

TAKE IT or LEAVE IT...

By Jim Stiles

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This publication, online, is one of those opportunities.

Perhaps, this is an old fashioned concept, but I always thought that regardless of the medium, it was the content of the written word that mattered most. If it's intelligent and articulate and makes the reader THINK, if it's witty and at times provocative, if it touches your heart and soul occasionally, then who cares if you have to "scroll" to read the story? Is "scrolling" an insurmountable task? Will you require counseling as a result? Are "thumbnails" that intimidating? And what difference does it make if those words are presented in HTML or as a PDF?

For those of you over 40 who are whining that you have given up on The Zephyr because you miss the old paper and "it's just not the same anymore," I can only say, "GET OVER IT!"

I received an email just yesterday from a former advertiser who admitted he just "couldn't get in to" the online Z—he gave up after five minutes. He was kind enough to share with me that he usually read *The Zephyr* on the toilet and now those days were over.

My question is, if he has a laptop, and he runs on battery power, can't he STILL safely read The Z while perched on his porcelain throne? And if he tells enough people of his reading habits, he'll never have to worry about lending his computer again!

Primarily, however, the response has been good, even enthusiastic. The readership stats are promising and as we find more ways to get the word out, I think *The Zephyr* online could catch fire. I hope so.

The best way to increase the readership, of course, is via its readers. YOU. Tell your friends. Torture your adversaries. Write your Congressmen and women. Call your Senators! The 'read' is free. In this day and age, who can resist an offer like that?

I'm a scribbler and a doodler, and I can assemble this cyber-rag anywhere, even sitting in a campchair in the middle of nowhere. But I'm a lousy promoter. I hope *The Zephyr* online is here to stay, but it's really up to all of you.

THE UPSIDE TO THE 'GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS' (But why isn't anyone cheering?)

On June 29, 1986, Ed Abbey scribbled in his journal, "The swine the scum oh God when will your vengeance descend upon these mean ugly greedy people? I long for the day of the coming Collapse."

If Abbey had lived, he might have thought last October was the Real Deal. With the international banking system disintegrating and the stock markets in free fall, it would have surely put a grin on Cactus Ed's face; it might have even taken the crease out of that familiar furrowed brow.

But not for long; instead, two administrations, Repub-

lican and Democratic, have taken extraordinary steps to prop up the criminals and now even Obama spins an optimistic sermon to the American public. *We are strong. We are America...all will be well again. We will be prosperous.*

Has Obama missed an opportunity to re-define the very word? Hasn't this crisis given us a chance to be prosperous in ways we seem to have recently lost?

Consider some of the byproducts of this global disaster:

According to USA TODAY, "The worldwide economic slowdown is having an unexpected positive impact in the fight against global warming: Emissions of carbon dioxide are falling.

"From the United States to Europe to China, the global economic crisis has forced offices to close and factories to cut back. That means less use of fossil fuels such as coal to make energy. Fossil-fuel burning, which creates carbon dioxide, is the primary human contributor to global warming."

An energy research company called Point Carbon maintains that while a recession is "good for the environment," it's too timid to go farther. It clarifies itself: "In the long term, that's not how we want to reduce emissions."

The Big Hedge.

Because of the recession, millions of jobs have been lost. But our consumption has also plummeted. New home construction has fallen dramatically. That means fewer natural resources are being taken from the ground—millions of cubic feet of timber have been spared and other necessary building materials stay un-extracted. The homes that are being built are smaller and less ostentatious.

We are driving less; consequently, the demand for oil and the economic advantage for oil exploration has fallen as well. Oil extraction that was profitable at \$150/barrel doesn't look as inviting at \$50. Even now, as speculators again drive the price of oil upward, it's less than half of last year's peak. If the market speculators push the price up again, the work force's weakened condition should reduce demand even more.

And finally we are simply spending less in our daily

People are discovering each day that they can live with less. Families are eating at home —with each other. Life it seems, can be enjoyed more fully and at a lower price!

lives. The unexpected result has as much to do with the quality of our lives and our very happiness as it does the complex scientific data that flows from the climate change works.

People are discovering each day that they can live with less. Families are eating at home—with each other. Life it seems, can be enjoyed more fully and at a lower price! This all reminds me of a few lines from my own book, *Brave New West*. I penned them four years ago:

The global economy as we know it... would grind to a halt. The teeming masses would no longer be able to afford the plethora of crap that we all think is essential to our lives. Factories would shut down. Jobs would disappear. Service industries would dwindle and die because no one would have money for personal trainers and nose-lift operations. Tourism world-wide would be devastated. Around the globe, people would have to survive by



FIRST ONLINE ISSUE POST-MORTEM

In *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain notes, "If I'd a knowed how much trouble it was to make a book I wouldn't a tackled it and I ain't a-going to no more."

What a whiner. He had no idea how much more complicated and frustrating the process of disseminating words would become in the future.

If Sam Clemens had somehow skipped a century and found himself trying to "post" his work on the world wide web, he may very well have slashed his wrists or chosen obscurity over fame. I'd bet he would have wisely decided to stay home, tuck his manuscripts in the closet and watch the grass grow.

How I long for such wisdom.

Making the decision to go exclusively online was a difficult one for a man who claims to be "clinging hopelessly to the past," but as I've explained, it was a choice made out of necessity—it was this or nothing at all. In most respects I am pleased with the result.

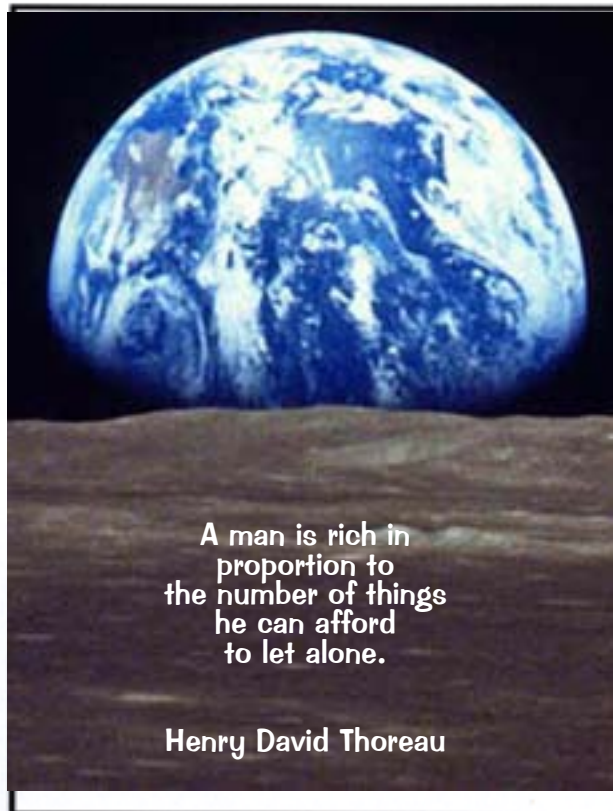
However, the new *Zephyr* has not escaped criticism, both constructive and otherwise. For those of you who are really IN to this cyberworld, the complaints or suggestions have been specific and technical and helpful, though I've often had to seek advice from others, just to understand what in the hell you're talking about.

But I did listen. Gary Henderson, as you can see, has offered readers the option of opening files as a PDF or via HTML. It still has some bugs, especially for Mac users, but we're working on them. For those of you who understand the difference, I say, "Good for you." But I discovered that many of you like the PDFs and are actually printing out the pages and reading them the old fashioned way (though the text must be excruciatingly tiny).

Some of you wanted the option of downloading all 40+ pages at once. As I write this, Gary and I are still considering the option. My worry is that the novice-reader, or even someone who failed to read the warning, may 'click' the DOWNLOAD ALL button and then find himself cursing me for what he's done (A slow connection could require a very long download wait).

We've put the BLOG in a more prominent and "user friendly" location on the home page and hope you will make use; and I hope I will find the fortitude to make more entries myself—there is no point in me waiting two months to vent when I can un-cork at will. I also intend to use the blog to add links and interesting stories on the web that have come my way.

For those of you, however, who are over 40 and are whingeing that you have given up on *The Zephyr* because you miss the old paper and "it's just not the same anymore," I can only say, "GET OVER IT!" This admonition comes from a guy who doesn't particularly like the way the world is changing—in fact, I loathe it— but I will at least admit that aspects of the Brave New World provide a real opportunity to learn and to grow.



A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone.

Henry David Thoreau

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helping each other. We'd take our altered noses out of the Playstations or the CNBC market report or Jerry Springer and start having conversations again. We would have potluck picnics and play horseshoes and we'd actually start listening to the stories that our parents and grandparents have wanted to tell us for years, but nobody had time to listen. We'd have more sex (albeit safe and protected)! We'd quit taking all these damn medications and we'd die when we're supposed to and not a minute later. We would cherish our real time together because we'd suddenly realize we have more of it, now that we're not worrying about buying a Lexus as a third car or fretting about our blood pressures. By not fretting, our BPs would most likely go down. We'd quit being "depressed" because we'd all be blissfully poor. We'd eat lots of fat AND carbs and become fat AND happy.

(But) are environmentalists really prepared to embrace a simpler, less materialistic life? Or do they still want all the stuff, but in a more efficient way?



**A 21st Century traffic jam in China...
If all the cars were more fuel efficient
would you feel better about this picture?**

At the bottom of all this, and the Reality that keeps almost everyone from cheering the recession instead of condemning it, is the dramatic loss of jobs. People need to eat, of course.

But here's the rub, the ONLY way the world economy can support a global work force that can embrace the lifestyle of a couple years ago, is if we all go back to the same levels of consumption. And DEBT.

An iPod factory needs to produce five times as many players as there are consumers. We cannot support this economy if we want just one plasma tv—we need one for every room. We can't stay home and eat dinner; we need to "eat out," and we need to do it regularly in restaurants we can afford only occasionally. But we must anyway, in order to support the eatery owners and the staff they hire.

If we cut our consumption, the workers who make those products and provide those services lose their jobs, and with it, the ability to buy other products and services that are beyond the grasp of their pocket books. And the only way to sustain that kind of consumption is to keep borrowing, which is what got us in this mess to begin with.

It's a house of cards.

What no one wants to say is this: For us to save the planet and save ourselves, it is going to hurt.

How much it hurts will depend on how deeply into this Debt Society you allowed yourself to be seduced by it.

If you lived far beyond your means, if your home is three times as big as the space you need, and the central air runs 12 months a year, and you haven't cracked a window since 1997, if your credit cards are maxed, then you are looking at a world of pain in the short term. If you lived more modestly, you still won't escape some serious Hurt. But you will be better prepared, simply because you will have already learned to live with less.

This is the REAL future. Very few politicians are willing to say it out loud, from either end of the political spectrum. I will salute any public figure who does, regardless of his ideological stripes.

THE CLIMATE CHANGE TEST

Three years have passed since the American Media and the advertising gurus on Madison Avenue began to push "Global Warming" into the spotlight; if "green" hasn't become the most overused word in the English language (next to Obama), I am at a loss as to what it might be. Call me cynical, but certainly the economic component of the issue, ie, "how can we make money from this 'crisis,'" contributes significantly to its recent notoriety.

But how many of us truly believe in global warming and, perhaps more significantly, how dire do we really believe the threat to be?

A recent Gallup poll provided some startling results. In 2006, almost 40% of those polled believed the media was underestimating the seriousness of climate change. Now, more than 40% believe the media is exaggerating the issue. All the publicity and the hype have created a global warming backlash.

In February, a Pew Research poll revealed that Americans place global warming on the very last wrung of their Top 20 priorities. The top three concerns were: the econo-

my, jobs, and terrorism.

What do YOU believe? It really isn't a YES or NO debate; instead it's: YES...NO..or YES, BUT. Take the test and I'll explain...

#1...DO YOU BELIEVE IN GLOBAL WARMING?

Many reject it completely. They believe the recent weather fluctuations are a natural part of earth's cycle. Many more believe some kind of seminal change is underway.

#2...IF YOU DO BELIEVE IN GLOBAL WARMING, DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS RELATED TO THE ACTIVITIES OF MAN?

There is a body of thought that agrees change is afoot, even dramatic shifts in the earth's climate, but they maintain that it is a natural change, brought on perhaps by fluctuations in the sun's intensity (sunspot activity, for example), or by the natural rhythms of the earth itself. The majority of us believe that we are the significant contributing factor.

#3...IF YOU DO BELIEVE HUMANS ARE RESPONSIBLE, HOW DIRE DO YOU BELIEVE THE THREAT IS?

There are brilliant scientists among us who believe we stand at the very brink of disaster. James Hansen, the NASA climatologist, fears we are at the "tipping point." Nothing less than draconian measures can reverse what he fears will be "eco-system collapse" and "mass extinction." Other "experts" believe global warming will be manageable and will even bring with it certain economic benefits.

#4...IF YOU THINK THE SITUATION IS DIRE— THAT WE STAND AT THE 'TIPPING POINT'—DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ALTERNATE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT & NEW TECHNOLOGIES CAN REVERSE THIS? OR DO YOU BELIEVE WE MUST MAKE MAJOR CHANGES—SIGNIFICANT SACRIFICES--- IN OUR LIVES TO SAVE THE EARTH?

This is the critical question. This is what separates the wheat from the chaff. Do you think green technology and more efficient vehicles and alternative energy like wind turbines and solar arrays will save us from destruction?

That is the philosophy and policy (though not always enunciated) of mainstream environmentalism, including the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) who said recently, "Reducing global warming pollution will have an imperceptible effect on economic output....We can stave off the biggest environmental and humanitarian crisis without disrupting economic growth." NRDC, in fact, believes we can expand the economy and fix the environment simultaneously.

**What do YOU believe?
It really isn't a
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or YES, BUT.
Take the test and I'll explain...**

If you believe this, then you should embrace organizations like NRDC and The Wilderness Society and the Environmental Defense Fund, and the Sierra Club and even smaller regional groups like SUWA, the Grand Canyon Trust and even Red Rock Forests in Moab, Utah.

All of these groups must believe that technology and the free market system will save the earth without any sacrifice at all, simply because they are funded and in many cases their boards of directors are dominated by America's most successful capitalists—men and women, entrepreneurs all--- worth hundreds of millions, even billions of dollars, whose core beliefs REQUIRE an ever-expanding free-market economy.

In most cases, as we have said again and again in these pages, the conservation movement throws down the gauntlet daily against the exploitation of our lands for the production of commodities. But it rarely raises a finger to object to the consumption of those commodities.

If you think that approach will save us from disaster, then you can move forward with a clear conscience, knowing that your new Prius and re-usable shopping bags will prevent the doomsday scenario that many suggest.

If you see the absurdity in that premise, then it is time at last, to say it out loud.

We are deluding ourselves and our "environmental leaders" are the most deluded of them all.

As Abbey once said, "What we need is something entirely different."

That "something different" is the Truth.

**REMEMBERING BENNION REDD
(And a few words in behalf of Monticello, Utah)**

I never knew a kinder or gentler man than Bennion Redd. He was a familiar and comforting presence in Monticello, Utah for more than eight decades. I was lucky and honored to know Bennion for almost 25 years.

When I was a seasonal ranger, the law enforcement division (such as it was in those days) had to endure a week

of annual "refresher training." Bennion was the local federal magistrate and each spring he gave us his standard one hour lecture on the Code of Federal Regulations and an update on any procedural changes that might affect the way we issued a ticket to tourists who illegally picked wildflowers or carved their names in a rock.

Bennion, always the gentleman, never kept us past his allotted time. In fact, he made a point of letting us out early for lunch, which made us love the man. And each year, in his very quiet way, he would invite all of us to come by his office in Monticello whenever we were in the vicinity.

"Fellas," he'd say, "I've been a widower for a few years now and sometimes I have more free time on my hands than I'd like. So if you ever want to stop by for a chat, the door is always open. I'd be glad to see you."

A few months later, remembering his invitation, I stopped in Monticello to say hello. In fact, when I pulled up to the curb, Bennion was outside, sweeping his sidewalk. I learned later that this was a Bennion Ritual. He was genuinely pleased to have a visitor and though I doubt he remembered me from the Park Service. training, he took me inside and he asked about my life and my job like a man who was really interested in asking. He never forgot me after that visit.

Years later, when I decided to buy a little cottage in Monticello, I stopped by Bennion's office for his advice. I described the property and his face erupted in the broad smile that Bennion displayed so often.



I never knew a kinder or gentler man than Bennion Redd. He was a familiar and comforting presence in Monticello, Utah for more than eight decades.

photo courtesy of The San Juan Record

"Yes, I know that little home very well. It belongs to my sister and her husband. You know the house next door that looks like a barn?"

I nodded.

"That's where I was born," he said proudly. "I gave that little house next door to Marilyn and Doyle as a wedding present. The house was an old CCC barrack. I had it hauled up here from the canyon and we made it a home."

Bennion smiled. "And now you want to buy that little house?"

He called Marilyn and Doyle, told them he had a prospective buyer and asked if they could come down to the office. A few minutes later—everywhere in Monticello is just a few minutes away—his sister and brother-in-law arrived.

We sat in the hardback wood chairs and haggled for about two minutes. Doyle told me the asking price. I made a counteroffer. He made another. I made one more. Doyle thought about it, looked at Marilyn and said, "Okay. We have a deal."

We shook hands and gave the particulars to Bennion. "I'll draw all this up and have it ready for signing in...how does four weeks sound?"

It sounded fine to us.

The next day, when I told my friends of my sudden and unexpected purchase, they were without exception, skeptical...how much earnest money did you put down? Did they sign a letter of intent to sell? Did you get the terms in writing and is it notarized? Did you get ANYTHING in writing?

We sealed the deal with a handshake, I said. They thought that was pretty funny.

"A handshake?" one buddy gasped. "It'll never happen."

I tried to explain. "I want to live in a town where a handshake does matter. If the deal falls through, then I wouldn't want to live there anyway."

One month later, Bennion, Marilyn, Doyle and I met again at the office. The paperwork was ready. I handed them a check. We signed on the dotted line. The house was mine.

I've never forgotten that handshake.

So I became a Monticello Man and almost every day, I'd see Bennion sweeping his sidewalk and each time we bumped into each other at the post office, he would smile and stop and ask me how Life was treating me on 300 East. He was one of those rare individuals who genuinely cared about people.

When he died on March 31, Monticello lost one of its best. But this little town can be proud that such a man was one of them, and in many ways, a reflection of the many people who loved him.

I may be a late arrival, but I'm proud too.