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**CELEBRATING 25 YEARS**



# TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

## by Jim Stiles

cczephyr@gmail.com

MY 'ALMOST-FERGUSON' MOMENT...  
*Rangers Should 'Range'---*  
*But Fear & Adrenalin Can Be Deadly*

*PREFACE: The events in Ferguson, Missouri remind me of a moment in my own brief career in law enforcement, as a ranger with the National Park Service at Arches NP. I wrote this account in 2005, years after the confrontation and in response to a fatal shooting that had occurred earlier in the summer at a state park in New Mexico.*

When Chief Ranger Jerry Epperson hired me to be a seasonal ranger at Arches National Park, so many years ago, I wasn't even sure what my duties were supposed to be. So it seemed like a good idea to ask. Epperson smiled wryly and said, "A ranger should range."

And while all of us endured the other Park Service chores like collecting fees and working the visitor center information desk and cleaning toilets and admonishing the tourists for their often almost unbearable ignorance, we still preferred to 'range'—to get into the backcountry and explore—any time the opportunity allowed us to. To know a piece of land, for no other reason than the intimacy between you that it provided, was the greatest reward of all. We didn't range for profit. We did it for our hearts and our souls. Not to mention our soles. My "rangering days" are still filled with fond memories of unforgettable beauty.

The fee collecting was always the least pleasant of my duties and I did them reluctantly and with little enthusiasm. Its only advantage was the opportunity it provided to occasionally meet beautiful single women camping alone who were in desperate need of a bath and who found my invitation for a hot shower and a cold beer almost irresistible. I was no chick magnet but my running hot water was.

But fast forward 20 years and employees of the various federal agencies collecting land use fees are

showing a zealotry in their work that is almost incomprehensible. It's not as if they're working on a commission. Yet, I continue to read stories of park and forest rangers and BLM staffers who spend most of their day looking for fee violators... even to the point of searching once empty dirt roads, watching for visitors without the necessary proof of payment taped to their windshields or stapled to their foreheads.

**I took a step backward and placed my thumb on the keeper of my gun holster. The young man saw the move and stopped. Then he screamed at me, "You take that f—king gun out of that f—king holster and I'll take it and shove it up your f—king ass!" We stared at each other for five long seconds.**

The almost fanatical quest for fees turned to tragedy in New Mexico a few weeks ago at Elephant Butte State Park when a state park ranger shot a tourist to death during a dispute over a camping fee. According to a story in the Las Cruces Sun-News, the victim, apparently a tourist in his 50s from Montana, became belligerent with Ranger Clyde Woods, a three-year veteran of the parks department when he refused to pay a \$14 camping fee. Woods attempted to arrest the camper for trespassing and the man put his hands in his pockets and refused to remove them.

According to a spokeswoman for the parks division, Erica Asmus-Otero, the man "acted in a manner that our officer is trained to respond to," and said he was "aggressive and verbally abusive." So Ranger Woods shot him dead. The dead man was NOT carrying a firearm or a knife of any kind.

After the shooting, Parks Director Dave Simon said, "Deadly force is always a last resort" and added

that the "vast majority of park users comply willingly with park fees."

*FOR A FULLER ACCOUNT OF THIS TRAGEDY READ: 'THE INCIDENT AT ELEPHANT BUTTE LAKE' <http://rangerford.blogspot.com/2006/10/incident-at-elephant-butte-lake.html>*

I have my own deadly force story.

While I always preferred to range than collect, sometimes the non-compliant camper can get under a ranger's skin. One evening when the Arches campground was full, a couple of young men, perhaps in their late teens arrived after dark and tried to camp illegally in the picnic area. My first encounter with them was civil enough and I told them they needed to leave the park. Twenty minutes later, I caught them again, when paid campers complained that they'd moved into their site. This time I was firmer and their attitude was icier. They left, muttering as they went, and I knew we'd meet again. A few minutes later I could see their headlights creeping down the Salt Valley Road in search of an illegal campsite.

My self-righteous indignation has always been a quality I needed to work on, and on this evening it was in full bloom---after all, how dare these jerks defy the order of a ranger!---and I went after them. I found their vehicle tracks in Salt Valley Wash. They'd driven off-road and were somewhere ahead of me. It was 11 PM, I was out of radio contact, but determined to confront and cite these violators.

At the time, rangers had not yet become full-time cops but even then we were required to carry our sidearms during night patrols. So I walked into the darkness with my maglite and service revolver snapped firmly in its holster to confront and punish these noncompliant campers. I found them a hundred yards down the dry wash, already wrapped in their sleeping bags and drifting toward sleep. My arrival was totally unexpected and when I brutally advised them that they not only would be required to leave immediately but that I was also issuing them a federal citation for driving through a natural area, the two young men came unglued.

Both leaped from their bags, screaming. They called me every unkind word imaginable and in such a hysterical manner that I wondered if I was about to lose control of a situation that was barely 30 seconds old. One of them was particularly rabid and finally, as the encounter intensified, he moved toward me in a way that definitely felt threatening.

I was, in fact, scared to death.

I took a step backward and placed my thumb on the keeper of my gun holster. The young man saw the move and stopped. Then he screamed at me, "You take that f—king gun out of that f—king holster and I'll take it and shove it up your f—king ass!" We stared at each other for five long seconds.

And I reflected on his words. And I decided that, in fact, he was absolutely right. If I took my gun from the holster I believed I could never shoot the man dead for illegally camping in a national park.

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But could I be sure? And on the other hand, this young fellow, in his current frenzied state, might very well take the revolver from me and kill me. I could almost see the headlines in next week's Moab Times-Independent:

SEASONAL RANGER AT ARCHES NP SHOT  
BY ILLEGAL CAMPER...  
FUNERAL SERVICES ON FRIDAY

"OK," I said, taking a deep breath. "I'm going back to my patrol cruiser. I want both of you out of here in 30 minutes." Retreat seemed like a viable option. I backed off slowly, turned and walked back to the road. Had they been running up behind me I would never have heard them—the sound of my heart pounding in my ears was deafening.

I sat in my patrol car for 20 long minutes, still shaken but happy to have my ass intact. Finally, incredibly, here they came, packed up and in their car. One of them had calmed appreciably and I handed him the citation. He actually thanked me. His friend, however, was still out of control and kept slamming his fists into the headliner of his friend's roof. I imagine damage to the vehicle surpassed the \$50 fine.

I drove back to the Devils Garden, to my residence, slept poorly and wondered if I'd done the right thing. Had I been a coward or a wise man? I decided that for once, I'd been the latter. I never again came even close to a confrontation like that. Life, whether theirs or mine, was not worth the risk over an illegal camping infraction.

I don't know all the facts in the New Mexico shooting but I would guess that fear and adrenalin and the rapid way uncontrolled events can unfold had more to do with the shooting than the character of the man who pulled the trigger or the man who allegedly provoked him. But a tragedy resulted that didn't need to happen. There's more to Life than collecting fees or paying them...I suggest we all range a bit more and fret a lot less.

*POSTSCRIPT: This story was not intended to pass judgement on anyone in the Ferguson case, including Officer Wilson. Had one of the men I confronted attempted to take my service revolver from my holster, I cannot bear to imagine what the outcome might have been. My point here is only that a seemingly benign situation can escalate into a horrid nightmare in seconds. And we can spend the rest of our lives wondering how those few moments changed—or ended--- the course of people's lives...JS*

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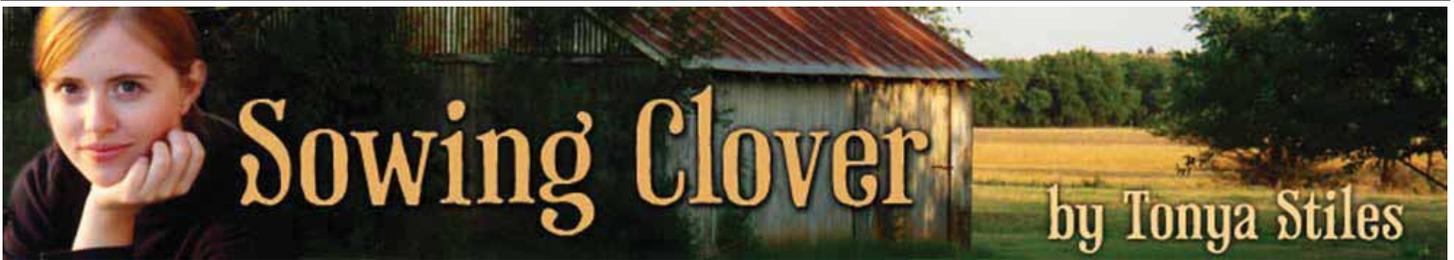
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## LIVING LIFE ON COMPANY TIME

First, I couldn't find my sunglasses. We were headed out the door. Jim was halfway to the car, and I suddenly realized I couldn't find them. They weren't on their normal perch with the car keys in the kitchen, not on the coffee table, not beside the door. It took two extra minutes to search the house top to bottom before I found them, on the nightstand in the bedroom.

I was out the door and headed to the car before I remembered the grocery list. Another trip into the house to grab it off the fridge.

Finally, strapping the seatbelt across my chest, it hit me: "Did I turn down the thermostat?" One last sprint inside to confirm, yes, I had.

Ten minutes after we'd originally set out to leave, we pulled out of the driveway.

I felt like a crazy person. I complained to Jim, "I don't know what the problem is. I remember intending to turn down the heat, but I can't remember the moment when I actually did it. Same with the sunglasses. I remember walking in the house yesterday, but the moment when I set them down is completely gone. What is wrong with me?"

He shrugged back at me. "It's normal. Took me five minutes to remember where I'd put the keys."

And that was that. We went on with the day.



The place to run into people, in our little town, is the post office. It took me a while to adjust to the practice, (part of me was fine being the stranger-not-from-here,) but it's customary to stop and chat with anyone you half-recognize. Mostly you talk about the weather, how quickly this year is passing, whether you're ready for the coming of summer or winter, and, depending on the time of year, whether we're due for rain.

And I've noticed, in my non-scientific polling of post office conversations, that lately the standard answer to "How are you doing?" has changed. I have always relied on that old standby, "Good. How are you?" But I seem to have missed a major shift in word usage, because my "How are you?" is rarely answered with an agreeing "Good" anymore. Now, I'm much more likely to hear, "Oh, you know. Busy." or "Ugh. So Busy." Or a tired sigh and a shrug, suggesting that the "busy" is so obvious, who needs words for it?

I can't fault them for this change. When pressed for details, everyone sounds honestly exhausted. This woman has to take on an extra workload for a recently retired co-worker in the same week when her two children have both come down with some stomach flu. A harried-looking man is taking on every extra work shift he can get, hoping to cover Christmas expenses. Even the quiet older woman sighs and says she's spent 8 hours of every day of the past week babysitting for families around town. They all seem tired, worn down, and beyond caring whether they should answer a "How are you?" with anything but the truth.

I felt a bit harried, myself, on some of those occasions, but mine was typically the privileged busy-ness of having put off a few tasks too long—paying bills, lining up posts for the Blog section of our website, getting the oil changed. I always feel guilty about complaining that I'm "busy," when most of my stress is self-imposed, and then I feel guilty about suggesting that I'm not really busy—not like so many people around me. Isn't it a sort of bragging, after all, to admit to being the one not-that-busy person in the room?

Really, I've been having this same conversation since Elementary School. I can remember so clearly sitting on the Merry-Go-Round, one among a gaggle of little girls, when one girl (the Chief Girl, of course) says, in a perfect pantomime of her mother, "Oh, I'm so tired today. I didn't sleep at all last night." And each other girl rushing to jump in over each other, "I only slept six hours! Four hours! I'm so exhausted I almost fell asleep on the bus! I fell asleep in Math!" And I remember my bewilderment so clearly. Did I want to be tired? Was this a trick? I searched myself for signs of fatigue. Yeah, I was a little sleepy, I guess. But I had slept for most of the night before, had stayed awake through my classes.

Finally, I figured I should just keep my mouth shut. I nodded along with the others and hoped the next topic wouldn't be who could or couldn't do the splits.

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In college, it was an equation of lack of sleep plus number of pages to be written. "Oh God," I'd moan, "I've 20 pages to write today on five hours of sleep. What is this hell?" Cue the one-upmanship:

"You're telling me. I have three different lab reports and I was studying until 7am this morning."

"I have major exams in five different classes in the next two days, and I haven't had the time to a book."

"It turns out I was supposed to start this project a month ago, and it's due tomorrow. Here goes."

"I just realized. Tomorrow I'm supposed defend my senior thesis."

Why do we want to win that battle? To be the busiest, the farthest behind, the most exhausted? What is this cultural cachet we've put on stress and fatigue?

And what, especially, is behind the guilt we feel when we pause to relax?

When critics of the American work culture offer their suggestions to better balance our home and work lives, they often recommend more options for employees to work from home. And, on its face, it's a great suggestion. Workers can fit in the same amount of work, without the commute, and they will have hours more time to spend with their family.

But, for the most part, that isn't how working from home pans out. When a person is given the option of working from home, a level of guilt sets in. "The company is giving me this gift," they think, "a gift of more time with my family. I can't let them think I'm using this as an excuse to slack off. I need to work harder than ever!" And so they end up working longer hours and more days than if they'd kept coming into the office. Their family life is unlikely to improve as much as they'd hoped, given that the office has now followed them home and camped out in their living room, a constant presence, where before it might have been left behind in that hour-long commute. Not to mention, even for office-workers, the company has also camped out on their laptops and their phones, which beep ceaselessly at the worker regardless of whether he is sick, or she is on vacation, or he's just trying to have a moment right now with his kid.

You can't just not answer that phone. What will they think? They'll think you're relaxing on company time—and it's all company time now.

That feeling—constantly having something to prove—has seeped through-out the culture. The need to prove what a good worker bee you are. Each day arrives with its series of tasks, and we bustle about on those tasks until the night comes and we joke darkly about how wonderful it would be to just have

a bath, read a book, drink a glass of wine. Those who work from home, either for a company or else as a stay-at-home parent, push their productivity the most. They press into each conversation the fact that they haven't had time for a shower in days, or a moment to think in months, because they're afraid you might not believe them. They're afraid you might think they've been slacking off on the job—lying around, sleeping, eating regular meals, showering. And they think you will judge them for that.

I feel it myself, because we work on the paper from home. I feel the guilt that accompanies those moments when I'm not "productive." Those moments when Joe or Susan, or whomever, from the post office, might see me and think I'm being lazy. Unfortunately, I'm lazy as a lizard by nature. So the guilt is a frequent companion, and it's assuaged only by spending another few days bustling around, regardless of how many tasks I actually need to complete.

I picture, sometimes, that analogy of the duck on the pond—calm and present above the water, all the activity below the surface. Usually, when I picture it, it's because I feel like the opposite of that duck. It's when I feel as if all my activity is a flurry on the surface—running around, checking off tasks—and below water, I've lost my ability to even work at paying attention to what I'm doing. I run, mid-task, into a room, and then stop, confused as to why I'm there. I'm running to gather myself so that I can leave the house, and I can't find anything and I can't remember clearly anything I've done that morning.

And those are the moments when I have to remind myself that I'm being an idiot. It doesn't matter if I only get three loads of laundry done today. I can do the rest tomorrow. It doesn't really matter that I answer all the emails when I see them, at 9pm. We're not talking about Sacramental Duties, here. They can wait until morning. Getting a few things done each day is a good thing, sure. Making progress on all those tasks feels good in its own way. But all of us need to recognize that some of our time is just that—our time. It belongs to us. And it's unconscionable for the greater world to demand that time too. Not only is there nothing wrong with letting a few of those tasks fall to the next day, to Monday, to when you're back from vacation. It would be considered wrong not to let them.

And what should happen if someone sees you enjoying yourself, stretched out reading a book, taking a nap? Will they judge you? Maybe. But maybe they'll have to think to themselves, "Why is it so decadent, really, to be able to read a book?" And maybe they'll go home and tell their cell phone to stuff it, and finally take that bath.



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# Point Blank 'Was'

*with apologies to Mister Faulkner*  
Damon Falke

It should be difficult for any of us to write about where we grew-up, to write about where we call home, or where we once called home. There are the expected trappings of sentiment and the near constant questioning of ourselves over how things really were. But then similar to telling a story, we might go ahead anyway, accepting the risk.

I came to Moab as a young boy, not yet a teenager. I spent the remainder of my youth in the town, and then spent another decade coming in and out of the first place I called home. The start though was 30 years ago. My father was a Baptist preacher, so in theory my family could have ended up any place. That's in theory, however. In prayer there was no other place that my father or family could have gone. So we came up from Texas, and for me, then, Moab was another world, and I do not mean the town and surrounding desert were interesting or made for some kind of an awakening—though perhaps these things were true—but I mean Moab at that time opened another world. My understanding of worlds tells me that there are other worlds to claim, provided another world is found, and Moab was such a world to be found and one that can no longer be claimed. The valley I looked at those years ago is no longer possible to see. That is a plain fact. The valley, as it was then, no longer exists.

**...there are other worlds to claim, provided another world is found, and Moab was such a world to be found and one that can no longer be claimed. The valley I looked at those years ago is no longer possible to see. That is a plain fact. The valley, as it was then, no longer exists.**

And two days after my family arrived in Moab, I went on my first walk through the town. There was one fast-food chain, one small grocery store, one drug store that I remember, a couple of

gas stations and a place called the Western Grill or The Westerner. I'm not sure which anymore. I remember The Westerner because after I got lost the diner was the first place I noticed where maybe I could've asked someone for directions. I looked in the front windows and determined this was not a place for a child to ask for anything. Probably someone would have helped me, some cowboy, some rancher, some hand could have given me an idea of where I was and where I was going, but then I didn't ask. I was, after all, a child. Although I didn't go into the diner, I told

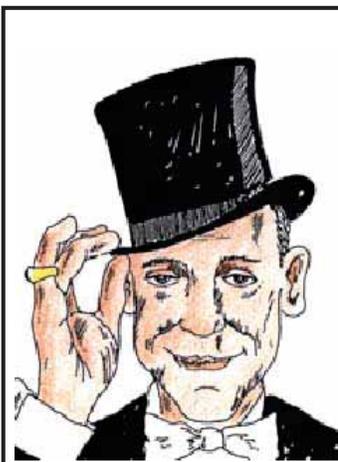
myself that one day I would eat eggs and drink coffee there, and I did, eventually. Otherwise, I went on my way.

Perhaps like everyone who comes to Moab, I was captured by the panoramic sweep of the place. But what I think about now when I consider my beginnings in the town is how I began to look close at things in a world. I noticed weeds growing from cracks in sidewalks. I noticed how few cars were on Main Street. I noticed the waxy greens of cottonwood leaves, which I had never seen in Texas. In part, the town invited this habit of looking, but maybe we all look more closely at those beginnings and endings that shape us.

There are moments that trigger before and after into certain experiences and even entire epochs of our lives. Moab, for me, was a place of beginnings and

endings. It was a place of actualities and things hoped for—some curious mixture of facts and what any of us might wish for when looking back at our lives and where we lived, where we grew up, and where we became what we did or did not become. Moab was that beginning for me, a start into a place now gone. That's not sentiment either. That's what William Faulkner might have called "was." And I like that notion. Moab became my was.

*Damon Falke's most recent work, Now at the Uncertain Hour, was performed by Square Top Theater Company with a grant from New York Council on the Humanities. His work has appeared on the Reflections West radio program and in numerous literary journals. His recent novella, By Way of Passing, is published by Shechem Press. He lives abroad.*



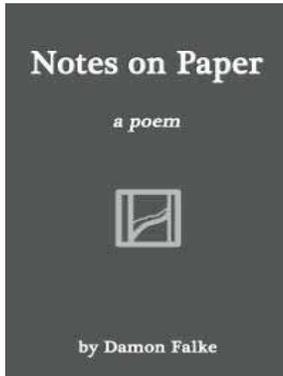
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*and really it never can be, the narrator bids us survey our own memories, taking time in the present for the winds, and the words, that move the world.*

## NOTES ON PAPER DAMON FALKE

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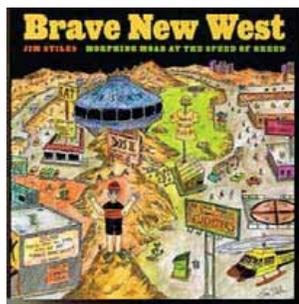
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*He says he writes elegies for the landscape he loves, that he is "hopelessly clinging to the past." I would call Stiles a writer from the future.*

*Brave New West is a book of import because of what it chooses to expose."*

Terry Tempest Williams

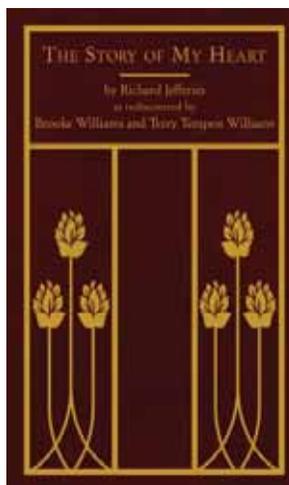
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## Back of Beyond Books



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Brooke and Terry Tempest Williams came across a copy of British nature writer Richard Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart* in a small Maine bookstore. The beautiful volume intrigued the couple and inspired a journey: they traveled to England in order to learn more about the 19th-century nature essayist, to wander the countryside which so inspired and captivated him. Delving into this love letter to nature strengthened and refreshed Terry and Brooke's relationship with each other and with the natural world.

Originally published in 1883, *The Story of My Heart* explores the existence of a "soul-life" as Jefferies experienced while wandering in England. With an introduction by Terry and essays by Brooke alongside Jefferies' original work, these two beloved writers and environmentalists contemplate dilemmas of modernity, the intrinsic need for wildness, and what it means to be human in the 21st century. Scott Slovic, editor of *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, provides the afterword.

Terry and Brooke will be reading and signing from the book here on December 1, 7pm.

[www.backofbeyondbooks.com](http://www.backofbeyondbooks.com)

# "LONELY ARE THE BRAVE" ...REVISITED #1

BASED ON EDWARD ABBEY'S BOOK, 'BRAVE COWBOY,' WE RETURNED TO THE ORIGINAL NEW MEXICO FILM LOCATIONS, TO SEE HOW MUCH HAS CHANGED IN 'DUKE CITY.'

*NOTE: This is a story about the film 'Lonely are the Brave,' based on the book, 'Brave Cowboy,' by Edward Abbey and my efforts to find, in 2014, the original film locations from the 1961 production. In searching for those sites, I did not initially seek additional information from other sources; I wanted to find these locations—or at least attempt to—on my own. In most cases I was successful, but other scenes stumped me. If you know the Albuquerque area and can offer additional information, or corrections, I welcome your observations. Finally, this story will only have meaning to you if you've seen the film. If you haven't...stop. Rent or buy the DVD and watch it. Then come back here for the rest of the story---volume one.....JS*

I was a kid, maybe ten or eleven and at home alone one evening with a bowl of popcorn and the tv. I'd turned the channel to NBC to catch that week's presentation of "Saturday Night at the Movies." It was a western, a film I'd never heard of, 'Lonely Are The Brave,' starring Kirk Douglas and Walter Matthau. As the opening scene played out, I assumed it was set in the Old West, that it was another 'Wyatt Earp/Gunsmoke' kind of movie. But when Douglas, as 'Jack

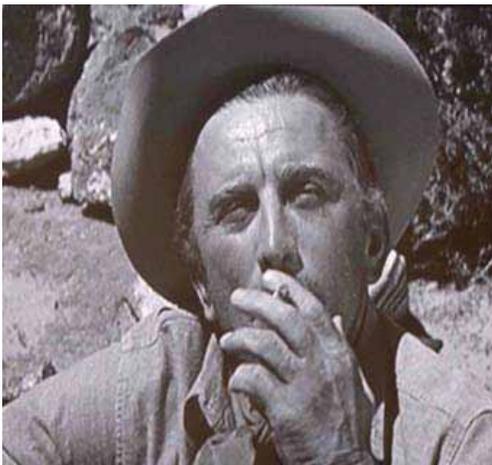
Burns,' leans back to savor his hand rolled smoke and offer a few soothing words to his horse Whiskey, the desert silence is disrupted by something out of place. Burns reluctantly lifts his eyes to the sky, not out of surprise but bitter resignation, to the sight of a squadron of screaming jet aircraft, their contrails fouling a faultless New Mexico sky.



Why, as a ten year old, did all this resonate so deeply with me? For the next two hours, I sat transfixed by the story, by Burns' loathing of a society hellbent on destroying everything he held sacred, and his solitary escape attempt over the mountain, by the film's disturbing last scene. Somehow, for reasons I still can't explain—except that maybe this is how my DNA was wired from birth—I came to identify with the film and Jack Burns in a profound way—it would shape my life.

More revelations lay ahead...

A decade later, I had finally seen the West, first with my family, and later on my own. As a young adult, it was my obsession. I knew it would become my home. Along the way, I discovered the author Edward Ab-



***"Basically you're still an easterner..."***

***A Westerner likes open country so he has to hate fences and the more fences there are, the more he hates them...It's true. You ever notice how many fences there are getting to be? And the signs they got in 'em... No hunting. No fishing. Private property. Closed area. Get moving. Go away. Get lost. Drop dead..."***

This story wasn't taking place in 1882...this was 1962---the "Modern West," and Jack Burns was trapped in it. The film was about a world he loved—his beloved West—but a world that was fast spinning out of control. Early in the film, Burns tries to explain himself:

*"Basically you're still an easterner...A Westerner likes open country so he has to hate fences and the more fences there are, the more he hates them...It's true. You ever notice how many fences there are getting to be? And the signs they got in 'em...No hunting. No fishing. Private property. Closed area. Get moving. Go away. Get lost. Drop dead...And they got those fences that say: 'This side's jail and that's the street.' Or 'here's Arizona and that's Nevada.' Or 'this is us and that's Mexico.'*

bey, and I read 'Desert Solitaire' again and again. Trapped for the time being in Kentucky, I still kept my watch on mountain time. And I sought out other Abbey books; I learned of a recent collaboration with the great photographer Philip Hyde.

I was as broke as I've ever been but somehow found the \$23 I needed to buy Abbey and Hyde's 'Slickrock.' I opened the large format book to the end piece, to the author biographies. There was a photo of Ed, the first I'd ever seen...I thought, 'yep, that's just how I thought he'd look.' I scrolled down the text, which cited some of his novels. I read, "including 'Brave Cowboy, upon which the film 'Lonely Are The Brave' was based." Of course...the complete circle. It was perfect.

\*\*\*

In the years following that first viewing of 'Lonely are the Brave,' the only way to see it again was to keep a close eye on the tv movie listings; there was no chance then, that the film would re-appear in theaters. Even after the Age of VCRs brought films into our living rooms, it wasn't until 1992 that Universal finally released the film as a video cassette, modified of course, to fit the small screen. 'Lonely are the Brave' was finally released on DVD in 2009, in its original wide-screen format.

Once I could watch the film on demand, the landscape of that film became as familiar to me as my own backyard. I had learned years earlier that the setting of the film, in and around Duke City, New Mexico, was and always has been, in fact, a moniker for Albuquerque and environs. But I always had to remind myself that the 'West' Jack Burns longed for, and the changes that had chased him up the side of the Sandia Peak occurred years ago. I first laid eyes on the American Southwest years after Burns lamented its death. If Burns feared all was lost in 1962, what would he think of the land now in 2014? And more specifically, what had happened to the very ground Burns had sought refuge in, and even employed as his 'escape route' from civilization and the long arm of the law, so many years ago?

I decided to go back to New Mexico and have a look.

**LONELY ARE THE BRAVE...SCENE 1...Camp**

The opening scene of the film unfolds on the scrub desert below The Volcanoes, or the Three Sisters, on the far west edge of town. Finding them is easy—they're visible from practically any point in the valley. Finding the exact location is more difficult.

For years, I've been photographing 'Then & Now' or 'Before & After' images. It's always a matter of finding two or more geographic features, at varying distances from your vantage point, and aligning them in relation to each other and to the photographer. This scene led us north of the Three Sisters, up Unser Blvd to Rainbow Blvd and the Volcano Vista high School complex.

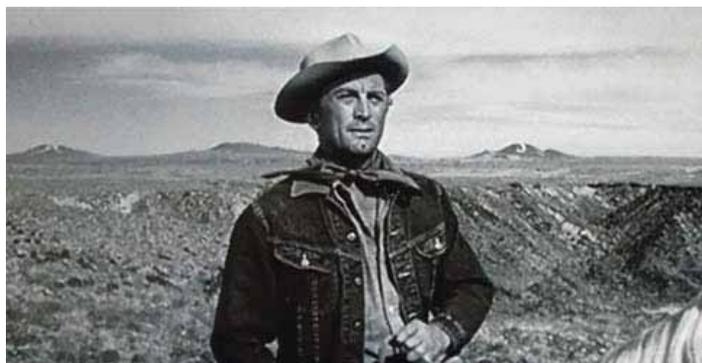
Just beyond the parking lot, Tonya and I spotted a very old dirt road. At a point a quarter mile west of the pavement, we found a junk yard of sorts. It was near here that the first scene of the film was shot. The view to the Volcanoes is still remarkably the same. It is perhaps the only part of the landscape, however, that is still intact. On all sides, housing projects are moving in, getting closer by the month. Our Google street view map, in fact, failed to show some of the new paved roads that have been added in just the past couple of years. Soon Jack Burns' campsite will be lost to suburbia...



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**SCENE 2...the Volcanoes.**

Still just east of The Volcanoes, this film location lies within the boundaries of Petroglyph National Monument, a 12,000 acre federally protected area on the west side of Albuquerque and south of the opening scene by a couple of miles. We parked at the Monument parking lot and followed a heavily marked designated trail that, in fact, was edged by a steel barrier. The trail clung to the bottom of a rocky talus slope and seemed determined to keep us from getting on top of the mesa where we needed to be. We had no choice but to duck under the railing and pick our way through the rocks to the mesa above. As we faced the Volcanoes, it became apparent that the film site we sought was on the far side of the mesa, on the other side of the horseshoe, as it were. An hour later, as we studied images from the film that I'd printed before we left, we finally came within inches of the spot. On this day, Tonya filled in for Kirk Douglas.



We made our way back to the road via the far side of the horseshoe mesa. When we ducked under the fence on the park boundary we realized we'd been in a 'CLOSED AREA,' and that entering the monument at this point was restricted by the National Park Service. We couldn't miss

# 'LONELY ARE THE BRAVE' REVISITED

the irony here. Had it not been for its national monument status, parts of this area might have been developed commercially, or for more residential sprawl. But even with the protection, Burns would have found himself in even more legal hot water for entering a national monument closed area--pursued, not just by the sheriff, but by eager law enforcement rangers from the NPS.

### SCENE 3...The Mystery Highway

If there is one scene in the film that stumped us, at least while we were there, it was the highway crossing by Jack and his horse. Pulling stills from the film, we could identify a busy four lane highway, the Sandias in the background and a truck stop in the middle distance. A prominent irrigation ditch bordered the highway and it appeared to bend right as it went north. We considered both 2nd and 4th streets as possibilities, but could never get the foreground to align properly with the Sandias.



We pursued one clue that offered an interesting side note. As Burns attempted to cross the highway, a billboard is visible in the background. We could make out the words 'Cavalier Motel,' and a Google search found an image of an old post card of the motel in its heyday. The card provided us an address and we discovered that the motel had long ago been torn down. But as we looked more closely at the business that resides there now, we incredibly found a remnant of the original sign.



**But as we looked more closely at the business that resides there now, we incredibly found a remnant of the original sign.**

Another clue to the location was a cemetery that appeared in the same scene, adjacent to a dirt road that Burns followed after he'd made his dangerous highway crossing on Whiskey. But we could not find the cemetery. Later, after we were home, I may have found it after all, via a Google street view. We've included a Google image of the cemetery and a still from the film for comparison. If they're one and the same, it may be that our mystery highway was once US 85 and has been so completely consumed by I-25, that no trace of the original road survives.



**If they're one and the same, it may be that our mystery highway was once US 85 and has been so completely consumed by I-25, that no trace of the original road survives.**

### SCENE 4...The Bondi Hacienda

To find the location of the Bondi home, we realized it was far closer to the Sandias than we'd first imagined. In fact, the small adobe home was near the Tramway Road. Someone once told me that the tram was under construction during the filming and the crew was able to gain access to several film locations that would have previously been impossible to reach. The area, like most of ABQ is fast filling with new subdivisions. The 'before & after' view we offer here is as close as we could get, though the actual spot might very well be in the middle of somebody's Great Room. We could find no trace of the little Bondi home as it appeared in the film, but we did spot one adobe home, very near the "Bondi place," that bears some resemblance to the original, though it has been greatly expanded and 'improved.'

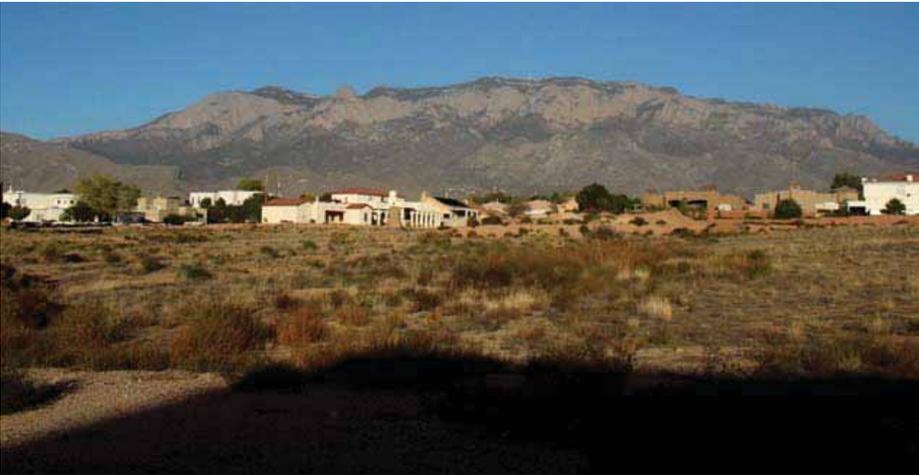




**SCENE 5...The Foothills & the Abandoned Cabin**

This is where things really got depressing. In the film, Burns escapes from jail, after breaking in to it and is unable to convince his pal Bondi to escape with him. Hearing the news, Sheriff Bondi stares east to the Sandias and speculates, "Cowboy, I bet you're above the foothills already." And that's exactly where Burns rides to make his escape—up the foothills to the top of Sandia peak, where "a carpet of pine needles, all the way to Mexico," awaits him.

In the 1961 production, Burns and Whiskey ride across open land and pinyon-juniper forest toward the mountain. The view is wide-open and in the distance, Albuquerque clings to the river valley below.



Today, the open space is disappearing fast. The open plain, the long rise from the river to the rugged terrain below Sandia Peak, is a maze of homes, and clearly many of them have been built in the last five years...Albuquerque's east side is exploding, almost as rapidly as the sprawl to the west.

The area, like most of ABQ is fast filling with new subdivisions.

The 'before & after' view we offer here is as close as we could get, though the actual spot might very well be in the middle of somebody's Great Room.

But while the topography of the long sloping plain toward the mountain offered little resistance to development, the complicated, boulder strewn geography below the peak should have made the construction of new McMansions more difficult...

next page...

## ROGUES' GALLERY

My 27 years at Rocky Mountain University...

**T. WINSTON MOJO**

*In the tradition of literary bureaucrats Kafka, Bukowski and Miller, T. Winston Mojo takes the reader on a journey into the abyss of institutional smallness. Everybody knows that politics at the university are so vicious because the stakes are so small. Mojo's real-life gauntlet of villains at Rocky Mountain University in Big Rock, Colorado, is an exploration into just how small those stakes can be.*

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# 'LONELY ARE THE BRAVE' REVISITED



**The difficulty of the terrain only makes it more desirable for the wealthy few who can take on the challenge of building a home where none should be allowed.**

What a foolish statement, and I should know better than that by now. The difficulty of the terrain only makes it more desirable for the wealthy few who can take on the challenge of building a home where none should be allowed. Albuquerque's most extravagant—some might say obscene—residential structures now mark—or mar-- Jack's escape route.

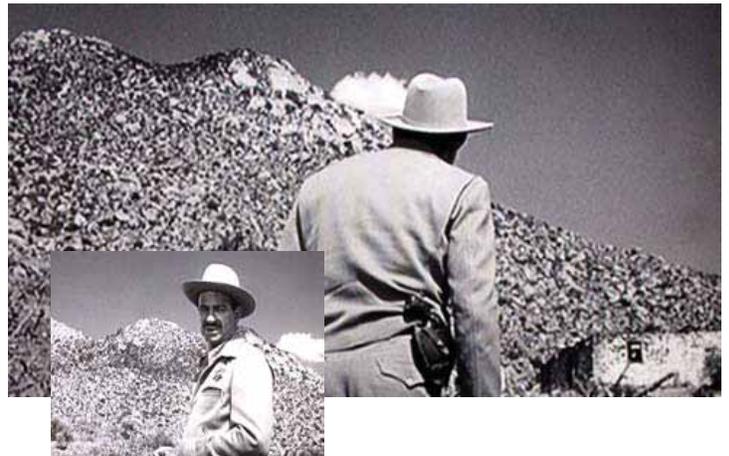


**In 2014, a mountain lion wouldn't stand a chance here.**

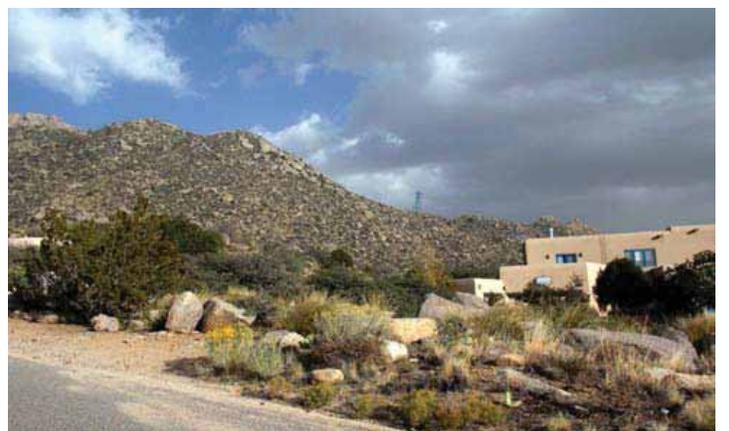
It seemed like such a quiet place in 1962. And in the film, he pauses near an abandoned adobe and stone cabin to water his horse and pause for reflection. Burns finds a comfortable place in the shade, already showing relief as he moves farther and farther away from the city. And despite signs that the law is getting closer, there is comfort in being back in the wilderness, as it was meant to be. As Jack saddles his horse, he sees a cougar perched on a boulder above him. He eyes the mountain lion with respect and appreciation. It's the human predators that worry him.



In 2014, a mountain lion wouldn't stand a chance here. The old derelict cabin is gone, replaced by a rash of trophy homes, some gated, and all of them ridiculously over-built and seemingly in competition for a page in 'Architectural Digest.' A quick Zillow check showed several homes in the area for sale, ranging in price from \$800,000 to \$1.25 million. I don't think many of Sandia Height's residents would look at Jack Burns as anything more than riff raff...a saddle tramp trespassing on their property.



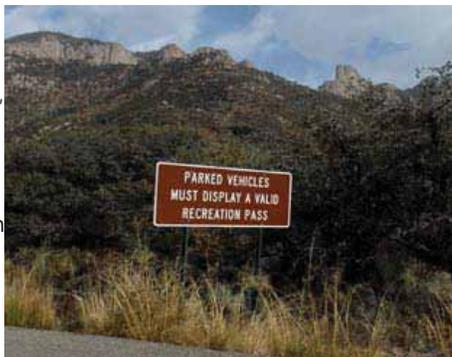
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Between the McMansions, up in the foothills, is a recreation area and on the day we were there, the parking lot was full. A bulletin board listed those pesky rules and regulations that Burns despised. And a road sign warned each approaching vehicle:



*PARKED VEHICLES MUST DISPLAY VALID RECREATIONAL PASS.*

I wonder if Whiskey would count as a vehicle.

\*\*\*

Duke City has changed since 1956, when Abbey wrote the novel, or 1962 when the story came to the screen. If Jack Burns found the city uninhabitable then, what would he think of Albuquerque and the American Southwest now? And what happens to people like Jack in 2014? Where do they go to escape the world today?....

*"...over the great four-lane highway...the traffic roared and whistled and thundered by, steel, rubber, and flesh, dim faces behind glass, beating hearts, cold hands—the fury of men and women immured in engines."*



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**If Jack Burns found the city uninhabitable then, what would he think of Albuquerque and the American Southwest now? And what happens to people like Jack in 2014? Where do they go to escape the world today?**

That's Abbey and 'Brave Cowboy' in 1956. He was always ahead of his time. But it must have never given him any comfort.

*POSTSCRIPT: We call this 'volume 1' because there are other film locations we'd like to visit in the future that we were unable to see on this visit. A late afternoon dust storm that reduced visibility almost to zero and shorter days cut our time short. So look for 'volume 2' at some point, hopefully by next summer....JS*

# 'JACK BURNS: AN ABBEY FICTIONAL CHARACTER FROM TWO DIMENSIONS'

—SCOTT THOMPSON

*"We might expect a peculiar change in the mentality of the world in the next fifty to one hundred years."*

— Carl Jung, 1929

I believe that Jack Burns, a character in several of Edward Abbey's novels, is in effect a time traveler from the pre-agricultural world. The hunter-gatherer societies that inhabited that world thrived for nearly 200,000 years and constituted the basic environment of human evolutionary adaptation. In duration they dwarf the last 5,000 years of agriculture-based human civilization ("syphilization" is what Ed called it).

I also believe that humanity is destined to reclaim salient features of those pre-agricultural societies, whether we do so by our own choice or because we are hammered into it by a long series of ecological disasters.

So Jack Burns is also a time traveler from humanity's future.

He first appeared in Abbey's 1956 novel, *The Brave Cowboy*: "He was a young man, not more than thirty. His neck was long, scrawny, with a sharp adamsapple and corded muscles; his nose, protruding from under the decayed brim of the [cowboy] hat, was thin, red, aquiline and asymmetrical, like the broken beak of a falcon. He had a small mouth with dry lips, and a chin pointed like a spade, and his skin, bristling with a week's growth of black whiskers had the texture of cholla and the hue of an old gunstock." (p.6.)

In the novel Burns rode his temperamental mare Whiskey into Duke City, New Mexico, in order to rescue his close friend Paul Bondi from jail; where he was sent for refusing to register for the draft. Burns engineered his own arrest in order to help Paul break out, but his friend had already decided to serve out his sentence. Burns then escaped on his own and outran the Sheriff and his deputies on a local mountain range, only to be crushed by a tractor-trailer loaded with privies when Whiskey panicked crossing a highway at night.

Abbey's 1980 futuristic western *Good News* was set in Phoenix following the collapse of the dominant political system. Burns was a one-eyed old man, once again on a rescue mission. He and his Hopi friend Sam Banyaca rode into the smoldering ruins of the city to find Burns' son, an officer in the army of a local tyrant who sought to re-establish a mass hierarchical social order. Burns failed to persuade his son to leave and was promptly shot down in an impulsive attempt to kill the tyrant, once his son had refused. Oddly, Burns' body vanished before the tyrant's soldiers could bury it.

**I believe that Jack Burns, a character in several of Edward Abbey's novels, is in effect a time traveler from the pre-agricultural world. The hunter-gatherer societies that inhabited that world thrived for nearly 200,000 years and constituted the basic environment of human evolutionary adaptation.**

**Jack Burns is also a time traveler from humanity's future.**

So: two novels, two rescue attempts, two failures. And Burns was killed, or apparently so, both times.

Usually, that doesn't make for a memorable character.

Yet there was something about Burns that was strangely appealing and also disquieting: for example, the way Jerry Bondi, Paul's wife in *The Brave Cowboy*, reacted to him: "She was having trouble with her thoughts; this man Burns, whose mere physical presence was so reassuring, and whose love and loyalty she could never have doubted, yet made her feel for some reason a shade uncomfortable: in his sombre eyes, in his slow smile and the lines of his face, in the firm rank masculinity of his body, she thought she perceived a challenge. A challenge in his every word, every motion." (p. 30.)

Perhaps she had such a pronounced reaction to him because he possessed ancient human qualities that rang true on an intuitive level, but that threatened to demolish her social conditioning. Qualities that contemporary urban literary critics ("literary crickets" is what Ed called them) were much too dense to fathom.

I'd like to discuss some of these qualities.

Burns was striking in that he had no emotional connection to the abstract notions and institutions of the mass culture that surrounded him. It was not that he was disloyal to them, strictly speaking: he was not a card-carrying rebel or revolutionary. Such institutions were simply irrelevant to him.

Several examples from *The Brave Cowboy* stand out. Let's begin with a conversation between Burns and a police booking officer following his arrest for a fight in a local bar:

"What's your address?" said the booking officer.

"I don't have none," Burns mumbled hoarsely.

"You got to have an address."

"I don't. I just wander around wherever I feel like."

...

"What's your occupation?" asked the booking officer.

Burns looked at him. "Cowhand," he said; "shepherd; game poacher."

"Which is it?"

"All of them. What difference does it make?"

The booking officer typed for a minute.

"Where's your papers?" he said.

"My what?"

"Your I.D. — draft card, social security, driver's license."

"Don't have none. Don't need none. I already know who I am." (pp.71-72.)

Imagine what it would feel like to shred every card you have in your wallet: credit cards, voter registration card, library card, driver's license, social security card, professional membership cards, and so on. Imagine how doing that would affect your way of life and how it could alter your subconscious picture of who you are.

I've had dreams myself about beginning to accomplish something important and then losing my wallet and going into a panic. Our collectively defined identity has a powerful grip on us.

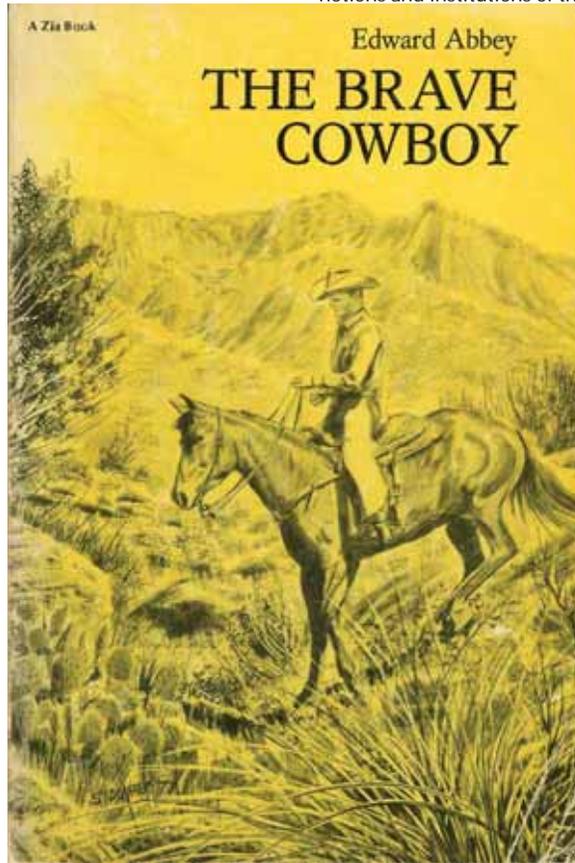
Here is a dialogue in the jail between Burns and his compadre Paul Bondi:

Bondi: "...I composed a little pledge or prayer...Would you like to hear it?"  
"Yes," Burns said.

"It went like this: 'I shall never sacrifice a friend to an ideal. I shall never desert a friend to save an institution...Great nations may fall in ruin before I shall sell a friend to preserve them...'"

...

"I'll not argue it," Burns said; "I like it; I think I thought of it before you." (p. 109.)



Group size matters. I suspect that when an organization is large enough to start issuing membership cards, that's when – strangely – it's at risk of selling out its own members.

Such behavior by large groups is unfortunately commonplace, and that may be a reason why mass societies are filled with disillusioned people, and also why their institutions are plagued by chronic public mistrust. Examples: (1) an ethical employee reports misconduct within a corporation or non-profit agency and is fired and scapegoated in order to protect the organization's public image; (2) a professional organization undermines its own objectivity by taking huge sums of money from pharmaceutical companies, despite the earnest protests of its more alert members; (3) legislators who are supposed to represent the public's best interests consistently give priority to the demands of lobbyists for multinational corporations that finance their election campaigns.

By contrast, pre-agricultural societies were comprised of small bands, typically made up of only a few families. It has taken me a long time to appreciate how resilient and emotionally healthy such a seemingly frail social framework is. This is because the well-being of an individual member of the group is much more likely to be congruent with the well-being of the group itself, and because the leaders are less apt to be emotionally distant, hierarchical figures. So that the people are far more likely to trust them. Deeply. That is the key.

Burns seemed to know this.

The following scene from *The Brave Cowboy* is relevant to dealing with these organizations:

*"When the arroyo turned he rode up out of it and across the lava rock again, through scattered patches of rabbitbrush and tumbleweed, until he came eventually to a barbed-wire fence, gleaming new wire stretched with vibrant tautness between steel stakes driven into the sand and rock, reinforced between stakes with wire staves. The man [Burns] looked for a gate but could see only the fence itself extended north and south to a pair of vanishing points, an unbroken thin stiff line of geometric exactitude scored with a bizarre, mechanical precision over the face of the rolling earth. He dismounted, taking a pair of fencing pliers from one of the saddlebags, and pushed his way through banked-up tumbleweeds to the fence. He cut the wire – the twisted steel resisting the bite of his pliers for a moment, then yielding with a soft sudden grunt to spring apart in coiled tension, touching the ground only lightly with its barbed points – and returned to the mare, remounted, and rode through the opening, followed by a few stirring tumbleweeds."* (pp. 11-12.)



**The remarkable thing about Jack Burns is that he was indifferent to both the ideological claptrap that keeps the mainstream growth n' profit system going and the ideological claptrap of leftist social activism ("chickenshit liberalism" is what Ed called it).**

To me, cutting the rigid extension of barbed wire is a metaphor for severing our emotional ties to the self-serving, sometimes self-destructive, norms and proclivities of large, collective organizations (as opposed to violating property rights in a literal sense).

I think it's significant that in this scene Burns pulled out his fencing pliers only after he'd tried to find a gate. This suggests that he was willing to function within the structure of mass systems as long as he could pursue his way of life: as he put it, to "wander around wherever I feel like."

But for each of us, as was the case for Abbey himself, the moment of conflict arrives when the expansion of the system's functioning closes off all the gates, and when obedience to that system means that something inside us will die.

What then? Our culture only offers its beaded string of threats: don't make waves, don't bite the hand that feeds you, you gotta go along to get along, don't be a trouble maker. But if we do give in a lassitude begins to work its way through us like a fungus. The movie version, *Lone Star*, aptly depicts the result: the Sheriff pursuing Burns has a visceral contempt for his own compliant, lazy deputies, while admiring Burn's boldness - in spite of himself.

But what does cutting through the expanse of barbed wire mean if it isn't just

simple-minded defiance? What else is involved?

A peculiar clue comes from the following conversation between Burns and his amigo Sam Banyaca toward the end of the novel *Good News*:

*Banyaca: "...Listen, boss, I learned one thing at Harvard. There's one thing wrong with always fighting for freedom, and justice, and decency. And so forth."*

*Burns looks up at the blazing sky. 'Only one thing? What's that?'*

*'You almost always lose.'*

*The old man laughs, reaches out, and squeezes Sam's near arm. 'Well, hellfire, Sam, what does that have to do with it?'"* (p. 222.)

The remarkable thing about Jack Burns is that he was indifferent to both the ideological claptrap that keeps the mainstream growth n' profit system going and the ideological claptrap of leftist social activism ("chickenshit liberalism" is what Ed called it). Which also refuses to see the big picture.

Put another way, there's a canyon between doing what one can to change the system and expecting to get results on some kind of focused schedule. As a pre-agricultural person, Burns was all about the former and had virtually no concern about the latter.

This is a key point. Pre-agricultural humans were not liberal activists; the difference is that liberal activists can be as impatient to enact their social agendas as corporate CEOs are to jack up their quarterly profits. When we contrast the worldview of hunter-gatherer societies to that of our own culture, we see that the thinking of our liberals and conservatives is much closer than we usually imagine. Compared to either of them, hunter-gatherers might as well have been living in another solar system.

Briefly, here's why. When our forbears became farmers, they got enmeshed in time lines: that is, when the rains were due, when to plant the crops, when to harvest them, and so on. And later on with market prices. In industrial and technological societies, this has escalated into a bizarre fixation on numbers and clock time: on productivity, quarterly profits, and election cycles. Time is money and results are everything. People living in this box are obsessed with short-term accomplishments and can't see outside the lid.

Conversely, pre-agricultural people had no concern about measuring time. They were not in a hurry, because their universe was a timeless now. For that reason seeing a thousand years in a glance was a simple matter for them. They would marvel at our inability to do it.

In such a glance the first thing that becomes apparent is that our massively expanding economic system, as presently constituted, is absurdly unworkable; that it's as ephemeral as a thunderstorm. The thought of taking such a system seriously would make them shake their heads or burst into laughter.

The danger of our gotta-get-it-done tradition of social activism is that the flip side is despair. We're tempted to give up or compromise when we can't identify a near-time causal sequence that will give us satisfactory results. That's one of the prices we pay for our obsessive time-consciousness. No wonder when Sam raised the issue of losing, Jack Burns said, "Well, hellfire, Sam, what does that have to do with it?" Giving up or compromising weren't options for Burns because they weren't in his paradigm.

When we consider the approaching global warming fiasco, as well as the organized disinformation campaigns and public denial it's generated, Jack Burns may be a useful figure to contemplate. This is because of his willingness to persist against superior odds and in the midst of seemingly hopeless situations that shut down many a devoted activist. What made Burns' persistence possible, his secret in today's terms, was his cheerful indifference to results.

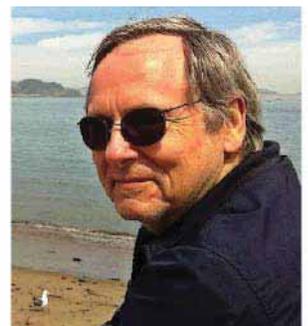
Burns' activist-like behaviors, if we can even use that term, did not arise from a commitment or some personal objective. It was primordial compared to that: he was simply living in the way that he enjoyed, and was willing to be killed in order to continue living that way. That abandon was what gave the man power, and was also what made liberal but conventionally-minded people like Jerry Bondi uncomfortable with him.

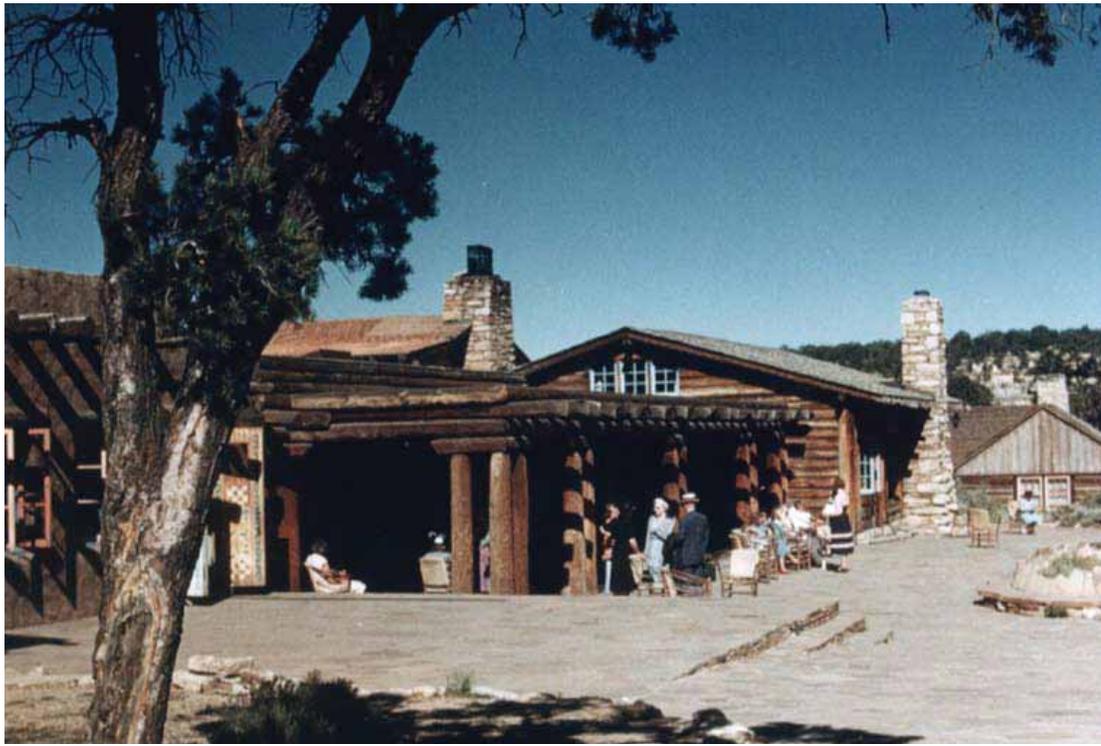
Have you noticed that when you're damn straight enjoying yourself, clock time vanishes? That's when there's a glimmer of the pre-agricultural world. We also get fleeting glimpses of it through comedy, which utilizes absurdity like a blowtorch to reveal the truth.

Jack Burns showed us how to cut through the barbed wire - which is our own discouragement and the temptation to compromise - and keep on riding.

**SCOTT THOMPSON is a regular contributor to *The Zephyr*.**

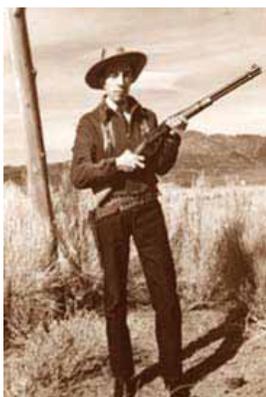
*He lives in Beckley, WV.*





THE  
BRIGHT  
ANGEL  
LODGE AT  
THE SOUTH  
RIM OF THE  
GRAND  
CANYON...  
1950

(AND BELOW 2014)



*HERB RINGER came West from his home in New Jersey in 1939. Camera in hand, Herb captured the American West, from the Canadian Border to the Rio Grande and from the Big Sur coast to the High Plains.*

*We believe Herb's collection of Life in the West is one of the finest. His work has been published in The Zephyr for 20 years. I am pleased finally, to offer Herb's photographs in color. We are also building a new 'album' of his work, elsewhere on this site.*

*My dear friend died on December 11, 1998...JS*

# new BACKBONE MEMBERS for April/May 2014

Bernard Cole Flagstaff AZ



Tim Steckline Spearfish SD

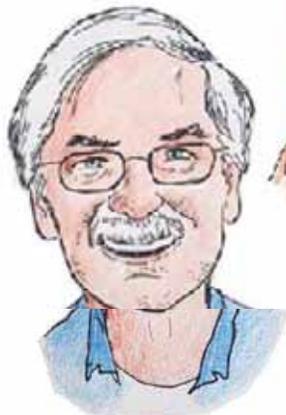


Richard Ingebretsen Salt Lake City, UT



Hope Benedict Salmon, ID

Tim Conrad Ogden, UT



Bill Stokes Saint Petersburg, FL



Jim Case Flagstaff, AZ

Jeff Stiles Stanton KY



And thanks to UN-TOONED Bill Gassaway Burns, TN



Al Cornett Slade KY



Sue Stiles Lexington KY

## THANKS ALSO TO

Omar Tatum AmeriCandy Co, Louisville, KY

Kathleen Raffoul Houston, TX

Justin Bendell Albuquerque, NM

John Feeny Boulder, CO

Karen Kennedy Marlborough, MA

catherine shank Moab, UT

Rex Peters Cottonwood, AZ

Julie Zych Milwaukee, WI

John O'Hara Berlin NJ

Wes Shook Bluff UT

Lewis Downey Salt Lake City, UT

Dale Lee Sandy, UT



Mike Marooney 'on the road'



Steve Jones Chicago IL

## BACKBONE #2

April/May 2014

# "more poets. fewer lawyers..." Ed Abbey

---Amy Brunvand

Art by MARY P. DONAHUE

## Western Tanager

A brilliant yellow bird with a scarlet head,  
A tanager, I mean, is sitting in the willows  
Singing,  
by the White River,  
singing

It is neither white nor whitewater,  
This muddy vein of life that flows placidly  
Through the hollowed desert where energy  
Comes straight from your college textbook  
Burning,  
gas and coal,  
burning

Stealing the power of this place for people  
In their faraway houses and automobiles  
Who will never even dream of this bird  
Glorious in his red hat and saffron robes  
Chanting,  
Om Tare Tuttare Ture Soha,  
chanting

With the sound of engines and rushing water  
And the distant thump, thump of drill rigs.  
Silly me! I know him! I met him before!  
Three years ago the tanagers came  
Migrating,  
through the city in huge flocks,  
migrating

Red and yellow birds with zebra wings,  
They had never come like that before,  
How astonished and delighted we were  
To see such beautiful winged creatures  
Flying,  
though our parks and backyards,  
flying

Then they were gone, but I have met them again  
Here by the drill pads and power plant, here in the  
willows  
Singing,  
by the White River,  
singing.



## Graham's Beardtongue

*Graham's beardtongue is an endemic plant found mostly in exposed oil shale strata of the Green River geologic formation. --U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service*

A bright pink snap  
dragon rooted in dull gray  
shale crouches over money  
in both pockets  
for whomever is greedy enough  
to squeeze blood from stone  
(A voice hisses,  
Love of money is the root...)

Who set this pug dog  
of a penstemon  
to guard the gates,  
lolling yellow tongue  
yippling puppy curses  
in the language of flowers?

We need a better dragon,  
hotter breath, sharper claws,  
harder scales coiled around the roots  
of the tree of life  
to keep the Earth from gaping open  
to shut this oily pit  
that threatens to swallow us whole.  
Or if you don't like those ones here's this one that is seasonally appropriate:

Correction

The blip  
That appeared  
Over Great Salt Lake  
On National Weather Service radar  
Yesterday evening

Was not  
As we previously reported  
A monstrous radioactive brine shrimp  
Risen from the murky depths of the lake  
Bent on wreaking vengeance  
For the ecological sins  
Of Salt Lake City.

In reality  
It was the heat imprint  
Of an enormous flock of birds  
On their annual southward migration  
Taking flight all at the same time  
Like a kite with a tail  
Fifty miles long.

Most likely  
They were tundra swans  
Although, since nobody was present  
To verify the species there is speculation  
That they may have been  
Eared grebes.



*Amy Brunvand is a librarian, writer, and part-time nature mystic from Salt Lake City, Utah. She agrees with Edward Abbey that the environmental movement needs more poets and fewer lawyers (even though some of her best friends are lawyers).*

*Mary Donahue grew up playing outside in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and moved to Logan, Utah at 18 for college. She is currently a professor of art at Chadron State College in the middle of nowhere NW Nebraska.*

NEW BACKBONE MEMBER for February-March 2014



Michael Cohen  
RENO, NV



Terry Weiner  
San Diego, CA



Craig Goodnight  
Grand Jct, CO



Scott Thompson  
Beckley, WV



Toni McConnell  
Flagstaff, AZ



Beau MacGregor  
Seattle, WA



Judy Fitzgerald  
Krup, Western Australia  
AUSTRALIA



Lynn Jackson  
Moab, UT

AND THANKS TO:  
Laurie Schmidt  
Fort Collins, CO

Doug Varn  
Oak Park, IL

Curtis Oberhansly  
Boulder, UT

Patrick O'Driscoll  
Denver, CO

Marilyn Hempel  
Redlands, CA

Eric Probasco  
Mount Pleasant, UT

Dennis Brown  
Telluride, CO

Greg Gneston  
Grand Junction, CO



Karllyn & John Brodell  
Jackson WY



ALSO NEW BUT UN-TOONED  
BACKBONE MEMBERS...

Eileen Caryl Anwood Springs, CO  
Fred Kahrl Woolwich, ME  
Rusty Wheaton Moab, UT

# THE DIMFORMATION AGE

from the desk of Ned Mudd,  
reporting from the crawlspace of history

*"If you look in the mirror and don't like what you see, don't blame the mirror."*  
Tao Jones

More or less full disclosure: This essay came into being thanks to my having perused Calvin Luther Martin's *The Way of the Human Being*. It's a whopper of a book deserving attention, not that I am the one to do it justice. Monsieur Martin's observations concern the intrinsically deep connections between humans and the kaleidoscope of what we call Nature. That many of his observations were seasoned by first hand experience adds gravity to his pithy tome.

On the other hand, what follows is my own interpretation and in no way should be seen as accurately reflecting the book's complexity and/or insights.....

We have become spectators in a theater of the absurd. Politics, religion, philosophy, materialism - all instruments of fragmentation, designed to split the world into pieces. A fragmented world needs suturing, or so we are told. For every fracture there is a ready-made poultice, even if the results are sham and fleeting.

For this surgery, they tell us that the price is right, the credit easy, the power of consensus being the implied warranty. We must only believe. And consent to relinquish who we are and accept the mantle of the New Tribe, where no one is anyone unless they are everyone.

Homogenization comes with a silent warning. To be a member of the New Tribe requires a blindness to the world-as-it-is. In return, we are afforded every fantasy. Yet, in the process, we forfeit the "awareness of wholeness." And find ourselves adrift in the cosmos.

**We have become spectators in a theater of the absurd. Politics, religion, philosophy, materialism - all instruments of fragmentation, designed to split the world into pieces. A fragmented world needs suturing, or so we are told. For every fracture there is a ready-made poultice, even if the results are sham and fleeting.**

The ubiquitous flicker of pixillated media both numbs and invigorates. In exchange for the sacrifice of our souls, our consciousness is channeled into a narrow band of programmed pseudo-reality. We are voyeurs inside the simulacrum of the New Myth. And this myth has been denatured, stripped of the throbbing gristle of unfettered spirit. Thanks to science, we have measurements to show us the way. And what we have lost.

Of course, no quantum measurement can be made without collapsing the probabilities. Measure, maya, illusion: the splintering of matter and spirit by the hammer of reason and time. The pieces are reconstituted and sold to any and all bidders, thus keeping the Game in perpetual motion. In the end, the rich are no samer than the poor. Perhaps even less so, as they have endless means to purchase their identities.

The New Myth is a vast tapestry of stories that tell no story. Except the stories of pain and pleasure, gain and loss, failure and redemption. If, by the end of the plot, we are redeemed, what are we redeemed from? The trickery of self-imposed displacement? Or do we, with a straight face, point to some invisible Out There as the instigator of our condition, and ignore that we are the thieves of our own souls?

These are difficult, perhaps even dangerous, questions to ask. They should be left for the experts to resolve. Unless we want an answer.

We say that time is money, and then pursue both commodities in a relentless whirlwind - the dog chasing its tail. Paradoxically, we enjoy wasting time, often to the point of killing it. We punch clocks, watch the clock, even try and beat the clock. We are obsessed with the mirage of time.

Due to a collective phobia about running out of time, we become possessive to the point where greed is considered an admirable mode of behavior. Entire institutions revolve around the axis of greed, propelled by an insatiable hunger for the acquisition of material objects. Power is the leverage, greed the fuel, money the abstract symbol of success. The New Myth resembles an emperor with no clothes, other than a corpulent balance sheet.

The cosmic Law of Thermodynamics requires a quid pro quo. Something gained requires something given. The dog never catches its tail, but receives a shekel for every full rotation. If the dog were to bite its own tail, would he find the victory worth the effort?

Time begins with the invention of the sun dial, and proceeds with haste. Tillers of the soil need assurance that the celestial realm is properly aligned, ready for this year's seed. But once the genie of time is out of the bottle, only the most ludicrous bribe can lure it back into captivity. We have become children of the furrows.

Legions of tillers bent their backs to the dictates of time and their celestial sky king, jump-starting the so-called agrarian revolution: a revolution which has no end, but becomes more sophisticated with the passage of time.

Agriculture is only cyclical in the abstract. A single minute is represented by the second hand imitating an hour. The invention of mathematics: counting the grain. The concept of work appears. A division of labor and leisure. Plant, tend, harvest, and rest. Until next time. Assuming the solar god shines his favor on next year's calories.

Four seasons, one cycle - spinning on towards the Great Harvest. Today's religions evolved from the marriage of plow, sun, and soil in a co-opting of the Old Myth. Priests look at the celestial clock in order for farmers to set their course. The Bear cult retreats



into deep hibernation, where Old Smokey sleeps amidst the campfires of the Dream Time.

The indigenous inhabitants of North America were forced into servitude by men bearing potatoes, guns, and small pox. The symbol of freedom, the Buffalo, was replaced by the genetically inferior cow. The infamous closing of the frontier was a result of the New Myth's requirement of uniformity - maps with lines, grids, and certainty. Law. You are here. Plant now. Keep your rows straight.

We no longer live in the Round. Modern lives are delineated by geometric determinism. We live and work in a rectangular world, watch rectangular screens, cheer as our vicarious tribes clash on rectangular fields. Four lines equals a perimeter, the boundary in which nothing wild can live. We die in rectangular hospital rooms, are buried in rectangular boxes, and are lowered beneath the ground into a rectangular hole.

Free roaming indigenous Americans followed the Roundness, accepting the cycle of the Gift and in turn reciprocated. Unlike the interlopers with their Good Book, the Old Tribe had no sky god directing the pageant of life like an omnipotent puppeteer in the Control Room in the Clouds. They saw the Great Spirit moving through rocks, wind, Elk, and across the waters. All were relations - Salmon, Horse, Bear. Respect and reciprocity kept the cycle in motion. The individual was only so in relation to the Whole.

The New Myth is predicated on a strange morbid fascination with eternity. The key to the Kingdom is a rejection of temporal life, a turning away from the biological shape-shifting of forms. The Old Myth is holistic, watching the Cosmos through a panoramic lens. The New Myth prefers to stare into the wrong end of a telescope, narrowing the view, imagining a just reward on the other side of the dark curtain. Death is the cost of eternity.

As one Yup'ik artist put it: "They sent us their missionaries and killed us with John 3:16." And the Yup'ik myths dissolved back into the void soon thereafter.

Stepping out of holism is to abandon the Other, which is ourselves. Holistically, we are Bear, Salmon, Raven, and Coyote. The dividing line is penetrable, crossed through. The cloak of identity isn't one's to possess, but to be worn until the shapes shift in accordance with the Great Mystery's unfathomable gyrations.

The hunt is a taking. We take a life and become what we have killed. In the final season, we give back our temporal mask and dance to a different frequency, always part of the song. A far cry from being yoked to the plow and our beasts of burden, our backs arched, praying for rain, sacrificing to an all-seeing angry father.

To lose one's Bearness is a serious breach of protocol. To forget one's kinship with Fox, Crow, or Crane, is to stray onto a path of existential confusion. There is no GPS to guide us on such a path. We are on our own. A lost people, seeking artificial cohesion, create holding patterns in churches, clubs, even digital social friendships. Virtual life for virtual people.

The Oglala, Cheyenne, and Nez Perce followed their own stars until those constellations were robbed of their light by men with superior hardware and numbers. None of America's indigenous People went gently into that dark night. The New Tribe was simply too formidable to repulse.

As the Old Myth dissolved, so too went Bear and Wolf, Salmon and Crane, Beaver and Bison. The hoop was broken by the rectangular powers, wielded by a people closed off from their own inner rhythms. Standing behind the symbol of their mythos, the bisected rectangle of the cross, these people came to conquer. And succeeded by spilling the Old Myth's blood, insulting the Mystery that had held the Earth intact for untold eons.

**Today, we are initiated into a culture of perpetual youth, relegated to whatever passes for fashion/identity. We stare into a menagerie of fickle identities and wonder who we are. A landscape of children in a game for adults.**

Today, we are initiated into a culture of perpetual youth, relegated to whatever passes for fashion/identity. We stare into a menagerie of fickle identities and wonder who we are. A landscape of children in a game for adults.

But the pursuit of happiness was never meant to be a game show. There is no Door Number 3, no Wheel of Fortune. The faster one runs, the more the scenery seems to speed up, always one step beyond. The Great Mystery is not a thing that can be possessed.

The awakened know they are being tricked, while dreamers look to the sky for answers. Do they see an infinite sparkle of stars, a magnificent blazing awareness? What are the stars thinking?

The songs of the Old Myth still echo within all beings. Much like a radio, one must adjust the tuner to find a signal. Those songs carry the dreams of Bear, Trout, Firefly and Skink. We live in a world of stories and Roundness. Where tree frogs become raccoons and fly away on gossamer wings. Where planets come and go in orbits leading to

the other side of a dark star.

An innumerable assemblage of suns cast photons into the Void, then explode in a final burst of fire. These explosions carry the stuff of matter. The shapes of things. We are those things. The boundaries are imaginary, much like the

convictions we defend, often with our own lives. Or someone else's life. We must not become casual with the Gift.

Salvation is not difficult to reach, nor particularly exclusive. It's simply a matter of looking and seeing. Roundness.  
Home.

*Notes: A nod to Paul Shepard's Coming Home to the Pleistocene; Candy Morton's Chief Joseph: Guardian of the People; Gary Snyder's Earth Household; S. C. Gwynne's Empire of the Summer Moon; Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History; Doug Peacock's Grizzly Years; Nanao Sakaki's Break the Mirror. And, of course, a bow to Calvin Luther Martin's The Way of the Human Being.*

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Moab, UT





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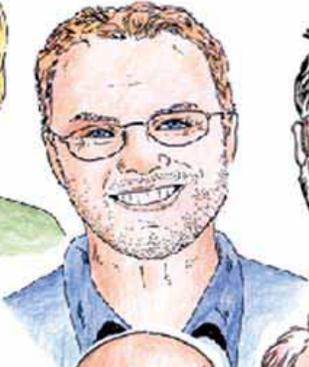



**STEVE BAIL & CATHY SEABOLD**  
Louisville KY



## THE BACKBONE....JUNE-JULY 2014

**GARY MEEKS**  
Price UT



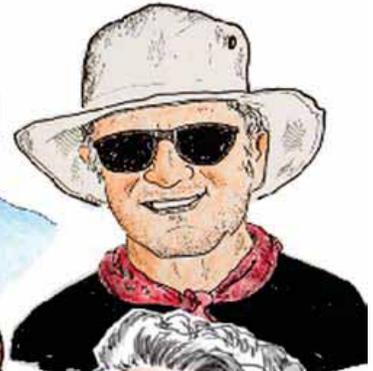
**IZZY NELSON**  
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Tulsa OK



**MARK GAEDE??**  
La Vanada CA



**CLARK TROWELL**  
Green Valley CA



**BRUCE BERGE**  
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Jerome AZ



also thanks to: MIKE FITZGERALD in Moab

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# Remembering WWII, The 'Bulge' & 'That Jerk' Patton

from a 1989 interview with Moabite ED McCARRICK

In December 1989, my friend Ed McCarrick recounted his World War II experiences with me in a recorded interview.

## December 7, 1941

I was in a store in Newark, N.J. buying candy when the news of Pearl Harbor came across on the radio. I was already registered for the draft. I'd done it the previous July and so I knew I was going to be in the Army. I decided I'd rather get in the Marines. I probably liked the uniform or something. I was a kid.

But my draft board wouldn't release me because they had to meet their quota. Maybe they did me a favor; if I'd been in the Marines, I might've been knocked off at Guadalcanal. Who knows?

So on February 10, 1942, I was in the Army. First I went to Camp Dix and then to Camp Polk, Louisiana. I had basic training with the Third Armored Division. After Basic we were getting different assignments and they were putting us in lines. The other lines had hundreds of men in them, and one line had about five. We thought maybe they were just going to ship us home. But it turned out to be a medical detachment. I had no background in it, but they decided to make me a medic. They sent us to a reconnaissance battalion, and as soon as we heard that, we thought, 'that's it—that's a suicide battalion.' We figured we didn't have a chance.

We stayed at Camp Polk for 13 months, and then went to the California desert for desert training for 5 months. We went there because of the fighting in Africa, but when that ended, they sent us back to Ft. Benning, Georgia. It was interesting meeting different guys from different parts of the country, but we were all doing the same thing, eating the same food. When we went to town, it was different-- you'd go to a restaurant, and in New Jersey, you'd never see fried chicken or hushpuppies or stuff like that.

From there we went to Camp Miles Standish in Massachusetts, which was an embarkation place. That was the most chicken outfit I ever saw in the Army because they made us walk in formation to go to chow. But usually you stayed there for four or five days and then got on a ship; but we stayed two weeks, and we wondered: What the Hell is going on? The Army is screwed up as usual. I'd finally gotten a pass to go to Boston, but when I hit the gate, they said our outfit's been alerted. You've got to go back.

They stuck us on trains and shipped us to Camp Shanks, New York. At Camp Shanks, nobody stayed more than 3 or 4 days, but we were there for a month. So again we all complained that the Army was screwed up as usual.

## June 6, 1944

Finally, we got on the Queen Mary in New York Harbor. It was June 6, 1944--D-Day. The Normandy Invasion. It turned out the reason our departure had been delayed was because the invasion had been delayed. There was actually no room over there on the British Isles to put us, until the invasion began and our soldiers started moving onto French soil. So really, the Army wasn't as screwed up as we thought.

Anyway there was about 15,000 of us on the Queen Mary. I was in a cabin made for two with about eight guys in there. It took six days, which really wasn't too bad: we could outrun any German submarine. We got to England and stayed at a place called Tidworth Barracks, which was near Andover and Salisbury.

Meanwhile hedgerow fighting was going on in France, and none of us wanted to be a part of that crap, although we didn't have much choice about it. We were in England less than a month when they took us down to South Hampton and put us on the L.S.T.s (landing ship tank) and that was when they made the breakthrough out of the hedgerows at St. Lo and we got off the boat and exploited it. We landed there on the Normandy Beaches where the invasion had taken place. We were to follow the breakthrough.



## Patton and the 7th Army

When we got to France, we became a part of Patton's Army, the 7th unfortunately. We knew that. When we were in England, he came and gave us a speech. I never heard anybody talk in front of 10 or 15 thousand guys like he did. Every other word was a curse word. Of course in the Army we all talked like that, but not in front of ten thousand guys. Most of us thought it was disgusting even if we said the same stuff. He was explaining the incident in North Africa when he got relieved of his command for hitting a soldier that had combat exhaustion. He said there was no such thing as combat exhaustion. All you had to do was be tough on them, and they'd come

out of it. Next Sunday, the chaplain mentioned the atrocious language of a certain general; later at medic school the doctors explained that in spite of what a certain general said, there was such a thing as combat exhaustion.

Anyway we started moving fast across France. There was no front at all really because we were moving so fast. Usually, we'd hear there were some Germans in a town,

and we'd go in and blast the heck out of them and they'd take off. The next day we'd do the same thing. At one point we went 700 miles in 21 days, which was unheard of in combat. In fact, in the fall of '44, we thought the war would be over by Christmas. We were knocking the hell out of these guys.

But the first thing that slowed down was we ran out of gas. We were moving so fast that we outran our supply lines. It gave the Germans time to recoup.

It was in Chartres where I finally got close to the action--bombs going off, one of the towers of the cathedral got hit. Right after that we were supposed to take Metz, which is right on the French-German border. A corps reconnaissance outfit had gone in and thought it was clear, but the Germans were watching. We thought it'd be easy to take. But instead we got blasted with everything. For some reason I wasn't with the line troop, I was with HQ Co. about three miles back. My captain, a doctor, got killed there.

## Eyeball to Eyeball with General Patton

This is where I saw Patton. We were stopped in this convoy, and I was in a half-track. I saw these three vehicles come down and as they got closer I saw the two stars--it's got to be Patton I thought. Patton climbs out and yells, 'Where's an officer?'

Meantime, this French vehicle comes flying down the road, and Patton yells, 'Stop that vehicle!' The Frenchman gets out and makes a real snappy salute, and Patton smiles and says, 'Bon.' If he hadn't saluted Patton like that, he would've been chewed out.

By this time, somebody found an officer, Captain Newton, and Patton yells, 'What outfit is this?' The captain responded, '87th Reconnaissance 7th Army Division, sir.' Patton says, 'If this is reconnaissance, why the Hell aren't they at the front?' After a few more questions he says, 'Where's the communications vehicle?'

I was in the next vehicle back, and I ducked down because I didn't want him yelling at me. Besides, I was a lowly PFC. So he goes back to the vehicle and yells, 'If there isn't some audacity shown around here, some officers are going to be busted!'

He went back to his Jeep, and which way did he go? He turned around and went back the other way. The next day in Stars and Stripes, big headlines read "PATTON VISITS TROOPS AT FRONT." This is the kind of publicity crap that went on about Patton. Hell, he was five miles from the front! He was such a glory hound. Anyway that was my major encounter with General Patton, that jerk. My captain got killed at the front and Patton got the glory, five miles away.

## A medic on the front lines

Back to when we were trying to take Metz, I remember the 5th Infantry Division was assigned to take the town and we all knew it was going to be a slaughter. The Germans controlled this hill and you had to go up it to attack. There were guys crying because they knew they were going to be killed. Eventually, we went around Metz.

As a medic in Troop C, we went in to get the injured. It was interesting to note that we never went in there under fire. We had the Red Cross on our helmets of course, and the Germans wouldn't shoot us. There were times when I went out and I knew

the Germans could see me, but they left me alone. In that case, they were observing the rules of warfare. Of course, they had medics too. It was pretty rough seeing guys hurt and killed, sometimes guys you knew. But, of course, it wasn't as rough as the guys being hurt and killed.

**"I was in a store in Newark, N.J. buying candy when the news of Pearl Harbor came across on the radio.**

**I was already registered for the draft. I'd done it the previous July and so I knew I was going to be in the Army. I decided I'd rather get in the Marines. I probably liked the uniform or something. I was a kid. But my draft board wouldn't release me because they had to meet their quota. Maybe they did me a favor; if I'd been in the Marines, I might've been knocked off at Guadalcanal. Who knows?"**

Later, we moved into Holland, and we got word that Germans were infiltrating the lines, disguised as American soldiers. This one guy got shot, and the brass wanted us to go out and get the body to prove that it was an infiltrator. They told this staff sergeant named Richie Gibson (he was also from Newark) to take a couple guys out and get the guy tonight. They decided they needed a medic along, so they picked me. We left that night and we were way out there in No Man's Land, beyond the last American outpost. They told me to stay by this empty house while they went in. I was there by myself and, oh boy, I started getting lonesome.

Meanwhile I could hear all this traffic, all these motors going, and what I was hearing was the Germans. I thought, I wish those guys would get back. I want to get the Hell

out of here.

Finally my buddies came back with the body, and he was dressed in an American uniform, but under it was a German uniform. And we thought he had probably just put the uniform on to stay warm. We took the body to a Colonel Dempsey of Division, and he looked at him and said: 'Hmm. Hmm. He's no spy; he was just staying warm.' That was that. They risked four lives to bring back a dead guy, and then that was that.



**The Bulge**

The next morning the Germans came across a canal, invaded the place, we got pushed back, and all those motors I'd heard during the night were the attack force. It was also this attack that caused me to lose my jeep and all my possessions. I'd decided to clean it out and everything was out of it when the Germans attacked. I had souvenirs and pictures and I lost all of it. But I forgot all about that at the time. Guys were getting hurt--Gibson the sergeant with whom I went to recover the body, got shot in the face and lost his eye. But we held on, only a couple of companies really, and later we got the Presidential Citation.

After that, they told us we were going to have some time to rest, to clean out the jeeps, take showers and all that. That night

at 7 p.m. we found out we were moving out; we were going south to set up a secondary line of defense. We drove all night in a convoy, lights off, and arrived at this town in Belgium. The Germans had made a minor breakthrough.

**"This is the kind of publicity crap that went on about Patton. Hell, he was five miles from the front! He was such a glory hound. Anyway that was my major encounter with General Patton, that jerk. My captain got killed at the front and Patton got the glory, five miles away."**

My captain told me to go out and find C Troop and take this new guy with me. We went way out this road and we came to a T in the road. One way said 'Malmedy,' the other 'St. Vith.' Which way? We turned left and went a couple of miles and we didn't see anything. I said, 'I don't like this, something's screwy,' and decided to turn around.

Finally, I found a guy and he gave us directions, but we were way out there, and I figure the Germans must have been watching me run up and down that road, with the Red Cross on the vehicle. We were miles ahead of the front.

The next day things were a mess. There were vehicles going every which way. The Germans opened fire and we all hit the ground. The new medic said to me: 'I wish I was experienced in combat like you.' I just looked at him--I was scared.

**Holding St. Vith**

Finally, we got directions to C Troop which was supposed to be at St. Vith. Of course, we had no idea where that was. But it turned out, it was right in the middle of the German offensive that we later called The Bulge. St. Vith had a highway and was a major railroad center. The Germans thought if they could take St. Vith, they could drive all the way to the ocean and split the Allied Armies in two.

I got back to C Troop at St. Vith; we were on one side of the town and the Germans on the other. All day long, we'd attack them and then they'd attack us. The next day it was quiet. I wandered out and found an abandoned American vehicle with all these uniform clothes. The fit me perfectly. Anyway when the Germans attacked, they had concentrated on the 106th Division. This was full of never-tested soldiers and the Germans must have known that. The 106th just broke and ran, and abandoned all that stuff. We even found frozen steak and french fries. I remember I'd cooked all this stuff up and was ready to eat, when they yelled 'Gotta move out! Germans are breaking through!' So I took the stuff with me. I figured, damn if they catch me, I'm at least going to have a full stomach.

We held St. Vith for six days. For most of the time, I thought this was it--that I'd either be killed or captured. Things were really getting bad, we'd been cut off, and we had this captain that we called G.I. Johnson, because he was so much by the book. Anyway, he was on the radio saying, 'We'll fight to the last man!' and I felt like hitting him over the head with something. I figured, why doesn't he just stay here himself and fight and get the rest of the guys outta here. But we finally pushed the Germans back again, so we didn't have to fight to the last man.

We started moving through St. Vith, and they had these checkpoints, looking for Germans disguised as Americans. They'd ask us questions like, who won the World Series, to test us. There was a doctor with us, an American but of German descent, and he was scared of his own shadow. Anyway, here's this guy being questioned, and he speaks with a German accent. Well they pulled him off the truck and said, 'You're coming with us.' The guy must have died a thousand deaths.

Because we had defended St. Vith, we got another Presidential Citation. After The Bulge, the Germans were defeated... they were worn out. Within four months the war was over and I was back home by September 1945."

*Ed and his wife Claire moved to Moab in the early 1970s; he was a seasonal ranger at Arches National Park for almost ten years and one of the original "Arch Hunters." Ed died in 1992.*



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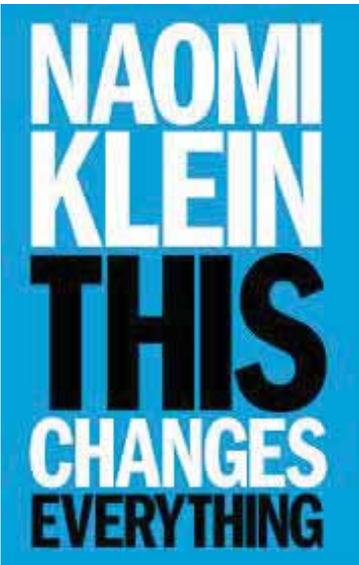
# DOUG MEYER'S Review of NAOMI KLEIN'S NEW BOOK: *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*

*"[Bottom line:] our economic system and our planetary system are now at war. Or, more accurately, our economy is at war with many forms of life on earth, including human life. What the climate needs to avoid collapse is a contraction in humanity's use of resources; what our economic model demands to avoid collapse is unfettered expansion. Only one of these sets of rules can be changed, and it's not the laws of nature."*

—Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*, p. 21

On the night before September's climate demonstrations in New York and well-timed publication of her new book, Naomi Klein appeared alongside Bill McKibben, Chris Hedges, Kshama Sawant and Bernie Sanders, rock stars of the budding U.S. coalition of "climate justice" activists, in a refreshingly agonizing display of American white folks trying to start something (apologies to Ms. Sawant). If you ask Chris Hedges, that something is quite clearly an overthrow of the corporate state. But after reading Ms. Klein's new political masterpiece providing a powerful ideology for that overthrow, one has to wonder. Will this soon be the handbook for a revolution that topples the global plutocracy? Or is it more likely just the latest required reading in popular "social sustainability" courses?

Make no mistake, the book's philosophical thrust is pure anti-capitalism and a tried and true attack on Western cultural myths of human ascendancy, but her political target is the fossil fuel industry and "deregulated capitalism" and we're immediately unsure what kind of revolution she has in mind. How much of the economy will be planned? How will fossil fuel corporations "continue being rich for the foreseeable future" while they're quickly taxed into oblivion AND politically muzzled? How will existing fossil fuel dependent infrastructure (like the U.S. suburbs) be decommissioned? We're left hanging between an almost glorious ideology (for those of us who've waited so long for the truth to be spoken out loud again) and a stubborn pragmatism that paints an urban, well-populated post-overthrow world that's unconvincing as a picture of zero carbon emissions. But at least we'll all work for a co-op, put in fewer hours, use public transit, and reliably vote Democratic.



**But after reading Ms. Klein's new political masterpiece providing a powerful ideology for that overthrow, one has to wonder. Will this soon be the handbook for a revolution that topples the global plutocracy? Or is it more likely just the latest required reading in popular "social sustainability" courses?**

Despite that, Naomi Klein does create a strong, classic ecological theme in the book, a real accomplishment given her wide audience. As I said, philosophically, she gets it — the problems go much deeper than capitalism and the political right and are far older than Ronald Reagan. These powerful critiques of Western culture are by no means new and constitute a polished, well-studied thesis in "old-school" environmentalism, with the notable omission of population as a factor in global warming. Very importantly, she mocks the idea of "decoupling" economic activity from environmental impacts, a foundational greenwashing lie that progressives (and some environmentalists) fell for decades ago. And she has extensive references to the need for real reductions in overall energy consumed, fair and shared sacrifices, lifestyle changes, and cultural changes in favor of the "stewardship" relation to Earth and land.

*"[T]he shift will require rethinking the very nature of humanity's power—our right to extract ever more without facing consequences, our capacity to bend complex natural systems to our will. This is a shift that challenges not only capitalism, but also the building blocks of materialism that preceded modern capitalism, a mentality some call 'extractivism.'"—Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything, p. 25*

So it's when she tries talking specifics about where we're headed to her progressive audience that she gets in trouble. For example, returning to a 1970's lifestyle (and by inference using that as the global convergence level for a projected 9 billion people) doesn't even sound sustainable, let alone sufficient to get to zero carbon emissions. But she has to give 'em what they want, like calling for policies making low-carbon choices both fair and "easy and convenient for everyone." And she repeatedly refers to "low-carbon sectors" of the economy as if such a thing exists. As if hospitals and schools don't depend on heavy industry and manufacturing to make them possible. Worse, despite the need for drastic overall economic contraction and having savaged the very idea of economic growth, she encourages growth of these sectors, primarily as a political salve

to progressives who'll be terrified about getting tagged with the "anti-growth" label.

And then there's the fact that she's mainstream, and therefore human-centered, but for this book, and I think sincerely, Klein's had to insert a core environmental-values structure. This leads to conflicts because honest environmentalism can no longer provide answers that society wants to hear. Supporting her assault on capitalism, Klein's thesis is straight out of classic environmentalism's critique of human nature as expressed in capitalist societies. "Are we masters, here to subdue and dominate, or are we one species among many?" she asks, putting herself right there with Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Carson, and *The Limits to Growth*.

**...for this book, and I think sincerely, Klein's had to insert a core environmental-values structure. This leads to conflicts because honest environmentalism can no longer provide answers that society wants to hear.**



But how does Klein square that in her own mind with her subtle, conditional support for global implementation of industrial-scale wind and solar power? We're pretty sure she's ultimately a left-wing journalist and writer. And whereas Deep Green Resistance was a sneak attack by the Left on the hard-core enviro camp, *This Changes Everything* is a long-overdue full frontal assault on the exposed and defenseless mainstream Greens, with Naomi Klein easily carrying away the flag. But now that she's taken global warming for the Left, does she really want it? The answer hinges on the differences in traction she'll get between true climate mitigation (i.e., planned, global, drastic emissions reductions) and adaptation (everything else).

*"[Anderson and Bows-Larkin] argue that, if the governments of developed countries want a fifty-fifty chance of hitting the agreed-upon international target of keeping warming below 2 degrees Celsius, and if reductions are to respect any kind of equity principle between rich and poor nations, then wealthy countries need to start cutting their greenhouse gas emissions by something like 8 to 10 percent a year—and they need to start right now."—Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything, p. 87*

OK, so Klein's thesis that our current economic system can't make those drastic emissions cuts in time (or anything even close) is rock solid. For any chance of meeting the 2C goal, that system must be overhauled. Agreed. And annual emissions reductions of the needed magnitude and duration have no historic parallel other than deep, prolonged economic depression. Agreed. But then she says we can "avoid that kind of carnage" through careful management of Anderson and Bows-Larkin's "radical and immediate de-growth strategies in the US, EU and other wealthy nations."

Klein admits the apocalyptic sound of this, but only because we all still worship at the altar of Growth. Then she kinda feebly hopes that planned, rapid economic contraction won't look like the Great Depression. (Tellingly, she links here to a global consciousness raising site whereas, for example, Richard Heinberg's thoughts on contraction would have been infinitely more appropriate.) Thank you Naomi, for hinting it like it is. One more thing, we can't forget those simultaneous massive wealth transfers to the developing countries who manufacture all of our gadgets, otherwise they won't go for it. Now how are we going to make this happen?

*"We need to turn things around by the end of this decade; the ecological clock is ticking and we have no time to waste. If we think realistically, are we going to build this [climate-only] movement of millions in that short time, no, but do we have the potential to weave together all of our existing movements and supercharge them with existential urgency? Yes! I believe in deadlines! Without deadlines, nothing gets done."—Naomi Klein, September 20, 2014*

Well, no surprise, but you don't have to read between too many lines to see that those deadlines are a means to a political end, with actual climate mitigation finishing second. Note that "turning things around" isn't nearly good enough. In fact, the world's non-agricultural emissions must relentlessly nosedive until reaching ZERO by 2040, according to the very same Kevin Anderson article that Klein cites repeatedly. And though she casually alludes to this a few times, readers of *This Changes Everything* just aren't given a real picture of the SCALE of everything that needs to change: 9 billion civilized humans with zero carbon emissions beyond agriculture.

So it's urgency that Klein really wants out of those deadlines: climate change (or the better named "climate justice") should be the progressive banner issue, a cause with revolutionary power linking activists seeking to level the playing field on everything from human rights to immigration, good jobs, a basic income, and money in politics. Why? Because keeping most of the remaining fossil fuels in the ground forever implies a regulatory regime that would kill free-market capitalism, and ergo, a complete power shift to governments from the private sector. This simple truth is obvious to right-wing conservative white males, explaining their desperate effort to deny the science. But weak-kneed progressives, having been snowed into cheering for globalization, just can't see it, and thus, sadly, the need for this book. At another pre-march appearance that night, Klein hung her head and admitted "I still cannot figure out why it took us so long to engage on this issue (i.e., climate)." Later she answered her own question: "because the science is just terrifying" but also in the book, "[we] thought Big Green had this issue covered."

And I have to note that despite the looming deadlines, her political wisdom counsels prioritizing near-term progressive victories, like maybe a basic minimum income, as a truly stunning and worldview-changing event, in the hopes that CO2 emissions reductions would soon follow. In fact, it's brilliant politics, because unlike climate campaigns up to now that held out the possibility of saving the planet for future generations, Klein's movement offers hope for (non-climate) benefits people might actually live to see. Meanwhile, those deadlines seem more and more impossible when she talks about the "civilizational leap required of this fateful decade."

Additional ammo for the cause comes from the adaptation side as she reminds us that trying to deal with the coming disasters with our current winner-take-all society leads to the Shock Doctrine's blatant profiteering on hyperdrive. If you want to avoid that, you build progressive communities, empowered and defensible, having the resources to deal with things as they come. In 1st world countries, this approach actually has a good chance of becoming a political winner, perhaps very soon, in many left-leaning localities where capitalists already think capitalism is a dirty word.

Constructing a backbone for progressives is a big job of course, and the whole thing rests on knowing where the money for all this will come from. Klein cites a U.N. study conservatively estimating governments would need \$1.9 Trillion a year for 40 years, half of the total going to developing countries, in order to save civilization justly from the climate catastrophe. And since we can't count on the super-elites at the annual Davos shindig volunteering for the job, the revolution's gonna have to figure out how to grab a huge chunk of the money using democratic means. Klein's job is to assure her readers that the money's there and what those means are.

**Thank you Naomi, for hinting it like it is.  
One more thing, we can't forget  
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transfers to the developing countries who  
manufacture all of our gadgets, otherwise  
they won't go for it. Now how are we going  
to make this happen?**

She mentions the need for governments to coordinate so Davos funds will be harder to hide from the tax man, but she doesn't consider the ephemeral nature of wealth itself, held mostly in the form of investments or relationships between entities. An earth-shaking revolution of the kind envisioned could easily make half the world's money disappear, just like it did in '08-'09. And taxing economic flows assumes those flows are still there after the tax becomes law. Nevertheless, Klein points to: a financial transaction tax, closing offshore tax havens, a 1% annual tax on billionaires' assets, slashing military budgets, a \$50/ton tax on carbon emitted, and eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, all together bringing in \$2T per year. But first, we gotta remove all the money from politics so our newly elected leaders can enact those laws. And the impact on overall prices in the economy is left as an exercise for the reader.

*"It wasn't that there was no role for the public. We were called upon periodically to write letters, sign petitions, turn off our lights for an hour, make a giant human hourglass that could be photographed from the sky. And of course we were always asked to send money to the Big Green groups that were supposedly just on the cusp of negotiating a solution to climate change on our behalf. But most of all, regular, noncelebrity people were called upon to exercise their consumer power— not by shopping less but by discovering new and exciting ways to consume more. And if guilt set in, well, we could click on the handy carbon calculators on any one of dozens of green sites and purchase an offset, and our sins would instantly be erased." —Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything, p. 212*

**Bad timing, Klein says,  
ultimately delayed our understanding  
of capitalism as the cause of global warming  
and Bill McKibben, sitting next to her  
on the dais, looked too weary to roll his eyes.  
It's painful to watch a culture slowly come to  
the realization that there just won't be enough  
energy to sustain our way of life  
into the future.**

It's been four years since The Nation published a memorable exposé of BP and Shell's implicit buyout of certain "Big Green" groups' climate policies, so I had hopes for more this time around. Maybe like outing specific donations from global fossil fuel barons or their foundations à la Jim Stiles, or connecting the dots better between chapters on "Green Billionaires" and mainstream environmentalism. Likely because of our tax laws' noticeable shielding of "non-profit" donations, my hopes will have to wait. But Klein does torpedo and sink any remaining image of Big Green (EDF, TNC, CI, NRDC and the Sierra Club) as left-wing activism, and exposes it for the right-wing Trojan horse that it is. If people like Naomi Klein once thought these groups were here to save the planet, imagine how many millions of Americans subconsciously believe their \$35/year enviro dues are helping to "stop" global warming. We're looking at both the complete success and the precise function of the Greenwash Business Model, brought to you by those very same rich folks at Davos.

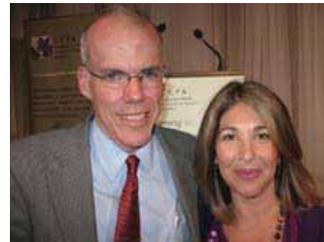
And given how deep this particular kind of delusion penetrates the American psyche, Klein needed a whole book discrediting it, but for now we'll have to settle for one good chapter. Besides supporting NAFTA (the first fight over global free trade), having corporate CEOs on their boards, greenwashing everything from fracking to laundry detergent

to Wal-Mart, McDonalds, FedEx and AT&T, taking fossil fuel money, investing heavily in fossil fuel stocks, starting the Center for Sustainable Shale Development, presenting climate as an issue "with no end of profitable solutions", hyping carbon trading markets, carbon offsets, and natural gas as a "bridge fuel", and one group even drilling for oil on their own conservation holdings, what else do you need to know about Big Green's climate efforts?

*"For any of this to change, a worldview will need to rise to the fore that sees nature, other nations, and our own neighbors not as adversaries, but rather as partners in a grand project of mutual reinvention. That's a big ask." —Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything, p. 23*

But let's finish with the revolution, the essence of Klein's work. Her conclusion has by far the single most helpful research effort in the book: a review of democratic social movements, with the goal of finding out whether a grassroots-led, non-violent economic shift of the scale needed to overthrow the fossil fuel industry has ever happened before. She notes the importance of measuring the economic results, as almost all of the movements studied achieved some legal and political victories, but few could claim real monetary gains for their members, at least in the short run. The review's more interesting than the answer, easily guessed, which is no. (The 1930's labor victories don't really qualify, being of insufficient economic scale.) One major effort did take on interests whose assets approached in value what's needed today but, alas, it was a bloodbath.

And then there are the revolutionaries themselves, "gripping, tweeting, flash mobbing, and occupying" but lacking the structure and organizing power of labor unions and political parties of the traditional Left. Instead, we are reflections of the victorious right-wing ideological project, seeing ourselves as "little more than singular, gratification-seeking units" totally absorbed with "the never-ending feed of the perpetual now" and thus cut off from "the broader communities whose pooled skills are capable of solving problems big and small." As Naomi Klein and all the rest of us know, the obstacles stacked against this bourgeois bohemian revolution seem insurmountable.



Bad timing, Klein says, ultimately delayed our understanding of capitalism as the cause of global warming and Bill McKibben, sitting next to her on the dais, looked too weary to roll his eyes. It's painful to watch a culture slowly come to the realization that there just won't be enough energy to sustain our way of life into the future. This Changes Everything has to take a step back in time so it can take a step in the right direction, while revealing a progressive revolution still needing a lot better grip on reality. But capitalism is rapidly being discredited in the 1st world, perhaps even in the eyes of many of the attendees at Davos. That ecological clock keeps ticking. We shall see.

DOUG MEYER is a former NASA technician and is the un-paid Zephyr's Colorado Plateau Bureau Chief.

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# Now it's Official: a Normal Planet is Politically Incorrect

Scott Thompson

*"What would be a normal planet would have a lot fewer people and lots more animals, and what we have now is an irregular, abnormal, and dangerous condition."*

— Gary Snyder, 2010

In a way this story is painful to write. I like Naomi Klein. She's a powerful, insightful writer with a deft touch; in addition she's a superb researcher; a medley of talents you don't find every day. But when I reached the bottom of page 447 of her new and interesting book on climate change, *This Changes Everything* - a mere 19 pages before the end - suddenly I felt like I was teleported back to elementary school and she'd smacked the back of my hand with a ruler.

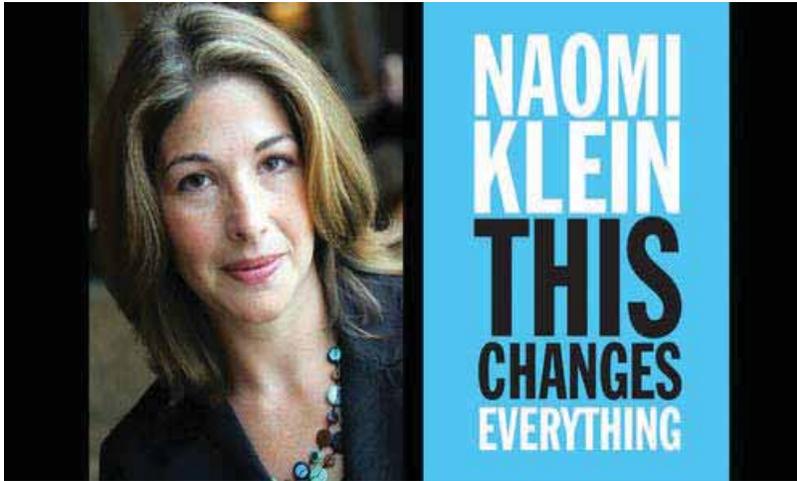
Assembling my wits, I read the two key sentences again with care. And yep, she'd actually said it: "This is a far more expansive vision than the familiar eco-critique that stressed smallness and shrinking humanity's impact or 'footprint.' That is simply not an option today, not without genocidal implications: we are here, we are many, and we must use our skills to act."

"Shrinking humanity's impact," of course, is a euphemism for reducing the human population, among other things.

Here is the other reference to genocide that I found in her book. In discussing the specter of geo-engineering, she said this: "...wealthy-country governments are already...allowing temperatures to increase to levels that are a danger to hundreds of millions of people, mostly in the poorest parts of the world, rather than introducing policies that interfere with short-term profits. This is why African delegates at U.N. climate summits have begun using words like 'genocide' to describe the collective failure to lower emissions." (p.276.)

It isn't surprising that they're saying that; nor would it be surprising if some dread a nightmare scenario in which authoritarian governments worldwide, controlled by the same kind of selfish elites, insidiously force mass sterilizations upon impoverished people. I do wonder if Klein might be trying to distance herself as much as possible from such fearful scenarios, which would be understandable if she hadn't in the process typecast a group of people who don't deserve it. And who have much that is of value to say.

Namely those who are legitimately concerned about overpopulation. They're not elites at all nor do they have insidious motives; instead they're caring, reality-oriented, scientifically informed people who have seen the big picture for more than a generation now, and are motivated by compassion.



Michael Charles Tobias, published just this year:

*"PE: ...the problem now is the extremely high rate of extinction – hundreds of times what prevailed through most of geological history..."*

...

*"MT: ...Based on everything I've experienced in my life and thought about and observed, if we are, indeed, witnessing the sixth spasm of extinctions in the annals of human biology – in the annals of biology, period, I should say – then is it not incumbent upon us to leave the lightest footprint possible and to advocate for a light impact, rather than the inordinately destructive one that most characterizes our notorious collective, in view of what's happening all around us?"*

*"PE: I actually feel very strongly about the inequities represented by at least three billion people on this planet not getting to live the kind of lifestyle I get to live...I'd much prefer a human population of perhaps 1.5 billion, with everyone able to live a lifestyle more like yours and mine. And such a situation should, in the long term, allow more Homo sapiens to live and enjoy life, since we could probably avoid the great collapse of civilization toward which we're now headed. And it would also allow the rest of nature to persist and continue evolving...." (Hope on Earth, 2014, pp. 89-91.)*

I hope these passages demonstrate that raising the issue of human overpopulation is a deeply ethical position and that what matters most to us is preserving the health of ecosystems everywhere, for the ultimate benefit of both humanity and all other beings. The Pulitzer Prize winning poet Gary Snyder expressed this beautifully in the following excerpt from his poem "For All" published in his book *Axe Handles* in 1983:

*I pledge allegiance  
I pledge allegiance to the soil  
of Turtle Island,  
and to the beings who thereon  
dwell*

*one ecosystem  
in diversity  
under the sun  
With joyful interpenetration for all.*

See, that's about eco-systemic integrity, and it's all about inclusion - not exclusion.

And about seeing far into the future.

**I read the two key sentences again with care. And yep, she'd actually said it:**

**"This is a far more expansive vision than the familiar eco-critique that stressed smallness and shrinking humanity's impact or 'footprint.' That is simply not an option today, not without genocidal implications: we are here, we are many, and we must use our skills to act."**

**"Shrinking humanity's impact," of course, is a euphemism for reducing the human population, among other things.**

Let's spell out what the notorious "shrinking of humanity's footprint" actually involves: First, that it's unjust to other species populations for we humans to overpopulate - to exceed the carrying capacity - of any ecosystem, thus placing the other creatures and plants at significant risk of extinction; that we have a fundamental duty to share this world with them. Second, that by overpopulating the planet we impoverish our own lives and those of our descendants as well as the essential genetic biodiversity we depend upon for our own survival. That therefore we need to significantly reduce the collective human footprint and that this is a bottom line for ecological sanity.

It's a stance to which I've been committed for over thirty years. And I'm hardly alone. For example, note the following from *Hope on Earth*, a book in dialogue form by the renowned scientist Paul Ehrlich and prominent ecologist

\*\*\*

Klein put another observation about overpopulation in her footnote on page 114. Although I thought it was offbase when I read it, it didn't hit me as hard as her later comment about "genocidal implications." And here it is: after first saying that "...the roughly 500 million richest of us on the planet are responsible for about half of all global emissions," including the rich in all countries "as well [as] significant parts of the middle classes in North America and Europe," she added this footnote: "This is why the persistent positing of population control as a solution to climate change is a distraction and moral dead end. As this research makes clear, the most significant cause of rising emissions is not the reproductive behavior of the poor but the consumer behaviors of the rich."

What struck me as I read this was that the attention she was giving in her book to the proximate cause of global warming, which is indeed attributable to the fortunate few as she well stated, seemed geared toward justifying massive transfers of wealth as reparations for climate injustice. While at the same time she was discarding the foremost ecological problem on our planet, namely human overpopulation, which the scientific discipline of ecology flatly tells us will make the impacts of climate change immeasurably worse.

In a sense this is getting things backwards, as Paul Ehrlich explains: "...we know from mathematics basically that it will take many decades to make big changes in the size of the population humanely. But of course the experience of World War II also taught me that if we want to change our consumption patterns, we can do it almost instantly...with the right incentives, society can do the right things fast on the consumption side. It can't do the right thing fast on the population side, which is the reason humanity should have started fifty years ago dealing effectively with the population issue." (Hope, pp. 151-152.)

**Owing especially to the long timetable for meaningful change, overpopulation remains a crucial moral issue, and anything but a "distraction."**

Owing especially to the long timetable for meaningful change, overpopulation remains a crucial moral issue, and anything but a "distraction."

Yet Klein was alert enough, and as usual did enough homework, to point out that even on a heavily populated planet humans can work persistently and intelligently to heal living systems, and that agro-ecological farming can help sustain and protect biodiversity rather than devastate it. And she's right that important and helpful steps can be taken. (See for example pp. 134-136 on agro-ecology.)

But such efforts will not be enough to protect the existence of other species populations or to sustain humans either. As far as the survival of both is concerned, ignoring the problem of human overpopulation is what has "genocidal implications."

Even if the mass political and social movement she's trying to generate is successful and the new society starts out with an abundance of ecological good works, in time the idealistic glow is bound to fade. As the human population continues to grow and grow, reaching eight billion, nine billion, even ten billion or more, by these increasing numbers alone humans will progressively shove ever more species populations off of their existing habitats, thereby sentencing them to extinction.

And it gets worse than this. To have even a chance to survive in the face of climate change, innumerable species populations will need both room to migrate

rapidly, that is, connectivity across landscapes, and also new habitats in protected areas if and when they arrive. (See the discussion of protected habitats and connectivity chapters 13 and 14 in Lee Hannah's *Climate Change Biology*, 2011). But these creatures and plants won't have either one because humans, by their ever increasing numbers alone, will progressively sever those connectivities and fill up the needed new habitats.

Thus accelerating the death spiral of extinctions.

The ecological bottom line here is that human-centered, socialist-inspired ideology, as important as aspects of it may be, cannot in the end make up for sheer lack of resources and space, most especially in the face of an ever more unstable and unpredictable climate. What's likely to be increasing in the long run is not sustainable agricultural production, however carefully planned, but human desperation. Ever more hungry people will in the end seize any and all arable land, no matter where it is or how many species populations they eradicate in the process of clearing and farming it. In the daily struggle for survival appeals for conservation and continued idealism will in the end be greeted with derision and hostility.

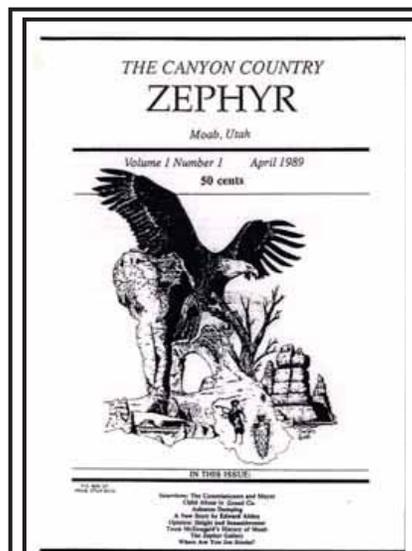
Instead of shoving aside the problem of overpopulation, as Klein and so many other climate activists are doing, the best strategy is to face it in a straightforward way, beginning this week (if not sooner). By making it an integral part of the grassroots mass movement addressing climate change, working tirelessly toward reducing the human population through changing the culture while minimizing government mandates and warding off influence from elites. And by carefully establishing and protecting civil liberties in the process, everywhere on the planet.

Together with making state-of-the-art birth control freely available on every street corner and in every hamlet, really, really everywhere. And funded entirely by the wealthiest countries and coupled with equally tenacious advocacy for political, educational, and economic equality for women, throughout every city and in every hamlet.

No bullshit and really, really everywhere.



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



The first issue of THE CANYON COUNTRY ZEPHYR went to press on March 14, 1989. It contained Ed Abbey's last original story.

We have a small cache of that first issue available for purchase.

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Thanks to our webmaster:

**RICK RICHARDSON**

who, each issue, manages to move *The Zephyr* into cyber-space, without causing the editor to have a nervous breakdown.



# THE ZEPHYR BACKBONE

## October-November 2014



**AL CORNETTE**  
Slade KY

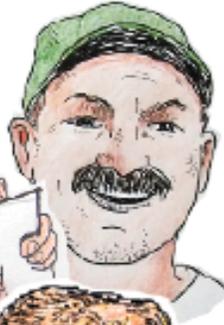
**BRENT SWANSON...IDAHO**



**TOM WYLIE**  
Centennial CO



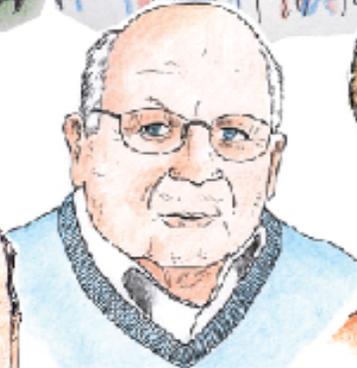
**SCOTT GRUNDER**  
Minnesota



**STEVE RUSSELL**  
Moab UT



**MATT BAKER**  
SLC UT



**OMAR TATUM**  
Louisville KY



**DR RICH INGEBRETSEN**  
Salt Lake City, UT



**JOHN BRASCH...**  
or is it BILL???  
Louisville, KY



**ALSO JOINING THE BACKBONE...**  
longtime Zephyr supporter:

**JANET WALTHER**  
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**ALSO THANKS TO:**

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## From the DESERT RAT COMMANDO



*'If we broadened the debate just a little bit, however, we would see that most liberals have just moved a giant boat-load of denial down-stream, and that this denial is as harmful as that of conservatives.'*

<http://www.resilience.org/stories/2014-11-26/six-myths-about-climate-change-that-liberals-rarely-question>



## MOAB SOLUTIONS

*The mission of Moab Solutions is to reduce and eliminate the waste of materials and human potential while nurturing the well-being of the natural world. We protect and restore natural areas, help the homeless help themselves, and promote the benefits of Respect, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle practices. At our core is a deep respect for and love of the natural world and all lives that depend upon it.*

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*we are now a 501(c)(3)*

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<http://www.moab-solutions.org/index.html>

## THE FOOTPRINTS Top 10 List

### Top 10 GOP Immigration Solutions

10. The US is too attractive; if we pollute and eliminate the minimum wage ...
9. Revise ObamaCare to require using only doctors in Mexico
8. Shut down federal govt and divert military and all funding to border patrol
7. Invade and occupy Mexico (take their oil and tequila too)
6. De-fund OSHA and EPA, make it too dangerous to work here!
5. Pay Mexican narco-gangs to patrol the border
4. Taco Bell purchases require picture ID, birth certificate and valid passport
3. Allow more Rio Grande River pollution (and flow), then light it!
2. Offer to trade places with Canada
1. Change US' Facebook status to "Not Available"



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# KEN SLEIGHT REMEMBERS...part 2

## THE 1940'S: THE SHAPING OF A LIFE

My first decade (1929-1939) was spent growing up in Idaho. My second decade of life (1940-1949) was set in Utah. Incidences, experiences, environment, and heritage all shape one's life, and so, pardon me as I divert a bit from my usual issue-oriented columns to touch upon some of my own personal ventures.

I was only eleven years of age, when in 1940 our family moved to Utah. Dad had just purchased a 60-acre farm at Woods Cross, a farm community eight miles north of Salt Lake City.

I had treasured my days in the Bear Lake valley of Idaho, as it was a great place to grow up. However, the Great Depression and the hard economic times had placed many challenges on us. Those times were my own "pioneer days."

There were seven kids in our family--Maxine, myself, Ray, Roy, Edward, Frank, and Gayle in that order and we all pitched in and had our respective chores and work to do.

In my work, I came to know the value of water. Our water system came from local springs from which we filled a reservoir for drinking purposes and irrigated our crops with the remainder. The job of irrigation was mine.

We were pretty well self-sufficient. We had a large garden and planted many varieties of fruits and vegetables. We'd trade with neighbors or at the markets if we wanted something we didn't have.

Things were not as we had in Idaho. Left behind was the wood-burning kitchen stove, replaced by an electric one. No longer were we kids cooped up in but one bedroom and the hallway, but we now had three bedrooms. And we had two bathrooms rather than just one.

Our crops consisted mostly of fruit trees: apricots, peaches, plums and prunes. Row crops were numerous: melons, peas, beans, corn, tomatoes, strawberries, asparagus. We grew wheat and oats, and alfalfa. And we had flocks of chickens and many straying turkeys. And with this we had plenty to eat. We'd have "down-on-the-farm" meals: meat, potatoes and gravy. And lots of eggs: scrambled, fried, and poached.

We'd sell our produce to the Woods Cross Canning Company, the farmers market in Salt Lake, or at our roadside fruit stand. I spent many hours manning the fruit stand while fighting off the flies.

There were always jobs to do. We worked a team of horses-- Kit and Kate--and the machinery was horse driven. Not until one of us accidentally killed both horses by leaving the grain-bin doors open did dad buy a tractor--a small Allis Chalmers thing. To start it, we had to crank it, and it kicked like hell, "knocking some sense into us" as grandpa would say.

We developed our own sports: sledged, tobogganing, and with slat board skis we skied the foothills behind us. Tiring of that, we'd ride the calves and hogs.

War seemed imminent and threatening to us in 1940 as the Nazi armies seized much of Europe. Nothing like a war to override the depression.

Our evening ritual was sitting on the front porch to watch the beautiful sunset over the Great Salt Lake. Grandpa would sit there with us too. He was quite deaf, and we had to yell at him to make him hear. His deafness didn't stop him from talking, but with no teeth he was not always easy to understand either. He would often mumble "I guess maybe I'll go to Salt Lake tomorrow" With his small satchel, he'd go down on the highway, stick out his thumb, and hitch a ride to Salt Lake to walk the streets and visit the bars. In a few days after having his fill he'd return home.

Politics always interested me. I remember the presidential race of 1940 when the Democrats nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt again as its presidential candidate, and the Republicans nominated Wendell L. Willkie. Willkie, closely allying himself with big business, attacked New Deal policies as "dictatorial regimentation." "Willkie will keep us out of war," dad reiterated in his Republican voice, but Roosevelt had been a father-figure to me.

I loved the movies. The closest movie house, the Queen Theater, was in Bountiful. I was happy to walk the three miles to see John Ford's great movie, Stagecoach, a movie about taming the wilderness. It dealt with an evocative period of Western American history that counseled a return to nature and other simple concerns. Also, it introduced John Wayne to the world.

Another great one starred Henry Fonda as Tom Joad, in the Grapes of Wrath. John Ford, in adapting it from John Steinbeck's novel, concerned himself with the eviction of a dust bowl family of Oklahoma in its search for jobs and justice in the promised lands of California.

On my twelfth birthday, I attended "Mutual," a Mormon kid's social organization. There I joined the Boy Scout program. It was fun and the Mormon thing to do, and there were lots of outdoor excursions and camp-outs. We'd make occasional trips to Saltair at Great Salt Lake by hopping onto the open-air railroad cars. We'd joyfully swim and float in the briny Salt Lake and then spend long minutes showering the itchy and sticky salt-crust off. And of course while there, we'd ride the huge wooden roller coaster which gave us hard, thrilling, and bumpy rides out over the Great Salt Lake.

During our first school year in Utah, the bus gathered us up each morning to take us to the Stoker School in Bountiful. The school had a small library, the first I had seen since leaving Bear Lake. By this time, my reading ability had so improved that I could digest more advanced texts, such as Will James' highly readable Smoky.

On the home front, I spent much time in our blacksmith shop, and grandpa was there to help me with my projects. He always took old scrap metal parts and made them into something useful, and he repaired the machinery and tools. If he was short of supplies, he would scrounge the nearby local dump. He was a true recycler.

Then came that dreadful and shocking day, Dec. 7, 1941, a day "that will live in infamy." Hundreds of Japanese warplanes attacked Pearl Harbor. Launched from six aircraft carriers they destroyed or severely damaged eight U.S. battleships, eleven other vessels, and 177 Navy and Army aircraft. Over 2,400 military and civilian personnel had been killed, and many were wounded and missing.

Though only twelve I felt the anguish of it so vividly. I saw the anxiety and fear on my parents' faces as they crowded the radio, their ears turned to catch all breaking news stories. Hirohito and Tojo became hated household words.

President Roosevelt spoke to the nation. Congress declared war on Japan and in a few days also on Germany. The war was now heavy upon us.

But there were a few light moments at school. I had an English teacher that read to us from time to time. One day, she climbed atop her table and stood there animating, expounding and reciting "Gunga Din." Putting her total self into the attention-getting presentation, language and literature came alive. A beautiful and dynamic lady she was.

Lowell Thomas's "March of Time," brought us the war news and played in movie theaters across America spurring us on to buy more U.S. defense stamps and bonds. Grandpa scrounged the dump for metals to contribute to the scrap drive.

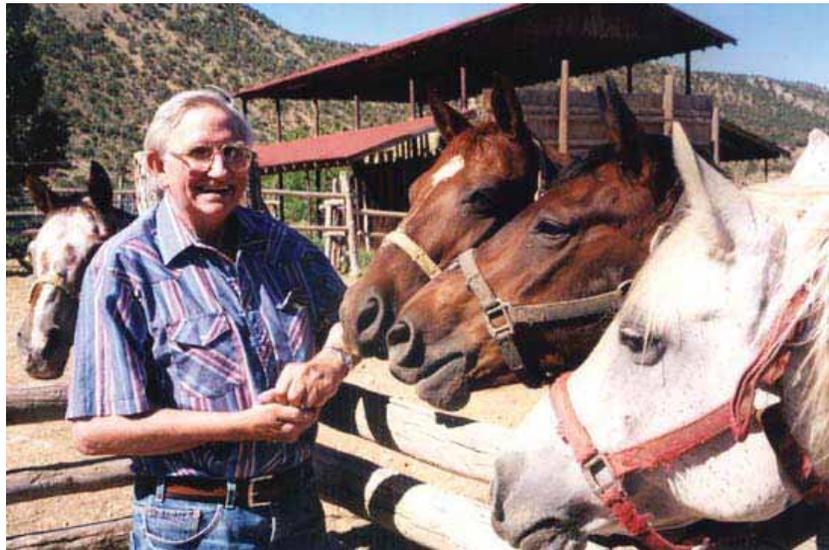
One of the most influential movies of that time was Howard Hawks' Sergeant York, starring Gary Cooper. Never had any film up to that time had such an impact on me. It was a story of our nation's most decorated hero of World War I, Alvin York, a Tennessee farm boy and a recounting of the morality of killing during war.

An intensive top-secret program, the Manhattan Project, was launched in 1942 under the direction of the Manhattan District of the Army Corps of Engineers that would have grave consequences for the world. J. Robert Oppenheimer and Enrico Fermi were chosen to create a top-secret establishment at Los Alamos, New Mexico to work on the bomb. Also recruited was John Manley, a physicist from the University of Illinois. Little did I know then, that Manley and his family would, years later, join me on several trips down the rivers and into the canyons. Through the years we became good friends.

On April 12, 1945 when President Roosevelt died suddenly at Warm Springs, Truman succeeded him, and in July he met with Churchill and Stalin at a conference in Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin, to discuss postwar plans. The news of success of the atomic bomb testing program reached Truman in time for the conference. Japan refused to surrender.

On August 4, 1945, U.S. planes dropped leaflets over Hiroshima warning, "Your city will be obliterated unless your Government surrenders." Truman used its citizens--men, women, children, babies--people who had no power, as hostages.

Two days later, the U.S. dropped its "Little Boy" atomic bomb on Hiroshima! A terrible holocaust of vast proportions, the news shocked the world. Though I was only



16 years of age, I too fiercely reacted. Why in God's name? Why? Truman carried out 80,000 instant death sentences on innocent people. So many perished that day, and along with them, and knowingly by our government, some of our own gallant soldiers held in captivity.

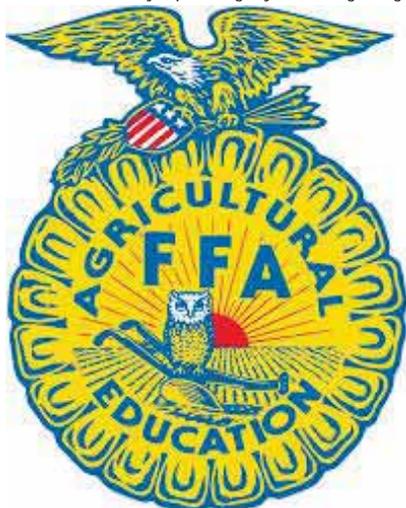
And then on August 9, as if one bomb was not enough, he did it again on the citizens of Nagasaki. Leaflets dropped earlier had threatened "a rain of ruin the like of which has never been seen on earth."

The next day Japan sued for peace, and President Truman proclaimed V-J Day on August 14. The great war was over! Our men were coming home. But to this day I retain a hatred for Truman's act. Like that of the Holocaust, the horrid nightmare persists.

Congress ended the Manhattan Project in 1946 and replaced it with the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). The powerful new agency took over the management of existing atomic facilities and the testing of nuclear weapons. The development of the hydrogen bomb was proposed, but David E. Lillienthal, the first AEC chairman and Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer both fiercely opposed its development. But Truman went ahead with it anyway, and it bothered me greatly.

**We visited Zion National Park and walked to the mouth of the Zion Narrows. Little did I know that years later, I'd be leading trips through that beautiful narrow canyon. After Zion we traveled on to Kanab, which once was ruled by an all-woman town council.**

I spent the winter playing basketball in 1947 with our Orchard Ward team in the Church's basketball program, and we delighted in taking the championship. Playing basketball was a great diversion for me. I was a good shooter but had problems on the inside. I was always spraining my ankle or getting an elbow in my face.



The FFA (Future Farmers of America) provided me many opportunities at school. One was "writing reports," and I presented one of my best to a forum of judges. It was a subject I knew well, "Cutting Down Erosion by Contour Plowing." It was my first environmental piece.

After graduation, some of us in the FFA class took a trip by school bus to the national parks in southern Utah and Arizona, my first trip south to the canyons. My grandmother had told me many tales of southern Utah and the canyons, and I looked forward to it. We visited Bryce Canyon. Great-grandfather George Spencer, a school teacher, had explored that region many years before as he settled the nearby town of Glendale. Out scouting new lands to settle, he met with an accident and died, leaving three wives and a throng of children, at the age of 41.

We visited Zion National Park and walked to the mouth of the Zion Narrows. Little did I know that years later, I'd be leading trips through that beautiful narrow canyon. After Zion we traveled on to Kanab, which once was ruled by an all-woman town council.

Owing especially to the long timetable for meaningful change, overpopulation remains a crucial moral issue, and anything but a "distraction." My new found freedom led me into many places. I especially enjoyed hiking through East Canyon from Henefer and through Emigration Canyon to Salt Lake following the same route traversed by the Donner-Reed party in 1846 and the Mormons the following year.

In my school year at college, I signed up for another series of classes. My courses in physical geology and biology were exciting and instructive. However, my major was destined to be in the business management area, and so I took several business classes which included economics and bookkeeping. Algebra, psychology, health education, and sociology classes helped fill my requirements.

My anthropology class was outstanding. Taught by Dr. Charles Dibble, its subject matter dealt with the treatment of the Indian people of the Great Basin--the Goshute and other tribes.

I was so taken by my geology class that it really affected my future life. Never had a subject moved me so as the historical study of the earth and its landscape. My geomorphology class, taught by Dr. Ray Marsell, provided me many pleasurable times and led me to the canyons.

And my geography class, which dealt with the geography of Utah, gave me much interesting and essential information of our own state. It was one class that I felt I had the knowledge to teach myself. Looking back from this day, I wish that I had majored in Geography as it encompassed so many fields of which I am interested. I would have enjoyed working toward a teaching major. Later classes included many exciting courses. A heavy load indeed. It's no wonder that it took me six years to get through a four-year course.

I enjoyed my political science class that I took from Dr. G. Homer Durham. It laid the base for a knowledge of the political system we have today. Durham was a dynamic teacher, and from him I developed much of my interest in politics.

My botany class that I took from Dr. Walter P. Cottam, the founder of the Red Butte Garden and Arboretum, was highly enjoyable. He had written a book that he used for his lectures, Is Utah Sahara Bound? and its message still sticks with me.

My whole life seems to have been wrapped up in years of conflicts and wars. First it was the Great Depression, then World War II, then the Cold War, then the Korean War, then the Vietnam War, and now the Environmental Conflicts. But interspersed with these heartaches, there have been many pleasurable incidents and experiences that I will never forget. Whether we are a product of our environment or our heritage, I don't know, but this is surely an interesting journey.

Those days are but memories now and I'm but a beneficiary of it all, like it or not. So with my well-worn copy of Dale Morgan's Utah, A Guide to the State, the best guide book ever written about Utah, I'll continue to head out to explore this wonderful state.

**NEXT TIME...Ken Sleight remembers the 1950s...**

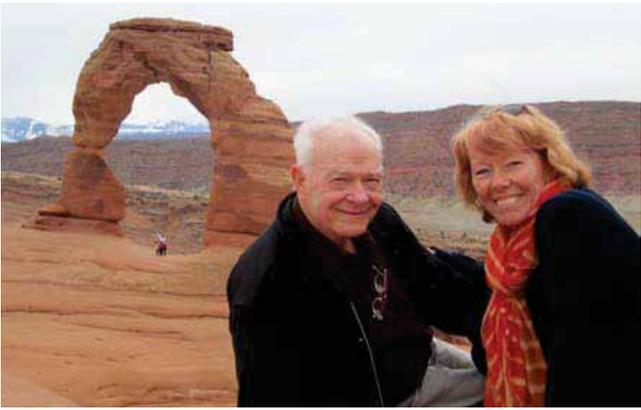


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# VLACHOS' VIEWS

America through the lens of PAUL VLACHOS



"Chris Flats" is in Brooklyn, New York. Urban flat fix joints tend to be store-front operations, but they inevitably spill over into the sidewalk and street. They also tend to be open late. Chris keeps a traffic cone handy in order to reserve that crucial space in front, which is part of the work area, even though it's a public street.

Not too far east of El Paso. This trailer is right off the interstate. I don't recall seeing the actual place, but it may have been at the next exit. I like the wording on this one: "We Fix Flats." I also like how big the trailer is compared to the sign.



These doors close on a large shed in an abandoned truck stop in Texas. It keeps getting more lonely-looking each time I pass through. It's an empty and lopsided kind of place, with an abandoned steakhouse restaurant sharing the same lot. I always stop here, even if it's just to grab something from the cooler.



Shiprock Arizona. I don't take many photos on the rez, but Obees Pit Stop was too good to pass up. All of your tire needs are met at Obees.

From Texas to Mexico. Mexico Tire Shop, that is. This is near the Gowanus Canal, also in Brooklyn. Did I mention Brooklyn in the opening paragraph? I probably should have, as the rivalries between the Bronx and Brooklyn are as fierce and distinct as those between east and west Texas. There are lots of tire places in Brooklyn and Queens but, out of fairness, the number of flat fix places in the Bronx outdoes them.



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Utah, on the edge of Bonneville Salt Flats. There's a tire place out back of the diner/mini mart here, which is the main establishment on this exit for the salt flats. The tire place is never open when I pass by, but it looks to be a going concern, so either they or I keep odd hours. One day, I'll see a sign of life here. I don't know why I'm always drawn to this exit, not far from Wendover, but I cannot ever pass by without stopping here.

Another shot from Brooklyn. Okay, call me a liar - I'll get to the Bronx soon enough. This place may or may not still fix flats. At some point, they flipped the sheet metal on one side of the gate and all hell broke loose. Who knows what goes on here any more? It's on a block of wrecking yards and the street, itself, is dirt and gravel. I was amazed I came out of that single block with my tires intact. Then again, I may think too much about tires.



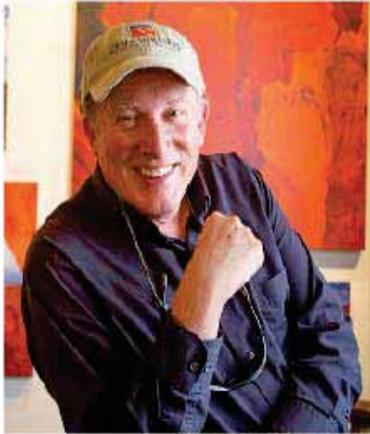
h, the Bronx! One thing about the Bronx, one of many things, is that you can often find hand-painted logos for national brands displayed prominently.

Austin, Nevada. Now, here's a place I could tell some stories about, but I'll try to keep it brief and save the details for another day. In short, the old gentleman who lives and works here, just at the bottom of the treacherous Austin Summit, is a volunteer fireman in his spare time. As such, he has seen his share of wrecks, which is why he used to post a "Speed Trap Ahead" sign at the driveway of his establishment. He mainly wanted people to slow down as they rolled through Austin. The subject of Austin is for another day. This is one place I actually got a flat fixed once, after a glorious day of soaking in the back country at a secret hot spring.



Texas again. What I like about this is the pure visual message. Nowhere do you see the words "tire" or "flat fix" displayed on this sign, for Rael's Diesel. Just a simple pictograph. It could mean "donut," but my money is on "tire."

For more images and captions by Paul Vlachos, visit our home page.



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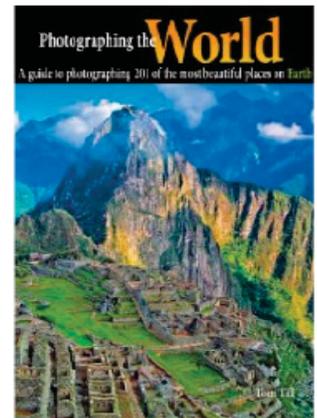
*Tom's latest book...*

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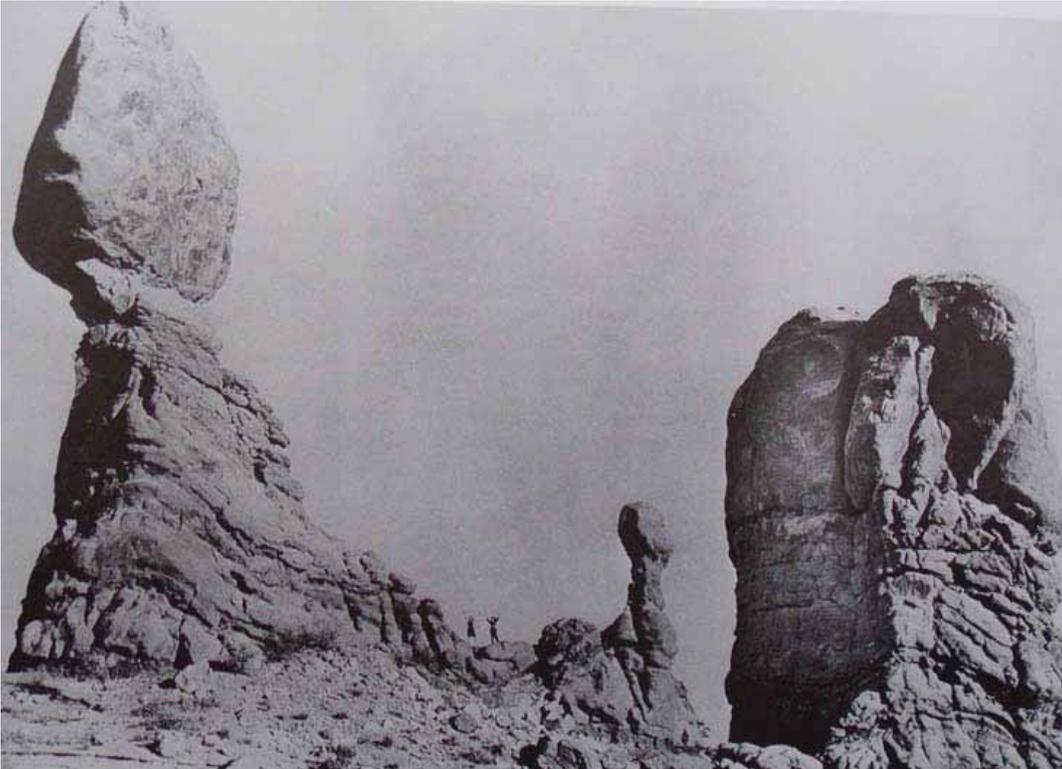
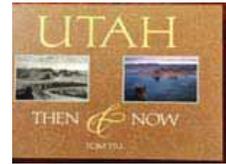


**LIFETIME  
BACKBONE  
MEMBER**

**ANNE  
SNOWDEN  
CROSMAN**



# from TOM TILL "THEN & NOW"



From Tom's book:  
'THEN &  
NOW'

*Balanced Rock, a landmark in Arches National Park, had a smaller companion that collapsed in the winter of 1975-76. There is continual change in canyon country. Large rocks spill from the walls of Moab Canyon and Castle Valley, and I have heard numerous rockfalls on my many desert hikes. Water—not wind, as some claim—is the principal culprit for the erosion that carves and sculpts features of the Colorado Plateau.*

