

The Islander

Incorporating the *Dead Whale Bay Intelligencer* and *Uglets Advertiser*

May

Editorial

The Cloudwalker Hotel — not a Grey area.

Councillor and shop owner Jean Grey is doing the Ugly Islands no favours proposing that a hotel be built on top of Cloudmaker. There are no benefits for the Ugly Islands economy in this grandiose scheme, and there are many ways in which we would lose out.

For example, Jean Grey will expect us to upgrade the existing air strip to handle larger jets, and also the helicopters that will be used to shuttle the hotel guests up to Cloudmaker. Or are we going to see a return of the great cable-car debate? And who will pay for the air strip?

Either way, you can be sure that the people who go to any Cloudmaker hotel will want to stay up there, wandering around over the stark majesty that is Cloudmaker, and trampling all over the rare flora that make Cloudmaker such a wonder.

Again, there will be no trade for the shopkeepers of Big Ugly, other than those who are fortunate enough to have permission to install boutiques in the edifice that Jean Grey proposes that her friends be allowed to build, whoever that lucky person might be . . . your correspondent cannot even begin to guess who that fortunate person might be, but perhaps others can.

The only employment offered to islanders will be at a menial level, while trained flunkies, well versed in the arts of pandering to the idle rich, will be given all of the responsible positions.

In fact, it is highly likely that most of the guests would be whisked in and out without their legs being even slightly pulled, a situation that no true citizen of these islands could possibly accept.

On that basis, if for no other reason, *The Islander* calls this proposal an abomination, and calls for it to be rejected out of hand.

Bumper Meadberry Crop — and a warning

According to all accounts, the meadberry crop this year has been an excellent one, and the first squeezings have produced a wine of middling quality.

Those who have already set off on the annual palm seed collection have reported that the wine has all of its normal restorative properties, and by the time this year's boat culling comes around, it should have matured fully enough to keep us all warm.

Bill James has reported a small trampled section of meadberries, and he believes that this may be the work of a rogue wombah, or possibly a group of up to three. Anybody venturing into the sucking swamps to harvest palm seed this season will need to be very alert, as it appears the wombahs may have developed a taste for crushed meadberries.

Who is creating what?

There are some interesting rumours starting to spread about the competitive portions of Little Ugly's creative month. In the 'freeform rabbit trap made of fencing wire' section, we understand that one person has already landed ten of their design on Green Island, and has been using the rabbit meat to catch the occasional early bender fish, and is now storing the carcasses for sale as bait when the bender fish start to run.

Meanwhile, we hear that two different competitors are trying yet again to make a boat out of airstone, using a sealant to close off all of the pores on the hull.

In the novelty zone, we hear that a group of the younger folk are trying to create a ballet that proves a mathematical theorem, but after last year's unfortunate experience, we are sure that it will not involve Pythagoras' Theorem, or at least not while the dancers can still recall the problems with the splinters.

And what is somebody planning to do with a goat and a sink plunger? He can rest assured that our lips are sealed — for now.

In council this month

This month's Council agenda includes one key item: the proposal to dam Finnegans Lake to generate more electricity for our homes and industries. Readers will recall that there has been considerable debate in the past two months about energy use, and just how far we can afford to go.

Over the page, you will find some opinions for readers on this vital topic, which seems to have a lot to be said on both sides. We will have to hope that the Council will be up to assessing the serious conservation issues that are involved.

Next month

The agenda for Council next month includes the question of allowing a limited number of tourists to have permission to take out big-game hunting licences to hunt snark on Big Ugly, in designated areas of Gorgeland at times when nobody else is using the area. Since snark are normally killed on sight in any case, says the Mayor Grey's recommendation, the islands economy could do with a boost that will help us get rid of a serious problem. We invite comment in the form of letters to the editor for next month.

The other item placed on the agenda so far for next month is the question of what other methods we might use to generate more responsible tourism. The Islander, as readers will be aware, has strong views about the Cloudwalker Hotel, but what else could we do? Over to our readers . . .

Apologies and corrections

Last month's issue referred to Barry Grey as "a battle-scarred heron", when he should have been accorded his true status as a battle-scarred zero. The Islander unreservedly apologises for the slug that was cast upon his character.

Letters to the editor

Sir,

The ongoing scandal over the agenbite feeding race simply will not go away. The action of a certain party in throwing lead sinkers to his opponents' agenbites was a low act, almost as low as my overloaded agenbite was after falling off the table after being sabotaged in this way. Do we have to wait for an agenbite to die of lead poisoning before action is taken?

Observer

Sir,

What is the use of a few ducks that have no feathers, when their meat tastes rancid? I believe that one of the reasons we have so many snarks in the area is because snarks eat them. If I am right in my seasoning, the sinking ducks need less spice not more.

Sideline

Sir,

The proposal to deepen Finnegans Lake for hydroelectricity at the expense of the sinking ducks shows just how shallow the thinking of Council is. These animals are not only unique in the world, they are potentially a major tourist attraction. We could have some of them at display points near habitation, and then we could offer guided tours to the area, charging a premium that could be used to defray the costs of power generation by other methods. We really have not done our homework on this one, but the sinking ducks have a right to live out their lives in peace, and if we can turn a profit from them, well and good. But we should not sacrifice the ducks on the altar of our greed for energy.

A.L.Plurabelle

Sir,

It is a well-known fact that one cannot be a serpent of two masters. That means there is no possibility that we could ever consider using Finnegans Lake for two separate purposes.

Sir,

I am absolutely appalled that anybody should even contemplate damming Finnegans Lake, when this is the only place where the fearless sinking ducks can live. If we make the water deeper, the temperature will drop off, and the ducks will chill out. Frozen duck may seem like a tasty dish to some, but it is by no means my idea of the way to go.

Peg Wilkins

Sir,

I believe that whatever we do about Finnegans Lake, we need to think more carefully about power and how we generate it. We have a number of excellent prospects in the form of waterfalls on Cloudmaker, sunshine, winds and even currents in the sea, all of which could be used to obtain electricity.

I realise that some people would argue that windmills on the Uglets would look horrid, threaten wildlife, and offer problems in terms of getting the power to where it is needed, because nobody could be allowed to anchor anywhere near the submarine cable carrying the power.

I realise that some people would argue that turbines on the side of Cloudmaker would look unpleasant, and I realise that any sort of barrier placed in the Plughole to get a 'head of pressure' from currents would also impede fishing boats and other water craft, so that leaves us with the science of photovoltaics, using solar cells to generate electricity.

I put it up as a challenge to some of our bright young students to show what sort of area we would need, assuming an efficiency of 24% in the conversion of solar power and a peak flux of 1000 watts per square metre.

This sort of solar flux is, an expert tells me, sinusoidal, so you get about 150 watts/square metre in the first and last hours of the day, about 300 watts/square metre in the 2nd, 3rd, 10th and

11th hours, with an average of about 900 watts/square metre in the middle of the day.

Developed economies live at about 7 kilowatts, day and night, while undeveloped economies live at about 1.2 kilowatts, and much of that comes from burning fuel on fires.

Here, we need an energy supply of about 5 kilowatts, because we import many industrial goods like steel, but that means we need around 120 kilowatt hours per person. I challenge our clever young people to say what that means in terms of a solar cell array on an average roof on the Ugly Islands, with four people to supply.

I know they learn about this sort of thing: now can they give us some answers?

(I note in this regard that there may be better ways of getting hot water than by using solar cells to generate electricity.)

J. P. Joule,
Northern Uglets

Sir,

I am sometimes led to wonder what planet some of your correspondents are from. Some of them are so far off this planet, they must come from Plato.

Why would we ever want to use meadberries to make alcohol that we can then purify and use as a fuel? I have done some rough calculations, and producing fuel alcohol would use at least fossil fuel delivering 120% of the energy we could obtain from the alcohol that was made.

Surely it is better to sell meadberry wine off the island and use the income to import fuel?

I know we have an energy problem we need to address, but perhaps we should begin by solving the brain energy problem?

Watcher