q. I am somewhat mollified that the bird's murderers did not find him tasty. You must warn Morton to watch out. The fellows he's been hanging out with lately belong to the Pescecane branch of the Bonano Family, a group called the Lona Squalo, who quite possibly ordered the hit on the bird. In fact, the word out on the wharf of the Port de Pulque is that the Pescecane Family is bankrolling the Hound's efforts to gain control of our precious Pulque Rtude. Apparently, the Pescecanes are not interested in our pulque, but in our harbour as a base for their pirate and drug-running activities, and believe me, these pirates could be much worse than the Duke of Pointliz. I do miss the Duke's nieces, though. It's hard running the Lumire Rouge singlehandedly. I am so busy, I haven't even visited Anastasia since my return.

Tell Horton I'm mixing up another batch of Cauldron Cookies and will deliver them personally when my broom gets a new motor for the Dustbuster attachment. Right now the broom is parked in the garage, useless even for curling. Thank him so much for the mushroom sherbet. His thoughtfulness and yours know no bounds!

Oh, we did find out why the Hound wants our pulque so badly, and it's not for drinking it! Apparently, the beast plans on using our pulque to make a special kind of durable tire, which he will sell for a small fortune under the brand name PneuVente. The Gnomes consider that strange, but they suspect that there are even more backers behind the Hound than the Lona Squalos, et al. There are some more pirates from the other end of the Island with designs on ending Gnomes' rights to free association. You see, one of the cargo nets broke and the bag fell on the dock, spilling its contentstiny shackles, gnome-sized. The Leader's right hand man is particularly disturbed, for there is one with his name on it just a little bigger than the rest. The Gnomes are understandably frightened and, naturally, I am working hard on some spells to dispel all this distress...

Lillium

**2006.02.08**

Dearest Cousins,

Horton is waiting excitedly for the arrival of Lillium's latest batch of Cauldron Cookies. There is nothing the old man likes more in this world than getting his cookies. The last time that Sask and Glendolyn were by Glendy cooked up a special mess of Kootenay Krumbles for us which sent Horton rocketing into the fourth stage of ecstasy. There is something about the select and secret herbs and fungi which gives that recipe an almost otherworldly quality. Of course, the old family tradition of dunking them in Reynaldo's pulque probably helped enhance their magic qualities. The next time that you see Glendy you should ask her to make you up a bag full.

Speaking of bag fulls, have the Gnomes been introduced to the shackles yet, or was their arrival there for some other purpose than was first suspected? Helena says that she would be more than happy to take all of the surplus shackles that you might spare as she needs them for the play room on the floating fishfarm and party barge. Any whips, chains, alligator clips, nose rings or other odds and ends that you might have laying around would also be appreciated.

You will be happy to know that we have finally returned to our remote BC chicken ranch. It seems that the heat is finally off now that a decent interval has passed since the holiday revelries, and just in time, too, for the Ground Hog celebration.

Of course once more we could not find a ground hog, so this year Morton staked out a burrowing owl. It was an improvement over the skunk, but we are not sure how to interpret the fact that it didn't come out of its hole until night, and then flew away. Fenster thinks that it means six more weeks of Pineapple Express since a real winter doesn't seem to be in the cards anymore.

Rumour is that the Kootenay gang will be visiting for Valentine's Day, and possibly Helena and the barge crew too. Morton is working on a special recipe for the event, popcorn chicken hearts glazed with maple syrup and cinnamon. If they work out he is hoping to sell the idea to McD.

*Bogash*

**2006.02.22**

Dear Bogash,

I am finally over my spell of dyslexia and able to write right. Glad you returned to the Chicken Ranch safe and sound. Please tell Horton the Cauldron Cookies are en route via Crustacean Carrier-- slow, but more reliable than my broom nowadays. As for the shackles, the whole bag of them mysteriously disappeared. If found, Helena can have them for her special Floating Fish Farm and Party Barge functions. I am sure that Morton's popcorn chicken hearts will be a wonderful addition to the Barge galley menu!

As at your Chicken Farm, here in Port de Pulque, groundhogs do not crawl out of confined spaces announcing “Spring is nigh”, either. The Pulp Gnomes do that. At the first blast of the Presque Printemps’ Air Horn, the Gnomes race like bats out of their holes. The first ones out have the privilege of collecting the fine foam off the season’s first fermenting pulque retude-a great delicacy, to be sure! The Hound intends to create yet another line of tires from this pulque, to go under the brand name of GnuPneus. When these tires go flat, you can eat them. No further environmental hazards! However, you will get a little tipsy, so it’s a good thing you have no tires to drive!

The Equinox Ferment, which follows the Gnomes’ hole race, is quite a lot of fun and encompasses activities, such as Burp Monitoring, Flatulent Detecting and the amazingly intricate Glass-breaking Ceremonies (not unlike a highbrow Hebrew wedding, without the intimate intimacies, to be sure. “Sex” to Gnomes is merely a Roman number, and they were never good with math or Latin.).

The best game is the last-- the Great Pulque-Suckin’ ‘n’ Funky Duck Plucking competition. My dear Gumpy would have won the Grand Prix this year if only he hadn’t tripped over his Vessel Entry Kit, dropping an armful of cluck feathers and fowl fat into the pulque vat. Consequently, the pulque was rendered into a downright tarry mix. The Gnomes were so incensed that they took the ruined vat of pulque and hung it over #16 Boiler until the mixture softened enough to stick to Gumpy when they dipped him into it. He looked like a Valdez’d duck when I pulled him out and it took two days of rigorous 4-letter incantations and constant poultice applications before that feathered gunk finally fell off him. In the end, Anastasia’s Prince wound up winning the prize-an autographed copy of my most excellent book, “Summer in the Frigon Islands: August 11th 2-4 pm”. (If you are interested, it can be purchased online through [amazoned.com](http://amazoned.com) or [chapsticksters.ca](http://chapsticksters.ca)).

Until the Barge Party!

*Lilium d’Alluvienne*

Concierge, Lumiere Rouge, Port de Pulque, in the Frigon Islands

Dearest Lilium,

We were saddened that you could not be in attendance for the Vice Regal Visit here in Port Paradise. We hope that your broom and its Dirt Devil and Dust Buster attachments have been repaired and you have recovered from the fatigue of flying with manual instrumentation. I hope that you were able to arise from the couch and make it to your featherdown.

Her Honour did not appear worse for wear after opening Legislature at the beginning of the week. Since I did not have my questions answered on that day, I summoned her to Port Paradise. HH and I had quite the t te- -t te.

To those with uninitiated ear, my probing questions my have sounded like Joan Rivers on the Academy Awards red carpet - “Who are you wearing?”. HH was

wearing a Dorothy Grant red vest as Royal Regalia. Very apropos for Flag Day I might add. Afterward we dined on dainties supplied by Queen Rose Red (although in deference to HH, did not wear her red hat, purple gown and Royal regalia). I, myself, was demurely attired in Royal Blue with South Pacific blue pearls to offset HH's gold armorial bearings on the Dorothy Grant.

I must say her Aide-de-camp was a most charming fellow. We must try to find a similar manservant for tasks here in Port Paradise and abroad.

I must take my leave now and ponder future social engagements. I must have Dorothy Grant to wear....

Island Fashionista,

*Anastasia*

**2006.03.08**

Dear Bogash,

Top o' the Mornin' to ye!

I am writing to ye incognito. I am a mole for the Preservation of International Leprechauns and Front for the Emerald Republic (PILFER). I have been living amongst the wee Pulp Gnomes in Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands, promoting support for the beloved Green Isle, especially at this time o' year. But 'tis only one of me missions.

Me other assignment is to discover the ingredients of the fine pulque the wee Gnomes produce. Me colleagues and meself found that hemlock is one of the substances, and so we tried to recreate the pulque using our own hemlock. After several deaths, we realized that we had the wrong hemlock. So we have been trying to grow the Frigon Island hemlock variety with some success on the West Coast of the dear Motherland.

The other secret ingredient, we learned, is Red Liquor. After experimenting with many bottles of liquor of a rougish appearance, me colleagues and meself (and our livers) gave up. We tried different substances as a base, having some success with recycled Chinese tires. However, we felt that the product is still far cry from the Real Thing.

So meself has a wee favour to ask of ye, Dear Bogash, and that is: Would ye please use your considerable influence with Liliun d'Alluvienne, the Concierge of the Lumiere Rouge to find out what the other ingredients of the Red Liquor are? If you do this for me, I would grant ye THREE wishes.

Slainte agus tainte! Eireann go Brach !

*Carmichael Curmudgeon*, Agent and Sgt.-at-Arms PILFER

**2006.03.22**

Dear Cousins,

Now is the winter of our discontent. I am anticipating the Spring Equinox in hopes that it may pull me from the depths of the Winter Doldrums. I suspect the same affliction has had its grip on Dogfish Boy since we have not seen him in some time. I suppose after his escapades in the notorious Tri- Port area last summer, he has been keeping a low profile, and I would too.

When he returned to Port Paradise last week, we could see the apparent change, although not necessarily for the better. Still motoring around the planet in the Chevy Colorado of silver hue he has adopted a new persona or at least an alternate to the Babe Magnet. Fishy paid a visit to Seattle's own Pike Place Fish Market and has returned to be known as the Colorado Kid. Apparently inspired by the famous market's employees' antics to entertain the customers and boost morale, Fishy has developed his own techniques for the North Island.

He can be seen at High Noon every day on Port Paradise wharf demonstrating Dogfish Boy's Fish Flinging by the Colorado Kid. He will take on all challengers to be the fastest fish flinger in the West. A quick draw Kid if you will; catching the Coho, springing the Spring, tossing the Tuna. There is no charge to bear eyewitness to his floundering on the flat fish. Although a Sou'wester lies upturned at Fishy's feet to collect any coin in thanks for his filleting mid-air. To his credit, the Tri-Port crowds have lapped it up, literally and figuratively and Fishy can afford to keep his Colorado Wild West show afloat.

Watching at the Wharf,

*Anastasia*

**2006.04.05**

To my Dear Cousins at the Chicken Ranch in Le Fleuve d'Or:

Lot's happening in the Frigon Island! The Hound, observing that most Pulp Gnomes are short and round, wants them to become taller, capable of piling Pulque tubs to higher levels. To that end, Gnomes are now required daily rack time, to stretch their capabilities.

Hound has placed them on a rabbit food diet, which is kind of silly, when you think of the shape of rabbits. Worse, he forbade them from partaking of the fine Pulque Retude they produce. Of course, they would rather be racked and sacked, than miss the noon imbibing of Pulque.

The Hound, suspicious of their disobedience, installed a metal-detecting portcullis at the Gates. You see, metal leaches out during the pulquing process, and drinking the beverage before the Secondary Treatment stage leads to absorption of heavy metals. So when the Gnomes walk under the metal-detector at the Gates, an alarm goes off and the Hound pounces. So far, Hound has

nabbed 30% of the supervisors and 45% of the grunts. They are being detained in the Million Buck Hole (another story).

So the Hound decided to hire more staff-taller, brighter and pulque-abstaining. So far, he hasn't found any such employees. Taller Gnomes tend to go into the better-paying falling and bucking operations. Brighter Gnomes never come to Port de Pulque, not even for a holiday. There are no pulque-abstaining Gnomes.

No good has come from the Hound's excessively high expectations. Morale is in the outfall. Pulque production is down, retail tire companies are complaining, and so are my own customers.

Sincerely,

*Lilium d'Alluvienne*

Concierge of the Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2006.04.19**

Dear Lilium,

I have noted that you are a keen observer of the human condition. I have for you, an observance of the most unusual sort, here in the Port. It involves your very own head of the Pulp Gnomes and a prominent Port Paradise personality.

It seems the local Library Lady was serving her community dutifully by collecting the daily post. Apparently it not an uncommon event to see her with her vehicle of transport for the books. Some unenlightened souls have even gone as far as to liken her to a Bag Lady as she trundles along with a Bundle Buggy shopping cart to and from the P.O.

It was such an assumption that the visiting Pulp Purveyor made on such a day. The Little Library Lady was merrily trudging the trolley past the Fine Dining Establishment when Mr. Pulp emerged, surrounded by his entourage AKA posse. He graced her with a benevolent smile and went about his way, shaking his head acknowledging that the beautiful burg had fallen to the depths of despair.

Au contraire!

The Timid Tome Trundler retreated to her halls of higher learning. Not to fall prey to visiting VIP's again, she devised a plan. Unfortunately it involved a deviant dog that had a fondness for fiction.

Said canine culprit "Copper," liked to chew hard cover collections. The Library Coppers are after Copper for his gnawing of novels times four. Madame Librarian decided to upgrade her Bag Lady status by harnessing the Belgian sheep dog to the Bundle Buggy to haul the volumes across the verdant veldt between the Library and the Post Office.

“Mush!” “Gee!” and “Haw!” can now be heard across the expanse of the temperate Rain Forest.

Me thinks the solitude of the stacks has rendered the Library Lady one volume bereft of a collection.

Cave Canine!

*Anastasia*

Dear Cousins,

Yet another Easter Season has passed here at the Chicken Ranch and we are gearing up for the May Day celebration. Festivities here included the traditional Easter Egg Hunt and the Easter Bunny BBQ. The egg hunt had new twist this year as we decided instead of decorated eggs we would hunt pickled eggs in a number of local community watering holes. By the end of the event eggs were the least pickled items involved.

For the BBQ we did up the bunnies stuffed with marshmallows and roasted them on little crosses made of alder wood. For desert we feasted on chocolate bunny ears, and all was washed down with a special red pulque from Reynaldo called Sangre del Salvadore. What a feast.

*Bogash*

**2006.05.17**

My Dear Cousins ,

The good news is that all of us at the remote BC chicken ranch have survived the annual May Day celebration. The bad news is that the pulque supply that was in reserve for the Canada Day/Fourth of July extravaganza has been seriously depleted. Fortunately, or maybe not, Helena and Figburt have been experimenting with a new brew, Bull Kelp Beer, made from fermented bull kelp and dandelion root, and promise to have an ample supply in time for the July event.

The fact that Figburt has currently lost all of his body hair does raise some questions about whether or not they have achieved a successful recipe. The fact that agents from several cosmetic companies have been seen visiting the Floating Fish Farm and Party Barge does make one think twice before accepting a tall cool one. Sask informs us that he and Glendolyn will be bringing their own refreshments to the July bash. The thought of Sask sin pelo is enough to frighten even the most jaded of family members.

Horton and Morton would like to enquire about how things are progressing in Port de Pulque. Word has come down that the ancient pulque factory there has

been cranked up once again, albeit with a number of old cranks no longer involved in the cranking process. Is such rumor true?

Down here on the chicken ranch all are waiting with bated breath, well some with baited breath, but what else is new, for an electrifying experience. We were expecting one last summer, but it turned out to be a shocking experience instead. Hopefully we will be spared from any more jolts like that.

We celebrated Boys Day here on May 4 with the usual carp pennants and such, followed by a rousing Cinco de Mayo fiesta the next day. You may have heard that Fenster was injured a bit when he got tangled in a carp that he was putting away and was mistaken for a pinata. No broken bones, thank Zeus, but the doctor says it will be awhile before the bruises heal.

*Bogash*

**2006.05.31**

Dearest Anastasia,

I guess I forgot to send this letter, and Bogash has already written in the meantime. Although I want to answer him, first I have to warn you about the gossip being spread about you by the notorious Groper Brothers. These twin gnomes have told everyone a much different version of your encounter with Mr. Pulp. According to them, you bumped into The Hound of the Baskersville-- not Mr. Pulp.

(Note that because of Global Warming, there are more Baskers now, so the name of the Hound's town was changed to reflect this. Please be assured that Sir Arthur was notified of this via Canada Posthumous.)

However, you do recall Ragin and Ragout Groper, don't you? The identical twins from Bait Capon in Sideswipe Bay? They run the sea chicken and crayfish farm there. The twins wear the same clothes and hairdo. They eat the same foods. They got the same marks in school, got the same Grad date, and fathered the same children and married the same wife. Truly, they are alike in everything, but looks and age.

They are equally creative with the truth, as well. Nevertheless, Ragin Groper was pretty convincing when he swore that he saw you, disguised as a Bag Lady, entering the Heritage Tooth-Pulling Establishment. Everyone knows that the entrance to the old Sasquatch tunnel lies right under the dental chair. Ragout said you lifted that chair and followed the tunnel under the harbour and into the Pulque Storeroom in the Mill. There, the twins claimed, you filled your cart with buckets of pulque and covered them with shopping bags and newspapers. When you came back out, that's when you bumped into The Hound, they said. The twins said he looked at you most piteously, until his eye caught the headline, "Pulque Prices are Falling", on the front page of the Gazettini in your cart. The

twins said he howled loud enough to wake the residents of #5 Hole (the old Cemetery and Golf Course).

While the Groper Twins sounded sincere, I've been fooled by them before, so I need to be sure that you really bumped into Mr. Pulp, and not The Hound. There are a few bets riding on this, so please respond ASAP, Your Royal Highness. I could lose my Lumiere Rouge, not to mention the boy Gnome stashed in the greenhouse!

Yours truly,

*Lilium D'Alluvienne*

Concierge de la Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque, in the Frigon Islands

**2006.06.14**

Dear Bogash et al,

Greetings from the sun-drenched Tri-Port area. The local store ran out of Sun Block 30. What to do? Sip a julep? Doze in the rays?

We heard reports of, yes, Rain in the Southern Unpleasant Regions. My Prince has made a killing selling "Sun-Shovels" (tm) - shining metal lightweight models that actually bank the sunlight for those not so sunny days. Helena, Figbert, Pandora and Harpy have opted for the deluxe 10,000 candlepower portable "Sun Reservoir" (tm), as it is exclusive to the Zorq Family only.

You can get it free until the patent is accepted. Drop me a "Solar Text Message"(tm) on the Family satellite. I'm so glad I don't have to share either of our satellites with the small people like IBM or the government of Great Britain. You know how SHE seems to get preferential treatment.

As the Equinox nears, I am fondly reminded that our day, the special family day for all Zorq's can mean so much in these low prime-rate times.

We are your Sunshine, (tm)

*Anastasia*

Dear Bogash, Anastasia and other Zorq Relations,

So much has happened, I know not where to begin! It seems The Hound refuses to contribute enough towards the care and maintenance of our Senior Gnomes. In fact, he is not feeding the younger Pulp Gnomes enough to induce them to stay and make the Pulque Retude for which the entire Neurosis Outlet (Quadsceno Sound) is renown, and which we enjoy imbibing. That is, we enjoyed imbibing it,

before PteryduckBill's theft of the precious secret ingredient (the retude) and The Hound's sudden appearance with a Patent to our Pulque Retude!

Because of all this, the worst thing has happened. My ever faithful Gumpy slipped out of his shackles, took my broom and flew along the Ooligan Oil Trail to Firstscott-to-coastie. There, rival Gnome groups fought over him, well aware that he knows the recipe for making Pulque by heart. True, he does not have the secret ingredient, the retude, but the Pulque he'll help make will certainly be first rate.

The Village Mound is as devastated as I am. Although many other talented gnomes, far too many, have also escaped, his departure is the worst. He took our soul, our spirit with him. And my broom...

Oh, how I shall miss that grease-covered gnome! He was my one constant in a vastly changing life. There are few left who can count my wrinkles.

Tearfully,

*Lilium d'Alluvienne*

Concierge, Lumiere Rouge,

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2006.07.12**

Dear Zorquies,

It has been a delightful summer thus far as I tour around to the various festivals and family events. Long to remain in my (royal) memory is the combined Freedom Festival Fourth of July / Dominion Day (pardon) "Canada Day" Bogash Bash at the Remote BC Chicken Farm! What a Chicken Wingding that was!

Perhaps it was the result of imbibing Renaldo's renowned RedWhiteand-Blue/RedandWhite Pulque, but I hardly recognized some of our kin. If my olfactory senses were correct, I detected a liberal layer of crushed bat guano encasing Lilium. One wonders if she got this from her belfry. Does she have any bats there? I ponder how many Zorquidiens she had to pay for that obvious ineffective beauty treatment.

Our American Cousins introduced me to American National Cuisine. Presented on a silver platter (out of the vault for this auspicious occasion) the Fluffernutter made its Canadian debut to the younger generation. I wasn't sure if I should consume the sandwich as a confection or replicate Lilium's regime and smear the concoction on visage and other body parts. I was assured that the peanut butter and marshmallow fluff spread was an American Institution and the official sandwich of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I suppose since they are part of the Commonwealth, this American bit of sweetness is quite acceptable and most appropriate at the Freedom Festival.

However, I do recommend not making a total repast of the Fluffernutter and Pulque. Perhaps I should have accepted Horton and Morton's Chicken Wing Wonder followed by Canadian Nanaimo Bar Bat wings (a favourite of Liliium's).

Perhaps Bogash can fill in those parts of the event that the Royal Memory is having trouble negotiating after the RedWhiteandBlue...and RedandWhite...and RedWhiteandBlue...

Fluffy and Nutty,

*Anastasia*

Dear Bogash, Fenster, et al, in Zorqland's Chicken Ranch,

Please, please do something about Anastasia! Her Ladyship has been far too successful selling those Sun Shovels her Prince gave her. She's made a small fortune -- assets in the millions of Zorquidiens-- and has no more need to smuggle Pulque. She can buy the stuff in quantities sufficient to satisfy the thirst of any Victorian Libertine Politician way down in LalaLand.

Everyone up and down Neurosis Inlet has a sun shovel and now our Village Mound is a sauna. Despite Sunblock 243 and a layer of crushed bat guano, I still got sunburnt. The moss in my yard has dried up and grass is threatening to grow. I may have to, yech, get a lawn mower or find some old goat to do the job, albeit a tasteless one, so The Cougar won't be tempted to eat it now that it has run out of fawns.

I have tried and failed to reach the Princess by Solar Text Message, but I'm sure the transmitter has burned to a crisp in this heat wave. So, if you manage to get a hold of Her Ladyship before I do, please tell her she can take her sun shovel and shove it up her assets.

Steaming,

*Liliium d'Alluvienne,*

Concierge of the Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2006.08.30**

Dearest Anastasia.

Your Royal Olfactory Glands were correct. I was, indeed, bathed in bat guano-- not for beauty enhancement, however, but for sunburn. With my prognathic jaw, gingival recession, and heroic keratinic rise on my hooked nose, I am the epitome of Wiccan pulchritude. (I have, also, won a prize for being the best dried flower presentation in the Fall Fair in Port Hardly). And, yes, I do have bats in my belfry! There are no bugs around me.

The Fluffernutter sounds delicious. Bogash, naughty boy, had led me to believe that the Sudeagles' National dish was the Hot Dog. Naturally, pulque goes with all food, including my all time fave, Nanaimo Bar Bat Wings. Yes, the flavour of the wings of bats who have been imbibing pulque is startling. One's lips purse in appreciation! Afterwards, a dose of Sudafed, Maalox and distilled camel urine is prescribed to ward off side effects.

I am sorry I was so harsh before, Royal One. You may now re-introduce your sun shovels. We're water-logged here in the Frigon Islands! Meanwhile, the Eastern Zorqs in Torontosaurus are experiencing a heatwave.

By the way, you will notice I am wearing an eyepatch and cheek leach. Gumpy still has my broom, so I tried flying a Mill pushbroom instead, but when I neared the Pulque Supply Room, an overwhelming gravitational pull planted my face into a pylon. The Medicine Man assures me my vision will return, so hope to see you shortly (no pun intended).

Sincerely,

*Lilium d'Alluvienne,*

Concierge of the Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2006.09.13**

Dear Bogash and Lilium,

I wish I could say Alls well on the Western Front. Oh, I could say it but it would not be the truth.

Dogfish Boy has undergone a metamorphosis to become Budgie Boy. He's suddenly a new type of chick magnet. The standby four - wheeled chick magnet has lost its mojo so to speak. Fishy has become Budgie, in an attempt to draw the birds to his nest. Drawing upon the sympathy of the fairer sex, he has purchased a yellow budgerigar.

I guess a bird in the hand...well you know how it goes. What he doesnt know is that while he is out earning his coins, the Lutino Lothario goes online to chat- ter rooms, finding his own fair feather friends.

After a long day with only bird to banter with, Fishy, (I mean Budgie) crashed the childrens summer fete at the local library, demanding a steak on the barbie while all the kids had to make do with meagre juice, cookies and petit fours. Needless to say, the Dragon Lady Librarian showed him the chute to the book drop for a quick exit. Fortunately, none of the juvenile partygoers were traumatized; expect the four year old who ran about the circulation desk in a frenzy then started to disrobe, overcome with the excitement of it all. You have

to wonder about Fishys / Budgies effect on people. Or maybe it was that Red. No. 4 dye in the fruit punch.

Bird Dog Observer,

*Anastasia*

**2006.10.11**

Dear Bogash, Anastasia, Dogfish Boy and Assorted Zorqs,

I was amused by Dogfish's newly discovered Lothario-ness. We've noticed a softening of his philosophy in the last 700 elf-years, a new understanding of some causes behind the impoverishment among Faeries. His has been a delightful transformation!

I had a run-in with The Hound before he was collared and reined in. (Did you know his irises are red?) I fear very much for the economic viability of Port de Pulque. Other than a few minor attempts at Crystal Methodology and Can-a-Bass Gardening on the sunnier slopes of Neurosis Inlet, there is no Plan for sustainability.

The accumulated effects of The Hound's hideous treatment of Pulque Gnomes and years of Haygunomics have whittled down the numbers of Gnomes experienced in making our cherished Pulque Retude. Whoever is now in charge (The tempestuous South Wind? No one knows.) agreed to supply pulque and sustenance to Old Gnomes and two pitiful weeks of Rest and Recuperation for exhausted semi-old Gnomes still shackled on the job. These measures are too little, too late.

Pulque Gnomes await either the big bang as the House of Steam self-nukes, or the clink of a padlock on The Gate. However, Village gnomes and faeries not directly involved with the making of pulque, remain blissfully unaware of impending doom. They've gone and bought new chariots -- fortunately big enough for them to live in, once their Mounds are repossessed by L'Esprit de Banque.

I am off to Fossil Fuel Lands to practice my trade of Healing and Spell-Casting, leaving the Lumiere Rouge vacant, as the fair and talented Pointliz Twins have gone to Ed's Mound Den, taking their clientele with them. Gumby still has my broom, so I retrofitted the Chariot and winter-shoed the Valiant Steed for transporting me and my herbs, newts' eyes and batwings over the icy mountains. Come and visit next Summer Solstice!

Until then, may God speed you all!

*Lilium d'Alluvienne*

Dear Cousins:

Things are busy here at the remote BC Chicken Ranch. Fenster and friends have taken to the woods to reap the rewards offered by the fall mushroom crop. Horton has been scavenging the gravel bars and beaches along the river for salmon carcasses to use in a new masculine body spray he is developing to compete with Axe. The major components are rancid salmon oil and stale beer. The tentative brand name is Chainsaw. It is not advised to wear it in the woods except when the bears are hibernating.

Morton and Horton have been busy making all of the arrangements for the upcoming equinox celebration. Special feast items this year will include Bull Frog chowder and West Coast Kelp and Anchovie pie served with an assortment of local road kill, some of which no one has been able to identify.

In addition to the annual chicken plucking contest this year's entertainment will also feature a performance by a troop of nuns, the Sisters of Depravity and Their Bad Habits, who are visiting from the convent of Saint Sylvia the Sybarite. It should be great fun for all.

*Bogash*

**2006.11.22**

Dear Cousins,

Please excuse my long absence from corresponding with you, dear kinfolk. I spent a considerable amount of time in the Vancouver Canucks penalty box. Minus the Canucks of course. Now I know how those athletes feel...waiting and waiting to get out of that tiny enclosure in the otherwise huge GM Place.

To pass the time, and with limited space, I have taken up Instant Ikebana. I buy the seeds directly from Japan. They grow and instantly arrange themselves. Poppies and nasturtiums are the most prolific (a most auspicious sign). The cherry blossoms and flowering quince bloom sooner, on Japan time. The recent Pineapple Express weather system gave the flora a flourish not soon forgotten. I await the blooming of the mysterious Akukinga blossom. Which, as we know appears on the Zorq family coat of arms, as it has for the last 900 hundred years.

We have been all consumed with this new flowering phenomenon and have not taken the time to bid adieu (so long, farewell, good-night) to Liliun, nor attend the equinox and Hallowe'en celebrations at the remote BC Chicken Ranch. We are looking forward to hear more tales of Horton, Morton, Fenster and friends.

I suppose it is time to begin to cultivate the holly and the ivy and the mistletoe...

Artfully Arranged (and deranged)

*Anastasia*

**2006.12.20**

Dear Cousins:

All of us at the remote BC Chicken Ranch wish you all a very merry and enjoyable holiday season. Our celebrations start on December 21 with the annual Winter Solstice rituals. To recognize our Celtic roots Glendolyn and Sask are providing some excellent blue clay from the Kootenays for the midnight dance around the bonfire, and Helena is providing a barrel of pickled herring to satisfy the Norse genes in our DNA. Morton wanted to serve Lutefisk, but he was out voted by a majority of more responsible members.

The Yule/Saturnalia/Chanukah celebrations continue on December 25 (the day of Solstice under the ancient calendar) when we celebrate other various heritages by lighting up an effigy of Santa in a manger, complete with a real donkey.

Finally, on New Year's we will be having a wild sake party complete with mochi.

*Bogash*

**2007.01.17**

Dear Bogash, Anastasia, Morton, et al,

I wish I could attend the New Year's sake and mochi party at the Chicken Ranch! Alas, my chariot is stuck in the Teutontuley snow and Gumpy has not yet returned my flyable broom, so I can do naught else but ski. Sigh.

I did have a job in Grinch Prairie, Alaberta, but it turned out they wanted someone with a few less centuries behind her and more chest centimetres upfront. They didn't care that, during those centuries, I amassed a mess of potions and cures for all ills, including flagrant flatulence and dishpan hands. So, disheartened and impecunious, I returned to the Cootknees to console myself with weiner schnitzel smothered in hunter's sauce and spatzel, washed down with a gallon of pulque and Wolffblast, followed by a soak in a hot spring.

Today, I sport a newt-and-mud poultice on my throbbing head. So a reminder to all would-be New Year's wassailers --woe doth follow wassails. Nevertheless, all the best in the New Year!

*Lilium D'Alluvienne*

Kimbuktuley, Teutontuley County in the East Cootknees

Happy New Year My Dear Kinfolk!

Christmas in the Kootenays was an absolute delight by all accounts. I suppose I should be more PC as the celebrations did include Winter Solstice / Yule / Chanukah and Saturnalia. Whatever. A party is a party is a party.

Bogash, I am afraid I chose to visit Sask and Glendolyn for the New Year celebration instead of your wild sake party at the remote BC Chicken Ranch. I simply could not pass up the left over blue clay from the Kootenays. It made a stunning contrast to my traditional red and purple garb.

We assembled at the Kootenay Lake cabin on Sunday. Of course Sunday is stuck next to Monday, cheek by jowl. It never moves around; no variety. Monday, Monday, can't trust that day. Monday, Monday, happy days!

At midnight we liberally coated ourselves in the Azure Ground Ground (blue mud) and proceeded to take the traditional Polar Bear Dip. However, Dogfish Boy got a little confused, having imbibed much of Sask and Glendolyn's Kootenay Kirsch, their adaptation of the famed Zorq pulque. Preparing for the 2010 games, he liberated a luge and commandeered the luge lunge. But somebody forgot to tell Fishy that the Polar Bear Dip is not the same as the Sheep Dip. After he emerged from the trough, he found the vat of Chip Dip and did a dippity-do too! The party departed, running pell-mell back to the Kootenay Cabin after Fishy's blue dip / sheep dip / chip dip luge lunge!

Not to be outdone, The Bickerson's continued their nit-picking with each other, driving the just warmed guests back out into the snow. We paced around the shore for a time until we decided to call the local constabulary for removal of the contentious couple. By the time the Gendarme arrived, the B's had been banished and continued their nitpicking in Nelson.

And so another year has arrived and the old one thoroughly kicked into Kootenay Lake.

Recovering in the Kootenays,

*Anastasia*

**2007.01.31**

Dear Bogash, Liliun and my Loyal Kin,

After my New Year Kootenay Kaper, I have found just the right antidote. A new Diet Guru has inspired me and it is with great pleasure that I announce the following: "Dr. Dave's Cuckoo About Cocoa Diet" will be the new regimen of the Royal House.

I have gathered together daughters Pandora and Harpy along with a few of the Royal Court friends, relatives, adherents and hangers-on. The entourage will emerge as the Theobromine Babes. We will commence on a Theobromine World Tour, beginning, most naturally, on St. Valentine's Day.

We will begin in North America and then move on to the Continent. West Coast to East Coast or east to west, it doesn't matter. We haven't decided if we

should separate the caffeine from the theobromine first, or just go where the sugar and caffeine enhancement take us. We know that this Tour will separate the wheat from the chaff (or beans from the pods) as it were.

Everyone has contributed to the agenda and we anticipate that whatever we can't consume, be it chocolate or coffee, we will bodily apply as a spa treatment. Dr. Dave would surely agree with us that a merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

And what better way to make us happy and keep the heart healthy than by our daily dark chocolate ration. He and the British Medical Journal say that a few pieces of chocolate a month actually help to extend life. Therefore, it looks like I will live forever!

So, the Babes will begin with Star Bucks and a tour of Purdy's chocolate factory in Vancouver. We will roll on to Roger's Chocolates, Godiva's. We'll wind our way to Smith Falls Ontario and visit Mr. Hershey. Dipping down, we'll drop by Second Cup for a brew or two and my personal favourite Laura Secord's. On to Mr. Wonka's fine establishment, Hershey Pennsylvania and Gagnon in New Brunswick.

Jumping on our private Concord jet, we will prove that chocolate is the food / drink of the Gods (and Royalty everywhere). Paris, Belgium and Switzerland await the Women of the Theobromine Tour!

Head Theobromine Babe,

*Anastasia*

P. S. I would give up chocolate, but I'm not a quitter!

Dear Cousins:

All of the New Year's excitement is behind us and all of us here at the remote BC Chicken Ranch have more or less recuperated and are ready for the next round of rituals required to keep the earth on its orbit and the sun shining. Currently we are finishing the preparations for Ground Hog Day and Valentine's Day.

This year Morton has decided to tie a fur hat onto a chicken and use it for the Ground Hog. This has led to a vigorous debate over what the omen is if it sees its shadow and lays an egg. Horton is of the opinion that such an occurrence would signify six more weeks of egg nog.

Helena has sent us an email from the Floating Fish Farm and Party Barge to inform us of her planned presence at the Valentine's Ball. This year she is bringing her special oysters pickled in aquavit with ginseng and wasabi. Morton is fixing quail stuffed with olives and garlic and covered in a dark chocolate and bleu cheese sauce. Horton of course will make his famous salmon haggis if Helena brings enough salmon guts.

Klatu Verada Nicto,

*Bogash*

**2007.02.28**

Dear Bogash,

I want to thank you for the invitation to the Valentine Ball. I'm sorry I couldn't be in attendance but the Theobromine World Tour with The Babes occupied my social calendar for the last two weeks. A cocoa covered planet was Nirvana, Valhalla and Heaven all rolled into one Tootsie roll for us chocoholics. There was only one missing morsel -- Morton's olive and garlic stuffed quail covered in dark chocolate and bleu cheese sauce. Perhaps there are leftovers hiding in a dark corner of party refrigerator? A smackerel somewhere?

Helena will be interested to know, that while I was gone, Port Paradise was papered in the purple poetry of the self-declared Valentine Man. Dogfish Boy aka Budgie Boy has re-invented himself once again. He cornered the market with those corny Cupid cards. Every female of a certain age was the recipient of a cutesy Valentine verse. I think it was the natural extension of the New Babe Magnet in his possession.

Not drawing the crowds of people of the female persuasion, he traded his Silver Chevy for a Ruby Red Valentine vehicle. He took the Valentine Man moniker to the max, drove around the village and lived up to the name.

Every town needs its own Valentine Man.

From your Village Valentine,

*Anastasia*

**2007.03.28**

Dear Cousins,

It has been awhile since we wrote, life on the chicken ranch has been frenetic. Ground Hog Day was a problem. Morton's chicken substitute never came out of the hole because a weasel went in the hole and had it for breakfast. We were all afraid that it augured six more weeks of weasels, but that didn't come to pass unless you count Fenster who is with us all the time anyway.

The equinox was pretty tame, too much rain this year. All of the blue clay kept washing off during the bonfire dance, and as most of us are moving on in years, and as Glendolyn was not in attendance, the scenery was pretty gross.

We are currently gearing up for the Easter celebration. There will be the usual rabbit BBQ, pickled egg eating contest, and a chocolate bunny ear biting orgy. What would the chocolate bunny people do without Easter? What would we do without chocolate bunnies?

*Bogash*

**2007.04.11**

Dear Bogash, Chocolate Bunny Biter,

Now being the time past the full moon after the first Sunday, past the vernal equinox, I suppose you have now bitten your fair share of chocolate Easter bunny ears. What an orgy it must have been! We can only be thankful we weren't there to witness the carnage bunny ears strewn about, broken Easter baskets and partially chewed pickled egg remnants. If I may say, you need some instruction from the Theobromine Babes on how to handle chocolate Easter bunnies.

Upon hearing more about the Chicken Ranch Spring Follies, we are again grateful that the celebration did not progress to Geek championships and the old time ritual of biting chickens heads off instead of chocolate bunny ears. Although trying to make a silk purse out of chocolate bunny ears must be attributed to Horton and Morton, I am sure.

So I must ask you Ranchers, lend me your ears. Bogash, you have your ear to the ground and know what Zorq family dirt is being flung about with the Easter baskets. I ask you, what has become of the genteel celebrations of yore? My Faberge eggs are collecting dust in the throne room. We have not had correspondence from Helena Handbasket for months. Liliium has taken her broom to other parts of the realm and we know not of her whereabouts.

From the Land of Cracked Eggs,

*Anastasia*

Dear Bogash,

When Grundy the Groundhog exuded from his hole (and into the jaws of Wil E. Coyote), I knew The Pass was clear and it was safe to return to Port de Pulque, to my potions, newts and Gnomes.

Alas, Gumpy still hasn't returned my broom. In fact, the gnome hasn't returned, period! So I am lumbering along landlocked in my dilapidated chariot, instead of flying. How confining!

I spotted Anastasia among some old books where she just happened to discover a recipe for Perpetual Youth. She offered me a sip, but in my profession, it's wise to look wise or at least, old and frightening. So I must maintain my gingival recession and wrinkles just as they are, or lose all credibility. Worse, children wouldn't run away from me anymore and I'd get no rest at all.

Anastasia's Prince conducts his own company now-- Ducts Unlimited. He makes outfits for ducts, viaducts, inducts and outducts everywhere. Then he deducts his products, the marital palace and Anastasia's upkeep from his taxes.

As for Cousin Dogfish Boy, well, he's been swimming upstream down south in Wayward and appears far too happy for this time of year.

Fortunately, none of my potions lost their potency in my long absence and my spells have been highly successful and far-reaching. I even managed to turn one old bird down in Victoria into a frog with a spell cast from way up here. To boot, the bird had been right-winged, but I turned him into a leftie. He hasn't even noticed!

While you have fun with weasels, Bogash, here in Port de Pulque, we enjoy hide 'n' seek with painted brown cackleberries in the Lions' Park. The rain, alas, washed all the paint away. (Mind you, the downpour also kept away the Parks' proprietors!) Next year, white cackleberries will be used, instead of brown, so that no one will ever again mistake a canine dumpling for an egg.

Sincerely,

*Lilium D'Alluvienne*

Concierge, La Lumiere Rouge, Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2007.05.23**

Dear Zorq Relative Revellers,

Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! This is not just a Pan-pan. Mayday was needed for May Day.

The Annual Port Paradise May Day Parade and Wiener Roast turned into a sham this year. The sausage fest became the Wurst of the Port. Shamburgers abounded on the grill. Dogfish Boy is in love.

Manning the giant grill at the park, Fishy was totally distracted by the hordes of staunch Communists and in particular by the May Queen. Ms. May Queen was oblivious to his fine ruby-red babe magnet on four wheels that she rode on during the parade. Not caring who provided her litter, so to speak, she waved and smiled at all. But Fishy fell hard for the raven hair and brilliant smile. And so the grilled goodies became burnt offerings for the peasants of the Port.

He's now devising a plan to have Ms. May notice his many talents. He has taken on a sideline as the Port's new Pool Boy, attending the lawns and pools of the Village Literati. He envisions she will be impressed with his lawn mower callisthenics. We can only hope Fishy finds favour with the Festival's finest.

I remain,

*Anastasia*

**2007.07.04**

Dear Cousins,

I have been practicing the Jackie O. look.

I have donned the headscarf and glasses trying to emulate our late cousin. Unfortunately, the little people of Port Paradise have not appreciated my endeavours. We have not seen the light for the entire month of June. The precipitation in the Port is perpetual.

I hope your Summer Solstice Soiree was a success this year, Bogash. Needless to say, it was a washout, here in the Port. The grass is growing under the feet of the populace and the Communities in Bloom Committee can't decide if the rain should be banished or feted. Dogfish Boy has taken to dancing down the avenues, heel clicking and tapping to "Singing in the Rain".

I am in need of good news. Please relate to the relatives, your happenings at the Remote Chicken Ranch.

Jackie's cousin,

*Anastasia*

Dear Anastasia, Lillium, Et al:

It is ere awhile since I last bore you tidings of the family here on the remote BC Chicken Ranch. Much has come to pass in the intervening months and such tales there are to pique your curiosity. More than the meager space and time allocated for this hurried posting.

May Day was celebrated with much gusto. Helena and Glendolyn danced gayly around the Maypole attired in naught but the seasons most glorious blossoms. Horton and Morton joined in the merry ritual, donned in coats of chicken feathers and bonnets made from weasel skins. Renaldo brought a fresh vat of pulque and Sask a bag of assorted road kill which we cooked on sticks over the bonfire. Alas, in the morning the pulque vat was dry, the blossoms wilted, and Horton and Morton reeked of wet plumage. More I can not say for fear of legal action.

The solstice celebration, I must declare, was not up to its usual caliber. So much rain and clouds for most of June laid low the growth of botanicals so necessary for conducting the proper ceremonies. Mostly we sat around and scraped mold and mildew off of each other, much like our primate cousins pick lice and fleas.

There was one highlight, though. The Phoskins cousins from the prairie came to visit. We had not seen them for many years. You may recall Horton's sister, Philomena Zorq, who took up with Philander Phoskins, the agricultural equipment salesman from Cowpie, Alberta? They have twin children of a tender age, Phineas and Phoebe, bright lights both with great promise for the clan.

Your cousin,

*Bogash*

**2007.08.08**

Dear Bogash, HRH Anastasia, Fenton and assorted Zorqs,

I am back in the place of Pulque and there will be a great deal of that substance floating around in Port this weekend. We are Celebrating the Life and Times of the most foremost Village Mound gnome, a giant named McLairdon from the land of Kelts, Kilts and Kilter Scotch.

McLairdon had saved more lives than North Isles parawitches and wizards over the years. He needed no magical potions, flying conveyances or hoists to lift the road-wrecked from deep dark gullies. He could do it all by himself, but usually had the help of his buddy Gerrycan from Rich Mound High Toadstool, which used to be situated at the beginning of the Hard Ball Curse before it became the Nine Teenth Hole.

The Hard Ball Curse, as you will recall, was once part of Sore-End sons spud and chip enterprise. The latter went belly up when they served yellow cedar chips, instead of elk, and someone died from an allergy. But that's another story....

This weekend, we'll hit this little hard ball with all we have, trying to get the Curse done before anyone else, while the best pulque is still available.. The best pulque, as youll recall, Dearest Bogash, Anastasia and other Royal Etceteras, is the batch with the rare Retude in it. Pulque Retude will be served to the first finishers of the Hard Ball Curse. Alas, my club has developed a limp and it looks like I might not finish this tournament in time for partaking of the sainted substance. It would be a different matter if I still had my broom to fly up and adjust the direction of my balls, but Gumpy has still not returned my broom last time I ever loan him anything!.

I will have to end this letter here, Dear Hearts and Livers (I didnt forget about you, Dogfishboy!). I must hurry, for my newt herd is ready for paring and re-pairing.

Sincerely,

*Lilium dAluviennne*

Concierge, Lumiere Rouge

Port de Pulque in the Frigon Islands

**2007.08.22**

Dear Zorqies,

What a summer! After the Solstice it has been downhill all the way. Weather here in Port Paradise has gone from Heat Stroke to Rust.

Our only salvation has been the local attempts to host a Summer Fish Fete. However, the recipes were more to the liking of Horton and Morton (and perhaps Lilium) I am sure.

Everyone was drawn to the Cruel Sea Soup. It is all-natural, made with salt water and filtered by whale baleen - krill and shrimp not included. That was reserved for the Cream of Krill soup packaged in Tetra-paks. Red-Tide Tomato was a close second in popularity. A little went a long way, you might say. The Cod Eye Gumbo was rather banal in comparison.

Recovering,

*Oceanfront Annie*

(Anastasia, to you)

Cousins Annie, Lli, et al:

We happened to read an article on the net the other day about some despondent souls out on the prairie who were woefully upset. Of course your say, why wouldn't someone be upset if they had to live out on the prairie in the middle of nowhere? But it wasn't the prairie that was the cause of their great and festering displeasure, it was the state of their dearly beloved and departed pets.

You may find this amazing, but there are actually places now that cater to the pet death industry. For a fee one can take Rover or Muffykins to a pet undertaker for burial or cremation or whatever. So much for a shovel and a patch of dirt out back.

Anyhow, what was causing the grief was the fact that instead of a deluxe funeration Fido and Felix were turning up in rotting piles or buckets of ashes, which I guess is probably better than turning up in tacos.

This wouldn't have been remarkable except the Morton heard about it while following the space shuttle. This led to the idea to start a service for those who want the ultimate send off for their little buddies, the expressway to Heaven, a trip for the departed pet to their pie in the sky.

Rockets, of course, would be best for this enterprise, but Morton can't raise the dough for such, so instead he and Horton are constructing a huge cannon to send puppies to Pluto.

I will keep you posted,

*Bogash*

**2007.09.05**

Dear Cousins:

The bad news is that Horton and Morton's Pet Highway To Heaven funeral service is a flop. The good news, maybe, is that the attempt to sent Fluffy and Fido on their final journey out into the stars resulted in a whole new development which our dear uncles are hoping to franchise. Artillery fried chicken.

The boys built their cannon for the pet project and to test it out they used one of the chickens here on the ranch. They rammed the bird down the barrel on top of a charge seven and fired it off straight up in the air. There was a bang and a whoosh and smoke and feathers everywhere and then a few seconds later the blasted bird came whistling back down to earth and smacked square on the front lawn, steaming hot.

Fenster, who will eat anything, picked it up and gave it the old taste test. He enjoyed it so much that a few more fowl firings were carried out just to make sure the first wasn't a fluke. We all enjoyed the feast with a few pints of pulque.

It was decided that for maximum effect the restaurant would have the kitchen at some distance from the dining area, and the order would be delivered by firing it from the preparation area onto the table. The waiter would act as forward observer.

Initial testing of the technique indicate that much training and practice will be in order before this idea can be presented to the dining public. We start testing again next week as soon as Morton has the drumstick and other shrapnel removed from his neck and chest.

We haven't a name for the franchise yet and are open to suggestions.

*Bogash*

**2007.09.19**

Dear Bogash,

Since our last correspondence, we have been contemplating the nomenclature for Horton and Morton's cannon chicken enterprise. To attract a suitable demographic you might have to do some market research. But given the type of clientele that has been attracted to the many H & M previous enterprises, here are my suggestions as requested: Fired Fowl / Blasted Bird / Cannon Chicken / Chicken a la Cannon / Charcoal Chicken and finally - Chucked Chicken. I'm sure they will find one of these names a suitable choice. I will be awaiting the registered trademark royalties, so to speak.

Thinking on this subject has taxed the Royal Grey Matter considerably. Worse still, is noting and recording Dogfish Boy's constant reinvention of himself. He distinguished himself this summer by becoming Port Paradise Pool Boy. He added Red Rose Romeo to his list of accomplishments. Along with attending to the lawns of the Village Literati, he raises red roses. He plucks a bloom and finds a worthy female to bestow the red beauty. He might want to change the name of his ruby-red babe magnet on wheels to Rosebud and become Citizen Kane. Whilst I thought he had finally settled into a suitable persona, Fishy's latest social faux pas has earned him Garlic Bud moniker instead.

It seems Fishy had been selected to act as a judge at the Miss Port Paradise beauty contest. You might think that after the Ms. May Day fiasco he would never be invited back for any such event. I guess the Paradise Pageant committee turned their collective heads (and minds) and sent out the invitation. Fishy did well until the Reception afterward. Delighted by the “chow” table, he made his way down the heaving bord until he came to the individual quiche platter. Who says real men don’t eat quiche? Fishy can outdo us anytime with that. He chose the best looking browned quiche and sat down to enjoy. So is Fishy a Real Quiche Eating Hombre? Perhaps he is but the quiche in question was a large bulb of roasted garlic.

Fishy’s resulting smile is never to be forgotten! Carefully wrapping his Garlic Surprise in a serviette, he slipped it gently into the refuse. No smelling like a Rose for this guy.

Perhaps Fishy should get together on this venture with Horton and Morton for Blasted Bird a la Allium.

Rosy in the Port,

*Anastasia*

**2007.10.17**

Dear Cousins ,

The artillery fried chicken idea is progressing, though we still haven’t the right catchy name for the franchise yet. Morton has a lot of refining to do regarding the accuracy of the cannon, but Horton is certainly charging ahead in the recipe department. Not only can we now offer the usual poulet, we have added heavy artillery featuring both goose and turkey, though diners must sign an insurance waiver for the turkey course. On the other end of the scale we have a field gun calibrated for duck and pheasant, and a pack howitzer for delivering quail, grouse and partridge.

Not to be out done by his uncles, Fenster has started development on a scheme to deliver egg dishes via a mortar. There are no words in the English language that can adequately describe the results of this experimental form of cuisine to date.

You will be pleased to know that two of our cousins from Alabama dropped by the chicken ranch the other day. Billy Bob and Daisy Mae Zorq. Billy Bob has just received his ordination from the Oral Monica Institute of Theology (OMIT) and is now a full-fledged pastor in the Pastryite faith. He hopes that soon he will have his own radio program and later be able to expand his evangelistic endeavors.

Pastryites believe that the spirit of the world resides in pastry and that omnipotent being of the universe is the Great Pie In The Sky, usually referred to as the GPS.

The Pastryite creed can be summed up by: Work and pray, live on hay, You'll get pie in the sky when you die.

A schismatic group known as the Donut Dunkers hold that the donut, not pie, is the superior pastry. This group is heavily populated with police officers.

*Bogash*

**2007.10.31**

Dear Bogash and Cousins,

Horton and Morton's chicken chucking franchise has been clucking around my cerebral cells these past weeks. They, of course, want to attract the most financially endowed clientele. I therefore suggest they may want to explore charging the enterprise with these monikers: Horton's Howitzer Hen or Road Island Red Rockets. Perhaps even Chicle Chicken would draw the desired effect. A Cock-a-Leekie Soup concoction would surely have them flocking in. I would even be willing to provide the secret Zorq family recipe for Chicken Tetrachloride (for a nominal modest sum, of course).

I am, indeed, pleased to know that our cousins from Alabama have decided to grace us all with a visit, albeit, half-baked. Billy Bob and Daisy Mae Zorq's visit is long overdue and should have been easy as pie. Too many fingers in too many Pies you might say. But I digress, as did the Donut Dunkers. Do the police officers prefer Constabulary Crullers?

Best regards,

*Anastasia*

**2007.11.28**

Dear Bogash,

We hope that this long silence in correspondence is an indication of the success of Horton and Morton's chicken chucking / bird blasting enterprise. We have had our own Gunpowder Plot here in the Port.

In Port Paradise, Dogfish Boy convinced the local population to forego traditional Hallowe'en activities and rallied the minions for a Guy Fawkes Day extravaganza. He started by having local merchants participate in a sales blast-off price war. Sales of fireworks and Guy Fawkes effigies went through the roof.

He was, however, not successful in bribing the local aldermen to set the town square Christmas Tree on fire as tinder for customary bonfire rituals. Not to be discouraged from celebrating the "blowing things up real good," Fishy set to, in his own backyard. I understand he took inventory of his own livingroom and

decided that Granny's Victorian Demi-Lune, Chippendale hall table was just the piece, with the right provenance, to start the blaze.

Well, it was a good thing that the Port Paradise Volunteer Fire Dept., paramedic unit, Emergency Response Team and Search and Rescue paratroopers are beyond Fishy's bribes of carefully prepared Fish Flamb. It was also "a good thing" (so saith Martha) the local Dragon Lady Librarian was on patrol with her Library Raid unit, kicking down doors taking back overdue library books. She was just about to knock some sense into Fishy's front door when she noticed Fishy running out the back door. With the keen eye for all things out of order, and certainly misfiled according to Dewey, she called for back-up.

Now Fishy is left with a pile of wooden refuse in his yard, having violated at least seventeen municipal by-laws. Methinks Fishy will be filling the municipal coffers for the next few months. Although I'm sure his protests that he has been misunderstood won't fool the local constabulary that he is the long lost cousin three times removed, of Guy Fawkes. Fishy has surely been out - Fawkesed, this time.

Reporting from my Fawkes - hole,

*Anastasia*

**2007.12.12**

Dear Cousins:

It has been awhile since I reported to you on the events of the remote BC chicken ranch. The artillery fried chicken enterprise has been put on hold. There were too many technical problems, particularly around the issue of undue amounts of gun shot residue contaminating the meat. Since there is no standard allowance for contamination, such as exists for insect parts and rodent faeces, the health inspector was demanding zero tolerance. A standard that proved impossible to attain. Of course if we could have raised the suggested amount for a donation to the Premier's cousin's brother-in-law's retirement fund there is no doubt the GSR problem would have evaporated.

Halloween was a mixed bag. Morton and Horton made a batch of pumpkin elixir which made for a lively evening. The only down side was Fenster, who donned a ski mask and went trick-or-treating at the local liquor store. The clerk didn't get the joke and treated him with a taser. No charges were filed, fortunately, and we are hoping that the lad will be able to walk straight and focus his eyes again sometime before Christmas.

We are all going out to Helena's fish farm and party barge for the solstice celebration. The theme this year focuses on our marine heritage and dress for the traditional midnight dance around the bonfire will be a kelp cape, crab claw necklace and a dried jellyfish headpiece.

Smoked sea cumpers will be served with plenty of oolachan grease and Figburt's special select fermented oyster juice.

Cousins Inge and Bjorn Zorquist will be visiting. We tried to find some lutefisk to add to the feast for them, but it doesn't seem to be available anywhere around here. They will have to settle for pickled herring, which we did manage, and of course aquavit along with the oyster juice and the usual pulque.

Al Nino and the Downpour will be providing the entertainment. And, cousin Billy Bob will hold a special Pastryite high mass featuring both Chicken Pot Pie for the purists, and Timbits for the law enforcement types.

We have heard that cousin Liliun is currently on assignment in the Kootentullies and won't make the celebration, but we do hope that the rest of the clan will be able to attend.

Vaya con pulque,

*Bogash*

**2008.03.19**

Dear Cousins,

It is once again approaching the Spring Equinox and I, on my new efficiency program, have already taken a yearly trip around the sun. Another year older and deeper in debt, you might say. I am finding great solace in cream cakes.

For this most auspicious, natalitious occasion, we had our royal portraiture taken. Unfortunately I feel like my head is tucked under my arm (in homage to Anne Bolyn) at the midnight hour. Although this likeness has been Provincially approved, the proof will be in the pudding when I attempt to board a Federal aircraft. Fortunately, the trip around the sun did not require government identification and brain cells.

Now that I have returned, you must give me fuel! I need the rumours! Bring on the dirt! Make my day, Punk!

Hoping all is well with you and yours.....

*Anastasia*

Dear Cousins,

Things are busy here at the Remote BC Chicken Ranch. We had quite a celebration on March 6 commemorating the victory of Santa Anna over the red-necked Texas yahoos at the Alamo in 1836. Those inbred incompetents fouled up so bad it makes one wonder why any self respecting Texan would want to remember it. I guess it speaks to the intelligence level of your typical Texan.

Then what could you expect from a state that once choose a nincompoop like George Bush for its governor.

Anyhow, we celebrated with tacos and tamales and lots of pulque. And Al Nino and the Downpour performed Mariachi style for the event. Fenster wanted to roast a few Chihuahas for authentic Aztec dining, but Morton threatened to call PETA, so he dropped the idea. Them PETA fanatics have about as much a sense of humour as Heinrich Himmler.

Speaking of animals, the provincial government is faced with the problem of having to choose between fair representation by population or not reducing representation in the rural areas. There is a wild rumour floating around that to solve this dilemma they are considering giving the franchise to livestock. In fact, Liberal organizers are reported to have been spotted in some areas trying to organize chickens and sheep.

We are gearing up for the Equinox celebration. This year we plan to hold the rituals as the sun rises, provided that it does not snow. If it does, tequila sunrises will have to do, we have decided that we have had enough to do with snow already.

Vaya con cerveza,

*Bogash*

### **2008.04.30**

Dear Bogash, Fowl Ranchers and Cousins of All Sorts,

We are in a bit of a funk. A Royal Blue and Purple funk to be exact.

The weather here has been frightful like the rest of the province and Dominion coast to coast to coast (to coast). In fact, coast is what I have been doing.

The only relief from this perpetual pre spring slide, is Orthodox Easter Egg Extravaganza. This year, Dogfish Boy, aka Cabana / Pool Boy decided to participate in our annual Crack-Up to see if he had the Champion Egg.

Did he collude with Horton and Morton from the Remote BC Chicken Ranch to substitute those wooden ringers for eggs? Declaring that "The flowers are dead but the Pool Boy is Fresh", he took to the Greek Egg Cracking game like a rooster to the hen house. Armed with his Champion egg, one might have guessed that his egg was suspect, being the bright blue and purple that it was. Only RED eggs are allowed to play the game, but Fishy Pool Boy took his egg to the rounds of guests and gleefully smacked each person's Easter egg on the head with his wooden ringer.

He crowned himself Crack-Up King and went on to devour the roast lamb on the spit as his self-proclaimed reward for having "out - egged" the Orthodox for this

year. When the ouzo started to flow, it wasn't long before Fishy was ousted from the egg party, lamby bits and all.

We are left to clean up the excess of eggshells. I'm sure Fishy will have to walk on a few of those before he is allowed to return. I, on the other hand, will have ouzo and eggs to carry me through.

Best regards,

*Ouzo Annie*

(Aka Anastasia)

**2008.05.14**

Dear Bogash, HRH Anastasia and assorted Zorqs,

Gumpy rode my broom back to Port de Pulque and is semi-happily shackled to his post at the Pulque Mill. Meanwhile, I am happily semi-shackled to a post in another mill just off the Skookie 500. This Mill does not produce the fine pulque retude that Port de Pulque makes, but it does pay full paycheques to enable me to return to Port de Pulque in time for the Summer Solstice. There, I will be able catch up with HRH for the latest adventures of Dogfish Boy. Of course, it will be good to see Gumpy, regain my Broom and be airborne again. I have been so irritable without Broom that I have inadvertently uttered a few incantations on the Skookie 500, turning a few racers into toads, replete with warts. The Ungulates have hired me to do more of this, for it seems that a 100 km is interpreted by some drivers to be 100 mph. (It must be the Alabertan influence.) So, I am brewing a Road Potion to spread on the straight stretches of highway to combat such speedy recklessness. The Ungulates tell me to hurry with that potion...

Love and Light,

*Lilium D'Alluvienne* in Kimbuktuley

**2008.05.28**

Dear Lilium,

It is delightful to see you "back in the (Alabertan influenced) saddle again" so to speak. Although that saddle is firmly affixed to your self-proclaimed broomstick, I am sure.

We are pleased to hear that your current endeavours will allow sufficient remuneration that you may be in attendance for summer Solstice celebrations. We are always in great anticipation to see what new fashion innovations you will bring

with you from the Outside. Will you have some new potions prepared as well? Perhaps your time away has given you inspiration for some new incantations?

Upon your arrival in Port de Pulque and Port Paradise you will observe that spring has barely blossomed and we hope that the verdant beauty you so remember will be in full splendour by the Solstice.

Have you seen our dear Kootenay cousins Glendolyn and Sask during your sojourn in Kimbuktuley? We have nary a word of correspondence from them in many months.

We are sorry to burden you with these many inquiries but you have not been your usual loquacious and verbose self, this annum.

With anticipation of your reply,

*Inquisitive Annie*

(aka Anastasia)