

Hedden Interview (continued)

we're going to say, "you should have been in Moab in the late '80s and early '90s." There's a lot about the size of the town that's nice, the feeling of vitality, yet you can still let your kids be at large at the baseball games in the evening and not worry they're going to be kidnapped. I can still leave the keys in my car. You know people who are involved in things, there's a real feeling of community here. That's terrific. To try to have some of that positive development without letting it run over us is the kind of balance I'm looking for.

"But I think we need to realize that lots of towns end up looking back and saying, 'you should have been in Moab in the late '80s and early '90s.' There's a lot about the size of the town that's nice, the feeling of vitality, yet you can still let your kids be at large at the baseball games in the evening and not worry they're going to be kidnapped."

We haven't paid for this growth yet. We haven't upgraded the sewage treatment plant, or our water lines, which today are falling apart. We don't have the schools that are adequate. We've just begun to pay for the courthouse. There's a big bill coming. We need to be aware that growth generally costs us money, it doesn't make us money. So I think it's a smart time to proceed cautiously and in whatever way county government can do it, try to be sure we're not reckless about the way we're moving forward.

Zephyr: Two ideas have been raised recently, a moratorium on new subdivisions, and a moratorium on zone changes. Let's take the first. How do you feel about that?

Bill: I don't think that I could support it right now. I feel like we don't have our act together at all, so for us to tell everybody, because we don't have our act together we're going to bring the community to a halt is premature. If we get the master plan in process, which is now just beginning, if we get that really functioning, we can say to people, "for a certain period of time, for the next 5 months or something, we are not going to approve any new subdivisions that can't be hooked up to the sewer," or something like that, then I think that would be defensible. But to just say we're going to impose a moratorium on new subdivisions would be foolish, because it would only have a 6 month life span, and we wouldn't have the plan ready when it expired. I think we're going to have to continue to take new subdivision requests on a case by case basis. But at the same time, push hard on the master plan.

Zephyr: You've had a shovel full of zone change requests at virtually every county council meeting. How about a moratorium on that?

Bill: It's easier for me to say no to zone change than it is to a new subdivision that's in an appropriate zone. But there again, I would like to do that in some sort of coordination with the planning process. If it became obvious that we were really closing in on something and we wanted not to approve any new zone changes until we had a plan finalized, then I think that would be appropriate. But we're constantly being approached by people who are terrified. They've heard a rumor that the council is going to do this, and we haven't even discussed it as group.

Zephyr: Do you believe the point of view you are expressing is a point of view with strong public support?

Bill: I think it is. But there's also a feeling I have that people who agree with me, and the points of view of most of the rest of the council members, feel like they did it, they changed the government, they elected us, and now they can relax and let us do all the right things. They feel like they don't have to be involved day-to-day to make that happen. The thing I'd like to say to those people is, "we're trying, we're doing our best, but we need input."

"I think that people are going to see some pretty brave and creative things come out of the council."

Bill Hedden. July 1993

It's easy for people who are not involved in county government to misjudge how important it is to be at a meeting, to give input. This is a little town, and people who get up and speak thoughtfully about an issue can change the way things happen here. If people have creative ideas of ways to address these problems, if they have big concerns about things we're doing, they ought to show up. The "old guard" which feels threatened by who we are and what they think we represent, DOES show up. They know how county government works, they know when to show up, when to bring in neighbors. If people who support us won't show up, then the old guard will have a disproportionate effect on the way things get done around here, because it's very hard to sit at a meeting and have 30 people unanimously opposed to what you're trying to do, and have no one supporting you.

Zephyr: You are one of seven council members. Do you feel that the majority of people on the council agree with you, and does the council as a whole have the courage to carry it out?

Bill: Yeah, we do agree pretty broadly on a lot of things. When we get down to specifics we have our disagreements like any seven people would. And I think there's a lot of strength in that group. I think that people are going to see some pretty brave and creative things come out of the council.

Interviewer Ken Davey in the early '90s



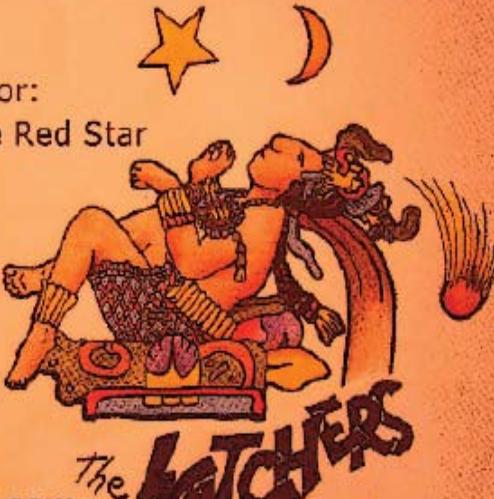

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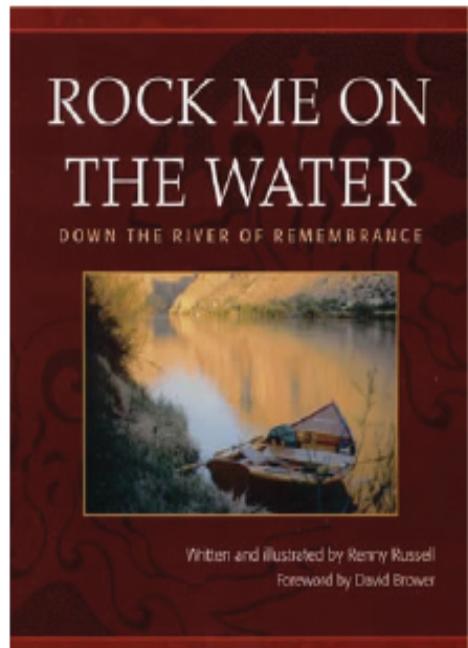


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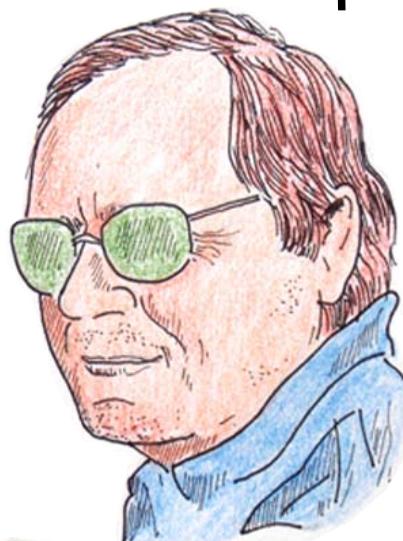
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