

U.S. Steel gears up to get out ✓ See page 12

# High Country

news

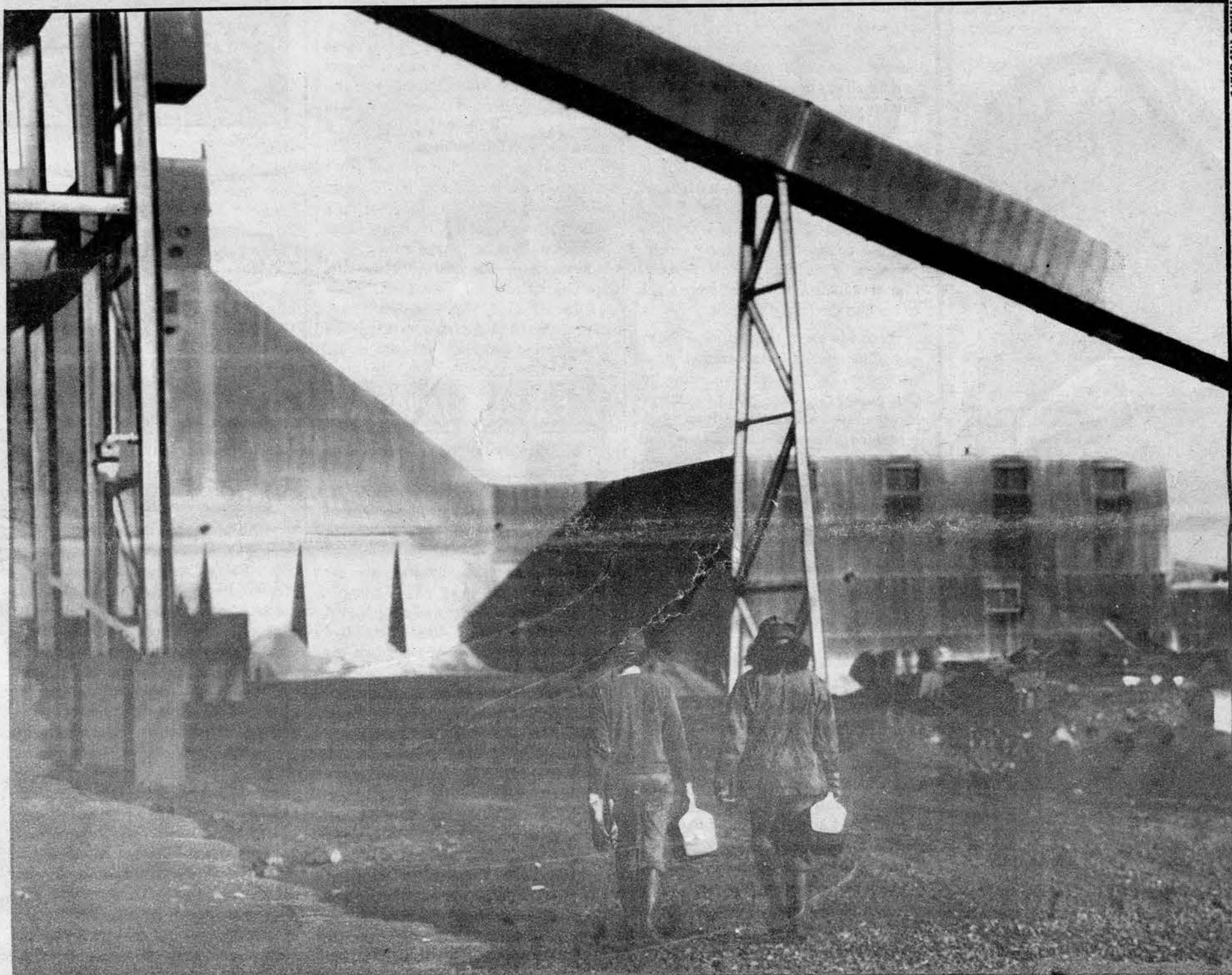
March 18, 1985

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

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## Special Issue, Part II: The Bust



Mike McClure

Leaving the U.S. Steel iron mine, Atlantic City, Wyoming

## A busted Wyoming mining town remains haunted by 550 lost jobs

by Marjane Ambler

**L**ANDER, Wy -- For Margo Hancock, everything in her past is dated either before U.S. Steel closed or after. "It is like you've had two whole different lifetimes. You knew most of the 550 guys up there, and all of a sudden, everyone is gone. I know some guys go to the swimming pool at the junior high just to talk to the other guys. They don't even swim. It's like we're on vacation and will be going back to work tomorrow."

Since 1962, the men and women who worked for U.S. Steel drove 35

miles from here up South Pass to the Atlantic City iron ore mine and mill. For 22 years, three shifts a day, they blasted until Iron Mountain was gone, replaced with a 250-acre pit.

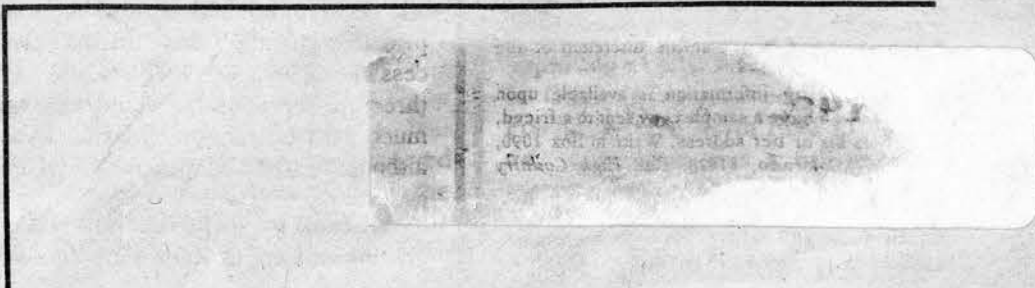
Driving colossal haul trucks, they rumbled through the night, taking the taconite ore to the crusher, hoping their brakes would hold when they reached its lip. After the ore was crushed, huge chunks of frozen ore sometimes got stuck in a chute. The conveyer man would tackle the blockage with a jack hammer, jumping aside when it gave to avoid being buried alive. After the ball mill had

noisily ground the chunks to powder, a balling drum attendant would mix bentonite with the concentrate to form dense, black pellets, which were then burned until hard and shipped on a private railroad spur over the

Continental Divide to Geneva Iron Works in Utah.

The layoffs started in spring 1983, and the union agreed to some cuts in benefits. At 9 a.m. on Sept. 26, 1983,

[Continued on page 10]





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# WESTERN ROUNDUP

## A Utah parks bill is called a gimmick

"Nothing ever dies in southeast Utah," says Pete Perry, superintendent of Canyonlands National Park. What has re-emerged, thanks to Rep. Jim Hansen, R-Ut., is a controversial proposal now being drafted into a bill by the National Park Service.

Hansen announced at an impromptu press conference recently that the bill would pave some 45 miles of roads inside Canyonlands, pave the 66-mile Burr Trail, make grazing permanent in Capitol Reef National Park, and add Lavender and Davis Canyons to Canyonlands, ending once and for all any hope the Department of Energy has for making that area the site of a high-level nuclear waste dump.

At first, Hansen was reportedly optimistic that environmental groups would support his proposal, which was designed to help tourism in a severely depressed southeast Utah. Unemployment is as high as 24 percent. Conservationists, however, were quick to rip into the proposed bill.

Terri Martin of the National Parks and Conservation Association says protection for the canyons close to Canyonlands is "two years too late." Hansen failed to take a position when it counted, she says. Martin says the parks association does endorse expansion of Canyonlands to its rim-to-rim boundaries, which is a 200,000-acre expansion rather than Hansen's proposed 6,000, but not at the expense of three national parks.

"There's no trade-off for our support," she says. Hansen's bill is a "gimmick" to get defeated projects resurrected.

One paving proposal revived by Hansen which seemed to die in 1977 is paving the San Juan Loop Road. It would connect Blanding by paved road to the overlook of the Green and Colorado rivers in Canyonlands National Park. Superintendent Perry says San Juan County Commissioner Cal Black, a powerful force in Utah, pushed hard for the paving when a draft management plan for the park was discussed. But the loop was overwhelmingly opposed back then by 985 out of some 1,000 comments.

"It would be a whole change in the visitor experience," Perry says.

Perry is also not enthusiastic about paving the five-mile jeep road that leads from Canyonlands' Big Spring Canyon to the confluence overlook. The road cuts through the Needles backcountry and would do environmental damage, he says.

Hansen's third controversial road paving proposal is for the Burr Trail, which Utah legislators have twice refused to fund. A \$600,000 engineering study kept the project alive during the last legislative session.

The road from the town of Boulder to Lake Powell's Bullfrog Basin would be a boon to tourism, Hansen has said. Martin says the paving would bypass the towns of Torrey and Hanksville, which depend on tourists, and primarily benefit the marina concessioner, Del. E. Webb Corp. All three road proposals would cost as much as \$100 million, Martin adds, although Hansen disputes that figure as inflated.

Hansen's proposal to retain grazing in Capitol Reef Park forever

has also drawn fire, particularly since Hansen was the author two years ago of a bill which authorized a 10-year study of grazing impacts by the National Academy of Sciences. Researchers would then make recommendations. Only two of eight studies have been done because of budget cutbacks. Martin charges that anyone can see that overgrazing is a problem in parts of Capitol Reef. "You don't make that permanent," she says.

To Martin, Dick Carter, coordinator of the Utah Wilderness Association, and Rob Smith, Sierra Club representative, Hansen's inclusion of Lavender and Davis Canyons in the proposed bill is clearly a smokescreen for "paving and cows."

Carter says the smokescreen won't work. "Nobody will buy it." Martin adds that few legislators will vote for a bill which removes a potential nuclear waste repository from further consideration by the DOE. "This is a special interest bill," she says.

Carter adds, "We shouldn't have ever given him the issue." When the Utah press covered Hansen's an-



Terri Martin

nouncement of the bill, Carter says, one headline was: "Hansen erases dump site." Conservation groups should have taken credit, he says, when DOE bumped both canyons from the three top sites left in the running for the nation's first high-level nuclear waste repository.

--Betsy Marston



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## Dear friends,

In the world of inappropriate coincidences, a California reader points out: "Do you realize that HCN stands for the most potent poison known to science -- cyanide or hydrocyanic acid. What an awesome acronym for a defender of the environment."

A Colorado reader was not pleased with Chip Rawlin's article on bad dogs: "It's possible I might Blam my HCN subscription..."

Intern Lynda Alfred corrects last issue's Roundup on the Superfund. There are 134 sites in the construction phase; not 39. Lynda is now an ex-intern, although she's still in the neighborhood, if you define the neighborhood as the surrounding 100 miles. She has gone on to Amory and Hunter Lovins's Rocky Mountain Institute in Old Snowmass. Taking her place is Lisa McKhann (that's the way the McKhanns spell it), a senior at Prescott College in Arizona, whose three-month internship is part of her requirements for graduation.

Our apologies to Albuquerque photographer Brian Walski. We found his front page photo credit on the light box the day after we sent the newspaper on its bus trip to Gunnison to be printed.

Poems usually speak for themselves, so all we will tell you about Chip Rawlin's poem in the center-spread (beautifully illustrated by Sylvia Long) is that he tells us it is based on ancient Indian symbols.

Ex-intern (now seasonal staff) Bruce Farling, who ran up HCN's phone bill last month seeking sources who could talk about the expanding military presence in Nevada, had his problems digging up Defense Department sources willing to address the issue. Finally, he has found his source. A Navy spokesman from Washington, D.C., called March 11 to ask why Bruce hadn't included its side of the story. So Bruce told about military people not being in when he telephoned them and not returning his calls. He could have told her, but he didn't, about his inquiries to Nellis Air

Force Base being forwarded to Washington, D.C., so that they could send back terse yeses and noes two weeks later.

This issue continues the Boom and Bust series we started a month ago. The boom issue, you remember, centered on Exxon's natural gas project in southwest Wyoming. The bust issues -- we're not sure how long the series will be -- will range more widely. The bust treated here is one the paper is living with. Although its center is U.S. Steel's huge Geneva steel mill near Salt Lake City, two mines connected to the mill are in Lander, Wyoming, which is HCN's hometown, and Paonia, Colorado, which is the paper's present home.

After 22 years, the Lander area mine no longer feeds iron ore to the mill -- it was shut down over a year ago. In this issue, former HCN staffer Marjane Ambler describes both what has happened to her town in the last year, and uses her interviews to describe what mining can do to miners, schools and community.

In Paonia, a mine which supplies Geneva with coking coal is still in operation. But as readers of the story about Geneva will learn, the odds are that both Paonia and Provo, the home of the Geneva mill, will soon join Lander.

On deck in the dismal batters circle are stories about the bust in the Montana copper industry, the New Mexico and Wyoming uranium industry, the Idaho logging industry and the Colorado oil shale industry. Also coming, we hope, are overviews which put the Rocky Mountain version of the Rust Bowl collapse into perspective.

Luckily, we don't have to create that perspective now. If we did, we would write about the rural Rockies as a Mexican village, in which all the menfolk and many of the womenfolk are off in the metropolitan areas so that they can earn enough to keep the homeplace together.

--the staff



## Coal taxes dominate Montana Legislature

As the 1985 Montana legislative session rolls past the halfway mark, lawmakers are getting down to brass tacks on some familiar issues. Before adjournment in late April, bills involving coal, water, hazardous materials and money promise to be the focus of debate.

Gov. Ted Schwinden's coal tax bill is creating the session's biggest shootout. It proposes to change the state's popular severance tax on coal producers by instituting a 33 percent rebate on new production contracts signed within a trial 2½ year period. As it stands now, the tax levies a straight 30 percent fee on all coal production. The governor's proposal would reduce tax revenues on new production by a third.

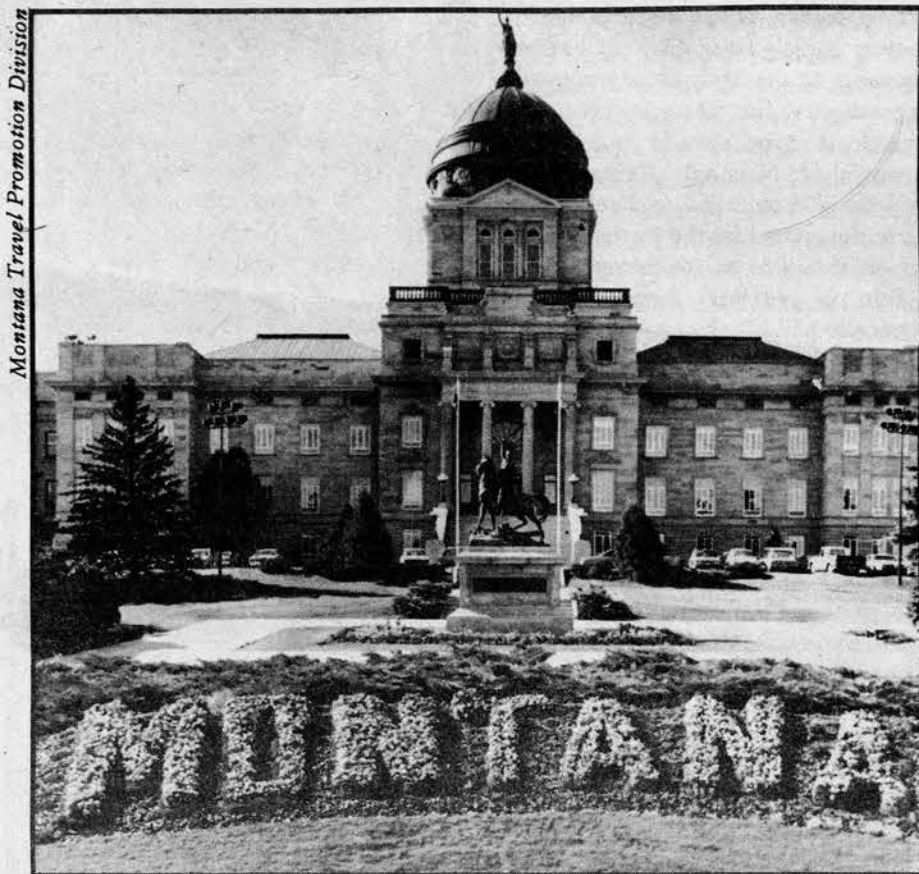
Schwinden's supporters say the measure will determine the validity of coal industry claims that the tax stifles production and economic growth in Montana. The governor says 2½ years provides enough time to study market responses to the rebate. If production doesn't improve, he says, the state can then go back to the old rate.

Critics such as the Northern Plains Resource Council, a public interest group started by coal country ranchers, say the bill opens the door for a permanent reduction in the severance tax. They claim the coal industry will manipulate production to make it look like the rebate works.

Montana Attorney General Mike Greely also opposes the proposal. He says the bill is ill advised because it is based on erroneous assumptions of the relationship between coal production and the state's economy. Montana Congressman Pat Williams agrees with Greely. He says the rollback will give congressional coal industry supporters more ammunition in their efforts to permanently lower Montana's severance tax, which is the highest of its kind in the nation. It has survived several attempts at being declared unconstitutional.

What once appeared to be a two-way battle between Schwinden and proponents of the old tax has now taken a new twist. Originally introduced in the Montana House by Joe Quilici, D-Butte, the Schwinden bill emerged from the Taxation Committee with amendments even more favorable to coal producers. Coalmen succeeded in changing the bill so that the rebate would become permanent for the life of all new contracts. The governor says the industry "torpedoed" his plans to help them out. The next six weeks will show if the severance tax can survive the legislative crossfire.

Another hotly contested issue is stream access, as lawmakers are being pushed into opposing corners by sportsmen and landowners. Legislators are attempting to fine tune the 1984 state Supreme Court ruling granting the public recreational access to rivers. The House has passed a bipartisan measure, sponsored by Bob Ream, D-Missoula, and Bob Marks, R-Clancy, which classifies streams by size and outlines the appropriate uses for each. The bill specifies portage rights for boaters, addresses landowner liability and defines the high-water mark. However, hunters disagree with landowners over the bill's restrictions on big-game hunting on streams. The Senate has passed two lesser bills and action melding the proposals together is expected soon.



Montana capitol

A comprehensive water policy package is also pending legislative approval. Introduced by Dennis Iverson, R-Whitlash, the bill addresses water marketing strategies for Montana, eliminates the ban on coal slurry lines and places major pipelines under the Montana Facility Siting Act.

The result of a year-long study by the Select Committee on Water Marketing, the bill is seen by legislators, environmentalists and water users as one of the most important of the session. Don Reed of the Montana Environmental Information Center says he is especially pleased with the bill's pipeline provision. He says it will mean all pipelines over 30 miles in length and 17 inches in diameter will be subject to full environmental review. The energy industry is expected to oppose Iverson's bill when it comes to a vote.

There also promises to be activity on regulation of hazardous materials in the coming weeks. Missoula's Bob Ream is pushing a state Superfund bill to cover cleanup of hazardous wastes not covered by the EPA. His bill is one of a number addressing liability and funding for cleanup programs.

Thanks to Dorothy Eck, D-Bozeman, a chemical disclosure bill passed the Senate unanimously. It establishes the rights of workers and communities to be informed if specified toxic chemicals are present in the workplace. MEIC's Reed says the measure will have rough sailing in the House this month.

In light of the state budget

squeeze, the governor and Legislature are looking for new sources of revenue for pet projects. The Resource Indemnity Tax is being targeted by both. It generates money from taxes on resource extraction industries such as mining; the fund is then used to cover the cost of reclamation and other "indemnifying" actions. Gov. Schwinden proposes using the tax for his Natural Resource Legacy Fund, which includes environmental mitigation. However, his legislation to accomplish this could also make the fund available for other state programs which face budget shortfalls. Critics say Schwinden's bill does not specify limits on where the money can be used.

On another money matter, some legislators have renewed the debate on where coal severance money should be spent. Led by Rep. Jack Ramirez, R-Billings, they propose using the money for highway, public building and water and sewer system repair.

Environmentalists have won one skirmish but are losing another involving energy. Legislation exempting oil and gas industry permits from environmental impact review was killed in the Senate. However, H-694, a bill opposed by environmentalists, is still alive. It would lower the rate utilities are mandated to pay for power purchased from small-scale hydro. Critics say it discourages investment in alternative energy sources and favors large, centralized power plants, such as the Colstrip project.

--Bruce Farling

## HOTLINE

### Big-gun hunting

In Colorado, three Fort Carson soldiers were jailed this winter for turning war exercises into a hunting spree. They shot at least three deer with a .50-caliber machine gun mounted on an armored personnel carrier. Accompanied by three other soldiers who were charged with misdemeanors, the six men face up to \$4,900 in fines. The 35 charges against them range from felonies for willful destruction of wildlife and tampering with physical evidence, to misdemeanors for using a motor vehicle, searchlight and unlawful weapon in taking wildlife.

### Park Service cuts opposed



The National Park Service will work with a budget reduced by 25 percent if the Reagan administration's 1986 proposal is approved. The cuts, which would reduce agency funding by \$239 million, were challenged by the National Parks and Conservation Association before a House subcommittee. Hardest hit would be the Park Service's fund to acquire new parkland, which the administration wants to cut to \$11 million from its budget of \$100 million last year. The administration would also eliminate 250 full-time positions and all funding for park roads, the Historic Preservation Fund and the Urban Parks Program.

### Oil wells near Glacier draw fire

Two oil companies have encountered strong opposition to their plans to drill exploratory gas and oil wells along the borders of Glacier National Park. Five groups and four individuals, including National Wildlife Federation attorney Tom France and the Blackfeet Tribe, have appealed the Bureau of Land Management's permit for American Petrofina's 13,500-foot well 2½ miles south of Glacier. They are concerned about the well's impact on the grizzly bear population and endangered gray wolf. Before that appeal was filed, the state of Montana was sued for approving a CENEX test well adjacent to Glacier's western edge south of Polebridge. The North Fork Preservation Association says a full environmental impact statement is needed, not just a preliminary review.

## BARBS

*You can't have too many verbs in a language.*

Orrin Hatch, a U.S. Senator from Utah, recently told the *New York Times*: "I'm tired of seeing the dumbing down of textbooks and schools to ignore all reference to religion and patriotic values."

*Your basic Act-of-God type accident.*

A Marrero, Louisiana, driver crashed into a Popeye fast food fried chicken restaurant, setting off an explosion which blew up the building.

*Horse Puckey.*

That's what Rep. Dick Cheney, R-Wy., called a recent rating of Casper as one of the nation's 10 worst places to live. "Any outfit that would rate Pittsburgh number one has their head up their fanny," he said. "You can quote me on that."

*Some people will go to any lengths to show their reverence for life.*

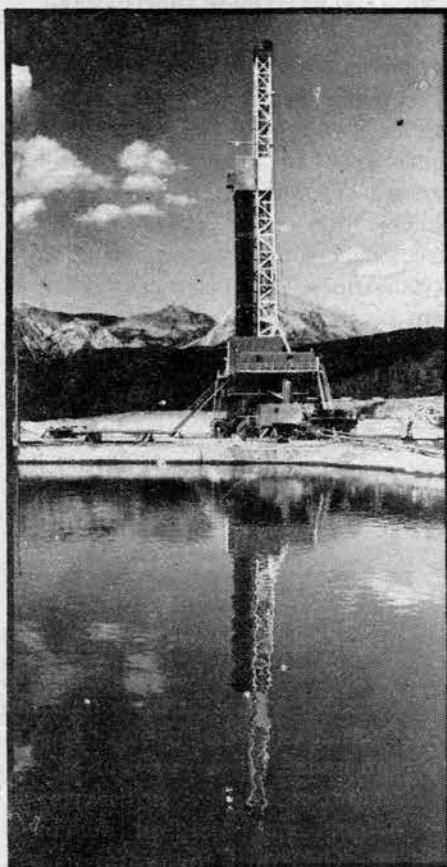
A bullet was fired into the apartment of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun in late February. The justice has received numerous threats since writing the 1973 decision legalizing abortion.



## HOTLINE

## Utahns try to bury Canyonlands dump

## Leasing is under fire



Drill rig in the Bridger-Teton

The Sierra Club may officially protest the Bureau of Land Management's plan to re-issue 31 oil and gas leases just outside Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. Phil Hocker, Sierra Club's national treasurer and a Jackson resident, charges that the leases are in critical grizzly bear habitat and on an elk migration route. A local rancher, Harold Turner, says that leasing along the park border and in roadless areas of the Bridger-Teton National Forest would also compromise the area's scenic value. But a national forest minerals specialist, Al Reuter, says that environmental stipulations in the leases will protect wildlife and visually sensitive areas. In any case, 95 percent of the lease lands are never drilled anyway, he adds. In the next few months, 350 more leases are expected to be issued on the Bridger-Teton and the drilling controversy has led to an extension of the public comment period. (See this issue's Bulletin Board for details.)

## Warheads encounter protesters

Protestors held a silent vigil recently along the route of a train carrying nuclear warheads. The demonstrators said the train from the Pantex nuclear armament plant in Amarillo, Texas, carried 180 nuclear warheads bound for a submarine base in Bangor, Washington. Police carried away protestors in Sheridan, Wyoming, who knelt on the tracks as the trains approached. Only a few arrests were made as residents of Kansas, Nebraska, and elsewhere in Wyoming also expressed their opposition to the warheads traveling through their states. Two anti-MX groups prayed beside the tracks in Cheyenne, although the train had been rerouted around Wyoming's capital. Members of anti-abortion groups joined the anti-nuke protesters there, praying for both "peace in the womb and in the world." Last year, 100 people gathered along the tracks as the train passed through Cheyenne. The orange and green train met massive opposition last spring and no longer travels through Colorado.

The Department of Energy ran into stiff opposition at its recent public meeting in Salt Lake City to gather comments on the draft environmental assessments for the Davis and Lavender Canyon sites a mile from Canyonlands National Park. Utah residents said neither was "suitable" as a burial ground for the nation's first high-level nuclear waste dump.

But at earlier hearings in Monticello and Moab, towns close to the proposed sites, some residents said they were willing to allow four-to-five-year site characterization studies, which involve sinking a deep shaft to underlying rock layers. They said the process would bring jobs and investment to depressed communities.

The one favorable comment at Salt Lake came from Cordell Lundahl of Logan, who said: "I'm a square peg in this hearing today. I'm 100 percent for this."

His reasons included "...to keep our people employed. If there hadn't been a nuclear bomb, maybe some of these people testifying today wouldn't be here because their parents would have been killed in that war."

"We're becoming pantywaists," Lundahl added. "We're becoming a people who are not willing to put forth the kind of effort that it takes to progress in this world."

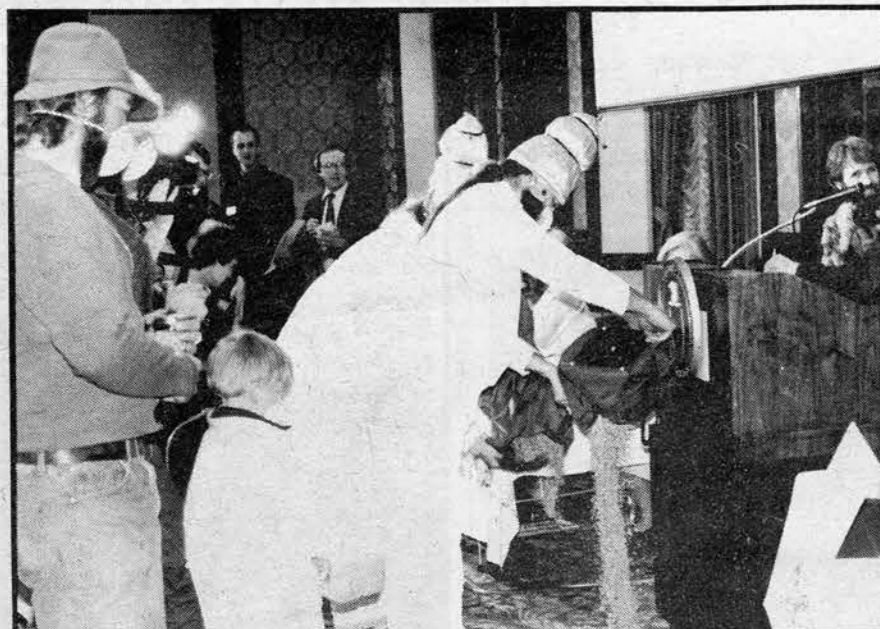
By contrast, lead witness Norman Bangerter, Utah's newly-elected Republican governor, echoed former governor Scott Matheson's objection to the DOE's "negative logic" in the siting process. Said Bangerter, "DOE has made primary decisions about the suitability of Davis Canyon on the basis of a single borehole three miles away from the closest proposed site."

The issue is whether the Davis Canyon site, designated by the DOE as one of five suitable sites, but not one of those scheduled for characterization, should be completely dropped from consideration. The three top sites are Yucca Mountain on the Nevada Atomic Test Site; Deaf Smith County, Texas; and Hanford, Washington. Utah residents voiced fears that political maneuvering may remove one of these top sites and put the Davis Canyon location up for the extensive blasting, drilling and construction activity of characterization.

The crowd in the Hotel Utah's Grand Ballroom wore everything from tailored fashions to thrift-store woolies. Next door was a convention of anesthesiologists and the plush Empire Room hosted a wedding reception. At a head table backed by rich draperies, the DOE-appointed panel looked like a Dutch Masters cigar box, and made about as many comments, asking for occasional and brief clarification.

The atmosphere of oppressive politeness was broken by the appearance of the Resident Shaman of Earth First! and his entourage, clad in beehive headdresses. They delivered, and dumped, a load of "nuclear waste" on the panel. (See Reporter's Notebook).

Representatives of several organizations read prepared statements, with Rich Warnick of the Utah Wilderness Association delivering a rapid-fire account of why Utahns "cannot accept" the DOE designation. Terri Martin of the National Parks and Conservation Association called the DOE's conclusions "outrageous, absurd and completely unsupported."



Earth First!ers dumping "nuclear waste" at DOE hearing

Ruth Frear, of the Utah Sierra Club, quietly analyzed the "serious deficiencies in the site selection process." DOE found no evidence of significant impacts, said Frear, "because DOE has not developed any evidence at all."

A class of sixth-graders included articulate Casey Minix, a "sixth-grade student and citizen of Utah," who chided DOE for not doing its "homework."

Jeffrey Floor, of Salt Lake City, spoke of "the lyrical, adaptive harmonies of desert biology" and castigated the DOE for "lacking the ability to deal with any but the most tangible factors," while lawyer Bruce Plenk criticized the draft EA -- "the very premise is flawed" and it "misspells Edward Abbey's name" -- drawing a laugh from the crowd.

Striking were the quiet men in three-piece suits who disclaimed any tinge of environmental radicalism but strongly opposed the DOE conclusions. Terry Tippetts, an electrical engineer, said he would consider an oil well a "reasonable use" of the sites, while Mike Kirshner described law school, stress and a breaking marriage leading to his healing journey to Canyonlands.

Craig Rayle, a self-admitted bureaucrat lately on Utah Gov. Matheson's Nuclear Waste staff, described his odyssey from "chasing snakes" as a teenager, through jobs as a uranium miner, boatman and wilderness ranger near Moab, Utah, to the present. "I love my automobile, word processor and three-piece suit. I also treasure our National Park system." He described the hearing process as being "bored into submission."

The panel, moderated by non-DOE employee Susan Wiltshire of Massachusetts, displayed restraint and equanimity in the face of sustained criticism, broken only by the Earth First! visit. It included Gerald Parker, from the DOE Washington office, evidently a public relations person, and Theodore Taylor of the DOE Salt Repository Project, technical consultant. Monticello, Utah, resident Hardy Redd, whose brother Robert owns the Dugout Ranch near Canyonlands Park, was identified as representing "special Utah concerns."

Technical comments, which started pencils scratching at the head table, were administered by several speakers. Dan McGraw, a PhD candidate in physics at the University of Utah, cited numerous errors in the DOE assumptions on everything from

waste canister design to the underlying geology of the sites. Steve Jensen, an industrial relations student, read an article by Dr. Charles Hunt, past director of the American Geological Institute, which termed the waste storage problem "appalling" and dismembered the DOE's approach to it.

Karin Hilding termed the uncertainties of dry storage in geological repositories "very high" and cited technical literature that had the panel's pencils flying again. Hilding, a student at Utah State University, traded broadsides with panel member Hardy Redd and San Juan County Commissioner Calvin Black -- perhaps the model for *The Monkeywrench Gang's* infamous comic Bishop Love.

Silence descended in the hearing room as Andy Lewis, a Navajo from the Torreon, New Mexico, area and an art student at Utah State, haltingly read a description of the collapse of an earthen dam which released radioactive mine wastes into the Rio Puerco in 1979, with "water, feed and livestock" contaminated. He described the death of sheep and the health problems of Navajos following the spill as reasons to doubt the sincerity of government promises.

"Neither government nor industry have taken responsibility for the accident and its effect on the lives of Native Americans." He said, "the American people are getting ahead of themselves," and presented the panel with a drawing of a waste storage plant in Canyonlands and a sandstone plaque, which he etched with the figure of a deity from the Newspaper Rock petroglyphs near the proposed waste sites.

If the purpose of the DOE hearing in Salt Lake City was, as presiding officer Gerald Parker said, "to receive your comments" and "to ensure maximum public participation," what the department received was more in the nature of a stern admonition to take the concern of Utahns seriously.

--C.L. Rawlins

## BARBS

Who says romance is dead?

Under the heading, WORN TEN TIMES, an ad in the Delta County, Colorado, *High Country Shopper* reads: "Set of wedding rings, Valued at over \$3,000. Will sell for half or will trade for a 4-horse trailer... or something I can use... No checks please."



## Elk are loving a national park to death

Elk are doing all too well in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park. The more than 4,000 that summer there and up to 2,500 that linger during winter far exceed the park's carrying capacity.

Visitors can't miss seeing mature aspen with scarred trunks grazed by elk, while the remaining live, young trees often exhibit "bushing" after new branches have been devoured by elk. Some aspen also show a leaf mold disease that spreads when spores are blown into the wounds of tree trunks.

Because the aspen ecosystem is in trouble, elk management policy is about to change. The question is: in which direction.

The policy in effect now had two goals when it was adopted in 1968: to provide better hunting outside the park and to re-establish elk at lower elevations where they were before the state was settled.

The policy has meant that elk are allowed to increase until pressure on summer range causes browse scarcity during the winter. That forces elk to move to the park's lower valleys and outside park boundaries to find winter food.

The elk migrate during hunting season, which increases the harvest for hunters. Nevertheless, the population has increased steadily both in and around the park.

The two goals have been met for perhaps a decade, says Charles Olmsted, an environmental studies professor at the University of Northern Colorado. Olmsted studied park elk in the late 1970s.

"I'm convinced that the elk will wipe out the aspen -- plus the plant and animal species dependent on them -- unless new management policies are adopted," he says. Back in 1968, he adds, there were only about 700 elk in the park.

The group that wants to change elk policy is a council whose members come from the state Division of Wildlife, National Park Service and Forest Service. DOW's representative to the Rocky Mountain Cooperative Wildlife Management Council is Walt Graul, who says, "We all share a concern that we have too many elk."



Aspen bark damaged by elk.

Graul says that adding hunting days and even an extra season have helped, "but didn't put a lid on the overpopulation problem." Hunting around the town of Estes Park can't be further expanded, he says, because of the high density human population.

Part of the elk overpopulation problem within the park has been caused by people outside. Since 1968, rapid development around the park has included subdivisions, more roads, shopping areas and resorts where once the elk found winter range. Each winter there are frequent complaints about elk eating aspen and rose bushes.

Last year park officials recommended the reintroduction of wolves, which are natural predators of elk. The outcry from ranchers and others living near park boundaries discouraged park officials from trying out the idea. Graul says the DOW is opposed to both wolf and grizzly bear reintroduction because both animals need a lot of territory and there would be inevitable "people-predator interactions."

Other proposals to reduce the elk herd range from translocation and harassing them to surrounding areas,

to allowing park rangers to shoot elk. All have problems. Park biologist David Stevens says elk used to be rounded up in pens and shipped elsewhere before 1968, but that the solution is expensive. Graul adds that "even if we could afford to transplant them, I can't imagine where we could put elk right now." The DOW says all of Colorado's elk habitat is full, which means another state would have to pay for shipping the elk.

Harassing elk out of the park by snowmobiles or helicopters faces a similar obstacle: there's nowhere to go. And as for rangers shooting elk, humane groups oppose the idea and in any case, the harvest would have to be large to make a difference. Hunting is not allowed in the Rocky Mountain National Park.

A more positive approach has come from some members of the Colorado Audubon Council, a coalition of Audubon chapters, who want Larimer County commissioners to limit development along elk migration routes and in preferred winter habitat.

Graul of the DOW says the management council is now in a "total brainstorming approach" to collect as many ideas as possible. Each of the three agencies plans to mail questionnaires this month to people and groups on their mailing lists, and in April, workshops will be held for anyone interested. The first workshop is set for April 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Estes Park Municipal Building on Elkhorn Ave.; the second is on April 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the Forest Service building at 240 W. Prospect, Fort Collins. Written suggestions can be addressed to council members:

Walt Graul, Manager NE Region  
Colorado Division of Wildlife  
317 West Prospect  
Fort Collins, CO 80526;

David Stevens, Biologist  
Rocky Mountain National Park  
Estes Park, CO 80517; or

Supervisor  
Roosevelt National Forest  
310 South Howes  
Fort Collins, CO 80521.

--Gretchen Cutts

## HOTLINE

### Restricting lead shot



After reviewing a petition from the National Wildlife Federation to protect bald eagles from lead poisoning, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has decided to increase areas where hunters cannot use lead shot. The program, which was started to save waterfowl from eating spent lead shot along with seeds, will expand to areas with relatively high numbers of bald eagles. The eagles sometimes feed on sick waterfowl in heavily hunted areas, and so risk consuming the shot within the birds. Fish and Wildlife has set aside 30 counties in six midwestern states for steel shot hunting, including all South Dakota counties along the Missouri River; Bingham and Jefferson Counties, Idaho; Box Elder County, Utah; and Weld County, Colorado, will be studied for possible additions as steel shot areas.

### Falcons rebound



Peregrine falcons are on the rebound in the Rockies. Although pesticide use and a drier climate in the 1950s and '60s reduced the falcon population to just 10 percent of its historical numbers, aggressive reintroduction programs are working. Fish and wildlife departments and the non-profit Peregrine Fund released 120 of the swift raptors in five western states in 1984. The birds were obtained from the Fund's active breeding program, the cornerstone for the national effort to revive peregrine populations. This year the program was responsible for creating the only active nesting site in Montana and for the return of falcons to a site that had gone unused in Yellowstone National Park for 10 years.

### EPA plugs leaks

As of April 10, the Environmental Protection Agency will require large uranium mines to seal off unused areas to limit radiation leaks. The mines emit radon, a radioactive gas that increases the chance of getting lung cancer. The EPA's regulation would apply only to mines producing over 10,000 tons of uranium a year. There are less than 17 working uranium mines today, and all are in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. In 1979, there were 300 working mines in the country.

## REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

### Take that! you scum

The atmosphere of decorum in the Hotel Utah's Grand Ballroom was so pronounced that mention of a landscape's "beauty" or any intangible quality not immediately translatable into a datum seemed faintly goofy.

The response of the DOE-appointed panel to statements proved early that their main interest was in any legal, political or technical information which conflicted with the Draft EA document. Aesthetics were beside the point.

The proceedings were hushed, oppressively I thought, considering the issue: the drilling, blasting, roadbuilding, floodlighting and contamination of the red sandstone heart of the Colorado Plateau. That one ought to be polite until the moment when the shooting begins is one model for living, but politeness doesn't always incorporate the range of an issue.

Enter Earth First! in white coveralls, filter masks and beehive hats of gold satin. Restrained consternation at the head table as the Resident Shaman delivers verbal digs in the ribs, followed by stinging backhands:

This gift is intended to convey a clear signal to you and the nuclear-energy junkies and land-raping scum that covet Canyonlands that there are those of us, more than you imagine, totally committed to stopping the dumping of this deadly, plutonium poison.

The somewhat unequivocal evaluation of DOE intentions was accented by the dumping of "nuclear waste," actually a garbage bag of shiny vermiculite. Someone cracked amid the scramble: I heard a single *goddammit!*

With a hearty cry of Earth First!,

the heroes (or villains) exited the room, chanting, as did the protestors who linked hands around the Pentagon, "Out, demons, out! Out, demons, out! Out, demons, out!"

I can't help wonder what, if anything, went into the official record about the interlude of guerrilla theatre provided by Earth First! I noticed more smiles than grimaces in the crowd and testimony began to be acknowledged by applause. The tide had turned and the panel seemed less comfortable than the crowd. Feelings had gotten loose in the room.

What had been yet another public hearing had been elevated (or degraded) into an event with the emotion that accompanies the issue, the passion that starts fistfights in Moab and Monticello.

I think Edward Abbey would have liked it, and Henry Thoreau. I know I did. Whether the hearings have any part in influencing federal policy, or instead are calculated to provide a cathartic experience for the public, Earth First! was a welcome, if weird, addition.

--C.L. Rawlins





by Sarah Gorin Jones

According to most post-session analyses, Wyoming's legislators broke little new ground in their 38 days of effort. Wyoming House Speaker Jack Sidi, R-Casper, summed it up with: "I really don't see too much pioneering, too many revolutionary ideas being placed into the law books."

But conservation lobbyists were nonetheless kept busy trying to prevent changes they opposed in Wyoming's water laws, severance tax rates and reclamation statutes. The major conservation issue was instream flow.

Wyoming law requires that when an initiative petition qualifies for the ballot, the Legislature must first be given a chance to enact legislation "substantially the same" as the initiative. The Wyoming Wildlife Federation and its allies had handed this year's Legislature that challenge at the end of 1984 by qualifying an instream flow petition for the first time in the state's history.

Instream flow advocates chose the initiative route because previous Legislatures failed to pass an instream flow law. Agricultural interests vigorously oppose instream flow, and are heavily represented in the Legislature, particularly in the House.

A Republican senator and oilman from Casper, Tom Stroock, introduced the initiative bill in the Senate this year, but held it back awaiting action by the House. This came in the form of a bill tying instream flow solely to construction of water storage projects, while the instream flow initiative allows instream flow to be maintained from reservoirs, appropriation of direct flows, or conversion of existing rights acquired by transfer or gift.

The House approved the storage bill 40-24, and sent it to the Senate, where the fun began. The storage bill skimmed through the Senate Agriculture Committee 3-2, but when it hit the Senate floor, Sen. Stroock substituted his bill -- the initiative -- for the storage bill on a 17-12 vote, and sent it back to the House.

Not surprisingly, the House refused to concur, and a conference committee report favored by the House died in the Senate. So, unless the Legislature acts in its February 1986 budget session, the initiative will be on the November 1986 general election ballot.

The instream flow issue led to renewed attention to Wyoming's very difficult initiative process. In an attempt to reform it, two bills were introduced: one to set a constitutional amendment to reduce the number of signatures needed from 15 percent of those who voted in the last general election down to 10 percent, and one to put a limit on how long a petition can circulate. Those who opposed the initiative process and instream flow helped kill the signature reduction, but an 18-month time limit was passed.

Also in the realm of water, the 1985 Legislature showed that Gov. Ed

## The Wyoming Legislature heads for home after a low-key 38-day effort

Herschler's \$600 million water program for Wyoming, which he proposed in 1981, is alive. There had been complaints that the program was generating paper rather than dams. But in this session the legislators approved two municipal projects. They authorized \$45 million for the Deer Creek project near Glenrock, 20 miles from Casper, and \$20 million for the Sulphur Springs Reservoir, near Evanston. As projects begin to emerge from the pipeline, it appears that the Legislature is beginning to scrutinize the Governor's program more closely.

Severance taxes, a perennial legislative favorite, also received attention. The initial focus was on the 2 percent coal impact tax, scheduled to expire when the account reaches \$160 million some time in 1986. Money in the account is loaned or granted by the state Farm Loan Board for municipal projects in cities and towns affected by coal development -- an area the board has defined as the entire state.

Extension of the tax pitted the Wyoming Association of Municipalities against the coal companies. The association argued that its members still need impact money; the coal companies argued they had done their share and "a deal is a deal."

Dissatisfaction with administration of the funds even among legislators who favor the tax made a win for the cities unlikely. The Legislature tried to pacify the municipalities by passing a law trading off the coal impact tax for a different distribution of federal mineral royalties. Legislators justified the trade-off by assuming that federal mineral royalties to Wyoming will rise as a result of renegotiations of federal coal and other mineral leases. But the Reagan administration wants to reduce the states' share of federal royalties, and the lease renegotiations may not take place.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, a bill was introduced to impose a 6 percent severance tax on carbon dioxide, which will be produced in large quantities from natural gas fields in the Overthrust Belt. This bill was remarkable not only for its sponsorship -- Sen. Stroock, the oilman, and Rep. Jim Barlow, R-Casper, an oil and gas exploration geologist -- but also for its companion bill. It proposed to lift the 6 percent severance tax on CO<sub>2</sub> used within the state to revitalize old oil fields.

Both bills made it through the House, but fared less well in the Senate Mines, Minerals, and Economic Development Committee. That committee went with the proposed 6 percent tax, but killed its in-state companion bill. Because of technical amendments made by the Senate, the surviving bill had to return to the House. And the House, despite its earlier approval, refused concurrence and the bill died in conference.

That doesn't mean Wyoming won't levy a severance tax on CO<sub>2</sub>. Wyoming Gov. Ed Herschler believes existing law gives the state the power to levy a 6 percent tax on CO<sub>2</sub> as a "natural gas." The issue will likely be settled in court when Exxon in 1987 begins to pipe CO<sub>2</sub> from its Riley

Ridge Overthrust Belt field (HCN, 2/18/85) to declining oil fields in Colorado, Wyoming and possibly North Dakota.

Exxon played a curious role in the CO<sub>2</sub> debate. When the 6 percent bill was first considered in the House Mines and Minerals Committee, it stayed neutral. But on the House floor, one of the vociferous opponents of the bill was April Brimmer Kunz, R-Cheyenne, whose husband, Brent Kunz, is an attorney representing Exxon. Rep. Kunz did not declare a conflict of interest and she voted against the bill. Brent Kunz was frequently observed talking with legislators around the Capitol, but was registered as a lobbyist for Mobil.

After the bill passed the House and went to the Senate, Exxon and Chevron, a buyer of the CO<sub>2</sub>, lobbied all-out against the tax. With both the bill's sponsors associated with independents in the oil business, it was a case of Big Oil versus everyone else. The lobbyists for the Petroleum Association of Wyoming, caught in the middle, urged legislators "to consider the effect of a tax on producers and consumers."

The Petroleum Association played a more aggressive role in the passage of two bills providing severance tax breaks to the oil and gas industry. The first reduced the standard 6 percent tax on oil and gas to 2 percent in the first two years of production from wildcat wells drilled before 1988. The bill's proponents described it as a way to promote economic development -- a theme heard in connection with many bills during the session.

It is not clear that the incentive is needed. Despite higher drilling costs, the state led the Rocky Mountain region in wildcat completions in 1984; similar results are expected in 1985. Democrats and moderate Republicans opposed the reduction, and Gov. Ed Herschler, D, vetoed the bill before the session was over, almost daring an override attempt. The House took the dare, and failed.

The ultimate effort by a single company to obtain special interest legislation was carried out by Pathfinder Mines, a uranium firm operating in the Gas Hills area between Casper and Riverton. Pathfinder wanted a special section written into Wyoming's Environmental Quality Act to allow them to postpone reclamation of mined properties if they so chose.

To get support from other mining companies, Pathfinder surrounded the language it wanted with provisos about interim mine stabilization -- a procedure to allow non-coal mines with market problems to stop mining and postpone reclamation until market conditions improved.

Opponents argued that the law was not needed. The 1983 Legislature had passed a law directing the Department of Environmental Quality to establish regulations governing interim mine stabilization during depressed market conditions, and 10 uranium operations have suspended operations under these regulations. The difference between the 1983 law and the 1985

proposal is that the latter would have put the regulations into the statute (in weaker form) and included the Pathfinder provisions.

Pathfinder got its language through the House Mines and Minerals Committee. But by the time it got to the House floor, Mines committee chairman Rep. Nyla Murphy, R-Casper, had determined that Pathfinder's language would give it complete discretion over the timing of their reclamation. She led the floor fight to remove the two Pathfinder provisions from the bill. Both votes tied, and it fell to Rep. Scotty Ratliff, D-Riverton, from the county where Pathfinder's mines are located, to break the ties. He did so in Murphy's favor both times, and the House sent the bill to the Senate without Pathfinder.

The company then convinced the Senate to accept its language as part of the bill it passed. By this time, the close votes and the technical nature of the issue had everyone confused. Concerted lobbying by conservationists and industry lobbyists from other companies, which feared Pathfinder's amendment would lead to a veto by Herschler, prevented House concurrence in the Senate version. The conference committee then deleted the Pathfinder amendment, and the bill passed. Conservation lobbyists were relieved that only a crummy bill had passed instead of a truly awful bill.

The latest twist in the Pathfinder saga came after the session had ended: a Herschler veto. The veto surprised everyone; the Legislature thought it had indications from the governor that the bill would be acceptable without the Pathfinder language. The Legislature will have a chance to override vetoed bills if it chooses to come back into session.

The Pathfinder incident resulted in an amusing exchange, thanks to Pathfinder's hot-tempered lobbyist, John Atkins. The three conservation groups represented at the Legislature -- the Wyoming Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Wyoming Outdoor Council and the Powder River Basin Resource Council -- held a press conference the last week of the session to announce that they would disclose their lobbying expenses, and to challenge other lobbyists to do the same.

Atkins, one of the first industry lobbyists questioned by a reporter after the press conference, took the offensive. He accused the conservation groups of having "secret budgets and secret organizations," and added: "They will probably disclose: 'Yeah, we live in a little commune on the edge of town. We only spent 15 cents to buy a coke one day.' But I don't know where their money comes from. It could come from the KGB."

□

Sarah Gorin Jones is a resident of Laramie, Wyoming. She attended the 1985 Wyoming Legislature, her third, as a lobbyist for the Wyoming Chapter of the Sierra Club. This article was paid for by the High Country News Research Fund.



# BULLETIN BOARD

## WINTER SEMINAR

The Rocky Mountain Nature Association is sponsoring ski and snowshoe excursions this month into Rocky Mountain National Park. The focus will be on winter astronomy, outdoor winter skills, snow shelters and winter ecology. The "Into Winter" program is scheduled for March 29-31 and will be led by Gary Laustsen at Meadow Mountain Ranch in Allenspark. The Association is also sponsoring 10 week-long field seminars during the summer and three August weekend sessions. For further information, contact: Superintendent, Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park, CO 80517 (303/586-2371).

## SALT LAKE STUDY

Predicting changes in water levels of Utah's Great Salt Lake is the focus of a three-day workshop March 26-28, sponsored by the University of Utah. Some 30 researchers will present papers about the lake's 20,000-year geologic history as well as the recent rapid rise. For more information call the University of Utah's Office of Conferences and Institutes at 801/581-7931.

## BLACK CANYON PLAN

Western Colorado's Black Canyon of the Gunnison Monument, which made national news last summer when a private landowner threatened to put a subdivision on its northern boundary (HCN, 6/25/84), now has a Draft Land Protection Plan. The document includes management guidelines as well as plans for acquiring the north rim private land. For a copy of the draft plan, contact the National Park Service, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument, P.O. Box 1648, Montrose, CO 81402. Comments are due April 1.

## TRUS JOIST EARNINGS UP

A Boise, Idaho, wood products firm whose top executives oppose the wholesale roading of national forest land saw its 1984 sales rise 26 percent, to \$121 million, and its earnings rise 25 percent to \$6.1 million. Trus Joist's president is Walter Minnick (HCN, 10/15/84), an outspoken critic of below-cost timber sales. Its chairman is Harold Thomas, lead appellant in the Jersey-Jack lawsuit (HCN, 3/5/85), which may force the Forest Service to do comprehensive studies of roading-logging programs.

## WILDERNESS SLIDE SHOW

Photographer and writer Galen Rowell will present "High and Wild," a slide/lecture presentation at Mesa College, Grand Junction, Colorado, on March 27. Rowell is a photographer for National Geographic and will provide narration for his slides taken all around the world. The presentation begins at 8 p.m. and is free. For more information call Bill Robinson at 303/248-1405.

## LOOKING TO SWAP

The BLM wants to swap land with private landowners in the Glenwood Springs, Co., area so that public lands are consolidated and management is made more efficient. BLM realty specialists will work with each interested landowner to identify a range of alternatives that would benefit both parties. Interested persons should contact the Bureau of Land Management at 50629 Highway 6 & 24, Box 1009, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602 (303/945-2341).

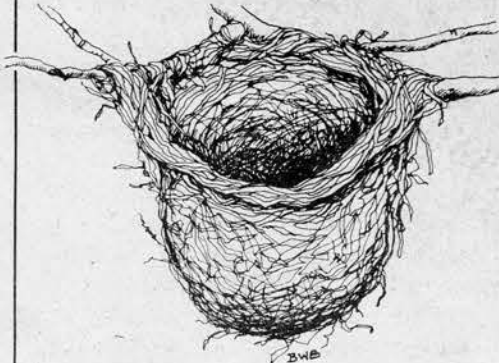


## GRAND MESA SKI LARK

Western Colorado's basalt-topped, snow-covered Grand Mesa will be the site of a day of ski races for all ages, with benefits going to the Western Colorado Congress. The date is March 24, with registration starting at the Grand Mesa Lodge at 9:30 a.m., kids' races at 10:30, and adult 5- and 10-kilometer races at 11 a.m. Entry fees vary from \$1 to \$5 depending on age, with \$15 the top price for an entire family. Western Colorado Congress is a coalition concerned with the environment and consumer issues. Contact them at P.O. Box 472, Montrose, CO 81402 (303/249-1978).

## TIMBER SALE DECISION IS WITHDRAWN

In Idaho, Salmon National Forest Supervisor Dick Hauff has withdrawn his June 28, 1983, decision to proceed with the Big Eightmile Timber Sale. Hauff said the decision was withdrawn because the Chief of the Forest Service ruled that the Environmental Assessment did not adequately address the issues of soil stability and regeneration of harvested areas. A revised EA and a new Decision Notice are expected within a month. The Big Eightmile Timber Sale, which was scheduled for offering in Fiscal Year 1985, contains approximately 1.5 million board feet of sawtimber. The sale area is about 45 miles southeast of Salmon in the Lemhi Range. The Forest Supervisor can be reached at: P.O. Box 729, Salmon, ID 83467, or 208/756-2215.



## NATURAL HISTORY FIELD CLASSES

Cloud Ridge Naturalists, now in its sixth year, offers courses on the natural history of the Colorado Plateau this spring. A class on the plants of the high desert, from May 15-19, will be based at Colorado National Monument; then from May 25-31 a class in geology will take students through the sculptured sandstone of western Utah and into Colorado's San Juan Mountains. Numerous other field courses are scheduled for this summer and fall. For more information, contact Audrey Benedict, Cloud Ridge Naturalists, Overland Star Route, Ward, CO 80481 (303/459-3248).

## FINAL PICEANCE BASIN PLAN RELEASED

A final plan proposing ways to manage resources in Colorado's Piceance Basin has been released by the Bureau of Land Management. The plan examines five alternatives for managing approximately 675,000 acres of public land. It describes the environmental, social and economic impacts of each alternative. The document is an abbreviated final draft so referrals must be made to the two previous draft volumes. Public comments should be sent by April 1 to the Director, BLM, 18th and C Sts. NW, Washington, D.C. 20240. Copies of the final plan are available at BLM offices in Meeker and Craig, and at the Colorado State Office, 2020 Arapahoe St., Denver, CO 80205. For more information call Mary Pressley at 303/824-8261.

## BIKING THROUGH UTAH

Dennis Coello's third book on bicycling, *Bicycle Touring in Utah*, offers maps and solid first-hand experience for the one-day tripper to the summer-long explorer. He writes well and entertainingly, but Coello must ride like the wind to cover as much desert as he does.

Dream Garden Press, 1199 Iola Ave., Salt Lake City, UT 84104. Sturdy paper: \$7.95. 118 pages. Illustrated with maps and drawings.

## RIVERS CONFERENCE

The National Conference on Rivers will be held March 29-31 in Washington, D.C. at Mt. Vernon College. This is the annual meeting of public officials, farmers and landowners, conservationists, technical specialists and recreational water users concerned with national water policy and river conservation practices and techniques. This year's conference features 26 workshops in the policy areas of local and state river conservation, national water policy and international water issues. It is sponsored by American Rivers Conservation Council and Environmental Policy Institute. The registration fee is \$55 per person on registration day, \$45 per person in advance. Checks should be payable to American Rivers Conservation Council and sent to National Council on Rivers, 322 4th St., NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.

## VOLUNTEER VACATIONS

Would you like to help restore a historic building in Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park or plant trees in Georgia's Chattahoochee National Forest? These and other outdoor jobs are available to volunteers willing to spend some of their vacation helping maintain our nation's parks and forests. A directory, "Helping Out in the Outdoors," lists hundreds of volunteer opportunities in 28 states. Most needed are campground hosts, trail workers and backcountry patrollers. Other positions include historical researchers, artists, fire lookouts, wildlife observers, photographers and writers. A copy of the current issue of the directory is \$3 postpaid from "Helping Out in the Outdoors," P.O. Box 2514-U, Lynnwood, WA 98037.

## BRIDGER-TETON LEASING

The public comment period on the Bureau of Land Management's request to re-issue 31 federal oil and gas leases on Wyoming's Bridger-Teton National Forest has been extended to March 30. Maps, recommended environmental stipulations and other info on the leases can be found at the Forest Supervisor's office, 340 North Cache, Jackson, WY 83001.

## SIERRA CLUB REACHES OUT

Sierra Club's Rocky Mountain Chapter has expanded in Western Colorado. The Weminuche Group has recently organized in the Durango area and includes the southwestern corner of the state. The new Uncompahgre Group encompasses west central Colorado, including Mesa, Delta, and Montrose counties. Both groups will be active on conservation issues and are planning a full slate of outings. To get involved with the Weminuche Group, contact Joe Goodwin at 1768 W. 3rd Ave., Durango, CO 81301 (303/259-0123). To join the Uncompahgre Group, contact Mark Pearson at Box 204, Grand Junction, CO 81502 (303/245-1191).



## 10 YEARS OF MONKEYWRENCHING

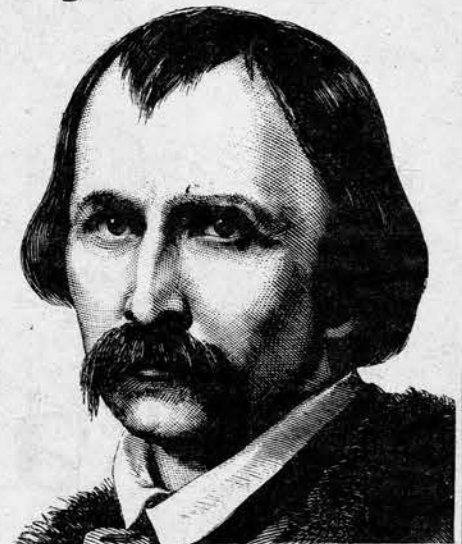
The 10th anniversary of the publication of Edward Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* has been commemorated by a new hardcover edition featuring illustrations by cartoonist and social satirist, R. Crumb. The book includes the chapter, "Seldom Seen At Home," which was left out of the original over the author's objections. The new edition by Dream Garden Press will be celebrated at an autograph party hosted by Ken Sleight, alias Seldom Seen Smith, on Sunday, March 24, in Moab, Utah, at Ken Sleight Expeditions, 550 North Main. The publisher tells us both Abbey and Crumb will be on hand. The new edition costs \$17.95 (plus \$2 shipping), and is available from Ken Sleight Expeditions, Box 1270, Moab, UT 84532.

## COAL ADVISORY MEETING

The Federal-State Coal Advisory Board will meet in Denver on March 21 for its first meeting under a newly approved charter. The meeting, which is open to the public, will begin at 9 a.m. at the Clarion Hotel, 3203 Quebec St., Denver. The board includes BLM officials and state governors from Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming. It advises the Secretary of Interior and the Director of the BLM on the federal coal management program. The public can address the board on agenda topics during the public comment period scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Persons testifying are asked, but not required, to provide written copies of their statements.

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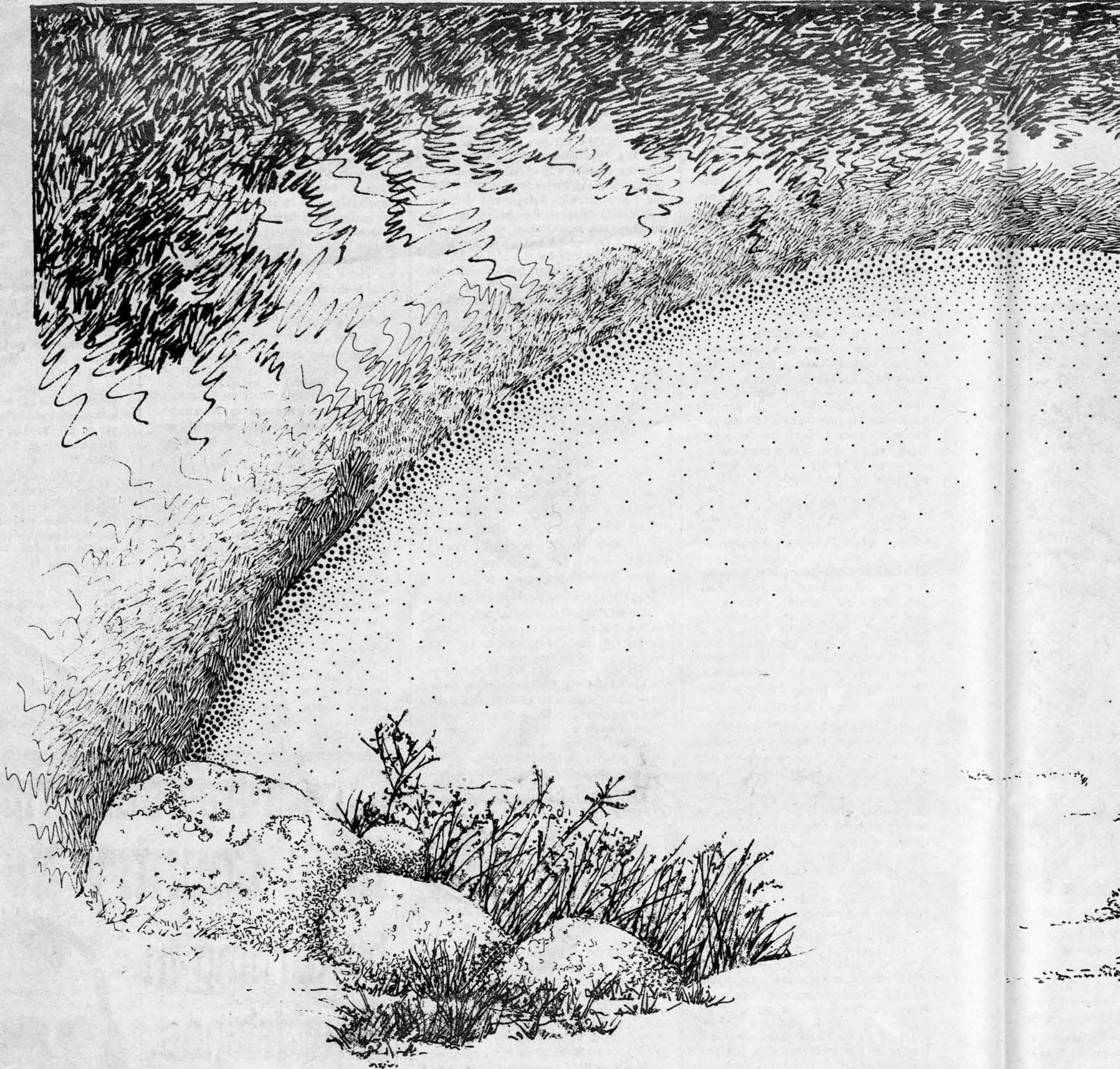
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# Rain as a woman, rain as a man

by C. L. Rawlins

We feel her, she permeates the air, walks as mist and moisture, so quiet that the first touch comes like a furtive kiss, a cool, transparent droplet to shine the skin.

Her voice is many meetings: water and leaf, water and soil, water and stone. She veils distance, cleanses the pool of its reflection, brings the world close and makes it soft.

Her gift is the green, the hues of all flowers, the curve of cattail and the tall grass, the wet coats of mare and foal, of twin fawns concealed in the willows. She calms us, we talk in the language of rest, our dreams are long and sweet.

Growth is given to the land, we shall be sustained.

She is grandmother, mother, sister, daughter and lover. There is no face that is not hers, she owns the color of our eyes.

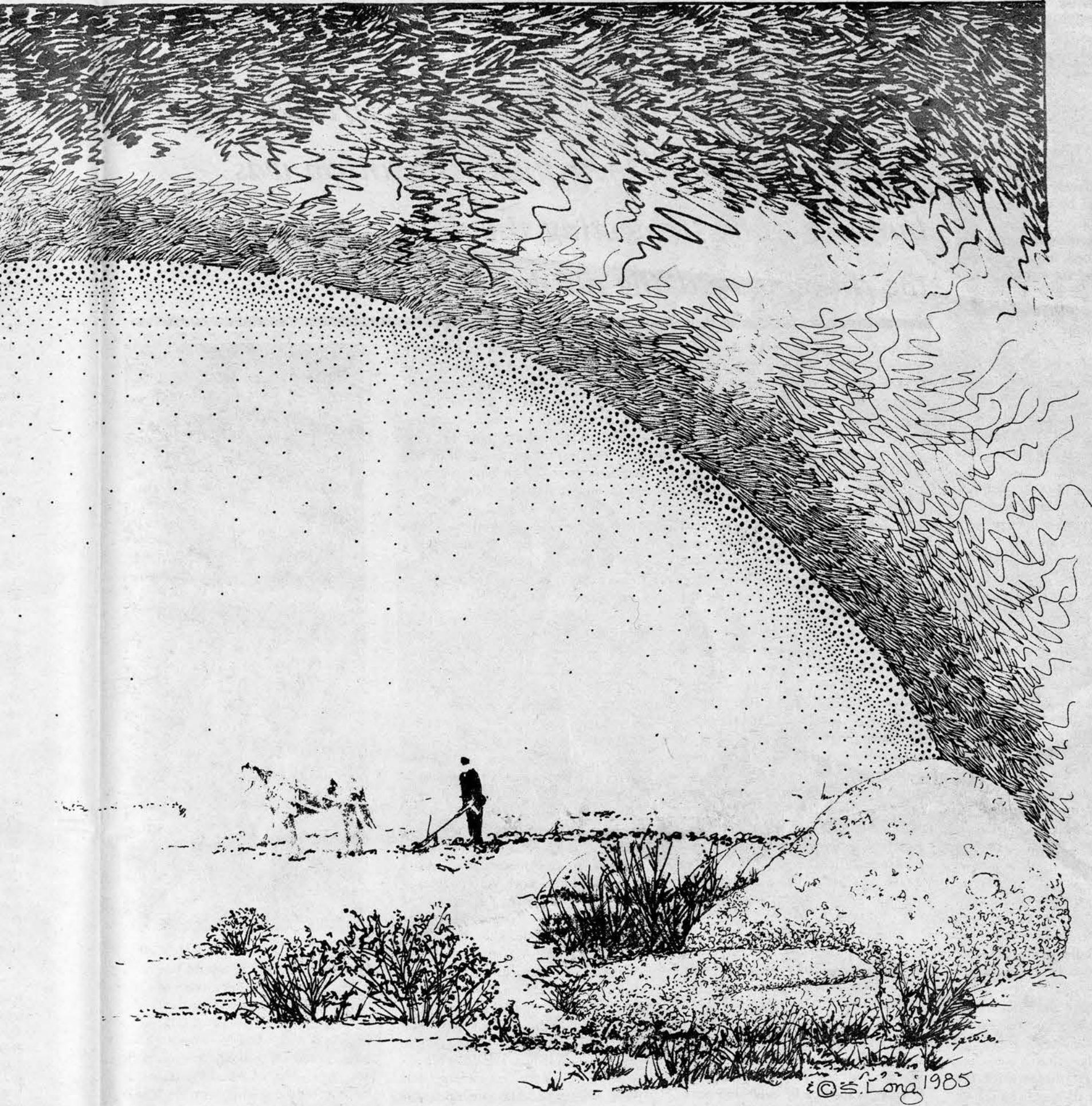
She is the nest, the mossy hollow, the shelter in the rushes.

She forgets and is not troubled. She leaves herself away.

He is the bull on a bare hill, the shadow of the sleeping, the hungry multitude of the creation.

He will not be denied, he charges and his obsidian hooves ring on roads of iron, he l





© S. Long 1985

# s a man: Faces in the storm

C. L. Rawlins

er, mother, sister, daughter, wife —  
s no face that is not her own. She  
ur eyes.

the mossy hollow, the low ground

d is not troubled. She has given

on a bare hill, the shout that wakes  
the hungry multitude, the knife of

denied, he charges and roars, his  
on roads of iron, he looms over us

and passes even the swift; he is the devourer, the  
swallower, he gnaws the bones of the land.

He is the summit and the fire, the falling great  
pine, the plain of spears, the black and wild blue, the  
whip and the flail, the red horse in the canyon, the  
silver on the rim.

He forces the gates of the city, his singing is a  
challenge, he loves the judge and the criminal alike,  
draws the grasses into frenzy, makes water froth, the  
deer seek shelter, the rich tremble.

He delights in the race, he will not falter, he passes  
in joy and splendor, he will not be stopped; he throws  
up a dark tower and leaves it empty. His voice strikes  
echoes and flame and he is gone.

PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



## U.S. Steel...

[Continued from page 1]

"Black Thursday," the company told its foremen that the mine and mill would close indefinitely in 30 days -- the notice required by the Steelworkers' union contract.

After getting concessions on other costs, U.S. Steel tried, unsuccessfully, during the following six months to win another cut in wages from the union. Finally, on April 1, 1984, the company announced that the closure was permanent.

Here in Lander, population 8,000, the thought that the town might permanently lose its largest employer was devastating. For months Lander business owners and the miners' families clung to countless rumors that the mine was being purchased and would be reopened. But on Jan. 28, 1985, Universal Equipment, Inc. of Ohio officially purchased the site with plans to resell the equipment. The company hired a handful of ex-miners at \$5.50 an hour to dismantle the equipment they once operated.

Tonight as the South Pass winter winds howl, driving snow across the icy highway, hundreds of miners here in the valley are relieved that they don't have to brave the mountain. No one liked the drive in the winter. However, their feelings toward their work and toward U.S. Steel vary radically from person to person.

Despite some criticisms, Bob Sittre, Jr. would go back tomorrow if he could. "I liked the job, but the people you had to work with -- their attitude -- made it miserable. They didn't appreciate their jobs," he says. "The union was hurting us by protecting the non-worker -- the druggie and the alcoholic. I was getting paid the same as they were, and they were off sleeping somewhere."

Although Sittre and his wife, Kelly, are only 25, they feel desperate. They're considering letting the bank have the house they purchased five years ago. A track laborer until the mine closed, Sittre then went to school in Laramie for six months to learn diesel mechanics with funds from the federal Trade Readjustment Act. He was offered a job in Nebraska. He says he had to turn it down because he hasn't been able to sell his house and didn't want to leave his family again. The \$1,500 in tools he would need was also an obstacle.

Greg Nardi has become a minor



Greg Nardi selling his wares

*'I liked the job, but the people you had to work with -- their attitude -- made it miserable. They didn't appreciate their jobs. The union was hurting us by protecting the non-worker -- the druggie and the alcoholic.'*

folk hero selling hot dogs on Main Street. He obviously loves his new line of work. No matter what the Wyoming weather, he offers foot-long hot dogs to fill the belly and a constant line of friendly banter, with a thick New York accent for seasoning, to lift the spirits. Nardi was ready to leave his job as a balling drum attendant for U.S. Steel anyway.

"That shift work is hard on your body. It's not very stimulating work there. In a way, I find this more challenging -- meeting people, out in the fresh air... I didn't want to see the place close. We needed it just to keep the economy going," he says. Nardi, who is also a nurse, came to Wyoming seven years ago to take a job at the hospital, but that didn't pay enough. He sees "Dogs on the Run" as an interim job. But with his and his wife's part-time job incomes, they support themselves and their daughter comfortably. He says several other miners have started their own businesses upholstering furniture, rebuilding electric motors, making batteries, repairing cars, making heat exchangers for oil rigs, and selling insulating paint. "You can't sit around and wait for someone to give you a job," he says.

Dick Manning helped build the U.S. Steel plant, and then stayed for 22 years. Now he and his wife, Marcelle, live in a log home they built on a small ranch in the foothills south of Lander. Thanks to U.S. Steel, the ranch and every dog, cat, and horse on it are paid for, he says. At 59, Manning is not ready to retire, but because of his age he can't find work. Known as a hard worker who stayed with a job until it was done, he would not have had any trouble getting work 30 years ago, he says.

Asked about his work at U.S. Steel, where he was a foreman, he speaks carefully, aware of contradictory feelings. Through the years he watched the attitudes toward work, including his own, deteriorate.

"I didn't have to back up to get my paycheck -- a lot of guys didn't," he says, meaning they weren't ashamed to collect their checks. But he thinks they were paid too much. (Laborers started at \$9 an hour plus benefits. U.S. Steel estimates the total of pay and benefits at \$22 an hour, although the union disputes that figure.)

"I can't say I was unsatisfied. After a few years, you saw you couldn't go anywhere else and get the same benefits... I can't say I was stuck. I stayed because I wanted to," he concludes hesitantly.

Kathy Curless, 32, is planning to return to the Lander area after completing one and a half years of schooling as a massage therapist in Colorado. A heavy equipment operator for six years at U.S. Steel, she found satisfaction as a pioneer, the first woman to become an operator there. She also enjoyed the feeling of "personal power" from driving the heavy equipment. While she would not have quit, she believes that being forced to change has been good for her. She now has the chance to learn a new skill and to work with people.

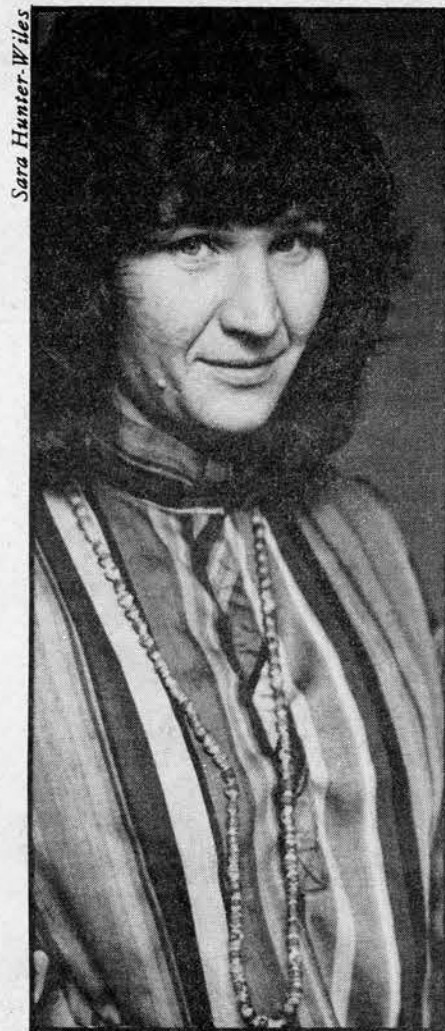
For Wilbur Miller, a foreman at U.S. Steel, the changes have been difficult. His wife has had to work for the first time. After nearly 20 satisfying years working at U.S. Steel, including several promotions, he now has to start over at age 52. He and his wife work at the Wyoming State Training School, a school for retarded people, which is now Lander's biggest employer. Twenty ex-miners work there. Wilbur and his wife often work different shifts, with different days off. "It's quite traumatic for me when I can't come home and say, 'Let's pack up the trailer and go camping,'" he says.

When Margo Hancock and her husband, Dale, worked at U.S. Steel, they once took their five children to visit Disneyland, and often went to dinner at Pizza Hut without blinking at the \$54 tab. She enjoyed the money and the job. "I did my job as well as the next man," she says. Hers was the top production crew for four years in a row.

As a woman, she could not get away with the same things men did, such as calling in and saying they had improbable diseases such as scarlet fever, meningitis or elephantiasis. "They would work half a shift and then come down with scarlet fever?"

Although she loved it, she would not go back now. She and her husband have started manufacturing batteries and selling them at outlets throughout the state. "It's too much work to start your own business to give it up," she says.

Dan Collesano would not consider going back, and his wife, Patty, emphatically seconds that sentiment. Collesano was not happy at work and the quality of their family life suffered.



Margo Hancock

However, he says he would not have quit, primarily because of the benefits. When their son was sick, the insurance paid all but \$27 of a \$13,000 hospital bill, which would have bankrupted the couple, now in their 30s. Ironically, now that Collesano is back at his old meat-cutting trade and making much less money, they are paying off more of their bills.

"Men are not made just for money -- they're made also for being fulfilled," says Patty.

The attitudes toward work at U.S. Steel bothered Collesano. "It makes a person wonder how things get like that," he says. "There was no



Dick Manning



Mike McClure



Kathy Curless

incentive... It ruins a good man. It was a show-up, get-paid kind of deal."

Collesano, who was a union officer, doesn't blame the union. "It was pitiful. Management said the union had their hands tied. I don't believe that. I don't believe they couldn't fire people and hire real workers."

The frustrations from work spilled over into the families and the community back in the valley. There was a lot of drinking. "We would get a couple of six-packs at the Rock Shop after work, and by half way down the mountain we had decided what bar to go to," he says. Now Collesano is glad to be working for an independent business. "Eight hours goes quicker than it ever did up there."

No one can say how many miners' families have left the area or want to leave. Everyone seems to have considered it, but many, like the Collesanos, are unwilling to give up the hunting and fishing for a chance at a couple of more dollars an hour.

The impact is measured in many ways. The realtors say 216 homes are for sale, and prices have fallen by 18 to 20 percent since their peak in 1981. U-Haul dealer Shirley Reed says business was up by more than 50 percent last summer after the mine closed. Many have sold their bulkier belongings, rented smaller trailers and taken off without knowing if a job is at the other end, she says.

The local Job Service office has helped 15 miners relocate to Wyoming and six other states. A total of 83 are being retrained through the Trade Readjustment Act as ferrriers, drug counselors, welders, mechanics, beauticians and dental assistants.

Despair is hidden in many of the cold statistics. In the county clerk's office, one or two foreclosures of homes and land have been recorded every week recently, compared with only one every couple of months before the mine closed.

People are more apt to walk away from their mobile homes than their cars, says Dennis Vinson of the Atlantic City Credit Union. "They keep their cars to go look for work," he says. Vinson commends most of the laid-off miners for their courage. "There's only a small percentage who make us take care of their problems," he says.

Not all the changes are negative. Margo Hancock believes people in Lander have become less carefree and are looking at life more realistically. While some in the community blame the union, many of the workers believe foreign imports killed the mine. She believes this has increased residents' awareness of the relevance of international affairs to their lives. She believes people in Lander are going hungry, and this made her think more about the people she saw on TV

picking through garbage cans in San Francisco.

Others believe Lander may become less provincial and complacent. Years ago, U.S. Steel rocked Lander out of its comfortable cow-town contentment when it built the mine. With a population of 5,000, Lander still had gravel streets then. Some miss the old days.

"It was a nice little town until this happened (U.S. Steel). We had two policemen, and that's all we needed," according to Fritz Meredith, 60, a Lander native and a chemist and warehouseman for U.S. Steel.

Wilbur Miller, among those attracted by U.S. Steel from other states, says such attitudes were prevalent. "They were just happy the way it was, you know what I mean? I felt the same way when I arrived. I didn't want it to grow too fast," he says. "That attitude -- of people not wanting it to grow -- continued for a long time."

The discomfort over growth, however, was buried under the massive influx of money U.S. Steel brought into the community -- the annual payroll was \$15 million. "It made us feel secure over the years, like U.S. Steel was going to take care of us. I don't know if you can blame

anyone for that," says the credit union's Vinson, who is also on the city Economic Development Commission and the City Council.

Two generations went from high school directly on to U.S. Steel, where they started work at more than their teachers were making. "They didn't have to learn shit at high school," says Kate McKeage, a former bartender and teacher.

"If an item was there and I wanted it, I bought it. I didn't bother to shop around to save two or three dollars," Dick Manning says. "Some saved, but some of them thought it was going to go on forever." Manning would advise his crew members to save their money. "Hard times are coming. You can't take ore out of a hole forever and ever -- it just isn't there."

But many miners and community business people didn't want to hear any talk of closing.

Vinson well remembers what he calls "Black Thursday," Sept. 22, 1983. Two months earlier, on a trip to Utah, he and other members of the Lander Economic Development Commission had been told by a U.S. Steel public relations official that they had nothing to fear for at least five years, that they would get plenty of notice, and that U.S. Steel would be glad to help with economic develop-

ment. While Vinson believes U.S. Steel was good to his company and the town over the years, he resents being misled at that critical time.

Asked about the accusation, U.S. Steel spokesman Jack Bollow wearily says, "I don't believe that was absolutely the case... Atlantic City had been the main provider of ore to Geneva since the early 1960s, and it was reasonable to assume that as long as Geneva was operating, Atlantic City would operate. However, the Atlantic City operation unfortunately became uncompetitive."

Now, in the wake of U.S. Steel, Lander people are more interested in growing, according to Alan O'Hashi, assistant to the Lander mayor. "The community has given us the nod to be more aggressive in some areas," he says. The city is promoting a technical park and a convention center, arranging low interest loans and industrial revenue bonds for local businesses, and paying for feasibility studies for a local ski area. At one time, according to O'Hashi, Lander people resisted such efforts.

But several of the ex-miners don't think the business people have changed either their prices or their attitudes to reflect the new need to compete. Between 1980 and 1984,

[Continued on page 12]



**U.S. Steel...**

[Continued from page 11]

state sales and use taxes collected in Lander fell from \$985,000 to \$609,000, a whopping 38 percent decrease without even correcting for inflation.

O'Hashi says optimistically that the economy has now bottomed out and is starting on an upswing.

Many of the miners and business people believe, however, that the mayor's office and local newspaper have a vested interest in optimism, and that the worst is to come. Unemployment benefits are running out and many expect a big exodus when schools close in the spring. U-Haul is already getting four or five calls a day. In the last week, several people told Vinson at the credit union that they're giving up. His company has budgeted for twice the write-offs and repossessions

in 1985 as in 1984. "This will be the real crunch year," he says.

The crowd of unemployed and underemployed that hangs around Nardi's hot dog stand regularly trades jabs at the city. "The city council and the mayor sat on their butts for too long... They didn't have the foresight to see that the goose that laid the golden egg was going into the stew pot," Nardi says. He expects half the town to disappear if nothing is done.

Because of similar worries, Wilbur Miller ran for city council as a write-in

candidate. He won and is now on the Economic Development Commission. He approaches his work for the city with the same fervor he did his mine work. "Now, when you write this, anything you put in there is optimistic for the town. You know what I mean?"

Marjane Ambler is a free-lance writer in Lander, Wyoming. Her article was made possible by the High Country News Research Fund.

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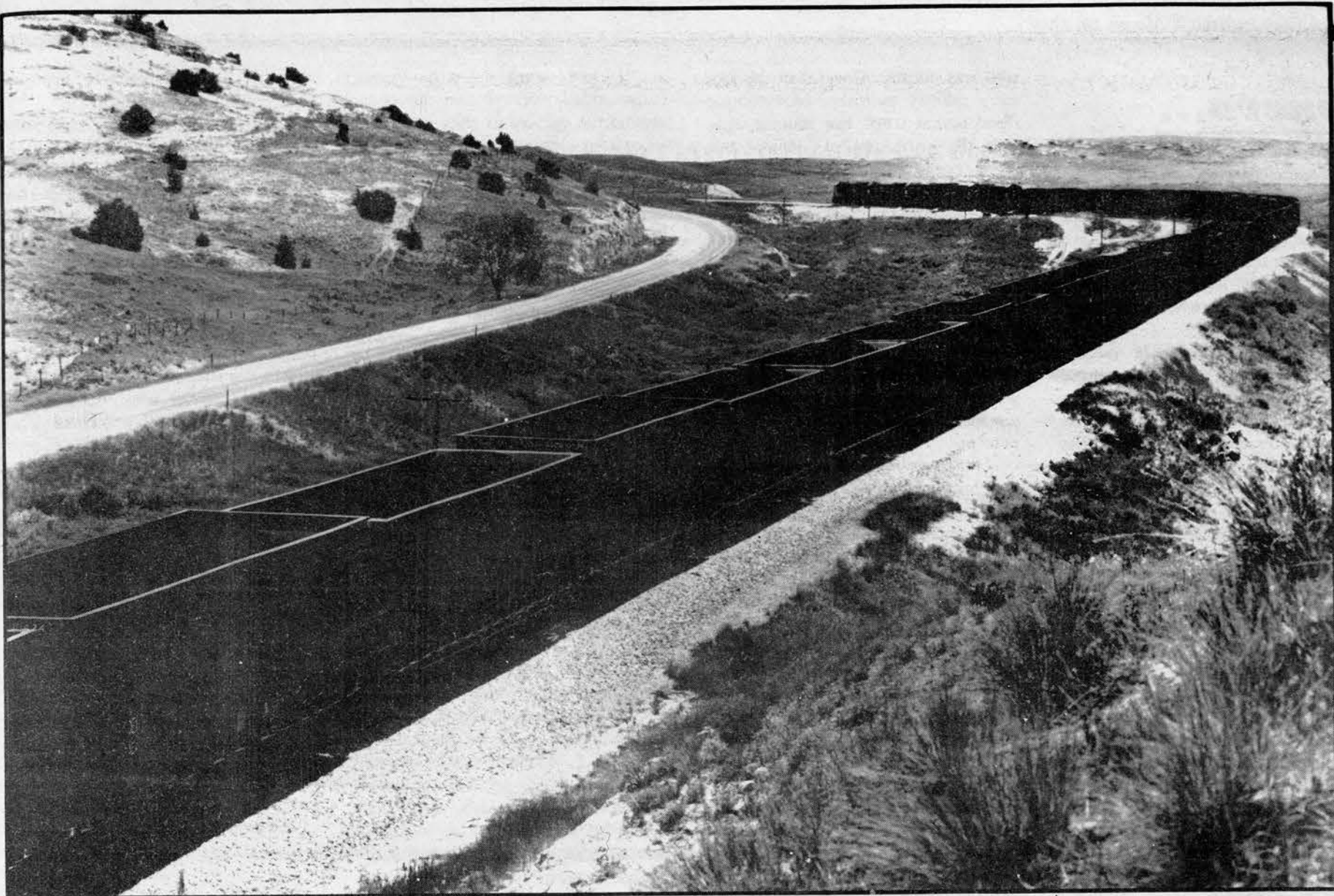
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Burlington Northern



# Critics say U.S. Steel is running its Provo, Utah, mill into the ground

by Ed Marston

*"U.S. Steel has passed from dynasty to dinosaur. The Utah limb of the mega-corporation needs to be broken off and grafted to the local economy."*

Thus writes Dr. Warner Woodworth, a professor of management at Utah's Mormon Church-owned Brigham Young University. Woodworth pronounces his sentence upon U.S. Steel in a 150-page study: *De-steeling: The fall of U.S. Steel and implications for Utah*, released in November 1984.

The subject is Brigham Young's neighbor in Provo, the Geneva steel mill, located 50 miles south of Salt Lake City. What Woodworth wrote enraged U.S. Steel. Its Utah spokesman, Jack Bollow, adamantly refuses to discuss it or the issues it raises.

Brigham Young University has backed away from the study, saying it is not endorsed by the university. The Provo Chamber of Commerce, galvanized by Woodworth's study, formed a task force to examine the issues raised by Geneva, and then, when U.S. Steel protested, immediately dissolved it.

Woodworth, as a tenured professor of management, might be expected to be part of Utah's dominant culture: one which holds the managers of large corporations in high respect. But he is not. His study contrasts the workers, whom he describes as hardworking

and productive, with a management he says wrongly invests its capital, lies to employees and communities, and wrings production out of decrepit, neglected physical facilities. His chapter headings include: "The corporate swansong of U.S. Steel is now, 'Farewell Utah, Off to Seoul,'" and "Utah has become a cash cow which corporate insiders come in to milk."

Beneath the rhetoric is his thesis: That although U.S. Steel denies it, the firm is shutting down the immense Geneva mill step by step, even as it wrings millions in profits out of it and the workers it plans to lay off.

"All the data amassed in this study with respect to national markets, capital investment, excess capacity and local plant deterioration converge into the same overwhelming conclusion: the Geneva Works of U.S. Steel is on the chopping block and will soon close."

Five years ago, Geneva employed 5,000 workers in the mill itself and another 1,000 or so in support mines elsewhere in the Rockies. Now the mill has 2,200 workers, a coking coal mine in Utah has been closed, another coal mine in Paonia, Colorado, has been cut back, and the iron ore mine near Lander, Wyoming, that once employed 550 workers has been closed and sold. (See accompanying story.)

Woodworth's conclusions are accepted by the United Steelworkers Union local at the Geneva Works, which says the only surprising thing

about it is that a professor at BYU wrote it.

Union local head Dennis Holdaway says, "Geneva is not only old, but it's not being maintained properly. It's in a terrible state. It's being patchworked together. Money is not being put back in here." Geneva, Holdaway says, makes money for U.S. Steel. "But it's all pouring into the company's coffers."

Holdaway, 38, has been at the mill for 18 years. For the first 16, he was a skilled pipefitter -- part of the workforce that built and maintained the water, steam and other pipes in the plant. But two years ago, his job was abolished; he is now a janitor at the mill.

Holdaway has not always opposed the company. He was a leader in the fight U.S. Steel, its unions and the communities near its mill and mines fought against the Environmental Protection Agency five years ago. The EPA wanted to impose pollution controls U.S. Steel said were unreasonable. With the help of political pressure brought by the unions and communities, U.S. Steel was able to force a compromise.

Holdaway says he also supported wage concessions the Steelworkers made to the firm. And he's deeply rooted in the Provo area. His mother and mother-in-law, both in their seventies, live near him.

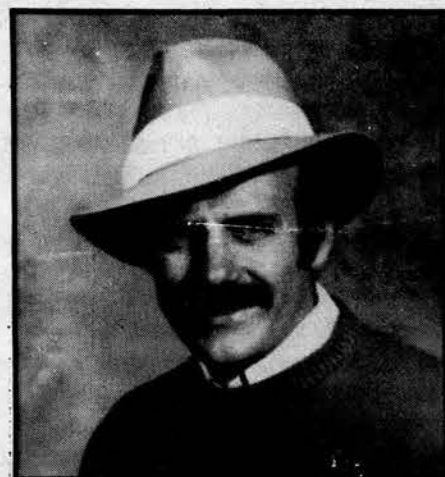
Nevertheless, he has given up on the plant and on the evolving Utah

economy, and is voting with his feet. He plans to move soon to a new job as a pipefitter in the Denver area. "There's a lot of opportunity in Utah if you want to work for \$4 to \$5 an hour. Utah is like a Third World nation in the United States. A lot of people are willing to sacrifice to live here."

A Salt Lake City businessman puts it differently, and less critically. He says that Kennecott's huge copper operation outside Salt Lake City "is dying and nobody cares. They don't even notice it. Up here in Salt Lake City, Kennecott is our Geneva. But isn't it marvelous that we can add another two wings to Sperry and have as many jobs as Kennecott laid off." (See accompanying story on Kennecott.)

Holdaway doesn't see it as marvelous. "Most people are reluc-

[Continued on page 14]



Warner Woodworth



## Geneva...

[Continued from page 13]

tant to leave the place they grew up. But I'll be one of those who will move away. I have four sons. The oldest is a senior in high school. I want to relocate in an area where they will have a decent future."

The future Holdaway is talking about is the middle class life working people can lead if they have a job in one of Utah's industrialized, unionized mills, factories or mines. He sees that future gone in Utah.

The disappearing jobs at Geneva and Kennecott played a double role in conservative, anti-union Utah. At their peak, the two operations directly employed 12,000 people at hourly rates of about \$13 an hour, and indirectly kept wages high at other factory, mill and mine operations in the region. Now those same workers are putting a reverse pressure on the wage market, as they compete for a shrinking number of blue collar jobs.

Gov. Norm Bangerter, R, of Utah, hasn't been in office long enough to develop an approach to economic development. But Dale Carpenter,

who was former Gov. Scott Matheson's cabinet member on economic development until two months ago, says the shrinking of Geneva and Kennecott has to be seen in perspective.

"Had either occurred 8 to 10 years ago, the impact would have been far greater. But today, despite these declines, Utah has a job creation rate among the top three states, thanks to firms like Stouffers and American Express." According to Carpenter, the number of jobs is growing at 6.1 percent a year, just behind Florida at 6.7 percent and Arizona at 6.4 percent.

Carpenter doesn't play down the lost high-paying jobs. "But if the alternative is no jobs at all..." He also says it is easier for government to bring in new jobs than to prevent the loss of existing ones. "The decline is clearly a market function. This isn't a centrally planned economy. The state often can't do anything."

Woodworth takes a different view. "The Utah economic developers are hustling high tech jobs. But pay starts at \$4.25 an hour instead of \$24 an hour." He thinks something can be done about the deindustrialization, and his study is an attempt to galvanize the Provo area to action:

"I had worked with other communities, workers and managers around the country as they struggled to counter area economic disintegration." He says in some cases labor relations were improved and plants became profitable. In others, employees bought out the old management and kept the operation running.

"While I was out chasing around the country helping other communities reverse economic blight, it occurred to me that my home area was facing a growing problem" in the shape of "Geneva's downward spiral."

Woodworth sees little hope that U.S. Steel will act to save the mill, and so his suggestions aim at a worker buyout of Geneva, followed by a change in the way the mill operates. He sees opportunity in the mini steel mills -- operations which turn scrap, rather than iron ore and coal, into steel and then fabricate specialized products.

He hopes to see the workers, through the union, buy the mill. "In Geneva, 3000 employees may be too big. But it could be an incubator to spin off a number of steel-related enterprises." Why can't U.S. Steel do the same thing? "U.S. Steel was 242nd out of 250 companies on a list"

of firms ranked according to their ability to innovate, he says.

It is not surprising that U.S. Steel reacted to Woodworth with hostility. He didn't give the firm an advance copy of his study; he didn't tone down its language; he attacked it from the bosom of conservative BYU; and he didn't hide his contempt. But Keith Haines, a resident of Orem, near Provo, indicates that diplomacy wouldn't have served Woodworth any better.

Haines is an Annapolis graduate, a Vietnam veteran who "came back from 'Nam in '72," a former Utah County Republican chairman ("Utah County is the Orange County of Utah.") and a former security officer, or Sergeant at Arms, for the Utah State Legislature. He tried to create a forum to provide information about Geneva to Utah County's 280,000 residents. "It's not just the workers who are at stake," he says, but also the many Geneva pensioners in the area, as well as the entire community.

As chairman of the Provo Chamber of Commerce's Legislative Action Committee, Haines helped convince its board of directors to set up a task force to look at Geneva. In January 1985, they

## Kennecott is striping away its Utah copper operation

The age of the Geneva Steel Works in Provo is a major strike against it. But compared with the 80-year-old copper ore concentrators at Kennecott's Bingham mine and mill operation outside Salt Lake City, Geneva, at 40, is a youngster.

Despite its age, the Kennecott copper operation, which was bought by the Sohio Oil Company in 1981, may have more future than Geneva even though employment at Kennecott is down drastically, from a peak of 7,000 a few years ago to just about 2,700 today. And production, after holding steady through the first cuts, is also down, from 108,000 tons of ore a day to about 30,000 tons now.

Kennecott also faces the same array of external factors as Geneva: a strong dollar, which makes imported copper attractive and exports impossible; foreign ores which are 4 percent rich in copper, compared to Bingham's 1 percent; and relatively high wages.

But there are also differences between Geneva and Kennecott. Wayne Holland, a subdirector for the United Steelworkers International, who is based in Salt Lake City, says he hasn't given up on Kennecott.

"You can get very depressed. That's what happens to Dennis (Holdaway, head of the Geneva Steelworkers local). But in mining, you have to have eternal optimism. I don't think the U.S. will go completely out of copper, and there's a good chance it will be Bingham Canyon that survives. It has not just copper, but also gold, silver and molybdenum in the ore," Holland says.

Labor relations are also better at Bingham Canyon. "They've deteriorated, but they're not as bad as with U.S. Steel. There's not that much animosity." The Steelworkers at the Bingham mine, who make about \$25,000 a year, haven't yet made wage or benefit concessions. An industry-wide attempt to renegotiate the labor

contract a few months ago failed, Holland says, when the copper companies turned down what Holland describes as a \$10,000 per year cut in labor costs. "They rejected our offer. I was amazed."

Holland says the workers don't see Kennecott management planning for a shutdown, as many see U.S. Steel doing at Geneva. The key indicator of a shutdown of the open pit mine, he says, would be true highgrading of the mining operation, in which the firm would take out only ore, and ignore the need to keep developing the pit by also hauling out waste.

Holland says that the degree of highgrading is expressed through the stripping ratio. The normal stripping

ratio is about 3:1 -- three carloads of waste for each carload of ore. At that ratio, the pit can keep operating forever. In true highgrading, the stripping ratio is 0:1 -- no waste would be hauled out, and the lack of pit development would shut the operation down quickly.

At present, Holland says, the stripping ratio is 1:1 -- a car of waste to a car of ore. "They can't keep it up too long, but it's not true highgrading either."

Sohio has also invested in the operation, switching from fixed rail haulage of ore to trucks. This enabled them to cut their employment from 7,000 down to 5,000 without reducing production. But the last big cut a year

ago, to 2,700, brought production down with it.

What of the laid off workers? "A good part of the 4,300 are still collecting unemployment. They can't find jobs that pay middle class wages. Some are working for \$5 to \$6 an hour. Them and their wives are working, keeping up their old standard of living. It's very depressing. Others are trying to retrain for high-tech jobs. But they pay \$5 an hour," Holland says.

"A few are thinking of moving. But most are hanging in there, waiting for the day Kennecott will start up again. It's always happened in the past."

--Ed Marston



Kennecott's Bingham Mine



voted 16-0 to create the task force. In February, Haines says, U.S. Steel turned the chamber around and its board voted 11-6 to dissolve it.

What did Haines expect of the task force? To provide information and "to let U.S. Steel know we are concerned about the plant." He planned, for example, to send Valentine's Day cards to its Pittsburgh headquarters saying: "Tell us your plans." He thought the cards, like the chamber, wouldn't threaten U.S. Steel. He was wrong.

"U.S. Steel brought all the pressure it could to have it killed," Haines says he hasn't given up, but he faces difficult opposition. It comes from business people who fear that bad publicity will provoke Pittsburgh to shut down the plant. "Their perspective is: Don't rock the boat." Haines's perspective is: "When do we start controlling our own future?"

It is easy to see why some wish to let a sleeping dog lie. U.S. Steel chairman David M. Roderick took over in 1979. Since then, *Business Week* reports, he has shut down over 150 plants and facilities, reducing steel capacity by over 30 percent, and let go over 100,000 workers. Nationwide, the number of steelworkers has dropped from 571,000 jobs to 200,000 in 35 years.

Under Roderick, U.S. Steel has sold \$3 billion in assets, including coal and iron reserves needed for steel making. At the same time, the firm spent \$5.9 billion to buy Marathon Oil. Only 32 percent of its revenues now come from steel, suggesting its very name is a misnomer.

Despite the massive layoffs, large union wage and benefit concessions, the sale of assets and diversification, U.S. Steel is not doing well. Roderick's goal, *Business Week* says, is an embarrassing one: to pull earnings up to the average for all U.S. manufacturing firms.

According to some observers, the situation for steel is even grimmer in the Rockies than in the Midwest. They say plants such as Geneva and the now almost closed CF&I steel mill in Pueblo, Colorado, are relics left over from an earlier, different time. Some suggest that mining and milling may have little future in the Rockies, whether you are talking of steel, molybdenum, uranium, gold or silver.

Each of those extractive industries is different, but Geneva shares enough of their characteristics to throw light on the collective plight. Ruth Mauer, an associate professor of mineral economics at the Colorado School of Mines who moonlights as the mayor of the city of Golden, says of minerals:

"I don't think it's going to get much worse. That's as optimistic as I can get."

Golden is the home base of Amax Corporation, which once employed 5,000 miners at its two molybdenum mines in Leadville and Henderson, Colorado. After a long shutdown to reduce its inventories of the steel alloying metal, 1,700 workers are now at the two mines.

So there's not much point in the Geneva mill workers coming to Colorado to work in a molybdenum mine or mill. Nor is there any reason for them to commute 50 miles north to the once giant Bingham copper operation run by Kennecott, a subsidiary of Sohio Oil. Although the Salt Lake City businessman quoted earlier writes that operation off, it is still alive. But less than 2700

*"The gradual erosion of our economic infrastructure is little noticed... There is no voice of conscience articulated by religious leaders as there is in Ohio. There is only quiet and a waiting for the inevitable."*

employees are left of the 7,000 who worked there a few years ago.

Another economist at the School of Mines, Professor Thomas Kaufmann, says time is steel's enemy. "Steel has been around since the Jews fought the Philistines, so anything new can only rob from it." Today, aluminum and plastic are the main robbers.

Its shrinking market sets off a destructive cycle. "Demand for steel is growing slower than the population. When you grow that slowly, and you're in a capital intensive industry, you tend to have overcapacity."

The excess plants discourage firms from adopting new technology. In the case of steel, Kaufmann says, the problem is aggravated by mistakes the industry made after World War II. "It invested in the wrong furnaces and the market never became buoyant enough to let it" change course. Today the strong dollar discourages exports and encourages imports, creating yet another handicap for steel and other minerals.

Kaufmann also says the steel industry had a cultural problem. "Every company wanted to be a kingdom unto itself. They didn't compete on price; only on product. So they had to make" every type of steel. "Also, they were more into making steel than into making money. So they were also integrated backwards -- into raw materials." They owned iron ore mines, coal mines, limestone mines, and so on.

Chairman Roderick has clearly broken free of that steel-only culture. Woodworth writes that U.S. Steel is no longer committed to its product. Instead, he writes, it concentrates on financial strategies without any loyalty or commitment to an end product. The result, he says, is lack of investment, long-term research and innovation.

**M**ore far-seeing or luckier management could have avoided the backward and forward integration and the failure to compete on price as well as product. But there is one problem the smartest management couldn't have solved: location. Geneva was built in Utah by the U.S. government during World War II for security reasons. Kaufmann says any plant in the Rockies is far from both markets and the ports that could bring in higher quality foreign ore. He says flatly:

"I see no future for steel in the Rockies."

Given those realities, Kaufmann says, it is only logical that U.S. Steel use Geneva as a cash cow, milking it as long as the machinery works. But he also says that what looks like a rational economic adjustment from a distance would feel very different to a worker at the plant.

How does U.S. Steel keep Geneva

productive even as workers see the plant, and their future, rust? Union head Holdaway says, "Morale isn't very good." But for those with jobs, the money is. "There's a lot of overtime now. They're not recalling people. Plus there are over 100 incentive plans" keyed to production. The open hearth and mill people have 200 to 300 percent incentives. (Average annual earnings are about \$13 an hour, or \$25,000 a year, before incentives. The \$25 an hour figure the industry uses refers to total compensation, including pensions and health insurance.)

Holdaway and Woodworth say the incentives have worked. Geneva, Woodworth writes, produced 1.42 million tons of steel in 1980 with five or six open hearths in operation. This year it produced about 1.5 million tons with only three to four hearths and half the workforce.

Holdaway estimates the plant made a profit of \$50 million, the second largest steel plant profit in the U.S. Steel system. In the short term, he says, that bodes well for Geneva. U.S. Steel chairman "Roderick says there are no plans to shut the plant down this year or next. I say the next two to five years look pretty good. But unless they modernize, the long term future is very bleak. I don't have enough faith to stay."

Holdaway's decision to move is part economic, but part based on what he thinks of U.S. Steel. "To me, U.S. Steel is the kind of company movies are made about. They're like the big landowner going after the small family ranch, and doing anything they have to do to get it."

Woodworth is no less critical of the firm. Among his chapter opening quotes are: "U.S. Steel has made more dumb decisions than anyone in the U.S.," and "Geneva conforms with EPA demands during the day, but in the dark of night, the equipment is turned off and they dump tons of junk into the atmosphere while the public is asleep."

However, unlike Holdaway, Woodworth has hope. "There are fatalistic attitudes that Geneva is beyond help and that attempting to redevelop steel in Utah Valley is wasted energy. Such a view is economically disastrous and morally bankrupt."

**H**e recommends intense public and political pressure to force the firm to set a precise schedule for reinvestment in Geneva. He is critical of a statement by company spokesman Jack Bollow: "Earnings (at Geneva) must justify modernization... I believe Geneva employees must still earn modernization."

Woodworth argues that if the mill doesn't deserve modernization now,

when it is turning out as much steel with 2,200 workers as it did with 5,000, it never will. He calls for contracts with U.S. Steel in which the company commits to modernize at definite earning levels. If that doesn't work, "We advocate the preparation of a comprehensive takeover plan... community reindustrialization based on local, grassroots strategies for change."

His study is a plea for self-determination, to ensure "that local wealth created from the backs of Utah's working men and women can be reversed from flowing east and instead become the foundation of a Utah redevelopment."

Instead of having Geneva workers go out into the world of low-paying high-tech and service jobs, he recommends a workers buyout and cites cases throughout the country where such operations flourish. "By retrenching and developing specialized markets, coupled with better machinery and spending on research and development, Geneva could become a different breed of steel mill."

The management professor thinks there is precedent in Utah for such action, even if it requires the state to take over Geneva through condemnation. He says that in the early days of the Mormon Church, there were 150 United Orders or communal groups, and that today's Mormons are well aware of that tradition.

In the preface to his study, he attempts to rouse the Mormon Church. "Perhaps, most curious of all, is not the discovery that U.S. Steel is ever so gently exploiting the community, but that the populace seems victimized by inertia, powerless to act. While big government is detested, according to local cultural values, big eastern business is somehow perceived as benign. Utah Valley residents think they have a long-term love affair with U.S. Steel, not realizing it is really a slow rape."

“When the disastrous flood waters descended from Utah mountains last spring, the entire community was quickly mobilized to block the destruction and (give) aid to those who were suffering. Yet the gradual erosion of our economic infrastructure is little noticed... There is no voice of conscience articulated by religious leaders as there is in Ohio. There is only quiet and a waiting for the inevitable.”

Woodworth's study is available for \$5 from: Alexander Printing Co., 725 E. 820 N., Provo, UT 84607.



16-High Country News -- March 18, 1985

## BOOK NOTES

## Is it our fate to grow 'ox-like'?

*This Land is Your Land:  
The Struggle to Save America's  
Public Lands*

Bernard Shanks. San Francisco,  
California, Sierra Club Books, 1984.  
\$19.95, cloth.

Review by Margaret E. Murie

The preface to this book is almost a prose poem, and a reviewer is tempted to quote and quote. "The federal lands are this nation's most valuable assets, and their great resources are both physical and spiritual. Of all the American freedoms, the opportunity to be on open land is the one I consider most unique and most to be treasured."

But it is not all poetry. The book is the result of years of working in all phases of public land administration, of slogging long trails or no trails, of research and reading and teaching. The author begins at the beginning, with the first white settlers on this

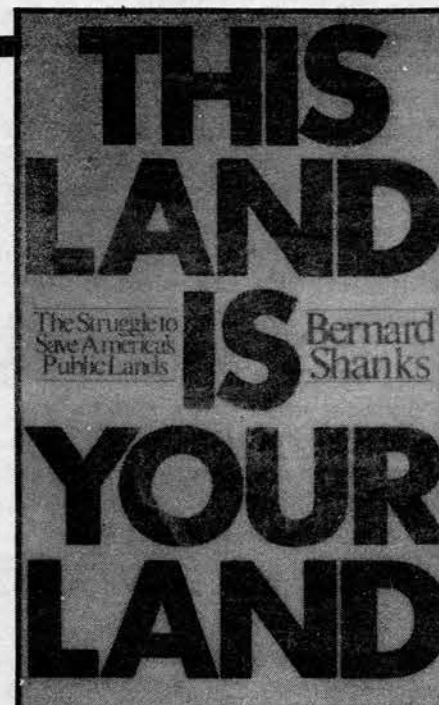
huge continent, and carries us westward to the conflicts with the much earlier-arrived Indians, through the amazing land acquisitions westward, southward and northward to Alaska.

The miles and the challenges were endless, and the people were adventurous, determined and greedy in those early years. The land was there for the taking; the first American land laws were not strong enough. As the author says: "Decades of study and debate preceded major shifts in government policy."

Bernard Shanks here gives us the whole history of our land and the various forces which have used, altered and sometimes destroyed it. But he gives us the story in such consistently pellucid prose that there is a tremendous satisfaction, a feeling that we are getting the real story, as we are carried on. The story is fascinating, disturbing, shocking in spots, but it is a story we need to know, and finally it is hopeful.

There began to be a force called conservation. "Every park, every wildlife refuge and every wilderness area worked its way through a political minefield. Hearings, studies, testimony, letter writing and often political campaigns were led by volunteers cooperating with a few dedicated and hyperactive staff from conservation and environmental organizations. Protection for the areas was always won by people with nothing to gain except a future in which their children could share the American lands."

A very important and cheerful thing about this book is that, unlike some books and articles which are only *complaining* about our federal agencies, this book, at the close of each section, gives us a careful list of suggestions as to how our lands should be managed for the future. It thus becomes a valuable guidebook for every concerned citizen, a real gift to the American people. The temptation to quote again is overwhelming:



"Without the land we will grow ox-like. As a people we will then have only the option of striving for material goods in a human-created world. We will lose touch with the spirit of the earth and be adrift in a sea of materialism. Our love for the great land of America that we own in common as a nation must be more powerful than greed. Our children must have their heritage."

## Some wastes won't go away

*Forevermore:  
Nuclear Waste in America*

Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele. New York, New York; W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1985. 352 pages. \$17.95, cloth.

Review by Betsy Marston

Reporters Donald Barlett and James Steele spent 18 months uncovering the dismal record of nuclear waste for a series of articles in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. For good reason, their stories generated 25,000 requests for reprints from individuals or groups in 40 states. This is a well researched account written in matter-of-fact style about how we plunged ahead into the nuclear age with reckless disregard for the lethal wastes left behind.

From the promise of electricity too cheap to meter and Edward Teller's prediction in 1957 that "these radioactive byproducts will turn out to be useful and will not be considered waste at all," the authors trace the government's still reluctant education. Nothing seems to work perfectly as a gravesite for nuclear waste, and there is no "away" to throw things into safely -- not the ocean, icebergs, space or shallow burial on land.

Optimistic projections about burying low-level wastes -- from hospitals to parts of power plants -- have been proven wrong. Sooner, not later, plutonium and other radioactive wastes migrate toward water supplies. Very hot fuel rods from power plants -- high-level wastes -- were never meant to be buried at all. Destined in the 1950s for reprocessing plants, these plants have been a technological and economic failure after 25 years of trying and expenditures of more than \$100 billion.

The result is that spent fuel rods from the nation's 82 commercial reactors are now stored on site, buried in cooled pools some 40 feet deep. In 1980, there were 3.4 million rods in storage.

The search now underway for a high-level waste repository is flawed by political bargaining, the authors point out, as well as our imperfect knowledge about how to contain radioactive garbage which can contaminate life forms for 10,000 years.

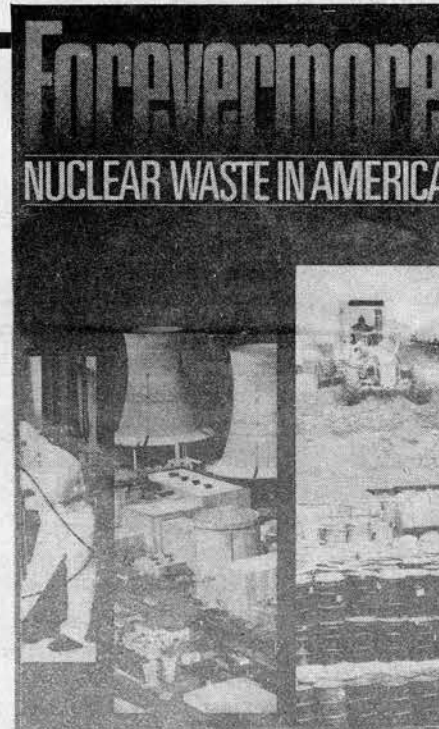
It is as if, the authors say, we sent John Glenn to orbit the earth until we worked out the technology to bring him down. "If the politicians and scientists in charge of nuclear waste had been running the space program, John Glenn would still be orbiting the earth today."

Besides bureaucratic confusion caused by overlapping jurisdiction of four federal agencies, the authors also document an institutional bias that insists no mistakes have been made. Still in court is the case of Utah ranchers who charge that more than 4,000 sheep were killed by fallout from a 1953 above-ground nuclear test. The

case was re-opened after two decades when long-suppressed documents revealed that the sheep died of radiation poisoning, not malnutrition or drought.

Another example of the government's resistance to bad news emerges from the reaction to a study of cancer deaths in the state of Washington. At the government's Hanford Reservation, which produces plutonium for warheads, an epidemiologist found in 1974 that workers were dying of cancer at higher rates than the general population. When his results became known, his contract was cancelled. When the study was resumed by other researchers, the results proved more sanguine.

Of special interest to any community approached by a commercial operator of low-level waste dumps is the chapter on "The Supersalesman of Nuclear Waste." The salesman is Frederick Beirele, who knows just how



badly rural areas need an economic shot in the arm. Beirele set up two burial grounds still operating today, in Richmond, Washington, and Barnwell, South Carolina. "...he's so convincing you find yourself believing him when you know you shouldn't."

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