

FEEDBACK...CONTINUED

Truth is, miracle workers either get assassinated or corrupted, or else they never existed in the first place. I knew that, and, honestly, I thought Obama would either get assassinated or corrupted, and I couldn't stand the thought of him getting corrupted, which left one alternative. Never did it occur to me that the grumps might be right, that he never even existed in the first place. (I don't mean Obama the man, Obama the politician. I mean Obama the messianic troubadour, Obama the agent of change.)

But seriously, Stiles -- if you were President, wouldn't you have to make an ally of compromise? Who among leaders hasn't? Even Carter (who in my opinion was the best of your presidents, the least inclined to compromise) gave in on the Tellico Dam. If you're a politician who really wants to effect change on this planet, you'll get assassinated. Or corrupted. Or maybe you'll try to walk the tightrope, hoping you can stay alive and bring about some small margin of change before everything you believed in topples. Nobody will like you for it and you won't even like yourself, but isn't that the name of the game?

Melinda Price Wiltshire
Victoria, BC, Canada

EDITOR'S NOTE: Honest to God, isn't there anyone out there willing to take a bullet, in order to do the right thing anymore? Look at Ghandi. Martin Luther King....does everything have to be polled and analyzed before a politician dips his toe in the shark infested waters? He/She KNOWS the risk...what is the point of the pursuit of power, if you're not willing to risk everything to at least try and change the world for the better???...JS

THE MOAB "PROGRESSIVES" & DISCRIMINATION

Dear Jim,

I hope your anonymous friend is wrong about the restrictive zoning; "And from that point of view, the

Moab "progressives" are not progressive...they support restrictive zoning, which keeps out Hispanic and NativeAmerican families from living in downtown Moab." It is the prices. I had thought that someday a one level small house near the library would be nice to buy, but a realtor told me people pay up to \$50,000 more for homes in that area.

I live in Steenville and like it over here, although my tri-level home is not so convenient anymore, but I do like my large lot and hope to keep it even if I must pay somebody to do some of the yard work. In the 30 some years I have lived here, I have had Navajo and Hispanic neighbors. That is not a problem. The problem with the zoning downtown was to not keep it residential. The proposal was to fill a lot with 3 story apartments with no place for children to play and no parking provided. That was ridiculous. How would you feel if Toots McDougald's house was torn down and the zoning was changed so the above apartments could have been built next to your home. I think you might have fought the zoning change.

Anne Urbanek
Moab, UT

EDITOR'S NOTE: I don't think that was what my unidentified commentator meant. It's not a deliberate attempt to discriminate against minorities. In fact, THAT'S the point—that "progressives" don't even seem to notice the impacts of their own self-proclaimed "good works."...JS

GREEN MEAN\$ GREEN, EVEN WHEN IT'S WHITE

Jim -

Snowmobile assisted backcountry ski touring is becoming increasingly common.

Heck, we've now got it here on the Deschutes --- albeit in a comparatively small way:

<https://threesistersbackcountry.com/huts/>

To think that Nordic skiing began as a way for people to get from their hometo where they needed to be. Now tourist drive to an airport in some distant city, fly to Redmond, drive a rental car to Three Creek Lake snowpark which was plowed out by ODOT, get on a snowmobile shuttle organized by Three Sisters Backcountry and finally travel upon a route manicured by the Sisters SnowGoers' groomer in order to arrive at the Wilderness border.

Ah Wilderness!

You've long complained about people driving long distances to Moab in order to pedal a few miles. Today's new class of snowmobile-riding hybrid backcountry skiers puts that old lyra crowd to shame.

I think you will find the comments associated with this video of interest.

<http://www.tetonat.com/2009/02/mount-moran-via-snowmobile/>

I simply find them discouraging.

Scott Silver
www.wildwilderness.org

EDITOR'S NOTE: Fellow "head-against-the-wall beater" Scott Silver has been throwing rocks at golden idols for years. Let's compare hematomas, sometime...JS

OBAMA & COMPROMISE...THE ONLY OPTION?

Dear Jim,

As usual, your "Take It Or Leave It" column is terrific food for thought and the fact that you question even your own conclusions shows that you are, indeed, still ever the optimist. All of us "progressives" (or "liberals" for lack of a better category) have been induced to question what it means to be left-of-center these days. Yes, the Democrats in power seem to be entrenched in much the same business as the Republicans before them and lots of things we'd like to see changed are not going to change anytime soon. Is Obama a disappointment, a Republican in sheep's clothing?

I say "No, he is not". I have been reminding my leftist friends that Barack Obama is only the President, not the Messiah. He would never have become President if he was truly messianic. He'd have been run out of town on a rail. Your reminder that we are running out of time on many of the issues is quite true, but the political system in the United States is rigged against dramatic change in a timely manner. The same system that prevented Dick Cheney from declaring himself Emperor of North America currently prevents Barack Obama from keeping all the wonderful promises he made during the campaign. This reflects the difference between what a candidate wants to do and what a President can actually effect.

The discussion is reminiscent of the Nader vs. Gore arguments made in 2000. "There is no difference between the Democrats and Republicans". Although there may be similarities, I took issue with this argument then and still do now. There is a world of difference even if both sides are only inches from the fence. Nobody is going to rock the boat the way lefties want it rocked. We're all in the same boat. In fact, we share it, for better or worse, with Sarah Palin and Rush Limbaugh.

I believe that Barack Obama wants to sincerely do good and, like the Clintons, believes that government can be a force for doing so. He's already doing better than any number of his predecessors. He has proven himself to be a thoughtful and articulate individual, which in itself is a step in the right direction. I'm inclined neither to jump to any conclusions about him after one short year in office nor to harbor unrealistic expectations. Reagan and the Bushes had 20 years to screw up the place. It's going to take a good many more to get back on track, if ever.

In the meantime, I'll raise a glass and wish you were here to share a couple of cold ones!

yours,
Evan Cantor
Boulder, CO

EDITOR'S NOTE: I agree. Obama is articulate, "wants to sincerely do good," and if these were ordinary times, that alone would sustain me. But this isn't 1979 or even 1992. It's crunch time...JS

STILES FOR PRESIDENT? AGAIN???

Dear Jim Stiles,

I have just finished reading Brave New West. If you run for President, would you let me be your campaign manager? First, I should tell you who I am: I'm an eighty-year-old woman who first came to Moab in 1999, long after having first heard about Arches from reading Desert Solitaire. I fell in love with the canyon country, returned a year later via a scholarship with an Elderhostel, repeated it the next year. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to return but am hoping to next May. I need to do it before both my car and my eyes give out. I trust that I have not been a bad tourist. I have never gone into the back country but have taken nearly every short hike in Arches, usually by myself. I did go twice into the amazing Fiery Furnace (with a group). My guidebook on my first visit was Journey to the High Southwest by Robert Casey, and it was invaluable. It got me to the Cave Spring in Canyonlands; this was in the fall, and there was no one around, just me and one fly. The silence was overwhelming. It was where I first realized what the so-called desert fathers must have experienced. I'll never forget it.

For a while I was a subscriber to the Zephyr, and then one day I sent a check that was never cashed. I always wondered what happened, but now I know. I also used to subscribe to the High Country News, which kept me alert to the controversies in the Colorado Plateau. Your book has laid out clearly those controversies.

I love your book! It makes me both glad and sad. So much in it to talk about. One thing: I'm not sure I agree with your assessment of taking money from organizations we disagree with. Money is just money and in itself is neutral. The problem is becoming beholden to the giver. But if someone wants to make a donation, can't they be told up front that there are no strings attached? Is that just too naive?

I'm trying to get a group together to discuss Postcards from Abbey. It's one of my favorites.

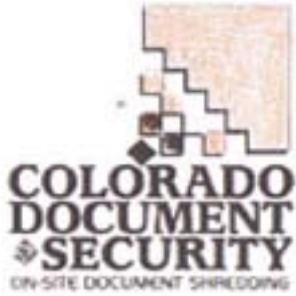
By the way, I am a city person. I believe it's more environmentally sound to live in cities and visit the parks and rivers and wild animals. (But at my age, I admit I also need to be close to my doctors! :))

If you've read this far, thank you for your patience. And keep writing!

Sincerely,
Nancy Newman
Minneapolis, MN

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ah...there's the rub. The mainstream greens ARE compromised by their largesse. Many of these groups ARE "beholden to the giver." Take a look at the August/September 2008 issue online: "The Greening of Wilderness...part 2," in our Zephyr archives at the bottom of the home page...JS

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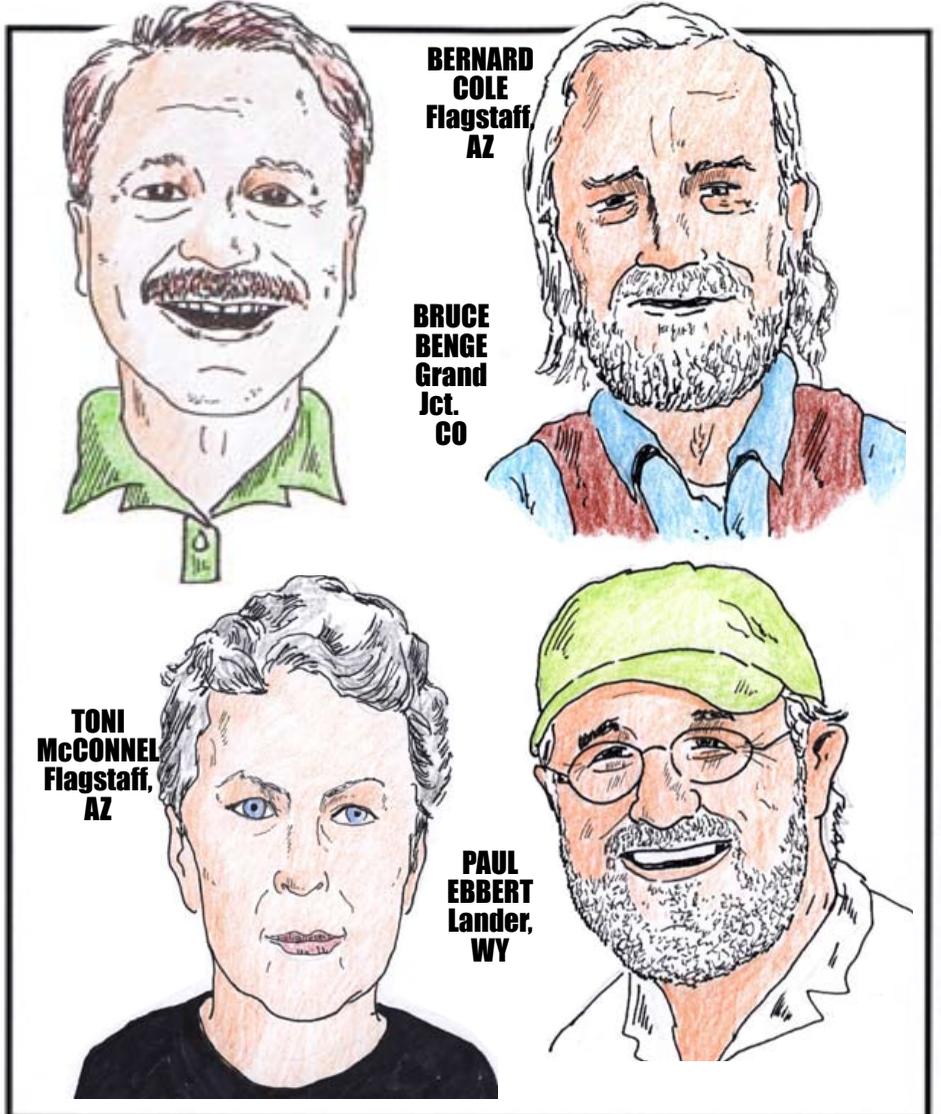
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HURRAHS FOR 'ALTERNATIVE ENERGY' IN BEAVER, UTAH

Hello Jim,

I have been telling myself for the past several weeks I needed write to thank you for your contributions to the San Juan Record. I also congratulate editor Bill Boyle for extending the invitation.

I find your comments very constructive toward engaging all parties to the continuing discussions regarding rural issues throughout the west. Whether you are one of the "new west" (whatever that means) or a multigenerational native, we are all best served by engaging in discussion. I grew up in San Juan County and will always call it home. A couple of branches in my family tree came from Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers so my roots are quite deep among the Anglo Saxons in the county.

I now live in Beaver and serve as the Beaver County Economic Development Director. You may or may not have read in the paper that we have been successful in harnessing some of the abundant renewable resources in our county for economic benefit. We recently cut the ribbon on the 200+ megawatt wind turbine farm north of Milford and a year ago had a similar ceremony on a new geothermal plant west of Minersville. In another year and a half we hope to have our third geothermal plant operational. With a little luck we should have solar operations up by that time also.

We have tried hard to brand ourselves as the epicenter of Utah's renewable energy resources. It appears we are having some success in that arena but there is still much to be done. The global warming debate has actually forced most in our community to come together. In this county there are more reasons for us to agree than to disagree, particularly with those who align themselves with the more mainstream environmental movement. When the issue of global warming comes up in a rural conversation, I always say "global warming is no religion to me" but quickly add, it has been the single greatest blessing to our county in years.

To those that claim power from renewable sources is too expensive, I counter by saying that yes, it may seem more expensive now, but most forms of renewable generation are fixed costs, they last a long time and they are not subject to volatile fuel price fluctuations. Some of the cheapest power in the United States today comes from hydroelectric dams along the Columbia River. That power is cheap for two reasons 1) they were heavily subsidized in the beginning by the federal government and 2) they are largely depreciated. While many will argue the fact that these hydro projects are environmentally destructive, they are similar to current renewable projects in that they do not require fossil fuels and hence are not subject to price fluctuations. These factors make investment in renewable energy prudent for the country.

If you are ever in Beaver County give me a call, I would love to show firsthand how the global warming debate has been an advantage to our rural communities.

Check this video out that tells the story of how a teacher and a bunch of high school kids got involved to make the First Wind project a success.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LF586aLTXzk>

Regards,
Rob Adams
Beaver, UT

EDITOR'S NOTE: Alternative energy may be an economic boon for towns like Beaver, but if we believe in climate change and if we are resigned to a world population of 10 or 11 billion by 2050 and if we think we can maintain the "American Dream" of a never ending spiral of consumption, and FINALLY if we are prepared to embrace the fact that most of the world's population wants to live the same consumptive life we have, then all these alternative energy projects are a waste of time as a solution to global warming. Too bad we didn't embrace these kinds of projects en masse 40 years ago...JS



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