

This Was The Year That Was ... Great

Written by Bob Alexander

Wednesday, 22 August 2012 22:20 - Last Updated Wednesday, 22 August 2012 22:20

One year ago today we loaded up a borrowed truck for the last time and in the great tradition of *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*, rolled on out towards a dream of a better life. The Joads struggled along Route 66 from Oklahoma's dustbowl through California's Mojave Desert to get to the Promised Land. Jed Clampett sold his oil-rich swamp in the Ozarks for 25 million and moved his family to the hills of Beverly. Our move wasn't as difficult as the Joads' and certainly not as well subsidized as the Clampett's. It took us 10 years to have the wherewithal to make the two and a half hour drive from our house in Seattle to our new home in Canada. Though we woke up in A New Country ... we didn't have the time to appreciate it for the first three months or so.

First we had to deal with schools that were going to start in a couple of weeks. Our son was going into the 6th grade and my wife was going to the University for her graduate degree. And we literally had an accumulated lifetime of boxes to unpack. All the nuts and bolts that held together our day-to-day lives had to be figured out and fast. Where are the schools? Where are the stores? Where do we get the car fixed? Where's the library? Where's *everything*? For the first time in my atheist life I welcomed guidance from above.

We had our cheap but trusty Tom Tom GPS to tell us how to get to where we wanted to go.

One of the first things most of the people we know back in the states asked us is a variation of this question: What have we found up here that we *don't* like? It's interesting to note they wanted to know the negatives first. And after a year of Canadian living behind me I have a ready answer.

Pizza.

To date we have yet to find a great pizza pie. Our pizza yardstick (one year later and I still haven't gone metric) is based upon the pizza we had at Grimaldi's, a little place located under the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Bridge, and the deep-dish pizza at Geno's East of Chicago. We haven't found anything that can compare with those phenomenal pizzas. But then again we never found perfect pizza in Seattle either.

You want to know what I don't like about Canada? Three words. Alberta Tar Sands.

There.

Canada's not perfect.

But ... There are no perfect places ... just better ones.

We still have family back in Seattle. We've gone down and back for holidays and birthdays. Every time we cross the border back into Canada I feel great relief that we've ... re-escaped. A fellow American ex-pat also residing in Canada said it best when he emailed me, "*These days, I live with the air of freedom that is, without fail, replaced by an air of repression -- every time I have to go back into the States.*"

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I've been leery of my government since the Vietnam War. The Reagan years convinced me it wasn't that difficult to convince millions of people to tentatively hold hands with Fascism. After two stolen presidential elections, the attacks on 9/11, and the invasion of Iraq, it's obvious we've gone way beyond the handholding stage to fully embracing Fascism.

We didn't come up here for the inexpensive Health care or the Chinese food. We came up here because The United States of America is closing down and I didn't want us to get caught on the wrong side of the border.

Before the Civil War the South was a closed society. People couldn't freely explore their own thoughts to anyone or even to themselves without eventually having to face the horrible conclusion that their entire way of life was based upon *owning* human beings. Therefore an arcane code of courtesy came about to keep inconvenient truths from tarnishing polite conversation. There were just some things one didn't talk about.

There's quite a long list of things Americans can't talk about since the coup of December 2000. It's not polite to bring up the illegitimate war-mongering president, the non-existent WMD, the horrific numbers of dead in Iraq and Afghanistan, the gutting of the poor and middle class, and the fact the criminals who committed these crimes have not been prosecuted. At the top of the list of unmentionables if you're a so-called liberal is The Lethal Presidency of Barack Obama. We can't have a national discussion about any of these things without being shouted down. The Right goes bat-crap ballistic and the "Liberal" water carriers forcefully whine ... *again* ... about the lesser of two evils dodge. We can talk about whatever we want to as long as we don't talk about What Is Going On. I don't understand how any rational American can *stop* vomiting.

Since there are only got a couple of months before the election those unlucky enough to watch television in swing states are being carpet bombed with crazy. The deranged Republican message is to steadfastly ignore what Romney and Ryan have done and vilify Obama for things he has *never* done. In other words they're lying their asses off by omission *and* commission. The Democrats on the other hand are focusing on what Romney and Ryan actually have done and said but ignoring the evil Obama has done. Since the Democrats are only *half* lying they claim the moral high ground.

This go-round, and forever more, I'm out of the game of "Heads they win -- Tails we lose." Regardless of who wins in November the Psychopathic Powers That Be get everything they want for Christmas a month early anyway. As I've previously written many many times the present system is completely and utterly unsalvageable. Unless of course you're one of the tippy-top 1%. Then it's a finely tuned machine of wonders.

I suppose I will always have mixed feelings about leaving the United States. Not any of them rational, all of them emotional, and none of them of any consequence. We're having too much fun up here to dwell upon the latest crazy emanating south of the border. We don't need any reminders that it's not perfect up here. Predatory Capitalism doesn't stop at the border, global

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warming is not country specific, and Stephen Harper's Conservative government is pretty damn scary.

But ...

There ain't no crazy and for now that's good enough for me.

Regards from Beautiful British Columbia