

The Town Fun Forgot

Posted by

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Swiftsure, Driftsure... I've lived in Victoria long enough to remember what the great annual regatta used to be and mean to the locals. Sadly passed, it's another case of our little burg's (d)evolution. But this attitude extends beyond us. I wrote the below a couple years back, and but for adding details like "our" government's further downward spiral towards militaristic fascism, it still holds true. - {lex}

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C. L. Cook

May 28, 2005

Been down to the Swiftsure yet?

I'm old enough to remember the raucous, mad, Bacchanalia that was Swiftsure. In "those" days, thousands of Victorians flocked to the inner harbour for the boats, buskers, and beer gardens. But a few years back a particularly heavy-handed Victoria City Police action, designed to make the popular event more tourist friendly, triggered a riot. Ever since, the police presence has grown, the fines become more costly and frequent, and the crowds dwindled.

What had once been the unofficial summer inaugural festival Victorians shared with visitors, is now just another opportunity to hawk cheesy t-shirts and mementos to the weekend owners of downtown Victoria. The locals now know, Victoria's heart belongs to the tourists.

Another group of tourists will come to Canada this summer and the police have already put the word out. Yesterday, the RCMP announced Canadian soldiers have been given the green light to shoot dead those with the temerity to protest the destruction of light, liberty, and the living world at the G8 meetings in Kananaskis, Alberta.

The men and women of the Canadian military, those newly returned from their War on Terrorism, will be lining their sights on Raging Grannies, Radical Cheerleaders, union leaders, and citizens concerned that the current economic paradigm, so ably represented by the corporate and government elite attending the G8 summit, is destroying the lives of millions around the world and will inevitably result in the destruction of the planet itself.

The message is clear: Kananaskis belongs to these others.

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The dissolution of our nation and its beliefs has been lightning fast. The election of Brian Mulroney and his delivery of our resources to foreigners; the crippling corporate trade deals; political surrender to the will of commerce; the abandonment of foreign policy and the laws that govern our constitution; and now our army used to enforce the will of George Bush and his criminal coterie. The RCMP's message couldn't be more clear: Canada doesn't belong to you and we're willing to kill to prove it.

My neighbour, a long time Canadian and Victoria resident remarked, "Swiftsure is dead, hardly a person about." We talked a little about the old days and concluded, it doesn't belong to us anyway.

Chris Cook hosts Gorilla Radio, broadcast from the University of Victoria every Monday at 5pm on [CFUV 102FM](#); You can check out his [blog here](#).