

The Stinking Desert GAZETTE

"Serving SE Utah Since 1986"

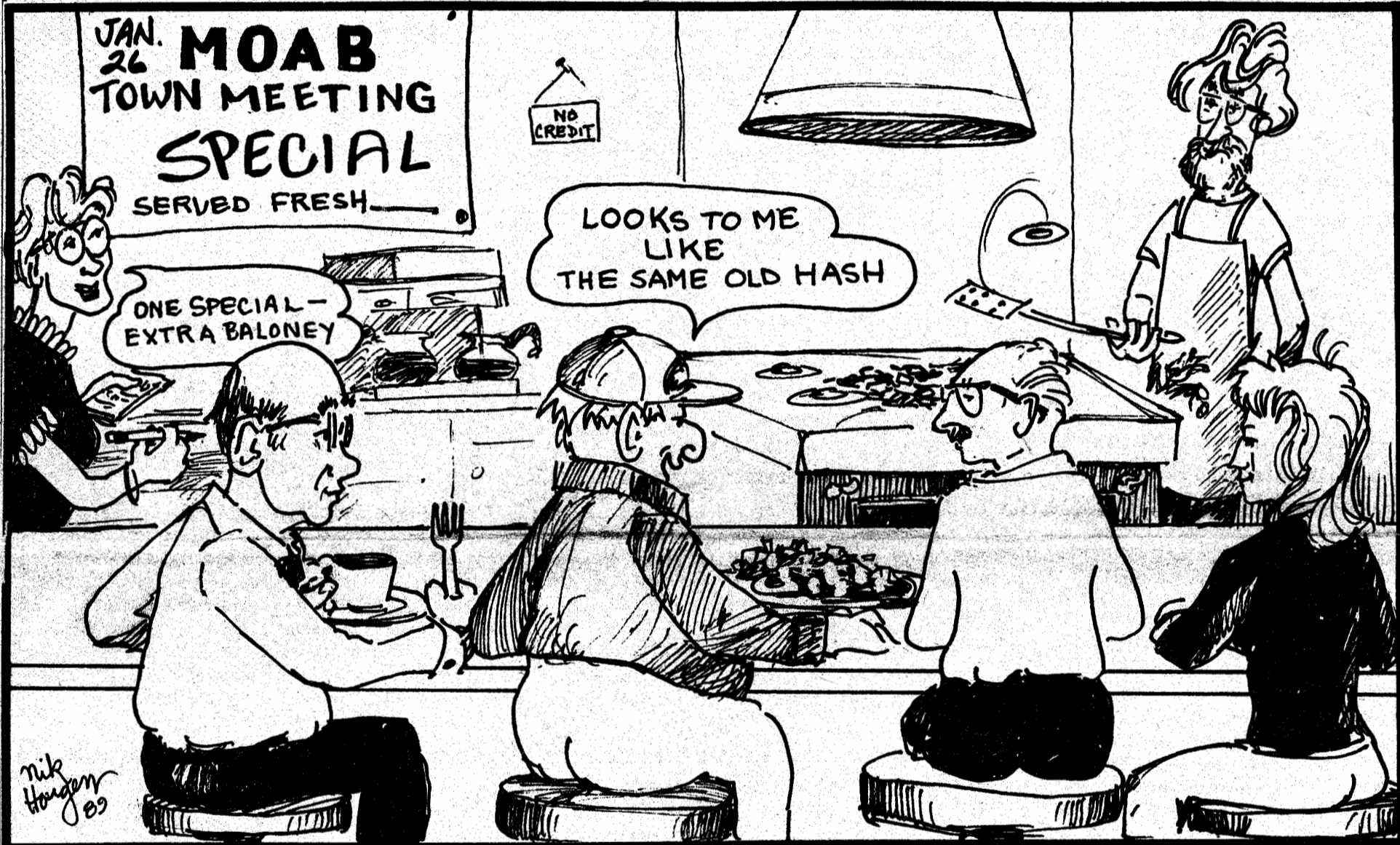


Vol. 3 No. 7

Moab, Utah

Feb. 1989

ANOTHER RECIPE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT...



DEVIL APPEARS IN MOAB

Rumors of a satan-worshipping cult right here in Moab continued unabated due to several reports of devil-sightings lately here in Grand County.

The devil was seen again in Moab last month, causing a minor disturbance at a local church.

Members of the fundamentalist congregation, The Solid Rock Sandstone Slab We're Better Than You Church Of The True Faith, sighted the rascal in the back pew during a Sunday worship service.

The fiend's spiked tail was spotted sticking out in the aisle during collection time. In a scene reminiscent of Oral Robert's well-publicized tough midnight scuffles with the devil, church members rushed the critter, tackled him down, and carted him out onto the

sidewalk. Witnesses reported that the horny, pitchfork-toting biped screamed loudly during the attack, shouting "you need me!" over and over, until he was finally gagged with a well-placed swatch of duct tape.

Police were summoned but it was determined that the events were outside of their jurisdiction.

The group decided that burning at the stake would be nothing more than a treat for the devil. They hit upon a plan to throw him into the ice cold Colorado River, conceiving that to be the ultimate torture for that exotic species. It wasn't to be.

They dragged him down the sidewalk, heading west toward the river, but the moment they got him away from church property he disappeared into thin air.

The Gazette contacted the area's

noted authority on metaphysical mysteries, Mr. Livan Letliv, of the liberal group, the Secular Seculists, for some insight in the matter.

"I think the answer to it is clear to even the most casual observer," said Letliv. "As soon as you get a short distance away from a church, the devil ceases to exist. At least, that's my interpretation of it."

The fundamentalist preacher, Dr. Oral Schiller, disagreed with Letliv's conclusion.

"It's clear," snorted Schiller, that Letliv is nothing more than a free-thinking pagan. If he spent some time in church, he'd learn to believe in the devil."

"Why, I've heard that Letliv's kids don't even believe in the devil. What kind of upbringing is that?" concluded Schiller.

EARTHSHIVER

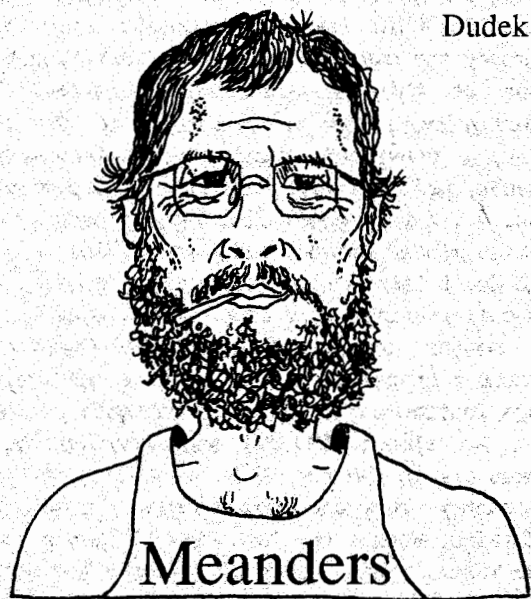
Randy Floater, information spokesman for the Moab Chapter of Rockhuggers International, called a press conference last month to report the occurrence of a rare canyonlands phenomena his group calls an "Earth Shiver."

"We've been expecting this for several weeks," said Floater. "The Canyonlands have been unusually cold this winter, and the conditions were perfect."

"A lot of people tend to forget that the rocks are alive, and have feelings just like we do," continued Floater. "When heat-loving rocks like we have here are subjected to below-zero cold, they tend to scrunch up and hunker down against it."

"A little more movement can be expected come Spring, when they relax again," said Floater.

Dudek



All right. I'll confess. I wasn't planning on putting a Gazette out this month. I know, I know, how could I even think about such a thing? It was easy. So easy, I couldn't handle it, although for a brief time it was a very liberating sensation.

After 2½ years of living my life in monthly chunks, and saying no to far too many river trips and other canyon excursions, I just felt it was my right to take a month off. You know, a sabbatical. Reflect on the past and plan for the future, free from the pressure. And February seemed a good time to do it, for a number of reasons.

February is the low spot in the local economy. Advertisers are kind of hard to find. Plus, I spent the coldest part of January being paranoid. So it seemed logical to me that in February my worst nightmare would come true, that February would be the month when every one of our advertisers dropped out for one issue. In fact, I was certain of it. I was afraid that my mental state, already frayed and tattered, would unravel completely on the occasion of such a magnificent failure.

Furthermore, it's been my responsibility the last three months to sell the ads. I was not looking forward to February. The month looked cold, grey, forbidding... It loomed on the horizon like a cemetery for dead newspapers.

You see, I am easily the world's worst ad salesman. I don't know why. It's just a special talent of mine. I have a sixth sense that tells me the exact moment of the day when my customer is at their busiest, and that's when I show up. But it gets worse.

Instead of exuding confidence, secure in the knowledge that the ad is going to make that customer some money (which they do), a hangdog, semi-apologetic look takes over my face when I begin my spiel. I've tried repeatedly, but I am unable to control it. It's kind of a "gosh, I know it doesn't seem like a month has gone by but it has and I'm sorry for the inconvenience but would you please do us a favor and run an ad this month so my aging dog can receive some proper medical attention" sort of look.

And so I thought that February was a good month to take a break, reorganize the paper, train our new ad man, and lay low until March, when the ice breaks loose, the tourists come back, and the economy picks up again.

I mean, hey, this is the Stinking Desert Gazette, not Time magazine. I thought, send the subscribers a post card, put a notice in the Advertiser and the T-I, and take a well-earned break. Then my buddies went to work on me.

In effect, I was a cruel, lazy, heartless,

self-serving, irresponsible, shiftless, no-good poltroon for even considering the idea.

A real editor would have told them all to go have a flying intercourse with a rolling donut. Not me. My paranoia instantly mushroomed. It materialized into a pair of iron manacles that clapped around my ankles, and ended my freedom dance.

What if everyone thinks the Gazette folded? There was that headline last month, a joke to be sure, but analyzed by my readers as a Freudian expression of my innermost feelings.

Plus, it's February, a month marked with few amusements. Furthermore, there was no river trip going out. Finally, I was unable to figure out how to change the Volume Number on the mast head - after twelve issues, or twelve months. I couldn't deal with it.

All right, I said, we'll put one out even if there are no advertisers and we have to pay for the thing ourselves. As it turned out, we got enough money to print this issue, and I got a ton of help with the ads from my friends. Nik Hougen, Mark Doherty, and Rick Showalter get the credit for the energy behind this issue.

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259-5575

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Delta Certaincoat Tole Paints
and Art supplies

Rick is our new ad person and illustrator. He moved here last month from Tucson. He has 20 years of commercial art experience, plus the prime prerequisite for this job, a really silly sense of humor. Watch for his distinctive style in this issue. We welcome him aboard. He will be a real plus to the paper.

Finally, we thank our advertisers for all the support, even in the black hole month of

The Stinking Desert Gazette

Box 13
Moab, UT 84532

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February. To serve you better, we are changing our format.

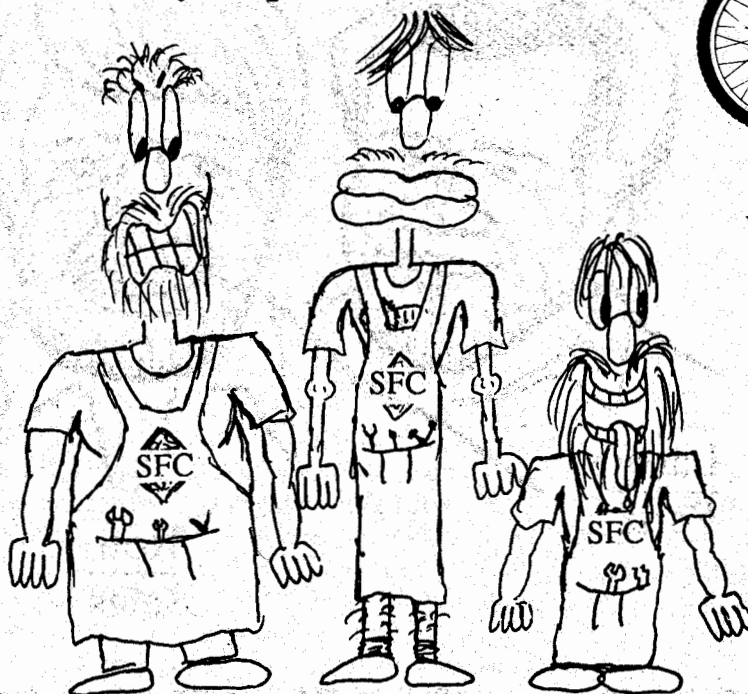
Beginning this month, the Gazette is FREE in Moab. In addition, we are increasing our press run. Our plan is to get the Gazette out and into the hands of the tourists, and accordingly we will have twice as many distribution points as before. We'll lose some money in stand sales and the larger press run will cost us more. But the change will result in hundreds of more tourist contacts for our advertising customers.

So, gone are the world's only barnwood paper stands. Good riddance. I won't miss 'em a bit. I don't think many of you will either.

I expect we'll get some flack for giving the paper away. Our subscribers will yell. But the 35¢, (with discounts and stand ripoffs, about 15¢), didn't pay for the trouble. It was either raise the price, double or triple, or raise the ad rates a little and provide far more coverage and potential business for our advertisers.

Our advertisers. Bless their hearts, they made this issue possible. Stop by and visit them this month. It's the cold end of their winter too. They will be glad to see you.

Ad Finally Captioned!



Our Friendly, Intelligent And
Charming Staff Will Serve You



259-5333

Welcome Bikers

(2nd Place)

Cretin, Cretin
& Buffoon
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READER'S CHOICE CLASSIC GAZETTE ADS



Steve Canyonlands

EARTHQUAKE: Amazing. This area of zero seismic activity has experienced two earth tremors in 6 months. Not centered here, but close enough to set the house plants swaying. And none of the spectacular balanced rocks in the community have fallen..... Has anyone noticed how hard it is for the TV news announcers to say the word "temblor"... They inevitably say "Tremblor"....

GRIPES: Does it bug anyone else that the three network TV stations in SLC report St. George's weather as "Southern Utah". That little dinky dab of real estate is "Southern Utah"? Is this a Chamber of Commerce ploy to promote the idea that all of Southern Utah is warmer in the winter than it really is? What's the deal here? Hey, the last thing we need is an influx of people who seek to avoid a good old-fashioned winter. They are generally a lower class of people. Who wants 'em? Bob, Rebecca, Mark, please tell it like it is.

STAND BY YOUR MAN: Bless her heart, that lovely lady who called me the morning of the two NFL conference championship games to find out what time and what channel to tune into. She was determined to videotape those playoff games, woman's lib tendencies notwithstanding, for her male friend who was out of town for the action-filled day, knowing full well that programs like that are exactly the type of thing that can rot the mind of a perfectly sensitive and potentially pliable man. What a selfless and wonderfully compassionate thing to do. It warms the cockles.

SPEAKING OF SPORTS: The Utah Jazz boast the best 1-2 punch in the NBA in Stockton and Malone. They have the most intimidating center, Eaton, and the best 6th man, Bailey. If Hansen, Griffith and Iavaroni finish strongly, It's the Jazz over the Lakers in the West, facing either Cleveland (best record in the NBA right now), or Detroit with the fearsome foursome of Thomas, Dantley, Salley and Rodman. Stay tuned to KCMY for all the action.

OTHER PICKS: Cash Houston, one of the strongest vocalists to ever play this town, hits it big in Nashville soon.... Dean Norris, toxic waste incinerator wannabe, fails in his bid to build his smudgepot in Green River due to state siting criteria and bad PR.... Moab Film Commission continues its string of successes with more features filmed in this area in 1989..... Since Jan. 25th, local saloons will do 25% more business... A factory will be built to house Jeff Davis's new mobile hot tub manufacturing company.... AND... Bob Redford actually buys that ranch along the river and becomes, what else, a Moabite. Just like the rest of us....

WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST DEPARTMENT: We've all

known that there is a double standard for justice in this country, depending upon how much money one has. Now it's been sanctioned, by one of this state's leading Republicans. Sen. Orrin Hatch came to the defense of Carvel Shaffer, a convicted swindler who bilked many thousands, probably millions, from unsuspecting Utahns. "...A very good, church-going person, a very high-minded person, and a very nice guy. People don't take into account what a blow to a white-collar criminal it is to spend, one, two, three months in jail," said Orrin. The fact that such a statement didn't cause a national outrage indicates what we're up against....

AND: At almost \$90,000 annually, our congressmen are in the top 1% of wage-earners in this country. They are about to give themselves a 50% raise. When's the last time YOU had a 50% raise? That's what we're up against. The only solution is to fire all fed incumbents for one election only. Think about it.....

DEVILS UNDER THE BED: Whispers of a Satanic Cult right here in Grand County have escalated into an audible buzz. Anybody possessing a pitchfork is suspect. The Moab Red Devil's high school athletic teams (especially the She-Devils) are being closely scrutinized. Even Bloato is a suspect because of those obvious horns. So be careful. The next person burned at the stake might be you... you devil, you.

A QUESTION

Would anyone out there like to help put together an illustrated book of canyon country poetry? *Canyon Country Publications* would publish and distribute such a book. For more information, call 259-6700.

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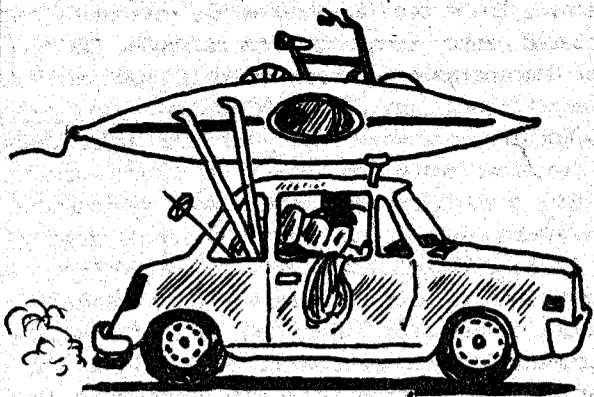
Larry
Parts

Ron
Sales

Stan
Service

DOWN HOME FRIENDLY SERVICE

DERAILED



Mudpuppy

Canadian Flyers, covered with dust lying lacelessly in the corner of the hot August yard sale, forgotten. Price: 25¢

As I walked up to the cashier with that dusty old pair of skates someone joked, "Pick-in' up a souvenir eh?" After all, this is the hot dry stinking desert.

Hot, Dry ... and then Cold. Part of the beauty of this country is it's radical extremes. And I had been thinking about those crisp cold zero degree cold spells that so often freeze every pipe in town and make the lightweights all migrate South.

So I polished the razor sharp concave stainless steel blades of my new Flyers, bought a set of laces, and put them in a cool corner of the closet to await Winter. They hadn't been used in years. Come to think of it, maybe they hadn't been used period!

November and December found me still out hiking and biking on the trails in the Indian Summer Sunshine, listening to all the skiers at

night complain about trashing their skis and their knees on an assortment of stumps, rocks, fallen trees, and bushes up in the freshly dusted LaSals.

And then January hit like the wind blast from an avalanche, and no one could find me at all during the days. I'd return late, listening to the skiers complain about whiteouts, frost-bite, deep snow trail breaking and stuck trucks; and often would never even be asked what I was doing for endorphin highs during the much disliked cold snap.

But I was hooked, a silent addict of back country ice, barely able to make myself stop to split firewood or write my next article because I needed just one more hour of glide and ballet on canyon glass ice, the Winter Wine of the desert.

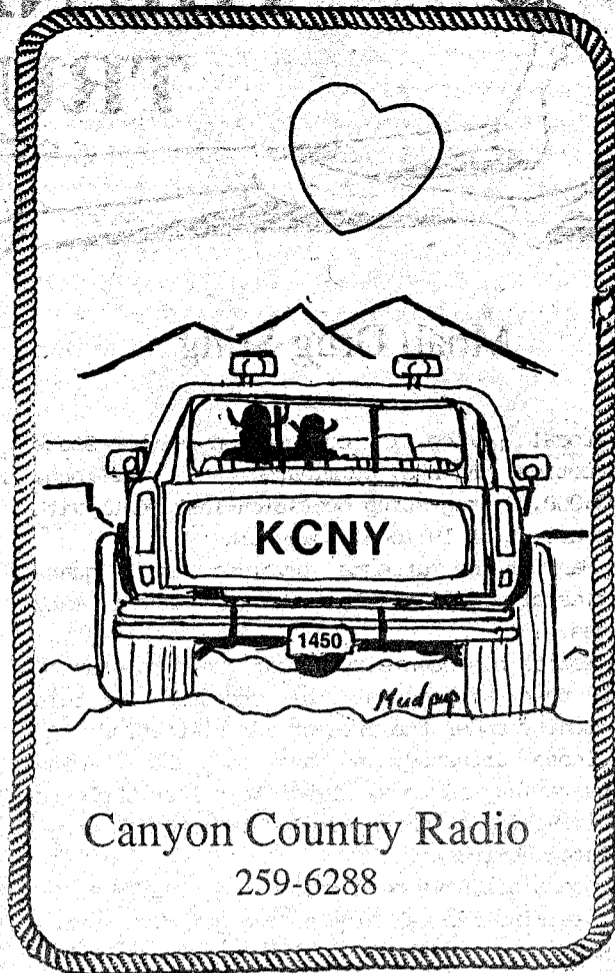
Of course, canyon ice holds no candle to the canals of the Netherlands, but for the persevering skater who learns to read the ice like a good boatman reads the riverbars, back country red rock skating can yield stretches of up to two miles of gradually sloped window-slick wild ice.

And then there's ice in the moonlight

But alas, the sun shines higher, and red rocks soak up heat by February. The collective mind power of everyone who has been (and still is) cold inevitably focuses on Spring, and the ice melts down in the canyons.

So I snoseal my Flyers, polish the blades, remembering having figured my first single skate eight this Winter, and go back to the cool corner of the closet where other toys await me.

While hanging the skates on their golden hook, I bump into the binding of one of my telemark skis. "Oh yeah," I remember, "someone turned me onto this sport about 27 years ago!

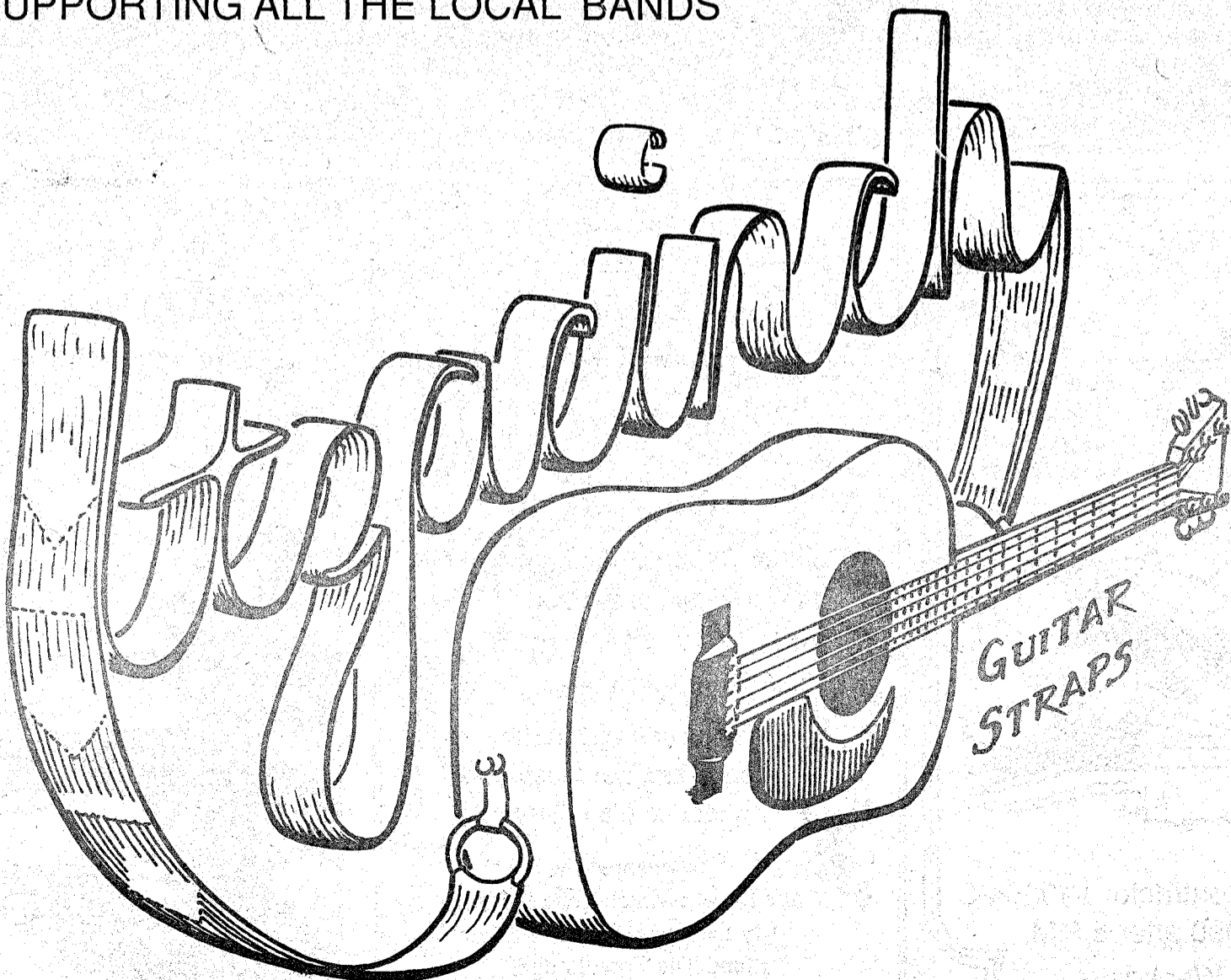


Canyon Country Radio
259-6288

I'll bet the Real ski season in the LaSals is just about to start!"

I can feel it happening now ... Flashbacks. I'm standing on the summit of Tukuhiwivatz on June First, the peak of the ski season, and as I step into the first turn of a telemark descent, I picture a perfect figure eight somewhere in a red rock canyon rimmed by blue sky, white snow, and filled with Winter glass.

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THE NAKED TRUTH



Moab Drug Sting

Local police, in cooperation with State Narcotics Agents, culminated a year-long, \$70,000.00 drug sting operation last month with the arrest of 19 local townsfolk.

Many of the arrests involved small quantities of marijuana, less than an ounce in many cases.

Notice has been served that "zero tolerance" has been adopted as the standard for this community under the present administration.

Those arrested, in addition to facing massive lawyers fees, immediately lost title to their vehicles, which were confiscated as drug-related equipment.

Questions have been raised over the legality of seizing the vehicles before guilt is established in court. The practice is common in this county and has been standard procedure for several years. The vehicle is usually resold to the owner for whatever price the local courts determine is fair.

In addition, the penalty for possession varies greatly depending upon the year and model of automobile seized. Arrests for the same offense can incur penalties varying from a few hundred, to tens of thousands of dollars according to the type of vehicle involved.

Visitors to Moab should be aware of this policy. Many a visitor has limped out of town, broke and broken, for an offense that would be dismissed by a small fine in California, Oregon or several other states.

Anyone planning to engage in recreational drug usage on their vacation ought to think twice before venturing into Grand County.

Dumping on Moab

Unbeknownst to most if not all Mobites until a week or two ago, The Moab City Dump has been taking truckloads of asbestos fibers from a disposal firm in Denver for some time.

As of press time, details of the dumping are still unclear. Apparently the asbestos waste has been coming into Grand County for a number of years.

The bagged asbestos is trucked to Moab and buried in the public landfill for a fee. It remains to be seen if and how the payments were entered into local government funds. Revenue for dumping asbestos doesn't appear per se in the published city and county budgets.

Nothing is known at this date about possible fiber pollution along the truck route, which passes through the Northeast residential neighborhoods and the elementary school area.

Moabites are wondering why the disposal operation wasn't announced to the public. The danger of asbestos fibers has been thoroughly documented. The question of the safety of this particular operation is still unanswered. The Gazette hopes to have a full report on the matter in next month's issue.

Llove Them Llama Llips!

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Moab, Utah

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On Weekdays

Hospital Benefit
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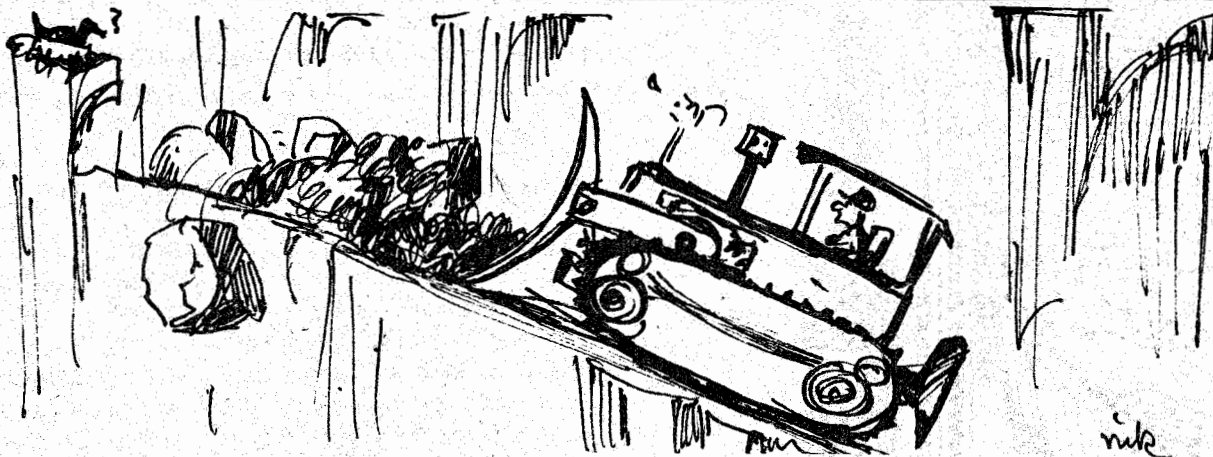
Valentine's Day Dance
Feb. 11, 8 pm, at the
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Singles \$5.00, at the door, \$8.00
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A Trough Springs Rebuttal

in which the author seeks to contradict opinions expressed in last month's gazette regarding the detrimental effects of a connecting hiway through Trough Springs Canyon.

By Frank Cox

I would like to scoff at some of the ideas put forth recently by both proponents and opponents of the proposed Trough Springs Road connecting Anticline Road and Cane Creek Road, then present a few fresh ideas. Lance Christie's article in the January 1989 issue of this paper provided some fuel for scoffery, but so have other recent articles and letters published here and elsewhere.

There are several objections to the new road that could be torn to shreds, but just tackling a few of the biggest should be enough to show the folly and unthinking nature of the rest.

First and foremost, there's the question -- "would the economic benefits of such a road justify the proposed expenditure of seven megabucks or more?" Opponents say "no way." Proponents make joyful sounds of endless economic prosperity. Both positions are nonsense.

Of course the road would not appreciably boost Moab's economic base. The scenic loop route created by the new road would only provide a longer and more rewarding drive between Monticello and Moab for tourists and a few others. It is highly doubtful that this new loop would attract swarms of new tourists, all eager to see things they could almost as easily have seen before, although it would increase the quality of experience of a few of our present tourists.

But while the new road would not bring instant riches to Moab, it would be a boon to local residents who would like to visit the BLM's Canyon Rims Recreation Area more often, but just hate the present long drive to get there. It would also benefit a few tourists who would like to explore a bit more of our canyon country from motel and campground bases in Moab. It might even keep some of them around another day or so.

But what's wrong with Moab residents benefiting from the tax dollars that would be spent building the road? Is anyone out there naive enough to think that if that seven million bucks is not spent here, it will be returned to the taxpayers? Fat chance! If it isn't spent on our boondoggle, it will be spent somewhere else on some other boondoggle.

What's wrong with some local taxpayers receiving, for a change, something for their tax bucks, some-

thing that they can use and enjoy? We receive so little for our federal tax money otherwise that is useful, or that we really want.

The economic benefits from such a road are exaggerated? Of course they are! It's a time-honored tradition of all agencies who spend tax dollars to inflate the benefits of their activities. Anyone who takes seriously the stated benefits from a proposed project is being ignorant, and also ignoring a factor that all politicians and businessmen understand very well.

To wit -- there are benefits to be derived just from doing the project. Some are honest profits from the sale of materials and services, some are under-the-table kickbacks to local politicians. Not to mention boosts in local employment, such as temporary construction helpers and flag-hags with road-building.

Besides, the very idea of economically justifying the construction of a road before it is built is silly. Very few of the roads in this nation, and even fewer in Utah, could have been built if they had to be honestly justified economically before construction. The real benefits, as against those alleged in advance, come later, and often from entirely unforeseen circumstances.

Now for a few words about that horrendous "ten-fold increase in traffic" on Cane Creek Road and its myriad negative impacts. First, does anyone really know what the present traffic flow is? Has anyone made an all-seasons traffic count that is statistically meaningful? Would ten times such a count still be very much?

And where did that multiplying factor of ten come from? Out of thin air, where else? It's just like the inflated economic benefits factors used to justify such projects -- deliberately exaggerated in order to justify the project. What else is new?

But suppose the new connecting road actually would produce a ten-fold increase in traffic on Cane Creek Road. That would still not equal the traffic this same road carried during the last uranium-mining boom, when heavy trucks from two different mines used and abused the road, day in and day out. Several times in those bad old days I was almost shoved off the road by such trucks, as they roared by at high speed in clouds of dust.

Where were the "heavy traffic" objectors then? By comparison, a few dozen more tourist vehicles a week on the road would be insignificant. The bottom line is that no conceivable increase in traffic on Cane Creek Road would be worse than the same road has borne in the past. The only new problems likely to occur would be a few more bad drivers sticking their cars in the Hunter Canyon or Cane Creek fords -- which would increase the incomes of local tow-truck operators.

Danger to the bikers who now use the road? More nonsense! Bikers scorn such dangers. Who hasn't seen bikers pedaling along our local two-lane highways, just inches from cars passing at 50 and 60 miles per hour? Or riding down Moab street center-lines, with cars whizzing by on both sides? Bikers will actually enjoy more traffic on Cane Creek Road -- more challenge! Gonzo-biking at its finest!

More traffic on the road a jeopardy to hikers? What are hikers doing on the road, when there are skillions of square miles of roadless terrain out there? Why hike the road in Cane Creek Canyon, when Pritchett Canyon, Amasa Back, Hunter Canyon and dozens of other routes are nearby? What's wrong with climbing to Funnel Arch, then up onto higher ground and on to Halls Bridge and Pritchett Arch? There's no traffic there.

Millions of Grand County bucks would have to be spent improving Cane Creek Road if the BLM built the Trough Springs connecting road? Why? Only if the BLM insisted would the county have to spend a single dollar. Otherwise, let the user-maintained present road regulate the flow of traffic.

After all, the Shafer Trail in Canyonlands National Park was improved years ago by the National Park Service, but the county has not spend buck one on the road that connects the Shafer Trail to the end of Utah 279. All kinds of highway vehicles descend the Shafer Trail, then make it on into Moab, despite the benign neglect given that road by our elected county commissioners.

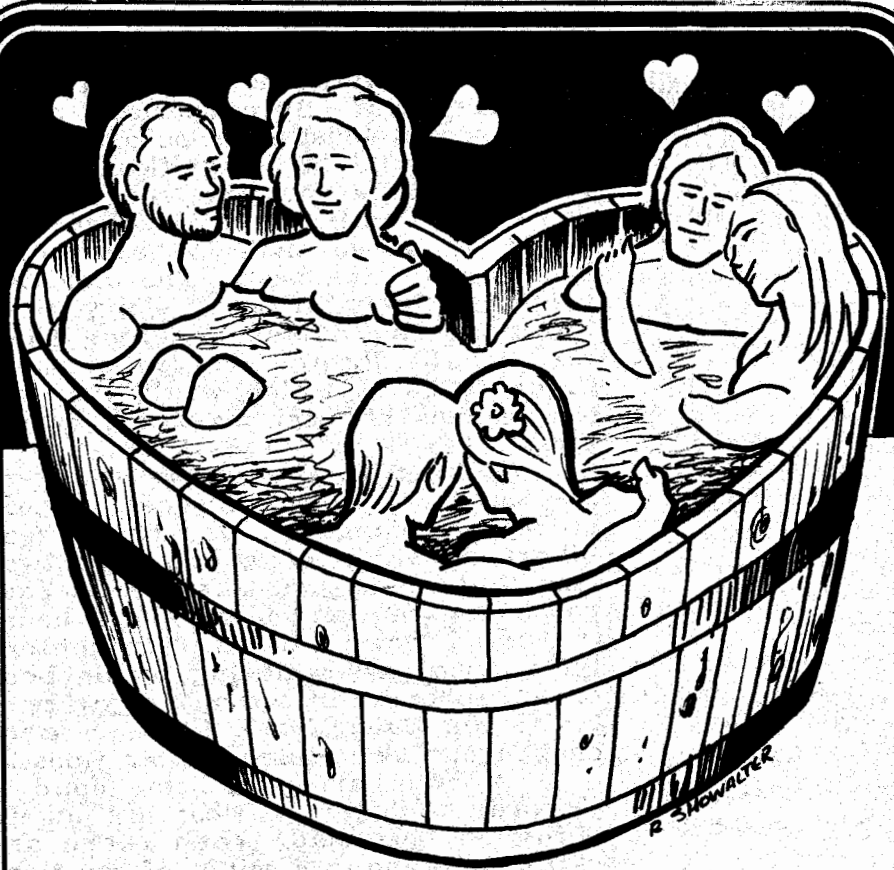
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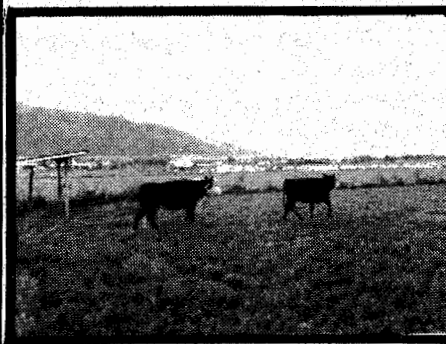
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This Month's Special - Cows Group (Herd) Rates

Why Have Your Cattle Stick Out Like Stinking Bovines in a Wilderness

Before



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Why not treat Cane Creek Road the same? The result would not be as trouble-prone as the road to Moab from the base of Shafer Trail. If a tourist descends a paved Trough Springs Road, then finds he can't ford Cane Creek because it's flooding, he can easily go back up. But the Shafer Trail is so steep, rough and narrow that if drivers of highway vehicles encounter a bad spot on the road to Moab, many of them simply could not go back up.

Besides -- what if Grand County were to spend a few bucks on a road that would benefit local residents and tourists? For far too many years our county commissioners have been spending the tax bucks set aside for roadwork on building and improving roads in the Book Cliffs for the use of oil-exploration companies.

This has benefited the oil companies, who could easily have done their own road work -- and who else, I wonder? Certainly not ordinary Grand County residents. Isn't it about time our road-building funds got spent for the benefit of someone beside oil-drillers and their extra-legal beneficiaries?

Other southeastern Utah counties actually maintain their "Class D County Roads." Grand County has been spending big chunks of its road funds subsidizing megabuck oil companies. Now, with new commissioners in office, isn't it about time for a change? After all, the old-boy network is still in charge of the road funds, and still has its hands in the cash drawer, so it shouldn't object too strenuously to the change.

Let me also point out one factor in this controversy that others have overlooked. Moab has one de facto recreation area nearby -- the Sand

Flats area -- that is heavily used and rapidly becoming too heavily used. It is easily accessible.

Moab also has another official recreation area almost as close by that is not easily accessible -- the BLM's officially designated Canyon Rims Recreation Area. At present, more cattlemen derive benefits from this spectacularly beautiful area than recreationists. And the Sand Flats grow ever more overused, because there is no easy access to Moab's second nearby recreation area. Why not build the new road and spread the load into both of Moab's backyard recreation areas?

The proposed Trough Springs Road would provide the missing access, and do little actual new damage to the land, which is already badly scarred by past mineral-search activities. Where were the people who are now objecting to the new road, when uranium prospectors and miners were ravaging Cane Creek Canyon?

The bottom line? Build the new road. The "official" benefits are nonsense, but so what? There are other far more realistic benefits. And what's wrong with spending a few tax bucks on Moab? Don't we deserve it?

Those who are objecting to the road are doubtless honest and concerned, but are grasping at straws, objecting out of reflex. They have not realistically assessed the situation. Many of them are not even familiar with the land involved, nor the history of its use. Most are being misled by superficial and irrelevant "facts," and ignoring the much broader picture. Perhaps this article will stimulate a fresh viewpoint on the entire situation.

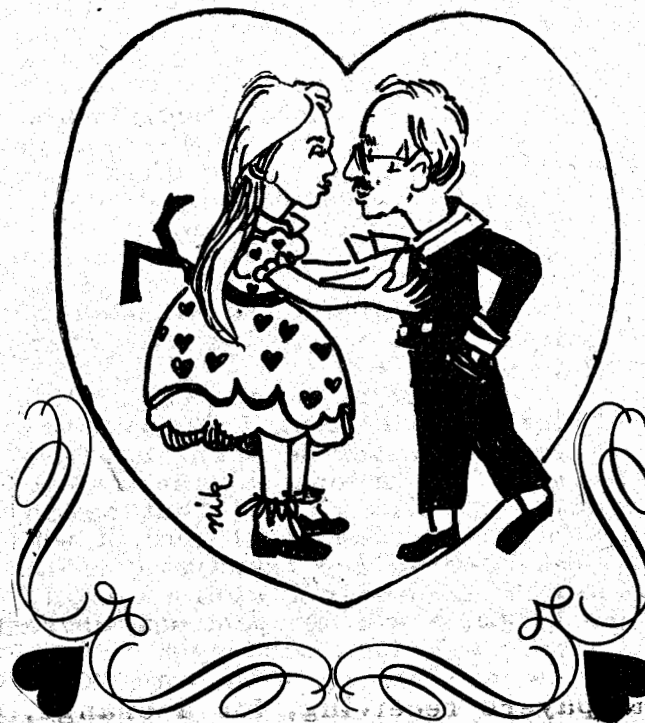
Perhaps.

"Frank Cox" is the pseudonym of an old-timey resident of Moab who is now retired. He used to get vandalized by rednecks for his preservationist views. After this article hits print, he expects vandalism by wilderness freaks. It all averages out.

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Poplar Place Gets Remodeled

In truth, it was a breath-taking beautiful morning to behold.

A micro-fine snow, snow atoms, had sifted through the fog all night. By morning, when the phone call from Mark came through, the world was frosted with glistening ice crystals.

As we drove to town, it was difficult to believe that this huge bumper of an event was actually happening. Wonderful stands of snow-flocked trees sparkled in the orange sunshine that finally pierced the thinning fog that lay against the eastern wall of the valley. Every shrub, weed, fence and phone line had gathered a thick, brilliant coating, undersides and all. Not even the slippery, glass-like streets that made driving difficult proved much of a distraction from the spectacle of fiery ice. It was a rare and beautiful morning, Jan. 25, the day the Poplar Place was gutted.

In town, the traffic was rerouted around Main Street. A massive cloud of smoke marked the corner at First North. Phone call confirmed. We followed the traffic up Center Street, swung into the alley at the Times-Independent, cleared the Sears Store, and by god there it was. Four walls and blackness, roof sagging, holes for windows, and the enormous billowing cloud of grey smoke. Gone were the flames that shot skyward about daybreak, when the interior heat finally melted the plastic skylight above the stairwell and turned the wooden interior into a magnificent fuel for a natural chimney. It was mostly smoke, steam, embers and ruins.

Our volunteer firemen had the place surrounded with their heavy equipment and were dousing the last of the flames. Friends of the bar arrived and gathered in little groups on the sidewalks and streets, shaking their heads, at a loss for words. I got pictures and left. I knew the real feelings would come later, when the image of this smoldering hulk was replaced by the memories of the happy little haven it used to be.

Ah, but I had to come back. This was an old friend, since the fall of '73, and, unpleasant as it might be, one has to pay one's last respects. View the corpse, compose a eulogy, and conclude the matter. I wandered back a few hours later, when the whole mess had cooled down. A yellow ribbon surrounded the perimeter and a few firemen were putting together their

final report out on the sidewalk. I peered inside to see what was left.

The floor of the second story was charred, but still intact. It never did give up. Oh, but there were weekend nights when we wondered about its structural integrity. Those summer nights with dancers and hard rock bands pounding away on the second floor.....

Glorious dancing! Elbow to elbow, shrieking, heavy metal madness. When there was room, there were conga lines and high-kicking circles of old friends and new, rejoicing, rejuvenating, hugging and kissing. When it got crowded, it was a seething, throbbing, tangled mass of rocking humanity, rhythmically stomping the floor joists loose in their sockets.

Downstairs, one tended to be a little more objective. We visualized the headline. "CABERET FLOOR COLLAPSES" The awesome power on the other side of the ceiling seemed measurable in megatonnage. One sipped one's beer and watched the

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string of light fixtures above the bar. The center fixture was located at the approximate middle of the dance floor above. The vertical travel in the rhythmic dip of that fixture was a visual gauge of the intensity of the dancers upstairs.

Our rock meter. The more the ceiling trampolined the better the party. I thought the reason the ceiling fans were finally installed downstairs was to provide upward thrust, and added stability. More people upstairs? Turn up the fans! Well, as it turned out, not even fire hot enough to destroy the metal cash register

Going.....

Going.....

could bring that solid old upper floor down.

Yeah, the cash register was almost gone, and the stereo looked like someone had put on some Ozzy Osbourne and turned it up to 9. A few knobs, a bit of front panel, and wiring ash was all that was left. Turned down, finally.

I picked up a piece of bronzed window glass from the sill. It was bent with heat and scored with a myriad of cracks from the sudden cooling of the fire hoses. Isn't that just like us, to try to save a piece of it for the memories. It later fell apart in my hands, more like sugar than glass. Even the relic was gone.

But, what the hell, it's only a building, right? No. It was more than that. When Joe May bought Frank's Tavern and remodeled it into the Poplar Place, the town was changed. From its opening in the fall of '72, it served as a meeting house for all the displaced and dispirited refugees who moved here from the cities in the early seventies and sought the company of their own kind. Tour guides we were, most of us, and the bar was the watering hole where we celebrated after our trips, and where we wiled away the winter hours building those excursions into legends of epic proportions.

Most of worked there at one time or another, when free pizza and the minimum wage looked better than being hungry all the time. I baked pizzas in that dinky little closet called the kitchen. There was barely room enough to turn around, but everything was within reach, and you could feed the whole bar from that amazing kitchen, even on those nights when two or three friends were squeezed by the crowd outside right into that phone booth with you. I poured beer and worked the closing shift for a time. It was like serving in line at the mission. We spread it around. Anyone who didn't work in the bar probably worked on it at some point. It was an old building and needed a lot of attention.

Joe May finally sold it, to Joe Kingsley. Memorable managers came and went - Spykerman, Murphy, Susanne, Rowanne, Wally and Lola, etc. The pool table went upstairs and finally out, the upstairs became a family restaurant, the storage room became a real kitchen, the outside was plastered and finished off properly, and some real effort was put into preserving the "oldest commercial building in Moab". The Poplar Place, if a little less fun than before, looked a lot better. Besides, by that time, the whole country was having a lot less fun than before, so the slow evolution towards respect-

ability can't be blamed entirely upon local conditions.

Through it all it was still "the bar". Last summer saw a rebirth of sorts with live music every week and great parties on Wednesday nights. And now this.

But wait. Don't hold the wake just yet. As of this writing, the walls have been certified intact by the fire and insurance inspectors. A rebuilding effort is planned by Joe Kingsley. Insurance coverage may not cover the full cost of reconstruction, and a committee has been formed to coordinate volunteer work to assist wherever possible.

Joe indicated that if nothing radical surfaces to change his plans, the building will be back in operation this summer. It will take a new roof, upper floor, lower floor, window casings, plumbing, wiring, and an all new interior to get the job done. The lower floor will house the restaurant and the drinks will

be moved upstairs. In the remodeled configuration, the "Top Of The Pop" will become the "Base Of The Place", and vice versa.

So, all is not lost, despite the pathetic sight that now graces the corner of First North and Main. The "bar" will come back, in grander style than before. Maybe we can talk Joe into expanding the upper floor out over the kitchen to provide more dance room. And while we're at it, how about getting Jim Martin to rebuild the wrought iron window grilles that were part of the original restoration. In fact, why not get a hot architect to redesign the whole unit, use some steel and glass to complement the original adobe walls, and make it Moab's most beautiful building so far. Oh yeah, money. Well, we'll settle for something less, anything, just to save the building.

So, cheer up, people, and give thanks for adobe brick. And for the fact that it was just a fire and not an earthquake. She's going to be fine.

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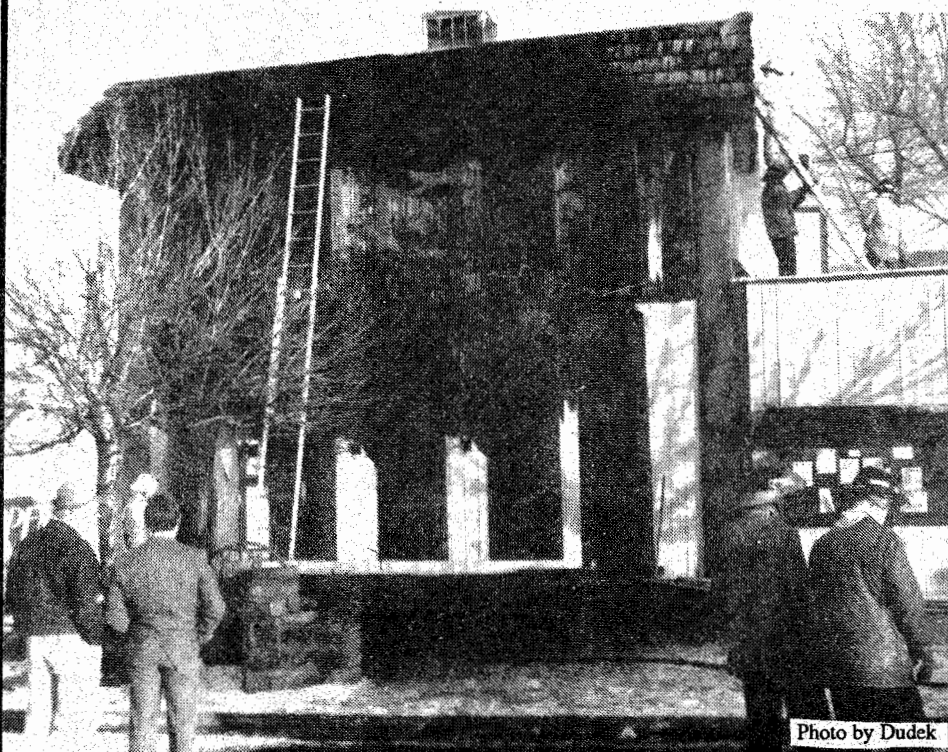
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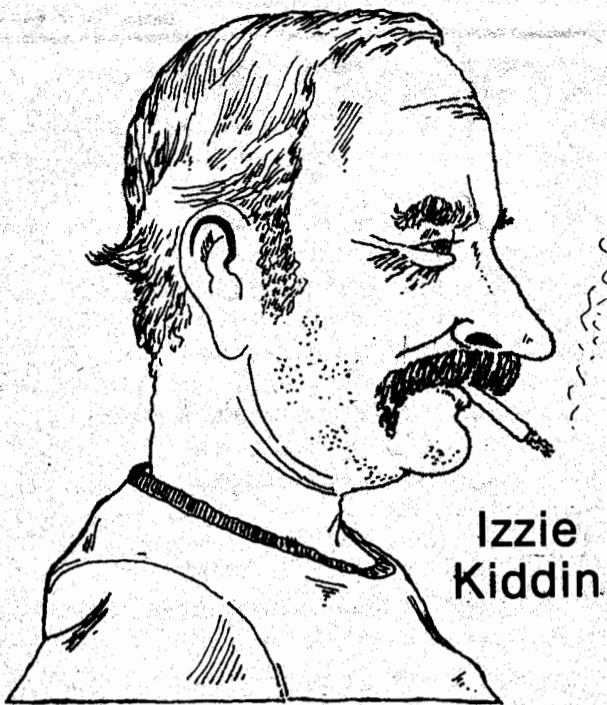
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But Not Gone!



Better times at the bar. . .



Conversations With A Brujo (Sky Lakes Wilderness, Oregon)

JUNE/1976/SKY LANES WILDERNESS/OREGON. So, just what the hell am I doing in twelve feet of snow in South Central Oregon camping with two rather eccentric Chippewa Indians who are waiting for the end of the world??? Go ahead----- don't believe me.

My intentions to hike The Pacific Crest Trail through the state of Oregon had been greatly hampered by the ton of snow I found there that all but obliterated the trail. I thought the middle of June at a starting elevation of 5,500 feet would be quite splendid. WRONG! After trudging six miles through waist-high snow I reached Four Mile Lake, only to find these two Indians and more snow.

Troy and Winema were surprised to see someone else out here in the middle of nowhere. They had to be at least in their early seventies. They told me they had hand-shoveled the six miles of road two weeks earlier to get their overloaded Toyota and themselves up to the lake. No easy task. After the normal round of greetings, I set up camp next to them and was invited over that evening for coffee and b.s.

Troy's cracked and weathered face glowed from the intense campfire. He did look like some ancient warrior at times. He was puffing away on a cheap corn cob pipe. Winema, his silent lady, stood at his side. I was still trying to get used to this horrible weather I had blundered into. They seemed unruffled by it.

"Izzie, what the hell are you gonna do when the bottom falls out?" Troy exclaimed. Perplexed, I took out a long sip of coffee while trying to figure out just what the hell this old coot was raving about. "You sure don't look like you're prepared!" he continued. What kind of sleeping bag you got there? What are those on the front? Pictures of grouse?" Embarrassed, I explained I didn't think winter would still be in progress so late in the season. And for the next four weeks around that campfire at Four Mile Lake, I waited for the snow to melt, and listened to Troy.

"When the bottom falls out?" I asked. "What are you talking about??? A depression or something?"

"That and much worse, Iz. I'm a talking about the DEMISE OF AMERICA!"

Troy continued puffing away on his cheap pipe filled with mullen and his story unfolded

around the blaze of the campfire. "Why do you think Winema and I are up here in the first place? To bask in all of God's glory? To whittle away the last years of our lives in complacent apathy? We're here to get ready for when the shit hits the fan! A major disaster, my friend! America's never been satisfied with anything secondary or on a small scale. Yes sir, it will hit with no warning. ZAPP! No food, no money, no gas, no stores. Everything will grind to a halt! Your money won't be worth jack-shit and all them fancy toys you've accumulated to help ease the pain of your miserable life won't be worth nothing! Do you have any idea what people will be doing to each other back in the cities? It will be madness I tell you. MADNESS!"

"Sounds pretty scary to me."

"Winema and I are prepared and just awaitin' for it to happen."

"Live off the land, huh?"

"That's what it will come down to. Did you ever take a gander at what we got in that camper? A years' supply of dehydrated foods, rifles, ammunition, a meat smoker, a gristmill, fishing poles and much more. Everything we need. And what we don't have, we won't be missing when the bottom falls."

I took another sip of coffee. These folks were SERIOUS! "How much ammo you got?"

"Enough. I only need one bullet for one deer. And one deer can go a mighty long way towards food and clothing."

"Well, just where do you plan to do all of this?" I asked. Certainly not here, so close to civilization."

Troy's weathered face curled up into a sneer. "America's NEVER been civilized! But, I know of a place that is secluded. A place where few folks have been. The valley is lush and the mountains loom like monoliths above the forest. There is plenty of games and water. There is hope."

"Can the camper make it up there then?" I inquired.

"Shit no! Burn the goddamn thing! There won't be any money or gas anyway! We'll have to walk there. Carry everything with us on a home-made sled. Set up shop...and continue."

"Well, if this does come to pass, you certainly won't be alone."

Troy reared back his head and let out a booming laugh. "HA! Oh sure, they'll try, but they don't know the hows and the whys! They won't be prepared! Just who's going to be following me? The hippie with his two weeks' worth of freeze-dried food??? The Dago in his Winnebago??? HA! In a matter of a couple of weeks, they will succumb to the horrors of the wild, simply because when it comes down to "surviving," these folks don't know jack-shit! We will be running across their bones come the summer."

The woods were silent, the only sounds being the crackle of the fire. Troy relit his cheap pipe and continued. "No Iz, it will be US. The people that were born and raised out here. The ones that know the ways of the woods. The ones that have observed Mother Nature and respect her for the promise she always keeps. The promise...of a tomorrow."

"And what if someone happens to come across your place?" I offered.

"Well," Troy smiled, "I ain't a-gonna invite 'um in for tea! There won't be no time for socializin' and such. No more hearts of gold. This will be survival of the fittest! Now, if the bottom were to fall out this very minute, what would you do, Izzie?"

"Ha! I'd rip off your camper and head for the hills!" I howled.

"I hope you're saying that in jest, my friend. 'Cause I'd sure hate to have to plug you between the eyes, but that's what it will come down to. People fighting and killing each other in the streets. Yes sir, survival of the fittest in the woods and survival of the slickest in the big cities."

I had to stop and try and visualize all this, assuming that it would become a reality. "Vennison stew everyday for breakfast doesn't

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sound too appetizing to me."

"Would you rather starve, Iz?"

"But...I don't know if I could kill a deer!"

"Would you rather die?"

"And just what if everyone thought like you did, Troy?"

"Iz, do you think I'm some crazy old man? Just some eccentric fool playing with half a deck? Well, all in due time, we shall see who the crazy ones are! Mark my words, Iz! He who laughs last...is alive!"

"But what about the winter? You'll FREEZE!"

"Snowhouses! Six feet underground! You can't freeze in 35 degree weather!"

"You seem to have thought of everything."

"Not 'thought' Izzie. TAUGHT!. Taught and remembered. My people did not survive on this land for so long...on luck. Legend days will return! And me and Winny are ready and waiting for it to come to pass."

"And just 'when' do you think this will happen, Troy?"

"How soon till the next war, Iz? If you watch and observe America, you will find her predictable as the animals. As exact as the coming sunrise. Watch the ways of the president. Watch the skies! Don't you feel that ever so slight ill-wind a-blowing, even now? What are you waiting for man! You should be getting ready! The clock...is ticking."

I stayed with them that whole miserable month in the snow up at Four Mile Lake, but I learned a lot and came to respect their beliefs. And as the days turned into weeks, the sunshine finally started to have its way and the snow slowly started to melt. That's when

the mosquitoes appeared. Now, not just a few pesky insects that can annoy your romp in the woods, but MILLIONS and MILLIONS of them! The whole forest would be humming with them in the morning and as soon as you poked your head out of your tent, they would descend upon your camp in one great black cloud. It was a horror show! Troy said this affliction would last till all the snow melted and then they'd 'peter out some.'

I put up with blizzard conditions for almost a month and was just patting myself on the back for enduring the wrath of Mother Nature. But when the bugs came, it proved to be the 'piece d resistance.' I cannot tolerate bugs that bit. I HATE THEM!!! I bade farewell to Troy and Winema and headed back down the mountain towards Klamath Falls and civilization. It was a bit later that my friend Sam found me and everything went wrong, but that's another story for another time...

Troy and Winema are probably still out there somewhere. Smoking mullen, shooting rabbits and waiting for the bottom to fall out. Two old folks who threw the monkey wrench at society, sold everything they owned, packed their gear and split without a forwarding address. The children of the woods. Basking in the joy of the wilderness and each other. Thirteen years have passed and I still think about them. And envy them.

I still have the map Troy gave me. Directing me to 'their place.' Their last stand. A place where few people have been. Where the mountains loom like monoliths and there is water and plenty of game. A place where there is life and

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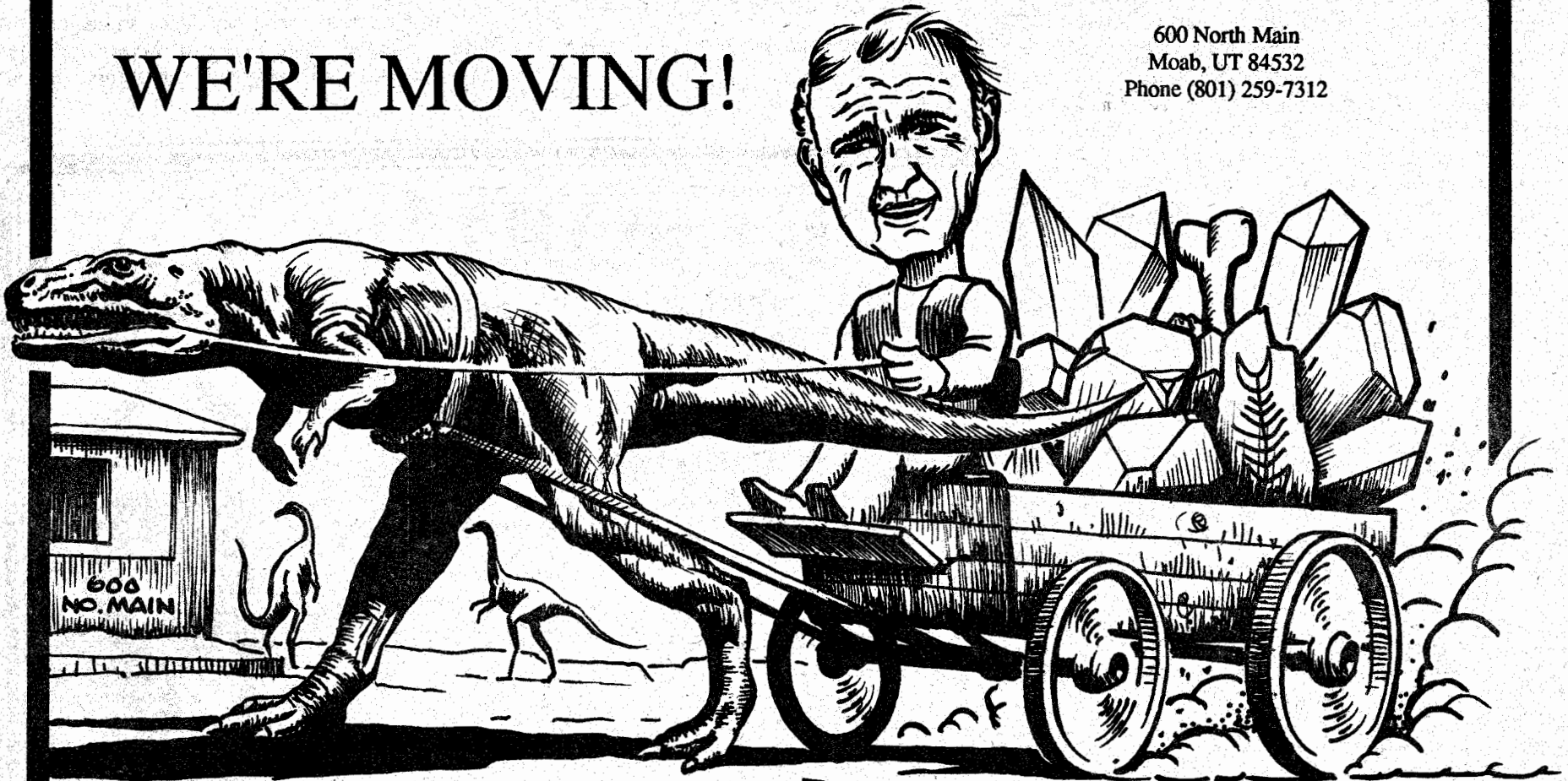
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The Eyes Are Upon You

A youthful Odyssey through the American plains - a tale of horseplay and toil, and precious youth spent.

By John Wahl

Texas, as you might possibly have heard before, is a very big place. Just ponder for a moment the extraordinary number of Lone Star tags to be seen roaming our highways and byways. With so many people absent from work, who's left to maintain the, well you know, the infrastructure for God's sake? Any state able to disgorge that many RV's, Cadillacs and pickups, and still function, is a state to be reckoned with. Now Texans often bear the brunt of childish and slanderous jokes, the masculine kind frequently being variations on a theme: his unusually large belt buckle or car or hat is derisively compared to a certain part of his anatomy. As a young Okie I of course never indulged in this sort of unseemly ridicule, being much too mature, much too familiar with my own glass house. Yes, Oklahoma and Texas have a rivalry going, but elsewhere in the country are often lumped together, such as: "I wish all the Texans would go home with an Okie under each arm!" Oil field trash, don'tcha know. Well, I'm not here to either praise or bury Texas—others have done a splendid job of both, to the point of cliché. I just thought I'd use this excuse to recall a few old experiences, have some fun. Bear with me folks, we'll eventually get to a stinking desert.

After high school graduation I became a wheatthacker, and then some years later a doodlebugger (Yes, these activities are quite legal in all 50 states). Contract grain harvesting, oil and gas exploration—both took me frequently to Texas. The combine crew I hired on with started cutting in southern Oklahoma and followed ripening wheat up into the eastern edge of Wyoming. License plates and oversize permits were very expensive in the Cowboy state, so we crept our equipment slowly out of Nebraska over lightly-travelled gravel roads, lawbreakers for sure. I was nervous with the enormity of the crime and, just as I had feared, there were armed men, standing in the middle of the road and signalling us to stop. Not

my idea, no sir, only a hired hand, never heard of Wyoming. I tried to downshift casually, prepared an innocent comment on the weather. But it turned out that they were hardly interested in agricultural shenanigans—a nuclear missile was being brought out to one of the many silos, and we pulled over to watch it roll past. What a relief! Armageddon was not nearly so frightening as the thought of losing my driver's license.

With a couple of seasons under my belt I began to moan and groan, badgering the boss to go further north like many of the other crews. I had expected to see more of the country, felt cheated. To promote harmony and pursue some extra profit, the decision was made—North Dakota or bust! We got up there on the tail-end of a month-long drought, in the high hundreds every day and no sign of rain. When the ordeal was finally over, we speculated that it must have been some disintegrating baffles in one of the mufflers that caused all those fires. Entering the tiny tavern each evening, we'd find volunteer firemen lined up at the bar, blackened and morose, each of them constructing a pyramid of beer cans. No hearty greetings were exchanged. A sullen glance toward our table now and then till one by one, as the night wore on, they fell heavily from their stools onto the floor, catching some much-needed shut-eye. See you tomorrow, fellas.

One day I spotted the beginnings of fire in some piled straw, and hit upon the novel idea of just running the stuff through my combine to extinguish it. I had momentarily forgotten that there was a large straw-catching wagon hooked on behind. Thinking that my brilliant plan had succeeded nicely, I glanced back to find flames flickering, smoke thickening. I became quite alarmed. Pulling out onto fallow ground I jerked the dump cord, but there wasn't enough straw built up to tip the gravity-activated cart. Oh dear. Running up into my highest gears I managed to build enough speed so that rushing air caught under the canopy, to dump what remained of a smouldering load. Meanwhile another fire had started, and our stalwart hose crew had been summoned from town—they knew the way, no problem. After saving the wheat they shot a steady stream of water through my thrashing combine, but even a thorough soaking couldn't kill the telltale pungent odor of fire. We finally had to drop the trap door and dig hot, caked chaff from behind warm cylinder bards. The boss was faintly amused.

Other things happened in North Dakota. I wrenched my back trying to manhandle some equipment, and was forced to steer the combine by standing bent over the wheel, couldn't sit

down. I was no longer enjoying myself. Loose glasses slipped off my sweaty face one day, filling a lens with an interesting spider web of fractured glass. No spares. Ended up driving back to Oklahoma that way. A particular image sticks in my mind, seems to summarize that whole summer. Nearly lulled to sleep on a monotonous stretch of wheatfield, I suddenly sensed something and glanced down. On each end of the 20' header, that part of the combine which cuts and swallows grain, there is one short curved rod which acts as a visual guide, a feeler. This bit of iron was repeatedly nudging a small owl in the back of the head—poor bird would run clumsily up the outside furrow for a ways and then slow down or stop. Thump. Another awkward series of hops. Thump. The biggest, roundest eyes I had ever seen were fixed on me, and their stare was witheringly indignant. That tiny owl was puffed up and ready to pop with outrage. With a startled laugh I backed off on my speed, which allowed the creature to gather its dignity and escape. If looks could kill, you wouldn't be reading this. Which reminds me...I know what you're thinking: "This longwinded blowhard started out writing about Texas, which is bad enough. Now there's no telling what we'll be expected to put up with." Never fear, I'm now prepared to head straight towards Texas, enroute to the stinking desert.

After a lay-off of one or two months, it would be time for us to hit west Texas for what we called maize harvest—a.k.a. sorghum or milo. Most of those crops were of dry-land farms, without irrigation, and were often pitiful to behold. Scrawny stalks random as weeds had been coaxed from thin sandy soil, the gaps filled in with thistles and other windblown debris. You could cover an awful lot of ground before finding it necessary to empty the grain bin. One evening on the way into town to do laundry, I stopped off at a club with thoughts of shooting a few games of pool. Found the farmer who we were working for inside; let's call him Walter. We teamed up to play partners, winners to get a couple bucks per stick. Normally a fair shot, I couldn't make a ball. But Walter, now Walter was a wonder. When his turn came I would have to go fetch him from the shadows, where an unlucky woman had become the focus of his attentions. Staggering to the table Walter would promptly unload on some exotic and improbable combination shot, making not only the object ball but also sinking one or more of its kinfolk. In this fashion we won game after game. Our opponents seemed to be good sports but were quite large, and I began to dread Walter's arrival, wishing he'd miss or pass out or something. But no. After relieving



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those nice men of all their money it was time to leave, and I steered a very unsteady Walter out to my pick-up and drove him home. On many days he would come park at the edge of his shifting land for hours, to watch us scrape a meager harvest from what was essentially a series of sand dunes. Poor Walter never did get a good crop.

By now it was wintertime for sure, blue northers roaring across the plains. At our next stop we attempted to harvest a peculiar patch of stuff, I think it was millet. Growing to a height of six or eight feet, the stalks had broken over and tangled themselves into a formidable mess. To deal inventively with the situation my boss had purchased and installed a truly bizarre piece of equipment, a Rube Goldberg machine. Its puzzling complexity of pulleys and belts conspired to drive several large cones, which bore an uncanny resemblance to a rack of horizontal dunce caps. Nowadays such a marvel would be considered sculpture, and be prominently displayed in the most avant-garde galleries. But for our purposes it proved to be not nearly so benign. The mechanism repeatedly plugged up, causing belts to burn and my temper to flare. Late on a cold night I would be practically howling at the moon in frustration, and if the boss had heard some of the things I said he would have given me a terrible beating, maybe even neglected to offer severance pay. (Not true—he was a great man to work for. As a total greenhorn my first or second day, I tore the unloading auger off on a telephone pole. Seeing my stricken face, Calvin just flashed his big smile and said "It wasn't a virgin, you know.")

Several years later I found myself back in west Texas, staying at an old stone ranchhouse with three other guys. We were conducting an exploration survey for sulphur, of all things. The country was hellish for a fact. Rough rocky ravine-ridden hills gnawed on our trucks and banged us around unmercifully. But we had a good time, in our own strange way. Jerry the surveyor was a high-strung wiry Texan who had a passion for killing rattlesnakes—kept a sawed-off hoe in his truck at all times. The surveyor trainee, who I'll call Slim, was never seen without his cowboy hat. He ate raw jalapenos with his bloody T-bones and was deathly afraid of snakes. Our helper's name, if memory serves, was Manuel, a big Chicano comedian who took everything in stride. He reminded me of an illegal I had worked with in the past, a large

guy who harbored no fear of the border patrol. Just smile and wave whenever you see them, he claimed, and they'll never suspect you. He had a wife in Chihuahua and a common-law wife in Texas, and always brought delicious burritos for lunch. But I digress.

The gullies could be treacherous, and often we had to stop and scout out a crossing. One morning while checking for a route I heard loud buzzing behind me, and thought instantly of a baby's rattle. Surely a reptile couldn't make that much noise, but I was mistaken. Its sluggish blood wasn't quite warm yet, and so it had been slow to react as I stomped past overhead. "Snake?!" I hollered back at Manuel, still not fully trusting my senses. He shouted "SNAKE!!" at the top of his lungs to inform the surveyors, who were $\frac{1}{4}$ mile behind us. They piled into their truck and started lurching our way, making surprisingly good time—probably thought someone had been bitten. Meanwhile the rattler started uncoiling, eager to find a nice safe gopher hole. I tossed a rock or two and watched it disappear. Soon our leaders were on the scene, Jerry digging feverishly with his hoe in the spot I'd pointed out, Slim standing sort of tippy-toed off to the side. Growing weary, Jerry indicated to Slim that he should do his share, dig awhile. Under that eternal hat I could see jaw muscles begin to twitch—Slim was not enthusiastic. But as there were witnesses to this affair he bravely accepted the hoe and bent to his task. Manuel and I had grown bored, thinking this was all a waste of time, and were kicking around aimlessly in the dirt. Suddenly I spotted something unusual on the ground, and picked it up. One of my rocks had apparently found it's mark, just clipping off the snake's healthy set of rattles. Intrigued, I turned my prize this way and that, admiring the handiwork. Slim was still digging away, no doubt grown comfortably in his belief that the snake was safely out of reach. Hmm, should I? Yes, I should. Coming quietly up from behind, rattles at the ready, I reached out slowly and gave them a vigorous shake, right next to Slim's ear. This caught his attention. The whistling hoe must have missed my nose by at least nine or ten inches, as we gazed into the most wide-awake eyes I'd seen since the North Dakota owl. It's the little moments like these that lighten

a workingman's day, that bind comrades together as they cheerfully perform important tasks for the good of us all. Slim, I salute you.

Okay, you're thinking, very cute, but what about the stinking desert? Trust me. We have arrived. Every day, driving from the ranchhouse to work we had to pass some sulphur springs, which gave off a truly rotten stench. Sometimes all four of us would be crammed into the front seat, and Slim or me or Jerry would usually make some caustic remark: "Man, do you believe that smell?" "Something must have crawled in a hole and died!" "Have mercy!" etc. But Manuel was always quiet, never said anything. Finally toward the end of the job someone happened to mention "those damned springs" as we neared the infamous spot. A puzzled look spread across Manuel's face. "Springs?" "Yeah, you know, those stinking sulphur springs we have to pass every day—Jesus, Manuel, can't you smell 'em?" He let that information sink in slowly. "But I thought one of you guys....."

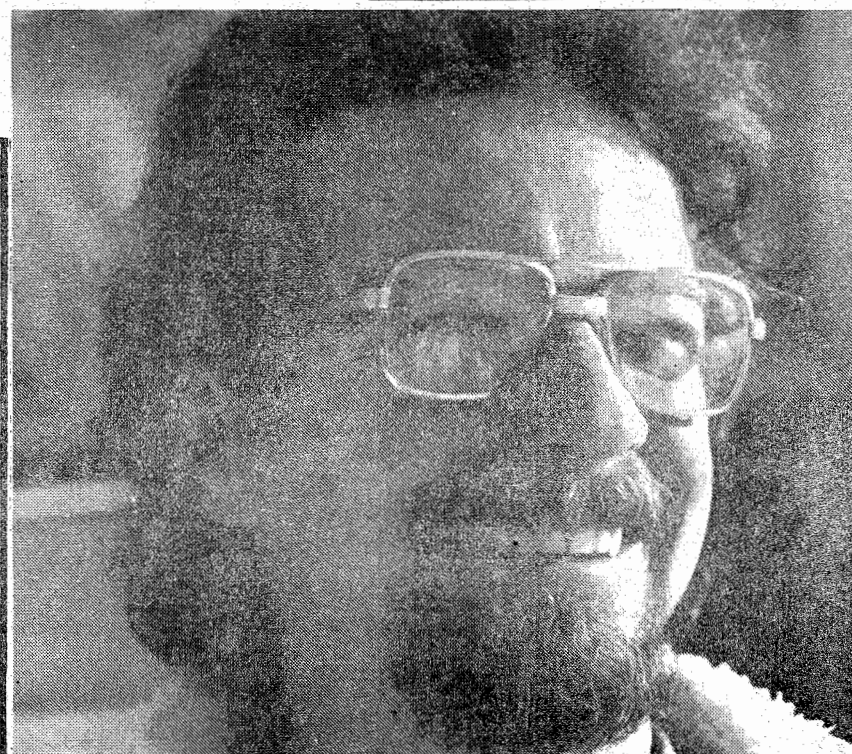
To this very day, I can't decide whether it was a joke or not.

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Meet Rick Showalter, new staff artist and advertising representative for the Stinking Desert Gazette. Rick joins us from Tucson, Arizona, and plans to make Moab his permanent home.

BARD'S NARDS POETRY CORNER

Livestock by John Wahl

Very quiet.

Bootleather creaks as I pivot beneath an eagle,
following it around into the sun and down
out of sight below Spruce Mountain's limestone spine,
veined with quartz and worn at 10,000 feet
by wild horses trying to escape August for awhile.
Cumulus are blooming in thin, hot air
and I think about that herd of several days ago
racing out from under a thunderstorm,
backs shiny wet and steaming as they stared
toward my pick-up spinning through gumbo mud.
Months later I would read news of the slaughter,
hundreds shot and left to rot.
A pencil seems to crumble in your hand sometimes—
better off with shovels, folks. Lots of beauty to bury
and more every day.

Bare trees.

October strikes an aspen like a match,
incandescence soon blown apart and scattered
by the wind, winter on its way.
This hollowed log will fill with ice
but now pale sparks float on black water,
each leaf a raft for clear droplets
that are beaded up firm as quicksilver.
The ax-hewn trough is mossy and it leaks—
overflow from a green-painted metal tank
allows it to remain useful, an act of charity
or perhaps respect.
A reliable spring sustains both, old snowmelt and rain
channelled through pipes to benefit cattle
that are down off Shay Mountain for the season.
Soon cold days will sparkle and bite
as snow buries all this spattered dung,
buries it real deep.

Kane Creek, January by Norm Shrewsbury

Full Moon
Pearl White.

4x4, no lights ... tires crunch and slide.

Trusty, Rusty colored
coyote's sister; trots behind
her feathers flutter in the breeze.

At the place,
by the sound of spring water, cracking over frozen rocks and
sand.

Chimes of the crystalline,
essence of life.

Cottonwoods glow white gold in the half Spirit-light.

Rock walls shine;
Crimson from the heat within.

A large slab of stone lies
in the creek bed
covered with it's white blanket
of sparkling diamonds.

Washed, in the Jupiter-Moon light. I lie down alone
on the slab.

Separate

Gazing at Orion
guardian
of the silent, crisp
inner time.

Beaver
musk drifts
with the swirling air.

Ice
sheets heave
as the currents pulse through
the channels.
Cycles and circles resound.

Memories
of the beginning.

Salty, tears of peace.

Joy

June 15, 1969
by Louise Teal

Some poor fool
was out here nailing
a tobacco can to a dead tree.
His claim to the Uranium boom.
(And our country's future.)


In mid-June, he probably
couldn't even touch the hot metal.

But, maybe his fingers
were numb
from sifting through rock.

Did he see any arrowheads?
Coyotes?
The Henry's?

Below Jacob's Chair
under the purple overhang,
he must have noticed
the deer taking counsel.
Sometimes they turned
into hawks
and flew.

Over Longs Canyon
and down into Lost.



259-7069

**CHRIS AND DEBBIE ORAM'S
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mr. Robert Dudek, Publisher

Dear Eminent Sir:

I wish to thank you most profoundly for the free publicity you gave my newest book, "It's Gneiss, Not To Be Taken For Granite," on the front page of your December 1988 issue. How otherwise could word of this latest in my long string of worldwide best-sellers have reached such an immense, grateful, highly-knowledgeable and ultra-sophisticated audience?

As those who attended the annual meeting of the Moab Chapter of Rock-huggers International already know, after reading a number of exciting excerpts from my thrilling new book, I took the liberty of "leaking" the soon-to-be-public news of a newly-documented "rock-erection" that stands a fine chance of outperforming the justly-famous "Brigham's Unit" located so brazenly near the road in Arches National Shame.

For the benefit of your readers who for one reason or another did not attend the Rockhuggers' bash, the newest and grandest upright symbol of manly virility is tucked away modestly in a side-pocket of Onion Creek, which is already well-known for its redrock representations of real-life figures.

While most of Onion Creek's stone figures are GP-rated, the newly-documented "Maiden's Delight" is strictly X-rated, not for viewing by any of the gentle gender, or by active males under age 70. It's simply too suggestive, and tends to bring out the worst in excitable younger males, and even worse in women.

If I scooped Stonemason Steve Oldshoeski, whose speech at the Rock-huggers bash was entitled Rocks I Have Laid, about this new symbol of all western he-men, hard cheese on him, I say!

For your information, Publisher Dudek, I am enclosing a photograph of Onion Creek's monolith, "Maiden's Delight," but of course you wouldn't dare publish it! The maidens would kill you!

Most Sincerely,

Professor F.A. Berms, world-famous geologist and author of "It's Gneiss, Not To Be Taken For Granite"



Maiden's Delight

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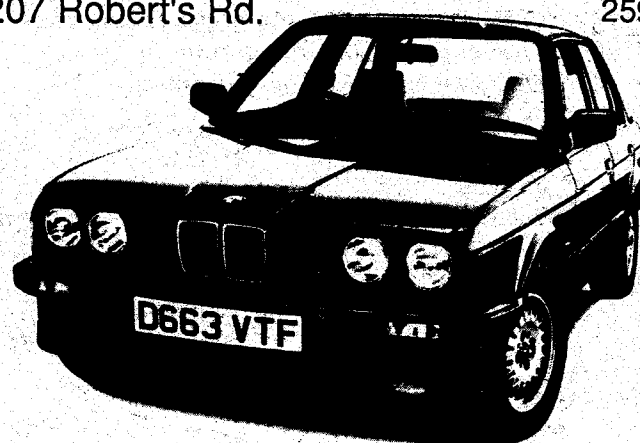
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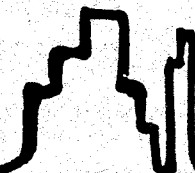
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Ground heifer and a ration of bull

LEDITORS

Dear SDG,

Everytime I look out my window at our local nuclear power plant I'm reminded of what a wonderful thing you folks in Grand County did to protect your environment. Congratulations to Ferne Mullen. Keep up the good work.

Jim & Abbey Gantenbein Kucera,
Newark, DE

Help!

Was in Moab in October and was pleased to see that the ANP Rangers had found a new use for taxpayer money—I watched about a dozen of them drilling with their billy-clubs (night sticks, etc.). Never know when those E. Utah Jackrabbits may riot! It was really inspiring, nearly brought tears to my eyes!

Brad Wallis,
Thousand Oaks, CA

Dear SDG,

This is just a note to all you Desert Rats to say Hell-o. Miss you all. Christine—visit if you're ever in the city. I need to get some good old Moab Gossip so please send me a subscription to the Gazette. Thanks.

Love,

Mo,
SLC, UT

Hi!

Sending you back the check for \$15.00 (I hate to see tear drops on a letter). Just give me the regular one year subscription for \$9.00 at bulk rate and with the extra \$6.00 perhaps you can hire a proofreader.

Glad to read the incinerator got shot down!

Larry Celic,
Chicago, IL

(Ed. Note) We need to announce to the world at this point that many of our writers take complete liberties with the English language, and often use little tricks that resemble typos. Nope, every letter, comma, quote mark, period and semicoma are written exactly as our writers laid it down in the heat of their expiration. It's nouveau huevos.

Hiya—

I wrote once before & you wrote back words of encouragement in the first issue of my new subscription.

I got back here after a summer & fall away, broke & then my truck decided to join me in that state.

But this being home, full of friends & adopted families, I'm still here & kickin.

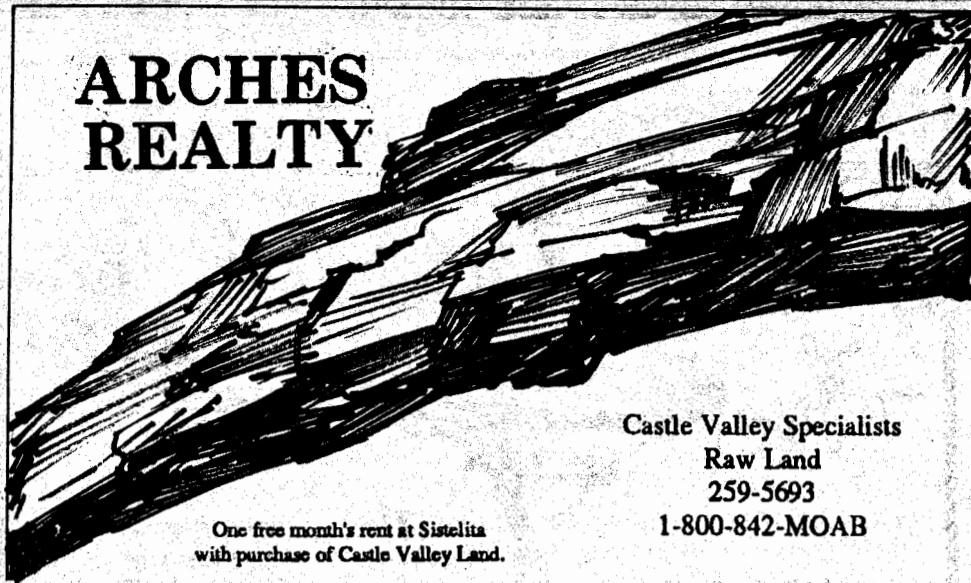
Not only that, when all else failed, I could be found w/caffeine or alcohol in one hand, The Stinking Desert Gazette in the other, laughing.

Just wanted to let you know some seeds have blown westward, & rooted, in what I bet is pretty similar desert.

Thanks,
Lynn Bornholdt,
Springdale, UT

(Ed. Note) Lynn has started her own grassroots paper in Springdale, UT, The Canyon Country Times.

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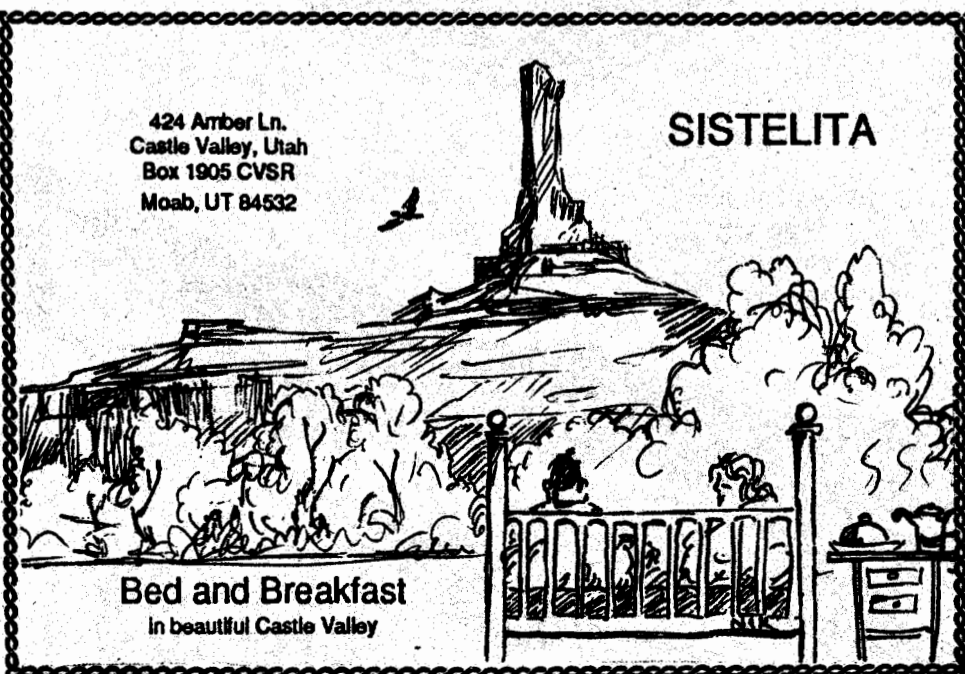
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