

The Stinking Desert GAZETTE

"Serving SE Utah Since 1986"



Moab, Utah

Vol. 3 35¢ No. 5

Dec. 1988



Incinerator Show Moves On

Dr. Deans Travelling Incinerator Show rolled out of town last month and was reportedly on its way to the little city of Green River where the good doctor hoped for more favorable reviews.

The show caught the fancy of many a Moabite who believed the doctor's gilded guarantees of health and good fortune to the community that would allow him and the magical machine he referred to as a "vaporizer" to take up permanent residence.

The doctor and his supporters claimed the sophisticated machine could transform ordinary horse manure into a "sweet-smelling vapor" with marvelous healing and restorative powers. People would come here from all over the world, they maintained, just to sniff the atmosphere scented with the miraculous fumes.

Many, however, remained unconvinced of the machine's ability to perform as advertised.

One local man reported having seen such a machine in Kansas, and declared that the sophisticated vaporizer "looked pretty good but still smelled like horseshit to me."

The issue was finally brought to a vote. By a two to one margin the "vaporizer" was rejected and the good doctor was forced to seek residence elsewhere.

County Attorney Elaine Croaks was recently invited to address the annual conference of the Free Enterprise Foundation concerning her unique free market approach to supporting a governmental legal office through non-tax revenues.

"What is required to get the burden of supporting a County Attorney's office off the backs of the taxpayers is to alter the outmoded, obsolete conventions of running such an office," Croaks said in her speech. "What I realized when I first assumed office was that, if I prosecuted a criminal in a court trial, it cost a lot of tax money and didn't earn anybody a dime. On the other hand, any time sued an object like \$320 or a 1977 Cadillac as the illicit fruit of criminal enterprise, I found that the money or the car did not defend themselves and we ended up owning the loot. As a champion of the taxpayers, I have assiduously avoided trying anybody in court or suing a human being. Instead, I have greatly expanded my office at no cost to the taxpayers by suing every valuable in sight. This innovative and beneficial approach to privatization of government functions would not have been possible, of course, without the support of the incumbent Grand County Commission. Being champions of free enterprise

County Attorney Wins Award

themselves, they have supported my privatization efforts by splitting the take, I mean, awarding a share of the assets seized, to me and my office. This commission provides the economic incentive which is the mainspring of private enterprise. I can only hope that the new commissioners-elect will show as much visionary support for the profit principle that made America the great nation she is today!"

Mrs. Croaks received a standing ovation from the audience and was awarded the Free Enterprise Foundation's Entrepreneurship Award for her "exemplary innovations in government" by foundation president Scrooge McDuck.

Rock Huggers To Party

Rockhuggers International, Moab Chapter, has announced a full slate of holiday activities for club members this month.

First and foremost is the annual decoration of Brigham's Unit, that infamous spire located just below the Windows section in Arches.

Decorations Committee spokesman Claudia Clay revealed that a park permit has once again been granted to the group by superintendent Paul Giardia of the National Park

Service. Preliminary plans call for strings of popcorn, paper loop chains, handmade ornaments, and gaily colored balls. Those wishing to assist should contact Ms. Clay before December 15.

Next on the agenda is the merry gathering on Christmas Eve in the endless cave above the south river portal.

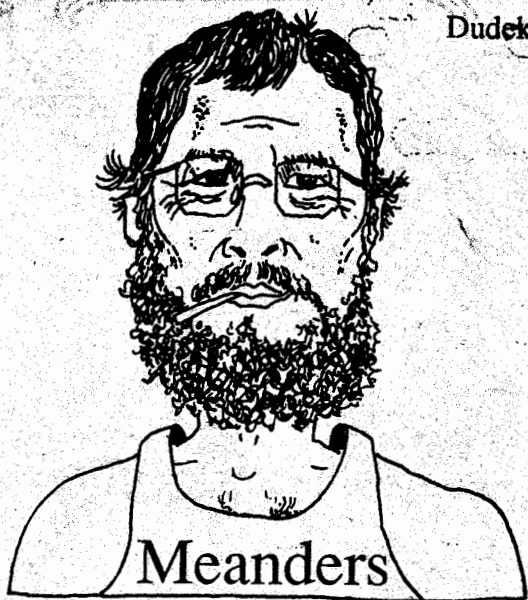
Scheduled speakers include the geologist and author, F. A. Berms, who will read excerpts from his latest book: "It's Gneiss, Not To Be Taken For Granite." Following Berms, stonemason Steve Oldshoeski will deliver an address entitled: "Rocks I have Laid."

Following the talks, a hearty dinner will be served featuring Cookie's Famous Rock Soup. Everyone is encouraged to bring something to add to it, or it could wind up being a little bland like last year.

Winding up the festivities will be an exchange of gifts. Members are reminded to keep the price under 50¢ so that nobody's feelings will be hurt.

Finally, a New Year's Eve party will be held at the home of club president, Cherty Biohern.

Cherty promises an ample supply of koolaid and brownies. The theme this year is "Punk Rocks". Members are instructed to choose their costumes accordingly.



Dudek

prevent the election of a demagogue who somehow hoodwinked the national electorate into voting for him/her. An occurrence of that nature is unthinkable in this age of media saturation and investigative reporting. All it does now is completely nullify my vote if I chose to vote for the national Democratic candidate. In Utah such votes are as good as in the wastebasket. I voted for Anderson, Jackson, and Paul, where a vote was at least a sort of "NONE OF THE ABOVE" statement.

Ah, this poor, unhealthy body politic we call our government. Eight years of jelly beans and now, pork rinds for four more. I think we're going to be sick.

A lot of people within my circle of acquaintances believe the economy is going to crash either in 1989 or 1990. Who knows? Times are strange when the stock market crashes and nobody outside of it even notices anything. If there was a major depression it would probably go unnoticed in Moab. We're used to it.

In any event, Dukakis fell before DeBush in a limp effort that made you wonder if he really wanted it. Every time he stepped up to the plate, the bases were loaded and it was his game to win.

However, all he did was talk about the nature of the baseball as it whizzed by him.

And Merrill Cook screwed me up. I thought Norman Bangerter could beat Wilson but for Cook's presence. It could have been foreseen that a lot of hot-headed Democrats would consider tax limitations the primary expression of voter discontent. Cook wound up hurting Wilson.

A poll (+ or - 3%) taken one week before the election revealed the most impressive statistic of the stinkbomb that was thrown to the public under the guise of a presidential campaign.

73% of the electorate would have checked the "NONE OF THE ABOVE" box on the ballot, a choice available to voters in Nevada for state offices but smacking of a purer form of democracy than the federal government is willing to adopt.

It speaks of the desirability of a national primary, where candidates would be unable to generate momentum by pandering to the interests of a select geographical locale.

And while we're at it, let's abolish the electoral college. The system was invented to

The Stinking Desert Gazette Box 13 Moab, UT 84532

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Locally, the elections went much better for the Democrats. They won a majority on the county commission. And they defeated the toxic waste incinerator by referendum vote, an issue that had set up principally along party lines. It was a sorry state of affairs, the bitter argument over the incinerator, and it's a certainty that nobody wants to see an issue divide this community to that extent ever again. Perhaps the only way to guarantee that is to reduce the local government's role in any kind of economic development as such involvement can only favor one group over another every time.

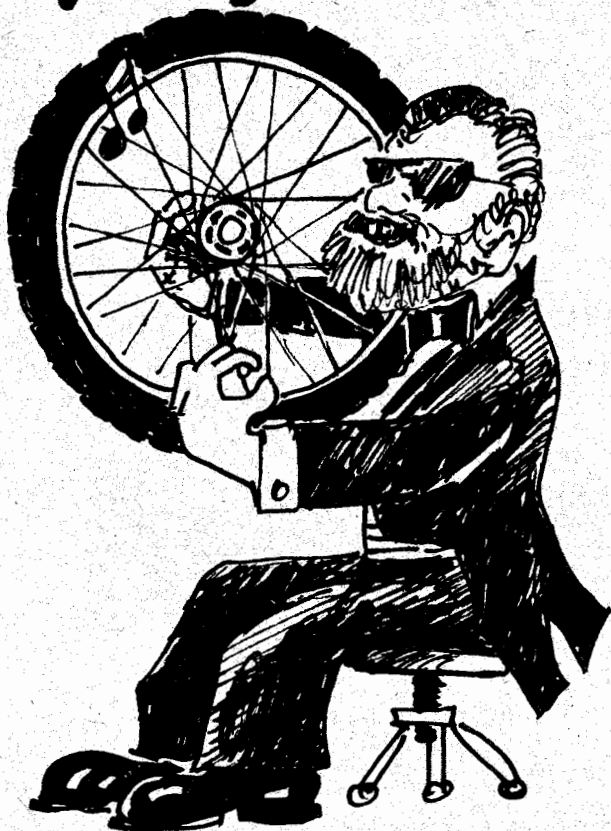
New year's wishes: To all the opponents of the incinerator, a year of peace and political abstinence. And to all those who favored it, a year of economic growth fueled by industry we can all live with.



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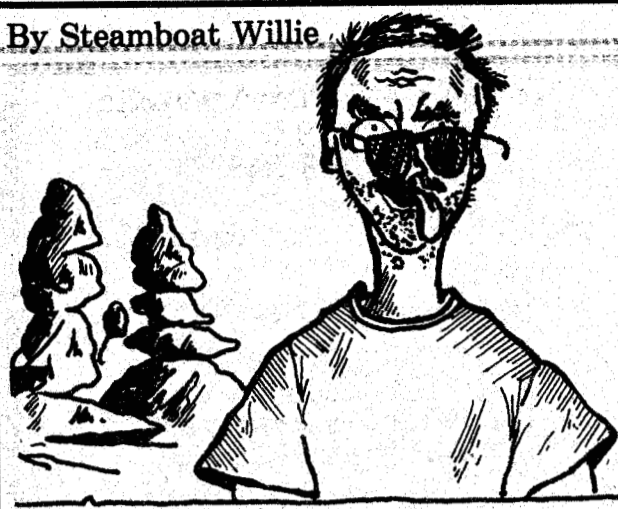
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By Steamboat Willie



Notes from the Risky Road Expedition Diary

JUNE/1984. It all started out as an ordinary day. We had been having a gonzo week on the river, averaging more than thirty people on the daily raft trip! The drawer was so full of cash, the boss told me I had better run to the bank and make a deposit before some wild-eyed loony who has been living up in Nigger Bill Canyon bops in, bops us on the head, and makes off with all this bread! I counted out three grand and put the bills in a plain white envelope.

Upon opening the door to the Mustang, I realize I didn't take the car keys off the rack. Leaving the envelope on the roof of the car, I dash back into the office, retrieve the keys, run back out, hop in the car and drive away.

A simple chore. I do it a least three times a week. It is a good feeling when you can be trusted with this kind of cash. But, when I parked in the Bank lot and reached over for the

envelope, my heart stopped! And sheer panic took over! I had drove off with the open envelope stuffed with cash still on the roof of the car!!! THREE FREAKING GRAND!!! It was a vicious time. Vicious! I was trembling as I slowly retraced my route back up Main Street hoping for a miracle. But, by the time I passed the last traffic light, doom was starting to set in.

I'll have to make up that money! Good Lord! That's an awful lot of rafts to patch! I'll be older than Frenchy by the time I repay all of that!!! I'm almost to The Maverick Food Store on North Main when I see two squad cars blocking traffic in both directions. There are people running and yelling all over Main Street. What's going on??? An escaped convict? A riot? I couldn't quite make out what all the confusion was until I see a little old lady in pink Reeboks hand over a fist full of cash to Officer Messkit! Good God!

I poured out of the Mustang and ran towards the officer and told him my story. The travelers checks signed over to the river company that he had also picked up checked out my tale. He recognized me from the office and calmed me down best he could. Just by luck, he was driving behind me as I drove off from the office when he stopped his squad car in the middle of the street at the sight of a hundred dollar bill laying on the white line! And there was a lot more where that came from! Cars were stopping and people were running out of their autos like wounded animals, scouring the street and picking up all this cash! Fortunately, with Officer Messkit already there, the folks turned over all proceeds to him. Who, in turn, gave it back to me. I WAS SAVED!

Stumbling back into the office with this arm load of cash, I spread it out on the bosses desk and told him what happened. I told him I would gladly repay him for any of the money

Al McLeod

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that was not returned. We counted out the cash and checks and to our amazement, found we had come out \$4.50 ahead!!!

The boss was so flabbergasted at this outcome, he wanted to take the cash outside and do it again, on purpose, to see how much more we could make!!! I quietly talked him out of it and drove back to the bank to make the deposit, never letting the cash out of my sight.

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Compact Discs Of The Year

By Skye



CHALKMARK IN A RAINSTORM - JONI MITCHELL
geffen cd #M2G 24172

I first saw Joni Mitchell in concert at Crosby, Stills, Nash and Youngs' World Premiere Concert in Chicago back in 1968, the day before they flew to Woodstock and became a part of history. I've been in love with Joni ever since. We've grown up with her music, which now takes on the textured gloss of perfection we've come to expect from her.

Commanding the presence of such diverse artists as: Peter Gabriel, Willie Nelson, Don Henley, Tom Petty, Billy Idol, Thomas Dolby and Wayne Shorter, she is probably the only artist that can amass this kind of talent in a studio and make it work. She continues to challenge us with her views, as well as her complex arrangements and harmonies. But when you strip it all down to the lyric sheet, it's still Joni. And it is probably the most intelligent statement to hit the record racks this year.

TRACY CHAPMAN
electra cd# 60774

Although Tracy's lyrics are certainly not as complex as Joni's or JT's, her first release of original material is like a breath of fresh air amongst all the rubbish that is polluting the airwaves. Straight-forward, simple and honest, it may be a bit too naive for some, but I like this album a lot. And isn't it nice to hear an acoustic guitar again? Remember them?

NEVER MIND THE BULLDOGS/HERE'S THE SEX PISTOLS
wb cd# 3147 (re-issue)

The only punk group that ever meant it and the only one that ever mattered. By the time the punk movement reached our shores, we had already turned it into a watered-down passing fashion with a few wimpy groups who tried to emulate the real thing. The Sex Pistols were the real thing. And here they are once again, with all the anger, vulgarity and emotion preserved for all time on CD, whether there is a future or not.

THE OTIS REDDING STORY
atlantic cd# 81762 (3 cd set compilation)

Probably soul music's greatest loss, it's been twenty years since Otis Redding's plane crashed, but his legend and his music live on. This long-awaited 3 cd boxed set is a fitting tribute to the gentle giant of soul music that he was. All the ballads that we have come to call classics are included here, as well as many tunes from albums that have long been out of print. A must for anyone that was an Otis Redding fan, or anyone younger that wants to hear what true soul music was all about.

NEVER DIE YOUNG - JAMES TAYLOR
cbs cd# MK 40851

JT is back! And this may be his finest set since *Mud Slide Slim* over fifteen years ago. When James Taylor is on the mark, he can touch you in that special place that no one else can. He has always been there, but his past few albums have been at best, a bit uneven. With this release, he re-established himself as one of America's finest songwriters and the magic is sustained from the first cut to the last.

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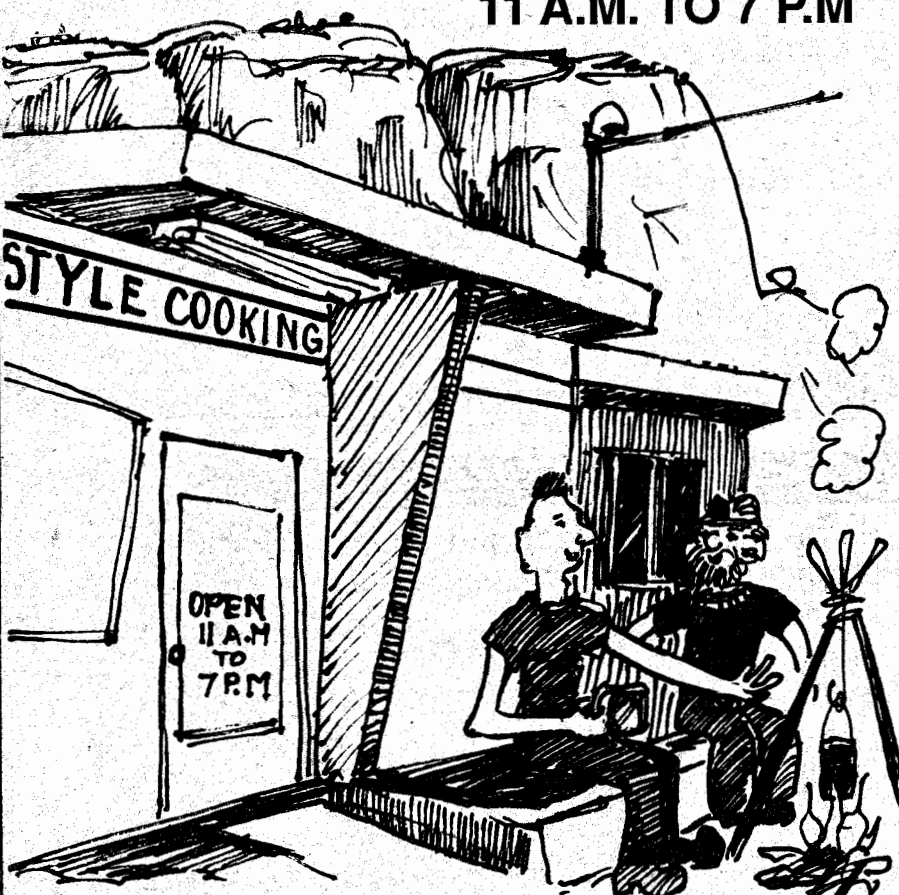


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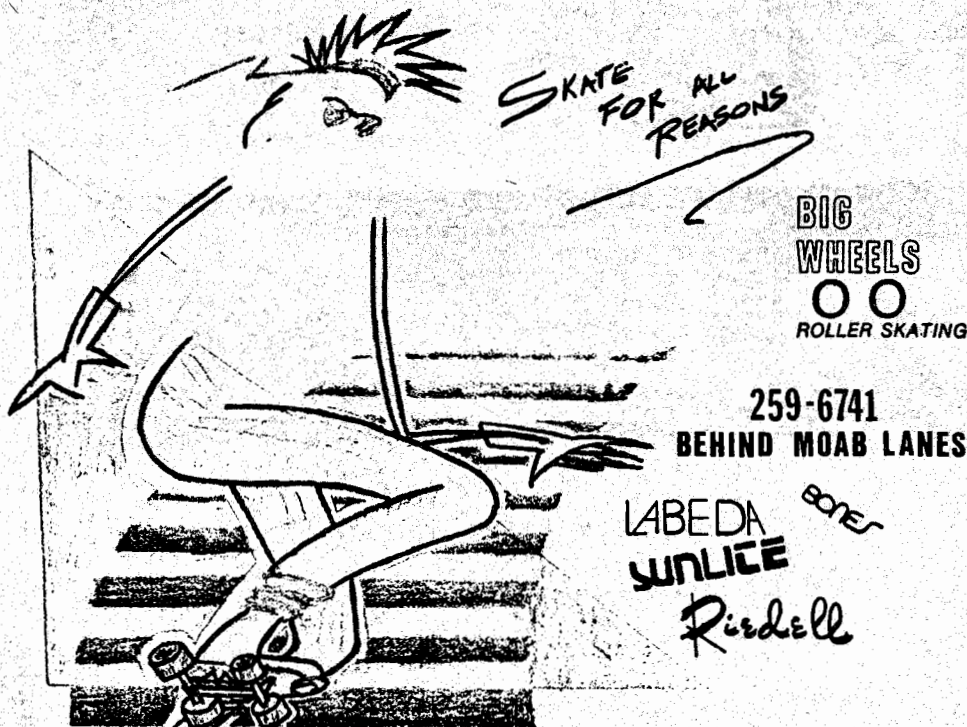
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Steve Canyonlands

Although it's only December, things have gotten so quiet that it's unlikely there will be any events this month that might overshadow:

STEVE'S BEST AND WORST OF 1988

Best Prediction: Jimmie Walker's prediction of a 2 to 1 majority on the incinerator issue.

Worst prediction: Jimmie Walker's prediction that the 2 to 1 majority was in favor of the incinerator. (Actually, a tie, with Dudek's prediction that Bush was unelectable.)

Cheekiest Move: Jane Dillon climbing over the commission table to present evidence at an incinerator meeting.

Truest Expression: Debbie's open letter about the new RV Park.

Suavest Move: Andrew Riley speaking extemp on stage at the other incinerator meeting.

Worst Gift: The package presented to marriage license applicants at the courthouse: a gift certificate of \$10 at a bank, a Frederick's Of Hollywood catalogue, and a sample container of Messingil douche.

Nicest weather: The month of October, averaging 84 degrees and beating the previous record for the month by five degrees.

Biggest Surprise of the year: The EARTHQUAKE.

Best gift: Two new commissioners.

Best Party of the year: Ladies Nite all summer.

Worst Party of the year: The Stinking Desert Gazette 2nd Annual Birthday Party.

Unsung Heroes of the year: All the merchants who planted and tended the beautiful flowers we admired around town this summer.

Dubious Achievement Award: The idea on the drawing boards to transform Mill Creek into a commercial attraction with concrete walkways and concrete tables, peopled with little automaton people in their automaton clothing, sipping little insipid, overpriced drinks.

Worst Movie of the year: Which ever movie was shot that year in Moab.

Bald-faced award: The County Attorney's request that a percentage of the funds forfeited as drug-related cash be awarded to her personally.

Good Samaritan award: Sherri Griffith, who should have sued the Gazette for all its worth (\$57.45), but didn't.

ACCORDING TO WORLD POPULATION FIGURES, EVEN IF YOU'RE ONE IN A MILLION, THERE ARE AT LEAST FIVE THOUSAND MORE JUST LIKE YOU.

Dancing Bear

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your holidays be happy ones, and the
new year peaceful and bright.*

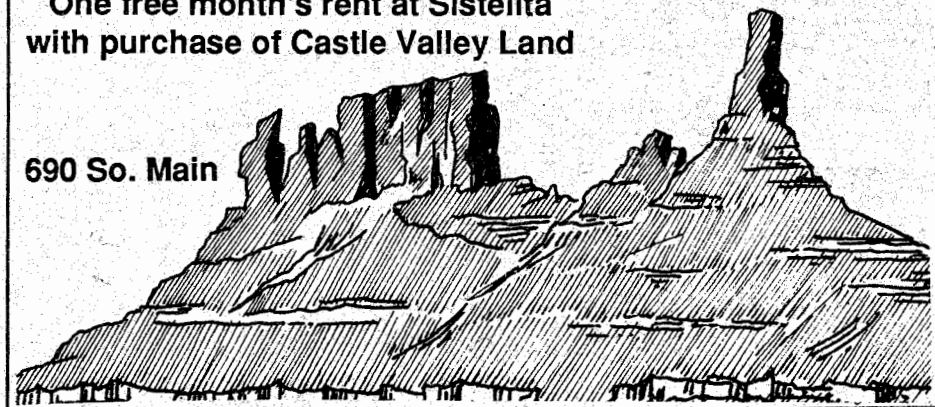
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Izzie Kiddin

Of Mice And Zen

AUGUST/1988. I suppose you're wondering why the sudden change in weather this past week? Why all this tremendous thunder, rain and lightening that knocked out power in Grand County for half a day? Well, what can I say? I had the backpack on again.

I cannot comprehend why something so insignificant as the mere act of donning a backpack can put an end to a three month drought. Maybe the pack acts as a catalyst, drawing those black cumulus clouds together. Or maybe it's this tripod I insist on lugging around, acting as some sort of lightening rod, summoning the

Gods. Whatever the case may be, I am sitting in the back seat of my car at Elephant Hill in The Needles District of Canyonlands and there is a hurricane going on! A fine how do you do....

Gilles is with me and he is trying to coax me out of the car. I refuse to budge. I'll stay here in the safely grounded confines of this fine American Motors automobile for a while longer. Druid Arch can wait. Gilles is scolding me, telling me I am acting like a little child. A bolt of lightening strikes the cliff opposite us and I scrunch down further in the back seat, sucking my thumb.

"Come on Izzie! Don't you realize how small your chances are of getting struck by lightening?" I advise Gilles to stop fooling around with MY chances and that he best take cover in here until this maelstrom is over. Instead, he swipes the pack with all the beer in it. It is a shrewd move. I have no recourse but to follow.

The rain is bombarding us with huge drops that hurt the body on contact. Thunder is echoing down the maze of canyons and lightening is striking the ground, putting an end to that age old theory that lightening seeks high places. I quicken my pace and catch up with Gilles until I am one-half step behind him. I'm almost tripping over him on the trail. "Hey! Why the hell are you following me so close?" Gilles shouts. I tell him that if I'm going to be struck dead by lightening, then by God, he's going to get a piece of it too! Gilles wearily shakes his head and tells me that he is one of the few people that can 'endure' me on a backpack trip. I smile and nod silently in agreement.

We spy an overhang and seek its refuge from the storm. It's time for a break, so we break out the first six-pack of Fosters Ale. Since we

are only doing an overnigher, we only brought a case. We cower under the overhang slugging down the imported brew like some good for nothing Anasazi winos. An hour passes and so has the storm, mother nature rewarding us with a double rainbow over Elephant Canyon. Gilles says it's my turn to lug the pack with the beer in it so we make a switch. Upon lifting my pack, Gilles finds that it is heavier than the beer!

"Hey, Iz! What in the hell have you got in here???"

"Well, there's my six pound sleeping bag. You know, the one with the pictures of the flying grouse on it? Then there's my view camera, the tripod, my foam pad, the flashlite, two cans of generic chili, the roluids and toilet paper, and the new hard cover copy of Hunter S. Thompson's book."

"Hell!" Gilles fumes sarcastically, "Why didn't you go ahead and bring your tent too!"

I tell him I would have, but the only serviceable one I had was that huge 12 x 12 with all the Disney characters on it and it just wouldn't fit in the pack. So, I thought I'd 'rough it' this time. Gilles slaps me in the eye and we continue on the trail, the squeaking of our pack frames marking off a counterpoint rhythm to our pace. An hour later, we are gazing into Elephant Canyon.

We discover another overhang that overlooks the canyon and decide it is a good place to make camp. I search the skies for more black clouds, but there are none to be had. I'll break this bad weather jinx yet. We pop open a few more beers and that's about when I heard the scampering of tiny feet all around our camp.

CANYON COUNTRY PUBLICATIONS of Moab

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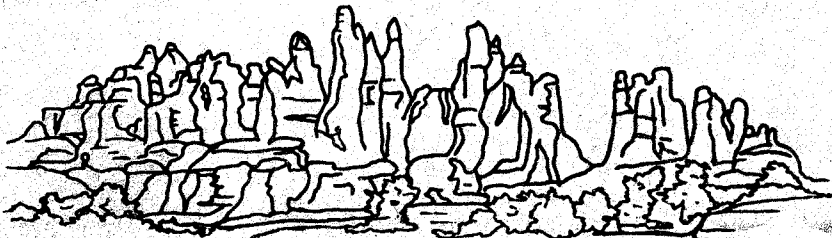
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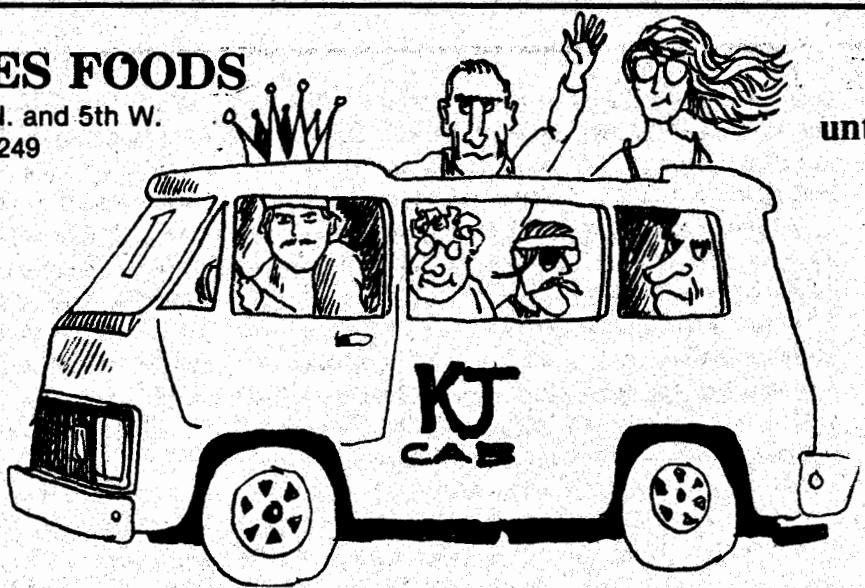
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"Hey Gilles! There's RATS in here! I HATE RATS! Why, as a kid in Chicago, I've seen rats so huge, they could drag away a man whole!" Gilles is laughing. He says there is nothing to be concerned about, for these are only the cute and loveable Kangaroo rats. "Well, they're still RATS to me!" I protest. "Aren't these the cute and loveable creatures that eat their own shit for nourishment? How could you possibly love something like that? Just look at their shitty little faces! THAT...is a disgusting animal!"

More beer cans are emptied and I finally level off into a mellower mood. Gilles gathers a few branches and makes a small fire under the overhang. I inform him we're not supposed to do that in a National Park. Gilles gets perturbed. "Don't tell me what I can't do! No one will be able to ever tell we had a fire here because I intend to pack out all the ashes! You sound like that Yuppie Rangerette that gave us our permit! I'll bet she's never been in the back-country! Four years of Forestry, for what? So she can dictate the policies of a Park she has never set foot in?"

The beer is being consumed at an alarming rate. An idea flashes and I pour some of the beer on the ground in hopes of changing the kangaroo rats rancid diet. After all, they are

KANGAROO rats, and this is AUSTRALIAN beer! They won't go near the stuff. They turn their noses up at it! Let them eat shit then! Night finally falls, but so do the scurrying of tiny feet. The critters keep me awake till the wee hours of the morning, but somehow I succumb to sleep. Peaceable kingdom...wretched rats and all.

I am up at my usual ungodly hour of 4 AM brewing coffee. We've brought some week old blueberry muffins with us that we got for half price at the market. But the rats have beat us to them. They've gnawed them to shreds! SO! They DO eat something else! I'll have to tell Kev at the store about his week old muffins. It could be the kangaroo rats salvation from their despicable habit! Gilles takes a bite out of one of the old muffins and informs me they taste like shit. So much for salvation...

We leave the heavy packs at camp, drop a few beers into the daypacks and let the moonlight guide us up Elephant Canyon. It is a surreal place. One half expects one of the Star Wars creatures to come popping out of the shadows around every bend. Mushroom-shaped rocks adorn the skyline. There just isn't any other place like this. Finally, after the scramble up the boulder-strewn slope, we reach the summit and Druid Arch looms before us, glistening in the moonlight. And there are no words.

We wait for dawn in silence. The arch watches over all things like some silent sentinel sent from heaven. I set up the camera but soon realize I can never capture the 'essence' of this scene on film. I try anyway. The first rays of dawn bathe the canyon walls in a golden hue and I thank God for the only rational church that I know of...The Desert! We sit in wonder as sunlight dances across a scene that even Dali would find amazing.

On our way back to the car after a peaceful morning beneath the arch, Gilles asks me, if after all these years poking around the desert, have I started to take the canyons 'for granted?' I think about this for a moment and answer him in my best Richard Burton voice. "My dear, dear Gilles. The canyons to me, are like old and cherished friends. And whether you see them everyday, or just once in a great while, you could never take either for granted." Gilles is so stunned by this rare burst of eloquence on my part, he agrees to buy the next case of beer upon our return home. (Tee hee, I knew this tactic would work!)

Gilles does get even, for upon returning to my trailer and cleaning out my pack, I find that Gilles has meticulously placed all of the ashes from his illegal campfire in my coffee-pot! I counter this by having a T-shirt made up and sent to him. On it, is a picture of a kangaroo rat gobbling up a turd. The caption reads: EAT SHIT...AND LIVE!!!

niktougensee

Backwater



The Eagle Of Death

A Short Story by Cliff Walker

A celestial investigator, poring diligently over the voluminous files of Patrick's ruinous trek through the ranks of his more sensitive fellows during his earthly incarnation, might conclude that he was recycled from considerably warmer climes. There was not really an entry of virtuous or noble action in the lot.

But down in the convoluted labyrinth of human existence, it is difficult to see how things could ever have been otherwise with him, and easy judgements of his ultimate virtue are more difficult to pronounce.

I picked him up hitch-hiking along the coast highway. I had dropped out of college in southern California and was working for a beverage can company. I was on the way home from work when he appeared alongside the road, thumb out, an enormous suitcase at his side. I pulled over and took a closer look.

He was a rather heavy young man, about 23, with beautiful teeth and an captivating grin. He pushed his bag into the back seat and joined me up front. He seemed an amiable fellow. I learned that he had just arrived in Los Angeles and had no place to stay. I had little to do that evening. I invited him to spend the night on the couch. The evening was fairly uneventful. Patrick seemed harmless but somewhat taciturn, and I attributed that to fatigue. He turned in early and was instantly fast asleep.

I studied that round body and wagered he'd never eaten a piece of healthy food in his entire existence. He had oily hair, black and straight, that fell from a schoolboy part and across his forehead. His pudgy face was rough from acne. Unshaven whiskers shaded the skin between the scars, and a pink, greasy sheen covered all. Nonetheless there was a cherubic appearance, an innocence, about him that negated all the rest and aroused a sense of sym-

pathy for this man who was walking the edge and needed some rest. And I trusted him.

I left for work early the next morning and let him sleep, leaving a note that said he could stay again if he needed. Upon returning home that evening I noticed the apartment was dark and it seemed that Patrick had already left. The reality was quite to the contrary.

I opened the door to a darkened dungeon lit with a dim red glow. The windows were covered with cardboard and the edges were duct taped against the light. Along the bookcase were pans of solutions emitting strange vapors, and Patrick was sitting in my overstuffed chair examining something he held with a pair of forceps. I didn't want to know what it was. The small apartment smelled of exotic aromas, and seemed Satanic and unreal.

In response to my urgent request to know exactly what was going on, Patrick rushed over and explained that what I was seeing was merely a makeshift photo lab.

Patrick had set himself up in business that day, producing fake California Driver's Licenses, complete with photo, and selling them to high school students down the street. I knew it was wrong to do such a thing, but Patrick had a way of making it seem funny and harmless. For some reason I decided to hold my tongue.

That's how it started. And somehow or other he moved in. I cannot say it was a conscious decision. I was lonely. Patrick was a superb conversationalist. I let it happen.

Within a week, Arnie at the corner grocery let me know with an ample supply of loud Italian epithets that Patrick had hung a bad check on him. I confronted Patrick and he insisted it was a banking error and no fault of his own. He bade me accompany him to explain the unfortunate episode to the irate grocer. With a reassuring flourish of some recent deposit slips for large amounts of cash, he calmed the man and coolly wrote another check for a case of beer. By the time that one bounced, Patrick was out of my life forever.

In the meantime this sly wizard had totally captivated all my friends with his stunning card tricks. One night he showed me how most of it was done.

It was in my little apartment, an add-on to the top of an old double garage adjacent to a foreign film theatre. The marquee lit the dark kitchen where we sat with a slow, colorful strobe.

We'd bought a gallon of Red Mountain wine. The alcohol humored him and loosened his tongue. He riffled the deck in front of me and asked me to pick one at random, the prelude to every one of his tricks. I picked one, face down. He identified it. Then he showed me how.

During the explanation of the details of the trick, he could index the deck in four places and gently force a known card to be taken "at random". Nineteen times out of twenty. If a clever mark got a card he hadn't indexed, he could alter the trick by indexing the card as it was placed at random back into the deck, and then shuffle it down to the bottom to sneak a peek at it later in the middle of one of his hilarious stories. He was a master, one of the few people I've known who could spread and recapture a deck in the air, and palm a card, perfectly, in the act of shuffling.

He revealed more. I saw how the constant stream of anecdotes and the humorous and animated facial expressions that so endeared him to strangers were a carefully rehearsed act to draw attention away from the deck of cards in his skillful hands. And I understood how he'd fleeced my friends in a card game at their frat house a few days earlier.

As the level of wine dropped lower in the jug, a dark and morally-skewed world was now revealed to me, a world where deception was not an unacceptable tactic in taking advantage of grasping men whose minds perceive exactly that which they expect.

I was growing uncomfortable. I was admiring and enjoying the company of a man who seemed the antithesis of everything I believed about justice and fair play. He brushed aside my apprehensions about the morality of his tactics. In an unfair world, one needs whatever advantage one can get, said Patrick.

No, I protested, surely there's fairness. Enlightened and emboldened by the fire of the alcohol I talked of democracy and the American Way. All of my past training spilled out with the utmost sense of brilliance and certainty. Before me sat the anti-Christ of our wonderful system, the non-believer, and all that remained was to turn the head of this wayward citizen toward the light and the truth. I was a little wobbly, but enobled and confirmed by the sterling principles I had somehow found sufficient eloquence to place in their proper perspective, at the top of all wisdom and human experience. I waited his reply.

Patrick stared at me in the psuedo-cinematic flash of marquee light, took a long drag on his cigarette, settled further into his chair, and related the following tale.

"What I am about to tell you is hard to believe, and I don't really care if you do. But I've never told it to anyone before and I doubt that I ever will again. In any case, the events remain etched in my memory as fresh as yesterday and though the circumstances will seem too bizarre to believe I beg you to suspend that disbelief. The details are too strange for even someone such as I to fabricate.

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"My mother died shortly after I was born. I was raised by my father. He was a drifter and a bit of an outlaw, and kept on the move to where ever he could find work.

"It was a hard life, but not without some compensation. By the time I was sixteen, I knew this country better than most people will in a lifetime. I saw many strange things, but none stranger than the incident I am about to tell.

"I was only nine, picking fruit with my dad in an apple orchard in Wenatchee. The bulk of the picking was done by Indians. They lived in refurbished boxcars that made up a train which was pulled to where ever they were needed. It was presently parked on a siding near the orchard. We picked with them the first day.

"Then dad charmed the Van Heese daughter who was in charge of the crews, bedded her down in a sleeping bag beside me, and they giggled all night long. The next day he was line boss and I was changing sprinklers and getting a buck an hour.

"A few days later I was working on a line near an Indian crew. One of the squaws had laid her baby down on a blanket on some cut alfalfa near where the cars were parked. It caught my eye as it wiggled around on that blanket. It seemed so alone, so far from help, but was placed there no doubt to be out of harm's way.

"I couldn't take my eyes off it. It looked fragile and exposed laying there in the sun. It waved its little brown arms toward the sky and kicked its bare legs. There was no sign of danger there in the bright daylight, but I had a bad premonition and felt the shadow of something terrible about to happen.

"Then I caught a whirring sound, the dark, flashing blur of motion, and the eagle was on it in an instant. It was terrifying...so large, and for a moment it hung suspended over that blanket. Then, the baby was gone.

"I watched the huge wings struggle with and finally overcome the weight in the talons. The bird rose higher. Finally, the blanket let go, and fluttered slowly back down to earth like a leaf, like a sad autumn leaf. The bird gained altitude and flew toward the distant mountains.

"I stood there, unable to raise my voice. I was frozen in horror. A harmless infant, a budding human life, had been brutally erased by a crazed mistake of nature. Finally I looked over at the pickers. They were working and chattering, unaware of what had happened. "But across the field, a blue speck in the distance, lay the blanket that'd flapped down from the sky.

"I was dumbstruck. Through the mists of my confusion the fate of that little child was becoming clear to me. I saw the aerie, the fluttering wings, the tearing and rending.... my blood ran cold. My stomach lurched with nausea. All I knew to do was just go back to work and try to put the sickening pictures out of my mind.

"That was it. And I just turned, latched and joined that section of pipe, and went for the next piece. I kept working, right through the uproar that followed when the squaw went back to check on her baby. I was as dumb as anyone when it came time to question everybody about the disappearance. The blanket was found. It had no blood on it. There was no sign of the violence that'd befallen the infant. I was the only one who knew the truth.

"The Indians thought the whites had stolen it. That night they built an enormous bonfire over at the siding and got drunk and chanted and danced all night. The sheriffs were called out and stood guard, but nothing else happened

and the next day they were back on the job.

"I never told anyone. I watched and listened at the packing house and in the sorting tents as the subject was debated over endless beers and whiskies. Everyone had ruled out abduction by animal as there was no blood or sign of violence, and most agreed that an "impossible" kidnapping had occurred in broad daylight. I held my tongue.

I knew, And I was determined that the young mother never, never know. The cruel reality was senseless and insane, and its demand was the bottomless remorse of maternal neglect. The truth was destructive and unnecessary."

With that, Patrick stood up and leaned on

the table, hands spread to steady himself, and looked into my eyes.

"My friend, I think you will do just fine believing the world to be exactly as you perceive it to be."

With that he turned and left, to go to sleep on the couch. I sat there and drank until the marquee light went black, and pondered the parable. I didn't understand it that night, nor the next day when I awoke to find Patrick gone. It wasn't until much later, after years of struggle and reverses, that I found myself face to face with the inexpressible truth.

The Private I

A Short Story

by Cliff Walker

The sun looked like the label on a bottle of Akadama, the color of cheap rouge on a 67th street hooker, before it sank below the smog of the metropolitan skyline. From my plush, oak-paneled office on the 52nd floor I could see the colored lights of the carnival New York night beginning to sparkle along the boulevard below, glistening like the broken glass of a million, shattered, big city dreams. Soon, the twilight streets would be teeming with slick hustlers, dopies, fast women, long cars, and every slimy worm out of every wormy hole in the Bad Apple.

Yeah, things get more interesting after the hot sun goes down, and the city is drenched in the dripping, psychedelic blackness of a warm and sweaty summer night.

I like the sun OK, don't get me wrong. The sun, the sweet perfume of chlorine, and the dames in their bikinis down at the Bellingham Pool, yeah, the sun's OK in my book.

It's good for something else. You need days to have nights. And there ain't a private dick packing iron on Long Island that doesn't prefer to work after dark.

I turned away from the window and tossed off the last of the whisky in the bottom of the clammy glass. Yeah, working at night is great when there's work. My appointment book was as empty as Shea stadium on an off day. There was an offer from Manny the Stick for three auto repo jobs. I wasn't that hungry yet. And there

was the six figure reward for the Bitworth kid alive. Too bad about that. Ernie the Tooth tipped me off weeks ago that the kid was probably history.

Yeah, This was a genuine drought and I sure wasn't about to receive any kind of government assistance. For what, cop failure?

I needed a night out with Mona, in that cool little jazz club down on 43rd and Vermont. Some rye, some blues and some gentle talk...women are good at that. And the lady has class. One glance at Mona would make a man facing a firing squad forget his troubles.

Ah, footsteps in the hall. Light footsteps, it's a woman. Mona....?

"There you are, you lazy, good for nothing excuse for a janitor. If I catch you stealing liquor from the lawyer's office one more time you're through. My crew is busting their asses to get this floor done and get out of here, and here you sit on your fat duff all evening. I mean it. One more time and you're gone!"

Mona looked older. Her once beautiful face was streaked with lines and contorted in anger. In the darkness I could see something long and shiny in her hands. I decided to play along with it for a while, feel things out, find out what she was up to.

"Sure, Mona, whatever you say," I reply, and ease myself out of the chair.

"Just get back on that buffer! And quit calling me Mona."



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The Hard Stuff

By Squareset Stopehammer, E.M.

I spent the last few years before my retirement involved in protesting the short-sighted actions of a few oil and gas conglomerates who were attempting to destroy the natural beauty of the LaSal Mountains and Castle Valley near Moab, Utah by drilling ugly holes into the ground. After three years of this frustrating work, I began to feel as if I was banging my head against a sandstone wall and so began looking around for a place to enjoy my retirement years—a retirement mecca, so to speak.

To my great surprise, I came across a new retirement development right in my own backyard—Cisco, Utah—and jumped at the chance to invest in this soon-to-be prospering little community.

We were moving into our new home in this beautiful, eastern Utah town when I first felt the onset of withdrawal symptoms. One of the reasons we picked this wonderful retirement center, a suburb of Crescent Junction, and only 45 miles east of the hopping town of Green River and 35 miles northeast of the fabulous night life in Moab, was my ardent hope that I could kick the habit of the hard stuff.

It was while I was moving in our wood-burning stove that the old, uncontrollable craving came back on me—I must have the hard stuff. I knew of no one in the Cisco area that I could ask where I might get the hard stuff. A good friend in Moab said that while he wanted nothing to do with anything illegal, he knew a guy in the Rotary Club who might know a guy who knew a guy that just might have the hard stuff for sale. In a few days I got a letter with no return address and no signature directing me to wait in front of the old bank building in Green River on a certain date and time.

I arrived at the appointed time. It was a hot, summer afternoon and very still around the old bank building which had not been a bank for decades. I waited—it was a few minutes past the hour. A glint of light from a roof top to the east caught my eye. It was sunlight reflecting off the lenses of a pair of field glasses. I was being watched! On the other side of the street on a roof top I could see the top of a hat sticking up and under the hat was a rifle barrel. By now I was scared. I looked around and noticed four cars—two to the east and two to the west—with someone slouched down in the front seat so they could just see out over the dashboard.

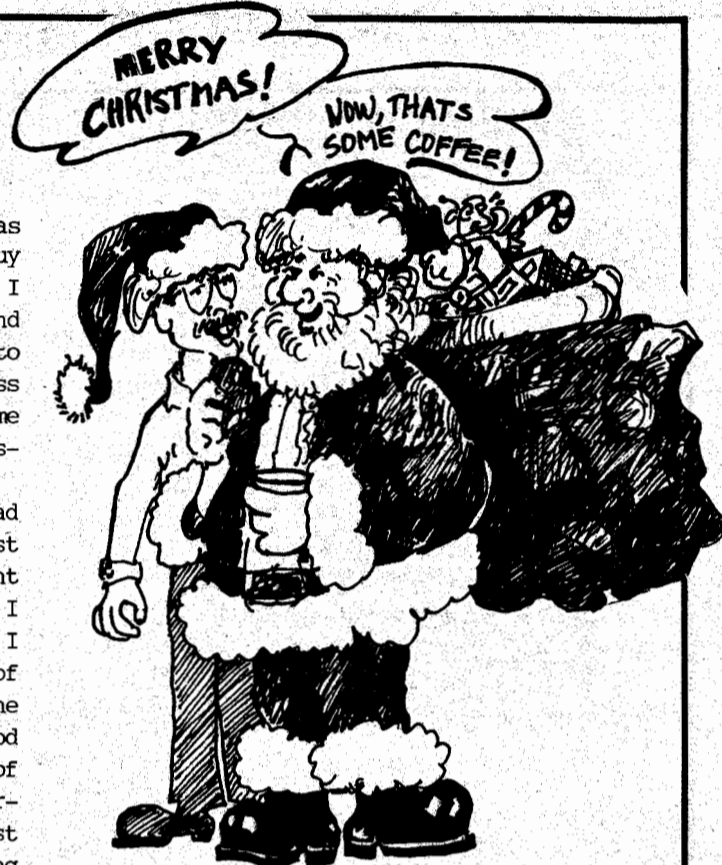
It was a trap! A stake-out! The law was about to make a bust and nail me and the guy who was going to deliver the hard stuff. I jumped in my four-wheel drive pickup truck and raced out of town. One of the cars tried to follow me, but I split from the highway across the desert in four-wheel high and in no time lost the sedan that could not hack it cross-country.

I was sure that my friend in Moab had nothing to do with the stake-out. It was just that the law found out about the appointment and was about to make a bust. At any rate, I would not go through the Rotary Club again. I decided to approach the construction manager of the real estate company that was developing the Cisco retirement community. It would be a good opportunity to ask him if he would have a roof on our house by winter. AHOC Development Corporation (the folks in the community just called it a-hoc for short), who were billing Cisco as "The 52-Week Vacation", had run short of money before they could roof the homes. We were promised roofs before the rainy season, but since the corporation was based out of San Diego, we weren't sure when that would be for as a-hoc told us, "It never rains in southern California." (I never did know what AHOC stood for [see postscript]).

The manager was a seedy-looking guy and just the type that would have contacts with pushers who sold the hard stuff. He gave me the name and address of a person in Grand Junction, Colorado. I went to this address and rang the door bell. I never did see the person involved; a bony hand was thrust through the mail slot with a note directing me to a small building supply house on the outskirts of town on the road to Montrose.

When I arrived, the clerk looked me over for some time. He then told me to drive around back of the store. There he delivered to me a quantity of the hard stuff and I was on my way back to Cisco.

I had been home for about an hour when a knock came at the door. I opened it to face two, grim-looking, Dick Tracy types. In unison they flung open their coats. Each had a badge marked "Special Agent—Enforcement Division—Environmental Protection Agency". "You are under arrest," they said in perfect unison, "for possession of an illegal quantity of the hard stuff." "What hard stuff?" I said in an attempt to bluff. "It's right there under your



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wood-burning stove—that 3' by 4', hard, asbestos board. You know asbestos is illegal, but you did not know that the building supply house in Grand Junction is an EPA asbestos sting operation."

I was convicted on 12 square feet of hard, asbestos board and given one year of hard labor washing birds caught in oil spills.

Postscript: After my release, I returned to Cisco with the goal of finally kicking the habit of the hard stuff and roofing my home. The AHOC Development Corporation had filed for bankruptcy and I did finally find out what AHOC stood for. Perhaps unfittingly, it was "Asshole of Creation".



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CHRISTMAS
GREETINGS





"Westerns" are out of fashion these days. The seemingly endless stream of Grade B movies and cheap pulp novels finally bored the hell out of us; sales dropped, ratings dropped, the movie stars moved on to film other stories and the genre seemed exhausted. A few superior writers of escapist western novels hung on and hacked out a living, Louis Lamour, Gordon Shirreffs, and once in a great while an interesting and well-written book that happened to be a Western was published, like Clair Huffaker's The Cowboy and the Cossack, but we have outgrown our romantic notions of the frontier—we've become enmeshed in romantic notions of crime, supernatural horror and even romance. Part of the blame, at least, was with the writers themselves. Only a few based their books on solid historical fact, on the authentic details of life on the frontier, on historical people or events or even on the true geographical details of the land they wrote about. Their heroes were lean, their damsels buxom and evil always perished at The End, book after book after book. A competent Western hack could grind out a novel in a month or less, and probably still can.

We will review some good novels about the West at a later date, but for those of you who are interested in the real people who committed themselves to getting their living through the law or outside it, the following books are recommended.

The Cowboy by Philip Ashton Rollins

The noted writer-historian David Dary has published a very readable and detailed book titled Cowboy Culture, and it is a valuable piece of work, but this history, I think, is preferable, for it was not written with the objective eye of the professional researcher; it is a serious memoir by a survivor of the life he writes about. As the author explains in his Preface, he has limited himself to his direct personal knowledge, to what was said or done in front of him—the few exceptions to this rule are carefully noted. Written in the style of the amateur who wishes to be taken seriously, the narrative has a fine, stilted charm, and rings true. Rollins speaks of every detail of Cowboy Life, the importance of a good saddle, the stupidity of cattle, the value of memorizing the labels on cans of food, the brutal work of the round-up and trial drive, and most of all, the Cowboy's great enthusiasm for his work and his great love for his way of life. Rollins is careful to give both real names and nicknames to material objects and events. His summary of the 1892 "Rustler War" in Wyoming is precise, insightful and based on

his experience there. This is not a history—it is a careful and kind explanation, as if from an old hand (which he was) to a bunch of pilgrims (which most of us are). This is essential reading in the history of the West.

Knights of the Green Cloth by Robert K. DeArment

If you never heard the tale, you probably don't know that Wyatt Earp once owned a half-interest in "The Only Second-Class Saloon in Alaska." Earp used to be a floor boss for Tex Rickard, the gambler who later promoted and produced boxing championship fights by Johnson, Jeffries, Willard, Dempsey and Sharkey. That's the sort of book this is. How to beat a faro game? Not a chance. DeArment is a serious historian who has compiled this fine summary of the world of the professional gamblers of the West. It was once a very respectable profession, and those who were successful sometimes died very old and as rich as railroad presidents. Given the range of adventures and personalities, it is surprising to me that serious writers have, for the most part, neglected these essential characters and their astounding careers. The author has neatly divided his pageant into four parts, Aces, Kings, Queens and Knaves. This is both clever and appropriate. Many of the gamblers knew each other; some were rivals, some were temporary partners, but each, male or female, honest or swindler, defined his own life in his own terms, living and working at a dangerous trade that was as fascinating then as it is now. From the Old South to the death of Poker Alice Ivers in 1930, DeArment has laid out an important source book and, I hope, inspiration to future writers. The bibliography is a good one.

The Gunfighter: Man or Myth by Joseph G. Rosa

The author is an Englishman, and his "detachment from local influences" has allowed him to produce a solid account of the differences between the harsh realities of the gunfighter's life and the even harsher and ever-so-much-

more-dramatic pictures of legend and fiction. Not only are the characters authentic, but they are well-defined in a context of real history. There is something sad about the book; perhaps it is the dispassionate repetition of death after death—marshalls, ranchers, pistoleers, it seems not to matter who they were—until, despite the explanations and details, self-reliance is the final victim, in the same way that taming a wild beast creates sadness. The danger may be over, but something important has been lost beyond the lives or fortunes of individual people. This is a fair job of debunking the legends of heroic proportions, especially for those not yet well-read in Western history. The chapters on the weapons of the age are good, not overly complex or technical.

The Western Peace Officer by Frank Richard Prassel

Written by a professional educator of police, this is more academically oriented than the usual popular style of writing. Law enforcement was anything but glamorous and even highly competitive in the West. Federal cavalry, U.S. Marshalls, State, County, City police all vied with as well as worked with, bank detectives, railroad detectives, cattlemen's associations and private detective associations for law and order. But the book is required reading to understand this important institution in our history. If the style is a bit lacking, the information is valid and valuable, right down to the Gilpin County, Colorado List of Sheriff's Fees. With just enough incident to sustain the average reader's interest in the history of the profession, Prassel's book is the modern organization of law enforcement agencies. The author is professional enough to take issue with those standards and practices which are not yet as modern (or humane) as they ought to be. Most of the early peace officers did not look or act like Gary Cooper in High Noon, because they weren't required to. Their work was mostly dull routine, punctuated by occasional moments of danger or terror. They were no better or worse than they had to be, and this book explains that quite well.

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OLD NEWS

Condensed by
Dale Pierson

DECEMBER 1896

Dr. J.W. Williams arrived in Moab on the Monday, December 2nd. The Grand Valley Times expressed its hope that Williams could be induced to become Moab's first resident physician and urged the community and the County Commission to do their part in getting Williams to stay.

Without a doctor in town, a time period of 24 to 48 hours would elapse before a serious injury or illness could be attended to.

Later in the month the County Commission, acting on a petition signed by the citizens of Moab, passed a resolution creating the office of "county physician". Dr. Williams was appointed to this position at a salary of \$150 per year. Williams returned to Colorado to settle his affairs, with plans to return on Jan. 1st, 1897, to take up permanent residence in Moab.

The County Commission passed an ordinance granting a franchise to Lester Taylor to operate a ferry on the Colorado (then Grand) River near the present bridge site. The ordinance also established rates to be charged for the use of the ferry.

A letter from N. Galloway, dated: Hite, December 10, 1896, described a trip through Cataract Canyon.

"...the river has fallen 2½ feet, which made the cataracts much rougher than usual as it leaves more rocks showing at the surface. There are about 100 rapids in the canyon and many of them have a fall of from 40 to (?) feet; we run all but six. The distance from the junction (confluence) to the foot of Cataract Canyon is about sixty miles.

"We had no serious trouble in getting through the canyon, except I fell on a rock and hurt my knee in which I have been lame since.

"From the junction down the river for about 30 miles the formation pitches away from the river on both sides at an angle of about 30 degrees after which it becomes more level, and at the foot of the narrow part of the canyon the ledges all come level with the river. The roughest water is in the first 30 miles; as the ledges become more level, the river becomes smoother."

DECEMBER 1913

The County Commission accepted plans submitted by engineer Horace W. Sheley of Salt Lake City for a suspension bridge to be constructed across the Colorado River at Dewey. A bond election for \$10,000 to aid in construction was also called for.

DECEMBER 1938

The December 1st issue of the Times announced that by proclamation of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Arches National Monument had been enlarged by 29,160 acres. The new areas of the monument contained Courthouse Towers, Klondike Bluffs, and a portion of Devil's Garden. Previously the Monument had been two separate sections of 4,520 acres containing The Windows and part of Devil's Garden. The new addition to the Monument made Arches one contiguous area, and it was hoped this would aid in the development of roads into the Monument.

A separate story in the Dec. 22nd issue stated that Dr. J.W. Williams, 84 years of age, had received a personal letter from President Roosevelt congratulating him for his efforts towards the enlargement of Arches. Along with the letter was the pen which FDR had used to sign it.

DECEMBER 1963

A new arch was discovered in the Fiery Furnace section of Arches. Superintendent Bates Wilson and party were doing trail exploration when they happened upon the arch. "...Wilson was the first to see it. 'My word, look at this arch,' he exclaimed, and dubbed it 'Surprise Arch'."

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Mudpuppy

I turned into a Lone Coyote for a few minutes the other day. It happened just after taking a draught of powerful desert medicine.

I remember kneeling, hands and knees on the slickrock, to dip my lips into the pure water of a shallow rain-filled pothole, and when I looked back up at the snowcapped peaks I was standing on all fours, peering down a long nose, listening to a million sounds and scents.

Maybe it was the freshness of the water, having fallen the previous night carried pure from the Pacific on a few hour cloud flight...

Maybe it was the voice of brother White Wolf coming from the snowline where he stepped gingerly upon the redrocks during last night's storm....

Maybe it was the same thing that happened to me on another hike when I briefly became a Juniper Tree...and I walked slowly among the other desert trees and realized that they were Anasazi Spirits, returned to their previous home to live with the land.

Suddenly, however, I became myself again, a lone hiker looking for a storm freshened pothole to drink from.

I hefted my daypack and continued, sticking to rock and wash bottom routes to avoid trampling the living soils.

But during my return hike I realized that I could smell each tree, hear each clattering leaf, smell the wet sandstone, and hear the moisture seeping into the rock.

My senses hadn't changed, but thanks to my friend Lone Coyote my perception, and my awareness had.



STARSCAM

Your
Horoscope
by
**Rama Lama
Ding Dong**
Sagittarius
(Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)

Your generous, enthusiastic astral aspects take over this month. Your love of festivity and socializing blooms to full flower in the holiday season. You have a great sense of humor about sex and will not question the awe-inspiring collection of strange underwear hanging over your shower rod on New Year's Day. (Cosmic Hint: consider inviting Virgos to the New Year's Eve party. Start the party on the 9th since the New Moon ensures your success in personal affairs.)

Someone you work with will give you a special family heirloom as a Christmas present on the 24th. If you value your job, don't laugh. Depend on your quick Sagittarian intellect to get you out of the situation. Say something like, "How interesting! I'd always wondered about your gene stock."

Remind everyone you know that, yes, this close to Christmas, you are having a birthday.

CAPRICORN: This holiday season you will finally slough the last remnants of inhibition from your goatish nature. Put a good attorney on retainer and go for it.

AQUARIUS: Your unpredictable, temperamental, eccentric actions have led even your friends to conclude that you are a discontinuous function. Confusion to them. Enjoy.

PISCES: Cheer up! This Christmas your melancholy, pessimistic attitudes will do a one-eighty. You will be happy for the rest of your life thanks to a pre-frontal lobotomy which will occur somewhere around the Full Moon on the 23rd.

ARIES: Uranus dictates a major job change for you around New Year's Eve. The specific details are cosmically occluded but the work will involve short hours, high pay, a limousine and FBI surveillance. It will be great while it lasts.

TAURUS: Your sensual, greedy, Taurean nature leads you to associate with a dark-haired man named Raoul you meet at the Poplar Place who offers you the use of his 41 foot motor/sailer if you will deliver a package to Ecuador for him. For once in your life, don't be practical. Trust Rama Lama.

GEMINI: You discover that aliens from the Crab Nebula are going to invade Earth on the 12th Day of Christmas. Because you are such a scatterbrain, no one believes you. You get the last laugh, though: just before they slag the planet, the aliens, impressed by your lack of effectiveness, choose you President of their bureaucracy. It will be nice having Inter-galactic power but you will miss a cold beer now and then.

CANCER: When Santa Claus climbs down your chimney this year, he will like the place so much he will decide to stay for a while. Stock up on booze, licorice whips, chocolate kisses, spray-can cheese toppings, and plenty of film to record what that fat, jolly fellow really does for holiday fun.

LEO: Your Christmas loot will astound even you if you hang around Rim Cyclery on the 18th. Look for the silver Ferrari 308 GTB4 with the mountain bike rack on the top. The keys will be in it. Treat yourself.

VIRGO: Lucky you, a Christmas romance comes creeping into you life. Don't let the fur or the extra appendages bother you. Loosen up. Experiment.

LIBRA: Your suave, persuasive manner will bring an unexpected Christmas gift on the 27th or 28th. Start building on an extra room right away. Hint: it should be a big room.

SCORPIO: Jupiter moves in and will hang around until March. This influence overcomes your vengeful, overbearing aspects and turns you into a cheerful little Christmas elf, spreading joy and happiness all around you. People will decide that they like you after all, and will pile presents thigh-deep under your tree. In March you can go back to normal.



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Wet Critters

By John Wahl

I avoid water, mostly. That is to say I avoid activities which require the participant to (a) swim, (b) float, (c) tread water or (d) drown. But an exception was made for Tonto Creek, and as a result I saw some interesting things.

Tonto Creek pours green as liquid mint from the high ponderosa country beneath Mogollon Rim (muggy-own), in central Arizona. Eager for a few cool, lazy days away from the desert, I chose to hike in to Hell's Gate. (Are you like me, irresistibly drawn to anything on the map alluding to hell or the devil? Seems a bit perverse.) Tonto emerges here from a narrow, sheer-walled canyon and is immediately strengthened by confluence with Haigler Creek. Haigler looked to be the more negotiable of the two, so next morning early I started upstream - wading, hopping, scrambling to avoid the deep pools. But inevitably I'm squeezed into a dark chilly slot, where the sun hasn't yet entered and won't for some time. The trip through is almost numbing, so haste is made to a warm boulder where I lie watching tiger swallowtail butterflies and a bird which I think you call a "dipper". At least it spent an inordinate amount of time dipping.

Further progress looks too much like work, so it's once more through the narrows. Just as my feet are finally finding the bottom, a tiny movement catches my eye. Clinging to the sheer slippery rock at waterline is a bat, soaked and threatened with each ripple I've stirred in passing. Most likely it was there earlier and I hadn't noticed. One claw reaches up, slowly, again and again in exhausted, hopeless attempt at salvation. Gathered carefully in my shirt it

squeaks and gnaws fabric. Deposited on a sunny ledge it wobbles around looking for something. Strange behavior. Then I laugh at what should have been obvious - it finds a rock to hang upside down from, and begins a cat-like grooming of leathery wings. Tiny pink tongue and needle teeth. Fur begins to dry and fluff out. Waiting expectantly, I imagine the grateful launching into flight, the confirmation of my good deed. Instead the little monster crawls into a crevice with not so much as a glance toward its benefactor. Oh well. A lifetime devoted to acrobatic mosquito-gobbling will be thanks enough. But exercise caution with those in-flight beverages next time, amigo.

The following day after things have warmed up I take another look at Hell's Gate, at the deep water disappearing 'round a bend, and listen to the enticing roar of upstream rapids or falls. The walls seem rough-hewn enough to be clutched at will by uncertain swimmers such as myself. So I throw a few things into a ziplock bag, along with a lot of air. Pushing this in front of me and wearing an ancient pair of expendable nerd glasses, I'm on my way. What a ridiculous sight but, hey, it works.

Soon I'm suspended above sunlit chambers where surprisingly large fish drift in and out of shadow, flashing silver, and boulders shimmer in a half-dozen shades of emerald. Grabbing for my first breather, I find myself attached to the brow of a flooded overhang. My relaxing body floats up into what should have been solid rock, till everything from stomach to toes is exploring an invisible cavern. This tickles the imagination in unsettling ways. Brings to mind bizarre, heretofore undocumented creatures, lurking in the black depths with their unspeakable fangs and the appetite of a starving shark. Nonsense. Piece of cake. At my third identical rest stop something shivers fast up my side, coils twice around my arm in a panic

to escape, and then streaks away. I do believe that poor snake was unnerved.

The shallows arrive, as does the roar, and I can pick my way among big smooth rocks and up around pour-offs. Water jets and squirms and boils everywhere, living for the moment. In a cauldron beneath some falls there are pale ribbons flickering in the current, attached to oddly-shaped stones. The I see the rest of the skeleton scattered about, bits of flesh still evident here and there. What an unusual place to find a cow. Caught up in a flash flood no doubt, but did it make the trip as a carcass or as a living, kicking, astonished bovine river-runner? Then what tales it could tell. At first I feel a little queasy, thinking my swim to have been through a diluted broth of decomposing livestock. But on closer inspection the remains look clean and harmless. Sort of water-cured, you might say. Cured of overgrazing and indiscriminate defecation, at any rate.

Next comes a day with voices, human ones. A lean fellow with a pistol on his belt is saying howdy, talking about gold and phantom cabins. Knows these canyons well, just brought the kids to do a little panning. Seems you can get to within a mile of this spot with a 4-wheel drive or even in a regular pickup given the proper devil-may-care attitude. Downstream five, ten miles is very beautiful. Spent lots of time in Idaho, Montana, he's saying, but this country is special. Well, take care of yourself. You too. So long.

The morning rolls around again, time to leave. On the highest stretch of trail I have an expansive view westward to the Mazatzals, rugged under a cloudless sky. Will have to get back here to Tonto Creek again someday, I'm thinking, and invest much more time and effort, get to know the place. Resolutions like that are often made, seldom kept. But in this case just maybe I will.

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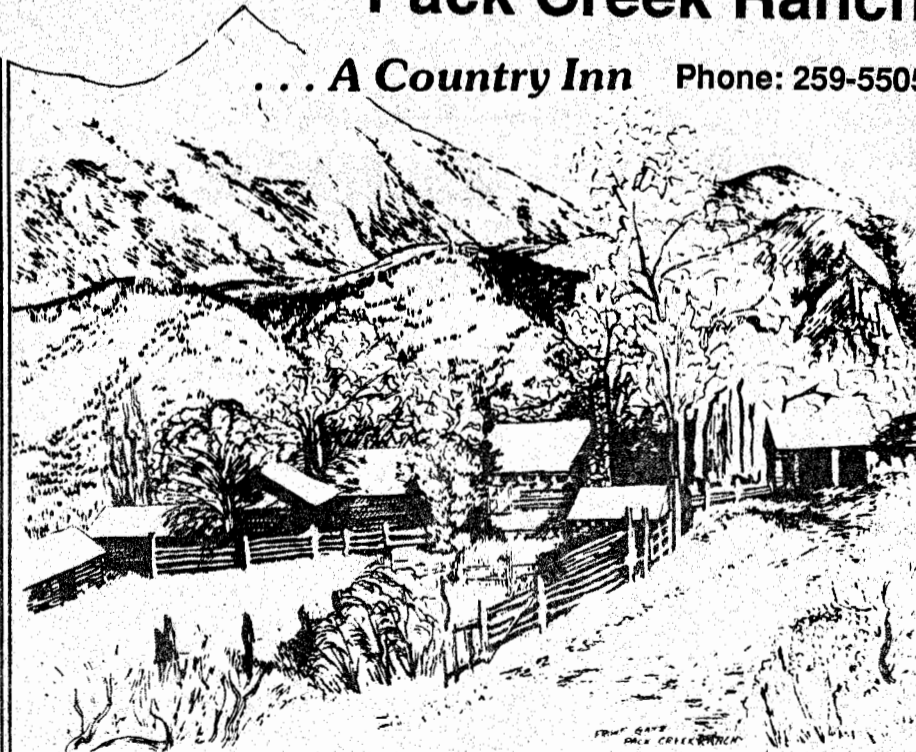


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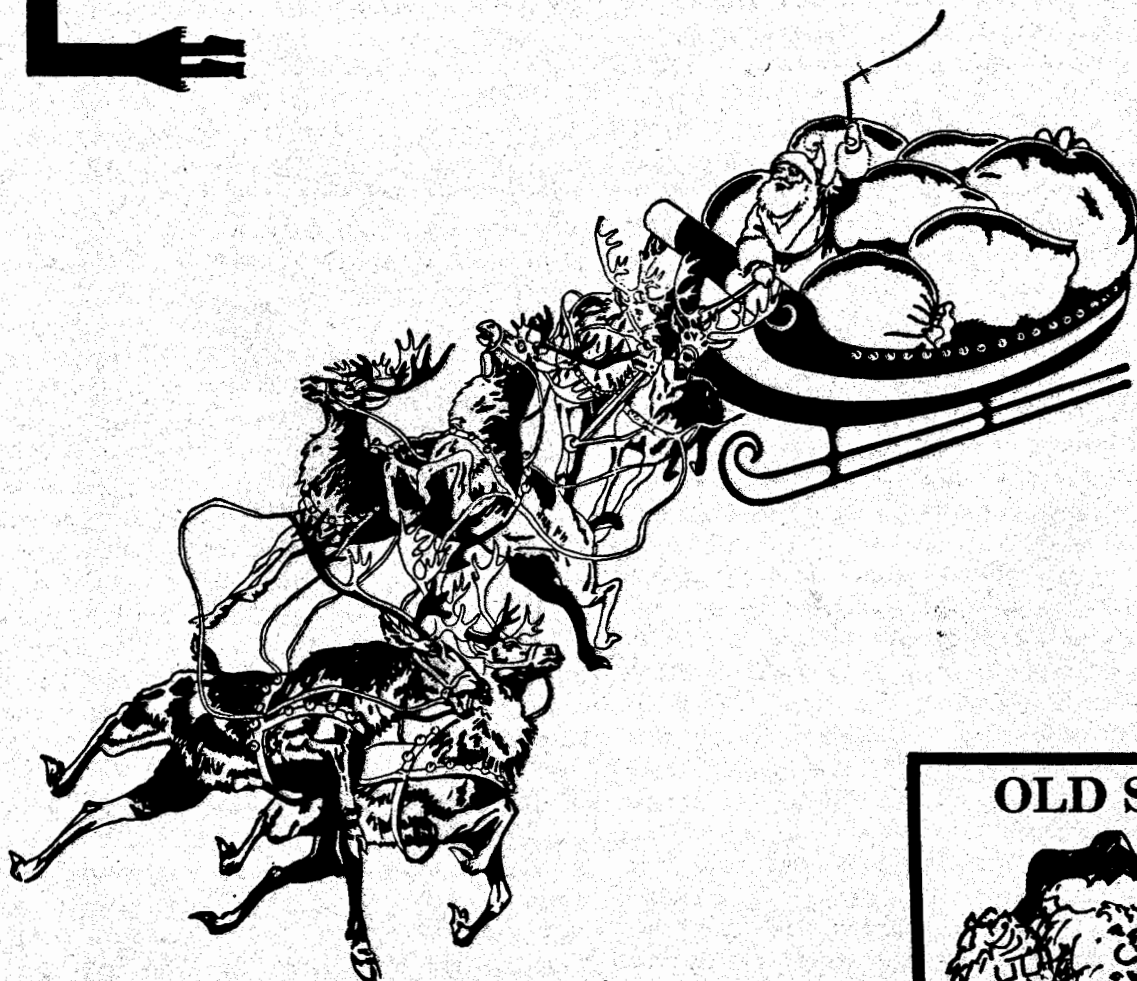


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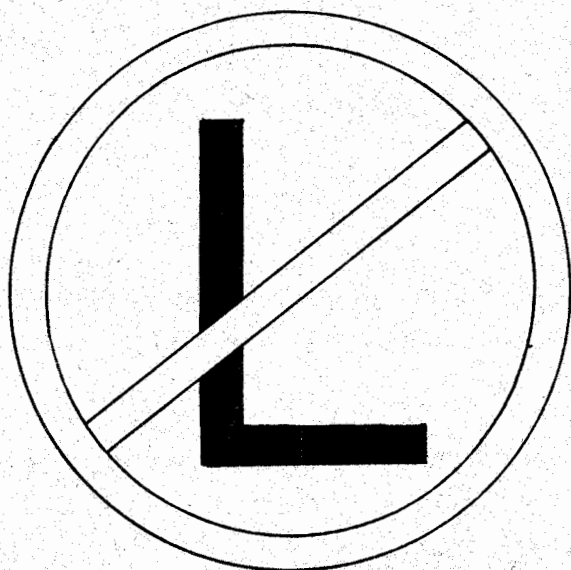
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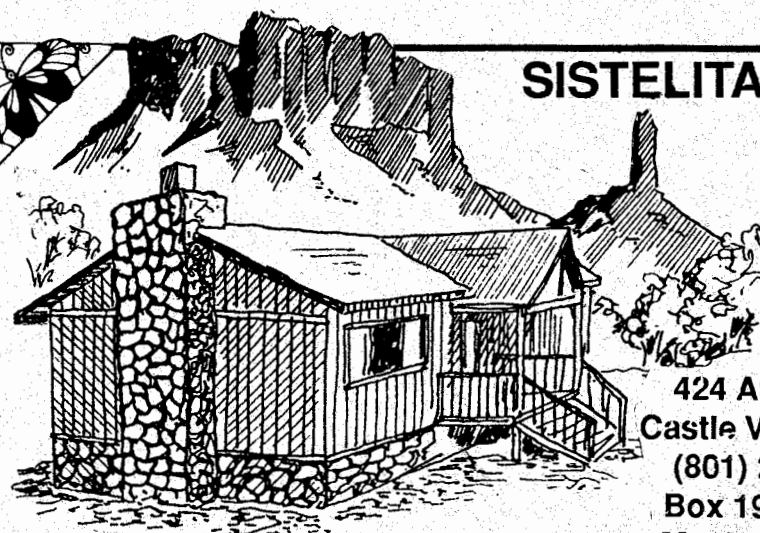
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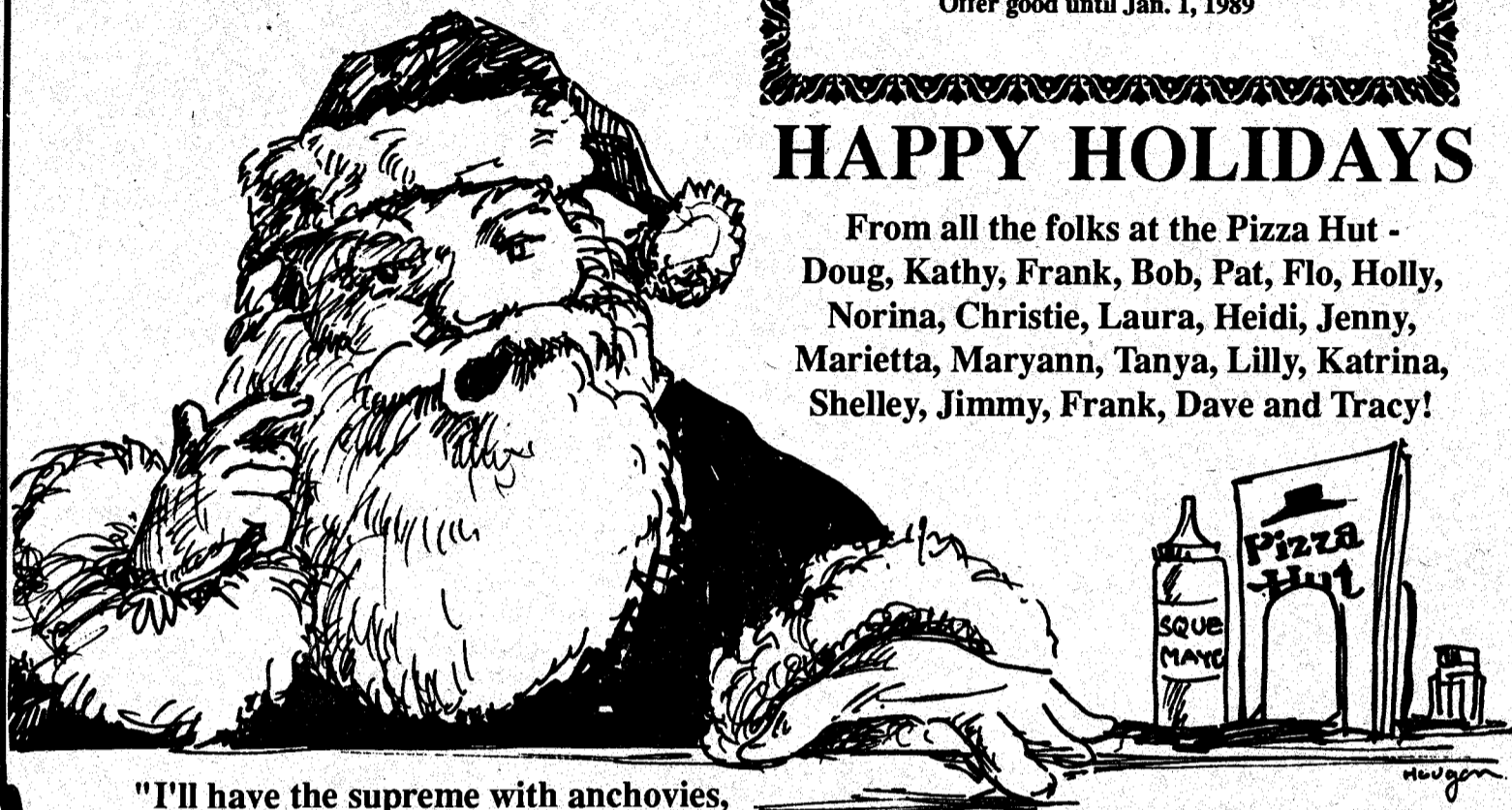
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IZZIE KIDDIN'S Second Annual MUSICAL TRIVIA QUIZ



So, some of you thought last years' quiz was pretty easy, huh? Well, you best put on your thinking caps this year, because the second annual quiz will test you expertise! Once again, the first person to mail in all the correct answers will win a free years' subscription to THE STINKING DESERT GAZETTE - PLUS - a copy of NOTHIN BUT THE TRUTH by THE IZZIE KIDDIN BAND - AND - a copy of HEART OF THE DESERT by local bluegrass artist MARK DOHERTY! GOOD LUCK TO ALL!!!!

- Which artist was the first to record LAND OF A THOUSAND DANCES?
- For his recording debut, the late and great guitarist ROY BUCHANAN, was featured on what 45 and who was the artist?
- A hit instrumental entitled SCRATCHY-PART I & PART II was recorded by what artist, and what was so odd about PART II?
- JORGEN INGMAN had an American hit with the instrumental _____.
- Laurie Records took a chance and released a Dixieland Instrumental around 1960 and the French titled tune went on to sell over a million copies. What was the name of the song and who recorded it?
- JAMES BROWNS' first hit and subsequent signature tune PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE was originally released in 1956 on what label?
- Which two great blues artists were born in INDIANOLA, MISSISSIPPI and are they related to each other?
- Who was the featured bass player on CHUCK BERRY'S early hits?
- What group scored with the hits: HULLY GULLY, BIG BOY PETE, and WESTERN MOVIES?
- THE YARDBIRDS performed in what foreign film?
- What song, sung completely in Japanese, was a huge American hit, and who sang it?
- Who is credited with bringing ROBERTA FLACK to the attention of Atlantic Records?
- Whose picture on the cover of SGT. PEPPER was ultimately painted out because he demanded a fee?
- Who had a jazz instrumental hit version of THE THEME FROM EXODUS?
- After Jimmy Page formed Led Zep, ex-Yardbird vocalist KEITH RELF, along with his sister, formed what group?
- Who swept four grammies in 1980 for BEST ALBUM, BEST RECORD, BEST SONG, BEST NEW ARTIST?
- What English Group had the hit: THE GAME OF LOVE back in the early sixties?
- What hit song spelled dollars for BARRETT STRONG?
- SHOUT! PARTS I & II was originally released by RCA in 1959. Name the group.
- Who was Ross Bagdasarian???