



Today I drove to Victorville (ugh, and with gas \$5.79/gallon at our local stations) to get a pair of tires put on my little Breadbox (or Shoebox) van, officially known as a Ram Pro-master City. What a dumb name! It's so long that it hardly fits on the car itself! I think they should call it a Baby Ramvan or a Mini-Ramvan, something with personality and color. But no, big corporations rarely think outside the box of their big office buildings filled with worker bees who have little imagination and are held to a set of instructions.

On the way to the tire shop, on Highway 18, a pedestrian crossed the highway at a green light, as he should, but what annoyed me was how he casually strolled across the road, almost as if he was daring the drivers to react or to honk or to show impatience. Then I noticed – oh, he has a crutch. Just one, which made me feel bad that I had been judgmental. And then I noticed again – he was a person of color! Aargh! My critical thoughts about him made me a racist hater and hard-hearted disabled-phobe. Throw me in jail!

Yes, it's possible, even likely, that his "stroll" was necessary due to some health issue in his legs. But I observed to myself how we have been conditioned to feel guilty if we are NOT disabled, and most definitely if we are NOT persons of color. And we dare not say anything lest other conditioned people criticize us for our taboo thoughts. (Yes, all that came from one stupid stoplight!)

Back to my tires. The tire shop was grungy, but then, what do you expect of a tire shop?

And the nice thing about it is that it's the same grunginess that I remember from decades ago, when we first started going there for tires and other front-end work. My dad liked and trusted these guys, and so since I trusted my dad's judgment about such things, I too like and trust these guys.

It's so refreshing to walk into such a place, with personable owners who treat you like a customer, and who are the same people you've dealt with for years! I sat in the waiting room for the short 40 minutes it took them to mount the tires and check the alignment and brakes. They have pictures of historic Victorville mounted on the walls that are truly interesting. And today, they had a video loop of about 20 minutes talking about various aspects of keeping your car in good shape, and I found it informative and simple for my simple mind.

One of the subjects on the video was how important it is to do a pre-trip checkup of your car if you are going to travel some distance. Sir William could have used their service on



his Jeep before his eventful vacation up to Bishop and Mammoth. Alas, he did not and had some issues with the car, which he will eventually tell you about.

Why is this little story even worth writing about? Because it was so out of the ordinary in these times. This was a step back in our culture, to a time much healthier than our society's current state. The tire guys were examples of the hardworking, "uneducated" servicemen, who aren't afraid to get dirty and who provide services without which we would not live in the comfort we do.

Yet they are maligned by the elites, scorned and looked down upon. What would "they" do without auto mechanics and tire guys to fix their, uh, limousines? Don't they need plumbers, electricians, utility workers, construction guys, truck drivers, etc. to maintain their lifestyles? Maybe they are so removed from reality that they don't even know that such people exist and are necessary to the smooth functioning of our nation.

I have this theory that the farther away from dirt you get, the dumber and removed from reality you get. In my opinion, farmers – those guys who drive the tractors, raise the crops, and tend to their livestock themselves – are some of the people with the healthiest outlook on life, and the likeliest to look to God for His help with the weather, the growing cycles, etc. Then as civilization has "advanced", people have left the family farms for the cities, for "greater" opportunities and pleasures that cities supposedly offer. We pave over the dirt with concrete and cover it with roads and buildings, inject a fast pace and lots of roar that drowns out thought, and then wonder why people are spiritually shallow.

Fortunately for us in our beautiful desert valley, we remain closer to the dirt, many with gardens and critters to take care of. There is

something healthy about that, keeping us grounded (pun intended, so laugh, please) in reality and more open to God's Spirit. It's much quieter here, even with the noise of the bulk trucks running back and forth from the mines every day. We can sit on our porches and look out at the vista of the golden desert, especially in the mornings and evenings, when God shows us His glory through my favorite setting of clouds, big and small, flat and fluffy, white and gray, anything as long as they are clouds that the sun edges with gold and silver gilt, rays gleaming from the unseen sun.

As we watch from our desert perch the theater of the disintegrating world, whether in our American society or in Israel, or in the growing tensions between nations, some of whom have the ever-threatening nukes, we can be THANKFUL that God put us here in this desert, away from much of the mess, and closer to Him!

Linda Gommel



This short update from an Israeli army major is a moving personal testimony from the front lines of young people fighting this war for Israel. I thought it worthwhile to share with you. LG



Somewhere along the volatile Gaza border, in a remote, desolate outpost, nestled and before me are some of our bravest soldiers. Their eyes are reddened by exhaustion their uniforms are caked with dust, and weariness hangs heavily upon them. Though their bodies ache for rest, sleep remains elusive. In their faces, you can discern a shared focus on the future, tempered by the worry that grips their hearts for the families they left behind at home.

The thoughts of family members and friends who are still alive start to float. Suddenly, the issues that once seemed insurmountable fade into insignificance. Down here, my happiest dreams are painted with vivid visions of me embracing my cherished loved ones, only to wake up and find myself trapped in a foxhole, surrounded by the haunting scent of war, death, and a pervasive sense of hopelessness.

Then, as if from a distant world, a convoy of black, shiny vans arrives. The city people jump out, blissfully unaware of the stark reality of war but at the same time drop everything and come to do their part in the battle.

Boxes upon boxes just delivered from abroad of fresh clothing and equipment are unloaded. As the boxes are opened, the aroma of new shirts and jackets fills the air. It's a stark contrast to just two weeks ago when we were at the mall, deciding which brand to choose.

The excitement of unboxing new gear, tearing open the package of that brand-new sports watch, was just a sense of normalcy to our new reality. A functional phone charger is a luxury in this new environment.

As we gave out these items to our young men and women in uniform, many of whom have been out of touch with the news, I told them: "The Israeli people are standing with you. Not just Israelis, but Jews from around the world. Not only Jews, but everyone in the Western world who seeks peace, values life, and wishes for their children to play freely without the threat of bloodthirsty Hamas-ISIS terrorists. They are all relying on you to fight the war of freedom and destroy evil."

Thank you to all who have been supporting us in these challenging times,

War Diary #4
Major Aaron Katsof
Israel Defense Forces (IDF)

On The Lighter Side of Serious Stuff . . . from the Web

ATTENTION CALIFORNIANS:
TEXAS IS LAME AND TERRIBLE AND YOU PROBABLY SHOULDN'T MOVE THERE.

We have really stupid stuff you wouldn't like such as:

- dumb open spaces
- big scary gas stations
- no special pronouns
- freedom
- guns
- meat

LAME! BORING!

From The Babylon Bee

AUSTIN, TX — In a last-ditch effort to stop Californians from moving in and ruining their state, Texans have resorted to putting up billboards in California telling everyone how terrible Texas is and how they probably should just stay in California.

"I hope by golly this tactic works," said Texas Governor Greg Abbott, "We've been passing laws left and right that would make sissy Californians wet their britches, but they keep coming in and voting like they never left the Car-Theft State."

"There are now dozens of billboards peppering California, educating citizens to the horrific dangers of this great state of Texas," said Bill Smroog, Chairman of the Texas Anti-Tourism Board.

Slogans currently being tested include:

- Texas is lame! Totally boring! Better stay away!
- Seriously, better turn around! Last chance!
- "Our fire ants now have AR-15's!"
- "Oh no, a church on every street corner!"
- "Smoke pot? Over our dead body!"
- "Our cattle are also racist."

At publishing time, Californians had continued moving to Texas based on the logic that being shot by AR-15-wielding fire ants was better than being robbed by street-pooping hobos.

The OLDER I get, the more I UNDERSTAND why roosters just scream to start their day.

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PRETTY SURE I SEIZED THE WRONG DAY

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