



THE STINKING DESERT GAZETTE

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April
1987



25¢

Moab,
Utah



SDG's Tips for Tourists

1. Moabites are insecure about the appearance of their town. Tell them you think it's cute. Tell them that St. George is too commercial. This puts Moabites at ease and helps them feel more at home.

2. Moabites are justifiably proud of their city dump, and annually host the National Scenic Dump Contest. Please humor them. Take a ride up there and see for yourself, preferably around sunset. If the pickers have taken all the good stuff, it's still a great view.

3. You will find Moabites are relatively unrehearsed in their role as proprietors of a "big-time" tourist town. You will find them a little rough-hewn, home-spun and still friendly, with the exception of a few who are getting the hang of it.

4. If you get bored and need some entertainment, ask any Moabite whether they think Designated Wilderness Areas are a good idea. This should take care of one entire evening.

5. Contrary to popular belief, it is not impossible to get a drink in Utah. If you are a little stealthy, discreet, and suitably penitent, you can find beer in the taverns and markets, and liquor by the mini in some restaurants.

6. Enjoy the slide shows in town. The commercial slide show presented by the Moab Rock Shop is free. The multi-media presentation, put on by a local non-profit organization, is only \$3.50.

7. A good place to repack your car and stretch your legs is the city park, an entire block of shade trees and green grass, one of our finest features. Turn West at the North Circle K.

8. The answer to your first question: 40% of us are Mormans.

9. The answer to your next question: mining, tourism, ranching, federal and state employment, light industry, and service industries. Since the uranium industry fizzled out, our economy has been bottoming out every month for the past five years. It's almost there. But times are tough and we will do just about anything to make a little money. So, buy a Gazette for a friend back home.

10. And the next: The bars with occasional bands and dancing, the restaurants, the movie house, the bowling alley, strolling, shopping, and cruising Main. During the day, there's the golf course, visiting the dump, and endless fun to be had outdoors. Visit the Visitor Information Center North of town.

11. And the last: Land is dirt cheap right now. This is your chance to get in on the "ground" floor.

12. A nice way to see the area is with a guided tour by jeep, river, mountain bike, horseback or plane. If you drive it yourself, remember: We consider our surrounding desert a garden of incomparable beauty. Enjoy our world famous jeep roads, but please walk through the garden.

13. If your male tour guide shows up wearing a skirt, don't be alarmed. Some of us are trend-setters.

14. Tip #13 is a joke, sort of. All of our guides are fully licensed, insured, and certified in first aid and CPR. And they are able nonetheless to take you out and show you one hell of a good time in the canyons.

15. The posted maximum speed limits are strictly enforced here in Moab. As you will soon find out, there is no illegal minimum. Moabites like to dawdle along, often conversing with friends on the sidewalk. It's a local custom.



DON'T FORGET!
THE TAX DEADLINE
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This is a Public Service Announcement.

INSIDE

Trust

A Short Story

Fishing in Cliffhanger Canyon

Plus - Mobabble,
Derailed, the
Absolute Truth
and lots more!



Moab plays host to many conventions during the year. Shown here is the pro-euthanasia group, The Lemming Society, holding their final meeting high atop nearby Pucker Pass.

Pearly-Gate

by Richard Robertson

These are very difficult times, indeed, for the entrepreneurs of electronic religion. The public has become more aware of this, as they contemplate the meaning of the battle of the dueling evangelists, sometimes referred to as the "Pearly Gate" scandal.

JIM BAKKER (ASSEMBLIES OF GOD) has had his human weakness revealed by The Charlotte Observer.

JIMMY SWAGGART (ASSEMBLIES OF GOD) has been accused of plotting a "hostile takeover" of the P.T.L. Club.

JERRY FALWELL (BAPTIST) is holding Bakker's hand and serving as Chairman of the P.T.L. Club, amid cries of foul from a number of charismatics.

ORAL ROBERTS (METHODIST) is in the Prayer Tower, waiting for God or money.

ROBERT SCHULLER (REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA) is in the \$18 million Crystal Cathedral practicing his impersonation of Norman Vincent Peale.

PAT ROBERTSON (BAPTIST) is in Iowa and New Hampshire, counting signatures on his petitions, while trying to ignore the squabbles of his fellow television evangelists and hoping that the voters will do the same.

MEANWHILE-

GOD (NON-DENOMINATIONAL) is in His Heaven, attending to Cosmic Concerns, oblivious to all of these other incidents.

When we were finally able to reach him and ask his opinion of the disagreements between these evangelists, God merely remarked, "There is too much violence on television!"



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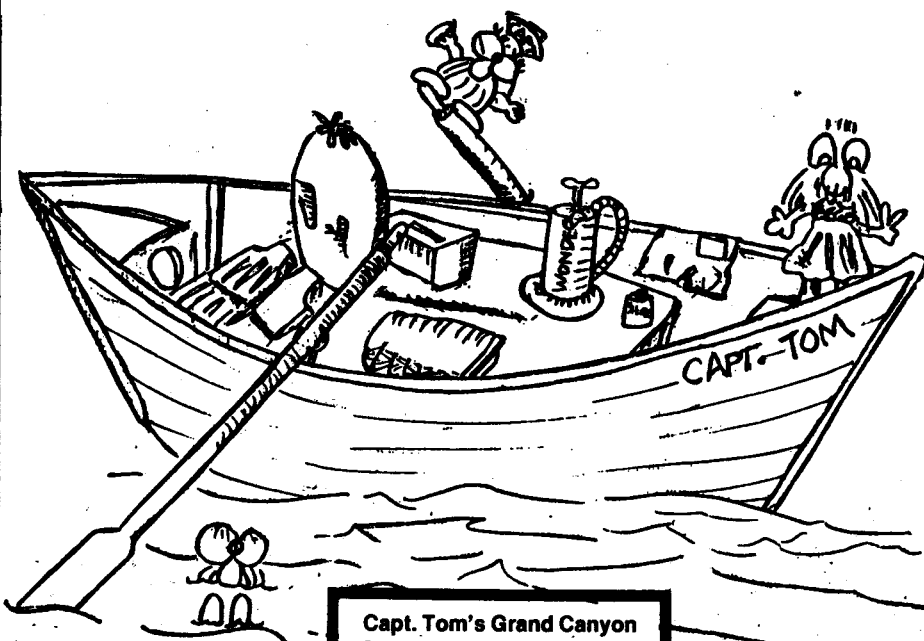
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COSMIC LUNCH

BY The Ravin' Ranger

So here you are in the land of the Free & Easy, somewhere past real winter, but not yet into spring. The summer rush is still quite out of reach, and you're enjoying that last lull before you really have to start working for a living. Now, I know that ordinarily you wouldn't be caught dead doing something as mundane as walking; 5.12 crackclimbs or high-water Cat trips are more your style. Still, that day is coming when you will find yourself in the middle of a classically and uniquely lovely Moab day, without the time, initiative, or perhaps the equipment to get it up on the Mountain or to go for that gonzo ride on your latest Mud-Humper or Rock-Hopper. You know that the day will not be complete without getting out into that winter wind for at least a little while, to take advantage of the privilege (some call it insanity) of living in what we all know is simply the most beautiful place in the world. For you, oh restless Moabite, as well as those of you who comprise the more stable population, these words have been written. Here are some of those places that you will never have time to even think about visiting once the season is upon us. Take advantage now while the visitation is low and the views are clear, and eat your lunch, if not with the eagles, at least with a canyon wren twittering at your shoulder.

THE ATLAS MINERAL/ROUTE 191 OVERLOOK

This spectacular overlook of the major monument to Moab's past economic glories is easily reachable for either the quickie lunch or for the more extended afternoon bask, via a route which begins at the intersection of Courthouse Wash and Highway 191. Follow Courthouse Wash upstream a few hundred yards from the road, watching for the aluminum ladders conveniently

provided (no one's telling by whom) on the north side of the canyon. Once on top of the lower cliff, it's a simple matter to ledge up the Kayenta sandstone to the top of the bench overlooking the highway, which also provides a gorgeous panorama of the Atlas Mineral Plant, as well as its notable tailings pond and outlying plant warehouses. The ledges also offer excellent winter afternoon sunbathing opportunities. If you stay long enough, you can watch for the afternoon pilgrimage to Ruben and Betty's Boulderling Parlour.

GATES OF THE WINGATE or THE HIDDEN VALLEY TRUDGE

When you're ready for something a little further way from Moab Culture, take a ride out to Spanish Valley Feeds on Route 191. Follow Angel Rock Road to Canyon Rim Road, which appropriately follows the rim. Follow this north until the pavement ends, where the BLM has thoughtfully erected trail markers and an embarrassing number of cairns leading up to a talus slope and a trail which meanders and switchbacks up to the notch, which forms the southern entrance to Hidden Valley. From the notch one has a number of options, depending on the level of recreation desired. The top of the rim on the east side of this hanging fault valley is an easy scramble for most of its length, affording the hungry hiker in search of immediate gratification with numerous perches on which to munch on his or her bagel and cheese while contemplating views of the Moab Valley, Book Cliffs, and the northern La Sals. Those willing to submit (go ahead, I won't tell anyone) to a fairly level walk up the Valley past two bottlenecks will be rewarded with access to the Behind the Rocks area; but that, to quote our Friendly Freddie, is beyond the scope of this report. (Note: due to the cliff configurations, the best time for catching sun is before 1-2PM in the winter.)

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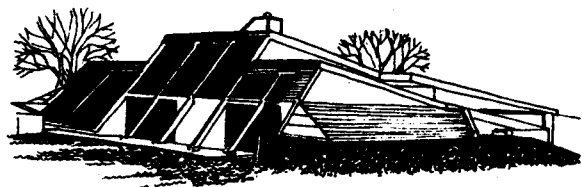
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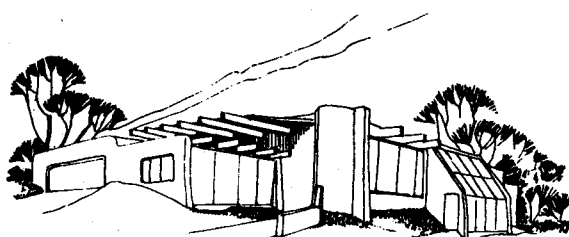
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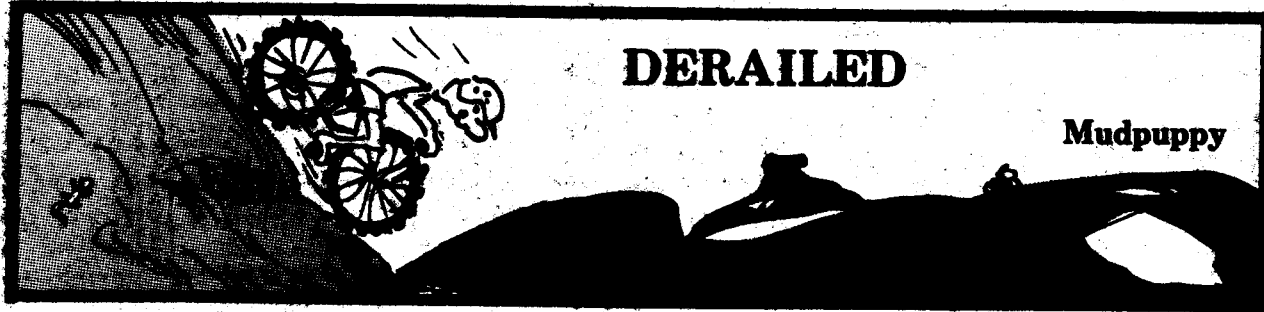
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Remember that old western tune, Ghost Riders? A couple of years ago, after mountainbiking too far and too fast, I woke from a delirious nap to the sound of snarling V-8 engines and a deep voice singing:

"A Mountain Biker went riding out
One Dark and Windy day,
Along the rim he rested
As he pedalled on his way.
When all at once a mighty herd
Of Four Wheel Drives he saw,
Blazing through a dusty sky,
And grinding up the draw..."

That happened before I had the misfortune of breaking a pedal off while riding in the heat halfway between Hellfire Canyon and Nihill Flat. A Cherokee and a Renegade (typical western outlaws) came by and saved the day, rescuing me with water, cold beer, and a ride home!

Since then I've come to appreciate the Four Wheelers more and more, especially when they offer to carry the kind of gear clusters that make bikes harder to pedal than easier - Sagwagon Offroadies.

I even set aside the gears and the spokes for an occasional poke about the canyons in my own Ford Wheel Drive. It wouldn't be right to forget who made all those bikeable roads in the first place!

But lately four wheelers are waking up to the bump and broken jar of their own nightmare. It has a voice that sounds oddly like John Prine singing sadly:

"Daddy won't you take me
Back to good old Grand County,
Down by that red river
Where four Wheelers play.
Well, I'm sorry my son
But you're too late in asking,
The Wilderness Acts
Have done closed all the trails."

Road and trail Wrecklamation is leaving both Drivers and Bicyclists high and dustless on ugly pockmarked pavement riddled with bureaucratic potholes.

Why doesn't everybody leave
Everybody else the hell alone?

JIMMY DURANTE

The parks certainly aren't horsing around either with their road and trail closures, making even hoofprints illegal in areas where hikers use trails that were made by the horsemen years ago!

I do admit that I can hear the Cryptogams scream in pain beneath errant off road tire tracks, (SOS, save our soil!), but the old bumpy red dirt tracks get kind of lonely out there while they wait for their expensive green revegetation program to come through.

So let those gnashing four barrels loose and spur them knobby bike tires to spinning! There's work to do - Backroads Need Our S'port!

How else can we get those backpackers in to where the really nice country begins?

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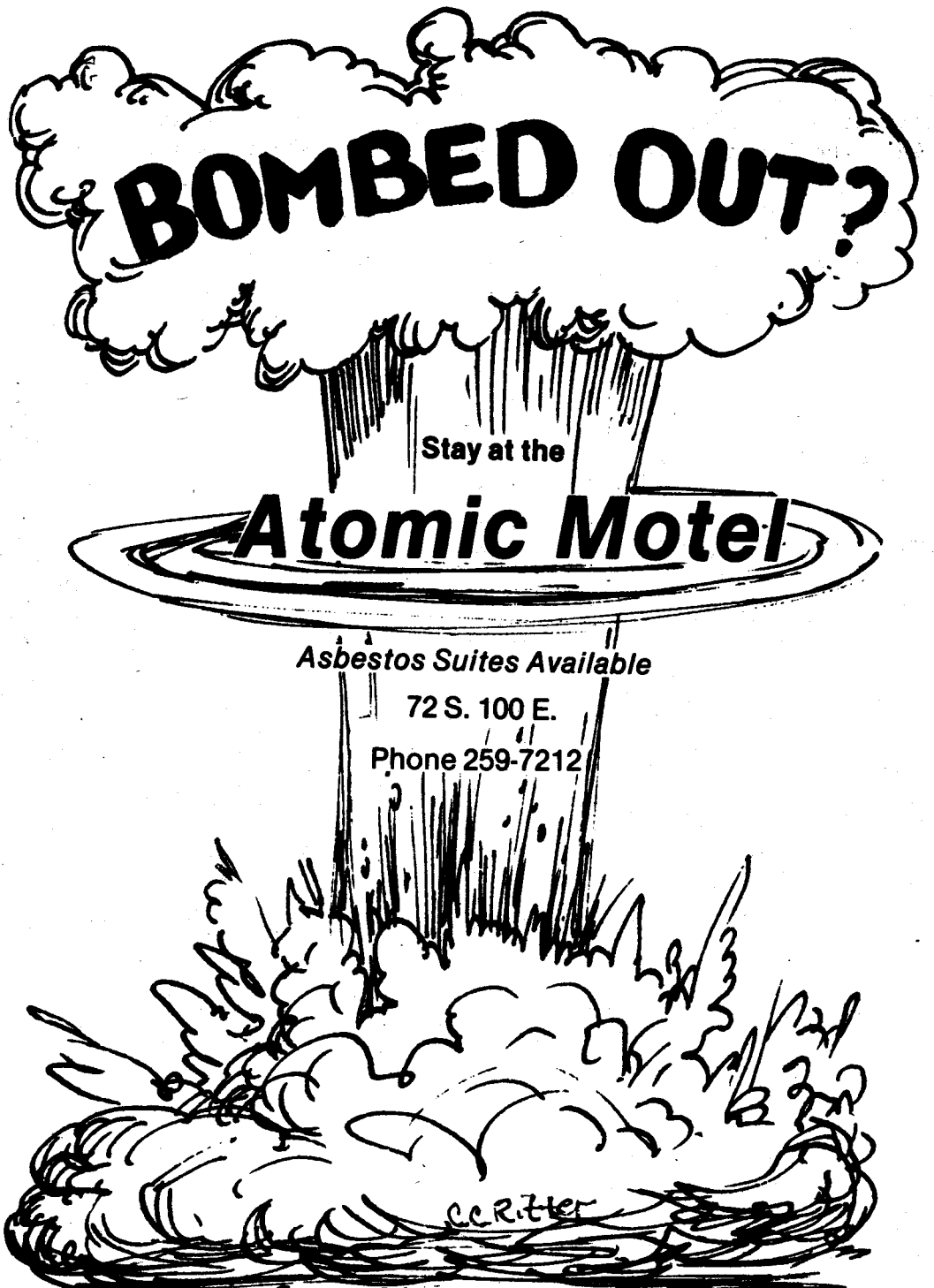
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The Absolute Truth



Philmore Banks, Esq.

In response to your overwhelming concern regarding the relative success of our drive toward the almost mythical goal of 200 subscriptions and the liberal postage paring that does thereupon accrue, I have both cheerful and altogether depressing news.

On the sunny side, we have surpassed the 70 level and the bold line on the giant graph pinned to the wall of our boardroom is steadfastly and appropriately inclined to the East by Northeast, and the promised land.

We currently have on our roles exactly 77 courageous subscribers, 77 juicy, sensual born-again pagans, the only true patrons of the arts. The Gazette is now reaching no less than 12 different states, spreading the joyful light of pure reason and tasteful discourse.

Now comes the impending gloom. We are closing in on a year of publication. Our initial, Issue #1 subscribers will almost certainly begrudge the continued high postage cost when it becomes time to renew, despite our best efforts.

As eager and innocent subscribers are added to the front end of the line graph, the older and more jaded patrons will drop off from behind. It portends a grey and ominous scenario.

We will be forced to place next year's graph further up the wall. And the next even further. And the one after that further yet. The graphs could spiral up the wall, across the ceiling and down to the floor again, and all the while the bold black line, gaining more head and losing more tail, would fidget like an arthritic snake from graph to graph in pursuit of the ever advancing column top, pathetically writhing toward infinity. Not a pretty sight.

I dearly hope that our patrons hang on there at the tail, as it were, and anchor the present latitude of our progress chart.

Because there is some more bad news. I've been reluctant to bring this out into public, but the time has come to share this revelation with you all. If we fail to get 200 subscribers by the end of July, the end of our first year of publication, God is going to call me home.

It came to me while I was out

walking in our beautiful canyonlands, meditating upon the importance of our goal. A Voice spoke from the opposite canyon wall, The Voice of Sandstone Itself, and It said: "Philmore, this is God. If you don't get two hundred by the end of July, I'm going to call you home".

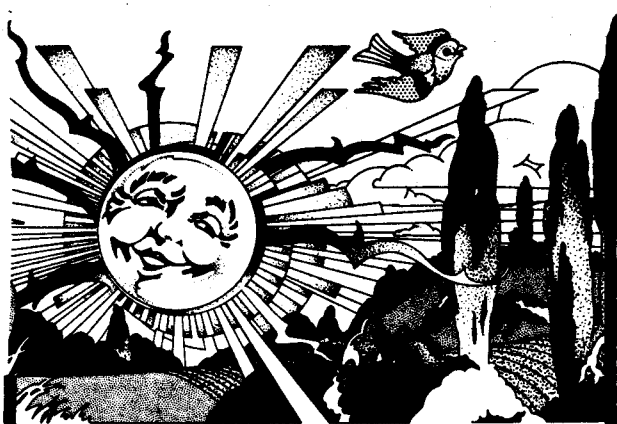
I had heard such a voice only one other time in my life. Ten years ago, on a sunny afternoon, a loud voice came booming down from overhead and I heard: "Heed ye the word of the lord. All sinners must repent and return to the flock, by the blood of our blessed redeemer!"

My heart skipped a beat, and I fell down on my knees, ready to repent. As I raised my eyes to the Lord, I saw instead an old bi-plane, cruising along at stall speed just above the housetops of Moab, with loudspeakers bolted to the fuselage and a mad Christian preacher at the stick. I felt I had been tricked.

But this time there could be no mistake. I was alone in the canyon. I am forced to conclude that, unless there is a sudden and significant upsurge in our subscription total, the end of my time may be near at hand.

As I write these painful words, my faithful dog nuzzles my still-warm hand and, with brown eyes shiny and pleading, implores me to put her on the subscription list, as if "padding" the total might help spare me from an early departure to the great cliff dwelling in the sky.

But, of course, mere dog bones will not do. We need a flurry of checks, money orders and greenbacks to push this drive over the top and grant some much-needed monetary relief to our weary subscribers. Join with us now in this most worthy of causes.



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THE ADVENTURES OF BOARMAN BOB





Fishing in Cliffhanger Canyon

by Izzie Kiddin

A hiking companion of mine, whom we shall call Phil Gasoline, has accompanied me on numerous backpacking excursions. When I feel like some company, his is most appreciated, except for one strange fetish.

We could be in a box canyon, we could be in a creek-bed surrounded by sheer vertical walls - it doesn't matter. Phil always looks for: A WAY TO THE TOP! On more than one occasion, I've found myself clutching onto some scrub oak root, high above the canyon floor, my view camera dangling precariously around my neck, in an effort to follow this madman up some tortuous route HE THINKS, MAY, get us to the top!

He has never bothered to mention to me why he must do this. Maybe it's for the challenge, or maybe just for the view. Maybe he is busy compiling notes for a book entitled: "101 Extremely Hazardous Exits Out Of Narrow Canyons". Whatever the reasons, he persists in persuing these routes, irregardless of danger to life and limb. Mine, as well as his!

Well, let me tell you about the time when Phil Gasoline almost met his match. (sic...)

I was doing some exploring and photography in a magnificent area known as Lost Spring Canyon, just North of Arches National Park. The area was recently dropped from Wilderness Study, and I was hoping to

attract interest with the Park Service, in hopes of securing Lost Spring Canyon inside the Park boundaries.

(I'm happy to report that currently the area has been reinstated as Wilderness Study, and it has been visited by the Park Service Planning Office out of Denver - Yes, there is such an office! - and that the future of Lost Spring lies somewhere twixt Denver and DC in a sea of red tape and misappropriated funds. But, there's always hope.)

Anyway, I invited Phil along on one of my visits, and as soon as we entered a lonely side-drainage, the fetish overtook him. He said he was going to get up on top, and would meet me in the adjacent side-canyon in about an hour. I watched him billy-goat up the smooth and steep slickrock slopes and disappear out of sight.

A couple hours had passed, and I'm sitting in the enxt canyon, waiting for him. My trusty bottle of Apricot Brandy is half empty by now. It's pretty horrid stuff, but as none of my other backpacking friends will so much as smell it, I'm usually left alone to consume the whole ugly contents, without any worry of moochers and the like.

It's extremely peaceful here. Far off in the distance, a lonely canyon wren, high above the canyon floor, is singing his sad refrain. "Help ... Help ... Help"

Wait a minute! That's no canyon wren! That's Phil, calling from the other canyon! I hurried back towards the place where we parted company, praying that he was alright, and laughing to myself at the same time. Serves him right!

Scampering around the next bend, the Apricot Brandy sloshing around rather uneasily in my stomach, his cries grew closer. And I could tell they were coming from way above the canyon floor. In canyon country, There is an important rule one must always abide by. LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP! Otherwise, you can find yourself in the midst of a terrible surprise.

Phil couldn't find his way down to the adjacent side-canyon, so he backtracked, and then, tried to find another route back down. He hopped down a twelve foot ledge that looked like it would go all the way to the canyon floor. A mistake. He was now trapped on this ledge, seventy feet above the canyon floor. No way to get back up. No way to continue down.

Directly below him, the cliff sloped about 70 degrees down to the canyon floor. No friction slide here. You'd burn your skin right off by the time you hit bottom. The twelve foot ledge he'd jumped down onto was only a couple feet wide. The smooth and unforgiving face that led back up top was unscaleable. He tried and tried, but it was like trying to climb up a mirror.

The sun was starting to set, and it was about that time that I started to become aware of the rather serious

predicament Phil was in. We had packed in some six miles from Sand Dune Arch. Of course, we never carried any rope, having never had any possible use for it. We talked of my hiking back to the car and going into town for some rope, but by the time I'd get back it would be well after dark. I took a sip of Apricot Brandy and pondered the situation I was glad not to be in.

It was then that we noticed a small, fragile outcrop of rocks, just sort of hanging on to the slope, about twenty-five below him. If he could make it to this rock p.le, and it held him, he could scamper around the side of the cliff to safety. He thought about committing himself to a slide down towards those rocks, but if they didn't hold, he and the rocks would come tumbling down to the canyon floor. What to do? I sipped some more brandy and shouted words of encouragement.

Phil got out his trusty hunting knife. The kind that certain people always have at their waist. I don't have one because I'm not one of those kinds of people. He wedged the blade of his knife into a small crack in the ledge. He then took off his belt and secured the belt to the knife handle. He then took off his shirt and tied the shirt to the belt that was secured to the knife. He then took off his pants and tied them to the shirt that was tied to the belt that was tied to the knife that was wedged into the rock.

Picture, if you will, a naked man, high atop a cliff face, contemplating a rope he has just fashioned out of last year's fashions. It would get him close to the outcrop of rocks, but he would still have to let go and drop the last ten feet onto the rocks. I took another sip of brandy and told him to "go for it!". He yelled back something obscene.

He double-checked the knots, took a deep breath, and started lowering himself down the steep slope, making little skid marks with his butt. Amidst the concern for the safety of my friend, I realized that this was a rare opportunity to do some journalistic photography, and whipped off a few shots with the 35mm I also carried along.

He was at the end of his rope. He let go and dropped to the outcrop of rocks. They held. In a few moments, he was standing safely on the canyon floor. I gave him a swig of Apricot Brandy and congratulated him on his perilous descent.

As there was no way of retrieving his clothing, I gave him my shirt to wrap around his waist, lest some little old ladies in pink Reeboks be startled out of their wits as they catch sight of a naked hairy man lumbering across the Broken Arch Trail. You've heard of Bigfoot in Oregon? Picture these old dolls, making a hasty retreat to their Toyota, hollering: "It's Bigclub! It's Bigclub!"

So, what does all this have to do with fishing in Cliffhanger Canyon? In

STROKES and POKES

Bobby Bloate



Did you notice that the STINKING DESERT GAZETTE is a little fatter this month? Our leader, publisher Philmore Banks, is totally preoccupied by his subscription drive, as if his life depended on getting his 200 by the first of August! He's decided to print everything that our readers submit to us, regardless of subject or content, journalistic style, and/or artistic merit. He's just scared to death of offending someone by turning something down and maybe losing a subscriber. My guess is, he'll wind up offending just about everybody by printing it all.

Hell, why not? We ought to be dedicated to the proposition that all points of view are valid, even if crudely spoken. A lot of people frown upon that approach, like the leaders of the Communist Party in Russia. But, fortunately, we have no commie pinko types in our area who would try to prevent us from printing opinions.

In Moab, when you offend somebody it gives them the perfect opportunity to offend you back. Everybody is happy with this system, and it seems to be the way God intended it to be.

Because sometimes, when the offensive is at a lull, an alternate point of view can slip in almost unnoticed, take root, and add to the general store of information. That valuable possibility is certainly worth preserving. It's the basis of our democracy.

We ought to give everyone their chance to be heard. I'd like to think that's what this town is all about; the amalgamation of the rich and the not-so-rich; the businessman and boatman; all opinions expressed and considered; compromise arrived at.

Banks is right, regardless of whether his motives are altruistic of purely mercenary.

But his obsession with his subscription drive is beginning to get to me. It's all he ever thinks about.

I saw him out in the canyons the other day. I was hiking the hogbacks from Pritchett Canyon to Hunter Canyon and saw him down below. I needed to get with him about some business and tried to get his attention. I called and called, but he never looked up. I calculated how long it would take me to get down to where his car would be, and shouted at the top of my lungs: "Philmore, this is Bob. If you don't get to Hunter by ten of five, I'm going to call you at home!"

He never heard a thing. He just sat down on a rock and held his head in his hands, probably worrying about his stupid subscription drive. I'm going to have to have a talk him. Nothing is that important.

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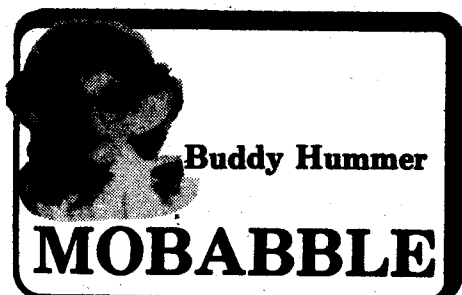
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MOBABBLE

Moab must be doing something right because a pair of Golden Eagles have been soaring over the downtown area all month. According to Larry Hixon these eagles have been around for the last eleven years. He says that they nest up on the Lion's Back, near the big white "G".

But it isn't just eagles who recognize the homely grandeur of these environs. Moabite Gayle Houston encountered a Canyonlands enthusiast when she stopped at the Grand Canyon recently. Gayle was talking with a ranger at the Grand Canyon Visitor Center and let it slip out that she was from Moab. The ranger, an Apache who grew up near the South Rim, suddenly turned wistful-reverent, commenting, "Grand Canyon's OK, but YOU live near those ARCHES. I once slept under Turret Arch and felt the spirit there."

Despite its spiritual insufficiency(!), Grand Canyon has been a popular destination for travelling Moabites this winter. A hardy group, which included 68 year old Fern Mullen, set out on a

month-long "Grand" river trip in February. It's reported that the intrepid boatmen had to brush snow off their rafts several icy mornings.

Moab's John Williams, a longtime river-rat, attempted to surf the tail-waves in House Rock Rapid this winter. John likes to "play" in his White Water Sport Boat amidst the troughs and crests of angrily churning water. But John flipped his boat in House Rock Rapid this time, and that was only the beginning of the trip...

Last month Marian Ottinger went to the Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada. She says it was the most remarkable assemblage of unique characters she ever saw. Of all the hundreds of cowboys there, no two had similar looking hats! One crusty old cowboy nearly went teary at the end of the session talking about how this was the first time he'd ever read his poetry before a sober audience without being laughed at.

Christy Robbins, due to have her first baby in April, travelled to New York City for a last fling before Motherhood. Now she's back home, busily reading about babies, and trying to figure out what some of those gifts she got at the baby shower really are for.

Spring arrived peacefully in Moab this year. We woke to a downy thick blanket of snow. Then there was an Equinox celebration at the Food Co-op in the evening. The newly completed Co-op Community Center was dedicated and Co-op manager Conrad was honoured for his "every-day heroism".

Dave Evans treated us to a show of his exquisite paintings of local scenes and Mitchell May presented an unusual slide show celebrating the harmony and pattern in the universe: spiralling hurricanes, dancing drops of spilled milk, and mandala-like vibration patterns generated by the human voice. Mitchell moved to Moab because he senses the spirit in these rocks.

Which brings me to the subject of this worthy rag. Everybody knows this desert is beautiful, so why the name STINKING DESERT GAZETTE? Lots of people ask that question.

To my way of thinking, "stinking" is actually a venerable appellation. In a world where "beauty" means well-swept concrete surfaces and polished Super-Malls, a good solid STINKING desert means a "wasteland" full of unkempt vegetation, disarrayed rocks and lots of untamed varmints.

One of this desert's greatest assets is the diversity of its varmints. Moab is full of one-of-a-kind individuals and some of the animal inhabitants are equally eccentric. Take for example the local Northern Grasshopper Mouse. This tiny carnivorous rodent behaves more like a lion than a mild-mannered mouse. Its scent marks its territory, prowls over vast ranges in search of prey, and snarls and growls just like any self-respecting ferocious beast. Yep, a local mouse that roars.

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TRUST

A Short Story

by Cliff Walker

Nighthawks wheeled like gulls at the canyon rim and peeled off to plummet into the deepening darkness below. The last rays of a brilliant summer sun gilded the upper wall with a blazing yellow band, but hundreds of feet down, the narrow wash was scented with the coolness of a gathering dusk.

The male birds, wings swept and striped like fighter planes, plunged down along the sheer sandstone walls, hurtling at terrific speed to pull up abruptly at the canyon floor in an intoxicated, impetuous aerial display.

Life quickens in the canyons at the end of the searing, forbidding heat of the day. As the sweet coolness descends, the birds are moved to play, and humans to dream.

And so, as the huge white horse picked a route through the boulders in the bottom of the wash, its rider drifted in a rush of poignant memories, of twilights past and pure.

Childhood evenings, outside after dinner with the other kids, shadows deepening, perfect games of hide and seek.

Evenings at the county fair, lying in the straw near the animals, a childhood crush, simply holding hands.

Awkward evenings, of formals and tuxedos, fumbling in car seats in the tight clothing, the long hot kisses.

City evenings in elegant fashion, low lights and music by the pool, love and partnership a natural presence.

And the terrible evenings alone after the betrayal, the city life gone cold and dreary, and the decision to return to the canyon country and a life one could trust.

Complete self-sufficiency, to rely upon nothing, no one, ever again, the freedom of.....

A sound like a whirling knife slashed through the silence. The rider was abruptly startled back into reality.

But the horse had been watching the nighthawks. The near miss by the bird brought no reaction.

The rider chuckled, and playfully slapped its smooth neck, chagrined at being caught off guard.

"Casey, I'm getting a little flaky! Let's get on home to the spring", whispered the rider.

Water was already beginning to glisten in the damp sand, testimony to the promise of a wet camp, a bandana bath and a firelight supper. The magnificent animal trembled in anticipation of a long cool drink, and life without the saddle. It made the familiar turn from the wash bottom, and started up the sandstone scree.

The spring trickled from the base of the canyon wall just a short distance ahead but at the top of two impassable jumps - pourover ledges created by hard grey limestone. The route up the scree led to a ledge that served as a trail to the upper level and the pool. On that ledge, under the lip of a flagstone slab, lay the rattler.

The rider stood forward in the stirrups as the horse struggled up the rubble-strewn slope, kicking out dust and rock behind it. The small avalanche rattled down the slide and echoed off the canyon walls. The animal gained the ledge with a final lunge and shook itself, resettling the shifted saddle before proceeding along the trail.

Suddenly, halfway along the ledge, the alert animal sensed the awful presence, and stopped.

There was no other route. A solid rock wall buttressed the trail on the right and a sheer drop of forty feet fell off on the left.

"Go ahead on, Casey", laughed the rider, and gently squeezed the enormous ribs.

The musky scent of taut reptile had stopped the horse, and conjured up visions of writhing demons with territorial imperative; serpents that broke the electrical surface of its ancient genetic memories and danced, ethereally, before its eyes.

But the horse was an exceptional animal. Its allegiance to its master was complete, stronger even, than its fear of the unknown, and the unseen.

It stepped forward, moved in its blood to abandon itself to the this most gentle of commands.

The reptile cocked its body, calculating the direction and momentum of the intruder.

When the hoof fell within inches of its head, it hesitated. The slightest pause would signal bad intent. But the horse maintained the deliberate and disciplined pace, moved slowly past the slab, and was gone.

Under the stars, the coffee spit and hissed on the high side of the pot canted against the coals. The horse browsed unhobbled among the rushes and thick grass. The rider lay back in a bedroll and rolled a cigarette.

"All in all, it's not a bad life, riding fence", she thought. "It's amazing, after all the changes, that the ranch is still in the family."

"Nice - a good base camp, and my favorite horse. I wonder why he stopped at the slab today. Maybe it's unsafe. I'll move it off the trail." With that, she flipped the cigarette into the dying campfire and slid lower into her bag.

The night air pulsed with the rhythmic buzz of frogs and nocturnal insects. The sky was a swath of diamonds on the black velvet strip between the towering cliffs. Her thoughts began to fade like the glow in the juniper coals.

"You're a good horse, Casey, good as your Dad", she called out aloud to her companion. She turned over on her side and drifted off to sleep.





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PATRICIA KRENWINKEL

Mysterious Forces Revealed

Capt. Tom

Several times in my life I've answered the call to mysticism.

Bouncing around on the ground at the start of the Space Age I would get confused as to which way to go in life and what was worth doing.

If all else fails go for a row in your dory.

I selected a secluded spot in Cataract Canyon on the Colorado River for a solo 40 days & 40 nights desert odyssey.

I had packed my Conga drum, several volumes of Bucky Fuller and a handful of Zap Comics for balance in my intellectual pursuits.

The first order of business was to contact the ancient Indian Gods.

Bego Chitti in particular.

A full moon night was selected.

Camp fire blazing.

The drum highly tuned and ready for its S.O.S. to the Cosmos.

That "Haint" was waiting for me.

I let out a howl at the moon and got an instant response.

Something was moving in the bushes. A chill of fear ran down my backbone and every hair on my body was erect!

I was scared.

Bad!

No place to run, no place to hide.

81994902

The "Nitty Gritty" at last! I beat-feet for my bedroll.

Climbed in and pulled the covers over my head and waited out the night.

Morning blossomed sweet and clear and my next entertainment was studying the local lizards. I was still on the "Mystic" trail but not so out front now. I had watched one particular lizard for several weeks from my dust wallow in the shade.

Same as clockwork this old timer made his rounds doing pushups and catching flies with that marvelous tongue. He had a trail hammered in the dirt half his body diameter in depth.

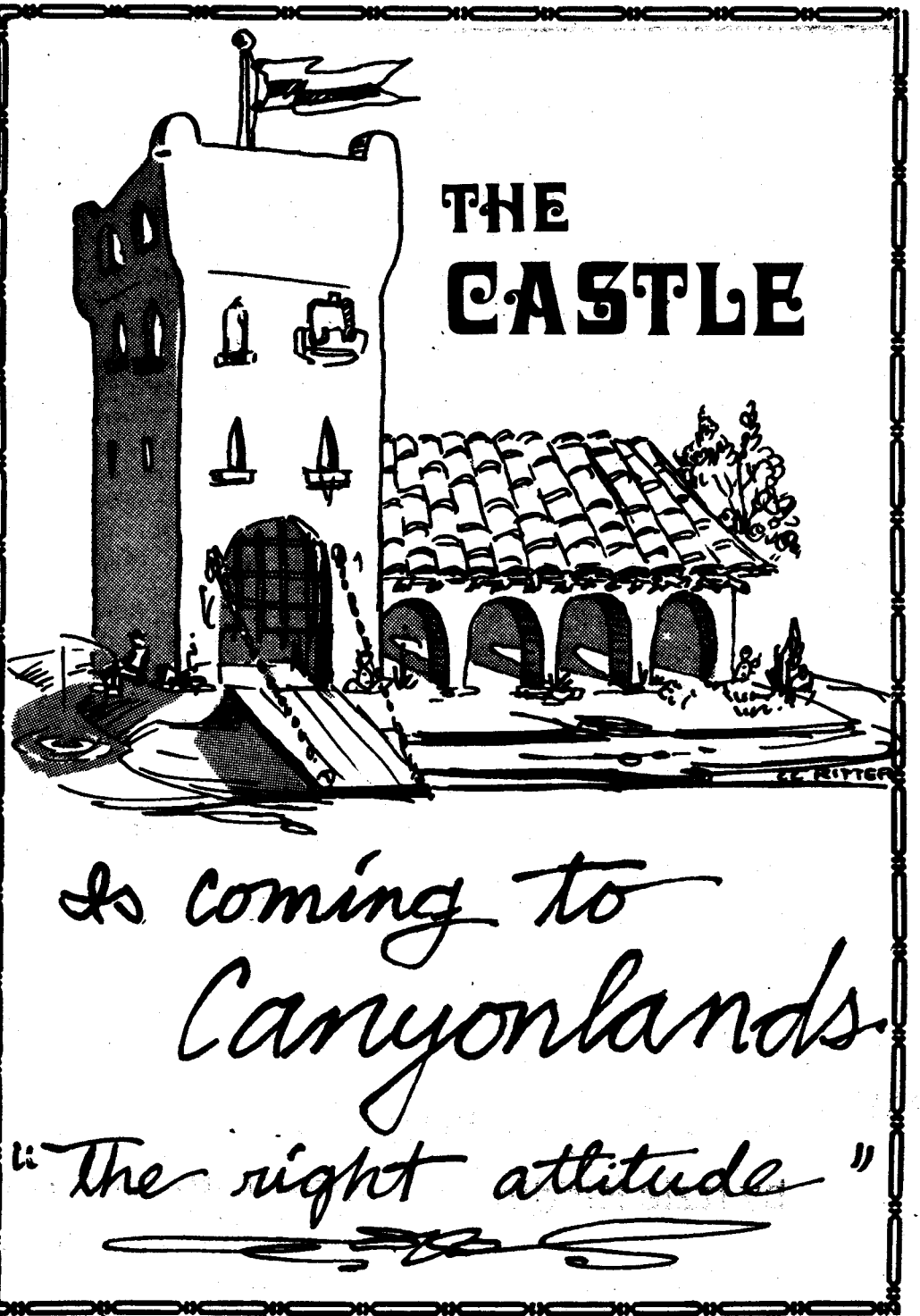
This was obviously lizard heaven.

One day, deep in my Inner City Romance Comic, I looked up and saw that lizard staring at me--from a gnarly root.

A sudden switch in my being popped me into that lizard's brain! Where my normal sight had been was replaced by twin counter rotating kaleidoscopes of color. With good feeling things glowing in my mind.

This only lasted for a short time and then I was back to normal.

Had the lizard been in my mind?



THE CASTLE

*Is coming to
Canyonlands*

"The right attitude"

This gave me much to think about so I wandered to the river for company.

A fleet of kayak women had come ashore to camp.

Then and there I abandoned esoteric pursuits, contacted the kayak women and tried to get invited over for a snack.

**Fine Arts
&
Graphic Design
by Nik Hougen**

Look
for the draft drawn covered wagon.





Fishing in Cliffhanger Canyon

by Izzie Kiddin

A hiking companion of mine, whom we shall call Phil Gasoline, has accompanied me on numerous backpacking excursions. When I feel like some company, his is most appreciated, except for one strange fetish.

We could be in a box canyon, we could be in a creek-bed surrounded by sheer vertical walls - it doesn't matter. Phil always looks for: A WAY TO THE TOP! On more than one occasion, I've found myself clutching onto some scrub oak root, high above the canyon floor, my view camera dangling precariously around my neck, in an effort to follow this madman up some tortuous route HE THINKS, MAY, get us to the top!

He has never bothered to mention to me why he must do this. Maybe it's for the challenge, or maybe just for the view. Maybe he is busy compiling notes for a book entitled: "101 Extremely Hazardous Exits Out Of Narrow Canyons". Whatever the reasons, he persists in persuing these routes, irregardless of danger to life and limb. Mine, as well as his!

Well, let me tell you about the time when Phil Gasoline almost met his match. (sic...)

I was doing some exploring and photography in a magnificent area known as Lost Spring Canyon, just North of Arches National Park. The area was recently dropped from Wilderness Study, and I was hoping to

attract interest with the Park Service, in hopes of securing Lost Spring Canyon inside the Park boundaries.

(I'm happy to report that currently the area has been reinstated as Wilderness Study, and it has been visited by the Park Service Planning Office out of Denver - Yes, there is such an office! - and that the future of Lost Spring lies somewhere twixt Denver and DC in a sea of red tape and misappropriated funds. But, there's always hope.)

Anyway, I invited Phil along on one of my visits, and as soon as we entered a lonely side-drainage, the fetish overtook him. He said he was going to get up on top, and would meet me in the adjacent side-canyon in about an hour. I watched him billy-goat up the smooth and steep slickrock slopes and disappear out of sight.

A couple hours had passed, and I'm sitting in the enxt canyon, waiting for him. My trusty bottle of Apricot Brandy is half empty by now. It's pretty horrid stuff, but as none of my other backpacking friends will so much as smell it, I'm usually left alone to consume the whole ugly contents, without any worry of moochers and the like.

It's extremely peaceful here. Far off in the distance, a lonely canyon wren, high above the canyon floor, is singing his sad refrain. "Help ... Help ... Help"

Wait a minute! That's no canyon wren! That's Phil, calling from the other canyon! I hurried back towards the place where we parted company, praying that he was alright, and laughing to myself at the same time. Serves him right!

Scampering around the next bend, the Apricot Brandy sloshing around rather uneasily in my stomach, his cries grew closer. And I could tell they were coming from way above the canyon floor. In canyon country, There is an important rule one must always abide by. LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP! Otherwise, you can find yourself in the midst of a terrible surprise.

Phil couldn't find his way down to the adjacent side-canyon, so he backtracked, and then, tried to find another route back down. He hopped down a twelve foot ledge that looked like it would go all the way to the canyon floor. A mistake. He was now trapped on this ledge, seventy feet above the canyon floor. No way to get back up. No way to continue down.

Directly below him, the cliff sloped about 70 degrees down to the canyon floor. No friction slide here. You'd burn your skin right off by the time you hit bottom. The twelve foot ledge he'd jumped down onto was only a couple feet wide. The smooth and unforgiving face that led back up top was unscaleable. He tried and tried, but it was like trying to climb up a mirror.

The sun was starting to set, and it was about that time that I started to become aware of the rather serious

predicament Phil was in. We had packed in some six miles from Sand Dune Arch. Of course, we never carried any rope, having never had any possible use for it. We talked of my hiking back to the car and going into town for some rope, but by the time I'd get back it would be well after dark. I took a sip of Apricot Brandy and pondered the situation I was glad not to be in.

It was then that we noticed a small, fragile outcrop of rocks, just sort of hanging on to the slope, about twenty-five below him. If he could make it to this rock pile, and it held him, he could scamper around the side of the cliff to safety. He thought about committing himself to a slide down towards those rocks, but if they didn't hold, he and the rocks would come tumbling down to the canyon floor. What to do? I sipped some more brandy and shouted words of encouragement.

Phil got out his trusty hunting knife. The kind that certain people always have at their waist. I don't have one because I'm not one of those kinds of people. He wedged the blade of his knife into a small crack in the ledge. He then took off his belt and secured the belt to the knife handle. He then took off his shirt and tied the shirt to the belt that was secured to the knife. He then took off his pants and tied them to the shirt that was tied to the belt that was tied to the knife that was wedged into the rock.

Picture, if you will, a naked man, high atop a cliff face, contemplating a rope he has just fashioned out of last year's fashions.

It would get him close to the outcrop of rocks, but he would still have to let go and drop the last ten feet onto the rocks. I took another sip of brandy and told him to "go for it!". He yelled back something obscene.

He double-checked the knots, took a deep breath, and started lowering himself down the steep slope, making little skid marks with his butt. Amidst the concern for the safety of my friend, I realized that this was a rare opportunity to do some journalistic photography, and whipped off a few shots with the 35mm I also carried along.

He was at the end of his rope. He let go and dropped to the outcrop of rocks. They held. In a few moments, he was standing safely on the canyon floor. I gave him a swig of Apricot Brandy and congratulated him on his perilous descent.

As there was no way of retrieving his clothing, I gave him my shirt to wrap around his waist, lest some little old ladies in pink Reeboks be startled out of their wits as they catch sight of a naked hairy man lumbering across the Broken Arch Trail. You've heard of Bigfoot in Oregon? Picture these old dolls, making a hasty retreat to their Toyota, hollering: "It's Bigclub! It's Bigclub!"

So, what does all this have to do with fishing in Cliffhanger Canyon? In

SCHOOL DAZE

Misinformed Moabites have been carping that the state legislature unfairly distributes educational funds favoring urban schools. These muckrakers claim that this misapportionment of funds violates the constitutional mandate that "...all children in the state are entitled to reasonably equal educational opportunities." (sep.clause 53-7-15)

Red-sympathizing radicals have made the fantastical allegation that urban legislators are conspiring to produce a class of docile rural illiterates who will be easy fodder for political/industrial control.

Such groundless claims have been proven unfounded!

To address these challenges the legislature set up a committee of experts to study comparative educational quality in urban and rural schools. The commission, the Outback Scientific Council on Rural Education (OBSCURE) conducted extensive surveys and came up with incontrovertible evidence that urban and rural districts provide EQUAL education.

The OBSCURE commission discovered that while urban schools are better funded, in every case there can be found counterbalancing advantages in the rural situation. For example, it may appear that urban school children have all the advantages, but this facile interpretation of the facts doesn't take into consideration the value of hardship as a builder of MEN.

OBSCURE studied three fundamental aspects of education: Programs, Supplies, and Teacher/Student ratios. The following data is a synopsis of the OBSCURE findings.

Programs

*Because urban areas offer a wider selection of curricular choices, it appears urban students are provided greater opportunities for academic, social and emotional development. However OBSCURE found these choices for students to be contributory to identity crisis among urban teens (i.e. "Shall I be a hockey goalie, a nuclear physicist or a Wall Street analyst?") Rural districts skirt this problem by sharing a firm belief in teaching the basics. This creates an optimum situation for rural students since, after cutbacks, students aren't in danger of developing over-inflated ideas about their potential.

*Urban schools offer approximately 75 different courses in high tech for ever single student whereas rural schools offer approximately 75 students the use of one computer. OBSCURE was confounded by the implication of these data but was encouraged by the fact that numbers 75 and 1 significantly appeared in the statistics for both urban and rural schools!

*While urban schools continue to offer a wide variety of art courses,

rural schools may cut their minimal programs in half. Certain wimpy types may bemoan this, but OBSCURE's no-nonsense data indicates that rural types are congenitally incapable of benefitting from art courses even when they are available.

Textbooks and Supplies

*The greatest disparity in conditions was found in this domain. OBSCURE found urban schools homogenized their students by providing all students in a course with the same text. Rural schools, on the other hand, encourage diversity in each classroom by using whatever students can get their hands on. Social and athletic skills are exercised during in-class scrambles for precious textbooks.

Student/Teacher Ratio

*Currently in Utah PRODUCTIVITY is judged by student/teacher ratio. Rural schools have recently caught up with, and are anticipating surpassing urban schools in productivity Here's

how: Moab has provided an outstanding example by closing an entire elementary school. This encourages displaced students and teachers to move into the remaining school, automatically raising over-all productivity. The obvious next step is for all grades to be moved to one Super School. The ideal set-up for the Super School would be to remove all classroom walls creating a large auditorium where one single teacher can orchestrate mass education using a bullhorn.

The Omega-point in PRODUCTIVITY will have finally been achieved!

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Inequality is a state of mind. While some schools appear to be more equal than others, this equality, or lack thereof, need not be a negative factor in the educational process. Education in rural and urban areas is not unequal; it is simply separate and different.

ANONYMOUS.



Izzie Kiddin

my notes to the Park Service Planners I ceremoniously named this side-drainage 'Cliffhanger Canyon', in honor of Phil's experience there.

About two weeks later, we returned to the spot. Phil had brought with him some fishing line and hooks to retrieve his clothes and knife with. Grabbing a dead juniper branch, he made a hasty fishing pole, and cast his line out into the driest part of Southeastern Utah. And he did retrieve clothes, belt and knife!

On our way back into town we ran into an old friend who, noticing the fishing gear, asked us where we had been fishing. We told him Lost Spring Canyon. Looking at us rather oddly, he asked if we had caught anything.

I told him that Phil had caught a very nice pair of Roebuck button-fly jeans, a two-tone Henley style long sleeve shirt, a cheap belt with the inscription HEYDUKE LIVES! written across it with black magic marker, and a very valuable hunting knife that at one time belonged to Butch Cassidy! (At least, that's what Lin Ottinger told Phil when he sold it to him for seventy-five bucks.)

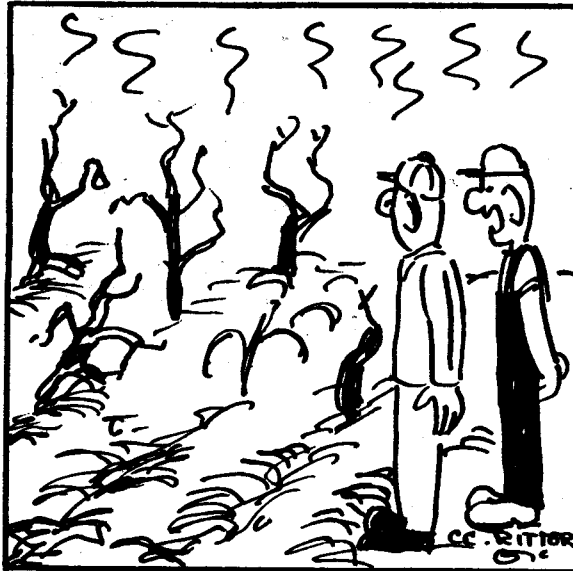
Our friend looked at us rather curiously, mumbled something about Apricot Brandy, and silently walked away.

The snapshots? Oh, I still have them in a safe place. And the next time I find myself hanging from some

scrub oak due to Phil's encouragement, you can be rest assured that upon my safe return I shall turn over said photos to this publication so that my friend can have the proper exposure that he so well deserves!

C.C. RITTER'S DIRE PREDICTIONS FOR 1990

THE DROUGHT OF 1990...



'WELL - WE COULD GO PLAY GOLF.'

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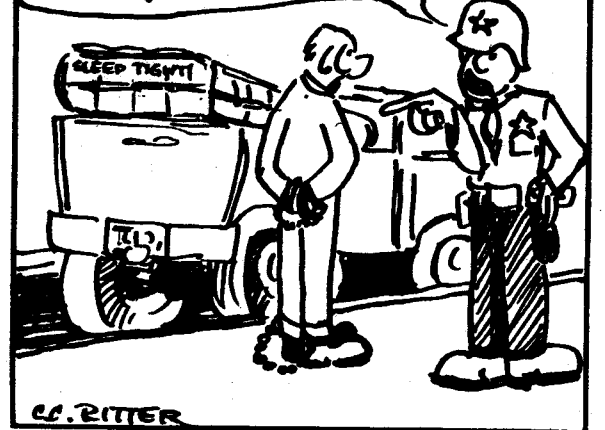
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1990

GETTING THE CRIMINALS OFF
OUR LOCAL STREETS...

"ALL RIGHT - WHAT DID YOU
DO WITH THAT MATTRESS
TAG?"



C.C. RITTER

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I was extremely interested in the article by Frank Cox concerning the "Gaynurd Bovine Beetle Bustle". Not to rain on his parade, but I must advise him that it is "An Idea Whose Time Has Been" a long time ago. The proof of this is available to anyone hiking the canyon country, especially in special areas of the Escalante drainage. Here for years the locals have been finding and selling petrified dung beetle balls and have even given them the name "Moqui Marbles", no doubt in honor of the original inventors of the "Bovine Beetle Bustle". Only, of course, there were no "Bovines" around then only native browsers. This also helps to explain why the desert is not totally covered by petrified browser flop from all times past.

As if this isn't proof enough, even the drawing you displayed with the story is not original. I can attest to seeing such a design for what was undoubtedly the original model of a "Browser Beetle Bustle" on a canyon wall while hiking along the Escalante River one day. Although there were no words to explain the various parts, as your figure had, it was unmistakably the same drawing, only the browser was sort of idealized rather than an accurate depiction of a specific creature. Obviously, this was done to allow future generations to adapt the designs to whatever new creatures were found to be flopping all over the desert. Along with the design drawing there was an intricate map showing the creature's of the day favorite flopping places. I followed the routes shown and found thousands of "Moqui Marbles" thereby verifying the accuracy of my translation of the petroglyphs.

Wisconsin Millar
Salt Lake City

P.S. I know the rocks are alive, but its damn hard to get them to speak!

Dear Mr. Editor:

Here's nine bucks to fill my prescription for twelve doses of pure Gonzo Journalism.

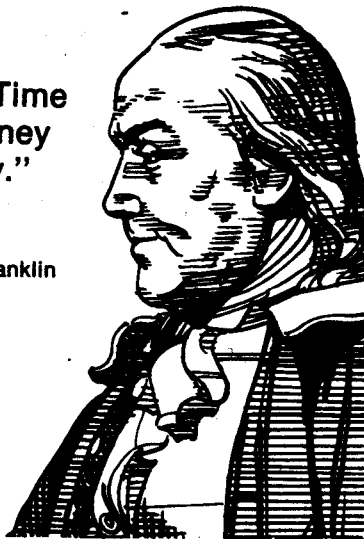
John Johnson
Salt Lake City

P.S. Just what the doctor ordered.



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the world with a steaming
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and witty reparte."

Hi,

Your March issue just came Saturday to Central Ohio. Since we are still unable to get a copy of the paper at our local newsstand here in Ohio, I would like to ask a favor. Could you send a copy of the March issue to a friend of mine? I have included the label for her. I think she would enjoy it. I would loan her my copy, but I think she would like to have a copy of her very own. She has never been to Moab, but I am working on her. She usually goes "touristy" places like Ireland for her vacations. She dodges bombs & bullits instead of "Canyon Cookies". Thanks very much!!!

Sincerely,
Lou Gostlin
Columbus, Ohio

P.S. My daughter wonders if I am the only one in Ohio who subscribes to the SDG? How many states have subscribers to the SDG?

Dear Lou,

We are reaching the following 12 states: UTAZCOOHMACATXMDVAIDAKOK. You are not alone. Abbey Gantenbein in Ravenna is a subscriber.

Editor

Dear SDG,

I'm troubled, in doubt, cornfused (I mean- confused) but my concern is: who chose the "cognomen" STINKING DESERT GAZETTE, and why? Was it for, what I hope it was for, to help stop the ever increasing stink caused by motorbikers, four wheel drive veh-icks who don't give a Damn about "God's Creations!"

Pop cans, beer bottles, gasoline and grease dripping out of their motors, and worst of all the carbon monoxide fumes from their cars, trucks and motorbikes. The poisonous stuff can't be seen like a good ol' campfire smoke--which I agree is annoying--but not deadly. The "cave dwellers" survived it! The Indian in his teepee (tipi) used it and survived, you've used it and so have I and we're still around, huh!

I guess 'ya' know Scientific Archeological Research has determined the people we've "dubbed" Indians have been on this continent 15,000 years or more, we white folks less than 500 years (1492-1987). And we are on the very verge of self-destruction, thanks to our greed for--for money, power and inconsideration for our fellowman!

I can recall a time when it was safe to drink from "almost" any stream, seep, spring, catch basin (provision of nature, that is) "but now"--be wary, be cautious! So if that's the reason for STINKING DESERT GAZETTE maybe it'll help keep --pollutors out.

Frank Lemon
Moab, Utah

P.S. I guess ya know horse-terds, cow manure and wildlife droppings dry up and blow away, but motor grease, beer bottles, aluminum cans last as long, or longer than the rocks do.

kee-rect?

Dear Frank:

We apologize for the confusion we have caused some people with our name. It's not meant to be read as the STINKING DESERT Gazette. That would be plagiarism. The Firesign Theater, a hip comedy group, did a routine that alluded to the "stinking desert" of the Southwest, a derisive term used by entrepreneurs to describe the sacred lands of the American Indian.

Read it instead as the STINKING desert GAZETTE, a title appropriate to our fragrant prose and sweetly scented journalistic style.

Editor

LOCAL GOVERNMENT 1090



"LET ME BE PERFECTLY CLEAR - I AM INNOCENT OF ALL CHARGES OF NEPOTISM IRREGARDLESS OF WHAT MY DETRACTORS SAY!"

THE BARD'S NARDS POETRY CORNER

Pueblo Poetry from MANY WINTERS Translated by Nancy Wood

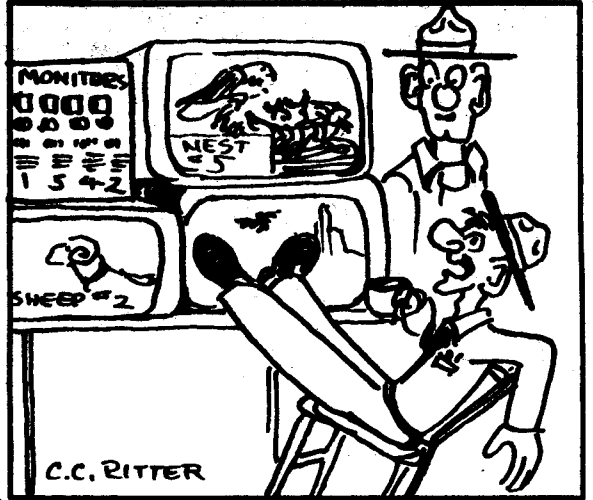
To be yourself is to be
Alone with the wind crying
When all that you ask for is
The warmth of a human fire.

We are not important.
Our lives are simply lasting thoughts
Which travel through time that way.

I have found more to life
In the travels of an ant
Than in the progress of the world
Which has fallen far behind
The place it started from.

I am a woman.
I hold up half of the sky.
I am a woman.
I nourish half of the earth.
I am a woman.
The rainbow touches my shoulders.
The universe encircles my eyes.

PARK HQ. 1990



"THIS IS GREAT, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A NATURALIST."



To Philmore

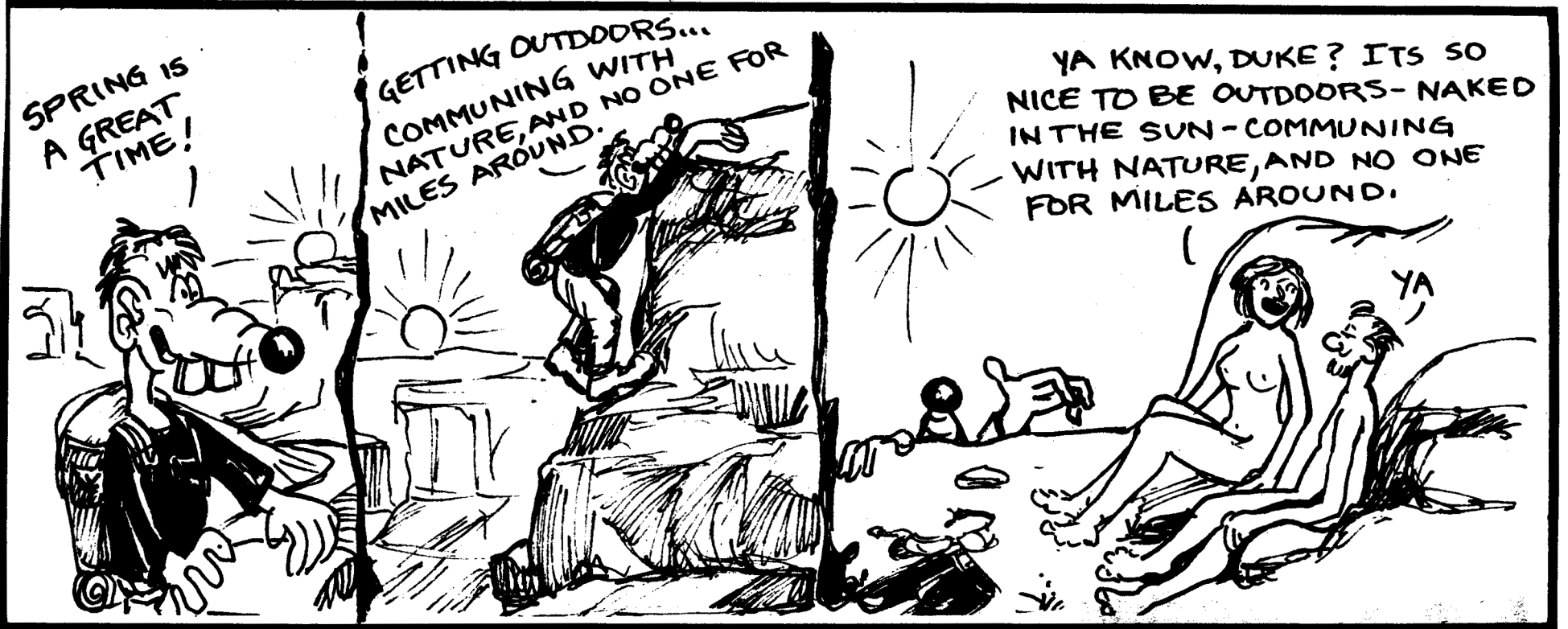
Oh miserable, suffering Multitudes
Be molified in degree sublime
Knowing that some of us have indeed
Been transported out of the slime

And deceit of the Apathetic Swamp
Wherein you have cast your fate,
Into that oh-so perfect world where
The dreams of zealots await.

Resident Alien

BACKWATER

C.C. RITTER © 87



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