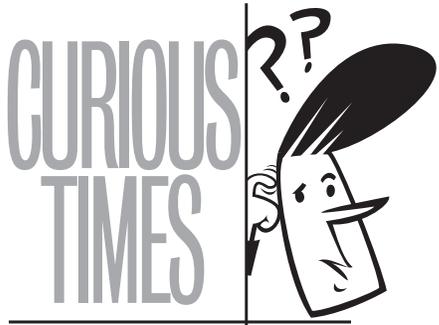


“Miracle berry” takes your tastebuds on a psychedelic trip



ANDREAS OHRT

A weekly roundup of newsbites from the Truth is Stranger than Fiction department.

TRICK OR TREAT? The *New York Times* has reported on a strange psychedelic berry that makes beer taste like chocolate and Tabasco sauce taste like a sugary glaze. The “Miracle Fruit” (*Synsepalum dulcificum*, technically) is a bizarre little berry that, when eaten, will make your tongue perceive bitter and sour flavours as sweet and yummy for up to two hours. Some restaurants in Japan are already serving the berry alongside unappetizing low-calorie desserts, as it makes customers believe they’re eating a deliciously decadent treat. While the berry is just beginning to make it to North America, there’s no shortage of websites which sell it as a dieter’s dream come true. “Works with alcohol, vegetables, cheese — in fact, almost everything,” exclaims one online sales pitch. “It is impossible to explain how wonderful things taste.”

2 2 2

AFTER I KILL MY ENEMIES, I LIKE TO PLANT A TREE: What to do if you love blowing things

up real good, but you’ve got a soft spot for the environment? Move to Germany, where scientists are trying to design the world’s first environmentally-friendly bomb. While traditional explosives leave a toxic mess behind, the new research involves the testing of materials called “tatrozoles,” which have massive explosive energy but don’t create nearly as many deadly pollutants when they detonate. (LiveScience.com)

2 2 2

WILL HIDE FOR FOOD: If you haven’t done your spring cleaning yet, you might want to get on with it after learning about a fellow in Japan who found a 58-year-old homeless woman living in his closet. She had been there for over a year without being discovered, but the man got suspicious when food started to disappear from his fridge. He then set up a hidden camera and had the images sent to his cellphone while he was at work. Sure enough, he discovered a roommate he never knew he had, called the police, and had them search the home. They discovered the lady hiding in the back of one of his closets. (TokyoManga.com)

2 2 2

RULE 1 OF CRIME: HAVE A GOOD GETAWAY DRIVER: A taxi driver unwittingly became the getaway driver for a thief who had broken into the cabbie’s house and stolen most of his stuff, including the food out of his freezer. The cabbie picked up the passenger in the wee hours of the morning and helped him load the taxi with appliances and electronics. “He had a lot of home appliances, so I helped him put all of his things into the cab,” said the victim. After ending his shift and driving home, he realized what had happened when he found his house broken into and all his stuff gone. Fortunately,

he remembered where he had dropped off the crook and police arrested the man a few hours later. (Ananova)

2 2 2

RULE 2 OF CRIME: NEVER SKIP THE STAKEOUT: A couple of burglars in Australia didn’t have much luck last week when they broke into a pot dealer’s home in the middle of the night with hopes of stealing his drugs and cash. Instead, they were arrested by a group of detectives who were in the middle of a drug raid at the exact same house. (News.com.au)

2 2 2

ALL I EVER FIND IS ABC GUM: The lost-and-found department of London’s transit system handled a record 170,000 lost items last year. Along with 32,268 books, 27,946 bags and 25,802 items of clothing, the haul also included a stuffed fish, a harpoon gun, one pair of breast implants, and several gas masks and inflatable dolls. While the vast majority of items remain unclaimed, the department was able to successfully reunite a bag containing two human skulls with a university professor who used them for his lectures, and was also able to find the owner for a suitcase containing £10,000 in cash, which belonged to an old man who didn’t trust banks and carried his savings around with him at all times. (*The Telegraph*)

2 2 2

HOT WORD OF THE SUMMER: *Staycation:* a vacation spent at home because it’s too expensive to travel.

2 2 2

...AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON: An Australian racehorse named Aydee Fic will now be known as Journey On, after racing officials discovered that the previous name means “Fuck You” in Arabic. “I was only having a bit of fun,” said the horse’s owner. (*The Courier Mail*)

2 2 2

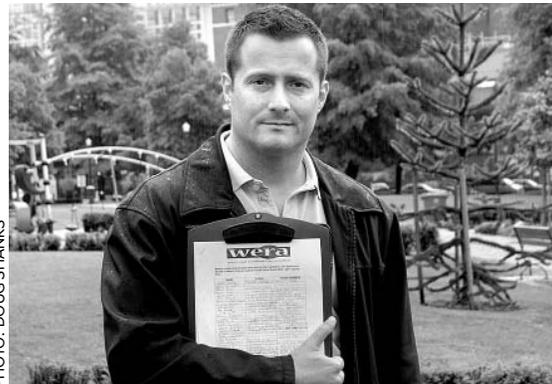
GOOD THING HE DIDN’T INVENT THE CONDOM: The man who designed the Pringles container back in the 1970s was so proud of the achievement that his final request was to be buried in one. He finally got his wish last week, as his family had his body cremated and given permanent residence in one of the iconic cylinders. (Cincinnati.com)

2 2 2

I-READ-IT-ON-THE-INTERNET-SO-IT-MUST-BE TRUE FACT OF THE WEEK: Two of the happiest countries on Earth — Iceland and Switzerland — also have two of the world’s highest suicide rates.

2 2 2

Get way more bizarre news at CuriousTimes.com



West End Residents Association director Aaron Jasper holds a petition urging the Vancouver Park Board to install a public washroom in the neighbourhood’s busy Nelson Park.

Petition campaign draws attention to need for washroom in Nelson Park

By Jackie Wong

There is currently no public washroom in or near the West End’s Nelson Park. Yet the park’s off-leash dog area, playground, and proximity to the weekly West End Farmers Market make it one of the community’s busiest social hubs during daylight hours. As a result, many nearby residents hope the city’s park board commissioners will soon, in a manner of speaking, answer nature’s call.

“When we had engaged in the whole redevelopment of Nelson Park, they ripped down the old field house [which included a washroom], assuring us, ‘Don’t worry, there’s going to be another one,’” says West End Residents Association (WERA) director Aaron Jasper, referencing the park’s protracted and often controversial makeover, which is still ongoing. “Part of us going along with that was we had been given assurances.”

Jasper is spearheading a petition-signing and letter-writing campaign that urges the Vancouver Park Board to budget for a Nelson Park washroom in the 2008 capital plan.

“Council makes its final decision on how big the capital envelope is in September,” says park board commissioner Spencer Herbert. “We’re doing advocacy work to increase the envelope. I’ve heard from residents already that this is a priority issue.”

Jasper hopes that letters in support of a washroom will get to the park board before commissioners go on an August break. According to Jasper, the parent advisory council at Lord Roberts Annex elementary school, the Mole Hill Housing Society, and the GLBT Centre have already submitted letters. “The community as a whole should have impact on the issues that effect us,” he says.

Park board commissioner Loretta Woodcock lauds Jasper’s community efforts. “I think it’s a good idea for them to continue telling us that they want [a washroom] there,” she says. “It draws attentions to commissioners in terms of what we call hot spots in the city.”

So far, the park board has asked for \$1.2 million to be set aside in the capital plan for building new washrooms and maintaining the ones it owns. There is currently an entry in a draft version of the capital plan for a prospective Nelson Park washroom, priced at \$150,000. Though no solid plans are in place for moving forward with that plan, a facility at that price falls in line with Jasper’s request. “We’re not looking for the bells and whistles,” he says. “We’re looking for a facility that’s wheelchair-accessible, where you can do your business and leave.”

Those in support of a public-washroom installation in Nelson Park are encouraged to e-mail the Vancouver Park Board at pbcomments@vancouver.ca, contact park board commissioners individually, or send letters by post to the Vancouver Park Board.

Discover the Art of the Short Film



Film Production OPEN HOUSE

June 18, 2008
6pm - 8pm

VFS Café,
390 West Hastings
(corner of Homer and Hastings)

vfs.com

- An inside look into what makes the VFS Film Production program one of the best in the world.
- A chance to talk with award-winning Department Head David Hauka.
- Instructors in Directing, Cinematography, Post Production & Art Direction will each deliver a short presentation about their areas of expertise.
- Students and alumni will be available to discuss the creative challenges they experienced.
- Watch award-winning student films and find out more about all the projects Film Production students tackle.

Let us know you’ll be joining us! To register contact openhouse@vfs.com or call 604.631.3591