

APRIL/MAY 2011
VOLUME 23 NUMBER 1

The Canyon Country

“A Moment of
Cleansing
Clarity”

ZEPHYR



*For us to maintain our way of living, we must tell lies to each other
and especially to ourselves. The lies are necessary because, without them,
many deplorable acts would become impossibilities.*

---Derrick Jensen

P.O Box 271
MONTICELLO, UT 84535

“ALL THE NEWS THAT CAUSES FITS...
...SINCE 1989



**PLANET EARTH
EDITION**

2/3...TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT....By Jim Stiles

RHETORIC...THE SEQUEL: Great Old Broads, Jim Garmhausen & Ed Abbey

THE ZEPHYR heads into YEAR #23...what next?

"When it comes to my own rhetoric, no matter what I say, do or scribble, the Right still thinks I'm a bleeding heart lib and the Left thinks I've abandoned my 'progressive' components and become a gun-waving redneck."

4/5...THE RETURN of DOG OF THE MONTH!!!

MERLIN from Stinson Beach...the next Dahli Llama?

6/7...THE POLITICS of EMBARRASSMENT...Tonya Morton

"It should be of grave concern to anyone fond of his own freedom that the Obama administration is more upset about looking bad in front of America than it is concerned with the fact that its government is supporting corrupt and criminal behavior."

8/9...'THE TELLIN' TAKES ME HOME' #4 Remembering the Canyon Country

Thirty year Moab resident BILL BERGE died in 2006, but I just recently discovered an old box of his color slides.

I've started scanning them and am pleased to share the first batch with Zephyr readers. You may spot some familiar faces among the red rocks...JS

10/11...HOW DID ED ABBEY KNOW THE SYSTEM WILL TANK? ...Scott Thompson

Or De-constructing 'BubbleLand'

"Whether it's called capitalism or socialism makes little difference; both of these oligarchic, militaristic, expansionist, acquisitive, industrializing, and technocratic systems are driven by the same motives; both are self-destroying." EA

12/13...A SORDID & DESTRUCTIVE AFFAIR...Brian Horejsi

Mountain Biking in Canada's National Parks

"...33 million Canadians for example, find themselves "represented", albeit begrudgingly and in limited cases, in Federal government decision-making by a handful of spokespersons from environmental groups, while equal or greater numbers of spokespeople for commercial and corporate interests represent the interests of dozens or hundreds of special interest stakeholders."

14/15...Brian Horejsi's story continues.

16/17..... THE WILDER WEST...the Art, Humor & Wisdom of Dave Wilder

"Sorry, folks, but we're full up. No room at the inn you might say. We're tapped out, overgrazed, overbuilt and under-watered. It's a nice place to visit, I know, but I'm afraid you just can't live here. I'm talking about the Southwest of course."

18/19...LOSING SOLITUDE ...Martin Murie

TRESPASS... "I once thought the solution was simple: abolish private property, hold everything in common.

That was youthful enthusiasm grabbing grand abstractions, evading realities of my particular, somewhat peculiar, homeland, these United States of America."

20/21...GAINING PERSPECTIVE...volume 4

TWO YEARS in the KINGDOM of MOROCCO.....CHARLIE KOLB

"Morocco is so raw and vital; each day holds a wealth of experience....my world is a mixture of 3000 years of tradition and a few decades of modernity."

22/23... CENSUS 2010: De-Bunking the Headlines.....Kathleene Parker

"United States growth is linked to both immigration at the highest rate, by large margins, in our history and, despite media depictions to the contrary, a rising birthrate."

24/25... HERB RINGER'S American West

Views of ARIZONA in the 1950s---Marble Canyon & Jerome

26/27...THE BULLETIN BOARD of DOOM

Including...How Delusional are we???

"The study found that fully 77 percent of Western citizens believe that it's possible [to] protect land and water and have a strong economy with good jobs at the same time, without having to choose one over the other."

28/29...BUKOWSKI'S BACKBONE NIGHTMARE!!!

30-31...from 'YOUNG AT HEART' by Anne Snowden Crosman

LES PAUL...The Inventor of the Electric Guitar

32-33...Anne Crosman's story continues...

34/35...WINDOWS...looking out & looking in. Volume 3

Marian Ottinger has visitors...

36/37...THE TRANSLATED WORKS of JI BO

including...OLD PROVERB...a bird in hand/is bad for bird

38/39...'TOURAIDE' Conoco's 1941 Travel Guide

"For your convenience and complete enjoyment, we have prepared this, YOUR personal CONOCO TOURAIDE. This booklet has been assembled for your INDIVIDUAL trip, and contains, in a handy compact form, full information, covering your entire itinerary.

"EVERY TOURAIDE IS PREPARED INDIVIDUALLY."



**RHETORIC...the Sequel---
On The Great Old Broads,
Jim Garmhausen and Ed Abbey**

As some of you know, I have been angering, or at least annoying readers in southeast Utah and beyond for more than 20 years and I am proud to say I have infuriated both ends of the political spectrum at one time or another. When I started *The Zephyr*, I was determined, for better or worse, to be evenhanded and consequently, I always provided space for even my most vehement opponents. There has never been a hostile letter to the editor I would not print.

Looking back, clearly there have been times when some of my own sarcasm and “humor” has been counter-productive and hurtful. Beyond that, I was sometimes unwittingly creating a sympathetic backlash. Later I’d learn that facts are more powerful than rants.

I admit that in the early years I was more of a knee-jerk liberal—nowadays I’m a knee-jerk for all people--and consequently, much of the criticism hurled at me came from the conservative wing of my readership.

For example, in the early 1990s, when *The Zephyr* expressed opposition to a proposed multi-million dollar road over the Book Cliffs to Vernal, the local politicians were furious. When the BLM chained Amasa’s Back, it was my turn to be furious and that made the ranchers mad. I didn’t much care for a toxic waste incinerator at Cisco and I caught hell for that too, mostly from the part of the population who had a history and work background in mining and oil and gas exploration. I could understand their hostile reaction, though I did not agree with them. When people asked the Grand County road board chairman to describe my newspaper, he said, “I only need one word to describe it...CRAP!!!”

Real estate developers didn’t like my “anti-growth” attitude and I made very few friends from that sector either. One Moab realtor complained that I read too much Edward Abbey and that I wanted to roll the clock back and live in a cave. I replied that it depended on the cave. More on Cactus Ed in a minute.

About ten years ago, I looked around at what “my side” was doing in its quest to both preserve wilder-



The global economy is built on the erroneous belief that the marketplace—read human greed—should dictate human behavior and that economies can expand eternally. Globalism works under the assumption that the ecosystem can continue to be battered by massive carbon emissions without major consequences.

Chris Hedges

TAKE IT or LEAVE IT...

By Jim Stiles

cczephyr@gmail.com

ness and create an economy based on recreation, tourism and “amenities,” and realized the liberal solution to the economic woes of rural Utah—to turn it into a little urban New West population center--- was creating impacts of its own.

I’ve always believed that saving what remained of wilderness is a moral and ethical issue, not an economic one, and when the environmental movement started promoting the economic advantages of wilderness, even when it degraded and demeaned their own cause, I took exception and subsequently incurred the wrath of my liberal friends as well. It was strange to see real estate developers and environmental groups on the same side of the fence.

I’ve always believed that saving what remained of wilderness is a moral and ethical issue, not an economic one...

When I exposed the fact that many green groups are now being funded by wealthy capitalists whose interest in being on their boards is questionable and whose conflicted agendas reek of hypocrisy, they came unglued.

In a *Salt Lake Tribune* editorial, SUWA’s executive director claimed I was the “Barney Fife of the desert” and maintained that my “rant says less about SUWA than about Jim’s own curious little world. As its only resident, he’s in charge. He gets not only his own opinion but his own facts.”

Yeesh.

But if SUWA and the road board were being honest, they’d have to admit that what infuriates them the most is when I quote them accurately and I DO get my facts right.

Clearly, I can’t please anyone—right or left. But then, as a writer...that’s not my job.

So here it is, Spring 2011...the conservatives and the liberals are as happy with each other as they ever were, the name calling is getting even hotter, the rhetoric more irrational, the country is spinning out of control and if I really had my druthers, I’d say to hell with the whole mess and hide out in a corn field

(which is what I do most of the time anyway).

When it comes to my own rhetoric, no matter what I say, do or scribble, the Right still thinks I’m a bleeding heart lib and the Left thinks I’ve abandoned my ‘progressive’ components and become a gun-waving redneck.

A few weeks ago, I stuck my nose into San Juan County’s latest controversy—the “WANTED: DEAD or ALIVE” posters that circulated at some backcountry trailheads and threatened the environmental group Great Old Broads for Wilderness. My friend Bill Boyle, editor of *The San Juan Record*, re-printed an essay that first appeared here in the Feb/Mar edition, called “Rhetoric, Death, Wilderness & Candor.”

My story noted that whoever printed the posters and distributed them acted recklessly and irresponsibly or worse. In San Juan County, hot-headed rhetoric from both ends of the political spectrum runs rampant. Because the political mood here is dominated by conservatives, their rants are easier to find. But I also included some of the condescending words that come from the left, specifically a passage or two from author and SUWA employee Amy Irvine and her bitter personal attack on the residents of Monticello.

The response from the left was just as I expected... nothing.

I once noted that when a Conservative really gets hot under the collar, he’s apt to get right in your face and growl, “One more word and I’ll knock your block off!”

But the Liberal? He’s more likely to sniff, “I will not even dignify that comment with a reply.”

I think I’d rather get punched.

But for the last couple weeks, Blanding’s own conservative polemicist/letter-writer, Jim Garmhausen, has been confusing me with a combination of conflicting comments. If he thinks he can placate me by agreeing with me, all the while making my point for me via his recent rash of letter-writing, he is mistaken. In the same way that many of my environmentalist pals have quit talking to me because I disagreed with them on some issues, there have been a number of conservatives who think I’ve swung to the other end of the political spectrum because of my criticisms of mainstream environmentalists. Garmhausen even joined *The Zephyr Backbone!*

Neither view is correct.

A couple weeks ago, Garmhausen took note of my effort to be evenhanded. “To his credit,” he observed, “San Juan Record columnist Jim Stiles has made an

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All the News that Causes Fits
since 1989

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honest attempt to find a neutral ground for non-confrontational language and reasoned discourse in the current land-use debate.”

Even that wasn't quite right, but it was all downhill after that.

He described the difference between the “sweet, decent, hard-working people of San Juan County and the grant-dependent neurosthenic Old Breds, who have come here to facilitate Big Government suppression of our civil liberties.”

He wrote: “Here's a good idea Ms. Egan (executive director) of the Old Breds could use to suck even more grant bucks out of Government bureaucracies and bored rich white people: Declare Durango an Area for the Study of noxious invasive species. That way the Old Breds could study each other.”

You can almost feel the love.

When it comes to my own rhetoric, no matter what I say, do or scribble, the Right still thinks I'm a bleeding heart lib and the Left thinks I've...become a gun-waving redneck.

Garmhausen actually scores a couple valid points, but they're so buried in his vitriol that the facts get lost in the rant.

The truth is, most of the Great Old Breds' staff and board are longtime residents of the rural West and its director, Ronni Egan, is an accomplished wrangler who could probably rope and brand Mr. Jim before he could scream “Liberal Bolshevik Bag!”

It's reasonable to surmise that many of its members are from urban areas or are recently transplanted to New West communities and here is where the differences with rural residents become so sharp. Urban environmentalists, after a lifetime in the city, see the sparsely populated places in the West differently than many who have spent their lives working here.

If you can imagine what it's like to live in a sardine can for most of your life, perhaps you can also understand how precious the wide-open spaces are when they get the rare chance to enjoy them. Consequently, right or wrong, many urbanites see the West in its entirety, as one big national park. Even when they move here, they generally loathe the idea of anyone making a living from the land. Many come here after retirement, when earning a living is no longer a problem.

For decades I've heard rural Westerners accuse their pro-wilderness opponents of wanting to “lock up” the West. Well...that's probably true. They do. But their motives aren't nefarious. Their goal is not, as Mr. Garmhausen insists, “to facilitate Big Government suppression of our civil liberties.”

Urban environmentalists' vision of western land use may be naive, but it's not sinister.

I still find myself pulling a quote from the most honest conservationist I've ever known, Wendell Berry, who notes that while most environmentalists object to the impacts from the extraction of natural resources, they rarely connect the dots to the gasoline they keep pumping into their SUVs. They loathe the damage caused by the production of resources but have no trouble consuming them.

Still, I don't see how anyone can mock their conviction or their dedication to a cause, even if you vehemently disagree with them.

Clearly, environmentalists believe the best way to “save” Utah's wilderness and make a buck as well is to abandon the extractive industries, like mining, in favor of tourism, which in the end is the most extractive business of them all. But isn't that what San Juan County is doing too? Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that Blanding, Utah, the bastion of anti-wilderness conservatism, promote itself as the “Base Camp to Adventure.” And the county advertises our scenic beauty on...of all places...NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO! Surely Mr. Garmhausen can see the irony in that.

If there is a fair criticism to be made here, for me at least, it's the way Great Old Breds, like every other environmental group I know, has got caught up in the money game. My friend Susan Tixier founded GOB, about 20 years ago with some other women over 50.

She was its first executive director, worked practically for free, and simply liked being an “old broad” with the courage of her convictions. She could also probably pin Jim Garmhausen before breakfast.

Nowadays, GOB has a quarter million dollar payroll and gets some of its funding from the same wealthy capitalists who are compromising the integrity of other grassroots green groups.

Their argument is (and I think they really believe this) that they need all the money they can get their hands on, dirty or not, to fight the corporate giants--oil companies et al--that they oppose. The irony here is that billionaires who DO have vested interests in energy companies and the profits they generate ALSO sit on the boards of environmental groups and donate huge amounts of money. The staffs of these groups should be wondering by now just what these guys are up to...but they don't.

Jim Garmhausen also has a few words about author Edward Abbey. If he is just now discovering Abbey's extraordinary bundle of contradictions, he is late to the game. Jim is absolutely right when he says that some mainstream environmentalists pick and choose their favorite Abbey quotes and leave the rest under the couch. So do conservatives. Ed Abbey may have been the greatest contrarian of all time and he did it for decades with a wink and a smile. To this day, I'm not sure what Abbey was really thinking. I gave up even trying a while back. I do think he'd be happy to know we're still debating his real essence, more than 20 years after he died.



Finally (thank Heaven), and still referring to Ed Abbey, Mr. Garmhausen complains, “I seriously doubt that Mr. Abbey would approve of the people who act in his name bursting into tears and threatening to tell Mom because somebody said harsh words.”

I don't think any of the Great Old Breds is on the verge of tears, nor am I. When I talk about civil discourse, I'm not talking about “neutral ground” or “non-confrontational” behavior, or even compromise.

What I'm talking about is sticking to the facts...arguing with passion and conviction, but with some class and integrity. And here's something rarely tried—try standing in your opponent's shoes. I am—foolishly or not--- convinced that none of us are quite as bad as we think and I wish there weren't so many people trying to prove me wrong.

THE ZEPHYR HEADS INTO YEAR 23.

March 14, 1989—Ed Abbey died and *The Zephyr* was born on this day. 22 YEARS AGO. Most of you know the story...

For the past two decades, we have been trying to put together a newspaper that is as honest and candid and cantankerous as he was. I would not begin to try and measure our degree of success. But at best it's mixed.

With this issue, we move into our third precarious year as a ‘cyber-rag.’ The last print *Zephyr* rolled off the presses in Tooele more than two years ago. Barring a miracle, none of us will ever see *The Z* on paper again and many of you have rebelled at the change, to the point that some of my once most loyal readers have quit reading it altogether, simply because they don't like the format.

We ALL have to get over this.

The only reason this publication survives is the internet. Two years ago, with dwindling revenues and increasing production and distribution costs, the only alternative to shutting down completely was to move here. Ultimately, this may be the ONLY place that the truly free and independent media can survive and, with your help and participation, flourish.

Look what's happening to the media—many publications are dying. Others are being bought up by giant media corporations. Consider HuffingtonPost's sell-out to AOL. Other regional and local publications are getting a big dose of dollars from wealthy donors and are being co-opted in the process. If a newspaper cannot print the news it sees fit to print, without looking over its shoulders at the finance department, then it's not ‘free’ at all. What happens when a story has to be screened to make sure it doesn't upset the balance sheet?

Did you read these stories---

Okay, Here's The Deal With The AOL-Huffington Post Deal...

<http://www.businessinsider.com/aol-huffington-post-deal-2011-2>

Does Gates funding of media taint objectivity?

“Better-known for its battles against global disease, the Gates Foundation has also become a force in journalism. The foundation's contributions to nonprofit and for-profit media have helped spur coverage of global health, development and education issues. But some people worry that its growing support of media organizations blurs the line between journalism and advocacy.”

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2014280379_gatesmedia.html

As we enter our 23rd year, *The Zephyr*—like all surviving independent rags--- needs more readers and it needs more financial supporters. We're not looking for corporate grants. We are not looking for a sugar daddy/mommy. Over the years, I've accepted lifetime Backbone memberships to the tune of \$1000 each, from about five good *Zephyr* souls. Mostly, though, the *Z* survives on the \$50 and \$100 ads and Backbone contributions that keep us in beans. Beans is all we ask.

At the end of the day, the question that needs to be asked is: Does it matter? In the whole scheme of things, if *The Zephyr* withers and goes away like so many other independent newspapers, will it make a difference? Will anybody even notice?

In the whole scheme of things, if *The Zephyr* withers and goes away like so many other independent newspapers, will it make a difference?

Probably not.

Probably not. But if you're not completely sure you're ready for the End— if you'd like to see this cranky, home-owned, fiercely independent publication stick around a while, then embrace your laptop and READ our *Z*.

Do you miss reading the *Zephyr* on the toilet? With laptops and WiFi, you can carry on exactly as you once did. Tell your friends about your new laptop/toilet reading tradition and I guarantee you—as an added bonus-- nobody will ever try to borrow your laptop again.

And FINALLY, if you care enough about *The Zephyr* to put your money where your mouth is, please consider an ad or a membership in the Backbone. Details are at the top of the home page.



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Flyfishing event with...
MAXIMILLIAN WERNER
...AUTHOR OF "BLACK RIVER DREAMS"

Black River Dreams is a celebration of the fly fishing life. It is also a record of human awakening. Alternately lyrical and meditative, mystical and sensuous, each of these sixteen essays represents an exploration of the intersection between past and present, spirit and body, water and land, trout and people, ghosts and dreams. Whether Werner is describing his first and last time fly fishing as a boy on a stream in northern Maine; or the experience of sitting on the river bank with a dear old friend who, moments earlier, told him he had cancer; or the many golden evenings he and his wife cast big dry flies to Apache trout cruising in the dim mountain light, he brings an ecologically informed, poetic sensibility to all of his fly fishing encounters.

APRIL 4, 2011

7 PM

FREE TO THE PUBLIC

“DOG of the MONTH”



“MERLIN”

Stinson Beach is just north of San Francisco, but seems much farther than that. It feels like it's decades away. We were looking for a place to buy a cup of coffee when “Merlin” caught our eye (His name was prominently displayed on his collar)

He sat in front of the Parkside Cafe' and greeted everyone who came or went. He had the most beatific countenance I've ever seen on anybody--canine or otherwise. I think he could be the next Dahli Llama.

Send us pictures and a few words about your favorite 'DOG OF THE MONTH'...whatever kind of critter it is cczephyr@gmail.com



ROSCO
BETUNADA
WhiteWater,
Colorawdough

KAY & TUCK
FORSYTHE
Ellensburg,
WA



LINDA HART
Coldwater, KS



NEW BACKBONE MEMBERS FOR APRIL/MAY

JEFF NICHOLS
SLC, UT



THANKS ALSO TO:

- ALAN MIKUNI...Fremont, CA
- PAT GREDIAGIN...Tucson, AZ
- ANDREW GOODWIN...
Blanding UT
- JAY WHITE..Cincinnati, OH



TIM STECKLINE
Spearfish, SD



MELINDA
PRICE-WILTSHIRE
Victoria, BC



PAUL VLACHOS
NY, NY



**WE NEED
MORE
BACK-
BONERS!**

**PLEASE
JOIN!**

BECKY MORTON
Oakland, CA

THE POLITICS OF EMBARRASSMENT

Tonya Morton

I was disappointed, if not surprised, by the recent resignation of US State Department official P. J. Crowley, who grabbed headlines with his statements that Bradley Manning's treatment at the hands of the Quantico Detention Center has been both "ridiculous" and "stupid—light words, really, compared to "torture," the word chosen by Manning's lawyer and Amnesty International. But what disappoints me most isn't that Crowley was fired for expressing a reasonable opinion. What disappoints me is that he was forced to resign because, by expressing his opinion, he unwittingly exposed his boss—the president—supporting policies that any layperson could see are patently "ridiculous" and "stupid". He was fired for making clear to the world that the Obama administration supports certain policies in private that it doesn't want to have to admit to supporting in public.

The only thing that seems to register with this administration lately is embarrassment—not to be confused with shame, which would be the logical response to admitting they had acted inappropriately or supported morally unsound policies. The administration has shown no signs of being ashamed, for instance, about selling British nuclear secrets to Russia in order to speed through negotiations of the recent arms treaty. And they weren't ashamed about the secret war they've been conducting in Pakistan, about sending CIA operatives and mercenaries into a country with which we're supposedly allied. They weren't ashamed at all. They were just angry and embarrassed at being caught.



It should be of grave concern to anyone fond of his own freedom that the Obama administration is more upset about looking bad in front of America than it is concerned with the fact that its government is supporting corrupt and criminal behavior.

Crowley is lucky to have gotten off with just a forced resignation. The Obama administration has taken such a harsh line on whistleblowers and muckrakers lately, he shouldn't have been surprised to find himself in jail. Right now, Stephen Kim, a Korean-born analyst and one of Crowley's colleagues in the State Department, is currently under indictment for "compromising national security." And to which terrorist organization did he pass his top-secret information? Fox News. Kim gave a wholly unremarkable interview with the cable news network in which he expressed his opinions on how North Korea would react to economic sanctions. Apparently that's now grounds for serving 10 years.

But that isn't nearly as terrible as what's happened to Thomas Drake, a former senior executive at the National Security Agency. When Drake felt that his employer, the NSA, had passed up numerous opportunities to instate an accountable, and legal, means of routing out terrorism in favor of an illegal, inefficient and dangerous program of warrantless wiretapping and surveillance, he turned to a reporter at the Baltimore Sun. Using Drake's information, the reporter publicly exposed the mismanagement and the illegality of the NSA's actions. Drake has now been indicted, like Daniel Ellsberg before him, under the Espionage Act of 1917. He faces up to 35 years in jail.

It seems to be a theme of this administration: when the government lies and commits crimes against its own citizens, the blame doesn't fall on the lawbreakers; the blame falls on the guy who told. Take, for instance, the case of the U.S. covert spy war in Iran. It turns out that U.S. officials, in an idiotic attempt to foil Iran's nuclear ambitions, actually provided nuclear design plans to the Iranians. While the plans supposedly contained one flaw which would keep the nuclear bombs from working, officials later admitted that the flaw was a rather obvious one and that the rest of the design was entirely correct. In fact, they admitted, they had provided the Iranians with a precise roadmap for nuclear development. And which government official will be going to jail as a result of this complete bungling of national security?

The answer: Jeffrey Sterling, a former CIA officer, who was uninvolved in the plan. Sterling has not been arraigned for selling nuclear secrets to Iran; but rather for tipping off a reporter to the details of the fiasco. Further, Sterling ap-

parently had the gumption to describe details to the same reporter of the USA's practice of using extraordinary rendition to cover up illegal detentions of prisoners of war. What will be Sterling's prize for all that honesty? Sterling faces up to 120 years in prison and \$2.5 million in fines. The punishment for the men who sold nuclear secrets to Iran and broke international law with regard to prisoners of war? Nada.

The Obama administration doesn't seem particularly interested in war crimes. They seem to stifle a big yawn at corruption and government malfeasance. What really ticks them off, the real crime, is bringing illegal activities to light and em-



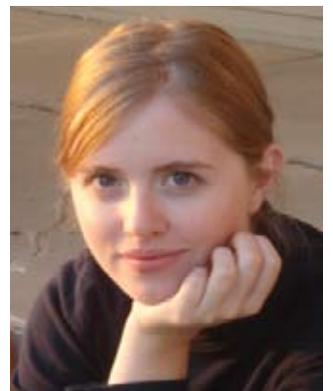
barrassing the administration. Who could be more deserving of incarceration, for instance, than the Apache helicopter pilots who mowed down two Reuters journalists and numerous civilians without a hint of remorse? And who deserves to sit naked and blind, stripped of both clothes and glasses, in a solitary cell at Quantico more than the men who gave the orders to cover up civilian deaths and the torture of detainees? The answer, according to the Obama administration, is that Bradley Manning, who exposed the actions of the Apache pilots and the corrupt officials, is more deserving. Yes, clearly Manning and his ilk—not forgetting P.J. Crowley, who had the nerve to call Manning's detention "stupid"—are what's wrong with America.

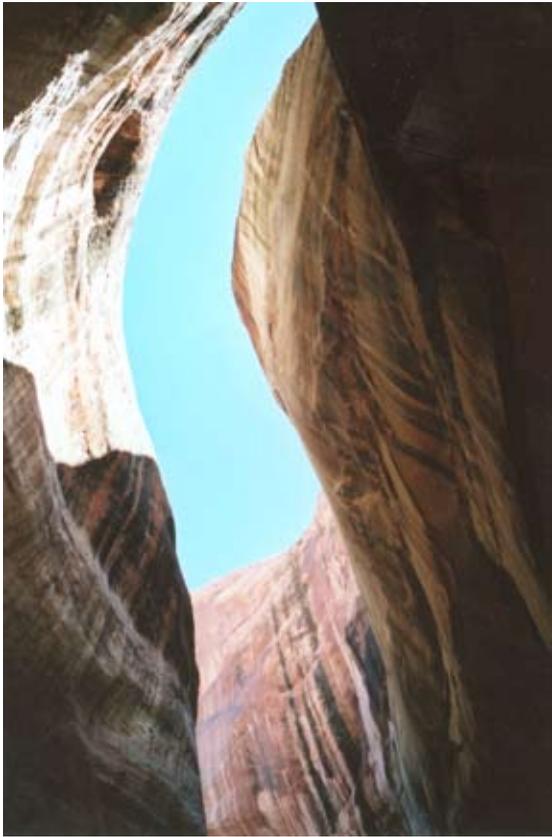
The most striking element of all these charges, as far as I can see, is the criminalization of an informed citizenry. Who was the target, really, of Bradley Manning's leaked information? No one has been able to point out a single case in which Manning's information helped Al Qaeda or the Taliban. No one is claiming that the information is bolstering the spirits of the Iranians. The target of Manning's leak was the American news media, and by extension, the American people. In each case listed above, the intended recipient of the leaked information wasn't a foreign government or a terrorist organization. It was the press. The target was Americans. And so when Manning is charged with "aiding the enemy" and Thomas Drake is charged with "espionage," one has to wonder who that "enemy" really is? If these cases are any clue, the enemy is us.

Daniel Ellsberg, who released the Pentagon Papers in 1971, detailing US malfeasance in Vietnam, and who was charged and later released on charges under the Espionage Act of 1917, is a man uniquely qualified to speak on matters of government transparency. In a recent interview with a Politico reporter, Ellsberg said Obama's "campaign against whistleblowers" is "unprecedented." In a separate interview with Spiegel, he called Obama, with regard to whistleblowers, "worse than Bush." That isn't high praise from a man who once claimed George W. Bush had aspirations to dictatorship. As Ellsberg's own history shows, an attack on government whistleblowers is an attack on the American public's right to know. It should be of grave concern to anyone fond of his own freedom that the Obama administration is more upset about looking bad in front of America than it is concerned with the fact that its government is supporting corrupt and criminal behavior.

And who can provide the best indictment of Obama the President of 2011? Why, that would be Obama the candidate of 2008, who said, "Government whistleblowers are part of a healthy democracy and must be protected from reprisal." In the same campaign, Obama described instances of whistleblowing as "acts of courage and patriotism, which can sometimes save lives and often save taxpayer dollars." I wonder if Obama remembered those words from his younger, more idealistic self as he signed off on P.J. Crowley's resignation. Or whether he felt the lingering stabs of conscience as he defended the detention procedures used on Bradley Manning as "appropriate." How would Obama respond to that younger version of himself, who supported the courageous over the cowardly? It's just too bad that "courage" and "patriotism" aren't as much fun when you're the one with egg on your face.

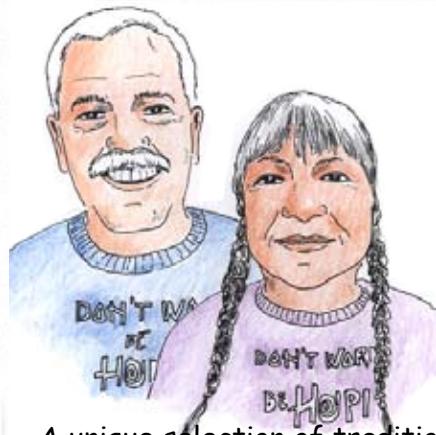
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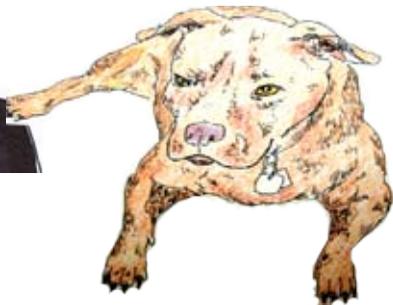
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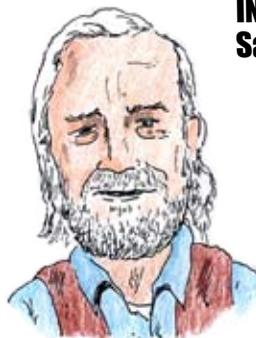
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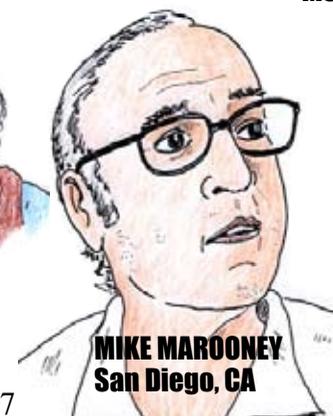
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THE TELLIN' TAKES ME HOME

REMEMBERING THE CANYON COUNTRY...#4

photographs by BILL BENGE

Thirty year Moab resident BILL BENGE died in 2006, but I just recently discovered an old box of his color slides. I've started scanning them and am pleased to share the first batch with Zephyr readers. You may spot some familiar faces among the red rocks...JS



Bill, in deep thought, above the Colorado River. The guy immediately to his right may be IZZY NELSON.



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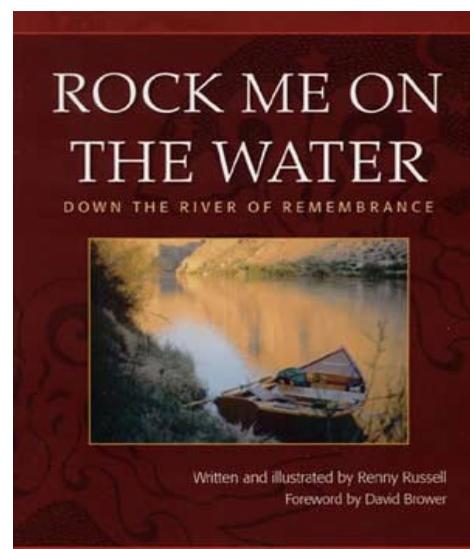
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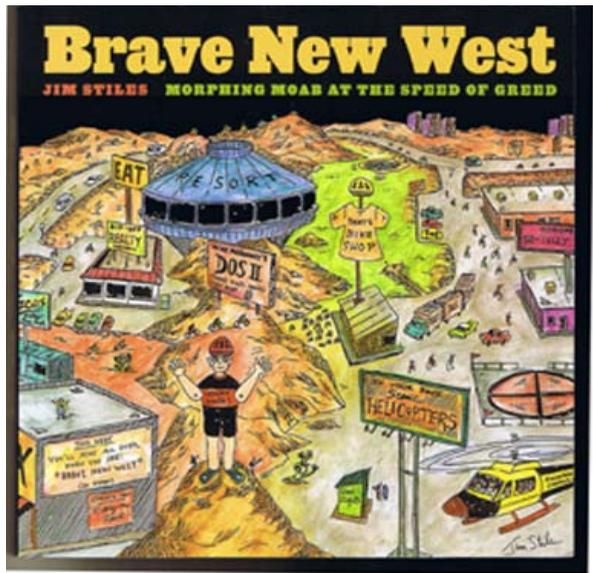
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How DID Ed Abbey Know the System Will Tank? Or, Deconstructing Bubble Land

By Scott Thompson

“The primitive seems to know when the problem is insoluble; the civilized man does not.” – Vine Deloria, Jr.

Maybe the two British climate scientists were desperate to be heard, or maybe they were simply fed up.

Whatever the case, in a recent issue of a prominent British scientific journal, they got in their own government’s face, saying: “... the logic of such studies suggests (extremely) dangerous climate change can only be avoided if economic growth is exchanged, at least temporarily, for a period of planned austerity within Annex I nations [developed countries for the most part] and a rapid transition away from fossil-fuelled development within non-Annex I nations.” (Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows, “Beyond ‘Dangerous’ Climate Change: Emission Scenarios for a New World,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*, January, 2011 p. 41.)

This article flicked on the scientific warning light for globalized economic growth. And assuming the system persists more or less as is, climate models will yield ever starker forecasts, to the mounting dismay of political leaders and their multinational corporate backers. At some point, even the public will have to be clued in – after as much delay (and profit-taking) as possible.

Some writers with intuitive gifts knew as much. For example, James Gustave Speth, of the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, who in 2008 said, “...it makes very good sense to question economic growth and the growth imperative...The planet cannot sustain capitalism as we know it.” (*The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, pp. 115-116.)

And Edward Abbey, with his hawk’s eye, was well aware by 1967, when he wrote that “growth for the sake of growth is a cancerous madness” and that “an economic system which can only expand or expire must be false to all that is human.” Well-known phrases to Ed’s aficionados. (See “Water,” *Desert Solitaire*, p. 127.) In 1988 he put it this way: “...the whole grandiose structure is self-destructive: by enshrining the profit motive (power) as our guiding ideal, we encourage the intensive and accelerating consumption of land, air, water – the natural world – on which the structure depends for its continued existence. A house built on greed will not long endure. Whether it’s called capitalism or socialism makes little difference; both of these oligarchic, militaristic, expansionist, acquisitive, industrializing, and technocratic systems are driven by the same motives; both are self-destroying. Even without the accident of a nuclear war, I predict that the military-industrial state will disappear from the surface of the earth within a century.” (*One Life at a Time*, Please, p. 28.)

Although Ed didn’t write about global warming, he may have been right about when the catastrophes will arrive, according to current climate science modeling. Consider, for example, the presentiment of disaster echoing in the following climate modeling paper, from the same British professional journal: “If climate warms rapidly...a temperature of anywhere between 2 degrees C and 4 degrees C might be reached by the 2050s or 2060s, precisely at the time when vulnerability as a result of population demands for food and water is highest...Contemplating a world that is 4 degrees C warmer can seem like an exercise in hopelessness: accepting that we will not reduce greenhouse gases enough or in

time, and laying out a difficult future for many of the world’s people, ecosystems and regions.” (Mark New et al, “Four Degrees and Beyond: the Potential for a Global Temperature Increase of Four Degrees and its Implications,” pp. 13, 16.)

The question is: how did Ed know that the mainstream system will tank decades before the science began to show it?

I think the reason is that he somehow acquired the kind of intuition indigenous people have. Whether he ever realized the significance of his breakthrough is unclear. But what is apparent from studying his journal is that he was often frustrated trying to deal with people who found what he said incomprehensible and who as a result hung a series of unsavory labels on him. In Vine Deloria, Jr.’s, last book – the one he had trouble getting published - the late Sioux writer presented an indigenous perspective on intuition that I think well applies to Ed.

Deloria said, “The most important observations that primitives could make would be of the environment around them.” (C.G. Jung and the Sioux Traditions, p. 52.) Some examples: in late August do we know to look for the wind picking up high in the trees, because we love seeing it? Or if there is a new pattern of dry, hard winds in the late winter, are we curious about that? If in the fall we see the leaves on the low mountains abruptly turn brown instead or red or yellow, have we almost been expecting it? Do we notice the Alligator Junipers in a movie supposedly situated in Wyoming, and if so does the inauthentic location make the story seem off center?

Our species evolved to be alert in just this way, so much so that a child in an indigenous society who only noticed this much might be considered socially backward.

One of the most revealing things about any culture is what people focus upon when they have free time and energy. For better or worse, that’s what their insights and intuitions will spring from.

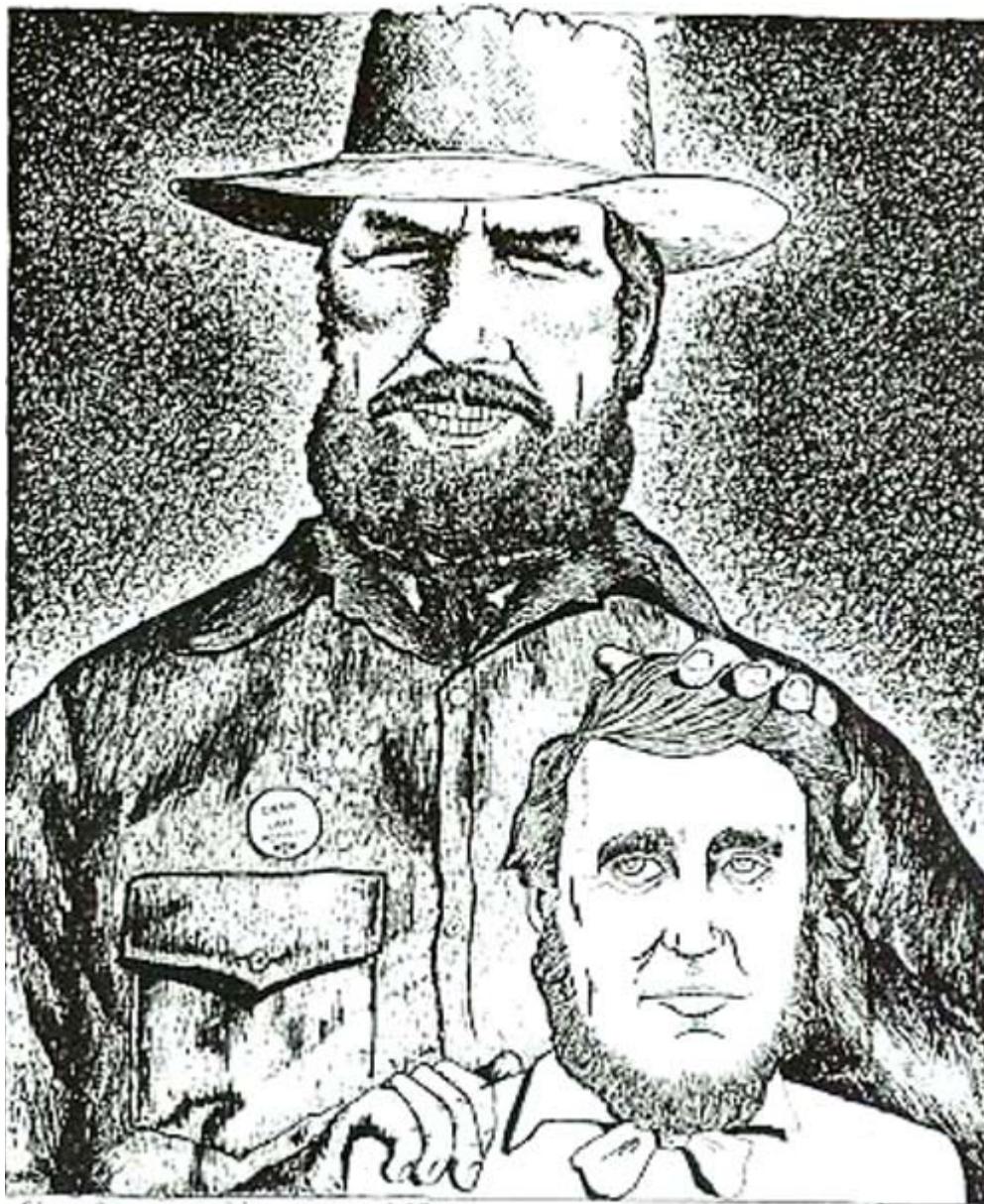
And no culture has been more successful than ours in distracting itself from observing the natural world in detail. Look at how many people flock to artificial environments of one kind or another for their vacations: Disney World, Dollywood, luxury cruises, five star hotels, London, Venice, Hong Kong, you name it. Even vacations that center in national monuments or parks or other open spaces are likely to rely on adrenaline spikes from rock climbing, mountain bikes, or off-the-road vehicles.

Observation of the environment as Deloria meant it is uncommon in our society, and people who do so are typecast as naturalists or “tree huggers.”

Deloria also said, “If civilized man concentrates on the single event, and misses the relationships that surely exist between and among objects, could not the primitive perceive differently, intuiting sets of activities that can only be apprehended with a larger vision?” (pp. 52-53).

The perspective he is describing is more aesthetic than rational, which in no way diminishes its importance. As an example, consider the opening paragraphs from Ed’s novel *Black Sun*, in which he describes the interaction between the main character and the environment around him:

“Each day begins like any other. Gently. Cautiously. The way he likes it. A



Edward Abbey contemplating the end of things

Jim Sisk
2011

dawn wind through the forest, the questioning calls of obscure birds. He hears the flutelike song, cool as silver, of a hermit thrush.

“He waits for a while, hands under his head, watching the light beyond the open doorway for the cabin. The subtle, stealthy shift from violet and blue to morning gray. He opens his sleeping bag, rolls off the bed and walks naked to the door, where he stands for some indefinable length of time gazing out, leaning against the door frame.

“The sun is close but not yet up. A few dim stars still hang blinking on the west. Deer are grazing at the far side of the clearing, near the foot of the fire tower – dim figures in the pearl-gray light. The dark and somber forest surrounds them all with its heavy stillness.” (p. 11).

Whether it's called capitalism or socialism makes little difference; both of these oligarchic, militaristic, expansionist, acquisitive, industrializing, and technocratic systems are driven by the same motives; both are self-destroying.

We're struck not only by the elegance of his description, but also by its capacity to evoke chords of memory; moments when the sun was a rim of fire over the sharp relief of desert mountains or when we saw a lone cliffrose blooming on a sandstone flat. We sense something fundamental in his approach, and therefore assume we'll find any number of parallels in other novelists.

But alas. You can read one bestselling, well-reviewed novel after another and find nothing like it. The acrid truth is that in our world nature is a stage, a backdrop, to human interaction. People may walk or piss under trees, but they do not interact with them as indigenous people do.

Writers making a living on the big market are well aware of this and learn to describe nature sparingly; just enough to give the reader the feeling of walking in a park or standing on a lawn, and then they plunge into the human-centered melodrama. Stephen King, touted as the world's best-selling writer, gave the following trenchant advice to wannabe authors: “It's...important to remember that it's not about the setting, anyway – it's about the story...In many cases when a reader puts a story aside because it 'got boring,' the boredom arose because the writer grew enchanted with his powers of description and lost sight of his priority, which is to keep the ball rolling.” (On Writing, pp. 176,178). You can't say King hasn't sized up his readers.

Let me end this point with an analogy. The relationships we learn the most from are those in which we interact with people without trying to use them for our own purposes. This is when we have to pay attention, and in time we learn to love paying attention, because the process deepens emotional involvement. It's no different with nature. Love of wildness comes from observation, which is only sustained by emotional involvement.

Now a third point. Deloria said, “Civilized man...in taking the thinking approach to his world now confronts an almost wholly artificial environment, a manufactured construct. It is a world created by thought that in turn nurtures further thought to the exclusion of other functions. The creation of an artificial world, and our reliance on it, is a dangerous proposition.” (pp. 55-56).

Last summer I saw a news short about two self-assured women, both former CEOs of major multinational corporations, each of whom had just won her Republican primary for high office in California. As they stood beaming before a tumultuous crowd, one crowed that they were “two business women from the real world who know how to create jobs, balance budgets, and get things done.”

Their proud declaration stuck in my craw because I can't think of a sub-culture on our planet that is more embedded in unreality than massive multinational corporations. By comparison, your average hospital psychiatric ward does a much better job of orienting itself.

The big-time corporate world governs its behaviors according to abstrac-

tions like quarterly profits, stock value, interest rates, and so forth. They take these formulations in deadly earnest; if, for example, their short-term profits are up, the Gross Domestic Product is growing, interest rates and market prices are favorable, they are likely to hire more employees (as cheaply as possible, of course) and consume even more natural resources, so that quarterly profits will spike and the company's stock value will as well.

This is the self-reinforcing “world created by thought that nurtures further thought” which Deloria warned us about. The “dangerous proposition” here is that none of these standard business abstractions considers the consequences of elevated consumption of natural resources on relevant ecological habitats, including the atmosphere; the very climate and physical reality upon which the survival of all that lives depends.

This is a dangerous disconnection.

I propose that we call this multi-national corporate unreality Bubble Land, because it floats above the actuality of habitats, ignoring both them and the surrounding atmosphere. Committed to expansion, Bubble Land sucks up more and more natural resources from the finite habitats beneath it, debilitating them to the point of extinction, and farting out an ever greater plethora of greenhouse gases and wastes.

With rare exceptions, the honchos of Bubble Land do not recognize that they are functioning within a bubble (it is, after all, an extraordinarily real-seeming bubble--like Disneyland). Consequently, they assert that the values fundamental to Bubble Land describe the way life works, and see themselves as the ultimate realists. As Deloria warned, they make the cardinal error of seeing their world of thought as self-sustaining--as real--instead of self-reinforcing.

To sum up. Ed predicted that the military-industrial state will go smack down within a century because the following train of thought was obvious to him, as it is to indigenous people world-wide. First, that in order to survive, all beings, whether plant, animal or human, require suitable habitat. Meaning physical space, plus other living systems compatible with our own survival: and vital to it all, that our survival be compatible with theirs. Because all predators, and that's what we are, are dependent on their prey to survive.

And second, there are no exceptions to the foregoing, which means that any

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species, including ours, which chronically overpopulates ecosystems will sooner or later experience a die-back. And that no economic system can grant immunity from this, no matter how much it “grows” and advances its technology. To the contrary, it worsens matters because so-called growth can only mean consuming resources in an ever widening spiral, destroying more and more habitat, until the system caves in on itself.

Our great-great-great grandchildren will look back at the myopia of our powerful corporate leaders with sardonic wonder. They'll say, “Didn't those mothers KNOW they were living in a goddam bubble?”

A writer they'll respect is Edward Abbey.

SCOTT THOMPSON is a regular contributor to THE ZEPHYR. He lives in West Virginia.

A Sordid and Destructive Affair: Mountain Biking in Canada's National Parks

By Dr. Brian L. Horejsi
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Citizens around the world, particularly in self described progressive nations, have long been suspicious and distrustful of government(s) that exclude the public from decision making. While they have rarely done anything about transgressions of their democratic rights, the public remains, collectively, a powerful force that routinely diverges in its opinions, desires and vision from that of the special interests that lobby government or are welcomed in the government fold because they endorse a given government agenda.

In an effort to neutralize, that is "control", this latent public power and still, at least superficially, mollify those members of the public who take their responsibility as a citizen seriously, federal, state and provincial governments have succeeded in forcing and compartmentalizing citizens into the category of a special interest. The public increasingly finds itself relegated to stakeholder status, in most cases more impotent than many commercial and corporate special interests.

This transformation of public rights is nothing short of a brilliant political takeover by special, almost exclusively, commercial interests. As one environmentally perceptive author states, it is easy to "understand the dynamics of power and repression at work" in something like the rise of stakeholder politics. And it is in the area of environmental protection and regulation that this coercive process plays a particularly potent role. A process that reduces the voices of millions down to a dozen or so representatives cannot maintain control unless it picks and chooses who will be allowed to "play the game". And as dishonest as it is evident, governments appear to "find their principles" when picking and funding stakeholder participants, now insisting on "equal representation". As a consequence, 33 million Canadians for example, find themselves "represented", albeit begrudgingly and in limited cases, in Federal government decision-making by a handful of spokespersons from environmental groups, while equal or greater numbers of spokespeople for commercial and corporate interests represent the interests of dozens or hundreds of special interest stakeholders.

In the interests of new found "equal representation", democracy is turned upside down in stakeholder roundtables where 3 or 4 Eco reps find themselves facing 8 or 10 commercial / corporate stakeholders and spokespersons from

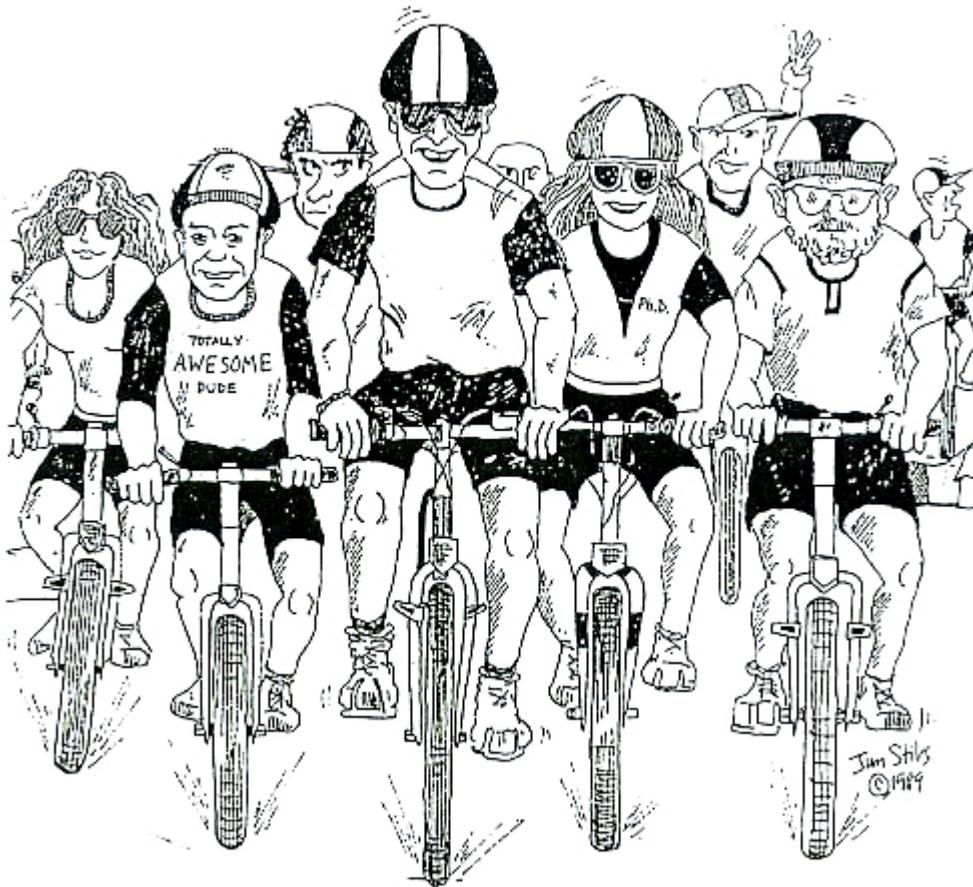
as National trails coordinator, who may well have chaired that meeting! Having railroaded the process, it appears Parks Canada willingly subjected itself, the people of Canada, and just as importantly, democracy itself, to a coup d'etat, as the Minister has recently reaffirmed that mountain biking "could soon become part of the menu of activities offered in national Parks"(2). This is a factually dishonest statement, since biking has already invaded parks like Banff and Jasper.

While this represents a grotesque betrayal of democratic process, what is equally as duplicitous is the eagerness with which certain individuals and environmental groups (including prominent ones such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society) abandon the public, ecological science, historical precedents, and legal and due process, and embrace and defend their now favored stakeholder status, encasing themselves as "insiders" in these closed-to-the-public meetings and discussions.

While this divisive process has continued to evolve since the 1970s, stakeholder politics now reign as the most democratically erosive and environmentally destructive schemes conceived of by governments catering to growth and expansion agendas of commercial and corporate interests. Governments, particularly corporate friendly ones, have embraced these deceptive processes as a means of excluding the public from participating in what should be legislated public processes, thus divorcing the people from decisions related to the control and management of exceptionally valuable public resources like National Parks.

From within this cesspool of corrupted internal machinations, a non-existent public hearing process, and critically flawed and prejudicial public consultation claims, has oozed the latest in what has become a mountain of threats to Canada's National Parks---mountain biking. True to its secretive

political and management culture, Parks Canada has held no public hearings – let me emphasize this; we are talking about never - and commissioned or internally instigated no social impact or environmental impact assessment of the widely known and well documented damages and conflicts generated by mountain biking. Nowhere in the National Park system is the threat greater than in Banff National Park, the internationally recognized flagship of Canada's Park system, where public policy has been hijacked by private sector Chamber of com-



33 million Canadians for example, find themselves "represented", albeit begrudgingly and in limited cases, in Federal government decision-making by a handful of spokespersons from environmental groups, while equal or greater numbers of spokespeople for commercial and corporate interests represent the interests of dozens or hundreds of special interest stakeholders.

government running the process. When Parks Canada held its "public meeting" of hand-picked participants to endorse, and at least in their eyes, "legitimize" mountain biking in Canada's National Parks, they invited 3 Eco "delegates", provided they were a "Senior representative of an ENGO whose mandate is in line with that of Parks Canada".(1)

These sorry delegates were to represent the Canadian public at a "table" stacked with 37 other people representing interests such as "partners, mountain biking groups and associations, equipment suppliers, companies who manage the activity." As if this were not a sordid enough affair, Parks Canada hired the former executive director of the Canadian International Mountain Biking Association

merce interests with deceptively folksy names such as the Association of Mountain Parks for Protection & Enjoyment.

The fundamental failure of this close-knit alliance between business interests, public lands agencies and hand picked environmental group "stakeholders" is that they aggressively exclude participation by historical and traditional low-impact public lands users, each of whom has, and should have, a constitutional right to be heard. As a result there is no voice for the large numbers of citizens who support the historical and traditional culture of National Parks and who oppose the expansion of destructive, divisive and conflict laden commercial exploitation of our public lands.

Contrary to claims by the IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) and bikers, mountain biking is largely driven by speed, aggression, thrill seeking, idolatry of gear, and competition. In most cases it has as much to do with being in and appreciating the outdoors as would be the Yankees' claim that they play baseball because they are outdoor enthusiasts. The mountain biking industry, along with its trade associations (like BikesBelong and IMBA (3), on the other hand, is driven by corporations and dealers focussed on expanded sales and consumption and it openly fuels biker extremism and aggression. It may also be an arm of ultra right wing elements in society that motivate its attack on environmental laws, wilderness, the protection of public land ecosystems,[1] and public management and ownership of public lands.

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Often wrapped in body armor, virtually unable to look left or right, hearing impaired (by helmets and riding noise), engrossed in overpowering and surviving the trail and its "obstacles" – labeled in one mountain biker forum as "whoopdeedos" - and often pumped with adrenaline and testosterone (75% or more of bikers are young males), bikers engage in an activity that negates each and every one of the benefits of being outdoors, from enjoying and interacting with the natural world, to finding solitude, to escaping from the stress, noise and pressures of modern society. Mountain biking violates every fundamental principle and public vision for which National Parks were established, and until now, managed.

No group of land users, other than motorized off roaders, has been permitted to create wide spread and intense conflict on public lands like mountain bikers have. The behavior of the leaders and promoters of mountain biking is grounded in sensation seeking, competitiveness and hostility, strongly paralleling the behavior associated with reckless driving of automobiles.(5) The industry glorifies aggressive and objectionable behavior, and far too many of the people recruited by this behavior fall into the mold.

In addition to forcing a sense of urbanization into natural landscapes, mountain biking sharply escalates dangerous behavior, where wheeled vehicles powered by mechanical advantage, often weighing several hundred pounds (with rider), hurtle down trails at speeds that threaten, intimidate, injure and kill people who at one time were able to walk peacefully, and safely, on public lands. While there is a cohort of bike users who confine their vehicles to roads like other vehicles, the majority resist doing so. Few things can be more offensive in a natural setting than a mob of bikesters and their vehicles "ripping" down a formerly quiet trail or chugging up an open ridge, often while assaulting one's senses with rainbow spandex obliterated with corporate logos. Mountain bikers, contrary to the hypocrisy of their motto "share the trails", have generated more animosity between themselves and legitimate trail walkers and hikers than ever in public lands management history.

A group of physicians addressing some of the behavior and impacts of mountain bikers and bikes say it well : "We as physicians see the shared use of these narrow trails as hazardous to both pedestrians and cyclists. Because these dangers are inherently obvious, as has happened elsewhere, pedestrians would begin to avoid these shared trails, reducing their options for recreation and exercise." (6) And that's precisely what is happening across North America; in Jasper National Park, for example, bikers have now taken control of over 200 km of former hiking and walking trails, driving traditional peaceful users, many of whom have enjoyed these trails for a lifetime, to abandon them.

Mountain bikers and the mountain biking industry have so far waged a highly successful campaign of denial of impacts and conflicts and diversion of the significance of these issues (7) that has pulled the blinders over the eyes of management agencies and fleeced the public. But reality, however slowly, is catching up to this deception.

The incremental and cumulative environmental and social impacts of mountain biking are as obvious as the schnozzola was on Jimmy Durante's face (too old for you? try Kramer of Seinfeld); yet management agencies are sitting around in denial and indifference as if dumbstuck. The physical, behavioral and ecological impacts of bikers that travel as much as 70 km a day are 7 to 10 times greater than those of the average hiker. With weight loadings on tires that are 6 to 8 times greater than those of the human foot, and are further aggravated by skidding, spinning, cornering, and jumping, much of it deliberate, impacts on soils, streams, wildlife and vegetation are exponentially more significant. Yet we continue to have "institutes" and "researchers" robotically droning on that "the available published literature indicates that mountain biking as an anthropogenic disturbance is similar in its environmental effects as other forms of summer season trail use".(8)

Direct impacts specific to mountain biking, as though ordained by some superior being (or could it be an advocacy think tank), are summarily being dismissed unless compared to some other activity. The operational and ecological reality of cumulative effects, like the proverbial greased pig, appears to have escaped



Having railroaded the process, it appears Parks Canada willingly subjected itself, the people of Canada, and just as importantly, democracy itself, to a coup d'etat

the grasp of land and wildlife management and conservation professionals and agencies who behave as though extensive and growing mountain biking impacts can only be measured when related to those of traditional hiking activity.

Fortunately, growing evidence and wiser voices are now being heard regarding the hazards of mountain biking; it should be obvious that the following also applies to the science, management, and prevention of impacts associated with biking: "we should not assume the lack of studies implies safety, nor should we allow the absence of scientific certainty to stand in the way of exercising our common sense."(9)

Regulation and management that protects citizens (seeking the emotional, psychological and physical rewards associated with outdoor enjoyment), land, water, wildlife and vegetation should be based on extension and inference from

NEXT PAGE...

LIFETIME BACKBONE MEMBER **SEDONA, ARIZONA**

ANNE SNOWDEN CROSMAN

GREG KROLL
Santa fe, NM

M. JOHN FAYHEE
Silver City, NM

TOM THORNE...SLC,
UT

A SORDID & DESTRUCTIVE AFFAIR MOUNTAIN BIKING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS (CONTINUED)

existing information, evidence accumulated through scientific process, common sense, and conflict elimination; it is irresponsible and unacceptable to keep passing the buck – in this case approving mountain bike environmental abuse and social conflict – because of (false) claims that a smoking gun has not yet been identified.

The loss of wildlife habitat security, much of it due to fragmentation and fracturing of habitat by roads and trails built for motorized and mechanized vehicles like mountain bikes,⁽¹⁰⁾ is a world wide problem directly linked to critical declines in fish and wildlife population viability and ominous losses of biological diversity. National Parks and wilderness areas were established partly to counter these threats and to prevent landscape degradation commonly associated with private lands and public lands “managed” for extractive consumption and mechanized exploitation.

As the Earth’s life support systems deteriorate in the face of over threshold human populations and industrial use, the value of intact and protected public lands in counteracting these forces has never been greater. When new trails are constructed to cater to bikers, or hikers and the walking public are driven from trails by high speed vehicles (bikes), or “trails” become roads as they are hardened and widened to accommodate speed and all weather biker travel, wildlife displacement and harassment escalate and habitat security and effectiveness are damaged and lost. ⁽¹¹⁾ Mountain bikes and bikers have attacked even remote remnant ecological and biodiversity strongholds because of their extensive reach – even 50 km does not deter them.

As the Earth’s life support systems deteriorate in the face of over-threshold human populations and industrial use, the value of intact and protected public lands in counteracting these forces has never been greater.

Mountain bikers are notorious regulatory cheats and their history of illegal trail construction (and its associated destruction of soil and vegetation) virtually everywhere they descend on a piece of land is legendary, just as is the inability of management personnel and agencies to police biker activity and protect the land and legitimate land users through effective enforcement. ⁽¹²⁾ It is a massive and thoughtless distortion to imply that these activities are somehow compatible with “unique and treasured protected areas”! ⁽¹³⁾

Choking budgets and staff reductions imposed on land management agencies are widening the gap between enforcement (protection) and user violations, giving free rein to mountain biker environmental destruction and social conflict. This is not what Canadians or Americans expect of their National Parks or public lands and it is not the purpose for which these unique landscapes were established.

It is increasingly difficult to tell whether Canadians and Americans just don’t care about the destructive onslaught of mountain biking – I don’t think this is the case for many of them – or whether they have been pounded into a state of numbness by government and corporate resistance to public participation; it may also be that they have been so blitzed by incessant commercialization and private sector exploitation of public resources and corruption of public processes that their defenses have simply been overwhelmed and they no longer realize that they have been, and are being, taken to the cleaners.

A significant portion of this retreat is, I suspect, related to the deep and expanding cultural gap in North American society initiated and fueled by specialized activities and occupations and closely linked corporate and commercial interests.^[2] This gap consists on one side of special commercial interests like mountain bike manufacturers and dealers who see public lands like National Parks as cash cows waiting to be exploited, and on the other side, the majority of society who have for a hundred years struggled to protect the cultural and ecological integrity of public lands and the rights of citizens and visitors to build and restore their physical and emotional sense of well being through direct and indirect communion with the natural world.

Already suffering the consequences of regulatory vulnerability, National Parks management is caving in to the pressure from the Chamber of Commerce lobby and mountain bikers to ignore cumulative impact and “throw the kitchen sink”

into the mix of users, and they are doing so without hearing from, listening to or respecting the traditional quiet users and supporters of Parks.

The attempted sweep of mountain biking into National Parks is a not-so-thin edge of a phalanx of privatization schemes wherein National Parks, and all other public lands, have thrown open the doors to ecologically and socially destructive and objectionable user behavior in order to pander to commercial and economic interests. One thing is certain – we, the people, have been out maneuvered by political manipulation and betrayed by national and regional environmental groups flying the flag of stakeholders. North Americans are slowly letting themselves become “customers” (a dangerous downgrade from citizen status), and customers always pay when using a “product.” National Parks, which we still own and once thought we controlled, are no exception.

In this case the costs are enormous – loss of ecological well being, loss of a national and traditional common currency of ownership, pride and equal access, loss of public oversight of National Park decision making, and elimination of the legal right to participation in establishing the vision and direction of Park management by any citizen who chooses to exercise that right.

Commercial interests, and now mountain bikers, are determined to turn our National Parks into Disneyland replicas.

EPILOGUE:

There exists a last minute antidote to the mountain bike threat. It requires an awakening by citizens across North America, who have a right and responsibility to call for:

1) a moratorium or injunction prohibiting all mountain biking in all National Parks (as well as State and County Parks), Designated Wilderness Areas, Roadless Areas and Wildlife Refuges (mountain bike vehicle use on roads like other vehicles excepted).

This injunction should remain in place until:

2) any and all citizens who chose to be heard, are heard, via legally mandated public hearings held across the country, regarding whether Americans and Canadians are prepared to sacrifice a century long culture and tradition of National Park enjoyment, pride and ecological integrity for an activity that is inherently conflict driven and environmentally destructive, and

3) an independent assessment of the environmental, social, cultural and decision making impact of mountain biking on Public lands, with full public disclosure and comment periods, has been completed.

One thing is certain – we, the people, have been out maneuvered by political manipulation and betrayed by national and regional environmental groups flying the flag of stakeholders.

SOURCES:

[1] Parks Canada. 2010. *Parks Canada’s National Assessment of Mountain Biking. Meeting in Ottawa, Ont., March 23-25, 2010. From Canadian Environmental Network website, 03 March 2010.*

2 Prentice, J. 2010. *New recreational activities in national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. News release of 09 September 2010, Parks Canada, Ottawa.*

3. Gyurina, S. 2009. *Subject: Re: BikesBelong - assuming you know about this organization. E mail by SG, Dated Mon, 3 Aug 2009*

4. Sands, W. 2010. *Hermosa plan takes shape. October 214, 2010. The Durango Telegraph (CO).*

5 See Harris, P. B., and J. M. Houston. 2010. *Recklessness in context: Individual and situational correlates to aggressive driving. Environment and behavior 42(1): 44-60.*

6 *Medical Society of Metropolitan Portland. 2010. In Forest Park, biking and hiking don’t belong together. Published: Wednesday, June 30, 2010, In OregonLive, By the Board of directors.*

7 See Jacques, P. J., Dunlap, R. E., and M. Freeman. 2008. *The organisation of denial: Conservative think tanks and environmental scepticism. Environmental Politics 17(3):349-385, for an understanding of this agenda, its origins, and its drivers.*

8 Quinn, M., and G. Chernoff. 2010. Mountain biking: a review of the ecological effects. For Parks Canada, National Office. Mistakis Institute, Univ. of Calgary, Calgary, AB.

9 Medical Society of Metropolitan Portland. 2010. In Forest Park, biking and hiking don't belong together. Published: Wednesday, June 30, 2010, In OregonLive, by the Board of Directors.

10 Mountain bikers routinely argue that they use their vehicles as transportation, demanding that they be allowed to drive through natural areas, whether they be wilderness or National Parks, so they can go from town to town! See, for example, endnote 4.

11 The prospect of three and/ or four wheeled bikes, and bikes driven by electricity, are now only in the formative stage, but the expansion of facilities and services these glorified bikes will bring with them parallels that associated with the ballooning size of "off road" vehicles that now a) rival automobiles in width and size, b) have dramatically escalated environmental impacts, and c) have overwhelmed regulatory agencies!

12 Johnson, J. And Porter, K. 2010. Trail wars at Annadel State Park. The Press Democrat. Published: Monday, July 5, 2010 at 7:32 p.m. There are dozens of public reports of illegal behavior, regulatory violations and failure to regulate similar to those reported in this article.

13 Prentice, J. 2010. New recreational activities in national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. News release of 09 September 2010, Parks Canada, Ottawa. I suspect, and sincerely hope, that Minister Prentice did not make this assertion; that responsibility likely rests with a woefully under informed and/or seriously compromised Public Official.

14 See Ehrlich, P.R., and A. H. Ehrlich. 2010. The culture gap and its needed closures. International Journal of Environmental Studies 67(4):481-492.



Richard Helmke...
Glenwood Springs, CO
Steve Urycki...
Cuyahoga Falls, OH
Mary Anne Hoover, Ogden, UT
Mark & Karen Galleger
Clarke Abbey...Moab, UT

Janet Walther...San Diego, CA
Rick...Cheyenne, WY
Bruce Van Dyke..Sparks, NV
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Linda McCracken...Westport, CT
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Kevin Hedrick, Allston, MA
Michael Kossow..
Taylorsville, CA
David McCargo...
Anchorage, AK
BARBARA CHURCHILL...
Bethesda, MD
BILL LIPE...Moscow, ID

These are the noble BACKBONE members who didn't send a photo. But I am standing by ...pen in hand...JS

THE UN-TOONED BACKBONES



LIETIME BACKBONER

STEVE RUSSELL
Moab, UT



SANDY WOLFE
Questa, NM



ANDREW KEETON
from Mike Reed..
OKC, OK



John Tappon
Corvallis, Oregon

PAUL CLEARY
Tulsa, OK



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No Vacancy

Sorry, folks, but we're full up. No room at the inn you might say. We're tapped out, overgrazed, overbuilt and under-watered. It's a nice place to visit, I know, but I'm afraid you just can't live here. I'm talking about the Southwest of course.

The numbers are now in for the 2010 census and it seems that Nevada, Arizona and Utah are among the fastest growing states in the U.S. and have now surpassed the Midwest in population. Meanwhile, the source of most of our water, the Colorado River continues to flow far below historic levels. This scenario is the very picture of un-sustainability, yet too many of our new neighbors continue to believe that this type of growth can go on forever, that there is plenty for all and we can all get rich and live happily ever after here in Southwesternland. Nope. Not everyone can have a house in the country. Besides, a pink stucco box built within spitting distance of a hundred other pink stucco boxes is not country living no matter what lies the realtors tell. Major Powel knew this kind of growth in the Southwest was a bad idea a hundred years ago. Seems everyone admires Major Powel but nobody listens to him. It's still a bad idea. The Southwest actually needs a couple million or so less people to be even remotely sustainable. Take Phoenix. Please.

In fact, do me a favor, if you're one of those folks who really love the Southwest and are thinking about relocating down this way, could you think about it a little more? Think about that ugly, overcrowded city that you despise, that cookie-cutter development, that strip mall, that big-box-Chinese-crap-store and then imagine them superimposed onto those lovely Arizona Highways landscapes that you've been dreaming of. Then love it enough not to live here. It's not just you; it's all of us.

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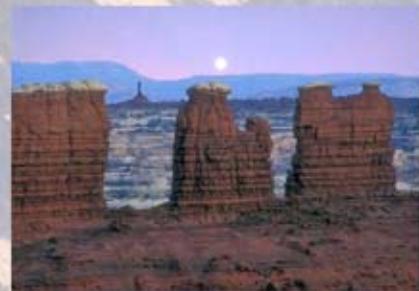


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LOSING SOLITUDE

By Martin Murie

TRESPASS

Red canyon walls ended abruptly. I stepped over sagging barbed wire into aspens and cottonwoods and came to a house in a clearing and a new corral made of freshly milled planks set on squared-off posts that had been treated with pentachlorophenol. A sorrel and two bays stood in the hot stink of the penta, looking me over. A raggedy, newly-planted lawn glowed like fresh paint on mud. An irrigation ditch diverted some of the canyon's lively creek to a hay field where a man was working with a shovel, irrigating. At the fence near him, a small motorbike.

I stopped in aspen shade for a while, ate a sandwich, went down the driveway to the county road. The irrigator noticed me, hurried to his bike and fired it up. We met at my pickup where he accused me of sneaking onto his place and then hiding. I explained that it had been necessary to cross his property line in order to ask permission to cross. Funny, eh?

No, not funny. He lectured me. Maybe it was different back east...he'd noticed my New York plates...but out here in the west, property rights are taken seriously. I told him Wyoming was my home state and I understood all of that very well.

He as much as called me a liar, then cooled a bit, shifted his anger to hunters, complained about the never-ending task of defending a small, private holding in a sea of public (Bureau of Land Management) land. We settled down to ordinary talk. I learned that the winter had been late in leaving, had been followed by drought; the alfalfa would be hardly worth cutting; too late to do much about that, not enough time for anything; life a constant commuting between town work that produced the real revenue, and the ranch. His wife held down a regular job too, and had her own pet project that took up too much of her time.

I drove away feeling sad. This couple, I wanted them to be getting a grand kick out of their privileged place. I wanted to imagine them saddling horses for a ride into wild mountains or rough desert. I wanted them to show off the place to friends, or even a casual drop-in. Tree shade and sounds of dashing water, aromas of cottonwood and aspen and sage, moon rising over redrock canyon. Get rid of those penta posts, quit trying to make a lawn in the desert. Enjoy!

Another day, another cattle range, the ranch house vacant, no one to ask for permission. I walked along the fenceline, trying to identify sparrow-like birds that were using fence posts as launching pads for forays against aerial insects. Returning, I met the rancher and confessed to trespass and birdwatching. Showing not the slightest resentment, or interest, he went into standard spiel against government and environmentalists. And prairie dogs, who were the ones responsible for overgrazing the range. I learned that he lived somewhere else, spent the winter in the sunbelt. Whether owner or renter, that rancher's identification with the land was minimal and his rant wasn't doing him much good.

Hey, is anybody happy out there? Anybody at home on the range?

Some public lands are hard to get to, sometimes impossible unless you cross private holdings. I look at those places longingly, sometimes I cross.

One July day, west of Independence Rock, I decided to not use up time finding a ranch headquarters for access permission, because the sun was way past noon. Not a good idea to get caught in strange terrain after dark. I walked a mile or so of livestock grazing to cross a broken-down boundary fence. The country rose, opening reluctantly. Brush, thick and tall, grew from niches in a style of rock outcrop that was monumental and unfamiliar. A few trees reared upward and outward from deep crevices. I found a stain of water on sun-glazed rock, and a pool that gathered that water in a slow faint dripping and that pool fed into another, partly shaded by rock overhang. The banks of those little oases were only inches wide, covered thickly by mosses and low plants I didn't know the names of.

I stayed for a while in water sounds so faint as to seem almost imagined. That's one kind of concentration. Another is the choosing of the next stretch of travel. Sometimes you get it wrong and backtrack and judge again. This way and that, you gain, maybe reach a summit ridge, maybe not. You find things, an animal

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trace to puzzle over, a stone whose shape or color makes you stop and pick it up, a weather-carved view across miles of rock upheavals and dry plains. Travelling like that is addictive. Is it acceptable, then, to take whatever means possible to satisfy the need? No, not if trespass means trashing your way through somebody's crop, or antagonizing their animals. Don't even ask the question, back off. Each situation is different. All I'm saying is that "No Trespass," or "Private Property" does not always end speculation.

One time, remembering grand sweeps of privately held prairie lands in Chase County, Kansas, I wrote that trespassing was my favorite way of travel. That was a bit of a stretch, careless writing; I wanted to toss a dart against bone deep reverence we're all supposed to feel toward property

and its rites of fee simple and lawyerly priestliness. Timber beasts and real estate barons use that reverence in their backlash against those of us who work to make enough habitat space for all of us beings, human and the others. I thought, and still think, that one of the big problems begging for solution is the problem of curvaceous lines of ecological domains vs the rectilinear lines of human priority. Various evasions of the Endangered Species Act...well documented...are interesting models of how those straight lines trump habitats of not only lowly snails and darters, but more respectable beings like lynxes, wild horses, wolves, grizzlies, eagles.

I once thought the solution was simple: abolish private property, hold everything in common. That was youthful enthusiasm grabbing grand abstractions, evading realities of my particular, somewhat peculiar, homeland, these United States of America.

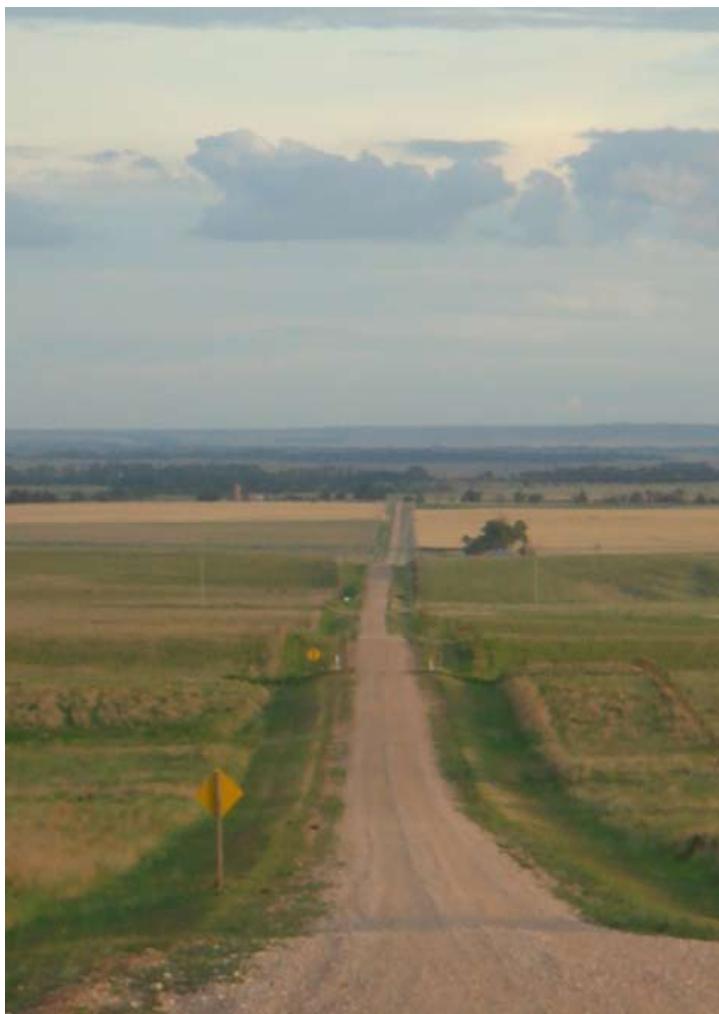
Reality, then, let's grab a handful. At one extreme families work and live on small land holdings...there are still some of those...and at the other extreme absentee zillionaires use land as a counter in big corporate games, or for tax dodge, trophy home, high-end recreation. Presidents and vice presidents play those games too. We're all obsessed with possessions, because that happens to be the way things are organized, in these times and on this continent. The more you possess in the way of objects or land or animals or

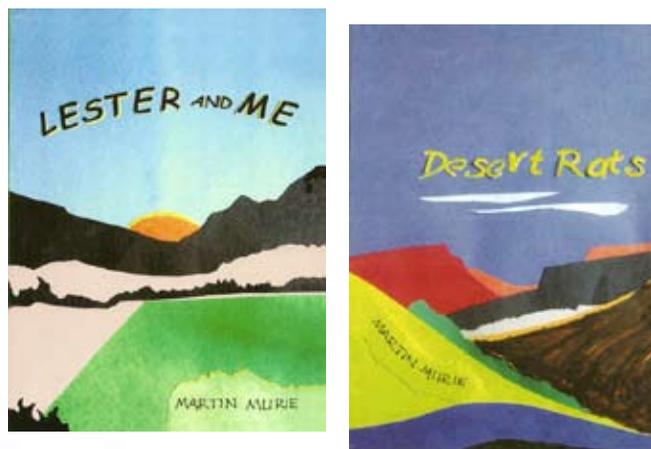
money, the greater your prestige and security and the good things a measure of security offers you and yours. The American Way, a distinctive culture, enfolds that obsession. We're all in on it. No one of us is free of it.

I remember an afternoon during what we now call "the first Gulf War," a few families gathered for food and sociability, one of the conversations turning to state intervention in land management, a landowner ranting, "I'm not about to let anybody tell me what I can do on my own land." About an hour later he and a friend, shotguns in hand, went rabbit hunting, with a parting thought for the rest of us: "Maybe we'll shoot an Iraqi."

I'm not saying that those two attitudes are directly connected, but I do think they signify two American character traits in these 21st century times: private ownership whose flip side is disdain for public responsibility, and a simple-minded nationalism that can't help but see other people in other lands like Iraq or Serbia or Korea as outsiders not blessed as we are with God's special attention.

Wendell Berry, an experienced and sensitive defender of private ownership, promotes "authentic cultural adaptation to local homelands." He believes that secure title to a patch of earth can nurture that authenticity, along with a sense of stewardship. But, he says, the human character also needs wilderness (e. g. an unused woodlot) to create "a practical deference toward things greater than itself." He calls this a "religious deference," ("Another Turn of the Crank," /Counterpoint,/ 1995).





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Question: Must every human outreach beyond self be tagged "religious"? Answer: No, religious loses authenticity when stretched that far.

Deference? Trouble there too, the word gives off a whiff of patriarchal condescension toward nature, an outsider's gesture.

Berry writes as an "uneasy believer in the right of private property," holding that therein lies hope for "intimacy in the use of the land." Is he implying that ownership is the only way toward intimacy with habitats? I hope not. Intimacy dwells in many places. Consider a farm worker tending grapes, apples, strawberries on someone else's land; or a herder from Peru in the mountains of Nevada with someone else's sheep; or a communications tech, diagnosing, repairing and modifying corporate-owned poles, cables, wires, terminals. These jobs are steady presences, intense dwellings on stubborn earth under changeable sky. Not that workers notice everything or even mull over every aspect of what happens, but owners don't do that either; they can't, being merely human. I hope that somewhere in his writings Berry acknowledges that a lifetime of authenticity can't take account of all that is there, and all that has been.

**I once thought the solution was simple:
abolish private property,
hold everything in common.
That was youthful enthusiasm grabbing
grand abstractions, evading realities of
my particular, somewhat peculiar, homeland,
these United States of America.**

Nature lovers, what about us and our pride in paying careful attention, noticing every little thing? Let's admit that we too move in limited awareness. Every species has its own abilities, and its own lacks, blind spots. No one has the big picture. No one can even say for sure that there is one big picture.

Luckily, human experiences tend to overlap; we are one species, after all; we can compare notes. Bruce Patterson, a former logger in redwood country, speaks to that:

"Maybe the environmental activist who could best share a campfire with an old time redwood logger would be young Julia Butterfly. If spending two years perched in a redwood tree has made Ms. Butterfly a bit crazy then the old timer could sympathize with that. And whatever tales she could tell of having witnessed 'magic' in the woods the old timer could match with stories of his own." (/Anderson Valley Advertiser/, 49/10).

And here's a different kind of overlap, trespass by beings other than human: "Because if you let the overall range of the spotted owl tell you where and on what kind of lands it could be found, or has historically been found, it covers private, corporate, state, county, and federal lands. And I would like to think of being able to provide for a species ...across different land ownerships and then guide the ownership goals such that they become one key focal goal." Bruce Marcot, biologist, quoted in Steven Yaffee, "The Wisdom of the Spotted Owl," Island Press, 1994.

These thoughts are not only things to contemplate, they offer ways to look beyond local and private worlds, to take seriously the other spirits and know-hows out there, and maybe, just maybe, build an alternative, a force of authority. I am choosing words with care. By "authority" I mean grassroots democratic majority that gathers authenticity only by sharing of views, taking account of diversity and disagreement. By "force" I mean prevalence against tyranny. A march in Washington, D.C. is a force. So is a union standing tall for its rights, or a spirited election campaign, even a voice crying in the wilderness listening for another.

In my small town we kids visited the back yards of saloons, and searched under their board sidewalks to collect beer bottle caps. We visited the same saloons

to gather whiskey and beer bottles to stock backyard spreads we called "bottle horse ranches." Whiskey flasks were the cattle, beer bottles the horses. We reveled in possession. And we wandered fields and meadows and mountains, knowing whose buck fence or barbed wire we climbed over or ducked under. There were times when we damaged someone's oats or hay or barley, or tangled with their dogs or horses or cattle, and got called down for it, learning at first hand about property rights. But there was that other right, the roaming right. Last year I talked with someone from those times. He reported that the big willow patch behind the old Skaggs grocery had been obliterated, replaced by upscale tourist traps. He has gained a calm acceptance, seems to be satisfied by nostalgia. I'm not.

Big outfits taking charge of homelands, happens all the time, trespass on a grand scale. Is that the way it's going to be? Peter Matthiessen, in his new book, /the Birds of Heaven/, claims to see a change. "The corporate world that dictates policies to the Western governments appears to be coming to its senses."

Sorry, that's a wrong reading of the scene. Remember that single-hulled tanker that went down off the coast of Spain, various ownerships involved, not one of them claiming responsibility? Do you see Anaconda and its offspring moving bigtime into Butte, Montana to do something about that toxic lake, formerly the biggest open pit copper mine in the world? In Navaho country is someone from the corporate world taking a decisive lead in safe disposal of radioactive waste? No, the corporate mentality coming to its senses would mean opting out of its role in the imperial reach of our country. They're not about to do that, they've been in charge for generations; too late now, retreat is out of the question. Rescue will have to come from elsewhere. Where's that? From the world's other superpower, the people.

Yes, I know, "the people" has been out of favor for quite some time, condemned on three counts, sentimentality, naivete, romanticism. And I know it tends to make some people grit teeth and growl. But there is a question that won't go away: where else is the countervailing power?

A little south by east of a certain sweep of western terrain there's a rugged valley bottom that you have to cross to reach federal (public) land. The place is overgrazed, cattle dominate, but the cattle there are Longhorns, wild critters who are prone to get up quickly and gather and stare with very thoughtful interest and then take off for higher ground in long-legged lopes. Those rangy critters have a certain style, even standing still, that sets them dramatically apart from other breeds, the stolid, beef-bound Herefords, Angus and the like. But wait, these are matters of body shape and manner and too easy to get off on a narrow track. Let me explain.

East of that longhorn stronghold, in sagebrush highlands, late in the day, I'm looking for a prairie dog town. I come to a gateway with a big sign that names a land-and-cattle corporation. "Violators prosecuted to the full extent..." I drive through, looking for a place where I can ask permission, but there are no headquarters buildings, no home base. Chartered sageland rolls on and on, high rises and deep falls of land. There's a passing into that loneliness you meet in wide open, un-fenced country. I keep driving, needing that dog town. (Found one later, just off I-80). I meet a small herd of cattle, Herefords, blocky and branded, but they're suspicious, been out here a long time on their own. They don't have the dull, seemingly hopeless quietude that takes over in a meat-processing feedlot. They have attitude. They get up and turn to face my pickup. One of them decides to take off, the others follow in that quirky gambol that's all their own, muscle action moving their hides that glow in sunset color, the sage in front of them seemingly endless, ownerships slipping away.

Once in a while I find boot tracks in snow or mud at the back end of "the property." I follow and get a sense of where they come from and where they're headed. Once the tracks were of a moose, a rare trespass. Sometimes fishers pass through, and coyotes and foxes. They live by scent and sight, hearing and touch, nerve and muscle.

Gaining Perspective...Volume 4

TWO YEARS IN THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

BY CHARLIE KOLB

03/03/2011

It is funny how I again find myself writing on the train. After my home visit at Christmas and my brief detour in Frankfurt, I have spent a large portion of these last two months in my high mountain village alone and trying to get through the winter. It has been intensely cold and, in the mornings, before dawn, even the air seems to have frozen during the night. When my living room heats during the day, tiny icicles shower down onto my head, and I occasionally have to break through a crystalline rime covering the basin in my bathroom.



Out in the village, the men spend much of their days outside, sitting in whatever café happens to be in the direct sunlight. Like a flock of migratory birds they move from one side of the street to the other; everyone wearing a jelaba (robe), including me. The women seem to be inside much of the time, so I see very little of them. But occasionally when I smell baking bread wafting from an ornately sculpted window, or watch the smoke trailing from kitchen chimneys in the early morning when I drink my coffee at sunrise, I know that they are in there working.

In many ways, this ancient society is set up in two spheres by necessity. To survive up here, it seems that two lives must be lived to maintain a single home. The women here are proud of the role they play in keeping their home running and the men are proud of their work and socializing outside the home. I am not saying that I agree with this separation of identities, and concrete assignation of roles, but I am saying that as a Peace Corps volunteer and single male in the Atlas, I very much feel as though I am living two lives. I have even gone so far as to schedule "village" and "home" days on my calendar, so I am able to devote equal time to both.



~ Winter is relinquishing its grip slowly but surely on the Atlas, the sun came out a week or so ago and allowed me the four hours necessary to do my laundry by hand on the roof. I came out of that day with a huge bundle of clean clothes and a matching set of abrasions on my knuckles. The following week, I went to the capital city of Rabat for a volunteer committee meeting. I took a 10 hour bus from my market town of Rich; transport here has become so easy now that I hardly even think about it anymore. I just go with the flow and hope that I arrive at my destination at some point. Occasionally I find myself at the wrong destination entirely, but that doesn't particularly bother me either. I can always backtrack.

Today is an auspicious day in my life as a Peace Corps Volunteer, it is the one year anniversary of my arrival in this country. One year ago today, I staggered down onto the runway at the Mohammed V airport in Casablanca. The pavement was wet from a recent rain, and the weak morning sunlight barely illuminated



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the swaying palms that stood in a row before the terminal. I was tired, confused, and apprehensive; not to mention surrounded by people who felt the same way. We were facing the unknown, my colleagues and I; twenty-six months in Morocco lay before us and that fact gave us pause. We came from all walks of life, from all over the country. We all had differing notions on what brought us here to Morocco, and what we expected from the country and from ourselves.

I can't remember what I expected of this place; that memory has faded as time has gone by. I know that I certainly expected much more hostility toward me as an American from the people here, but I quickly learned that expectation was simply born of fears seeded by a sensationalist media, theirs and ours. The people who surrounded me, who took me in, and who cared for me and still do---these people were no different from you or me, and ultimately I began to see more similarities between our cultures than differences. Though there were still enough differences to ensure a steep learning curve indeed. I had to relearn most aspects of my life; from how to speak and how to eat, to how to clean myself and use the bathroom. I do my laundry by hand and all my own cooking. Eating out is a rare pleasure that only happens in cities. But though the trail has been rocky and the way steep, the benefits far outweigh the difficulties. Part of what I have gained from my experiences of the past year is a deeper understanding of the world as a whole and how we as humans relate to each other globally. I have gained a new respect and understanding of my own culture and have come to realize just how unique America is. We have an amazing amount of freedoms. I also have gained a deeper understanding of myself; who I am and what I want.

I am able to travel confidently, communicate effectively across language barriers, and am more at ease overall than I have ever been. I have found solace in my solitude and have come to treasure the days, weeks, and months spent in my high mountain aerie. I have found beauty even in these harsh and desolate

mountains and have even come to love them as though they were my own Southwest.

More experienced volunteers, many who have trained, mentored, and supported me over the last year, have completed their service and moved on with their lives. They are now in graduate school and easing themselves back into "reality"; but is it any more real than here? Morocco is so raw and vital; each day holds a wealth of experience. A wave of sights, sounds, and smells assails me whenever I go anywhere, and my world is a mixture of 3000 years of tradition and a few decades of modernity. I have come to love olives and dates, and find myself craving cumin at strange times. The speed and opulence of American life has lost its appeal to me and I have fallen in love with the slow, steady pace of life in the mountains.

I find myself wanting nothing more from my life than to be still and to write. To be surrounded by vast silence and warm sun under an endless sky. This love of simplicity has always been present in me, but it has been sharpened and refined by the past year spent here.

~ I have spent the past few days with my friends in Casablanca, the same wonderful people I spent time with over Thanksgiving. Though I found myself again admiring the opulence of their home and enjoying the wonderful food they provided; more and more I found myself enjoying their company and insight rather than simply reveling in the creature comforts that surrounded me. I would have been just as happy cooking them dinner in my concrete hut. That said, I certainly cherish my time spent there, playing with the dogs, talking and laughing about things familiar to me; things from my past life. In their home, I feel that I am not just Charlie the Peace Corps Volunteer, which is how most of my friends here know me, I think they see more of the big picture of my life, and our conversations inspire, challenge, and convict me. Good friends and mentors are that way.

Later, I found myself in the Ancient Medina (old imperial city) of Fes; legend has it that the city's name comes from the old Arabic word for "pickaxe," because of a golden pickaxe that was unearthed here by the first settlers of this valley. How true this may be, I am unsure; but I am happy with the name because of how easy it is to pronounce, as opposed to, say, "Ouarzazate".

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Spring is in full flower here in Fes, everything is green and the hillsides are covered in shimmering silver olive trees. Birds are everywhere and house buntings flit in and out of the earthen homes and riyadhs of the medina. The storks have returned to their towering nests on the mosque minarets, and clouds of white egrets glide in from the river at sundown. My hotel is a "no frills" affair, consisting of a bed on a wire frame covered in sheets so threadbare that the mattress is visible through them. My bathroom is a Turkish toilet shared with the entire floor. Somehow, a year in, this doesn't bother me and the view from the roof more than makes up for it. It overlooks the "great tannery gate", or the Bab Boujaloud in Arabic, a massive crenellated archway covered in blue and green tile. People bustle in and out of the arch and the medina stretches away into the distance, a vista of flat roofs and minarets all covered in satellite dishes which I have heard referred to as "the flower that blooms in peacetime".

Navigating the medina for the first time since my return trip from the states, I found that my Arabic has improved to the extent that I can carry on a simple conversation and banter with locals, as well as repel guides, which are everywhere here and very persistent. Fes is a city of simple pleasures, cappuccinos on quiet rooftops and music drifting in from every direction. There are always English speakers to be found here, in the form of tourists or other volunteers passing through. Speaking English is a pleasure in itself. It is easy to forget the harshness of my village here, surrounded by comforts and the greenery of spring. But I need to go back home, a week is far too long away; although I would have welcomed it just a few short months ago.

On the bus ride south toward my village, I felt the air grow cold again as the trees disappeared and the horizon became hazy with dust blown in on a storm from the Sahara. At a stopping point, I sighed realizing that I had to again put on my long underwear, my second skin, and shrug on my heavy coat. I caught a transit twenty minutes after arriving in my souq town of Rich and after another three hours of cramped and smelly travel I was home.



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~ Easing back into my routine over the past couple of days has been a pleasure, with its early morning wake ups and rooftop coffee drinking. My mailbox was full of month-late Valentines day cards which I read in my study next to the heater. The time not spent drinking tea in the village or shopping for food is spent here in my study, usually reading. I recently finished "the Sea Wolf" by Jack London, the 32nd book I have read since my arrival. I am hoping to make it to 100.

I have work now too, the potential to teach Environmental Education at the local middle school, as well as a trail building project in the nearby national park, but more on that later. My good friends on the mountain, volunteers from the previous staging group, finish their service in April. While I will be sad to see them go, it will be exciting to train their replacements and introduce the new volunteers to the wonders of the Eastern High Atlas. Hopefully they will love this place as much as I do.

When I think of how much the previous volunteers helped me through the difficult patches of this first year, and there have been many, I realize just how difficult it will be to suddenly go from the role of student to teacher. But I feel that I am ready.

In the next few months, I will watch the bands of snow recede from the mountains above the village. The apple trees will soon be in flower and the bone-white poplars will again be green with new leaves. I look forward to long days of shafting sunlight and the sudden violence of summer storms that blow in from the north. I will again fast for Ramadan when it comes in late summer, and will better be able to enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship that exists from an entire country going nocturnal. I am excited for another fall and spring, and even a second winter. I can look forward to all of this because I have experienced it once before, and therein lies the joy of the second year here in Morocco.

"The views and opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not reflect the views or opinions of the U.S. Government"

CHARLIE KOLB is almost a native Coloradan, and has worked as a seasonal ranger for the National Park Service, but will be working with the Peace Corps until 2012.

*The Zephyr looks forward to sharing-regular reports from Charlie.
You can also follow him via his blogs:*

<http://charlieofmorocco.blogspot.com>

<http://wind-water-stone.blogspot.com>

CENSUS 2010: De-bunking the Headlines

By Kathleene Parker

The United States recently updated its census. But—considering corporate media’s and the government’s seemingly deliberate efforts to distort the results, and considering that our booming population continues as the unacknowledged elephant in the room—I wonder why we even bothered.

When the first census was done in 1790, our population was roughly 4 million. But when the outcome of the 2010 census was announced, the astounding new population total was barely mentioned or, when it was, its context was ignored, so that no one understood the significance of the 307 million Americans, likely more, we have become. (Some estimate the number at closer to 320 million.)

Nor were we helped to understand one of the best-kept secrets of our time: That only three nations—China, India and the United States, in that order—have populations over 300 million. (Indonesia at 230 million is a distant fourth.)

Meanwhile, the United States is the world’s fourth fastest growing nation! In other words, we’re not only a high-carbon, high-impact economy, we’re a global population super-giant. And, the drought-plagued American Southwest is the fastest growing region of this, the world’s fourth fastest growing nation!

with populations over one billion—also becoming big-time consumers and highly industrialized that dubious distinction falters, but we’re still a major global population player. We—and the world—deserve for us to have a candid national discussion of “where we are growing” and whether that is what we Americans want for our children’s futures.

(Some scientific estimates indicate that one American has the environmental impact of 10 to 30 citizens from a developing nation, depending upon what developing nation and the specific American lifestyle—say a trophy house versus a humble suburban cottage. Sadly, in the United States, even those with a “green” lifestyle have a huge carbon and general environmental footprint compared with that in many non-industrial cultures.)

United States growth is linked to both immigration at the highest rate, by large margins, in our history and, despite media depictions to the contrary, a rising birthrate. (In contrast, most other developed nations have below-replacement-level birth rates.)

Our numbers explode to the extent that we could easily be a China-like one billion Americans this century, a fact it seems, studiously ignored—even deliberately hidden—by Big Media.



When will the American people be allowed full disclosure about our exploding population or the implications to the planet?



After the census, there were the much-ballyhooed and correct—but appallingly misleading—headlines that 2000 to 2010 brought “some of the slowest growth in decades.” In fact, recent growth slowed only slightly while we continue a decades-long population explosion.

Our numbers explode to the extent that we could easily be a China-like one billion Americans this century, a fact it seems, studiously ignored—even deliberately hidden—by Big Media. Of note, since 1950 our growth rate has exactly matched India’s a century earlier, a pattern that shows every indication of continuing—with an almost identical demographic outcome!

But since media reports imply the opposite, we are, in the word of Colorado population activist Dr. Al Bartlett, “innumerate”—which is to numbers what “illiterate” is to words. It seems that even the truth—and perhaps the planet—are to be sacrificed in the name of continuing our population growth! (More on those economic forces in a future column.)

When will the American people be allowed full disclosure about our exploding population or the implications to the planet? After all, Bangladesh’s overpopulation is a huge problem for Bangladesh, but—except for it being a breeding ground for terrorist extremism—it is of little consequence to the world. But U.S. overpopulation, with its huge and growing carbon and environmental footprint, is a global problem!

Sierra Club director Carl Pope—back when the Sierra Club still considered population a component of carrying capacity—in the early 1990s called the United States “the world’s most overpopulated nation.” With China and India—each

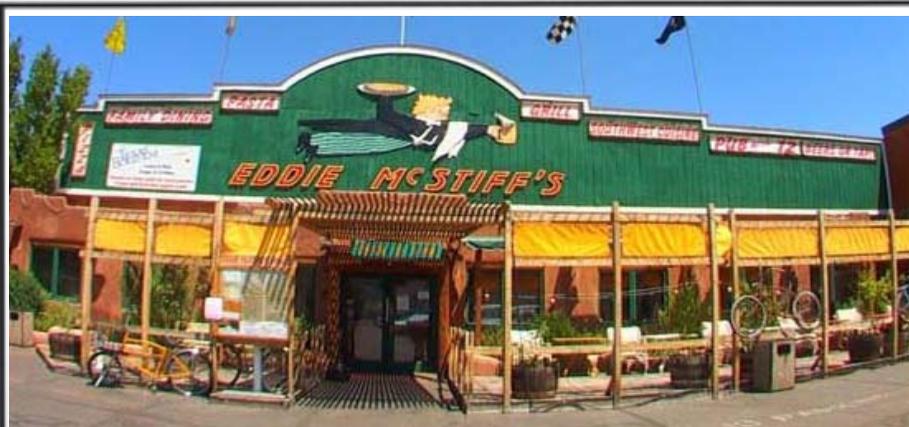
The media are fond of saying, “We are a nation of immigrants.” True, but we are also a nation that—with two exceptions—tightly controlled immigration. (Founders Jefferson, Franklin and Washington opposed immigration or raised deep concerns, for reasons apropos to their times, and forged policies of tight immigration.)

The previous immigration highs were “the Great Wave” between 1880 and 1920. Today there is what I call “the Great Tsunami of Immigration,” beginning about 1990 and continuing.

For perspective, in the 60 years between 1860 and 1920 only 25 million immigrants were admitted. In contrast, in just six years between 2000 and 2006, over 20 million arrived! During the frontier-era Great Wave—when urban sprawl, water shortages, crumbling infrastructure, a gripping recession with high unemployment or global environmental degradation were not problems—on average about 600,000 legal immigrants a year were admitted.

But even that was not without controversy, partly because powerful economic forces (the “robber barons”) wanted a flooded labor market to keep labor helpless against exploitation. Lost on many today is that the current immigration debate has happened before in our history. Just a century ago, we were having a heated discussion similar to our current one. (I say “similar” because, unlike today, liberals, civil-rights advocates and labor advocates then stood mostly on the side of restricting immigration and the discussion aligned along a labor-versus-business demarcation. More on that in a future column.)

But Congress eventually had no choice but to halt the Great Wave. Immigra-



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tion was slashed to under 250,000 a year beginning in 1920, an average that held through 1965—not coincidentally a time, despite the Great Depression, of huge labor advancement and the civil rights movement. (During the Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt and others insisted that immigration be kept below 10,000 a year, despite the humanitarian crisis in Europe, a difficult but necessary stand given a nation teetering on the brink of disaster.)

In contrast, immigration during the today's Great Tsunami averages 700,000 legal immigrants. That is at five times historical averages and is the highest rate in our history with almost as many arriving in one year as all immigration between 1776 and 1826. An estimated half-million additional people arrive each year via illegal border crossings. That translate to 1.2 million added to our population each year just from immigration, with most arriving from less industrial, less high-impact cultures to become part of the most high-consumption, destructive economies in world history!

United States growth is linked to both immigration at the highest rate, by large margins, in our history and, despite media depictions to the contrary, a rising birthrate.

Immigration was slashed to under 250,000 a year beginning in 1920, an average that held through 1965—not coincidentally a time, despite the Great Depression, of huge labor advancement and the civil rights movement.

The other growth source is births. The media hype a basically replacement-level birth rate of about 2.1 children per woman, albeit up from a low of 1.7 in the 1970s. Again, strictly speaking, true, but absolutely ignoring a staggering demographic force called momentum.

Put as simply as possible, it means that while each woman is having fewer children, more women than ever are of reproductive age and are having children, meaning a high annual birth rate! That's a trend common in all rapidly growing nations and it means that it can take decades, after achieving a replacement-level birth rate, for population to stabilize.

As a result—and absolutely lost on the media—more babies, 4,317,000, were born in 2007—than during the 1957 peak of the baby boom! Over 4 million babies continue to arrive each year. Subtract roughly 2.4 million deaths and the upshot is that births add just under 2 million to our population each year, while immigration adds 1.2 million.

Each year the nation adds another 3 million high-impact, high-carbon, high-consumption Americans with global and domestic implications of staggering—and undisguised—proportions.

(Parker, a journalist, publisher and longtime environmental and population activist is a native of the Four Corners area. She earlier served on the national Population Issues Committee of the Sierra Club and currently sits on the Board of Advisors of Population-Environment Balance. She often writes nationally about population and water issues. During her lifetime, she has seen cities, such as Las Vegas, Phoenix and Denver, grow from populations of tens of thousands to millions. She lives in the Albuquerque suburb of Rio Rancho.)



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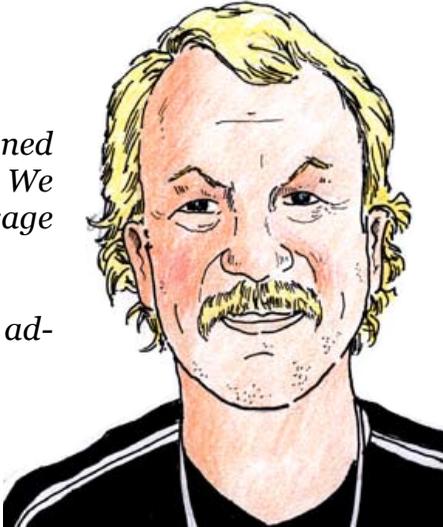
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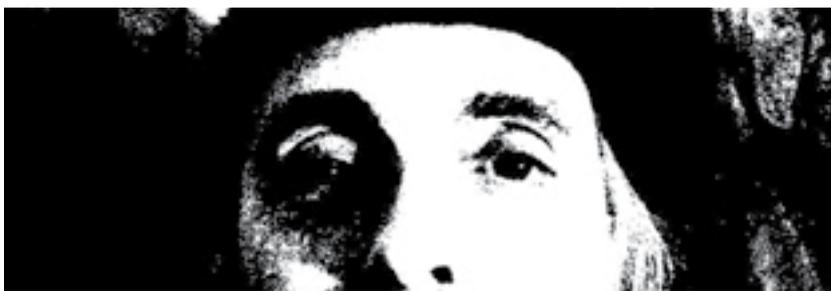
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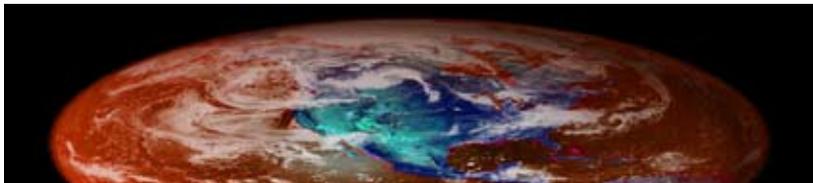
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America's population center is edging away from the Midwest, pulled by Hispanic growth in the Southwest, according to census figures.

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"unrecognizable" world by 2050

WASHINGTON (AFP) – A growing, more affluent population competing for ever scarcer resources could make for an "unrecognizable" world by 2050, researchers warned at a major US science conference Sunday.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20110220/ts_afp/scienceuspopulationfood

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MOSCOW (Reuters) - Does the sun revolve around the Earth? One in every three Russians thinks so, a spokeswoman for state pollster VstIOM said on Friday.

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"Sperm quality significantly deteriorated and testicular cancers increased over recent years, a Finnish study says. The study in the International Journal of Andrology looked at men born between 1979 and 1987.

The University of Turku research suggests environmental reasons, particularly exposure to industrial chemicals, may be behind both trends. A UK expert said chemicals may affect the development of male babies." BBC News



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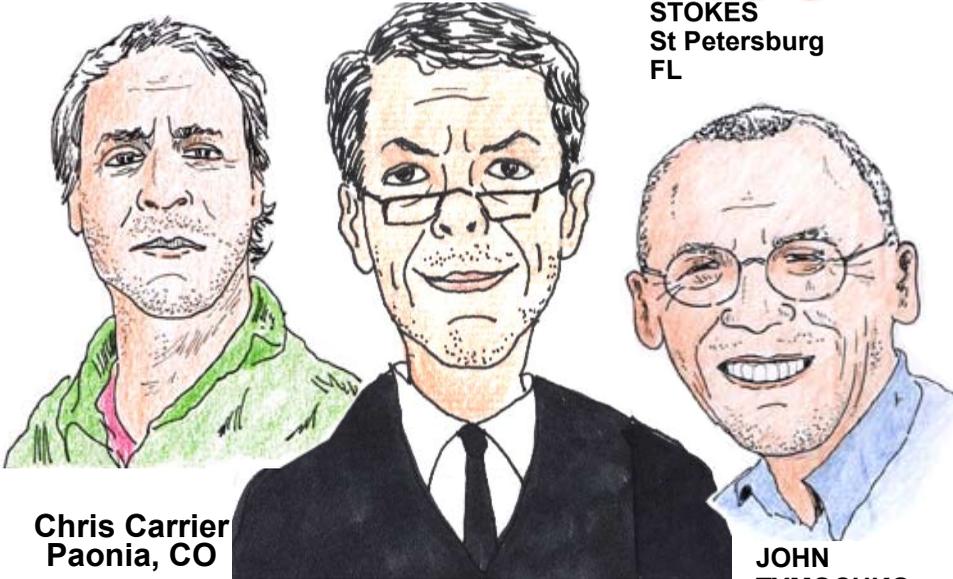
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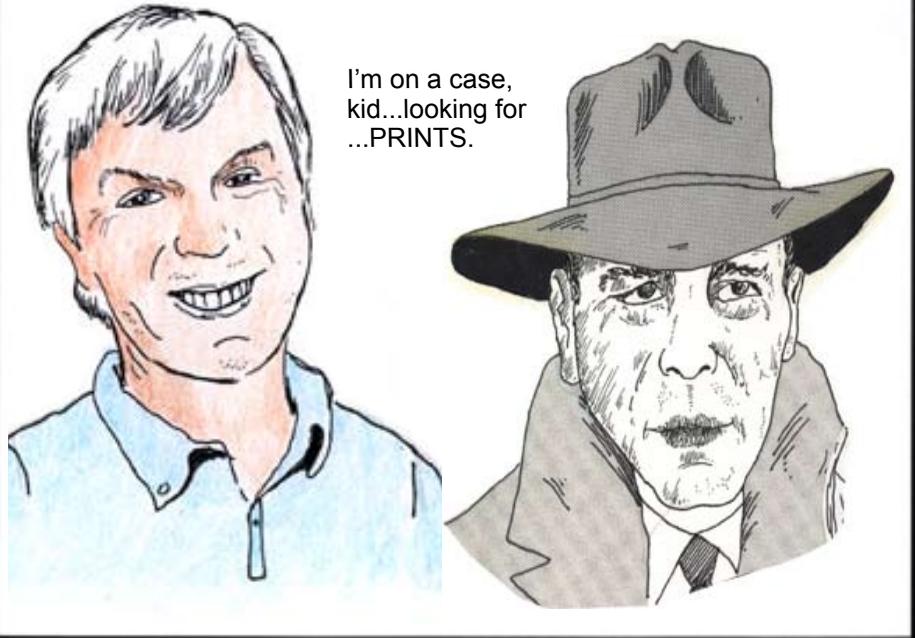
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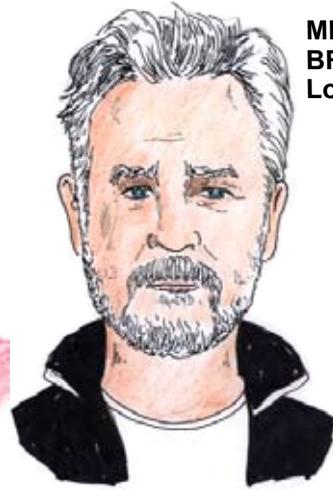
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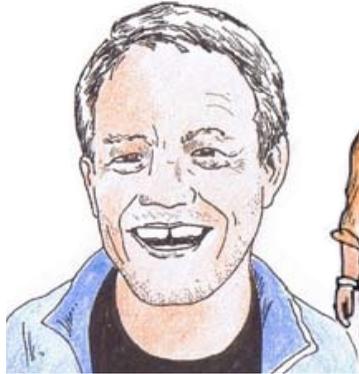
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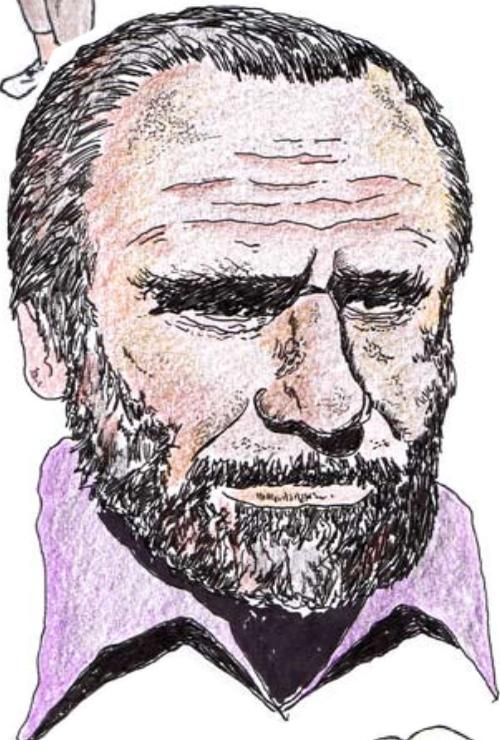
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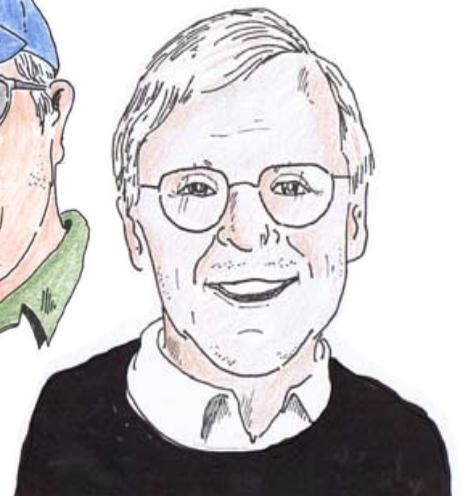
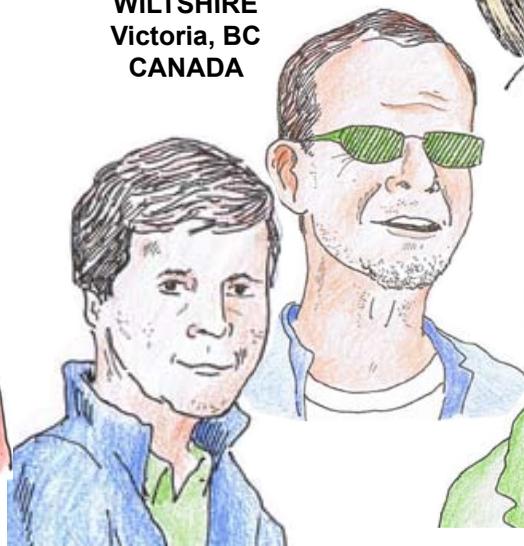
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From “YOUNG at HEART”: LES PAUL

By Anne Snowden Crosman

At 88, he is a pop music icon. Decades ago, Les invented the electric guitar and still plays weekly to standing-room-only crowds.

Every Monday night, he drives into New York City and takes the stage at the Iridium, a Broadway nightclub. He and his trio— “kids half my age,” he jokes— play two sets of mellow, jazzy music, including his signature piece, “How High the Moon.”

The fans love his intricate improvisations. Between sets, they line up for autographs, which he signs enthusiastically, on napkins and items presented to him: postcards, photos, sheet music, record albums, even a T-shirt worn by a comely young woman.

**Born: June 9, 1915,
Waukesha, WI**
**Profession: Musician, song
writer, inventor**
Home: Mahwah, NJ

A consummate gentleman, Les asks her to turn around and signs his name on her back. They both laugh.

“Hey, how’re you doing?” he gives a hearty handshake to a German tourist. “What kind of guitar do you play?” The young man, clearly thrilled, replies, “A Les Paul electric.” Les smiles warmly. “Gee, that’s nice. Enjoy it.”

He jokes and banters with the crowd during sets. “You want to hear THAT old tune?” he laughs. Then he invites anyone to come on stage and perform a piece. “You’re something else!” he tells a young man after his lively guitar rock number.

“I’d hate to follow your act.” The youth blushes and grins.

After the show, Les invites me to his tiny dressing room.

He sips beer from a bottle, leans back in his chair, and asks me about myself and the book. We have a mutual friend and an interest in music, so talk comes easily. I say I’ve always enjoyed his music. He laughs in appreciation.

“I can’t express how much I look forward to WORKING every week,” he says. “I can’t express how much my trio means to me. They are so much younger than I am! The bass player is quite young and the guitar player is half my age. We all look forward to Monday night. It’s almost like we’re being GIVEN something, rather than working a job.”

Quiet and well-spoken, Les is a slight man with fair skin, freckles, and light blue eyes that dance when he gets excited.

Wispy red hair combed straight back gives him an elfish look.

He wears a royal blue turtleneck and pressed, faded jeans.

“I never at one moment EVER stopped being grateful for all the people who like what I’ve done, or like me or my music,” he goes on. “I love to be with the people. I love to hear their negative comments or their constructive criticisms. I LOOK for ’em.

“Yes, I look for ’em!” he says. “My son Les, Jr. is my engineer. He videotapes each set and I watch the videos at home.

Every week I come down here and say, ‘I’m gonna try again. I didn’t get it right last week, so I’m down here this week to get it right.’ And I enjoy it.”

He plays guitar despite gnarled fingers. Diagnosed with arthritis 20 years ago, he despaired of ever playing again. Then he hit on a new method.

“I jam the pick between two fingers of my right hand,” he demonstrates. “Then I use two, not the usual four fingers, on my left hand. Those two left fingers are my only good fingers now. In some ways, I play better than when I had use of all my fingers.”

He looks up and shrugs his skinny shoulders. Les also survived advanced heart disease. In 1980, he had quintuple-bypass surgery, a new technique at the time. On doctor’s orders, he stopped smoking and drinking. He radically changed his

diet and started to exercise. By the time he went for a post-surgery checkup, he’d lost 45 pounds.

“My doctor didn’t recognize me,” he laughs. “He really didn’t know me! I’ve kept to that health plan.”

Les did one more thing. Before he left the hospital, he made a list with two columns, labelled “positive” and “negative.”

He asked himself, “Where am I happiest? With all the different hats I wear, where am I happiest? And I was surprised to find out it was playing in nightclubs.

“NOT playing for presidents, or the Queen of England, or 50,000 people at a slug,” he tells me. “Those were not the important things. It’s playing in an intimate little nightclub, like this one, that I’m the happiest. I like playing the guitar with the real people, the rock people who have been loyal fans, the newcomers, and people coming in from different countries.”

Many fans are Japanese, who have followed his career and collected all his records and CDs. They tell him so when they shake his hand. Before the Iridium gig, Les played at Fat Tuesday’s downtown every Monday for eleven years. He loves his schedule.

“It gives me time to do creative work at home the rest of the week,” he says. He practices and experiments in a state-of-the-art studio that he built.

Where do you get this zest for life? I ask.

“Mother lived to be 101 1/2,” he says promptly. “She had all the get-up-and-go, all the energy, UNBELIEVABLE energy. When she had her one hundredth birthday party, she leaned over to me and said, ‘Lester, do I still have my marbles?’ Ha! I said, ‘Yep, you’ve got ’em, Mom.’ She was just sharp as a tack, just like a lawyer. So quick.

“I was always very enthusiastic about most everything I got into,” he continues. “I had to know why, when you throw the switch, that light LIGHTS! It’s a curiosity. It’s a curiosity where you not only want to know, but you CAN.”

Do you want to live to be 101 1/2, too? I ask.

“Absolutely,” he says, without hesitation. If you have all your marbles, I add.

“If I have all my marbles,” he laughs, “and if I’m enjoying myself fine. If it so be that things aren’t that fortunate, then I would like to check out. I don’t see any sense in being around if it’s just lingering on.” He sips his beer.

“I feel like a million bucks, better than I did before the surgery. I feel young, I feel real young. I smoked five packs of cigarettes a day for ten years, from the age of 65 to 75. I stopped that after the bypass. I stopped drinking. I’ll drink a little now, I allow myself two beers a week. I went on the Pritiken Diet. I’m very careful not to wander off on some flaky diet. I eat oatmeal, and a lot of popcorn! No saturated fats,” he says crisply.

What about plastic surgery? I ask.

“I don’t believe in it,” he says. “I think that if the body is growing old, your face should go with it. I think the whole body should grow old together.” He smiles at me, eyes flashing.

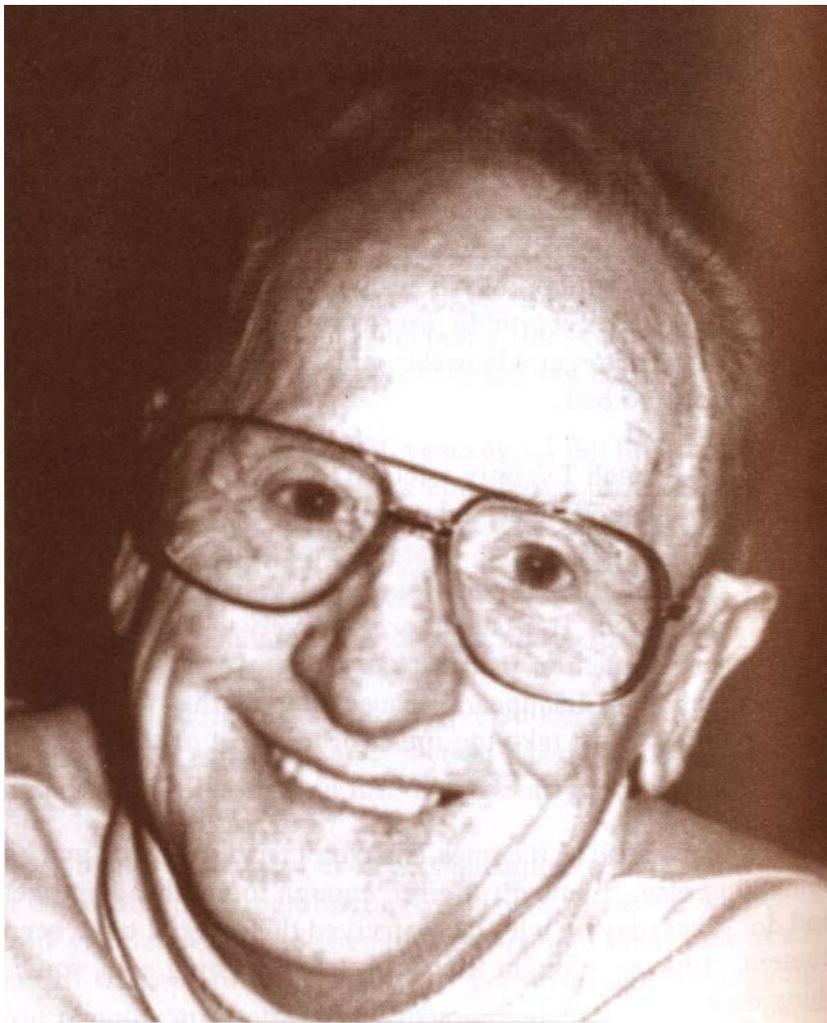
Les is rarely idle. He needs only five hours of sleep every night, sometimes less. “Just this last week I didn’t sleep for two days, be-

cause I was busy,” he says nonchalantly. “At home, I’m building a second recording studio, writing my memoirs, and always practicing to keep up my musical skills.

“I surround myself with young guys like Jimmy Page, Billy Joel, and George Benson,” he explains. “I’m in a studio with all young players. I’ve done a country album, a jazz album, a rock ‘n’ roll album, and a blues album. They’re all with young guys, except the jazz album.

“I learn from the young guys,” he says excitedly. “I learn from my son Les, Jr. He’s divorced, has three children, but lives with me. He’ll ask me something, some advice, and I’ll take a deep breath. Because I want to tell him, ‘Look, I tried that 40 years ago, it don’t work.’ But it will work NOW, see, because he does it a little different.”

His passion for work can take over, and Les has to watch it. “I get terribly busy, which is selfish,” he admits. “Which is selfish,” he repeats gently.



Does your current lady love understand?

"Oh, I make sure she understands," he replies, not unkindly.

"We've been together 20 years. She understands."

Arlene is a little younger than Les and lives down the street from him. "She has a home and I have my home and we just see each other," he says. "Never get married! Never get married. It spoils everything."

He and Arlene like to take motor trips, often spontaneous.

"Once we drove to the Pennsylvania Amish country. It was a beautiful autumn day and we stopped to get some food at a store and have a picnic by the highway." He warms to his story.

At 88, he is a pop music icon. Decades ago, Les Paul invented the electric guitar and still plays weekly to standing-room-only crowds.

"We saw a young Amish guy, this red-faced, healthy looking young person, trying to make out with a little Amish girl." He grins. "We saw these young people all jump into a car. All the rules they make—these kids were breaking them."

He laughs delightedly.

"Another time we were on a trip and all of a sudden, I said to her, 'Hey, I need to get my exercise.' I walk a lot and ride a bike three or four times a week.

I said, 'I'll tell you what. I'll take my walkie-talkie with me and I'll talk to you.'

"She let me walk two miles. A trucker came by and said, 'Can I help you? You got a problem?' I said, 'No, I don't have a problem, I'm just out hiking.' Then another person stopped, because she got the car parked two miles down the road and she was sitting there. 'Do you need help?' he asked. 'No, I'm fine, thank you,' she said. That's what we do. We have a wonderful time.

"If you're lucky enough to find somebody, you can share and enjoy yourself and be happy around 'em. You can benefit by your life in the past, too, and do the things that you didn't do. If you're fortunate enough to figure that out, you can actually be terribly happy." He leans back and takes another sip of beer.

So love and sex exist in old age? I ask.

"They're anything but over. As of last night, anyway," he laughs lightly. "I'll tell you something about love. My late wife Mary told me once that she was stunned at how many things came to my mind and were successful, whether it was writing a song or inventing something. 'Where in the world do these things come from?' she asked me.

"I thought about it perhaps two seconds and just blurted out, 'First you have to be in love. And second, you'd better believe in God.' And that's the truth," he says firmly.

"Being in love is a lot more than having someone around to sew a button on your shirt. I had a girlfriend that I used to hang out with, and we had two things that she just didn't understand. One was that pride was almost a disease. It's something that you have to be careful about, because pride is not always beneficial.

"The other thing was sharing. There's SO much in sharing," he says.

"Yeah, hang onto love, because love is important. You can love your work and you can love your partner. You can love your parents. There are SO many things.

You can love music. You know, love is quite a word."

He grows pensive. Is love more valuable as you grow older? I ask.

"Sure, because you appreciate it more," he replies. "You don't know where you're going after you die. And I wish some son-of-a-bitch would come back and tell me!" He laughs. "But nobody comes back, you know." He wags his head at me.

"Although," he adds mischievously, "I beg God, Whoever, to let me come back and finish my job. You have so much to do and so little time to do it in. The days aren't long enough! Time seems to pass faster as I get older. I don't know why, it just does," he says softly.

He's not afraid of death. "When the time comes, I doubt if we're going to the pearly gate up there," he says. "I doubt that God's going to be sitting there, and that I'm going to have to meet some people that I'm so glad NEVER to see again. I don't think so!

"I do believe in a supreme being or power," he goes on.

"Einstein did. And Edison did. I believe everybody has to say, 'Hey, this much you know for sure: it started with NOTHING.

Who made nothing and then put something in it?" He stares into space and falls quiet.

Les doesn't go to church, but prays privately and often gives thanks. It's part of life, he says. "I never ask God for help, but I'm always thanking Him for what I've got. I don't ask Him to help so the Yankees will win or something like that," he says quickly. "Although I was at a Catholic hospital once in Pittsburgh," he chuckles. "And the nuns were praying for the Pittsburgh Pirates to win. I told them, 'I'm a Yankees fan and you have the edge on me. I have to go around the hard way, you know?' But then the Yankees won! That was something."



"I like playing the guitar with the real people, the rock people who have been loyal fans, the newcomers, and people coming in from different countries."

Les has cheated death more than once. "I had a bad car accident back in 1948," he recounts. "My chances of living were nil. Walter Winchell went on the air, saying I wasn't gonna make it. Others said I wasn't gonna make it. It didn't look good. At one point, I knew that I had a choice of letting go. My fingernails were hanging on the outside of the Empire State Building, and I said, 'All I've got to do is let go—and it's over.'

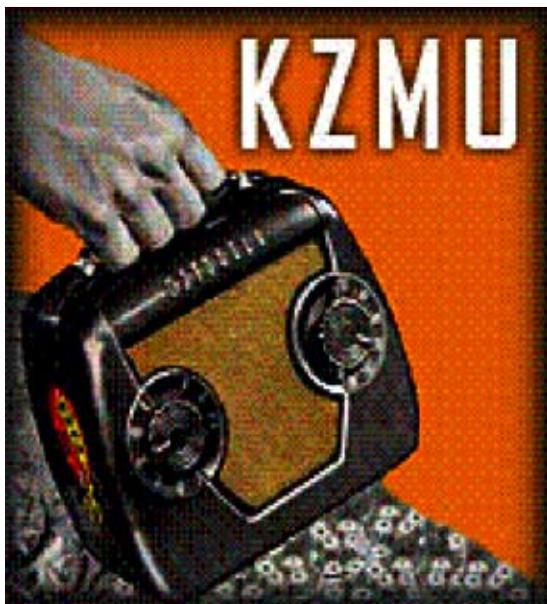
"Well, I didn't. I chose to fight." His face assumes a bulldog look.

"It's terribly important for a person, especially an older person, to want to live their life the most productive and happy they can. You've GOT to have a positive attitude. And you've got to be grateful for what you have, okay?" He raises his eyebrows.

"You've got to thank God for what you've got and quit complaining about what's wrong. If you don't believe in God, then thank WHOEVER."

Les acknowledges his old-age problems. "You live with 'em," he says briefly. "I have about a million of them! I wear a hearing aid. I take anti-inflammatory medicine for arthritis. I take a pill for gout, one for blood pressure, and I take

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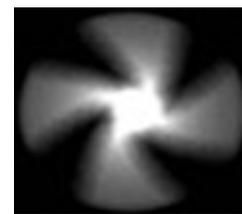


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LES PAUL...continued

aspirin. There are days when you just feel extra, extra good."

His eyes flash and he smiles broadly.

"Most of the time it's hard to beat me down, because in about two minutes, I'm up fightin' again!"

That bulldog look returns. He tells me that he was a serious child. At nine, he decided he wanted to be a musician and mapped out a career. At eleven, he began studying guitar. He persuaded his school principal to advance him two grades at a time and he attended summer school.

By 13, he had acquired the equivalent of a high school education. He left home to take a radio job, moved to New York, then to Hollywood, where his career took off. He wrote lyrics, composed music, invented the technique of over-dubbing, played nightclubs, and made records and movies with his wife Mary.



"Being happy is not having nine of everything," he goes on enthusiastically. "It's not having four cars in the driveway."

"I said to Mary once, 'Work is the most helpful equalizer in the world.' I'm a worker. So was she."

Les shakes his head sadly. Their marriage ended after 14 years.

"She said she couldn't keep doing the very hard work, the strain of singing and performing, the strain that especially a female can be under. It's very tough," he says softly.

"It means you have to look right, ALWAYS. You have to climb four flights of stairs at 6 o'clock in the morning, with no rest. You have to forfeit so much and have to give so much, just to stay on top. It's rough for any female. It's tough for a male.

"We had five children, four are still living, and five grandchildren. All of them live nearby," he says. "They come to see me perform. I wish they'd come more often to the house for holidays. It's hard for my children even to get the wives

together. In the old days, it was sort of an unwritten rule. I'm very old-fashioned that way."

Mary and Les stayed close friends until she died in 1977. He retired for ten years, but got bored and returned to music at age 65.

"It's the best thing I ever did, because it kept me alive and perking, in touch with young people. There are some great young players out there. I don't always agree with their new music, but young people have to have artistic freedom, the freedom to choose their own music."

Most of the young people he meets impress him. "Very few people you interview stress this point," he sits up in his chair and jabs a finger at me. "About how much GOOD the young generation has done.

"When rock 'n' roll music came in, the older generation said, 'That trash, that junk!' I looked at it entirely different. I said 'They're on MY side. They're taking my toys, my electric guitar that I developed starting back in 1927, 28, and they're playing with them.

"Thank God, they are!" he laughs happily. "I'm proud of that. I'm grateful that I was the one lucky enough to think of 'em and bring 'em about, so they can play with 'em. The kind of music that comes out today is something else. But that's up to you. I say if the shoes fit, put 'em on. But if they're not your shoes, they're gonna hurt your feet. You've got a knob on the radio, turn it off." He tilts his head and smiles.

"I think YOUNG and I understand where these kids are coming from," he says. "I'm genuinely interested in them. It's when you turn off, when you turn 'em off—then you're done."

He is emphatic.

"Young and old, from nine to 90, come to the club to hear my music. A nine-year-old kid sits here and I say, 'Hey, fella, what are you doing here?' He says, 'I'm studying guitar.' I say,

'Do you have one?' He says, 'Yes, sir.' I say, 'What kind do you have?' He says, 'What else? A Les Paul guitar.' I say, 'Bless your heart. You know, you study and someday you'll be great.' He says, 'That's why I'm here. I wanted to come and see the master.' I say, 'I don't know if this is the right place to see that, but I'll do the best I can.'

"I'm a role model for them," he says matter-of-factly.

With all his work, Les keeps up with hobbies. He's a longtime ham radio operator with the handle "Red," and enjoys talking to people all over the world.

"I love to read and listen to books on tape. I'll read a book on Einstein, something by Joseph Campbell, the Bible, anything about Major Armstrong, he's the man who invented FM. And Norman Vincent Peale, his book The Power of Positive Thinking. Brilliant man, brilliant man.

"In life, there are two things that make me tick. You've got to BELIEVE, and you've got to be in love. If you don't have those two things, you don't have much to live for. I don't care what you believe in. But you'd better believe in SOMETHING.

"Being happy is not having nine of everything," he goes on enthusiastically. "It's not having four cars in the driveway. Being active and being excited over something new, and appreciating what you have—THAT'S it!" he cries. "I could



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be happy if I had a cave in New Mexico and I pulled that rope up after me with a girl and a bucket of water, with no electricity.

"I'd be happy," he repeats. "I can be happy anywhere

ANNE SNOWDEN CROSMAN *lives near Sedona, Arizona. She teaches memoir-writing at Yavapai College's OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute), and is the afternoon host for "All Things Considered" on KNAU, Arizona Public Radio*

"YOUNG AT HEART " is available from Amazon...

http://www.amazon.com/Young-Heart-Aging-Gracefully-Attitude/dp/1887542205/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1290568050&sr=1-1

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Due to be released in 2010

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**The Desert Rat's
OUTRAGE
OF THE MONTH!!!**

The percentage of workers who car-pool has dropped by almost half since 1980, the first time the Census Bureau started systematically tracking the numbers, according to new data from the bureau. NYT

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/29/us/29carpool.html?hp>



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“You asked for a picture from my window and so I took the camera and snapped a few. You will notice that one of the fawns has had a broken leg which mended.

“The deer like to come up on my deck and eat birdseed from the feeder. This herd of deer live in the hole you see in the background and roam over this part of town eating whatever they can find.

“I try not to feed them but they eat my plants anyhow unless I fence them in. They especially like the leaves when they first appear on any kind of trees and the especially like my silver lace vine. Oh, well, it saves me from having to trim it.”

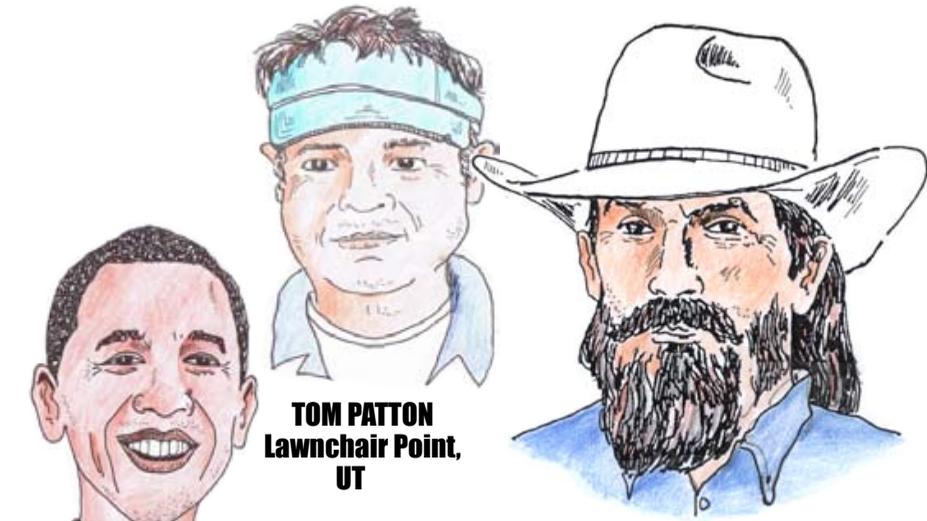
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Marian Ottinger was a longtime resident of Moab and now lives in rural western Colorado.

Thanks Marian!!!



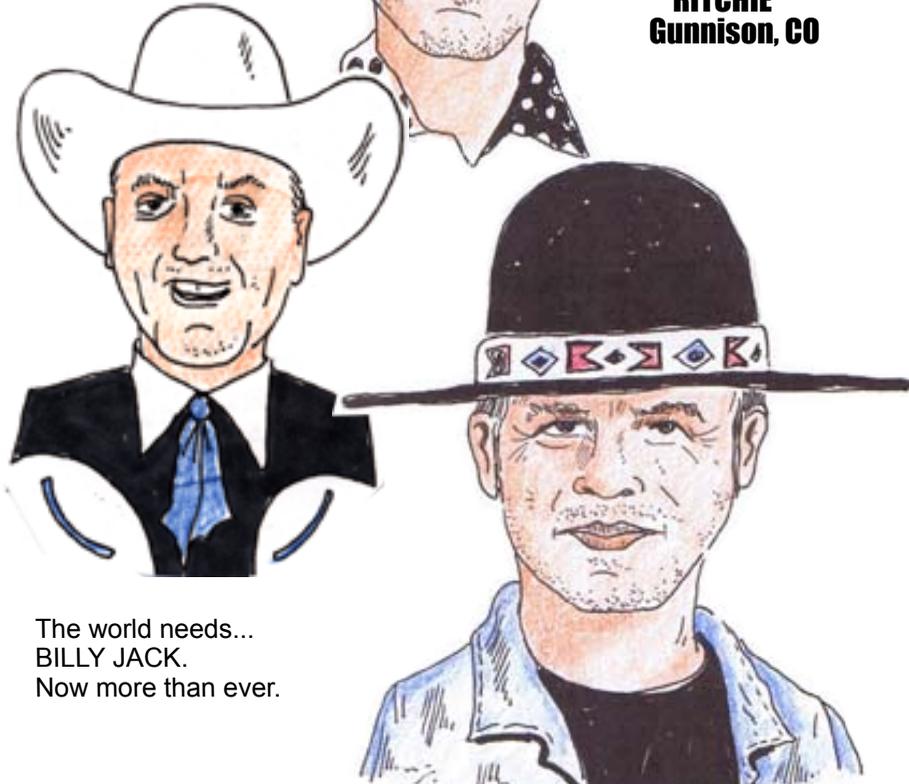
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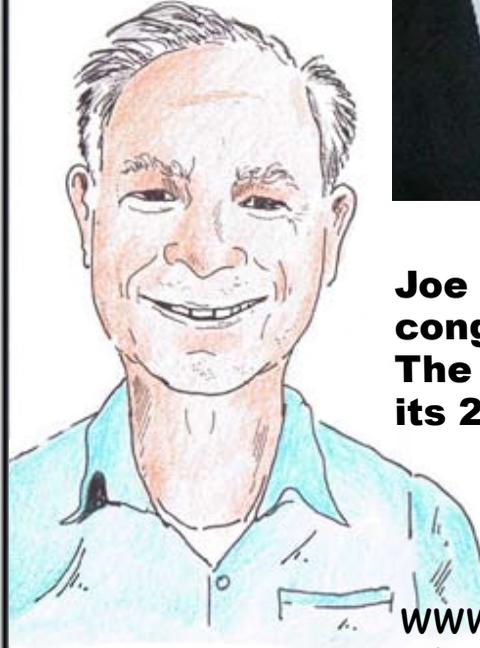
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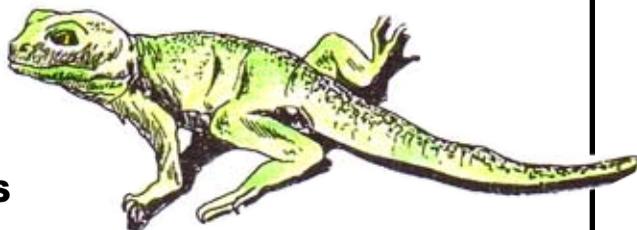
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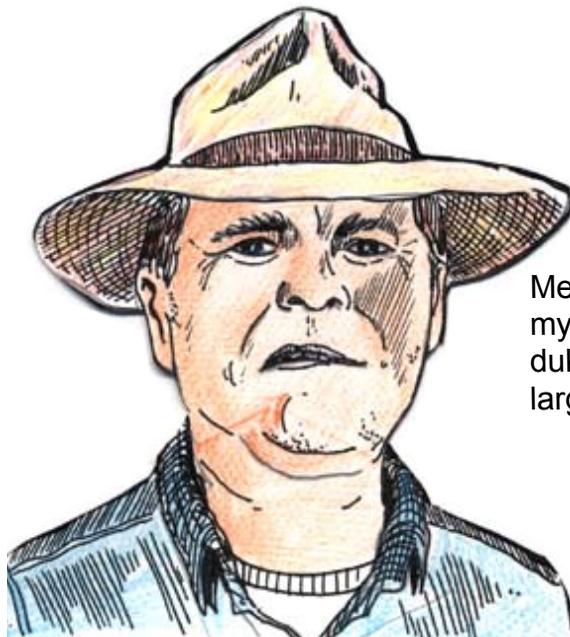
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I'm not as GRUMPY
as I look...Stiles just
draws me like this.



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May the longtime sun shine upon you,
all love surround you, and the pure light
within you- guide your way on.
Sat Nam
(old sikh hymn)

the translated works of ji bo
from ned mudd

global warming

*is global warming
real?
is planet Earth
real?
is Empire State Building
real?
is Great Wall of China
real?
is bottom of ocean
real?
is Hubble Telescope
real?
is Black Hole
real?
is Universe
real?*

*turn off TV
work in garden
drink tea with friends.
no more global warming.*

ji bo

planet Earth

oldest species - bacteria
newest species - computer
smartest species - cockroach
fastest species - photon
slowest species - mountain
loudest species - politician
deadliest species - mosquito
funniest species - clown

unknown species - other side of black hole

ji bo

old proverb...

**a bird in hand
is bad
for bird.**

when hungry
eat noodle bowl;
when thirsty
drink green tea;
when tired
go to sleep;
when happy
laugh with world;
when lonely
call friend;
when bored
get on airplane;
go to desert
talk to cacti
listen.

ji bo

During a long hiatus from his regular "job," Ned Mudd became interested in an obscure modern Chinese poet in need of an audience: Ji Bo. While being contemporary, at least in time, Ji Bo's particular brand of poetics hints at ancient Chinese bards such as Han Shan, Big Stick, and, of course, the infamous Li Po. In 2010, Mudd translated upwards of 100 of Ji Bo's short pieces, some of which are appearing here for the first time. Never brooding, Ji Bo uses twisted humor to jab at our helter-skelter world. And there's plenty to jab at.

TOM TILL

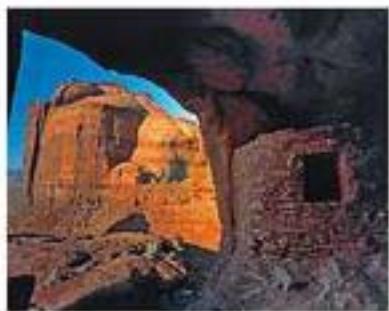
GALLERY



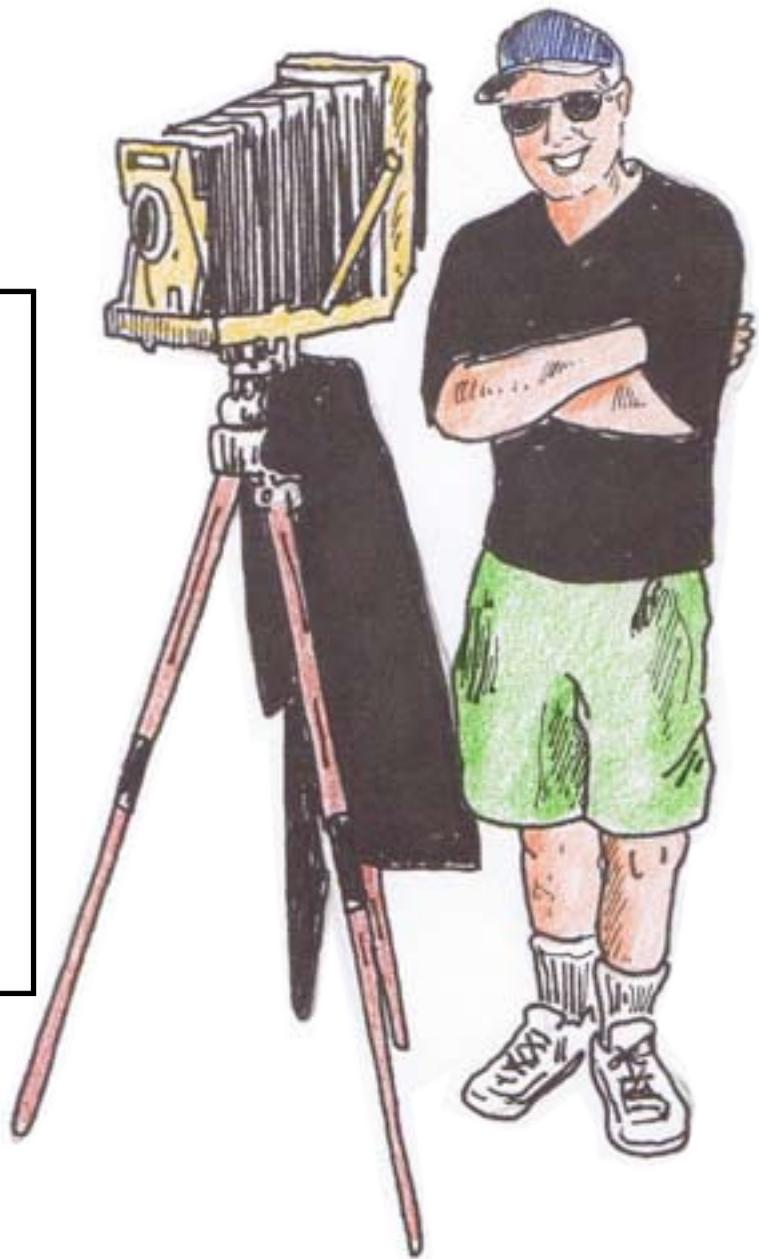
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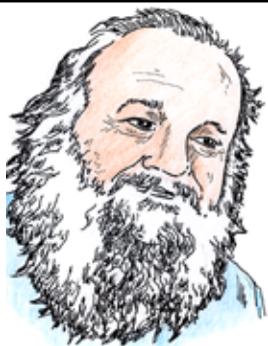


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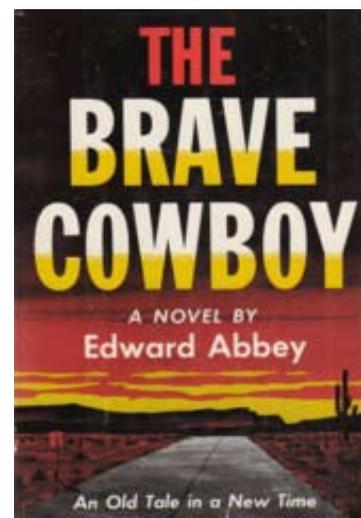
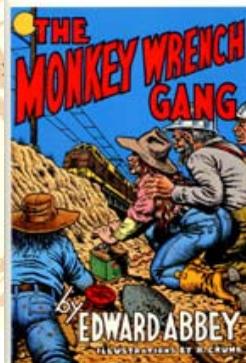
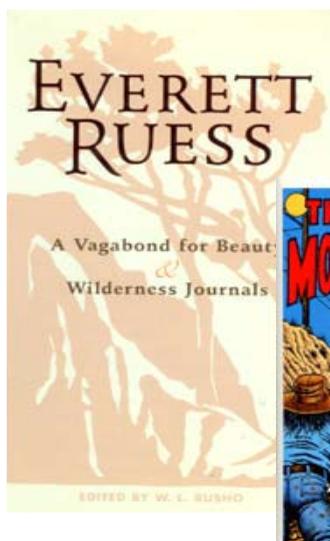
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'TOURAIDE...' Conoco's 1941 Highway Guide

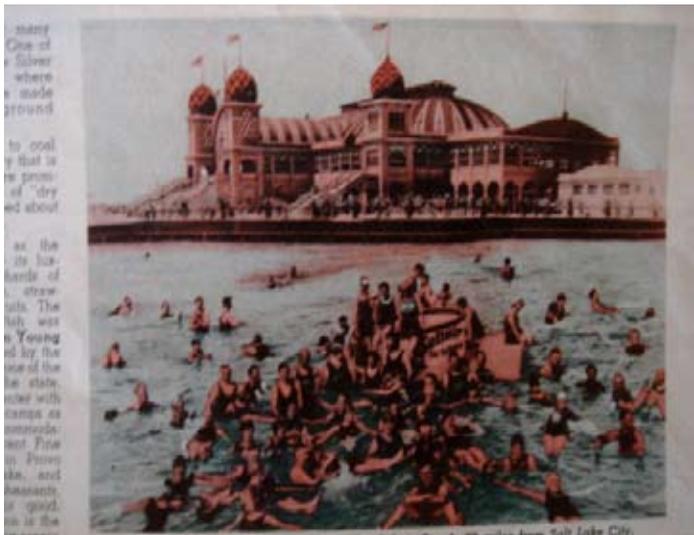


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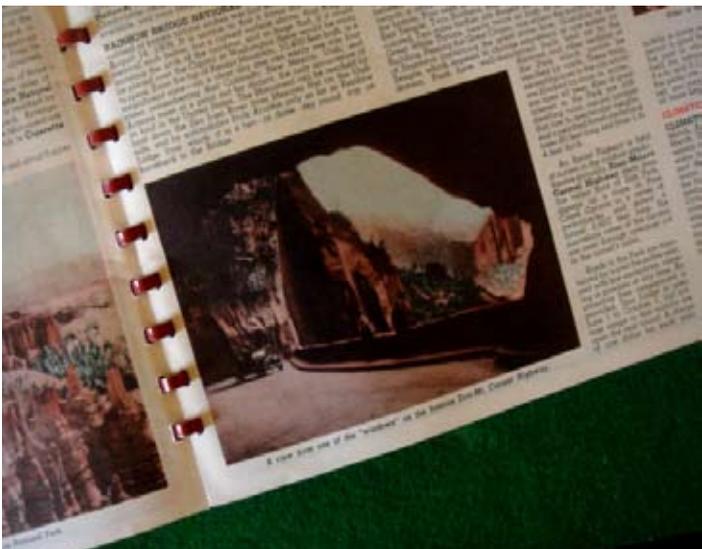
3/19/41
Gas in Denver,
14 gallons. Cost: \$1.75
Meals: \$1.20
Lodging: \$3.00

							MILEAGE AND	
DATE	TOWN AND MILEAGE	GAS	OIL	COST	MEALS	LODGING	MISCELLANEOUS EXPEN	
3/19/41	Denver	14	oil	1.75	1.20	3.00		
3/19/41	Laramie	9	oil	1.60				
3/20/41	Rawlins	9	oil	2.80	.50		.20	
	Paineville						.40	
	Rock Spring				1.40	2.50	fare hotel 1.8	
2/21/41	Rock Spg	8		1.80	.50		.30	
	Montpelier	9	oil	2.20	.50			
3/21/41					.50	3.00		
3/22/41					1.75	3.00	.90	
							.55	

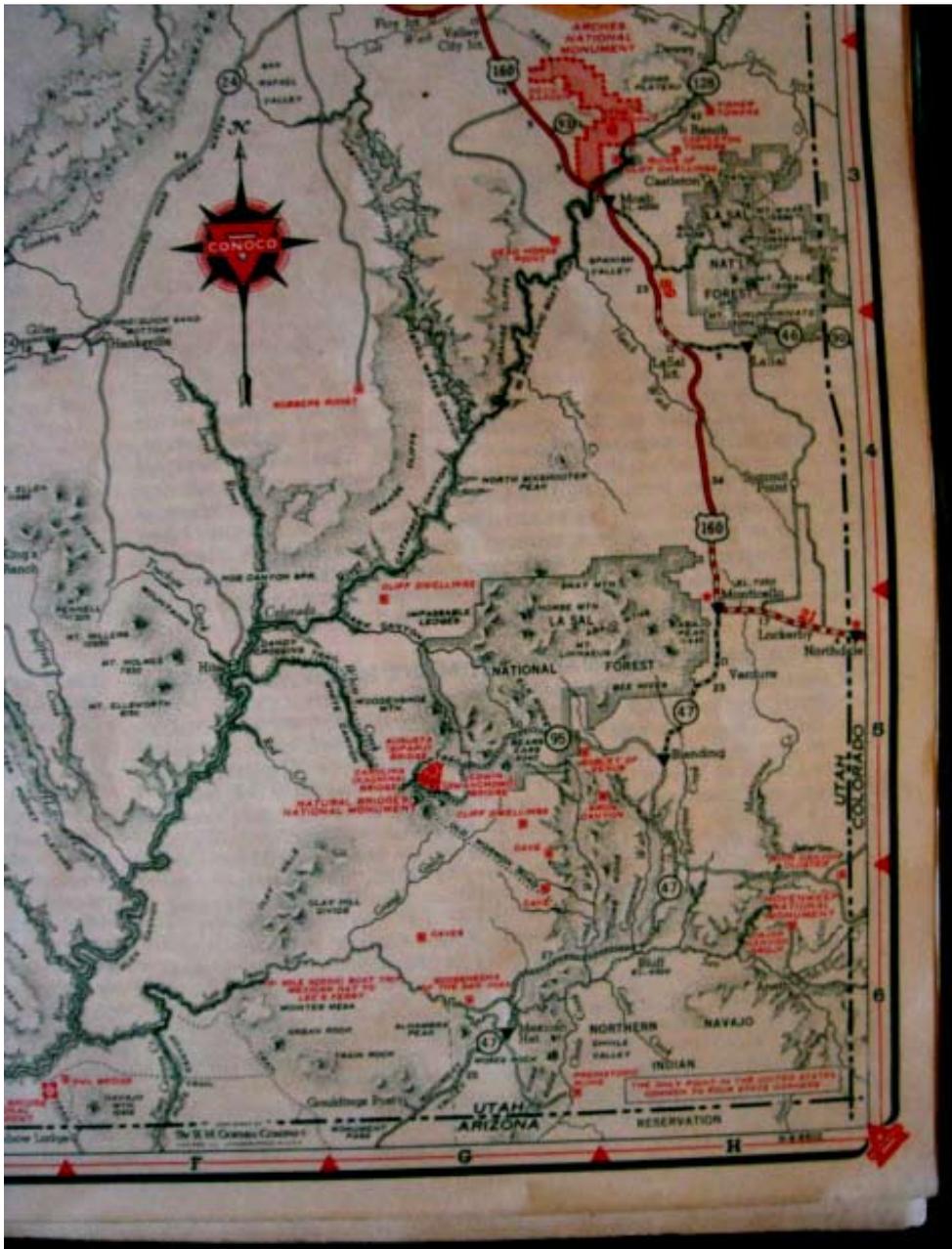
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