

SQUIRREL PROBLEMS

August 13, 2006

Its been a quiet week on the Island. The City Council appears dead set on completing the ludicrous Cineplex expansion project, complete with massive parking garage, as well as pursuing the invitation of "big box" stores to come here.

Well, the place used to be pretty nice. But nice, quiet, residential neighborhoods where kids play in the street don't bring in tax revenue.

On the upside, the new library is on track for completion in October. No one is talking about what to do with the old one-room Carnegie building. Personally, we would like to see it converted to an aviary. Perhaps we can put all those Canadian geese in there. Quite a while back, the geese decided that migration was too much of a bother what with all the global warming and such, so they just plopped down here to make a home between the Washington Middle School baseball field and the grass beside Crab Cove. The cove itself is home

already to scads of white egrets who set up quite a clacking any time someone mentions raising the rent or changing the Birds-per-Tree allotment.

The dahlias are just now beginning to explode out there, and the gladiolas are starting to yield up their glories, even as the morning glories are mounting a serious offensive against the fence. No defence against the glory of morning, apparently, as the wall of bright blue and white flowers is now seven feet high.

Mike and Jim returned from their fishing trip, claiming in all seriousness to have caught several ten-pounders, only to let them all go. Susan refuses to comment upon this curious behavior, but then she does have a few oddities of her own. Susan makes lavishly colored shawls out of raw wool, pounding the stuff and working it until its soft as butter before she dyes the stuff in the most unmentionable liquids to get her indigos. The shawls go for about \$400 a piece, and its rather pleasant to think about these Society Matrons attending the opera draped in something which has been colored with bodily fluids.

"Its the way they dyed fabric for thousands of years," says Susan.

Yes, and that is precisely why they invented polyester.

There is something about the dog days of August, with its Back to School sales at the Walgreens and its flurry of departing freshmen headed off to that great four-year adventure in what Nabokov called "The mansions of madness". The fog hangs lower and a little longer before burning off. We'll all have some lovely Minnesota weather for a while before Mssr. Soleil body slams Northern California for one last reminder of the season in September. But for now, we all have the woolen blankets pulled up at night and leave the windows open to listen

to the racoon family go chirruping among themselves outside along the trash bins.

Mrs. Carmine Pescatore feeds them at night and they go right up the narrow stairs to munch on catfood, which cannot be very good for them. She feeds the squirrels too, and one of them, whom she has named Stanley, has gotten quite fat and confident. The other day something got into Stanley and he went after Festus during one of his rare sober periods. Festus was sweating and having god knows what sort of hallucinations at the time -- Mr. Stimpson, the court magistrate had ordered Festus to attend a AAA program -- and here came this enraged squirrel at him gnashing his teeth. Festus ran up the passageway but a car coming in made him run back and there he was running in circles with Stanley nipping at his heels. Fortunately for Festus, Stanley had gotten so fat he couldn't outrun the man any more than he could outrun any of the cats in the neighborhood, whom he beat up regularly.

We all think Mrs. Pescatore puts steroids in the squirrel feed.

Festus finally got away by jumping, or say, rather, falling over the fence into the onion patch planted by Mr. Treadwell next door, while somebody threw out a walnut, on which Stanley pounced with glee. Nobody would go out to the car port while Stanley tore apart that walnut with his maddened eyes glaring in every direction.

Mr. Treadwell came out and seeing a strange person mashing his onion garden, took hold of a shovel and began beating Festus about the shoulders, accusing him of trespassing. Festus only cowered among the onions there and

appeared in danger of getting into the swiss chard, which served to enrage Mr. Treadwell even more. With his shovel raised on high like the Biblical Canannites of old, he hooked the shovel on the clothesline there and bringing down the shovel, brought down the line, the clothes and the support post bolted to the rotten wall of the storage shed behind the carport on the other side. The support post fell against the power lines and brought down one line and the telephone service. The powerline fell sparking on Mr. Tarkieff's open convertible Miata and set the upholstery on fire while the telephone line dropped just as Mr. Ramsey was in the middle of downloading a salacious episode of "Bodacious Ta-Tas does West Texas". This made Mr. Ramsey stand up and look out the window to see the burning car.

He immediately dialed 911, but of course got no dial-tone.

Mrs. Wheaton, looking through her window, saw Mr. Ramsey standing there at his window, half naked and so she called 911 to report a flasher. The police arrived as Festus came running out with blood pouring from several head cuts and Officer O'Madhauen tackled Festus at the far curb for the crime of jaywalking as each end of the block was clearly marked with traffic control devices. The fire department finally arrived after police backup called by Officer O'Madhauen spotted the smoke from the burning Miata. Backup was called because of Mr. Taikeff and Mr. Treadwell.

The street was filled now with the police, the fire department, and crowds of people who had come out when the power was cut. Mr. Taikeff was screaming the most abusive language at Mr. Treadwell, and Mr. Treadwell looked about to

use his shovel against the gesticulating Mr. Taikeff. Mrs. Treadwell and the tenants from the common-law apartment were screaming at each other over the soiled laundry.

While all this was going on, an Iranian submarine passing underneath the surface of the estuary, there to spy on activities taking place at the Port of Oakland on the other side, popped up its periscope to note all of these events. The captain's log for the day noted with puzzlement several "conspiracy" theories blaming Isreal for everything. The submarine glided from the estuary without being noticed.

After the fire got put out, Stanley was no where to be seen.

That's the way it is on the Island. Have a great week.