

THE STINKING DESERT GAZETTE



VOL. 2
NO. 1

AUGUST
1987



25¢

MOAB,
UTAH



XX CROQUET FOR ADULTS

Moabites are once again in the forefront of fashion, and this time it's a brand new recreational pastime, cross-country croquet.

Not since the boatmen began wearing skirts has this town been swept by such a popular trend, with rugged and challenging courses popping up all over the county.

A combination of several other sports, cross country croquet blends the sensible practicality of croquet with the demanding shot placement of golf and the unrelenting snobbishness of polo.

The best courses are on several levels, and offer high risk shortcuts from level to level for the more daring players. Negotiating these shortcuts requires that the wooden ball be "put" into the air with any of a number of shots invented for the purpose, like the "dipstick", the "blivot", and the highly unorthodox "flummer".

When it is the shooters intent to put the wooden ball into the air, he must first notify the referee, who alerts all players with a shout of "five!".

It's no wonder that most of the injuries associated with this sport occur to the spectators, who tend to relax with some drinks and jocular conversation, and sometimes pay dearly for the lapse.

The rules are surprising close to ordinary croquet, with a few exceptions.

Any player, after making contact with an opponents ball, may choose to "send" his opponent into the wilderness areas beyond the official boundaries. In addition, a player may choose to "send" the ball of any player passed out on the playing surface by another means.

With a spectacular shot known as the "mashie", the

"down" players ball is placed next to his head, which in turn is held firmly in place by the "sending" player's foot.

Victims of the mashie either quickly learn to hold their liquor while on the course, or find their career cut short by chronic double vision.

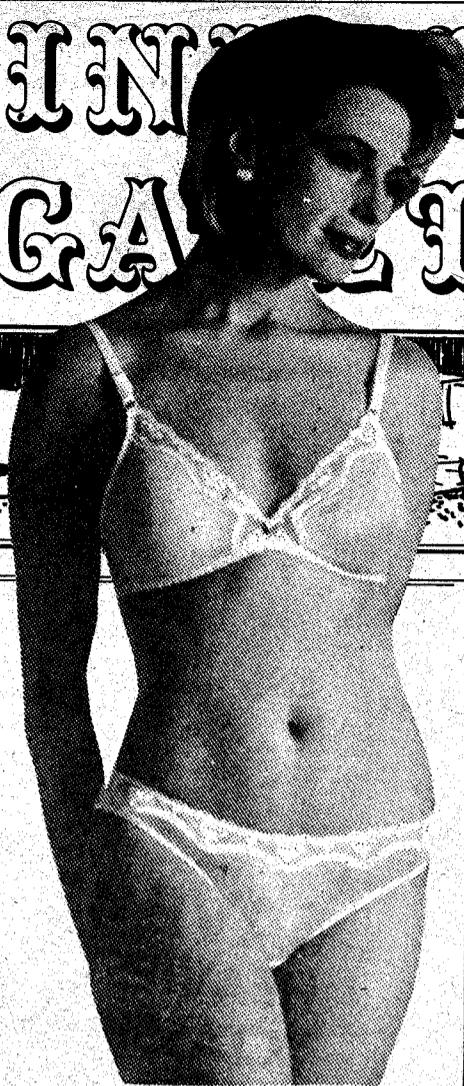
The only really serious injury at the midway point of the season, spectators aside, occurred last month at Deglas Downs, where Ben Before suffered a serious foot injury while executing the mashie.

Halfway through his swing he experienced a moment of sympathy for his downed opponent, a serious weakness he was known for while still in the amateur ranks. He pulled up and smashed his own foot, and put himself out of the game.

All players observe the proper decorum when any outstanding shot has been made. There no high fives or vulgar shouts during CCC match play. Players wishing to acknowledge a good shot do so by politely tapping their mallet handle on any nearby stone, creating a light stecatto of approval. If a shot was truly wondrous an opponent could, under certain unique circumstances, be moved to utter: "Nice put". It is imperative that the shooter not acknowledge these outbursts, as any kind of celebration would lower his esteem in the eyes of his fellow players.

Sanctioned tournaments are played regularly in the area, refereed by bonafide CCC officials. The most recent, sponsored by the CCCCC, the Canyonlands Competitive Cross Country Croquet Confederation, was held at the unforgiving, master's-play course at Deglas Downs in Castle Valley.

A record crowd was in attendance, due primarily to the heavy airtime the match received from Martin O'Keefe of Radio Station KQFM in Colorado.



CRITIC RAKES GAZETTE

The following article, a critical analysis of the first twelve months of the Stinking Desert Gazette, was written by literary critic, Gaylord Smooth, for the July issue of The Last Word, a journal of journalistic comment on journalism.

"A fledgling publication has sprung up in the deserts of Southeast Utah, and for the past twelve months has been severely trying the patience of the people of Moab.

"Like any one-year-old, the Stinking Desert Gazette has been known to "mess" in its own pants on occasion, and frequently, while trying to speak, spits up on its front.

"There have been a few serious faceplants, as it struggled to take its first steps. And advertisers could only stand by and watch, horrified, as it grabbed hold of highly complex, controversial issues, and stuffed them in its mouth."

"It's a source of wonder to this quarter that it could have survived this long as a purveyor of such infantile metaphor."

Stinking Desert Gazette publisher, Philmore Banks, had this to say about the critique: "It's obvious that Mr. Smooth hasn't altogether misapprehended the nature of our market appeal."

INSIDE

**Izzie Kiddin
meets his match
in Goblin Valley!**

see page 8

**Higher Education
comes to Moab!**

see page 4

Also: Mobabble,
Bobby Bloato, Cliff Walker,
Rama Lama Ding Dong,
Rock Hart, Nemo Glitz,
and Philmore Banks.

AND inside...
the best of
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Volume 1



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The Absolute Truth



Philmore Banks, Esq.

Staff members have been submitting suggestions, among them: The Jojoba's Witnesses, The Psycho Animists, The Pet Rocks, (oh, but they get worse!), The Jack Pantheists, The Turtles (?), The Dust Devils, The Throbbing Spires, The Roamin' Batholiths, The Hairy Hoodoos, and The Mineral Pulse.

But none of them quite captured the nuance of our belief that the rocks are alive and that distinctions made between the "organic" and "inorganic" are primarily mind-manifest.

The subjective nature of matter, that turbulent sea of electromagnetism as described by new-wave physicists, prompted an ancient greek to exclaim something like: "The rocks are but music, with a solid rythm!"

In any case, I think the best way to proceed, to avoid embarassing any of our earnest and true believers, is to throw this open for more input.

If you experience an enlightening inspiration, don't forget it! Jot it down and send it along to the SDG, Box 13, Moab.



Be in the know before you go!



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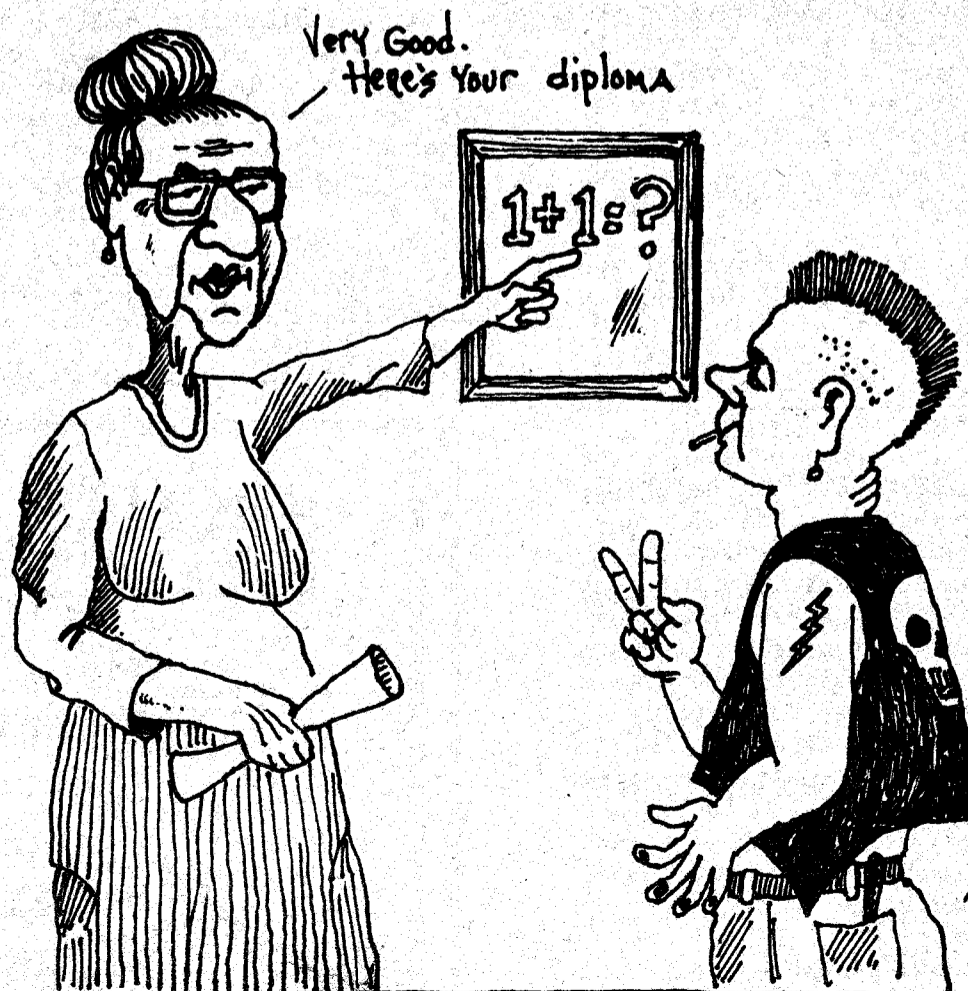
Despite our scansional, slightly defalcatory progress towards the steep and slippery summit of two hundred subscriptions, a level set by the U.S. Post Office as a trial by fire for all fledgling publications desirous of obtaining most favorable rate status, we are nonetheless able to report the recent addition of four more states to our rolls - New York, Nevada, Montana and Pennsylvania - and a market share of .0000005% of the population of this glorious nation. In addition, the fact of an arrearage of 75 subscribers who as of yet have not responded to our appeal means that the STINKING DESERT GAZETTE will continue to be delivered by First Class Courier. A total of 21 states are at the present time being reached by our ministry, and the only Black Pantheist newsletter in this entire country. Which brings up the pertinent point of this address.

It's become apparent to those manning the phones in our subscription department that many of you resonate with the movement, but are hesitant to call yourselves Black Pantheists. Some fear discrimination in employment, some worry about what their parents will think, and some, especially those of Celtic, Germanic and Slavic origin, simply can not acquire a tan.

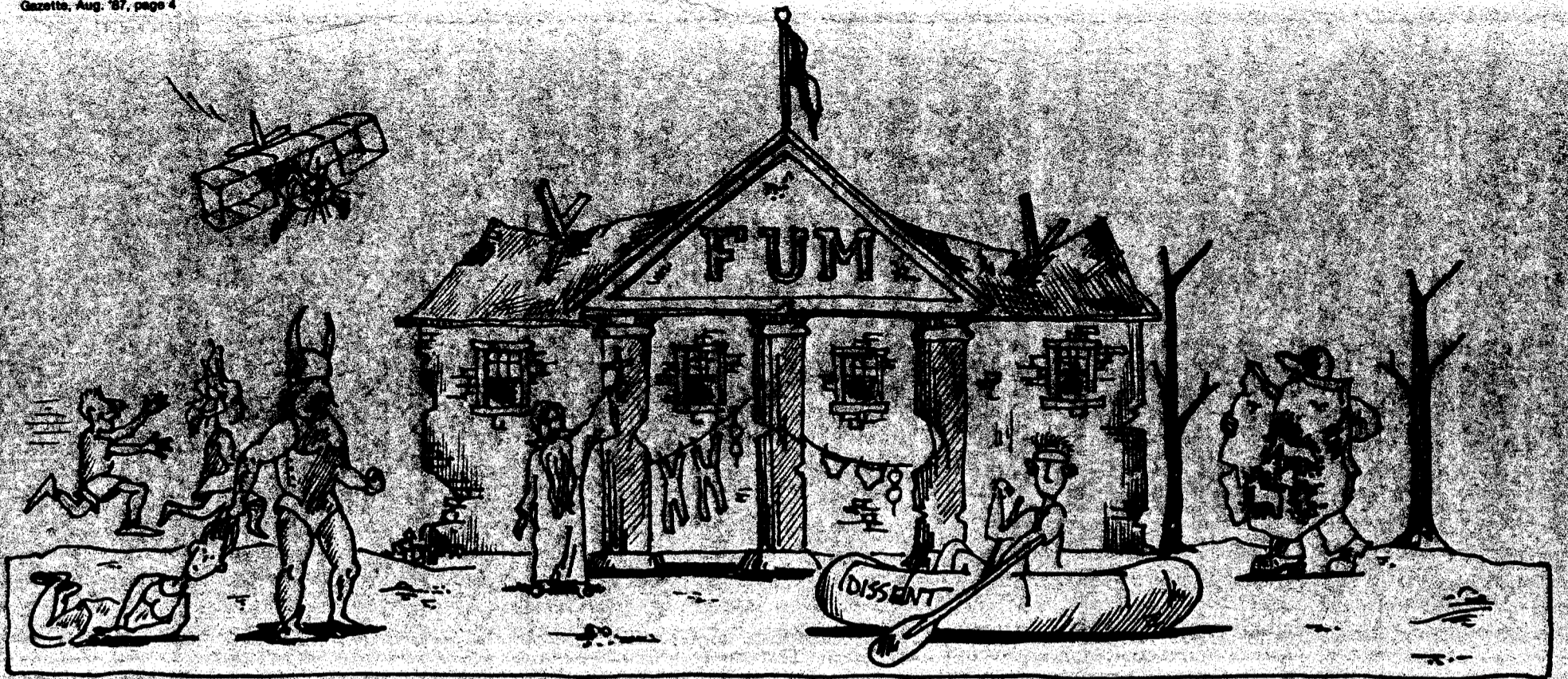
As President of the Living Rock Monastery and Antacid Rain Institute in Hoebroken, Arizona, I felt the time had come for a more upscale name for our movement.

The colloquial term "Rockhuggers" came to mind, but it seemed too coarse in addition to being generically imprecise. Our union with the rocks, the ultimate source of everything we are and know, is more mystical than carnal, although a certain amount of gentle affection is permitted.

School BOARD Resolves Educational Crisis: Re-defines INTElligence



Jim Stiles ©1987



THE FREE UNIVERSITY OF MOAB

BY Deidre Elliot

Long overlooked by major Utah universities as a potential hotbed of intellectual desire, this fall Moab will at last have its own college. Begun on a whim by three sharpies from the west coast carrying carpet bags and alligator brief cases, the Free University of Moab will offer a variety of non-credit courses.

"All our classes will be taught by experts in their fields," commented Swami N. It For-The-Money, acting president of F.U.M. "However, the word 'free' in our title is often misinterpreted. We do indeed charge a nominal fee to register for classes (plus a \$50 handling fee if a student actually wishes to attend the sessions.) 'Free' refers to the spirit of the university itself. We are free from any religious, political or intellectual biases. In fact, F.U.M. is so free, we'll let anybody teach anything - provided we get 90% of the take, of course."

A sampling of the courses for the first semester of the Free University of Moab includes:

Self-Actualization Through Pot Hunting

Learn the ins and outs of the Federal Antiquities Act! See beautiful canyon country that few others know about! Get up close and personal with the ancient Anasazi! Yes, you too can achieve your highest level of personal satisfaction by rummaging through abandoned cliff houses, and knocking down kiva walls. Free the power of your individual potential while raiding culturally significant sites for handcrafted pots, manos and metates, turkey feather blankets, and other irreplaceable signs of human habitation. Defile religious shrines for your own profit!

Students must provide their own bulldozers.

Hit The Road, Jack: A Singles Hiking Group

All alone in Moab? Love the out-of-doors? Then this class is for you. We will meet approximately 2.4 times a week for a brisk hike in the hills and then sex in the back of a Volvo. Bring wine and cheese, appropriate clothing (preferably with snap or Velcro fasteners), and cigarettes to smoke afterwards.

Texts: Hiking Guide To Canyonlands National Park and The Joy Of Sex.

Start Your Own Import/Export Business

Learn how to smuggle anything into the United States with just six weeks study! The very best trade secrets will be revealed in this class including: field identification of endangered species, geography of marijuana growing regions around the world, and 44 places to hide antique art on your body.

Text: The Frequent Flyers Guide To Getting Past Customs.

Note: Students may prefer to register for this course under an

assumed name.

Men Who Love Too Much

"Wham, Bam..." Never say "thank you" again! This class will teach men to pillage and plunder just as their Hun, Viking, and Visigoth ancestors once did. Leave all that '80's sensitive male crap behind and create a whole new you. (Phil Donohue should be so lucky.) Feel the power of a broad ax in one hand and a naked, screaming female in the other. Field excursions planned to Bluff and Monticello to wreak havoc on unsuspecting townspeople.

For Fun And Prophet; Starting Your Own Religion

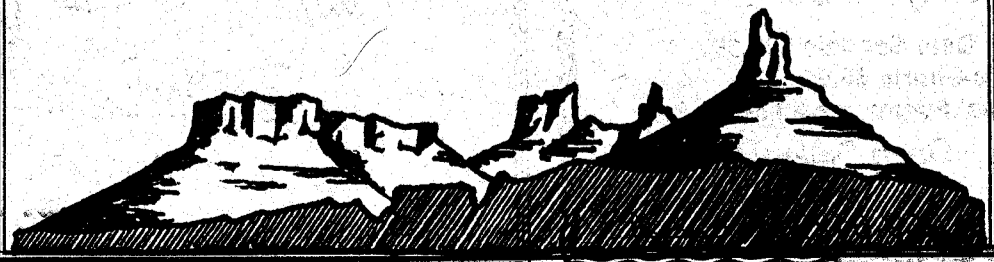
Yes, Utah has historically been a veritable mecca for spiritual groups persecuted everywhere. Now is the time for a new revival of religious fervor to spring from the loins of the desert, rise to life, and spread it's seed over the unwashed.

see page 5

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cont.

Whether your religious orientation is western, eastern, or bi-coastal, this class is for you. Any belief system is an acceptable starting point as long as there is potential for at least three Mercedes per leader.

Class lectures include: "Greed, Guts and Glory - Increasing Contributions Via Telecommunications", "Visa or Vishnu? Making the Toll-Free 800 Number Work For You", and "Tammy's Tips for Evangelical Make-up."

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Men! Check out the other fillies in the stable before you kick down your stall and decide to put that old gray mare out to pasture. Why take a chance only to discover that it's breast augmentation, tummy tucks, and liposuction that's making you feel so frisky.

"Dating For Married Folks" is an invaluable resource for any couple married over five years.

Tax Shelters For River Runners

It's not too early to start thinking about next year's tax return. Save money now by starting your own fiscally un-sound rafting business. Purchase big, expensive rafts, 500 life jackets, and 1000 crates of duct tape. Hire your brother-in-law and all your friends in order to increase your guilt later when you must lay them all off. Apply for river permits which you will never receive because of the difficult lottery system. Discover how to drown your sorrows with a combination of Coors, Corona and axle grease. Start now and you, too, can be in the red by next spring's runoff.

Care Package Cooking

As a public service, F.U.M. offers this class for the down-trodden, out-of-work neighbors-in-need. Learn the culinary secrets of Chef Abdul Al Salami, caterer of the great Ethiopian Famine. All recipes will be provided, such as these all-time favorites: Textured Protein Surprise; Rice, Lice and Rice Cassarole; and that classic beverage, powdered milk mixed with water. Students may choose to live in their own Unicef packing crates after the class.

The Free University of Moab plans to add more classes for the winter semester, including: "1001 Uses For Channel-Locks", "The Joy Of Real Estate Foreclosure", and "Creative Federal Financing", presented by guest lecturer, Lt. Col. Oliver North.

Sign up now and help make F.U.M. a success!

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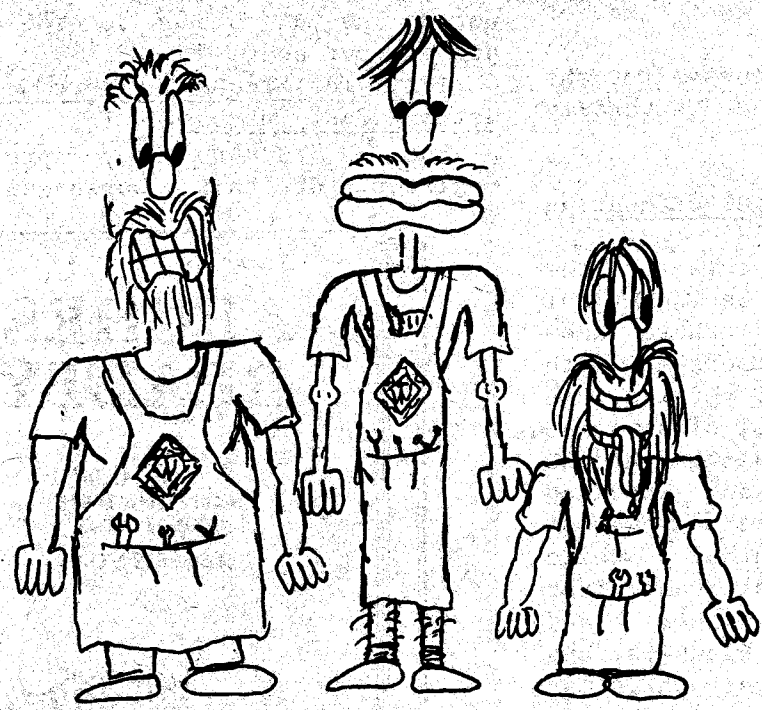
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This month began with lots of boom and flash on the 4th of July. Eight freedom lovers celebrated the anniversary of the establishment of our land of liberty and independence by putting on a phenomenal pyro-technical display from the top of Castle Rock, 1,400 feet above the floor of Castle Valley.

These human flies shinnied up the narrow rock pinnacle without climbing aids, a treacherous feat no normal, sane human would attempt.

Thank goodness we live in the land where freedom is valued above sanity!

Our rock climbing heroes prefer to remain anonymous, so I'll just relay the rumor that, in addition to the seedy character who organized the activity, The Ninja Bitch Warrior was there and so was some guy with a bumper sticker which features a whale and the phrase: "Save The Humans".

No doubt about it. We humans need saving. I mean, everywhere you look humans are wreaking havoc despite the best of intentions. Not only is our weather due to change radically any day now, thanks to human atmospheric pollution, but even local Moabites can't perform a normal, everyday activity without botching it up somehow. DeVore managed to break his foot while playing cross country croquet, and Roger Talbot broke some ribs while coming to the assistance of a helpless infant in a crib. Oh dear.

Are Americans really competent enough to deserve freedom?

It seems to be getting very hard to be a responsible citizen these days. It's not enough to have mastered the skill of standing upright and walking, without breaking any bones. In a democracy you have to be proficient at making decisions about really complex, crisis level problems.

Have you heard all the brou-ha-ha over the issue of whether or not to eradicate tamarisk in Arches National Park? The Park, because of its mandate to preserve the natural environment, is waging war on the tamarisk because it's an invading species (ie: weed) and therefore perceived as definitely NOT natural. Of course, the opposing side argues that tamarisk is natural (well, at least it's not made out of plastic, or assembled by some guy in a parts factory).

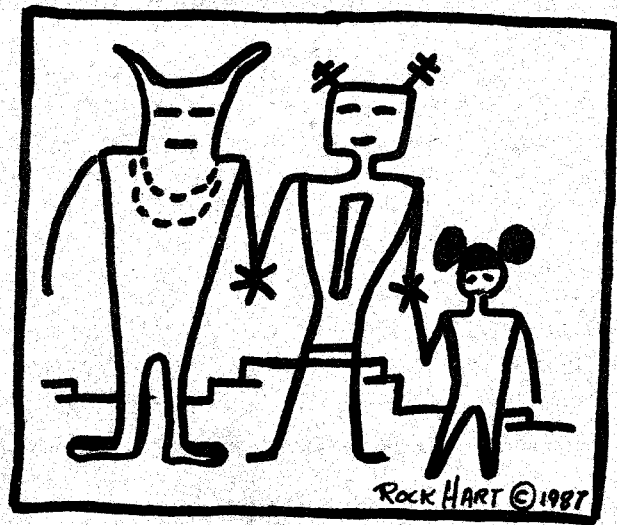
The Park's eradication program is actually extremely modest, but I think the real reason there's so much heat around the issue is because we civilians resent the government's power to manipulate the environment with seemingly uncontrolled abandon. After all, the rest of us have to tiptoe through the Park, self-consciously avoiding every little heap of moldy soil.

But just because the Park Service is big doesn't mean it has much power. Our Founding Fathers figured out that the best way to control rampaging power is to immobilize it with red tape. Here in America we value individual opinion and the rights of minorities so highly that we won't let any governing body carry out a proposed scheme without first filling out at least a small forest's worth of triplicate forms.

The tamarisk debate raises very fundamental questions, like; "What is a weed?" Ivan Palmlad, a professor of ecology at the University of New Mexico, proposes that "perhaps the word 'weed' is just a loser's term for success. It's the guys who get shoved aside by a weed that resent it's success."

When you think about it, what is the worst 'weed' (metaphorically speaking) in the Park? Man, of course. I hear that the 500% increase in Park visitation this year has coincided with a phenomenal increase in graffiti on the rocks down at The Needles. But, I ask you, are there any human eradication programs being developed by the Park Service?

No. And that's because weeds don't usually feel guilty about claiming their place in the sun. The big question in a democracy (which values individual rights) is: When is success too successful?

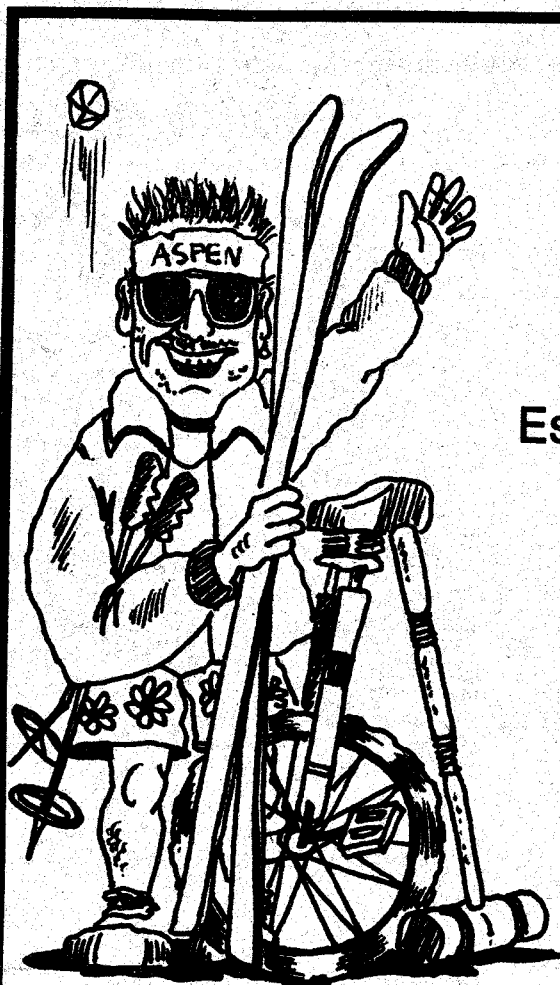


We in Moab value freedom and diversity, which is why we're afraid of too much success - too many tourists, too many mines, too many policemen, too many parties. (However, there is no such thing as too many rocks!)

The genius of the American political system lies in its separation of powers which insures that nothing gets accomplished quickly and efficiently. There are no easy avenues to success. Instead, the painfully slow process of achieving consensus among diverse interests insures that some kind of sane unity evolves out of the plethora of bumbling schemes of enthusiastic individualists. In other words, democracy works best when no particular 'weed' is too successful.

By the way, did you see the strange hail which fell in Moab late last month? The gunball-sized hailstones came in a wierd assortment of shapes, from hemispheric to stick-like and covered with pointy protuberances. Wierd.

Maybe the hailstones last week were celebrating their own independence in their own bumbling way.



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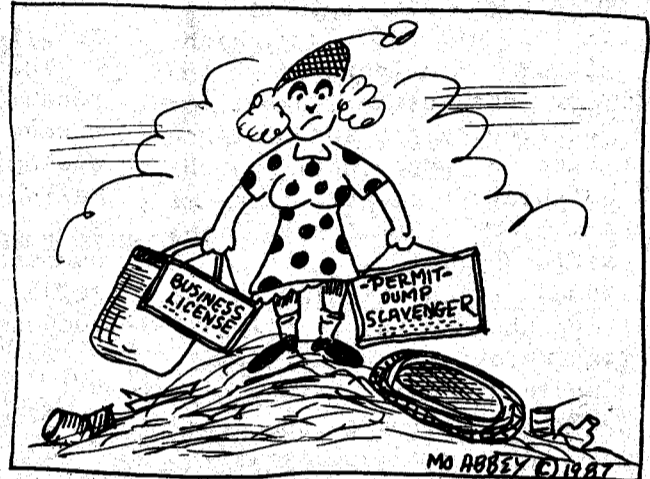
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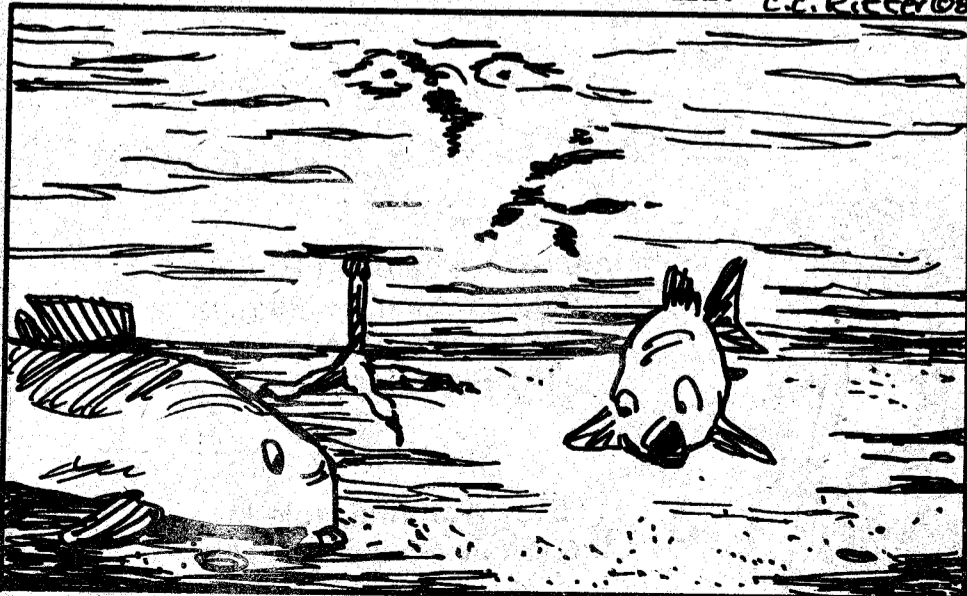


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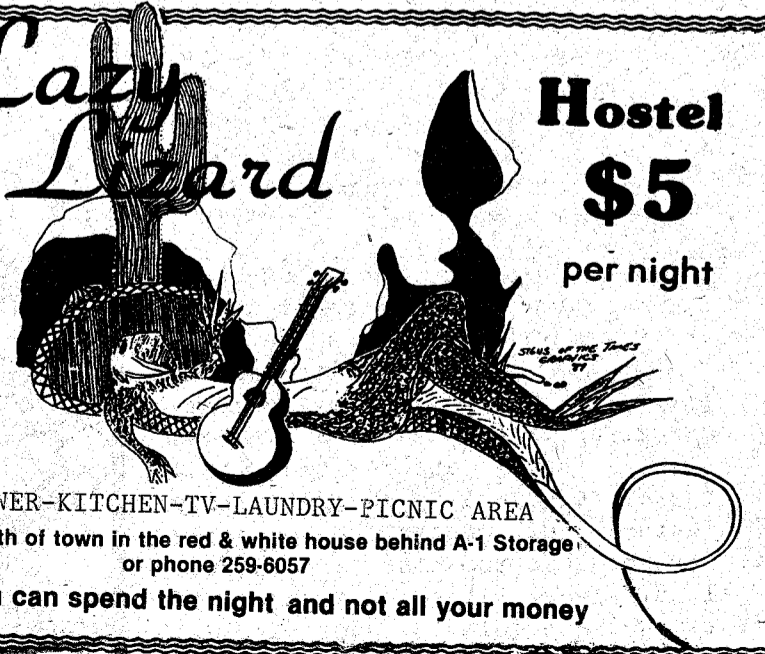
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Izzie Kiddin

THE GOBLIN VALLEY DIARY

(OCT. '85-DAY ONE) What an absolutely horrid place to want to be deposited at for a whole week! I can see the dust plumes Gary is raising with his jeep, and I miss him already. Maybe this wasn't such a great idea after all. There's no one else here but me ... and of course, the goblins.

Not pretty or majestic sculptures of stone, but grotesque stumps of rock, crudely carved, all huddled in a little valley in the middle of nowhere. Strange alien shapes! There are dog-heads, dick-heads, fish-heads, a Santa Claus wearing a baret, a one-eared mule - ungodly manifestations of stone!

To the West rise the tortured cliffs of the San Rafael Swell. No one lives there. Even the Coyote's tune this morning was demented and mournful. Sibelius #7. To the South rise the Henry Mountains, almost in defiance to the surrounding twisted landscape. And to the North lies ... nothing. The bleak vast void that is the San Rafael Desert. And here I am, having fun.

It will be a challenge to get to know this place. Impossible to love it. This is a proving ground for the Gods. But, I'm here for a whole week with the camera and supplies, so might as well go down and meet the goblins and introduce myself.

DAY TWO - I was sure that fish-head rock over there was facing in the other direction when I arrived! Silly, probably just my imagination. Isn't it? Did not sleep too well last night. Some jokers must have been rolling rocks around somewhere all night long.

There is a 'feeling' about this place. In my travels I have come across certain areas that seem to generate a 'force' all their own. There's one such place near the Boulder, Colorado, Library. Goblin Valley is another. Not an evil force, but an 'ominous' one just the same. Hard to explain ... THERE! Did you see that rock move??? Of course you didn't, you're not here. I am here, having fun. Maybe a drink or two will relax me. I'm sure it's just my nerves on edge from being here in this grizzly place without another soul in sight. I could have sworn that rock moved though.....

DAY THREE - A feeling ... of utter dread is creeping into my bones. This redundant view that I have been watching for three days now is becoming ridiculous! Entrada on Entrada. Buff on buff, naked and colorless. Not so much as a goathead grows out here. Not even a lousy dumb rabbit running among the goblins. No life at all. Just me. And this is living??? I've toyed with the idea of hiking to the highway, but it's a long walk out and a very lonely road this time of season. I just better stay put and relax. HEY!!! SANTA JUST TOOK OFF HIS BERET!!! Gimme my bottle.....

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DAY FOUR - Yes, there are rocks that move, Virginia. I HAVE SEEN THEM! Last night, Santa switched places with the mule with only one ear. Santa gave his beret to the mule to help hide that handicap. That's a nice Santa, isn't it? tee hee ... Surely you've heard of a donkey's berrrrrrray, haven't you? How about a turkey goblin? Yuk yuk.

I am not sleeping too well yet. I've really been drinking entirely too much. I haven't even taken the camera out of the damn pack! Don't want to steal the spirits. no no no. SSSSSSH! Keep your voice down! They'll hear you. That's better. heh heh.

I'm starting to question my existence of late. I mean, what the hell am I doing out in the middle of this horrible place watching these rocks move??? For what purpose? To what end??? I'm sitting here talking to these rocks! Telling Santa what I want for Christmas, for Christ's sake! These rocks move, you know ... I'VE

see page 9

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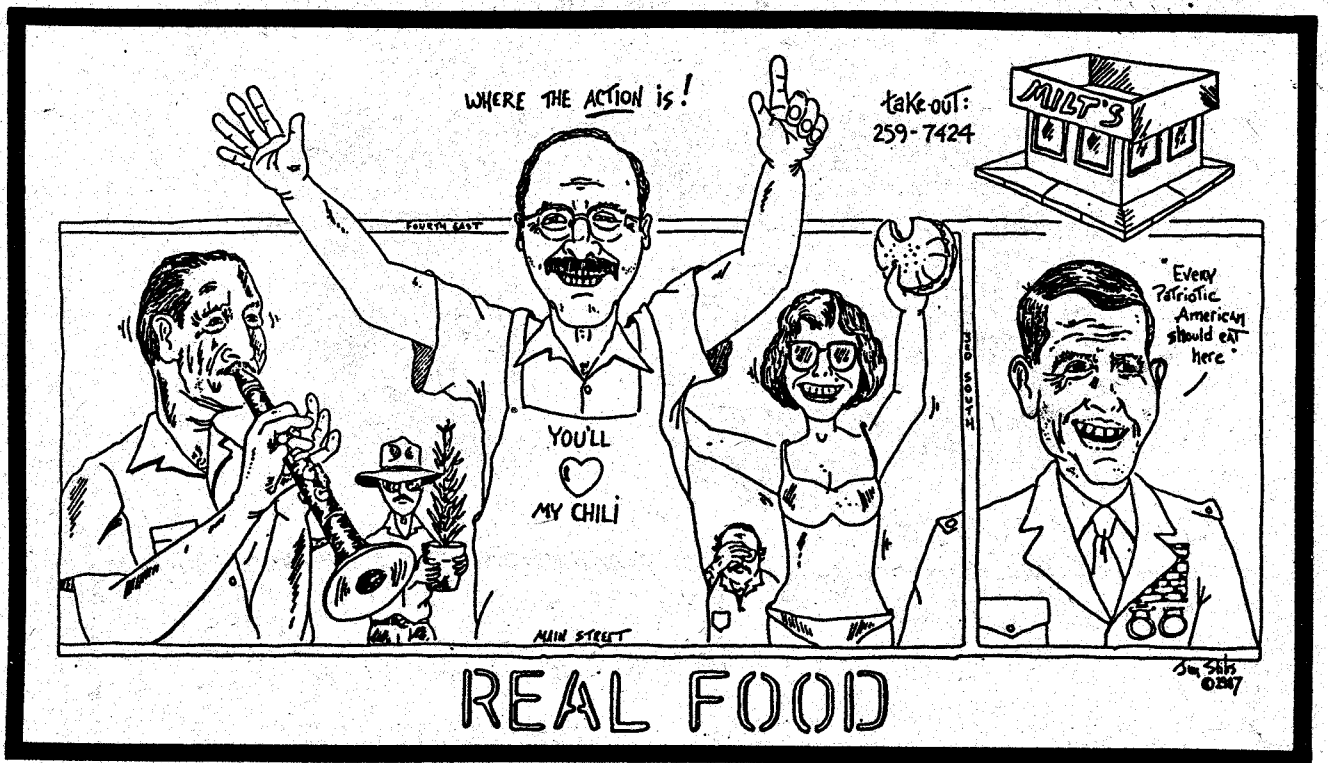
SEEN THEM! LUCIFER IS AFOOT! NO! HE'S MUCH MORE THAN JUST ONE FOOT!! CIBOLA! CIBOLA!!! CITY OF SEVEN!!! AND THE BEAST WEARS THE NUMBER 666!!! I've seen it! It's on Santa's beret! Sleep ... must ... get ... some ... sleep.

DAY FIVE - AHHHH! What rough beast gallops in the night, keeping me from my much-needed slumber? And who jammed my camera? My booze has been confiscated!!! YOU'LL ALL PAY FOR THIS! Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood! Over thy wounds now do I prophesy! Lo and behold that I am meek and humble ... WITH YOU BUTCHERS!! HA!

Full moon is tomorrow night! TOMORROW NIGHT! BY THE LIGHT! OF THE SILVERY MOON! IN OCTOBER!!! HA HA HA!! I think I'll stay up all day and night and day and wait for the full moon! THE FOOL'S MOON. luna. lunar. lunacy! Lucy. lucid. lucidity. lucy in the sky. I lost my blue buttons .. SANTA'S A PERVERT!!! And you, you one-eared ass of a rock! Did you steal my booze? I'll knock off your other ear! AND THAT GOES FOR YOUR DOG TOO MY PRETTIES!!! HA!!!

DAY SIX - OH MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE OF GOB! OGRES OF POWER!!! HAVE PITY ON THIS MERE BIT OF DUST THAT STANDS BEFORE YOU! FORGIVE ME FOR INTRUDING HERE! I MEANT NO HARM. DO NOT GAZE UPON ME ANYMORE WITH THOSE EYES OF STONE!!! I worship your very presence Santa Claus is coming to town...

I AM ON THE PLAIN OF ARGOS! I know it's Argos 'cause of the red soil. I'm some kind of priest at an official ceremony. Before me stands a herd of 500 boys and girls, all stretched out in single ranks. On either side of me are two high priests, wearing large, pop-eyed masks. I am at the sacrificial altar awaiting the beginning of the ceremony. IT IS TIME TO BEGIN!!!

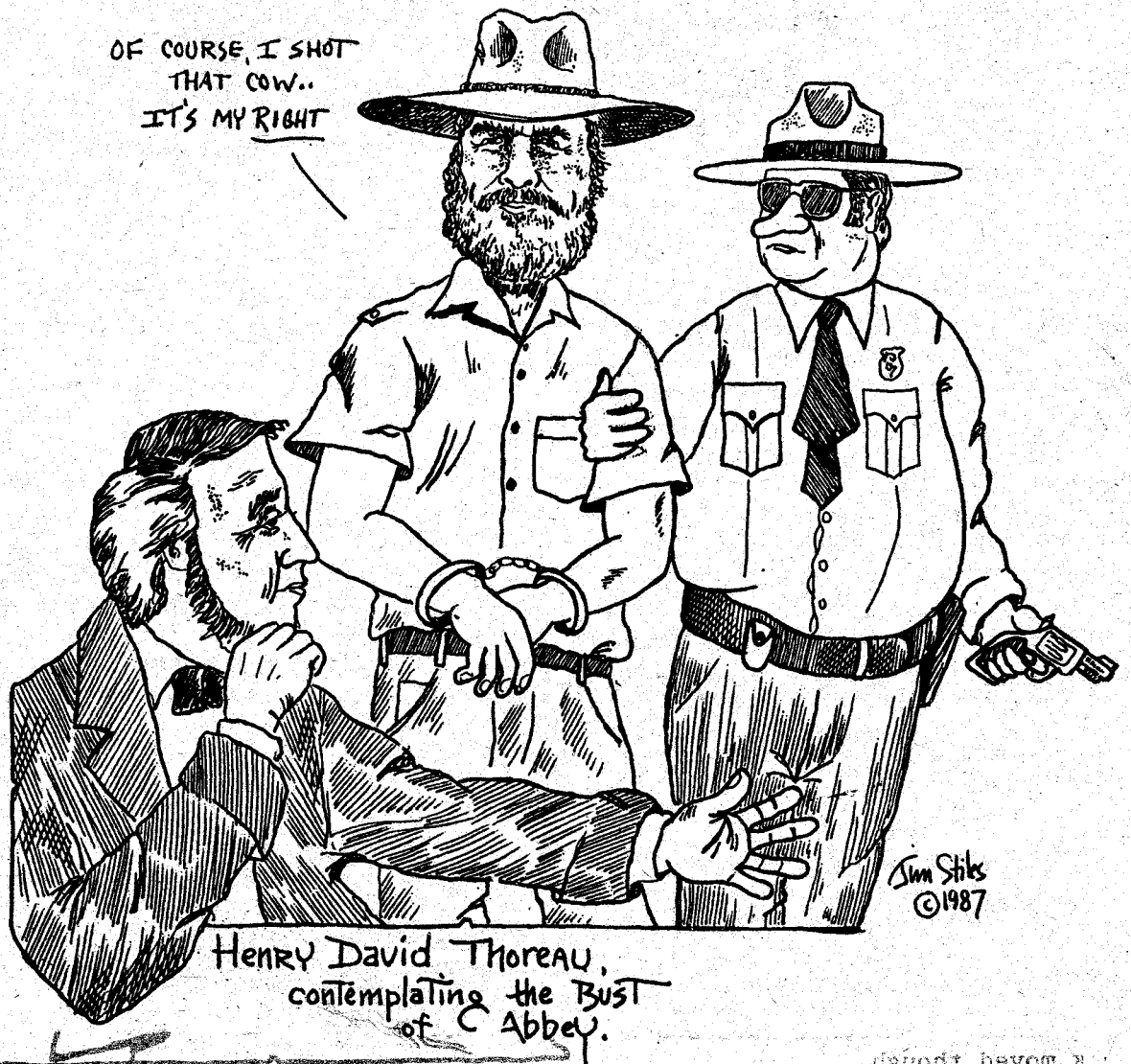


One by one, the high priests hoist a child upon the altar while I brandish my carving knife and slice elegantly down from the neck to the navel. PART THE FLAPS! SEVER THE INNER TUBES! AND THROW THEM HOT AND STEAMING ON THE DESERT FLOOR! The high priests look at them as if they were studying ancient hieroglyphics.

I redouble my efforts, cutting and snipping for all I'm worth ... lest I be the next over the stone.....

DAY SEVEN - This is Gary writing. We found Izzie naked and unconscious by the goblins. I'm taking him home now. Strange place to be left for a week. Like, I could have sworn that fish-head rock over there was facing the other direction when I arrived. Silly ... it's probably just my imagination.

signing off;
Gary G.
Oct. 15, 1985



Henry David Thoreau, contemplating the Bust of C Abbey.

Jim Stiles ©1987



NIGHTHAWK AT THE DINER

by Cliff Walker

There were no other patrons in the all-night diner. He sat there alone at a booth in the rear, keeping an eye on the front door. He picked at the remains of a piece of apple pie, wondering how it was going to react with all the beer he'd drunk that evening.

The lady from Ogden he met at the bar was not going to show up. After four cups of coffee and the slice of pie, that fact was beginning to soak in.

The help was back in the kitchen, their quiet talk barely audible. Alone again. He washed the crust down with a sip of lukewarm coffee, and pushed his plate to the edge of the worn formica table.

It was well after midnight. A light rain was falling outside. The window by his table was slid fully open. A light breeze wafted through, carrying the aroma of wet sand and petroleum off the surface of Main Street, and the peculiar smell of dusty window screen, pungent from the dampness. He remembered being a kid, pressing his face against the screen to reproduce the pattern on his forehead, inhaling that stale smell, and wondering about it.

The surface of the black highway glistened with the reflections of the lighted signs on the other side of the street. The liquid neon threads and patterns were shattered occasionally by a trucker swishing past, nursing momentum through the gears, leaving in his wake a mist of vapor and a void of dark, wet silence, broken only by the low conversation in the kitchen.

The waitress was recounting details of the Junior Miss Utah Pageant. Pieces of it floated out, constructing in his mind an image of a young girl on a stage, the bright lights, the hurried promoters, the kinfolk in the audience, so much riding, on what? Nothing really, in the greater scheme of things, unless ... that intensity, that kind of passionate involvement, that youthful exhilaration, meant everything.....

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The thought disturbed him. Those experiences were too far back in his past to easily relate to.

Too far back. And it depressed him to think that he might never know that kind of delirious abandon again. But, when one got older life was supposed to be more predictable, he told himself.

God, had he come that far? But he was only 38 ... and yet suddenly, he could see through the labyrinth that was his life, all the way to the end. A predictable route, and the finality. He sought to shake the thought, but it would not go away.

And then, under restaurant lights that seemed suddenly much brighter than before, every visual detail jumped out in stark outline. He saw his hands, aged and strange, looking like somebody else's hands - an older person's hands - there on the table before him.

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The hallucination pulled him in with an inexplicable force, like the pull some people feel when they stand on the edge of a steep cliff. He stared at the formica, the decoration rubbed off over the years by countless patrons, and he knew his life had left less of a mark than that.

He was face to face with what he had become. He saw his future close before him like a massive steel door, the keys to which he'd left at some critical junction too far back in the past to ever recover.

He suddenly envied those who had a profession, a career, to provide a solid format for their lives. He'd tried, God how he'd tried.

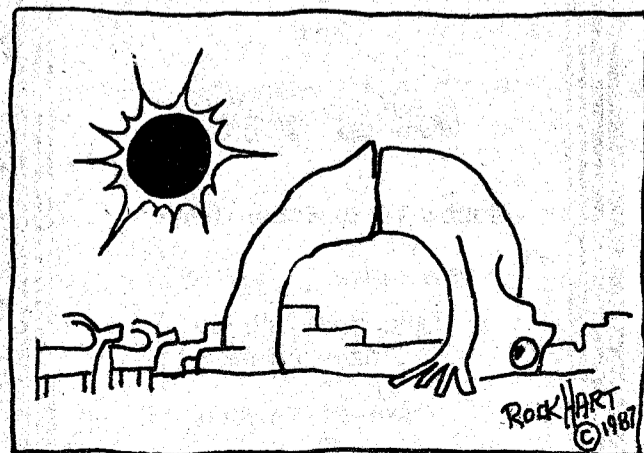
But he seemed to lack the set of navigational coordinates he sensed in other people, the cartesian center upon which a sensible reality could be constructed, fact by fact, into a comfortable edifice.

In the metaphysical heavens, where other people sometimes soared during flights of daring fancy, he hung suspended, unable to reach the ground.

see page 11

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cont.

Sometimes he visualized himself as a writer of novels, drinking scotch past the midnight hour as the scream of loneliness in his soul poured out magically onto the pages in his typewriter. But, inevitably, he drank the scotch, left the typewriter, and went out to cure his loneliness.

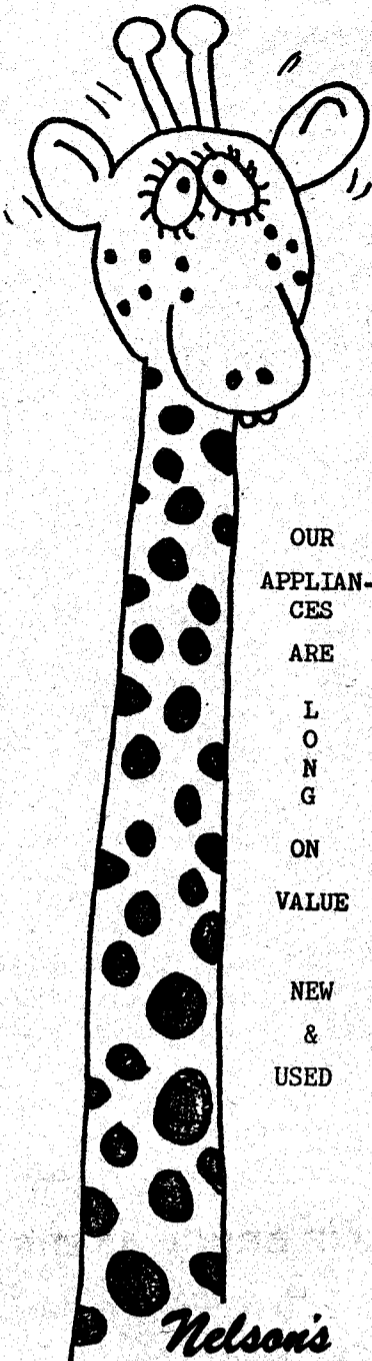
He told himself that writing was nothing more than sticking pins in butterflies. He could rationalize anything, even when he knew he was doing it.

But now, in the quiet restaurant, he was not able to rationalize the hopelessness that had crept into his brain like bindweed. He barely noticed the car that had pulled up outside, and the figure that dashed through the rain to the front door. She entered the restaurant.

She slipped into a booth, flashed him a quick smile, and called out to the waitress for a cup of coffee. She brushed the droplets of water from the shoulders of her blue silk blouse, and shook them from her dark hair. She glanced up at him again, smiled, and finally spoke.

"Excuse me", she said. I just got into town, and I'm on a short vacation from a consulting job in Colorado. I've heard a lot about this area. I'm interested in seeing what there is to see around here. Do you know anybody who might be able to help me, sort of, get oriented?"

"Could be", he replied, as a giant steel door began to roll back, revealing a wonderfully sensuous and vibrantly colorful world, full of exciting possibilities. "Could be", he said, picking up his cup of coffee and rising from his seat. "May I join you?"



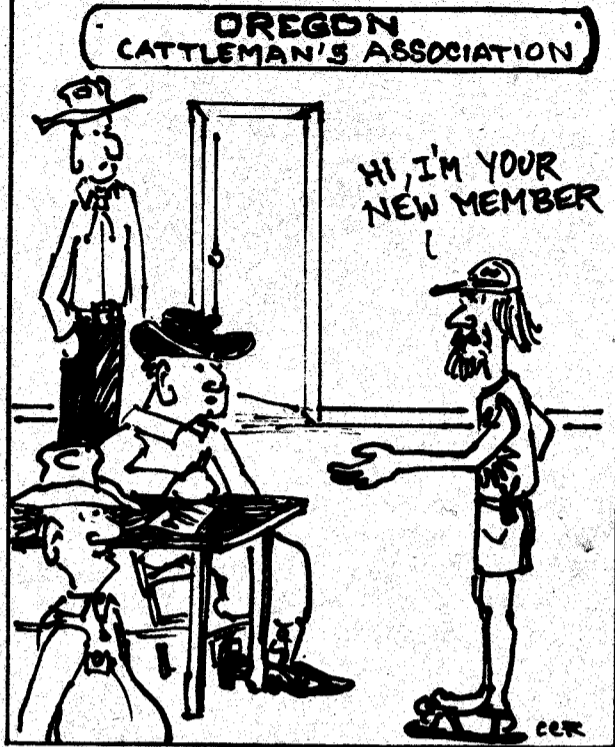
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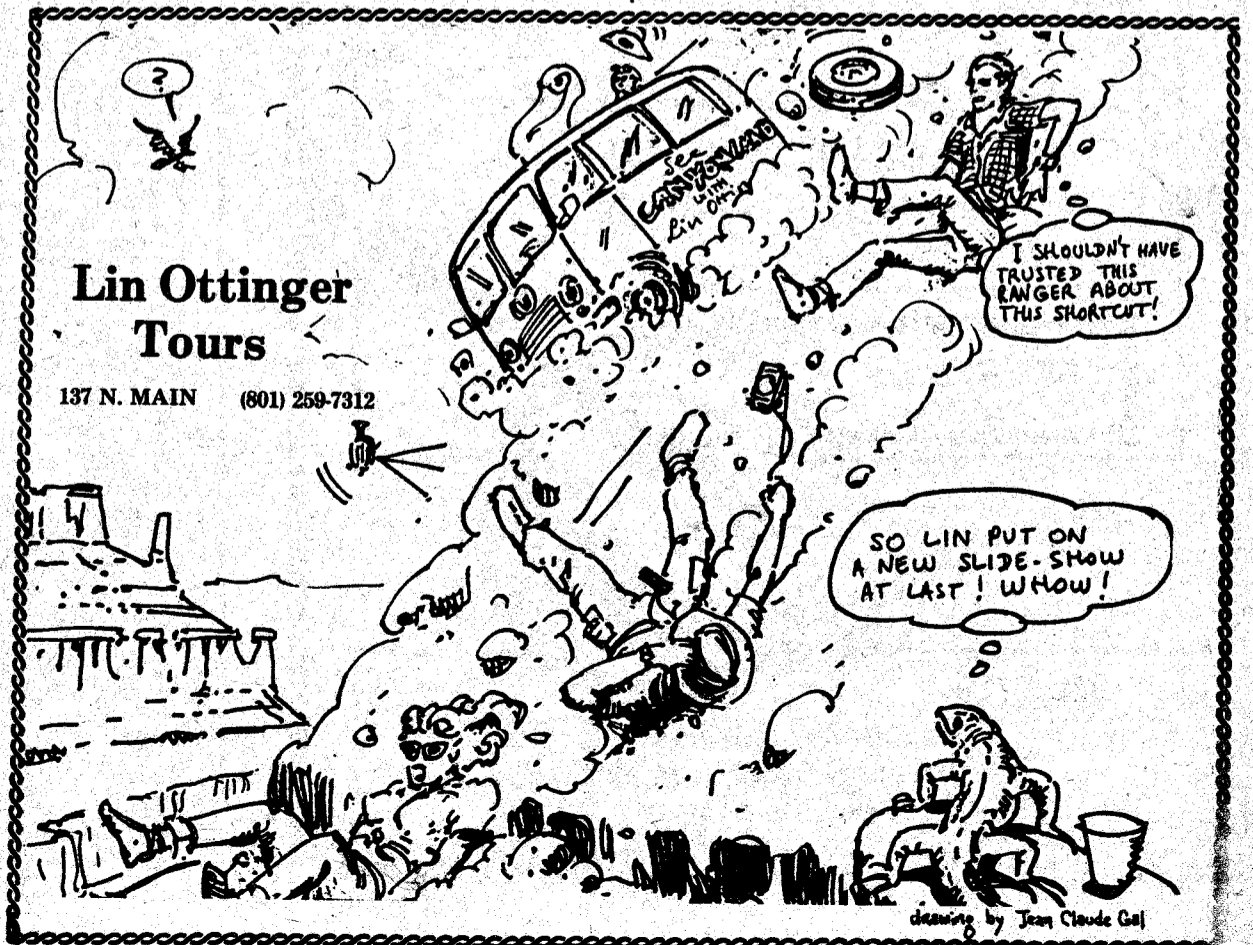
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STARSCAM

Your
Horoscope
by

**Rama Lama
Ding Dong**

LEO

(July 23 to August 23)

Your Leonine nature and animal magnetism are put to a severe test this month, especially if your birthday is on the 16th or 17th. On these dates, you will be one of the 144,000 humans to speak for the Earth during the Harmonic Convergence when humanity and the Earth shall become one. The Earth will become a fully conscious organism, capable of communicating with humanity - and man, is she pissed off! Listen carefully to the Earth in the following weeks. Put your ear to the sandstone. Your shoulder to the wheel. Your nose to the grindstone. Your back to the wall. The Fate of our Civilization is in your hands.

This is also a good month for Leos financially. Combine your idealistic and greedy natures, and capitalize on them by ghost-writing a book about how you spoke for the Earth. Spinoff an article for People Magazine. Appear on the Oprah Winfrey Show. Put together a slide show and hit the lecture circuit (Hey, if it's good enough for Ollie North....).

VIRGO: You will be confused between the 3rd and the 18th.

LIBRA: Your lucky numbers are 6 and 9. This could be a very interesting month for you.

SCORPIO: Your astral influences are improving. Be sure to return all sweepstakes entries this month, and then buy lots of expensive items on credit. Trust Rama Lama.

SAGITTARIUS: Expose yourself to Art.

CAPRICORN: Seek to improve your low social status this month. Have breakfast at the Stop and Eat, until the New Moon on the 24th.

Aquarius: A fantastic opportunity awaits you this month. For a Small honorarium in three figures, Rama Lama will give you more specific information.

PISCES: Thwart your indolent nature and get a job. Work for scale.

ARIES: You will receive exciting news on the 17th or 18th. (Do you remember that night in the back seat of the '62 Impala?)

TAURUS: Have a battle of wits with an unarmed person.

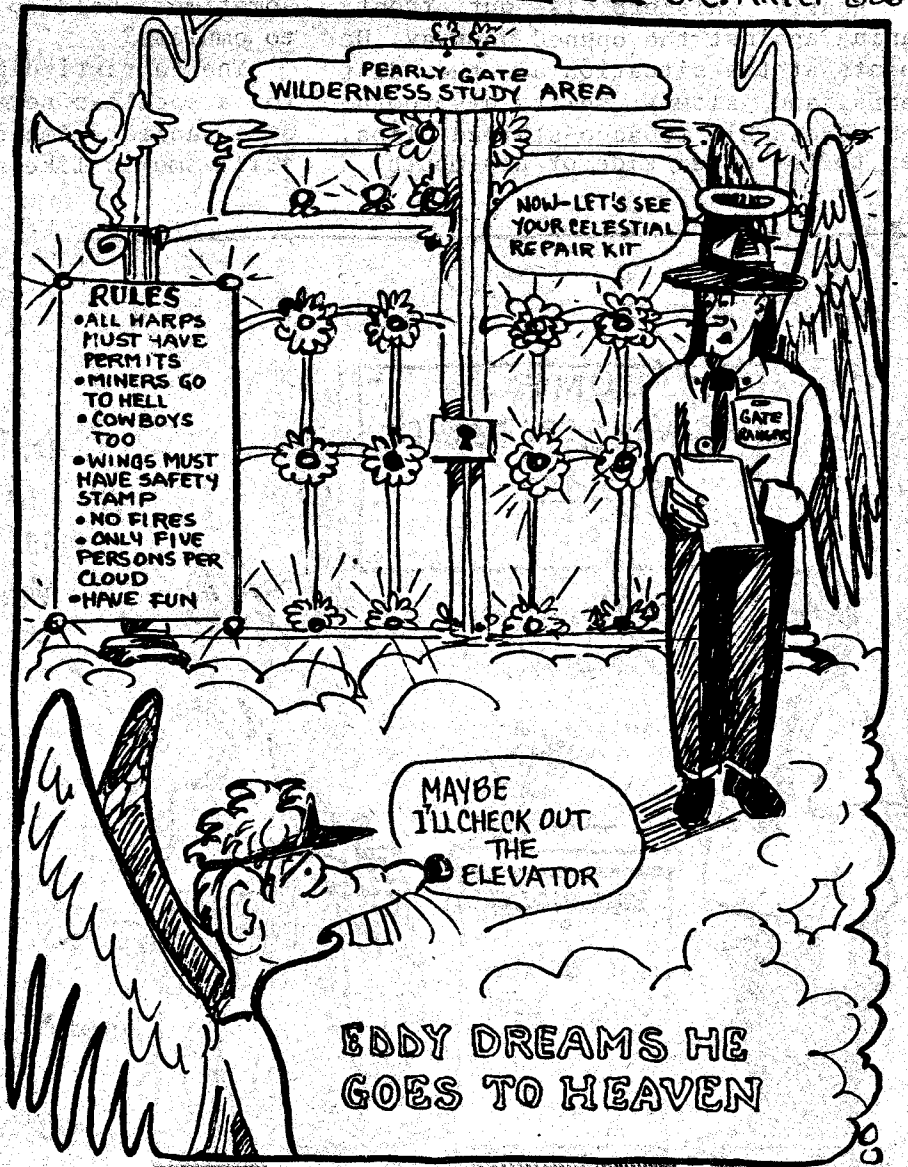
GEMINI: Burn a tamarisk this month.

CANCER: Convince the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Board to build the World's Most Scenic Crustacean Museum as a tourist attraction.

THE BEST OF C.C. RITTER

BACKWATER

C.C. Ritter ©86





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Happy Anniversary,
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STROKES and POKES

Bobby Black



Human beings are very funny people. Our fascination with certain earthy and seedy aspects of society is often at war with our early Sunday School conditioning.

This leads to a lot of paradox in our behavior.

Why is it that funky and junky settings, resplendent with the steaming garbage and wreckage of the modern world, are considered artistic on film, but are roundly poo-pooed in real life? Imagine the following scene.

A tumbleweed rolls slowly across the highway on the outskirts of some dusty, southwestern desert town.

A speck in the distance grows larger, and soon it's a sleek Farrarri gearing down for a stop.

The driver wheels the sleek machine up to the rusty gas pumps rooted into the gravel and dirt. The driver cuts the powerful motor, and surveys the garage and gas station, nothing more than a tilted wooden shack.

There are old tires lying all around it, and a few wrecked cars rusting into the sand. The "lot" is covered with oil drums, engine blocks, a pile of rusty machine parts and a lot of tall weeds.

The proprietor, a grisly old guy in dirty bib overalls and a weeks worth of gnarly whiskers, is out front, leaning against the opened doorway. He squints at the situation as the dust clears, and slowly shifts his toothpick across his tobacco-stained lips, over to the other side of his mouth.

The driver steps from the car and slowly walks over to him, unzipping his Gucci motorcycle jacket and peeling off his Isotoner driving gloves. He sizes up his competition, and words the question carefully.

"Are you the owner here?" The old guy is not big on words. "Maybe," he says, or the more lengthy "that depends." He's country-wise, he's on his own turf, and he's tough. We wonder what's going to happen next, because the scene is interesting, and we're drawn into it.

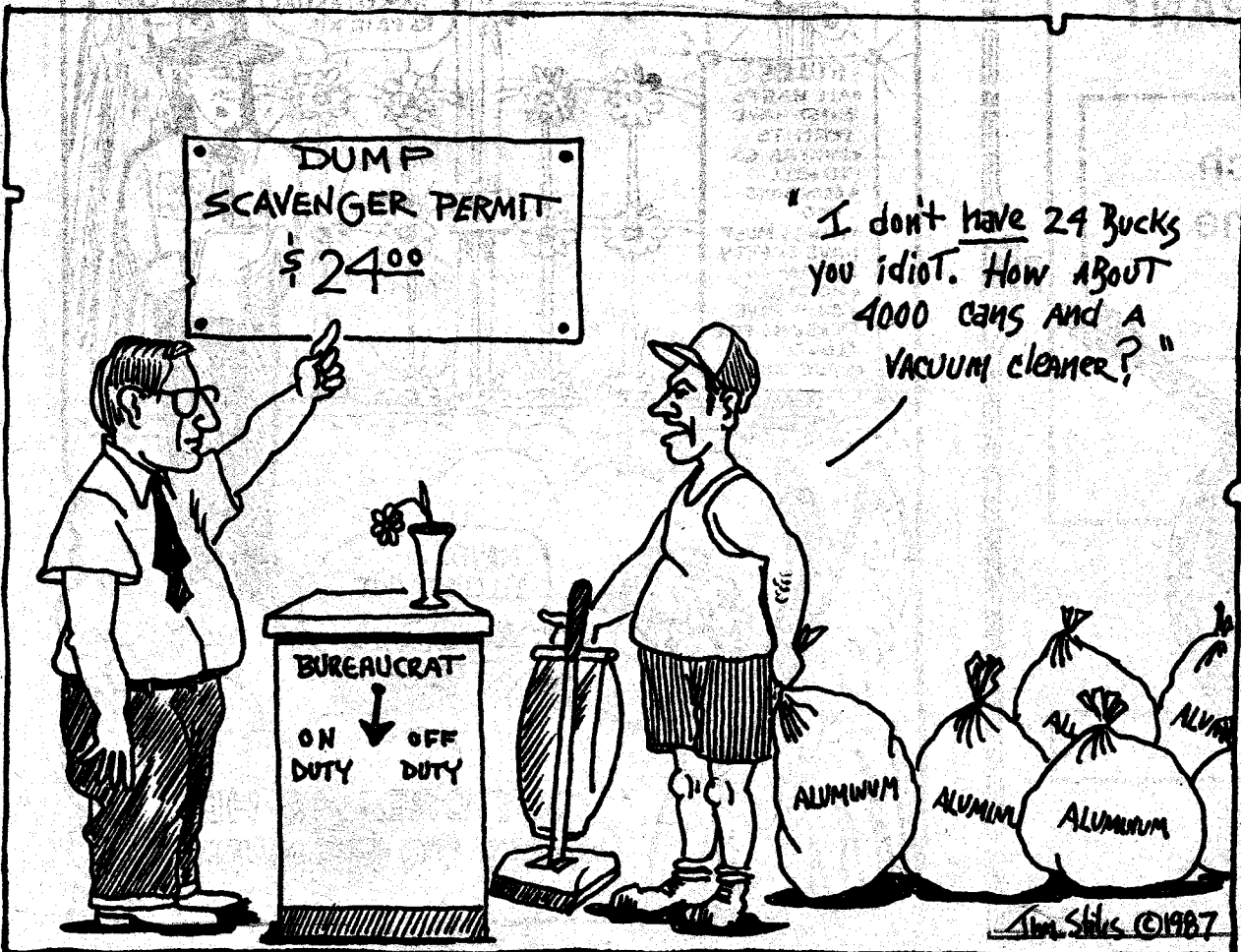
But, that's how it is on film, where local color becomes artistry, emphasizing cultural contrast and the rugged individual.

Alas, too often, in "real" life, we can predict exactly what is going to happen next. The driver is going to hand the old-timer a summons to appear in court to show cause why his property should not be condemned for being an unsightly nuisance.

Why is this so? I am at a loss to explain it. If funkiness is art, why would anybody want to rub out art in life? Of course it's art.

I mean, can you imagine the same scene, but set in Lake Havasu City, California, the all-new city that's sometimes held up as a model for Moab to emulate?

The Farrarri ding-dings his way up to a spotless service island in front of a sanitary Amoco station, so new it still smells like paint.



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"I hope you're having a nice day, sir. You might be interested in our special for today, a lube and oil change for only \$89.95. We specialize in these foreign economy cars. Fill 'er up?"

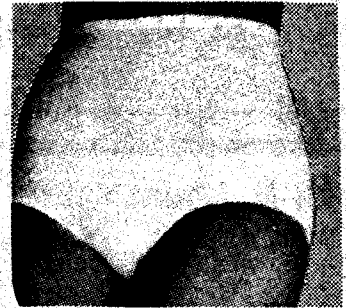
Are you kidding me? There's no contrast, no color, no juiciness, no great possibilities, no unknowns.

But, some people like life that way. They are the legislators of mediocrity. Just like the ruling party in Russia.

But, thankfully, in Moab there's still room for some funkiness and independence. Moab may be the last bastion of personal freedom from the rigid confines of "good taste".

The contrast is beautiful. The good-looking yards look that much better, the funky yards are that much more interesting.

And Moab continues to be right there on the leading edge of modern art.



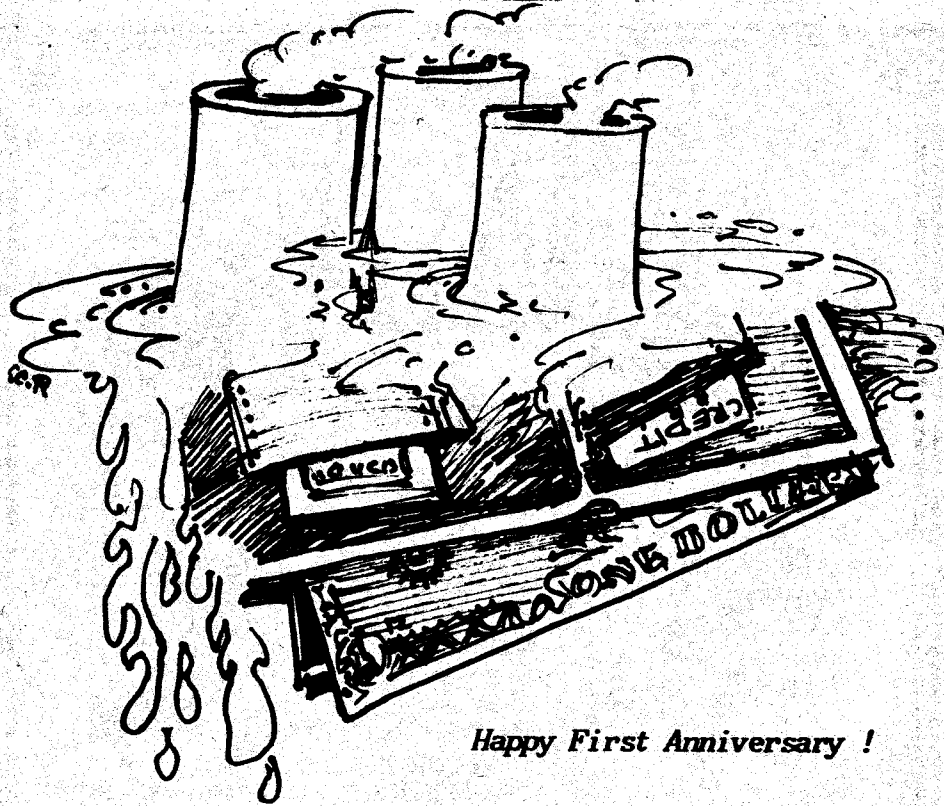
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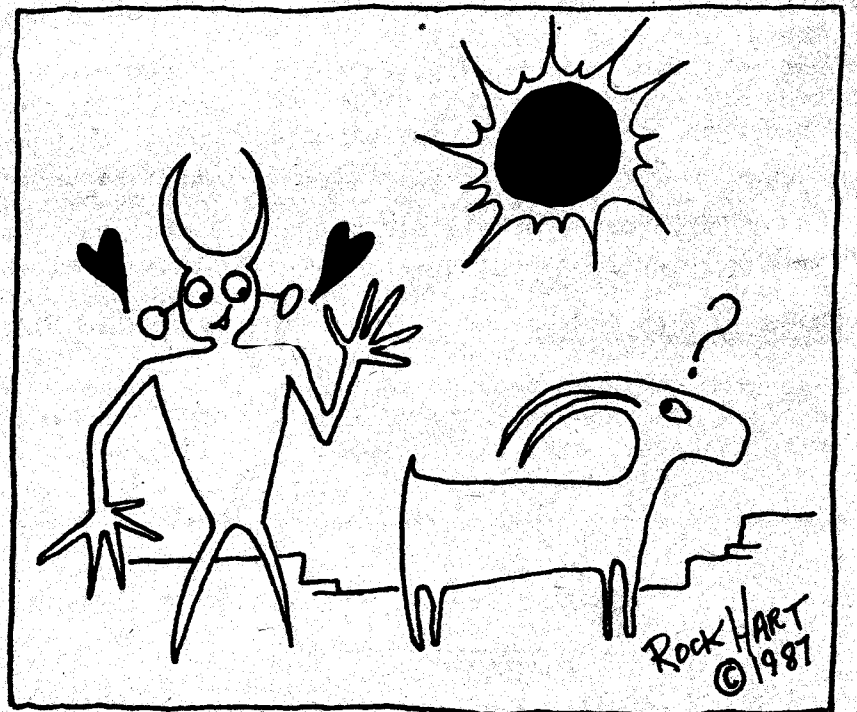
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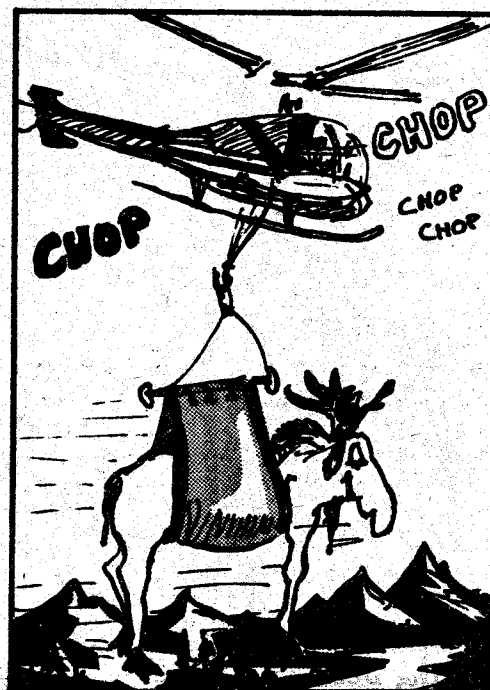
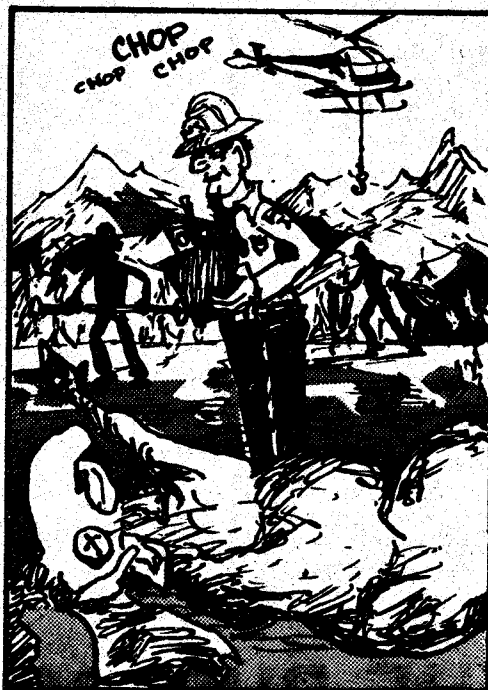
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THE BEST OF C.C. RITTER



LEDITERS

Dear SDG:

How many dishes will a dishwasher wash in a year? How many beds will a maid make in a season? How many questions will a desk clerk answer in a week? And how many miles will a waitress walk in a summer?

The answer to all of the above is: It doesn't matter. They will all be still making the minimum wage or less.

I suppose most of us stay in this area by choice, but summers are not getting us ahead of the game, and winters are just plain grueling. It is getting increasingly harder to justify our meager existence here.

Tourist towns pay lousy, that's all there is too it.

I've talked with enough hard-working people in this town this month to know that this feeling of futility is quite prevalent. I would have liked to print the hourly wages made by these folks, as well as the businesses they work for, but fear that would have put the publisher of this newspaper in a rough situation.

I can tell you that out of the fifty-two people I talked with, over half are making less than minimum wage. Some have package deals and some have to work for tips to keep food on the table and get the rent paid. I do not know where tipping originated, but am sure it was concocted by some miserly businessman. I'd like to see this whole business of tipping eradicated from American Society in lieu of some decent hourly wages for all.

So, are we just at the mercy of this town, employers knowing all along that we are just dying to live here in this paradise and will do anything to stay here for practically nothing? Are we so much white trash, that at the drop of a hint of mutiny or dis-satisfaction we can be replaced as easily as a trash can liner, the employer knowing all along that there is someone else eagerly awaiting our job the moment we head for the hills?

Or are our employers doing the best they can for us?

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They've been suffering all winter too, and their bills keep coming whether it's busy or not. Are we in this thing together? And what about loyalty and reliability? Doesn't that count any more? Is there no way we can change this tourist town mentality in regards to pay scales? Tough questions.

It's a dilemma that afflicts not only our town, but any town deemed a transient tourist town. And questions of raises and fair wages get lost in a sea of grey areas until there is no basis to go by, as to what is fair.

So, to all you folks toiling day to day, bussing tables, washing dishes, waiting on tables, making beds, and going about your duties loyally and reliably, if no one has said it of late, I will: I APPRECIATE YOU! AND I THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE OVER THE YEARS!

You're not just white trash. You're the ones keeping this town going! "Cause you all know, deep down in your hearts, that if we ever got together as a whole and decided to say 'the hell with it all' on some busy weekend, we could bring this bustling tourist town to a complete screeching halt.

Fight for your right for a fair wage.

Sincerely,
A Voice From The Pits

Dear Stinking:

How many National Security guys does it take to screw in a light bulb? . Answer: 12.

- 4 to make arms for the light bulb deal,
- 3 to deny that any screwing around whatsoever went on,
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- and last but not least a commander-in-chief to say: "What light bulbs?"

DG



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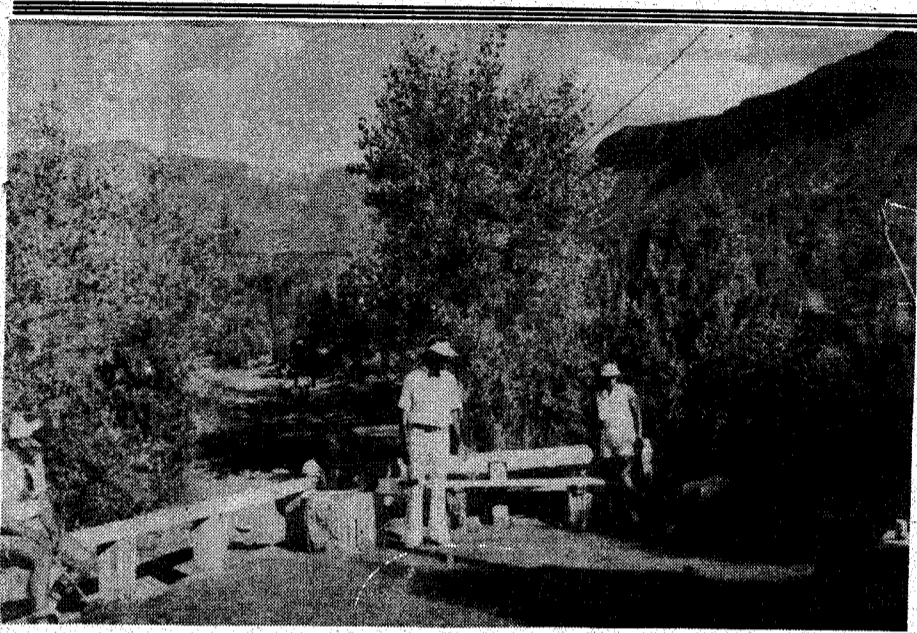
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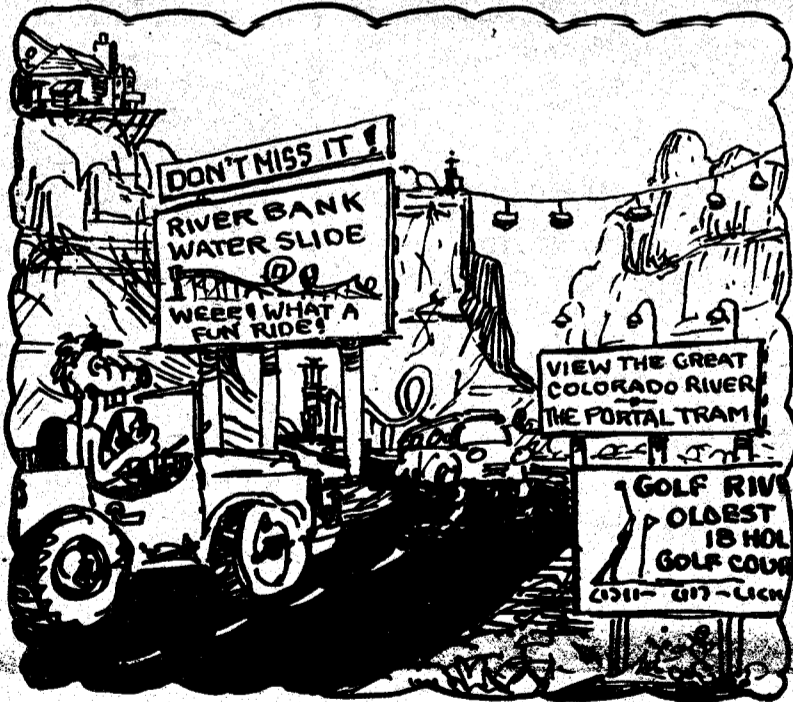
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