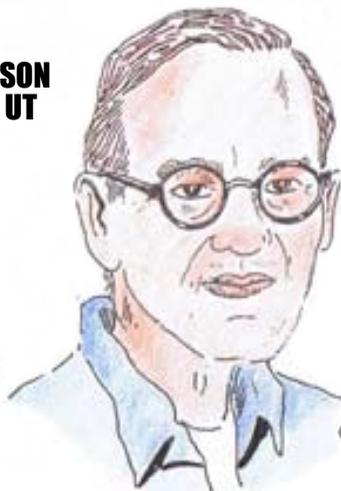


THE BACKBONE #10



DENNIS BROWN
Telluride, CO

J SCOTT THOMPSON
Salt Lake City, UT



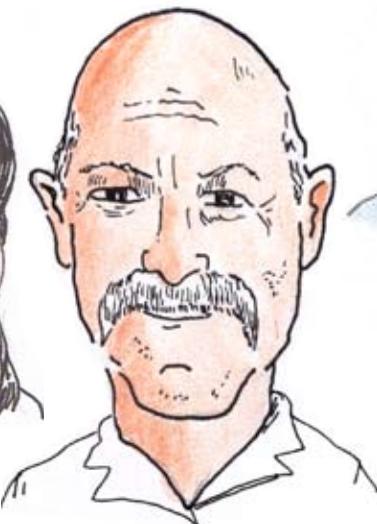
GIBBS SMITH
Layton, UT



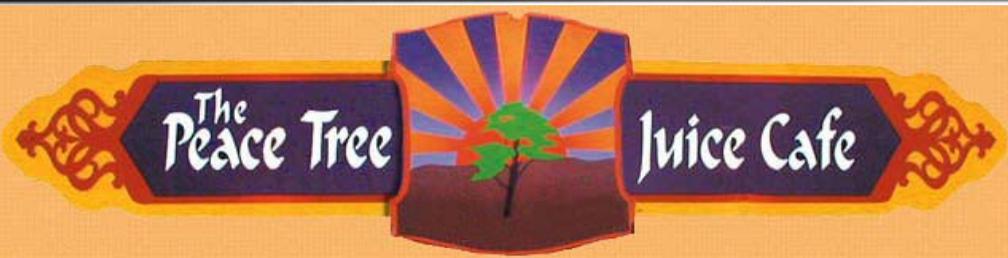
CYRANO
(on behalf of Marice Doll)
Glenwood Springs, CO



MARY MCCUTCHEN
Grand Jct, CO



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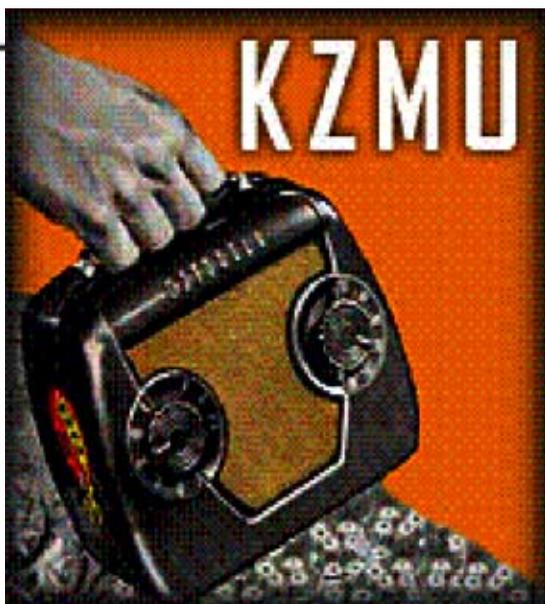
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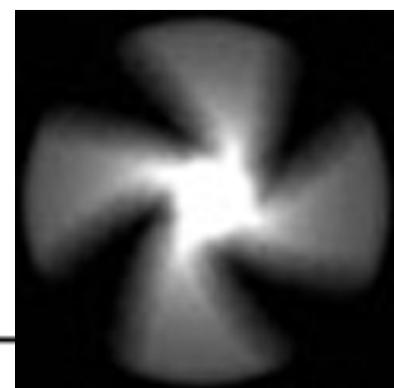
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THEY PUT THEIR COURAGE WHERE THEIR MOUTHS ARE

Captain Paul Watson, the Sea Shepherds & the Fight to Save the Whales

Jim Stiles

Who are the good guys? Who are the bad guys?

It's a topic this publication has wrestled with for years. Elsewhere in this issue, we note that mainstream environmentalism has finally come under the critical eye of the media. Compromised by corporations and Big Money, many "green" groups have become legalistic shells of their former selves. They rake in the bucks and turn a blind eye to any insult inflicted upon the Earth that might jeopardize their funding.

I have no idea where the Sea Shepherd gets its money and I don't really care. If Captain Paul Watson, the fearless commander and leader of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has a fast track to a rich man's pocket book, clearly he is not being compromised. For the last three years, he and his crew have placed their lives on the line as they try to stop Japanese whaling campaigns in the Southern Ocean, off the coasts of Australia and New Zealand.. This year was Sea Shepherd's most successful. According to their web site:

After three long weary and dramatic months upon the most remote and hostile seas in the world, the Sea Shepherd ships Steve Irwin and Bob Barker were welcomed by crowds of cheering supporters in the port of Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, on Saturday, March 6th, 2010.

Sea Shepherd just completed the most ambitious and effective campaign to defend the great whales that we have ever undertaken and Operation Waltzing Matilda, the sixth voyage to the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary to oppose the illegal whaling activities of the Japanese whaling fleet, was astoundingly effective.

For three straight weeks from February 5th until February 26th we prevented the entire Japanese whaling fleet from killing a single whale. The month before, we had shut the whalers down for twelve days giving us thirty-three solid whaling-free days, which is one-third of their whaling season. In addition, our actions forced the harpoon vessels Shonan Maru 2 and the Yushin Maru 3 to break off from whaling activities to serve as security vessels to oppose Sea Shepherd interventions, and this prevented these two vessels from killing whales for almost the entire season.

But their victory came at a price. Their interceptor ship, the *Ady Gil*, was rammed by one of the whaling ships when the *Ady Gil*'s crew placed themselves in a protective position, between the whales and the *Shonan Maru 2*. The \$1.5 million trimaran eventually sank, but as Sea Shepherd points out, "This is, of course, something not unexpected when we deliberately sail our vessels into harm's way to defend the whales from their remorseless killers. Our view is that ships are expendable, and that endangered species of whales are not."

Ironically, Sea Shepherd's success comes not because of, but despite the best efforts of Australia's recently elected and progressive Labor Party government, a fact that bewilders Paul Watson. For months, the government's enhanced and stringent visa requirements appeared to have stymied Sea Shepherd's need to

use Australia's port for re-fueling during their anti-whaling campaign. In December, Watson expressed his frustration on Sea Shepherd's website:

Way back in October 2007, I had urged thousands of Australians to vote for Kevin Rudd and Peter Garrett's Labor Party. Why? Because they promised to get tough on illegal Japanese whaling. They promised to take Japan to court. They promised to send a ship down to the Southern Ocean to monitor the illegal activities. They had severely criticized the former Howard government for not doing enough.

Since then Rudd and Garrett have demonstrated that they have done far less for the whales than former Environment Minister Ian Campbell had done.

Under Campbell, Australia was the toughest voice at the annual meetings of the International Whaling Commission. Under Garrett, the whales have become a very minor concern. Under Campbell, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society was given encouragement and support.

Under Garrett, we have been disparaged,

and now we are being harassed as the Rudd government seeks to sabotage Sea Shepherd efforts to defend the whales. Peter Garrett does not want our ship the Steve Irwin to return to the Southern Ocean in December. Why? Because the government of Japan has requested that the Australian government intervene to prevent us from returning to the Southern Oceans.

Eventually, the government issued its visas and Watson and Crew were able to successfully harass the whalers for months. But again, how could the Labor government, with an election promise to end Japanese whaling in the Southern Ocean and with an environment minister like Peter Garrett, who for years was Australia's "greenest" rock star and a high profile member of the Green Party, suddenly shift gears and forget what made them who they were to begin with?

The Good Guy/Bad Guy phenomenon continues, in all hemispheres of the world.



photo: Glenn Lockitch

The *Ady Gil*, just before it was rammed by a Japanese whaling ship.



photo: Jo-Anne McArthur



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