

notes from the disturbed edge - chapter 9

“Ahhh.” It was a strange telephone greeting, but she recognized the fish tank noises and knew it was him. She kept it simple, “What do you have to report?” After a few exasperated huffs and puffs, he set in.

“Remember that crazy lady - oh excuse me, I mean, concerned citizen, we met last week? Well, somehow,” (dramatic pause, accompanied by accusatory insinuation) “she got my home number. Seems she is convinced that I am destined to serve as her personal link to Big Brother, the media, the establishment, and the man. Seems she is convinced that I know what the heck I’m talking about, I am connected, and I can provide all the answers. She was going off the wall about some newspaper article that, Heaven’s to Betsy, recommended planting some exotic plant that gets invasive because, get this, it’s hard to kill and it actually grows, but don’t you think you ought to do something about this...” He stopped to take a breath and she interjected, “Hmm. Did you tell her to write a letter to the editor at the paper? Did you tell her that’s a great way to reach some folks?”

“Well,” he retorted, “I sure tried to, but she just kept talking... ‘and who do you intend to contact and I can send you a copy of the article’ - wanted my address too, no way - ‘and, well gee wilikers, you ought to talk to our congressman about this, because well, this is our earth and there are laws, aren’t there and, well, aren’t there?’” Again, she piped up, “Did you tell her to just look in the government pages of her phone book and make a call herself? Did you tell her how easy it is?”

“Oh yeah, but she whimped out. Overwhelmed by the concept of bureaucracy and the void between the representatives and the represented. ‘Oh, it all just seems too humongous. I can deal with things plant by plant, but this big picture stuff seems to have no tangible horizon.’ I actually liked that one. Said she just wouldn’t know where to start.”

“So did you tell her?” she asked “Did you confess?” He paused for a moment, then responded. “Yes ma’am. Exposed my whole sordid past as a clueless constituent. I told her the other stuff, the supposedly Real Stuff, was easy. Identify this, hack a cut into the trunk here, squirt some herbicide there, pull this, burn that. Machinery, machetes, mixtures were no problem, but the other world, the real real world, confounded me. Told her sure, I knew all that seventh grade social studies theory about government by the people, for the people, and four score and seven years ago, and political agendas and contingencies, but beyond that, I had no freaking idea. Didn’t even know what half those buzz words even meant, although I was pretty sure a score was ten years. Couldn’t tell a representative from a senator, and darned if I could figure out how to actually “contact” one of them, like they were dog-gone aliens or something, to express an opinion or appeal for funding and yadiyadiyah. Told her it took time to figure it out. Told her she can’t just call somebody else and expect them to do everything for her. Told her consensus opinions count. Told her it takes work and it takes a while to get to the point where things actually happen. Told her it’s

worth it though, if she really wants to make a difference. I told her she should start local, not bite off more than she can chew. Told her to pick something ‘tangible’ in her little world. Told her to write to the paper, contact the reporter who wrote that article - promote a story from the other side. Told her to send a copy of that article to her phone book governmental dudes with a brief and polite letter expressing her concern, and told her to write three weeks later with some useful information, and then just keep the momentum rolling. Gave her the whole recipe.” He stopped talking.

“And did it work? Do you think she’ll actually DO anything?” She had to know. “Don’t know,” he replied. “When I got done ranting, she was gone. I don’t even know if she listened through to the part where I provided her with a reliable local phone contact.”

And then he signed off. Report complete. She sat for a moment, enjoying the silence, but was jolted back to reality by the ominous sound of a ringing phone.

-J.A.

An excerpt from “The Adventures of Hack Garlon and his buxom sidekick Squirt”

THANK YOU

to the following sponsors for supporting this issue of WILDLAND WEEDS:

Helena Chemical Companyp. 14	University Press of Floridap. 11
SePRO Corporation.....p. 2	UPM Corporation.....p. 13
Syngenta Professional Productsp. 20	Allstate Resource Managementp. 16
Applied Biochemists.....p. 7	All Terrain of Floridap. 16
BASF.....p. 9	Applied Aquatic Managementp. 13
Dow AgroSciencesp. 8	Aquatic Vegetation Controlp. 12
Earth Balancep. 16	Pandion Systemsp. 12
UAP Timberland.....p. 18	Association of Florida Native Nurseriesp. 10