

there will be people that take refuge from the cities and live in the country. That doesn't mean that I endorse the sort of thing that's going on here at all.

Despite the damage that grazing can cause, at least the land is still open. Doesn't open space have value? Isn't it, in effect, still capable of being restored at some later date, and isn't that still preferable to seeing urbanesque development?

Patrick: We're activists on the public lands grazing issue. Unless the right wing gets its druthers and we privatize all the public lands, they're not going to get developed.

Tori: My ideas about things have changed since moving here. I hadn't even thought about the condos vs. cows thing until moving here. And when I moved here I got all panicked that there would be subdivisions all over those green fields. And I thought to bring the Grand Canyon Trust here to help people put easements on their land--I was into it. And then I realized the whole cow problem on public lands and that those fields are feeding those cows.

Patrick: I look back to August of 1998 when we moved here, and shake my head at how many assumptions I made about the future, and how optimistic I was about a lot of things. Given what's happening on a national and global scale, it's very hard to worry about what's going to happen in Escalante.

There's a growing movement in the Southwest where ranchers, environmentalists and scientists are getting together and exploring the best available practices for restoring and maintaining ecologically healthy and productive rangelands. What's your thought on this movement?

Tori: Bogus.

Patrick: Yup.

Tori: There probably are some small ecosystems where you can graze a few animals and not destroy the land. But in general, in the intermountain west, it's too arid, and they shouldn't be here. You cannot support enough of them on the land to make a living. So I don't think it's going to work. Public lands should be for wildlife. Where else is wildlife going to go, but on our public lands?

I really loathe this town, and you can quote me. Socially it's a really loathesome place.

You can put that in the paper.

Absolutely. It's the worst place I've ever lived, and I've lived quite a few places.

There is still a rural culture in the West, albeit dwindling. It represents a distinctly different lifestyle. Rural westerners are willing to do without certain amenities to enjoy other qualities of life that can't be found in an urban environment. If people choosing this kind of life can't feel their future is safe in an isolated part of the West like Escalante, where can a rural westerner feel confident that this lifestyle can endure? Is there anyplace?

Tori: What have they given up? I don't feel like they give up a lot. People have most of what's available in other places. But, since I grew up in a rural town, I do feel there were values imbued in me that were perhaps "rural." One of them was fair play, and I don't see it here.

Patrick: The real thing people give up around here is medical care. But what is the specific content of a rural lifestyle? If it's quiet you want there are lots of quiet places in the city. Go up into the Berkeley Hills. It's really quiet there. Except for the freeway noise. There are plenty of quiet places in large metropolitan areas. So I'm trying to get what it is that constitutes the rural lifestyle. I'm not coming up with much of a list.

This might include open space, not always locking your doors, knowing your neighbors, parents feel like they can let their kids move around more freely, people waving at each other when they drive by.

Patrick: They don't wave at us; they don't talk. I can come up with lots of things that you don't have in a rural lifestyle, but I can't come up with many things that you do get that you wouldn't have in the city. The one thing that you don't have here is constantly polluted air.

Tori: We enjoy being able to go out and hike, and others like to hunt, fish. So that's part of rural life. Then there's the cowboy/rancher lifestyle. Personally I think that is mostly a negative, because people abuse the animals. As a child I was encouraged to participate in that and I don't think it's good for kids to learn that. I find the cowboy lifestyle to be violent, very macho, very non-feminist. I don't like it. I didn't like it as a child. I hated Country Western music--it was my parents' music, I was not of their generation, I wasn't ever going to listen to that. I still hate it. And it's gotten worse.

Patrick: But I have to admit there are a few really good country-western songs.



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