

# May I Please Have A Cookie

Turkish homeless man burns to death after being neglected

*crowded streets of Istanbul screaming "I do not have a blanket, someone stole my blanket!" He was offered a cookie and a coat by two passers-by before someone*

Friday, January 19, 2007

On one of the very crowded streets of Istanbul, Turkey, an elderly homeless man died of burns thought to have been caused by a fire he lit to warm himself. The police officers who came to help could not extinguish the fire with the small bottles of water which they had.

The man was seen earlier in one of the most crowded streets of Istanbul screaming "I do not have a blanket, someone stole my blanket!". He was offered a cookie and a coat by two passers-by before someone called an ambulance. He was refused admittance to two different hospitals because he lacked identification, and the ambulance eventually left him where he was picked up.

Wikinews holds a follow-up interview with Kevin Baugh, president of the Republic of Molossia

*I take all visitors on a tour of our country and tell them about Molossia and micronations in general. Cookie dough is served, too, of course, and I stamp*

Thursday, May 1, 2008

In March, Wikinews reporter Joseph Ford held an exclusive interview with Kevin Baugh, president of the Republic of Molossia, a micronation located near Dayton, Nevada. Due to the interest the article gained, both online and off, a follow-up interview was held this week.

Molossia's capital city, Espera, is situated on little over an acre of land in Western Nevada, within driving distance of Reno. Another territory, Desert Homestead Province, is located in Southern California. Unlike most of today's micronations, Molossia allows visitors and has its own economy. It also has its own time zone and holidays as well as a few tourist attractions.

When asked about the culture of his country Baugh replied, "Molossian culture is a mix of several sources. Above all, we value the lifestyle of the western U.S., especially as it pertains to living in a wide-open place such as we do. Life here is fairly relaxed and easygoing."

He also said that Molossia and the United States "generally ignore each other" and that there haven't been "any altercations" between the two, despite claiming each other's land. He went on to tell us much more about his tiny nation, which can be read in the interview below.

Wikinews interviews candidate for Cleveland mayor Arthur Kostendt

*a delivery driver for Insomnia Cookies in University Circle on the overnight shift. I took the bar exam in February of 2021 and left Insomnia Cookies*

Monday, June 14, 2021

Arthur Oliver Kostendt, a candidate running in the mayoral election of the US city of Cleveland, Ohio set to take place November 2, discussed his campaign and policies with Wikinews this spring.

According to Cleveland Scene, 29-year-old Kostendt is a member of the Cuyahoga County, Ohio Republican Party but has referred to his campaign as "casual". According to his web site's personal biography, he was a cadet for the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), scout platoon leader for the 2nd Squadron of the 107th Cavalry Regiment of the Ohio Army National Guard and logistics officer for the 1st Battalion of the 145th Armored Regiment. He served in Kuwait, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and assisted coalition force detachments in Southeast Asia.

Kostendt is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and summa cum laude graduate of Cleveland State University. He writes he uses an apostrophe to abbreviate his middle name as "Arthur O'Kostendt" instead of the customary period after the O to emphasise his Irish heritage.

A poll published May 5 by Baldwin Wallace University, which does not feature Mr Kostendt, has Dennis Kucinich and Basheer Jones leading in the mayoral race by 17.8 and 13.3 points, respectively, with a margin of error of up to five per cent either way. 48% of those surveyed were undecided. Incumbent mayor Frank G. Jackson, who won the 2017 Cleveland mayoral election with 59% of the vote, is eligible for a fifth term but announced on May 6 he would retire.

Wikinews interviews Kevin Baugh, president of the Republic of Molossia

*Molossia and even serve them cookie dough, our national treat. It's important, though, that visitors do not arrive uninvited. Please contact me first via e-mail*

Friday, March 7, 2008

Wikinews held an exclusive interview with Kevin Baugh, president of the Republic of Molossia. Molossia is a micronation or entity that resembles an independent nation but which is unrecognized by world governments or major international organisations.

Molossia is situated on several acres of land in western Nevada, within driving distance of Reno. Unlike most of today's micronations, Molossia allows visitors and has its own economy. It also has its own time zone and holidays as well as a few tourist attractions.

President Baugh said of his country, "Molossia is unique among micronations in that we possess actual land, real terra firma upon which we stake our national claim. Most micronations only exist on the internet and don't have land. We are quite proud of our little country, and display all the trappings of a full-fledged nation, including our flag, boundary markers, signs, a couple of small tourist attractions and so forth, as well as our own money, stamps, national anthem, navy and even a space program.....Our goal is to exercise complete sovereignty over our country without annoying the United States."

The United States recognizes the territory claimed by Molossia as part of the United States and exercises the same dominion over it as it does over any other part of the country.

Israel Journal: The Holy Land has an image problem

*This is a first-hand account of his experiences and may — as a result — not fully comply with Wikinews's neutrality policy. Please note this is a journalism*

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Wikinews reporter David Shankbone is currently, courtesy of the Israeli government and friends, visiting Israel. This is a first-hand account of his experiences and may — as a result — not fully comply with Wikinews' neutrality policy. Please note this is a journalism experiment for Wikinews and put constructive criticism on the collaboration page.

At 70 miles per hour halfway to Kennedy Airport the scent of alcohol filled the back of the cab when the driver turned around and said, "There is no traffic. It is good. Quick." It was fitting. Up to that point I sat staring out the window thinking about all the warnings my family and friends gave me about taking care of my safety in Israel. Although I have traveled a good deal and never found a place I visited to be as it was depicted in the American media--Cuba is nothing like it is portrayed--the intonations to steer clear of pizza parlors and buses weighed on me. "Whatever you do, David, don't go to Gaza or take a bus! Don't. Go. To. Gaza," my mother said several times, "Just, you know, there's a war going on over there. If you see anyone praying to Allah and sweating, run!"

Until the cab driver turned around and smiled through his boozy breath, my mind had raced with thoughts of my life ending head bowed on Al-Jazeera, surrounded by gunmen forcing me to denounce my country. I thought about Gay Talese, desperate to go to Iraq, who told me he would tell "the bastards" to "go ahead, make my day" because he would die doing what he loved: working on a story. Strangely, I found solace in my drunken driver to distract me from these thoughts, and instead I thought about Carolyn Doran, the former Wikimedia COO who has caused a firestorm for the foundation when they hired her unaware that not only is she a quadruple-convicted drunk driver, but that she also shot a boyfriend.

My flight from Kennedy to Tel Aviv had the hallmarks of a caricatured bad flight: Despite my request for an aisle, I found myself in a center seat. To my right was a morbidly obese woman in a purple beret breast-feeding her baby. In the seat to my left was another infant in a baby seat, and to his left was his mother holding yet a third baby in her lap. When I woke two of the babies were suspended from the wall in what looked like airplane baby crib trampolines. Surprisingly, it was one of the better 11 hour flights I have had. All three babies slept through the entire trip and when I woke from one nap I found myself lying against what felt like memory foam, but turned out to be the obese woman, whose largess had spilled over our hapless arm rest and into my seat. It was...not unpleasant.

Upon arrival at our hotel in Tel Aviv we were given exactly ten minutes to shower and change before we had to leave to have dinner with Dr. Yossi Vardi--the father of Israeli invention, as he is known. Jimmy Wales had introduced me to him over e-mail, and I had done my research on the man who funded and sold the ICQ network. On the bus over there Stacy Perman and David Saranga spoke about how Israel is trying to brand itself today. In particular, Perman, who writes for Businessweek, mentioned a spread in Maxim Magazine that Saranga, who is in charge of media relations for the Israeli consulate in New York, was responsible for arranging. Its theme was "The Women of the Israeli Army" and featured buxom, beautiful scantily-clad Israeli girls from the armed forces. It rubbed Perman the wrong way. "The spread seemed so Lowest Common Denominator to me. What was the thinking behind that?" asked Stacy.

Saranga had no apologies for appealing to the male libido in his never-ending drive to sell Israel. "Look, I would love for Maxim's 2.5 million readers to pick up that magazine and read about Israeli technology and our wonderful culture here. But in truth, they are not so interested in that. When we approached Maxim they asked why they should do it; after all, there are beautiful women every where. Why Israeli beautiful women? We said, 'But Israel is the only army where women are actually fighting alongside the men.' So they did it. Not with guns and ammunition, but just the...beautiful women of the Israeli army. When we tested how that piece worked, we found it was very, very successful."

But what is success? The issue, Saranga explained, is Israel has an image problem. Saranga is one of the key people in the Israeli Foreign Ministry working to create a new brand name for the holy land. Indeed, one

scheduled dinner for the journalists on this trip is hosted by Ido Aharoni, whose title is Head of Israel Brand Management Team. A country's brand name is what this trip is all about. More accurately, about rebranding.

When people think of Israel, Saranga explained, they think the same things my friends and family think: it is dangerous, it is a place where you may be blown up. It is difficult to find in the American media stories that travel outside of Israeli-Palestinian-Lebanese conflict narrative. The effect, according to Saranga, has been that people do not want to come to Israel. It is too dangerous and even if safety is not an issue, it does not look like a fun place to go. According to the test research the Israeli government has conducted, people see Israel as a place that is deeply religious--it is, after all, a Jewish state--and besides holy sites such as the Temple Mount and retracing the steps of Jesus Christ, most secular American thrill seekers think there is little for them to do.

In reality, Israel is a multi-dimensional and pluralistic society with a large Arab—the majority of whom identify themselves as Palestinian—population in one of the most stable democracies in the Middle East. This trip, however, is mostly modeled to show the technology journalists what is by any measure one of the most thriving centers of innovation in the world. What we won't see is Israel's Arab side. When I suggested to Saranga that I would like to venture to the Jaffa Market, Tel Aviv's thriving Arab bazaar, he looked at me perplexed, "Why would you want to go there?!" When I replied that it would be a good place to look for things to buy people back home, he still did not see why I would choose to go there. It was only when I mentioned it would also be good for photography--another purpose for this trip--did he say, "Well, that's true. I suppose it has color."

At dinner Dr. Yossi Vardi discussed the future of Israeli technology and pointed out that after California and Boston, Israel attracts the highest amount of venture capital incubator dollars in the world. After his speech, he turned to me with what the standard complaints I hear about Wikipedia; namely, that it is not always accurate and it is arbitrary in how it decides what is notable (in particular, the article on a product he is financing, Fring, has been deleted five times, he said, despite being a market leader). "How do you decide what is right and what is notable?" asked Vardi.

It was the same question raised by the Haaretz reporter when he interviewed me later that night for an article about my trip. With both Vardi and Haaretz I brought up the on-going Santa Claus battle on Wikipedia, in which I was heavily involved. Several editors do not want us to point out that Santa Claus is not real (think of the children!) or, absent outright supporting the myth, that we should hide he is made up. The problem is that Wikipedia is not responsible for supporting cultural myths, but to explain them.

"But I believe in Santa Claus" replied Vardi. "Who are you to say he is not real?" It is a question that was raised in the Santa talk page discussion, and a difficult challenge to answer. And like the pro-Santa editors on the Santa Claus discussion, Vardi asked "What about God? Can you say that God does not exist?" But are Santa and God really the same beyond an academic philosophical discussion, I replied. God is typically taught to explain aspects of the world around us that we can not explain ourselves through our knowledge and technology. Santa, on the other hand, is a story parents know to be false. They tell their children to believe in something and then make an elaborate effort to support something they know is not true (milk and cookies consumed; gifts given by Santa; Father Christmas tracked on the Air Force website). Eventually, the time comes when parents reveal to their children that he never existed; it was them all along eating those cookies.

"But perception," Dr. Vardi responded, "is reality. So who are you to say? It is the question of the tree falling in the woods and whether anyone hears it." I responded that to take knowledge to such academic and philosophical realms is fine for spirited dinner conversation, but useless when trying to engage in practical pursuits. "After all, Dr. Vardi, how would you ever solve an engineering problem if all it takes for reality to be formed is to believe something to be true? You must come across many people who believe fervently that products they are developing will be successful; do you invest based upon their beliefs? The question is always whether a tree falling makes a sound. The question is never framed as, 'Has the tree fallen?' It's a

given."

Cnaan Liphshiz, the Haaretz reporter, relayed similar concerns about Wikipedia as Vardi, although less philosophical. Are we a reliable source of information? "The short answer is no," I said. He looked at me surprised "The problem with such a question is not whether Wikipedia is reliable, but is any one source of information reliable? Studies continually show that Wikipedia is reliable at redacting information and presenting what others say to be true. But are our sources right? No person should rely upon one source for anything. They should seek several sources to form an opinion. Does Wikipedia do a better job of presenting several opinions than The New York Times or Fox News? Yes, I believe they do."

My presence on this trip, I offered Haaretz, raised the interesting question that Web 2.0 presents: how did the Israeli foreign ministry decide on David Shankbone to report for Wikinews and Wikipedia on this trip? 25% of the answer lies in my accreditation with Wikinews and that I am able to be an original source of reporting. But 75% of the reason rests upon my contributions to Wikimedia projects, which made me stand out over other contributors. Between my photography and my interviews, I have done high profile projects on Wikipedia and its sister projects. So can other commoners like me take off to Israel when we make worthwhile contributions to high-profile Web 2.0 sites like Wikipedia? Maybe. The challenge for firms, governments and organizations today is to figure out who amongst a morass of disparate and sometimes bizarre user names can actually produce substantive work. The answer is that those who want to contribute information to the public sphere need to expend time to find who out there in Web 2.0 is worth contacting, and whether people in Web 2.0 can even do anything for them. This is the same advice I gave the Rubenstein Public Relations company (who manages PR for the Tribeca Film Festival), which is how the Israelis found me.

On a trip like this, what are the Israelis' goals for Wikimedia? For David Saranga, it goes back to the rebranding of Israel. They simply want people to highlight aspects of their country that do not involve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hence, we are here to look at Israel's technology sector in a head-spinning array of meetings. This made Wikipedia and Wikinews, influential sources of information that attempt to present the world as it is, an attractive option. "The fact is, there is so much going on in Israel today that nobody knows about because the media does not write stories about Israel outside of the conflict," said Saranga. The opportunity to have someone from the Internet's major encyclopedia visit the Weizmann Institute, the Technion and some of the holy sites was golden for them. Just don't go to the Arab parts and whatever you do, don't go to Gaza.

Yahoo! to purge personal data after 3 months

*deleting one half of the identifier created; a similar hash obscuring of all cookie identifiers; and will filter certain types of unique personal identifiers*

Thursday, December 18, 2008

Internet giant Yahoo! announced on Wednesday that by January 2009 it will begin purging personal data collected when users access its search page at the 3 month mark, a far shorter time period than any of its search engine rivals such as Google, which retains personal data for 9 months, down from 18 months as of September, and Microsoft, which retains data for an 18 month period, though Microsoft has stated support for a six month industry standard. Prior to the announcement, Yahoo purged data at 13 months.

Just three years ago, the policy of all three search engines was to keep collected private data permanently, on the basis that it was necessary in order for them to run their services. However, in the wake of substantial public pressure, private advocacy and indications from regulators that if the industry did not police itself, it would be imposed upon them, all three companies instituted data protection schemes. Calls for shortening the time period before data is removed or obscured soon began and have grown in pitch.

Anne Toth, Yahoo's vice president of policy and head of privacy stated that "we want to take the issue of data retention off the table."

The move puts pressure on Google and Microsoft to follow suit, in a climate where European Union regulators have pushed for legislation, private advocacy groups are planning such a push in the U.S., and where Congress has raised questions about the extent Internet tracking of private data by telecommunications companies is being used to target advertising based on personal information.

Despite Yahoo's data policy being more restrictive than that of Google's or Microsoft's, personal data will not be destroyed entirely but will be "anonymized"—hidden in various ways, including: deleting the final eight bits of a user's IP address; changing the user's Yahoo! ID to a one-way, secret, hash code and deleting one half of the identifier created; a similar hash obscuring of all cookie identifiers; and will filter certain types of unique personal identifiers such as credit card and social security numbers. Additionally, Yahoo indicates that it will purge information on page views, ad views, page clicks and ad clicks.

In a press release, Massachusetts Democrat Edward J. Markey, chairman of the House Energy Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, praised the restriction, and stated, "I urge other leading online companies to match or beat the commitments announced by Yahoo."

ACLU, EFF challenging US 'secret' court orders seeking Twitter data

*accept cookies, no plugins for Firefox, etc.) and use tools such as Tor, it is rather easy for any service provider to identify you." "Finally: I prefer*

Thursday, April 7, 2011

Late last month, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) filed objections to the United States Government's 'secret' attempts to obtain Twitter account information relating to WikiLeaks. The ACLU and EFF cite First and Fourth amendment issues as overriding reasons to overturn government attempts to keep their investigation secret; and, that with Birgitta Jonsdottir being an Icelandic Parliamentarian, the issue has serious international implications.

The case, titled "In the Matter of the 2703(d) Order Relating to Twitter Accounts: Wikileaks, Rop\_G, IOERROR; and BirgittaJ", has been in the EFF's sights since late last year when they became aware of the US government's attempts to investigate WikiLeaks-related communications using the popular microblogging service.

Satanism: An interview with Church of Satan High Priest Peter Gilmore

*One conception in the book I wanted to dispel is the stereotype that Satanism is always associated with Metal and the cookie monster voice. That's Satanism*

Monday, November 5, 2007

In the 1980's and the 1990's there were multiple allegations of sexual abuse of children or non-consenting adults in the context of Satanic rituals that has come to be known as The Satanic Panic. In the United States, the Kern County child abuse cases, McMartin preschool trial and the West Memphis 3 cases garnered worldwide media coverage. One case took place in Jordan, Minnesota, when children made allegations of manufacturing child pornography, ritualistic animal sacrifice, coprophagia, urophagia and infanticide, at which point the Federal Bureau of Investigation was alerted. Twenty-four adults were arrested and charged with acts of sexual abuse, child pornography and other crimes related to satanic ritual abuse; only three went to trial with two acquittals and one conviction. Supreme Court Justice Scalia noted in a discussion of the case, "[t]here is no doubt that some sexual abuse took place in Jordan; but there is no reason to believe it was as widespread as charged," and cited the repeated, coercive techniques used by the investigators as damaging

to the investigation.

One of the most visible Satanic organizations—though one that was never a suspect or charged in any of the Satanic Panic cases—is the Church of Satan, founded by Anton LaVey. Members of the Church, such as Peter H. Gilmore, Peggy Nadramia, Boyd Rice, Adam Parfrey, Diabolos Rex, and musician King Diamond, were active in media appearances to refute allegations of criminal activity and the FBI would later issue an official report debunking the criminal conspiracy theories of this time.

Gilmore feels Satanists are often misunderstood or misrepresented. LaVey's teachings are based on individualism, self-indulgence, and "eye for an eye" morality, with influence from Friedrich Nietzsche and Ayn Rand; while its rituals and magic draw heavily from occultists such as Aleister Crowley. They do not worship—nor believe in—the Devil or a Christian notion of Satan. The word "Satan" comes from the Hebrew word for "adversary" and originated from the Abrahamic faiths, being traditionally applied to an angel. Church of Satan adherents see themselves as truth-seekers, adversaries and skeptics of the religious world around them.

On a windy October day in Central Park, Wikinews reporter David Shankbone sat down with the High Priest of the Church, Peter H. Gilmore, who has led LaVey's congregation of Satanists since his passing in 1997 (he became the High Priest in 2001). They discussed the beliefs of the Church, current events, LaVey's children and how Satanism applies to life and the world.

Wikinews interviews DuckDuckGo, Opera, Mozilla, Wikimedia about DoNotTrack feature

*provides the user with the option to remove user tracking, including cookies. It disrupts a lot of the technology used by digital ad services to follow users*

Tuesday, February 5, 2013

Following the introduction of a "Do Not Track" feature in modern browsers at the end of last year, Wikinews interviewed several companies and groups about the feature.

On the campaign trail, February 2012

*adds, "I used to be an accomplished musician." His songs "I'm Cryin for you Baby", "I Do", "Te Deum", "United We Stand", and "Let Those Cookies Burn" can*

Saturday, March 3, 2012

The following is the fourth in a monthly series chronicling the U.S. 2012 presidential election. It features original material compiled throughout the previous month after a brief mention of some of the month's biggest stories.

In this month's edition on the campaign trail, the Libertarian Party holds a primary in Missouri, Wikinews interviews a lesser-known Republican candidate focused on the nuclear situation in Iran, and a Democratic candidate disputes a "one-dimensional" label.

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