

# Noodle Salad

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July 2, 2021  
Millarville, Alberta

*Some of us have great stories, pretty stories that take place at lakes, with boats, and friends, and noodle salad. Just no one in this car.* – Jack Nicholson in *As Good as it Gets*



I can't eat pasta salad without thinking of Jack Nicholson's line in *As Good as it Gets*. Nicholson's character Melvyn Udall, an obsessive-compulsive antisocial book writer, uses "noodle salad" as a metaphor for *common human behaviour*.

Melvyn and his companions are disconnected from society, each in their own way, and struggling to cope. Nicholson reminds them that not everyone shares their embittered outlook. Some people have normal lives he says, *just no one in this car*.

We have been through so much the past year; isolation, polarization, all the continuing political and conspiratorial nonsense happening in the world. Collectively, we have contracted a Melvyn Udall-sized case of misanthropy – a general distrust and contempt for human behaviour.

But Covid is almost over. It is time to put it behind us, to pull toward the middle again; time to enjoy a big helping of ....

.... Noodle Salad

<https://youtu.be/ekofeM6Pedg>



# Maggie May

June 21, 2021  
Okotoks, Alberta

We went for a drive to Okotoks today to buy some hardware and ~~almost~~ came home with this:



I bumped into a *car guy* I know on the way to the hardware store. Dean mentioned that a neighbour was ready to sell his Clénet. And not just any Clénet, this car was once owned by Rod Stewart!

Dean showed us this picture. In my mind I was transported into the driver's seat, Bear beside me tuning the radio to *Maggie May*. It was 30 degrees, the sun was shining, the big Lincoln engine was humming, and we were burning up California asphalt. Bear's hair was flowing in the breeze, every head turned as we rumbled past.

It took a few minutes and a lot of willpower to come back to reality. Dean didn't know how much the seller was asking but he said he could arrange a look-see; it was on our way home.

Dean introduced us to Norm, who jokingly commented that any time another *car guy* brings his wife along he is almost assured of a sale. Norm wasn't just speculating, Bear had gone for the same virtual ride in her mind as I did, and she wasn't saying "no".

Norm's garage is a cornucopia of speed and elegance. It houses a McLaren, a Bentley, a Rolls Royce, a scattering of muscle cars and, high on a lift, Rod Stewart's 1978 Clénet Series I Roadster. *'S wonderful, 'S marvelous!*

<https://youtu.be/Q6wQV395k1I> - *'S Wonderful* - Rod Stewart



Norm went through the standard *car guy* stuff, performance specs, ownership history, horsepower, yada, yada..... All I could think of was, *did Rod Stewart name Maggie May after the car, or the car after Maggie May?*

There wasn't time to move all the other cars out of the way (although that could have been fun) and take the Clénet down off the rack, so we decided on a return visit Thursday. I asked about price – *about the same as a new pickup truck*. I wasn't shocked, but I would be doing some comparative research before Thursday.

Bumping along the highway in my F-150 on the way home seemed a bit *ordinary*. We pulled up *Maggie May* on I-tunes and floated the rest of the way home on a mandolin.

*I suppose I could collect my books and get on back to school  
Or steal my daddy's cue and make a living out of playin' pool  
Or find myself a rock and roll band that needs a helpin' hand  
Oh, Maggie, I wished I'd never seen your face*



<https://youtu.be/WAXHlqStsoo> Rod Stewart - .....

..... *Maggie May*

*To be continued on Thursday.....*

# Clénet

Thursday June 24, 2021

Millarville, Alberta

I spent all day Wednesday mooning over my new paramour, Clénet. She is a beauty! We dated for several hours on-line, I got to know her well.



Clénet is a neoclassic, conceived, designed, and built in Santa Barbara, California in the 1970's and 1980's. She has sleek lines, and a 1920's, *Great Gatsby* personality.

In addition to Rod Stewart, Clénet has dated Sylvester Stallone, boxer Ken Norton and King Husain of Jordan.

Clénet swings both ways, she and Farrah Fawcett had a fling in 1976.

Thursday dawned to a summer downpour. I was scheduled to meet Norm the owner at 11:30. At 9:00 I still hadn't decided if I was going to propose to Clénet, or not. I took a drive and grabbed a coffee to think it over.

I like everything about Clénet. She is gorgeous, she is probably a little high-maintenance, and she comes with a substantial reverse dowry, but money shouldn't be an obstacle to love. Bear is onside with a polygamous relationship where Clénet is concerned, so why not drive off into the sunset with her?

The problem is, Clénet is just too glamorous.





We enjoy a paparazzi-free lifestyle. Bear and I live on a farm, with four kilometers of gravel road to get here. We don't seek the limelight, and Clénet would attract more attention than I am comfortable with. Driving on a mud road in the pouring rain, I concluded that Clénet would be better suited to life in the city, hitched to somebody who enjoys the glow of the spotlight.

I called Norm. I asked him to extend my heartfelt regrets to ....

..... Clénet

*I don't want to talk about it, how you broke my heart  
If I stay here just a little bit longer  
If I stay here, wont ya listen to my heart?  
Poor, ol' heart*

<https://youtu.be/w46bWxS9ljY>

*I Don't Want To Talk About It – Rod Stewart*



# Badass Banker

July 10, 1998

Highway 22, Alberta

*“Everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes”. – Andy Warhol*

My 15 minutes of fame hasn't happened yet, but I have experienced 15 minutes of *infamy*. I am not sure if that counts.

The incident occurred in 1998. I remember the date because that was the year I bought my Harley Davidson. It was also the year I met Rick.

Rick was a trucker/customer. He transported livestock and I leased highway trucks and trailers to him. Rick paid his bills on time, a model customer in most respects, but Rick had a dark side. He was a full patch member of the Hell's Angels motorcycle club. Rick had served time for murder, escaped prison and was recaptured. When he was eventually released Rick became a trucker, with ties to the criminal underworld.

I was initially unaware of his past and quite happy to deal with Rick. He was a larger-than-life personality, quick with a joke, a pleasure to transact business with.



I bought my Hog in 1998. The Harley was more motorcycle than I had ever ridden so soon after I bought it, I took a solo trip to get familiar with the bike's handling. I drove north on Highway 22 to Cochrane, then west on the 1A toward the mountains. I gained some confidence along the way.

On the return journey I pulled into a Husky station for fuel. As I was filling the tank a rumbling, backfiring monster of a bike rolled up at the next pump, followed by a dozen more bikers, all emblazoned with "*Hell's Angels*" on the back of their jackets. The leader pulled off his helmet and there stood Rick!

I had some trouble adjusting my mind to accommodate the trucker/customer I knew, to the uniformed gang member standing there. Rick was his usual affable self. He shook my hand, admired my bike, and introduced me to some of his colleagues as "My Banker".

I never considered myself a “banker”, but I wasn’t about to argue the point with Rick and his fellow demons.

Rick explained that he and the “boys” were on a drive for charity, *The Gizzard Foundation*, or some such. I suggested that Essex would be willing to contribute to this worthy cause, which Rick seemed to appreciate.

When the tanks were filled Rick asked if I wanted to ride along with him. I was living near Bragg Creek at the time, so I was going their way anyway. I put on my helmet and followed Rick and the outlaws onto the highway.

For fifteen glorious minutes, rumbling along Highway 22, we were thirteen Hell’s Angels and one ....

.... **Badass Banker**



# Too Soon

**July 9 to 12, 2021**

**Southeastern BC**

Colin, my motorcycle traveling companion this week is no angel, but he has never spent any time in prison, that I know of. We spent a few days crisscrossing the Okanagan and Kootenay ranges. After 15 months of travel restrictions the freedom of the open road has qualities that seem like a release from prison.

We put in long days, I only had time to take “two” notes.

Two guys  
Two motorcycles  
Two Thousand Kilometres.  
Two provinces  
Two days out, and two back  
Two hundred bug splats  
Two mountain passes  
Too hot in Osoyoos  
Two Kokanee beer before dinner and one for dessert  
Forest fires too close for comfort  
Two thousand biker waves  
Two hundred cannabis stores and two vacant H&R Block outlets,  
(Let's call it the Justin Twodeau ratio)  
Only two eyes to absorb so much scenery  
2000 bends in the road  
Almost \$2 for a litre of premium gas  
Too many 2-scoop ice creams, then

Highway 22 and home, ...



...Too soon



# French for “Mid-Life Crisis”

July 23, 2021

All Around Central, Alberta

Remind me again, how many lives do we get? Only one! And is it short or long? Thought so.....

I spent the entire month of July pining over Clénet. She plagued every waking hour and had me up most nights.

When I did fall asleep, I dreamt of nothing but her. One night in my dream, somebody else was driving her down the alley.

That did it! Next day I called Norm and gave him a cheque.



I texted a picture to my siblings on the way home. Brad asked how Clénet was pronounced. I told him:

*“Clen-ay, it’s .... French for “mid-life crisis”.*

(Photos courtesy Gervais Goodman)

# A Spanner in the Works

July 26, 2021  
Millarville Garage

*You know you can make a name for yourself  
You can hear them tires squeal  
You could be known as the most beautiful woman  
Who ever crawled across cut glass to make a deal.*

*Sweetheart Like You – Rod Stewart from **A Spanner in the Works** - 1995 Album*



Clénet is 45, that time of life when wrinkles start to appear. Her passenger-side rear view mirror droops, her top is faded, and there is a bulge in her rear tire, other than that Clénet is in great mid-life condition.



And her headlights work.

.... What!?



Clénet, with *A Spanner in the Works*.



# A Happy Childhood

August 1, 2021  
Millarville, Alberta

Bear drove a Camaro Berlinetta T-top when we met. The car had a racy, *Smokey and the Bandit* look to it. We eventually traded it for a family car, but the topless Camaro remains a symbol of Bear's carefree youth.



Ragtops have that power. They evoke feelings of freedom, adventure, even danger.



**Sally Fields:** *Why don't you just drop me off here, I'll take a cab.*

**Burt Reynolds:** *Too late now!*

**Thelma:** *Ok, then listen; let's not get caught.*

**Louise:** *What're you talkin' about?*

**Thelma:** *Let's keep goin'!*

**Louise:** *What d'you mean?*

**Thelma:** *Go.*

**Louise:** *You sure?*

**Thelma:** *Yeah."*



**Al Pacino:** *What you talkin'? That's a Cadillac.*

**Michelle Pfeifer:** *It looks like somebody's nightmare.*

**John Travolta: Don't die on me now Mia!**  
...from *Pulp Fiction*



**Dustin Hoffman: I'm an excellent driver.**



Bear is driving a convertible again, and living by the adage; "It is never too late to have ...

....a happy childhood".

*Oh me oh my oh, look at Miss Ohio  
She's a-running around with her rag-top down  
She says I want to do right but not right now*

Gillian Welch – *Look at Miss Ohio*  
<https://youtu.be/B8aH4cRdpIE>



It's not a convertible, but I love this image of my grandniece and nephew enjoying a **happy childhood**.





(Photo courtesy Gervais Goodman)

To Be Continued .....