

A PUFFERFISH, TWO WRITERS AND A PANCAKE MAKER



Pierre's monthly newsletter for the quirky, the nutty and noir

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What do a pufferfish, two writers and a pancake maker have in common? I'll divulge the answer in a moment, but first, thank you to my subscribers. I hope you are enjoying these newsletters as much as I enjoy writing them. If you know of friends, family or colleagues who may be interested in joining the subscriber's list to *Bertha's World*, please forward this to them as I don't send any unsolicited emails.

The drive to create

It's been nearly 30 years since my dear Uncle Eric gave me a copy of his book [The Everyday Work of Art: Awakening the Extraordinary in Your Daily Life](#) and I came across it again while moving house. Intrigued as to why I kept it (I am one of the rarer kinds of people who give most of their books away after I read them), I re-read it. Perhaps, because I have started understanding something he was aware of all those years ago, or maybe I'm just older and more receptive to ideas, this time I really grasped what he was saying. It dawned on me how primal the drive is to create things, including in everyday activities as Eric explains in the book. We're all artists whether we know it or not. Even the pufferfish. Take a look at this video of a pufferfish creating sand sculptures to attract a female. I've also kept this for a very long time and every time I watch it, I am overwhelmed by his commitment and the resultant beauty of his efforts. Look at the little fella, he's a marvel:





What about the two writers? First, Sue Robertson Danells. I spoke to her recently and she has an inspiring story of having the artist in her awakened after discovering “an ancestor with a secret”. She says she was simply researching the facts, but the story took over. A fairly common anecdote (don’t we all have ancestors with secrets) morphed into an artistic creation, a novel. At that point she began seeing stories everywhere and a writer was born at the wonderful age of 72. I read her second novel *Bittersweet* and had a lot of fun with it. She will be reading from it in one of my future podcasts. For more about Sue, see [her website](#).

The second writer Rob Glenister has also turned to writing later in life. It seems like his journey has been a long time coming. Until now, his artist has been in the form of a nature photographer, and indeed they are inspiring works (I may contract him to get one for one of my forthcoming books). Check out [his website](#)! As for writing, he says he has always liked short stories (his favourites being by Roald Dahl and Charles Bosman) and has recently published a collection of his own short stories called [Only One Cow](#).

And now, what about the pancake man? He is Pieter Pretorius. He moved to the garden route in South Africa (perhaps one of the most beautiful places in the world—I lived there for a short while and may well return) a few years ago and started a pancake stall. And this really is an example of Eric’s awakening of the artist in everyday life. The desire to create emerges everywhere, including in making pancakes, which Pieter revels in. He sent me this photo of one of his patrons, an Arabian boy on holiday with his family. I love the look on his face as he enjoys the pancake. If you ever at Milkwood Village on the garden route, visit Flippin’ Delicious Pancakes and you will enjoy the same.





(Permission to take the photograph and share on media was granted.)

So, what do a pufferfish, two writers and a pancake maker have in common?

The answer is that they are all creatives. The innate desire to create is in everyone, from story tellers to pancake makers and pufferfish. I am not capturing this nearly as eloquently as Eric does—he continues to have a remarkable career and touches so many lives ([click here for his book](#) about teaching artists and their role in shaping a better world)—but what we are both saying, to quote from one of the captions on his site, is that: “Everyone is brim-full with creativity.” It is part of human nature. In fact, I would suggest it is part of the nature of any conscious creature (perhaps even minimally conscious ones). Just ask the pufferfish.

Bertha learns French and launches a podcast channel

There are two developments I am excited to share with you. First, *Bertha’s Law*, my first fiction book that inspired me to become a professional writer is translated into French. I have teamed up with a scholar of French literature, Sébastien Maury, in translating the book for Francophiles and my publisher has kindly offered me a contract for the translation. The book is currently in the formatting stages, so it will probably be available in time for Christmas. If you have French speaking friends or know someone learning French, it may make a welcome gift. I will let you know when it’s available.

My second piece of news is that my podcast channel *Bertha’s World* is scheduled for launch very soon. It should begin about a week after you receive this newsletter and is a place to listen to stories that you may otherwise not have heard of, and you will hear about their writers and readers. As the blurb goes:

“Join Bertha’s World to find your next favourite fiction writer. Discover stories and writers that you may not have heard about (but probably should), and the readers who enjoy them. It is named after the quirky protagonist in the book Bertha’s Law, whose life story was almost lost to time. Bertha’s World includes a monthly newsletter, a one-man show, and more.”

Change to the non-fiction free read

For subscribers who have an interest in my non-fiction work, the free read on my website has been changed to a newsletter I recently wrote on cotinine and cannabis laboratory testing in southern African and South American countries where cannabis is legalized. When do laboratories that test for the compound consider the test to be positive? It's quite interesting the thinking behind it all and is, of course, important for medical and legal reasons.

The November newsletter

In November I will share the first podcast in the *Bertha's World* series. If you can't wait until then, you will find it in all the usual places: Apple, Google, Spotify, YouTube and maybe a few others after 7 October. Just search for *Bertha's World* and look for the icon at the top of this newsletter. I am planning to dedicate most of the November newsletter to memoir writing, something that I think many people have considered. Until then, warm greetings and be free to be.

Bertha and me.

Pierre



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