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JAY WALKING

Beached boats and radioactive wine therapyBy *Jacqui Zurcher*

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I've wanted to head out to Sunset Beach and survey the stranded Sealand Express ever since it lodged itself onto a sandbank a few weeks ago. But has this desire translated into my getting into my car and trying to find a beach with which I am not very familiar? It hasn't.



My reasons for avoiding an excursion to Milnerton are complex and varied. Firstly, I am not quite sure of the route from my house to the specific beach and have a morbid distaste of map books. I would rather ask directions from an inebriated malodorous whippet than sit down and study a map. I know this is ludicrous and with a few minutes of devoted concentration I could master the route, but the mental block against applying myself in this way is so immense that without substantial counselling or a dire emergency, I doubt I will ever change my map-despising ways.

So, I am left with a lingering sense of unease about my ability to find the beach from which I would like to view the unfortunate ship.

My attempts to harness enthusiasm from my friends to form a party of onlookers has also met with dismal failure. My less directionally challenged friends, free of map book hang-ups, know perfectly well how to get to the ship but are unwilling to offer their masterful assistance in accompanying me for some good old fashioned ogling. "I can see the ship across the bay from my office," the one retorts dismissively, "it'll just look bigger and rustier in real life". Big and rusty could be interesting, I think coolly.

"You can't even get up close, they've cordoned off the beach," another whines. "Where are you going to park?" I don't know, I'm not intimately acquainted with the Milnerton parking scheme, but other people are making an effort and seem to be managing to find parking, I muse sulkily.

Devoid of directions and deflated by the disinterest of friends I was still reasonably determined that I would see the ship, even if it meant getting lost alone and perhaps winding up in a strange and unfamiliar area. I might be forced to make polite conversation with a

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from the editor



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on, live a little..."
Leigh Robertson,
Highlife Editor

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lecherous barman with an unseemly interest in philately for the sake of getting directions. This could be the start of a lounge-singing career, who knows? But I digress.

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Yes, I was still intent on surveying the Sealand Express with my own eyes, until my unwavering determination was dealt a sickening blow. Uranium. Leaking radioactive substances. I read the consoling fine print commentary that all was safe and contained, but I had seen the toxic sludge newspaper headlines and my attitude to this adventure was forever changed. Satisfying my curiosity at the cost of courting radioactive contamination seemed a little silly even if I was only living in hysterical newspaper headline land.

So, for a week or so, my compulsion to view the beached ship was quelled. I went about my life without the nagging pressure that there was something unusually interesting to be seen close at hand and I was passing it up in favour of queuing for broccoli at my local supermarket. Neurotic hypochondria can sometimes be strangely useful for relieving undue mental tension.

My adventure malaise continued until I stumbled across an unassuming article in the Sunday newspapers. An American scientist has discovered that a specific element contained in red wine can slow the aging process in yeast cells. The scientist enthusiastically related how he has upped his red wine consumption from a glass or two a month to a glass a day. The article further illustrated the resilience of the treated yeast to radiation and declared the findings landmark.

Interestingly, the study also mentioned that mulberries and peanut butter contained the wonder age-defying element, but the scientist hadn't mentioned that he had increased his consumption of these foods since discovering their potency.

Heeding the good scientist's example and considering my ship-viewing predicament, I wondered if this study could be my ticket to Milnerton. All I would need to do would be to stoically increase my red wine intake for a few days, thus increasing my tolerance for radioactivity. I would thus be invulnerable to any possible side effects of leaky uranium.

Further pondering convinced me that I might need to sustain the intake for a few days after the viewing, just to ensure I am in the clear in the uranium department. With a bit of effort and determination, I think I might just be able to master this particular self-medication plan.


So, here's to hoping that red wine is indeed a radiation repellent and cheers to the scientist for giving me a fantastic excuse for indulging in a glass of red.

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