High Country News

January 2, 1989 *Vol. 21 No. 1* *A Paper for People who Care about the West* *One dollar*

Norm Shrewsbury

The Cisco Post Office serves just a handfull of residents in Utah

In southern Utah

Voters reject an industrial future

by Craig Bigler

Billed as a referendum, it became a plebiscite. Residents of Grand County, Utah, faced a clear choice Nov. 8: Vote for a future based on tourism and lifestyle or vote for an industrial future propelled by a toxic waste incinerator. Vote for challengers who promised to protect the area as a beautiful and desirable place or vote for incumbent county commissioners defiantly defending the extractive ideology.

Grand County didn't equivocate. First, by a two-to-one margin, voters rejected the incinerator proposed for the all-but-abandoned railroad town of Cisco, 30 air miles northeast of Moab.

Second, by a margin of 57 percent to 43 percent, voters elected Merv Lawton over incumbent County Commission Chairman Jimmie Walker; and by a margin of 52 percent to 45 percent, Ferne Mullen over incumbent Dutch Zimmerman and a Libertarian challenger. Mullen and Lawton willingly accepted the charge that they are "environmentalists."

Most of Grand County, home to Arches and Canyonlands national parks, lives in Moab, a town with a long history of uranium mining and milling, potash mining and oil and gas drilling. Since 1980, extraction's dominance has been undermined by the collapse of the mining industry, the loss of 37 percent of jobs in Grand County and the departure of many who had held those jobs.

The Nov. 8 election shows that in the wake of the collapse, the community has changed radically, but has not become radical. The referendum and the election of two Democrats to the county commission just moves Grand County from the far right to the political center.

The stage for the November plebiscite on the future of Grand County was set in early 1987, when it appeared the Sagebrush Rebel faith in industry and extraction was about to be redeemed. Toxic waste entrepreneur Dean Norris came to Moab to tell county commissioners that the desolate, wide-open spaces of the Colorado Plateau would make a perfect home for a toxic waste incinerator and that the incinerator would be perfectly safe. The commissioners, in turn, assured Norris he could expect "3-to-1" public support for a toxic waste industry. He quickly bought the land they offered him in Cisco. There was no public discussion.

The commissioners saw the incinerator and the industry Norris said it would attract as a way to recover the old Moab, where real men could make a living without much education or catering to tourists. They heard their 3-to-1 majority when they listened to people like motorcycle salesman Rocky Erb wistfully recalling the days when, "You had your kids just out of high school working in the mines making lots of money. We had a lifestyle here in Moab we don't want to give up. What gets me is that the people that belong here can't get jobs.

"Here we are being the beggar for the tourist when we used to be the tourist," Erb went on. "They're making us bow and scrape to the tourists, so (we might as well be) beggars to the toxic waste industry. Incineration would be a calling card for heavy industry that produces a lot of waste."

Judging by the vote, a majority of residents now see the future from a different perspective than the one that guided the Sagebrush Rebels in 1980. That perspective led to the push for the incinerator and still guides most communities on the Colorado Plateau.

During the campaign, for example, commissioner-elect Lawton promised "to avoid economic quick-fixes that would be disastrous for our image as a beautiful, desirable place to locate a business, to retire, or to visit frequently. We must have employment opportunities ... we need an improved tax base," he said, "but not at the cost of spoiling our major assets."

Similarly, commissioner-elect Mullen declared herself in favor of reasonable, but not industry-dominated, multiple use. "Mining and ranching," she said, "can be compatible with recreation and tourism if properly managed." She also promised to "make our county more

(Continued on page 10)

Dear friends,

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Skipping an issue

This column should be filled with ambitious plans for 1989, but, despite the dateline, it is not the first *HCN* of the year — it was written just before Christmas and is the last issue of the declining year.

Librarians, especially, but all readers should be aware that the next *HCN* will be dated Jan. 30, 1989. *High Country News* skips two issues a year, one in July and one in January. So there will be no Jan. 16 issue.

Meeting in Santa Fe

Before our next issue, the High Country Foundation Board of Directors will have met in Santa Fe, N.M., to decide on the paper's 1989 budget and to attend a potluck gathering with the paper's subscribers at the Randall Davey Audubon Center at the end of Upper Canyon Road on Saturday evening, Jan. 28, starting at 6:30 p.m. Subscribers in the Santa Fe area will receive invitations in mid January, but in the meantime, we hope you will reserve that date. These gatherings are always enjoyable events — informal, with a minimum of ceremony and a maximum of good food and wonderful conversation. We hope you will join us.

Filling in

We need help filling in our files. Our archivist tells us we are down to one copy of the Oct. 12, 1987, issue (Vol. 19, No. 19). Its lead story is about Box-Death Hollow wilderness area in Utah. We are also very short of the Sept. 28, 1987, issue (Vol. 19, No. 18), which featured several stories on sewage and Salt Lake City engineer Peter Maier by staff writer Steve Hinchman.

On the loose

This issue's centerspread features artist Renny Russell Sumner, co-author of *On the Loose*, the bible of the back-to-the-land movement of the 1960s. Renny's brother Terry wrote in 1966:

"We've been learning to take care of ourselves in places where it really matters. The next step is to take care of the places that really matter."

Steve Hinchman met Renny on the Colorado River this September and says he's alive and well in the Southwest. His artwork is available on cards. He can be reached at Box 628, North Star Rte., Questa, NM 87556.

News from readers

Writer Ray Wheeler, who wrote about the Colorado Plateau in this fall's special issues, tells us those issues got positive mention in the Moab, Utah, *Times-Independent*.

The series was described as "excellent," although *HCN*'s name was altered somewhat to the *High Desert News*.

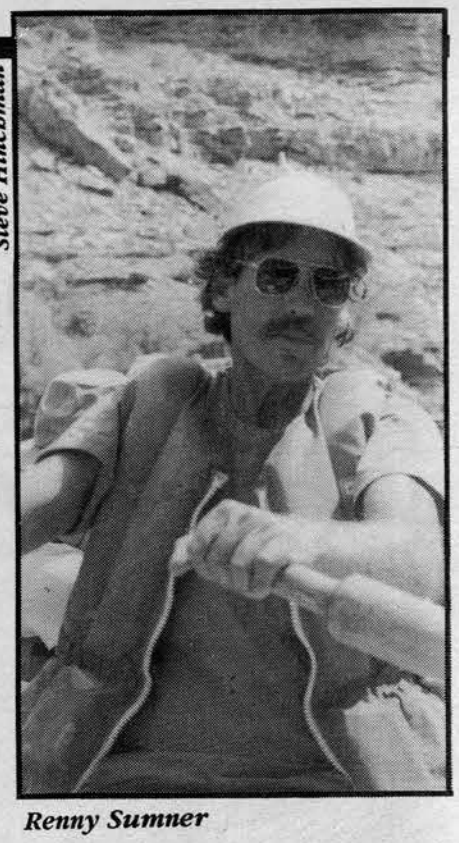
While subscribers are no longer dropping by the office, we are hearing from them via the mail. Tom Robinson and Maggie Coon, who recently moved from Boise, Idaho, write:

"We are finally settled into our Seattle home with views of the Sound and the Olympics. Despite the views and traffic, we realized something was missing beside the sun — no *High Country News* to read."

Finally, we'd like to thank the Fund for Investigative Journalism in Washington, D. C., for funding part of our last issue, which covered nuclear waste in the West.

—the staff

Steve Hinchman



Renny Sumner

LETTERS

RESPONSE

Dear *HCN:*

In response to John L. Moore's attack (*HCN*, 12/5/88) on Tom Wolf's "piece of garbage writing" on Gretel Ehrlich, and, obviously, on people like me who think grazing livestock on public lands is a lousy idea:

I've heard this "As a _____ (specify state) rancher" who has a "deep, abiding respect for the land" line a dozen times from public lands ranchers, *in these exact words,* and I'm as tired of it as Moore is of people like me being allowed to express their views in print. Come on, John, think of something new! This is the real "garbage," and a good look at the Western landscape proves it. You claim ranchers don't harm the land, but you know it just ain't so.

You also claim "no guts in his soul" Wolf hides behind "the safety of his pen" so some irate cowboy doesn't kick his ass. Yet, you hide behind your popular cowboy personna so people don't question what you're doing. You seem to just naturally expect everyone to go along with you because you are, after all, a rancher, not just an ordinary person. You seem to assume that, because of your profession and lifestyle, people who don't agree with you are somehow not as "real" as you. I'll tell you now, for 20 years I've lived a more "earthy," "real" existence than 95 percent of ranchers I've known.

You and other big-shot stock raiser-land barons keep everyone in line with your folksy, I-jus'-a-hardworkin'-cowboy while you trash the West for a profit (or loss, as is usually claimed) and push other rural people around. I know; I've lived with it for many years, talked with and heard from hundreds like me. For reasons of which I'm sure you're aware, few dare to speak out, so I wouldn't accuse those who do of being cowards.

And, no, not everyone who disagrees with you about public lands ranching is a malcontent troublemaker or on some crazy vendetta. As hard as it might be for you to understand, many of those who want to end public lands ranching have the same "deep, abiding respect for the land" you claim to have...

Lynn Jacobs
Tucson, Arizona

Wilderness group to try again

More than 300 people took part in the 30th annual Montana Wilderness Association convention Dec. 2-3 in Kalispell, which featured discussions ranging from timber economics to forest fires and from grizzly bears to global warming.

But a prime focus of the meeting was to rally the troops for the next state wilderness bill battle, expected to take place during the 101st Congress. President Reagan, as part of a successful political strategy to unseat veteran Sen. John Melcher, D, vetoed a bill that would have designated 1.43 million acres in Montana as federally protected wilderness (*HCN*, 11/21/88).

Along with plotting strategy and hobnobbing, conventioneers heard from University of Montana economist Tom Power, who explained that western Montana's increasingly fragile timber economy would not be crippled by further wilderness legislation, and Ron Therriault, wildlands champion and former tribal chairman of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He blasted a proposal that would allow grizzly bear hunting on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

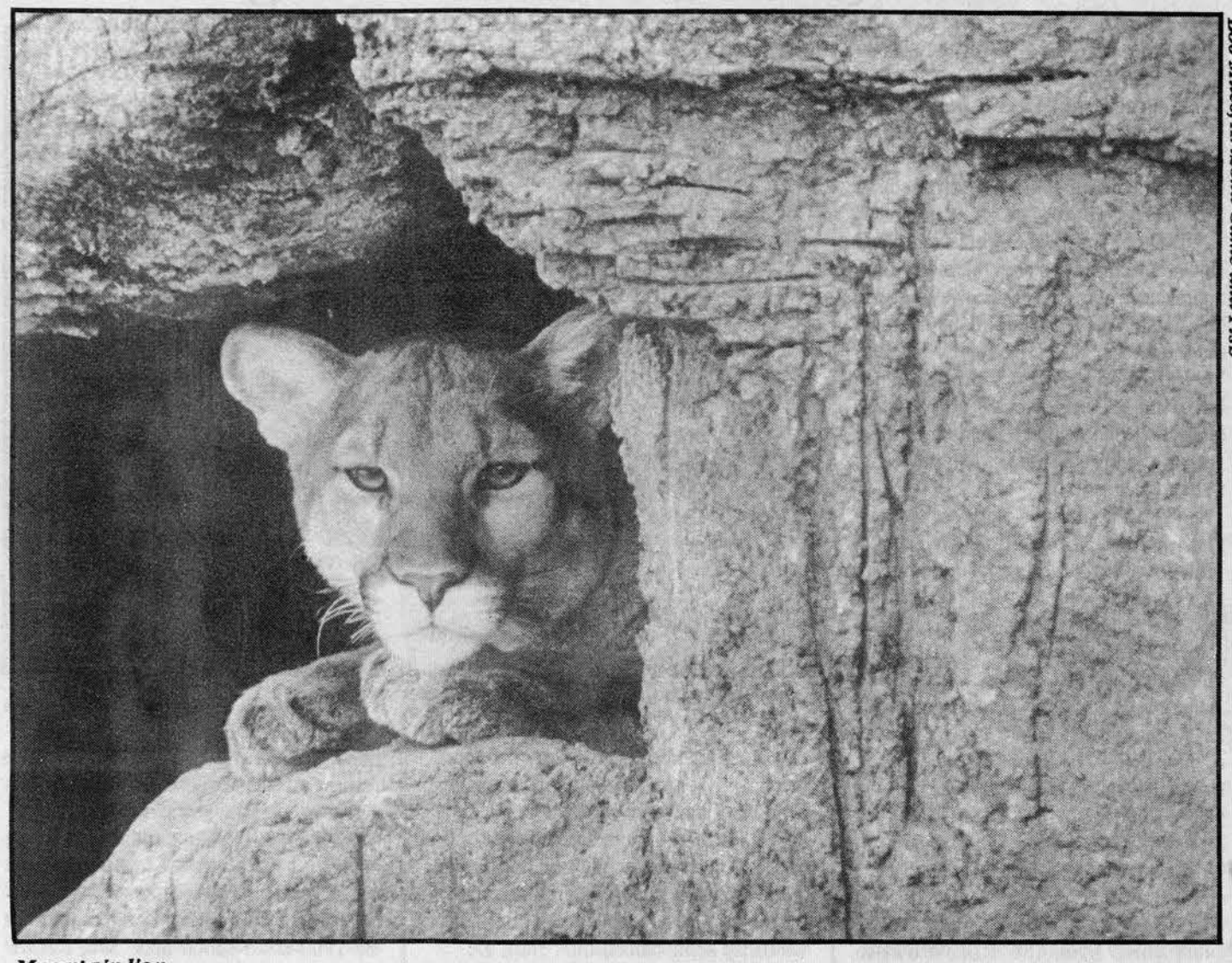
Children for Wildlife, a club of school children from Whitefish that has been studying a variety of outdoor-related issues, delighted guests with their play, "Thinking Like a Mountain." The presentation, complete with guitar-playing, singing and zinging one-liners, centered on the need to develop a deeper appreciation for all things wild.

Another highlight was the showing of "Peacock's War," an hour-long film about grizzly-advocate Doug Peacock and his work toward protecting the threatened bears. More than 400 people turned out to see the film and hear Peacock field questions afterward.

Explaining that he's becoming a "deep ecologist," or one "who thinks an ant is as noble as an elephant," Peacock drilled home his devotion to grizzlies. "I feel I'll do anything I can to keep them around," he told the group.

—Ron Selden

WESTERN ROUNDUP



Bob Miles, Arizona Game and Fish

Mountain lion

Cougars get friendly attention, for a change

A mountain lion workshop last month in Prescott, Ariz., drew more than 200 biologists, wildlife enforcement agents and others from the United States and Canada.

Their discussion was lively, reflecting ambivalent feelings about lions that are reflected in current law. While some speakers told of efforts to bring back an endangered subspecies of mountain lions in one state, others told of a separate subspecies that is still hunted.

The workshop was highlighted by Maurice Hornocker of Idaho. He is the founder of the Wildlife Research Institute and dean of mountain lion researchers.

Hornocker, who pioneered field studies of mountain lions in the mid-1960s, recalled that only 20 years ago virtually every Western state and Canadian province paid bounties for killing mountain lions. The animals were considered "vermin" and programs were created for their extermination.

"Now," said Hornocker, "they are a valued big game animal whose popularity among hunters as a trophy is growing rapidly."

Hornocker said the gathering's first conference, which was held in the early 1970s, focused on the "nuts and bolts of research techniques," such as drugs (for tranquilizing lions) and dogs (to locate them). Today we find ourselves discussing the social and political aspects of the management of this species."

Hornocker noted that while the lion's popularity is growing as a game animal, its constituency is also increasing among those who consider it too valuable and rare a species to be hunted. Cougar researchers won't be served by becoming adherents of either group, he said.

"If we start calling any of these groups 'goons' we're going to end up limiting what we, as researchers, can do and not getting the support we need."

Despite his warning, a split was apparent at the three-day meeting. In California, an attempt to reinstate a sport-hunting season continues to be countered by groups such as the Mountain Lion Protection Foundation and Earth First! They have succeeded in court in opposing the season .

Their opposition may be gaining momentum. Wildlife agency officials from Oregon and Washington said the anti-hunting campaign shows signs of spreading into their states.

In Arizona, the protectionist approach is taking a different slant. An effort is underway to repeal a law that gives cattlemen virtually unrestricted authority to continue their historic range war against the mountain lion.

Wyoming, the only state besides Colorado that reimburses ranchers for losses attributed to predators, is at the other end of the spectrum. A law almost passed last year that would have returned mountain lions to varmint status, stripping them of protection as a game animal. The campaign to pass that legislation is expected to be renewed.

A number of presentations at the conference related directly to these ongoing controversies. Several California presenters talked about the danger to lions that comes when the public becomes aroused. Increased contact between humans and lions has caused a few highly publicized attacks, said F. Lee Fitzhugh of the University of California at Davis. He called for the removal of any lion that exhibits less than a fearful response to humans.

The highpoint of the conference was supplied by a Florida contingent, which detailed its efforts to save the 30 to 50 endangered Florida panthers. They are believed to live in that state's southern jungles and savannas.

Their story of the extensive measures that are being taken to maintain this threatened population in the face of explosive urban growth contrasted sharply with reports from Western states, where more and more hunters are making record kills.

"Some people transplant hearts; we transplant lions," said Robert Belden of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Commission. He told of efforts to reintroduce Florida panthers to areas they lived in almost a century ago, using sterilized lions imported from Texas to test the suitability of the old habitat. Later, Belden said, in vitro fertilization and maintaining frozen panther-embryos are possibilities under consideration to provide the animals necessary to repopulate areas.

Looking toward the future, Hornocker told the group that although lion populations are increasing, a population crash is sure to come. He said now is the time to improve management and do intensive research. He recommended protecting backcountry populations of lions to serve as reservoirs for areas that experience high hunting pressure, and he urged restricted hunting of females to ensure that the animals can maintain a healthy reproductive rate.

Even in the isolated forests of British Columbia, he said, human-caused mortality was found to be the most frequent cause of death of lions under study.

During the meeting, an event underscored Hornocker's warning that current high populations of lions cannot be taken for granted. Just as a Florida researcher said the West was "not dealing with an endangered subspecies, at least not yet," the first designation of a Western subspecies of mountain lion as threatened was announced.

That animal is the Yuma puma, whose home range is the hot, dry flats, tangled bosques and desert mountain ranges of the lower Colorado River valley. When the Arizona Game and Fish Commission designated the animal as threatened, it made no provision to exempt the puma from that state's year-round hunting season or predator-control programs.

—Dan Dagget

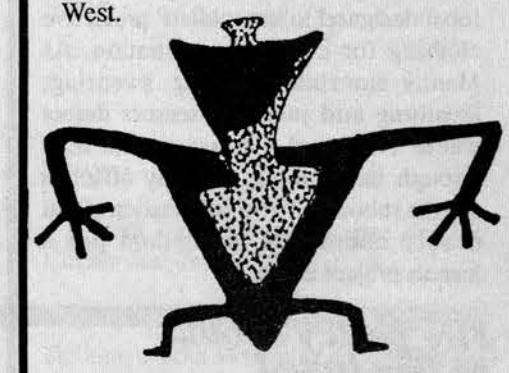
HOTLINE

Dugway in Utah is contaminated

Army officials are faced with a massive cleanup of hazardous wastes at the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah's west desert. Reports obtained by the *Deseret News* under the Freedom of Information Act reveal the 950,000-acre base is littered with hundreds of waste sites, many of which cannot be located because of poor record-keeping. Since the 1940s, contaminated wastes, nerve agents and unexploded munitions have been buried at Dugway, often marked only by mounds of dirt indicating something buried below. In addition, a 66-square-mile area outside Dugway's southern border is contaminated with unexploded chemical arms and bombs. Records show the Army has known about the problem since 1979, though little effort has been made to warn the public. The tract is used by hikers, hunters and ranchers and is currently under Bureau of Land Management administration. Dugway officials say they want to add it permanently to the base, both to clean up the land properly and to create a buffer for future chemical tests. So far the BLM is reluctant to transfer the land.

Court rules for antelope

One of the West's most controversial disputes was settled recently by the Supreme Court when it ordered Wyoming rancher Taylor Lawrence to take down his 28-mile fence. Lawrence said he will abide by the ruling but called it a violation of private property rights and destructive of fencing laws across the country. Lawrence's fence, completed in 1983, encloses over 20,000 acres of private land that is checkerboarded with state and federal lands. During the winter of 1983, over 700 antelope died when they were unable to get past. Taylor's fence to their winter grazing lands. Lawrence said he built the fence to protect crested wheat planted for cattle feed. Attorney Tom Lustig, representing the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, said the ruling "closes a terrible chapter" in the history of Western wildlife. Lustig said the ruling was also an important first step in reducing or eliminating illegal fences throughout the West.



Looter fined in Utah

A Colorado man caught running from an Anasazi Indian ruin six miles northwest of Moab, Utah, has been ordered to pay a $2,500 fine. The Bureau of Land Management estimates that the damage he did will cost more than $20,000 to repair. The man, Kenneth Walter Kirby, was found guilty of violating the Archaeological Resources Protection Act when he dug through artifacts in a cave known as Trappers Alcove (*HCN*, 10/10/88). Utah federal judge David Winder suspended a one-year prison sentence because "the public interest is better served by making him pay restitution." Kirby, who spent a month in jail following his arrest, will also serve 50 months on probation and must submit to random drug testing, reports the Fort Hall, Idaho, *Sho-Ban News*.

HOTLINE

Nuke plant is a bust

Colorado's only nuclear power plant will be converted to coal or natural gas or closed by June 1990. Public Service Co. said it will look for partners to finance a conversion of its Fort St. Vrain plant 35 miles northeast of Denver but will begin to decommission the facility whether or not partners are found. The plant has a 10-year history of problems and has been closed since July, when workers found moisture in the reactor core. Public Service spokesman Mark Severts said continuing problems with the helium-gas-cooled reactor spurred the company's decision to decommission the one-of-a-kind plant almost 20 years before its license runs out. The reactor will remain isolated for 59 years after its radioactive core is removed. Plans to send its radioactive spent fuel to the INEL facility in Idaho remain in place despite Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus' ban on out-of-state nuclear wastes. Severts said Public Service also hopes the Department of Energy will have a permanent disposal site by 1990, when decommission begins.

U.S. Army

An expensive recruit

The U.S. Army has a new recruit at the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah. "Manny" is a $2.8 million, 165-pound robot designed to test soldiers' protective clothing for chemical penetration. As Manny simulates walking, sweating, breathing and jumping, sensors detect where chemical warfare agents leak through its clothing. Dugway officials say the robot will give information about deadly chemicals that would put a human subject at risk.

Fire policy should be fine-tuned

A federal review panel of officials from the Forest Service and National Park Service concluded that the fire-management policy which guided reaction to the Yellowstone-area fires of 1988 should be "refined, strengthened, and reaffirmed," rather than changed. Rep. Dick Cheney, R-Wyo., called the review balanced and comprehensive. "The key now is follow-up; we'll have a comment period for the public. The new administration will be the recipient both of the study and the public comment on it," Cheney told the Casper *Star-Tribune*. Environmental groups were pleased by the panel's conclusions. Ed Lewis of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition called it "the right conclusion" to leave the natural-burn policy intact. The Wyoming Heritage Society, however, accused the panel of designing its findings to "protect government employees."

'Breathers' fight 'burners' in Oregon

Traffic was moving briskly along Interstate 5 through Oregon's Willamette Valley Aug. 3 when disaster struck. Without warning, survivors said later, cars were enveloped in thick smoke from a nearby burning field. Within seconds, 34 vehicles collided.

Drivers and passengers scrambled for the roadside as even more cars approached, unseen, at freeway speeds. A woman watched a small boy thrown from one car and run over by another. The driver of a wood-chip truck bailed out as flames lapped across his load. A family of four, trapped inside a flaming van, was burnt beyond recognition, a state trooper said.

When the smoke cleared, seven people were dead, 37 injured and Willamette Valley residents were again clamoring for an end to an agricultural practice that has darkened their skies for 40 years.

Every summer, as the long winter rains give way to a few months of sunshine, the valley's 780 grass-seed farmers torch almost a quarter-million acres of their fields. On a peak day, dozens of towering columns of smoke rise from the valley floor and drift towards the Cascade Mountains in lazy purple clouds.

Burners say the fires sterilize fields, eliminate diseases and stray seeds, and help to produce a pure seed that's used everywhere from the Rose Bowl to Japanese golf courses.

Last year, according to Oregon State University estimates, Willamette Valley growers sold more than $170 million of grass seed, making it the fourth largest legal cash crop in the state. The burns also eliminate the industry's major waste disposal problem — almost a million tons of straw a year.

Farmers began burning in the late 1940s, when plant researchers discovered that fire could control a stubborn disease called blindseed. So successful was the technique that by 1969 the valley had become a major source of the world's grass seed. It was also a major source of the state's air pollution.

In August 1969, after a cloud of smoke covered much of the valley on what became known as "Black Tuesday," Oregon Gov. Tom McCall temporarily halted the burning. Two years later, the state legislature passed a bill to phase out open-field burning by 1975. But the industry won a series of extensions, and in 1979, despite a smoke-caused 22-car pileup on Interstate 5, the proposed ban was scrapped in favor of a 250,000-acre-per-year limit. A smoke management program was set up under the state Department of Environmental Quality, burning was allowed only when winds were blowing away from the cities of Eugene and Salem, and a $3.50 per-acre fee was initiated to finance research into alternatives.

One approach, planting alternative crops, has not taken root. Meadowfoam, a plant that produces an oil that could be used to make cosmetics, has not yielded enough to make it economically viable. Rapeseed, which produces a cooking oil popular in many countries, has met with similar results.

Other research has explored alternatives to open burning. Large rolling burning-chambers have been built, only to break down in mid-field. Propane burning, in which fields are torched after the straw is cleared, has proven more popular. Farmers like it because it's not subject to state regulations but say it also costs more; estimates range from $30-90 an acre vs. $5 for open burning.

Still other, mostly unsuccessful, research has gone into looking for markets for the three tons of straw produced per acre. Of the 850,000 tons of straw produced annually in the valley, only some 60,000 tons are used, mostly as exports to Japan for animal feed. The rest, even if it's cleared and stacked in preparation for propane burning, still winds up being burned.

The Register Guard, Eugene, Ore.

Smoke begins to billow over the interstate

Opponents to the burnings, dubbed "breathers" by the local press, maintain that farmers won't find alternatives until they're forced to. Nancy Fadeley, a former state senator who led the fight against burning in the 1970s, calls the state's smoke-management program "voodoo environmentalism." Instead of spending money on alternatives, she says, the industry has spent it on getting legislators elected.

"They don't want to kill the goose that lays the golden egg," agrees Bill Johnson, leader of a group called ENUF (End Noxious and Unhealthy Fumes). "My family's been farmers for 400 years, and I know how they think. They'd rather strike a match, go to Hawaii, and let someone else worry about the straw."

"What they're doing," adds state Sen. Grattan Kerans, "is taking the cost of waste disposal, putting it in their pockets, and calling it profit. We pay the cost."

That cost, fear the breathers, may be measured in human lives. Straw, like any vegetative matter, produces a smoke with several carcinogenic substances, says Oregon's field-burning program manager, Brian Finneran. Particularly troublesome are its fine particulates. They can lodge deep in the tiny air sacs of lungs and linger there a long time. Critics are also concerned about combustion products from fungicides used on crops. And, despite tighter state regulations on burning near highways since August's fatalities, there's still the danger of smoke blowing across roads.

Since August's accident, burning opponents have increased their efforts to put an end to the smoke, circulating petitions to put an open-field burning ban on the 1990 state ballot. State Sen. Kerans says he will introduce a similar bill this session. Passage, however, is far from certain.

State Sen. Ron Cease, co-chair of the legislative committee on the environment, says conservatives throughout the state are resistant to any new kind of state regulation. "But there's obviously great pressure to ban," he says, "and it might frighten the other side into making concessions."

"I don't think Kerans' bill will pass," agrees co-chair Bill Bradbury, "but maybe it will push us to getting this damn thing resolved."

Even if it does pass, Oregon's air is not likely to turn crystalline. For one, farmers are likely to increasingly turn to propane burning, where most of the straw still goes up in smoke. For another, according to the state's Department of Environmental Quality, field-burning only produces a paltry 6 percent of the total particulates in Oregon's air. Wood stove smoke produces 11 percent, and timber-slash burning, which is almost totally unregulated, contributes over 30 percent — some 81,549 tons of particulates a year.

The battle against grass-seed field-burning, then, may be only the opening skirmish in a larger war. "The air over the entire state and beyond is continually polluted by all this burning," says Bill Johnson. "People have had it."

—Jim Stiak

HOTLINE

Bacteria beat bugs

Oregon's bacterial battle against the gypsy moth may be over. State officials announced that next year, for the first time since 1984, no aerial spraying will be necessary to control the timber-destroying insect. The state's control efforts relied heavily on the bacterial pesticide Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis). The result was a five-year decline from 19,000 to 10 moths caught in traps.

Eagles get a break

A five-year agreement to protect eagles wintering at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal near Denver was signed Dec. 14 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Army. Some 20 bald eagles winter in the 17,000-acre Arsenal every year, and the process begun by the Army and Shell Oil Co. to clean up its nerve gas and pesticide wastes this year threatens the eagles' winter habitat, reports the *Rocky Mountain News*. Arsenal spokesperson Bill Thomas says roads will be closed, if necessary, to protect eagles and other wildlife.

Congress puts controls on Indian gambling

Indian tribes are no longer free to initiate and run casino, bingo, horse racing and other forms of gambling on their reservations. A law passed by Congress and signed by President Reagan this October subjects all such gambling to state or federal control.

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act is a major practical and theoretical blow to the tribes. Tribes have been increasingly squeezed by federal revenue cutbacks over the past eight years, and gambling has become an important source of revenue: It is estimated that some 100 tribes raise about $400 million a year from gaming.

In a legal sense, the new law is also a blow to tribal claims to self-rule. Indians maintain that reservations are sovereign entitites, equal to states in many respects, as a result of their special treaty relationship to the federal government. Tribes can and do maintain their own police forces, courts, system of taxation, and governing councils. And until passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, they had also operated casinos, race tracks and bingo parlors independent of outside control.

Indian leaders say the new law gives states an unprecedented jurisdiction over the tribes. Reno Sparks Tribal Chairman Lawrence Astor, in a guest column for the *Native Nevadan*, said in November that the law "reflects a fundamental shift in federal Indian policy." It marks the first time Congress has allowed states to have direct jurisdiction over tribal governments, he said.

In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the *Cabazon* case that the California Cabazon tribes could run gambling activities without state interference. The Court said states could not regulate Indian gambling unless Congress authorized them to do so. In response, identical bills to grant states regulatory authority were introduced this year by Morris Udall, D-Ariz., in the House and by John McCain, R-Ariz., in the Senate. Those bills led to the Indian gaming law.

National columnist Jack Anderson in an Oct. 6 editorial, "Casino barons crimp Indians," reported that many Indian nations had used gambling to raise revenues to meet health, education and housing needs.

The stated purpose of the law is to keep organized crime off the reservations. Anderson charged the real push for its passage came from Nevada casinos, the Horse Track Owners Association and the American Greyhound Track Operators Association, all of which feared Indian competition for America's gambling dollars.

Indian journalist Tim Giago, in the syndicated column "Notes from Indian Country," made the same charge. He mocked the crime argument, writing that organized crime had as much chance of taking over Indian gambling as Nixon had of being re-elected. "The Don thought this over and said, 'We'll send Ricco the Rat out to Indian Country. He's dark and his name even sounds Indian. We'll let him infiltrate the tribes out there.'"

Tribal leaders had more direct responses. Lorraine White, president of Arizona's Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe, told the *Arizona Republic*, "Now we've got another bureaucracy to deal with that will eat up what we were clearing from our games."

The law creates a federal National Indian Gaming Commission to oversee tribal bingo and lotto games. Bingo and lotto will be subject to federal purview but will remain under control of the tribes. Bingo is by far the most played and widespread Indian game regulated under the new law. Traditional games remain solely in the jurisdiction of the tribes.

The federal Gaming Commission will be composed of three people, two of whom will be American Indians. The annual budget for the Commission's operation is $3 million, with tribes splitting the cost with the federal government.

The tribes will also have to enter into state compacts to run such enterprises as horse racing, slot machines and casinos and any other gaming not covered by the federal commission. House majority whip Tony Coelho, D-Calif., said he has been pushing for regulatory legislation ever since the *Cabazon* ruling.

"Most members of Congress don't feel the federal government should be in gambling. And as a result, most Indians shouldn't be in gambling," said Coelho. "I'm not sure the American people want the federal government to be authorizing gambling all over the country." He also told the *Arizona Republic* that bingo was more or less acceptable but that high-stakes gambling had to be brought under state control.

Indian leaders say Congress can not take away their rights to run gambling because such rights are guaranteed by treaty. But Tony Coelho replied, "You're not talking about Indians (on this issue), you're talking about gambling."

—Kevin Lee Lopez

HOTLINE

Dumpers target South Dakota

South Dakota officials report they are deluged with requests to dump garbage in the state. To cope with requests — eight so far — the Department of Water and Natural Resources has called a 90-day moratorium on applications for garbage disposal to allow its small staff to catch up. A recent request came from a Golden, Colo., company which wants a permit to bury as much as 1.5 million tons of garbage at a 1,200-acre site it owns close to Edgemont, in southwestern South Dakota. Though the company, South Dakota Disposals, has no existing contracts for garbage, its plans are to haul non-toxic waste from states in the Northeast.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Colleges face a quality-access dilemma

by Joan Barron

CHEYENNE, Wyo.—Another oil-producing state, Oklahoma, is witnessing a debate over higher education between the elitists and the populists.

As State Auditor Jack Sidi, a former educator, points out, the parallel with current discussions over access to the University of Wyoming is striking.

Like the University of Wyoming, the University of Oklahoma has an outstanding football team.

Yet I can't recall a University of Wyoming president making the startling statement attributed to a former president of the University of Oklahoma, George Lynn Cross.

Cross once said he wanted to create a school his football team could be proud of.

Although Wyoming Cowboy fans are remarkable in their zeal, none has said — at least publicly — they would subordinate academics to athletics.

In the November issue of *Governing* magazine, political editor Alan Ehrenhalt says bluntly that the University of Oklahoma not only never has had a great university, it never has even had a good one.

The University of Oklahoma, in Norman, accepts 95 percent of all applicants. The tuition has been mighty low — 47th in the country.

Its faculty salaries have been below the average even for Southern and Southwestern schools.

Moreover, the University of Oklahoma has never been admitted to the Association of American Universities, an organization of 50 high-quality public and private schools that includes Texas, Kansas, Iowa (my alma mater), and Iowa State.

Ehrenhalt reasons that oil-financed prosperity allowed Oklahoma's political leaders to shunt aside the question of educational quality while the University of Oklahoma built a great football team the whole state could worship.

But now Oklahoma is in the economic quagmire that Wyoming is trying to struggle free from as a result of the depression in oil prices.

And like Wyoming, Oklahoma political leaders are trying to attract businesses and industry. What they have found, according to Ehrenhalt, is that these businesses are less interested in the football team than in the quality of the University of Oklahoma's physics department.

So Oklahomans are struggling to choose between access to higher education and excellence in higher education.

According to Ehrenhalt, Oklahoma has had a preponderance of populists — people more concerned about providing education to the masses than superior education for the few.

Many states that haven't been able to afford both access and excellence have chosen access.

In Oklahoma, a task force in 1987 reported the state should declare a victory on access and make the commitment to increase the quality of the higher education system.

This is what Oklahoma's new chancellor on higher education is trying to do by syphoning from the budgets of the state's junior colleges and four-year regional universities.

Understandably, this guy is in a pickle in Oklahoma.

Returning to the basic premise of the article — whether academic excellence translates to economic development — Ehrenhalt points to Texas, another oil state.

Although Texas has the highly rated University of Texas, the state's economic woes are about as severe as Oklahoma's. Academic excellence hasn't helped.

The similarities between Wyoming and Oklahoma end when considering the latter's profusion of state colleges and universities — 27, including 12 four-year institutions granting bachelors' degrees.

Wyoming has only one four-year university that grants bachelors' degrees, plus seven community colleges.

The Legislature has been kind in the past to the University of Wyoming, unduly so some may argue, and the institution has some standout talent in academics as well as on the football field and basketball court.

In the past, the University of Wyoming has fought off challenges to its singular status — namely the Casper College fight in the 1970s to become a four-year, degree-granting school.

So today the University of Wyoming stands alone, the only institution in the state that confers a four-year degree.

With only one degree-granting college in the state, Wyoming must give priority to access and also attempt to achieve academic quality with the resources available. But access is paramount.

Given the limited options in this state, the University of Wyoming must remain populist — open to all the kids who want to go there.

If they can't cut it, at least they had a shot.

❐

Joan Barron is a reporter for the *Casper Star-Tribune*.

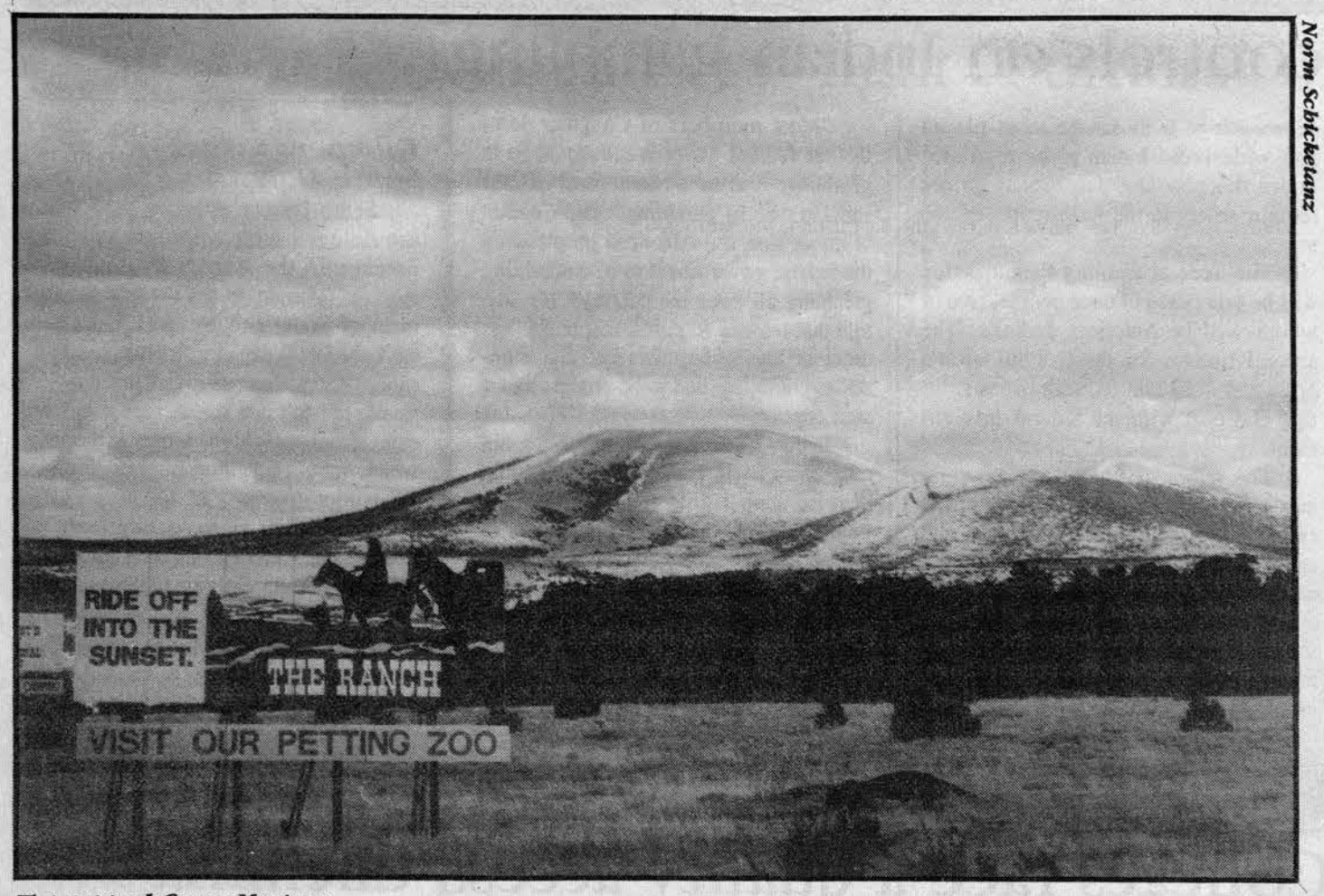
HOTLINE

Backbone of the fire effort

The summer fires represented an economic boost for Native Americans who made up over half of the West's fire crews. A disproportionately high number of Indian fire crews were available this summer, and they generated millions of dollars in income. About $800,000 was paid to the 10 Sho-Ban Strike Team crews of the Fort Hall Reservation in southeastern Idaho, and over $10 million was earned by the 63 all-Indian crews in the Portland, Ore., area. Other sizeable Indian crews came from Montana and the Southwest, and over 100 Alaska native crews were sent to battle the fires. Fighting fires is a source of income for many otherwise unemployed Native Americans, some of whom use their fire-fighting checks to sustain them throughout the year, reports the *Sho-Ban News*. Indians "made up the backbone" of the fire crews in the West this summer, said Bureau of Indian Affairs fire-control coordinator Jim Snyder, who is stationed in Boise, Idaho. Over 55 percent of the crews were Indian, he said.

16 tons of garbage

Volunteers collected almost 16 tons of garbage from Oregon beaches during the fifth annual beach cleanup Oct. 8. For the first time, plastic, which by volume was double all other materials combined, was separated for recycling. Later this fall, medical supplies began washing up on the state's northern beaches. Officials theorize that the syringes, surgical tubing and vials of antihistamine — apparently manufactured in Poland — fell from or were dumped by ships at sea.



Norm Schicketanz

Flat-topped Cerro Montoso

Wildlife habitat threatened by FM antenna

Cerro Montoso does not look like the center of a controversy. The squarish-topped cinder cone in northeastern Arizona presents a stolid, calm demeanor that dominates the eastern skyline of the tiny town of Vernon. Several of its slopes are grassy and treeless, a perfect winter grazing ground for elk, antelope and deer. The rest are wooded with aspen, pinons, juniper and ponderosa pines.

But Cerro Montoso may soon change its appearance. A company called Plateau Communications has chosen it as the site for a 100,000-watt radio antenna designed to bring an FM station to St. Johns, Ariz., a city of some 4,000, northeast of Montoso.

Environmental groups and the Arizona State Fish and Game Department have opposed that choice, citing evidence that Montoso is critical winter habitat for elk, antelope and mule deer, as well as bald eagle habitat and the site of several Indian ruins.

"Cerro Montoso is unique," said Paul Smith, of Vernon. Smith formed "Save Cerro Montoso" in January 1987 in response to Plateau Communication's application to the state for a commercial lease.

"It has an incredible diversity of vegetation — a diversity not found on surrounding mountains. And if a road is built on it, the impact on wildlife will be devastating," Smith said.

Plateau first applied for a commercial lease on Montoso in December 1986. The State Land Department turned down the application because of opposition from the Arizona Fish and Game Department. Last October, however, the State Land Department reversed its decision, opening the matter for reconsideration if Plateau Communications receives its license from the FCC. An FCC representative said a decision is pending.

Opponents to an antenna on Cerro Montoso have made it clear that they are not trying to prevent St. Johns from getting a radio station. Representatives from Plateau Communications, however, say that alternate sites are too expensive. Plateau spokesman Milford Richey told the *Arizona Republic* last January that the FCC would only grant him a permit for a regional station. "That means I had to find a site where I could have 1,000-foot clearance above the average terrain of the area. That's where Cerro Montoso comes in."

Cerro Montoso, at 8,438 feet, is about 300 feet higher than Cerro Quemado, a neighboring cinder cone that is already the site of cinder-digging. It is the alternate site favored by environmentalists.

Environmentalist Smith, who has challenged Plateau in both state and county hearings, questions Plateau's assertion that the FCC will only approve a 100,000-watt class C, or regional, station. He says a smaller station could give St. Johns the local coverage that it desires without requiring the high tower currently proposed for Montoso.

"The State Land Department took Plateau at their word that the FCC mandated a 100,000-watt station," said Smith. "Plateau has never presented any documentary evidence to support that claim."

Smith says Plateau has also not given serious consideration to alternate sites. "They keep saying that it is too expensive to put a tower up on Quemado," said Smith. "But there have been no figures given. When talking costs, people ought to be putting costs and expenses on the table so that others can review their projections."

Smith maintained that it is the road, rather than the tower itself, that will pose the biggest threat to Montoso. "Cerro Montoso is a valuable habitat for wildlife precisely because it is a roadless area," said Smith. "There has already been some damage to the terrain by four-wheel-drive vehicles."

Smith predicted that if approval for one antenna on Montoso is given, others will be sure to follow. "It will become another antenna farm like Greens Peak," said Smith, referring to a 10,000-foot cinder cone south of Montoso that now sprouts over a dozen antennas.

Norris Dodd, the regional habitat specialist with the Arizona Fish and Game Department, agreed. "The state has told us that if one antenna goes up on Montoso, it will probably become a designated electronic site," he said. "One tower will lead to many towers."

Representatives from Plateau have emphasized that they are willing to fence and lock the proposed road up Montoso to reduce traffic, and they suggest the tower's impact on wildlife had been exaggerated.

Theron Hall, an attorney for Plateau Communications, wondered, at a county hearing on the issue, why everyone was so worried about the elk in the first place.

"The Game and Fish Department... issues permits to kill the silly animals," said Hall. "Nobody from Plateau Communications is even going to shoot at one. That should be a lot less damaging to the elk habitat than what those who are complaining about (the tower) do on a regular basis."

But Dodd, who supports hunting and fishing as a valid recreational and income-producing activity, says comparisons between hunting and preserving habitat are not valid.

"Hunting does not destroy a wildlife population," said Dodds. "It is done in a manner that the population is maintained, not destroyed. The key to keeping a healthy wildlife population is habitat. If there is no habitat or not enough habitat, there will be no wildlife left to hunt."

If the FCC grants a license to Plateau, the State Land Department will hold a final hearing to determine whether to grant a commercial lease on Montoso.

To Dodd, that hearing will determine more than what happens to one mountain in northern Arizona: It will indicate how responsive the state is to environmental concerns.

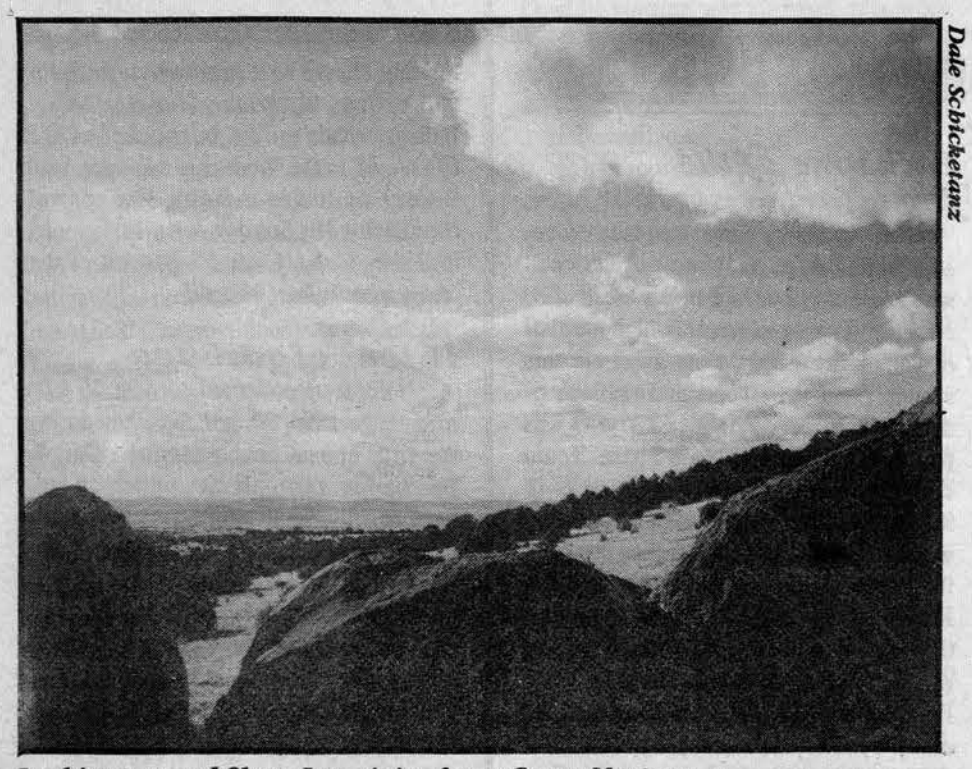
— Susan Kroupa

Susan Kroupa is a writer in Show Low, Ariz.

BARBS

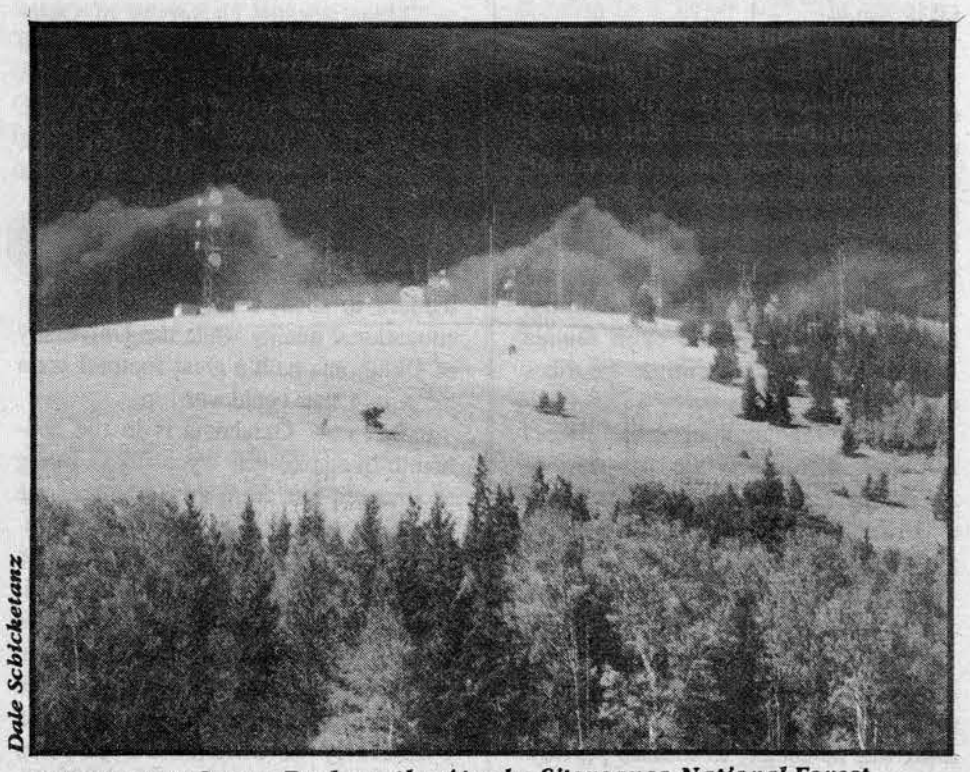
That's great! It means America will never run out of food.

After a mega-billion dollar competition, RJR Nabisco was bought out by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, which controls Beatrice and Safeway stores.



Dale Schicketanz

Looking toward Show Low, Ariz., from Cerro Montoso



Dale Schicketanz

Antennas at Greens Peak on the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest

ESSAY

Here's a chance to win back the West's rivers

by Peter J. Kirsch

For the intermountain West, one of the hottest wars of the 1990s promises to be over the protection of surface water. And that war will likely be won or lost in battles before a single federal agency.

Buried in Washington, D.C's, alphabet soup of agencies is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. FERC, in the acronym parlance of the federal government, is already well known for regulating natural gas and oil pipelines, and hydroelectric projects.

Since it was created in the mid-1970s, however, FERC has gone about its business fairly quietly. Until recently, little attention was given to the long term effect of the agency's policies on Western rivers. But historical accident and recent changes in federal law promise to make FERC the most important battleground for river protection for the next 10 years.

First the history. The 1930s and early 1940s were the halcyon days of dam building. Beginning in the latter years of the Depression, dam building was seen as the key to economic development in the arid West. Dams could provide water for irrigation, homes and industry, as well as cheap hydroelectric power.

Anyone who has spent time in the intermountain West knows this building frenzy resulted in the damming, channeling and rerouting of just about every major river, stream or creek in the West. With the exception of a few protected rivers, river flow is no longer determined by weather or geography. Instead, rivers are turned on and off by dam czars who sit in futuristic control rooms and open and shut valves as their ratepayers and investors demand.

It is no surprise that environmental impact was largely irrelevant when these dams were constructed. Neither dam builders nor federal regulators cared much about the ecological effect of stopping up freely-flowing rivers and creating huge lakes. It has only been in the last two decades that we have fully understood the environmental effects of such unnatural river flow.

We have learned that river basin ecology is the result of not just the quantity of water flowing in a river but also its speed, frequency and variation. When any one of these elements is changed radically, the downstream ecology may be grotesquely affected.

The Platte River in Nebraska provides a good example. While actual quantity of water has not declined radically in the last 50 years, dozens of dams have changed when water flows, how fast it flows, how deep the river channel is, how much sediment the river carries, and myriad other characteristics. The result has been a more regulated river — there are fewer floods and fewer dry spells. The river channel is more clearly defined.

While any one of these changes might have been small, the combined effect has been tremendous. The last fifty years have seen an alarming decrease in the Great Plains wet meadows, land crucial for scores of migratory birds and other wildlife. Habitat for endangered and threatened species such as the whooping crane, bald eagle, least tern and piping plover has been destroyed or damaged for hundreds of miles of the river basin. And while each dam along the river plays a part in the destruction, the mammoth Kingsley Dam in western Nebraska is most directly responsible for the changes.

The federal government, local governments and private industry all got into the dam-building frenzy that included such federal behemoths as Hoover and Bonneville dams and smaller but equally important local projects like the Kingsley Dam in Nebraska. Federal dams were built and regulated by one of several different federal agencies; dams constructed by local governments, public utility districts and private industry were all regulated by the Federal Power Commission, predecessor to the FERC. Most dams received 50-year licenses.

Quick arithmetic shows the 50-year licenses granted in the 1930s and 1940s have recently expired or will soon. The licenses for several hundred early dams expire in the next five to ten years. The single largest number — almost 200 nationwide — expire in 1993, a scant five years from now.

The 1920 federal law under which the early dams were licensed was silent on environmental protection, recreation, or wildlife protection. Despite the passage of environmentally enlightened laws like the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act, dams have been routinely relicensed for another fifty-year term, as in the 1930s, without any real thought given to environmental impact.

The expiring of the Depression and post-war licenses coincided with Congress' enactment of the Electric Consumers Protection Act in 1986. It will fundamentally change the issues FERC must consider before licensing or relicensing any dams.

Although the language of the existing law required that FERC consider the "public interest," it has consistently refused to give weight to environmental values. But the new law requires that FERC give "equal consideration" to energy conservation, to protecting and improving fish and wildlife, to protecting recreational opportunities, and to preserving other aspects of environmental quality.

FERC is now required to place conditions on dam operations as needed to protect the environment. No longer can irrigation, power production, and commercial and industrial development run roughshod over the environment in a drive for cheap water and power.

The combination of the 1986 law and the hundreds of pending and soon-to-be-filed relicense applications offers an unprecedented opportunity to direct the fate of dozens of American rivers for the next fifty years. But, as Dave Conrad of Friends of the Earth explained to Congress, it is unrealistic to expect that FERC and the dam builders will calmly accept these changes. FERC has an historic bias against environmental protection which won't be easy to overcome. And dam operators will cling tenaciously to their freedom to run projects without environmental constraints.

Because no one has much experience applying the new law, we will be working with a clean slate. How will that slate look a few years from now? Will FERC be allowed to continue its anti-environmental interpretation of its mandate? Will the hydro and power interests be permitted to continue business as usual?

Or will FERC and dam owners be forced to come to grips with the true environmental effects of hydro projects? The answers to these questions will be written during the next year or two as FERC creates the first and most important precedents for how it will apply the new law in practice.

If we hope to protect river environments — like the wet meadows along Nebraska's Platte River — the earliest battles will be most important. These first relicensing proceedings will create the law and precedents upon which will be built the hundreds of relicensing proceedings over the next ten years.

National environmental groups like American Rivers, National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society and Friends of the Earth have been lobbying FERC to adopt regulations which add real teeth to the "equal consideration" language in the new law. FERC has recently proposed — and is expected to adopt — regulations which, by and large, follow the intent of the law. But they are only the beginning.

If the environmental community hopes to establish favorable first crucial precedents, local organizations will have to become involved very early in the relicensing process. Today is none too early.

Under FERC regulations, a dam operator whose license expires before 1992 should have already informed FERC whether it intends to apply for a new license. Dam operators are required to give FERC notice five years in advance. A final relicense application must be completed two years before the existing license expires. Shortly after FERC receives relicense applications, the new statute requires that it set procedures for handling that particular application.

Once FERC has received an application, any interested person — including citizens' associations or environmental groups — can ask to become a formal participant in the relicensing proceeding. Participants can comment officially on the application, scrutinize the dam operator's data, and have a substantial role in structuring the conditions under which the dam will operate for the next 50 years.

The environmental community must scrutinize these dam applications and must analyze their 50-year history of environmental effects. It must bring all environmental impacts to FERC's attention and ensure that conditions are added to the dam license to assure future environmental protection. If necessary, the environmental community must take dam operators and FERC to court to challenge loose environmental controls.

If the necessary work is large, so are the potential rewards. Unlike too many environmental battles where victory is short-lived, victories today will be here for our grandchildren. If the environmental community watches over relicensing, we just might be able to buy 50 years of peace. And that is no small battle to win.

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Peter Kirsch is an attorney in Washington, D.C., who specializes in public policy litigation. He represents a number of public interest groups and local governments in environmental law matters.

LETTERS

DISAGREES

Dear *HCN*,

I disagree with Peter Carrels' assertion about North Dakota Gov. George Sinner. "... Sinner, a Red River Valley farmer, has a bad reputation with environmentalists in his state because of his work against environmental controls on energy development in western North Dakota" (*HCN, 11/21/88).*

First off, I'm not sure what an environmentalist is or isn't, but if it is one concerned about the environment, Gov. Sinner has a good reputation with those types I'm familiar with. While many would have preferred a stronger stand from the governor on Clean Air Act amendments, this by no means shows the governor is anti-environment.

Gov. Sinner has been a major force in the resumption of habitat acquisition by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Game and Fish Department in North Dakota. He has led the way in the establishment of what is popularly referred to as "No Net Wetland Loss" legislation in North Dakota. This landmark effort insures that the remaining 2.5 million acres of wetlands in North Dakota will continue to be part of the state's environment. The governor signed and supported the Nongame Wildlife Bill. He has worked with wildlife professionals, farmers, and water interests to help develop dialogue to benefit all those diverse groups. His actions indicate he is pro-environment. It is incorrect to categorically state that George Sinner has a bad reputation with environmentalists in North Dakota. I think it is more accurate to state that Peter Carrels has limited environmental contacts in North Dakota, and his assertion may simply reflect those limited contacts.

Michael G. McKenna
Bismarck, North Dakota

The writer is Natural Resources Coordinator for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

MIXING IT UP

Dear *HCN*,

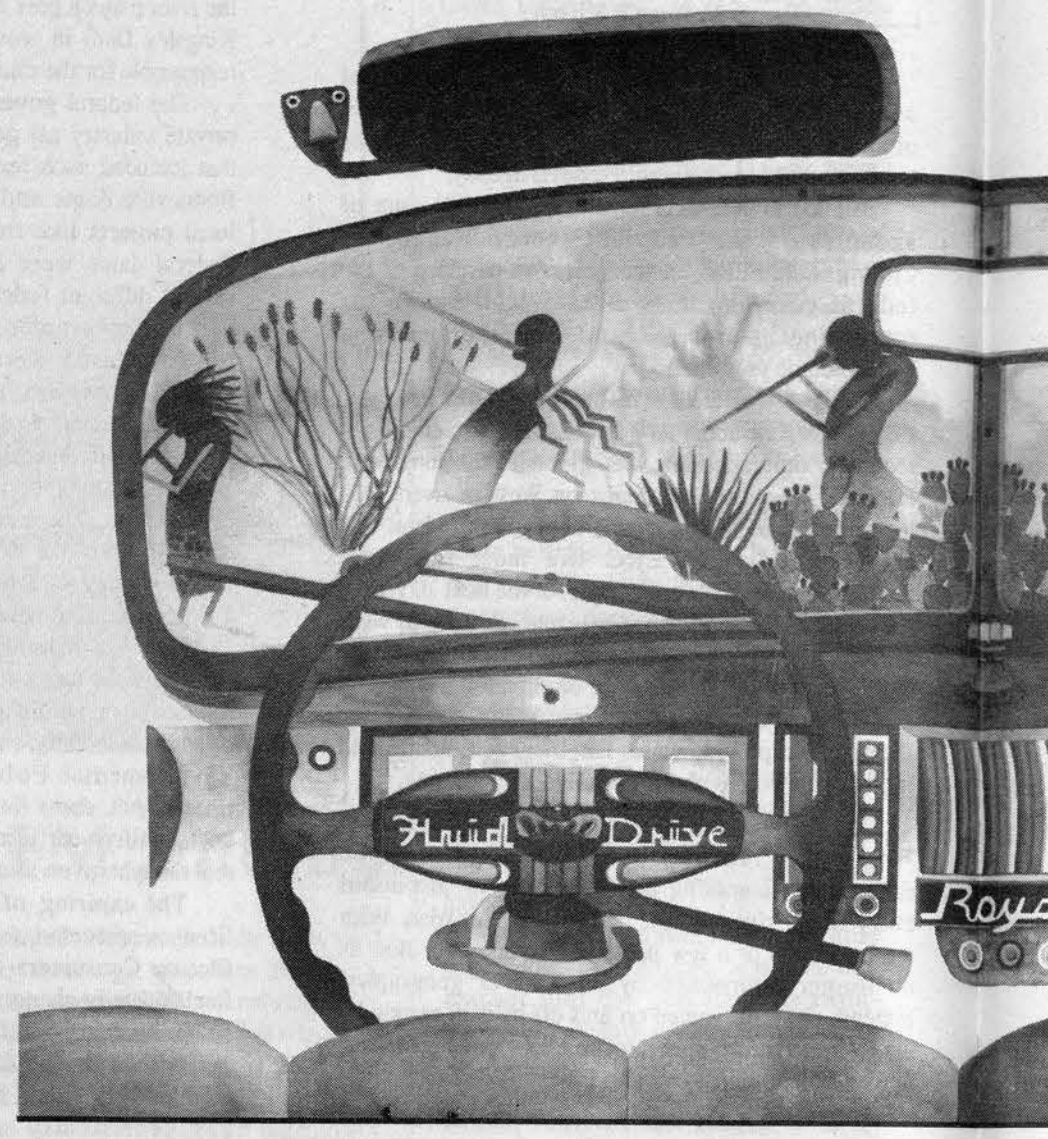
I'm glad to learn that I'm not the only one who collects mixed metaphors. Last spring I bagged, from the same writer who gave us the cavernous Achilles' heel, a sentence that read, approximately, "The yeast that made the Front Range rise since World War II had finally run out of gas." I'm forced to quote from memory because I sent the original to the *New Yorker,* intending to donate the $25 they pay for such items to the Research Fund. Alas, the *New Yorker* declined to kick in.

Bruce Berger
Aspen, Colorado

Editor's note: Yeast operates by generating CO_2 — a gas. Dough stops rising when the yeast stops generating CO_2.

No wonder the *New Yorker* didn't use it.

On the Road with



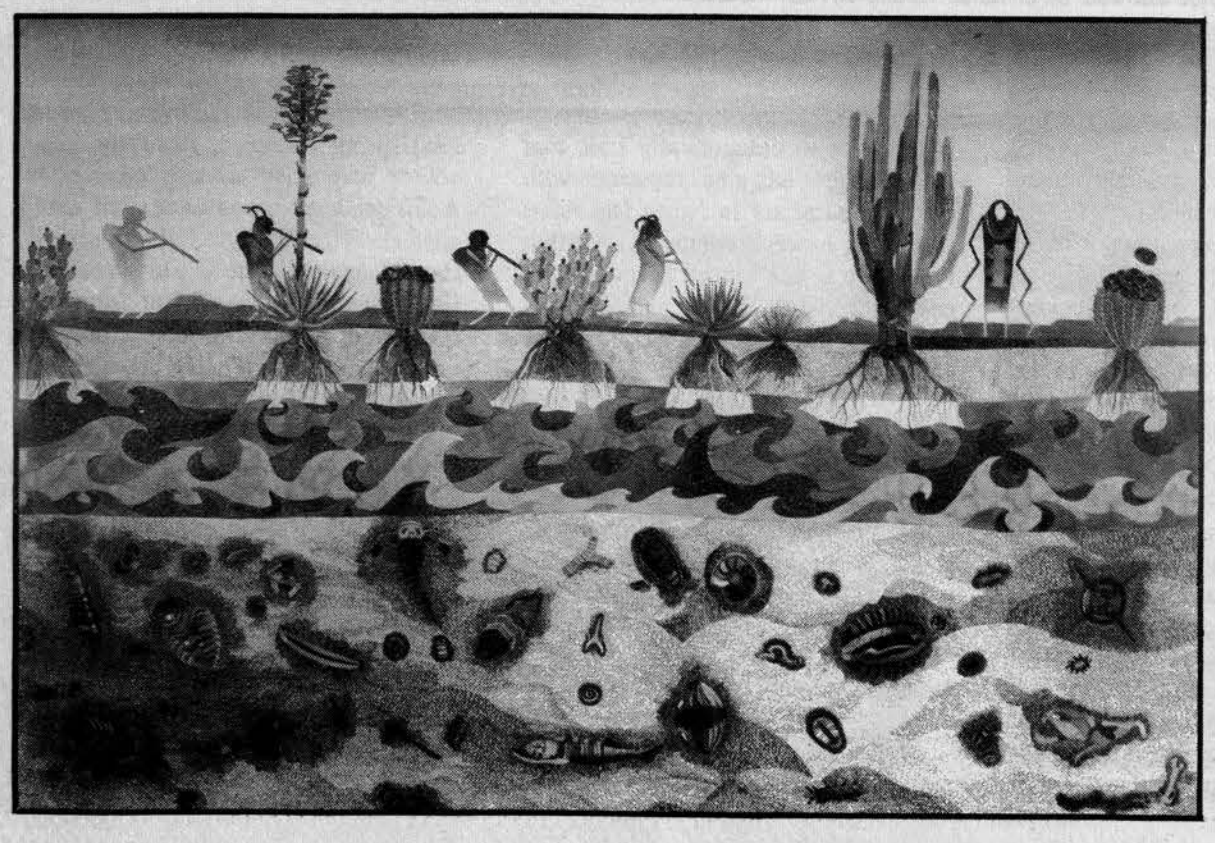
I was educated in the Sierras, the Cascades, Glen Canyon and the San Fransisco Art Institute. After writing On the Loose with my brother Terry in 1966, which Sierra Club said was their most popular book, I escaped from the Bay Area and moved to New Mexico. I was captured by the light and space and never left.

I paint for the love and joy of it. I am also a musician, a silversmith, and I have a perpetual house-building disease. I charge my batteries working as a part-time river guide in Grand Canyon.

The Southwest inspires me — the people who live here, the places where they don't. The land, the rivers, the light, the empty timelessness.

A while ago I came upon a huge, beautiful, intricate, perfect Anasazi pot in a cliff crack with thousands of vertical feet below. The repercussion of that event will always influence my art — and yes, that pot is still out there.

I paint mainly with watercolor, with very small brushes that I like to keep immaculately



vith Renny Sumner

clean. I use watercolor in a non-traditional way. I never cared for thin, boring washes, but color drives me wild. A cyclamen next to a burnt orange, next to a Juniper blue-green and on and on. I like to intensify nature.

The image is often a mystery. It happens automatically while I work. The process is difficult to articulate. I go into a timeless, trance-like state when I work. My paintings reflect my whimsical, spiritual, colorful and humorous view of life. I like people to look at my work and become emotional — to laugh, to think, to feel something. Diego Rivera once referred to his need to paint as a biological necessity. I feel the same.

All the petroglyphs I've seen over the years have been a strong influence. Who can say why so many of these figures seem to be the same shape, and what are those antenna-like projections? About five years ago I decided to take these beings off the wall and have them walking around in my paintings. They've been with me ever since.

—Renny Russell Sumner

Voters...

(Continued from page 1)

Fern Mullen

stable and attractive to tourists, retirees, and compatible industry," and that was what the majority apparently wanted to hear.

Mullen, 69, is a retired director of nurses at the local hospital. Every winter she restores her soul with friends on a month-long river trip through the Grand Canyon.

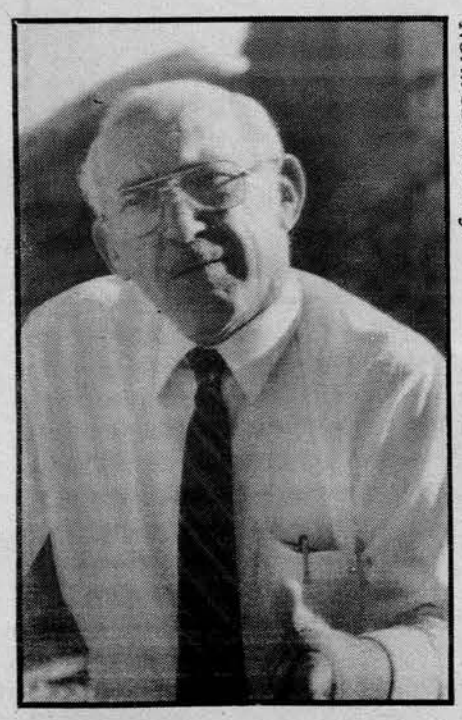
Lawton, 65, recently retired after 17 years as general manager of Rio Algom uranium mining and milling. Politics will now provide the risks he once sought in stock-car racing and keeping a Moab-area industrial operation going for years beyond its life expectancy.

It took Mullen to harness the most potent political force to emerge from the ashes of economic decline — older women. And it took a man of Lawton's mining stature to make Grand County believe the uranium industry dead. "Even if acid rain and ozone problems make nuclear power politically acceptable," Lawton declared in the campaign, "another uranium boom in Grand County is unlikely because there are cheaper foreign sources."

Mullen campaigned as "the soft-spoken candidate who can research, study and listen." She was the opposite of incumbent Dutch Zimmerman, who often offended older women (and many others) with his blustering, macho behavior, his antipathy to education, and his refusal to read reports.

The Mullen campaign's main weapon was Zimmerman's bluster. He refused to acknowledge any arguments against the incinerator and he classified all opponents as "environmentalists."

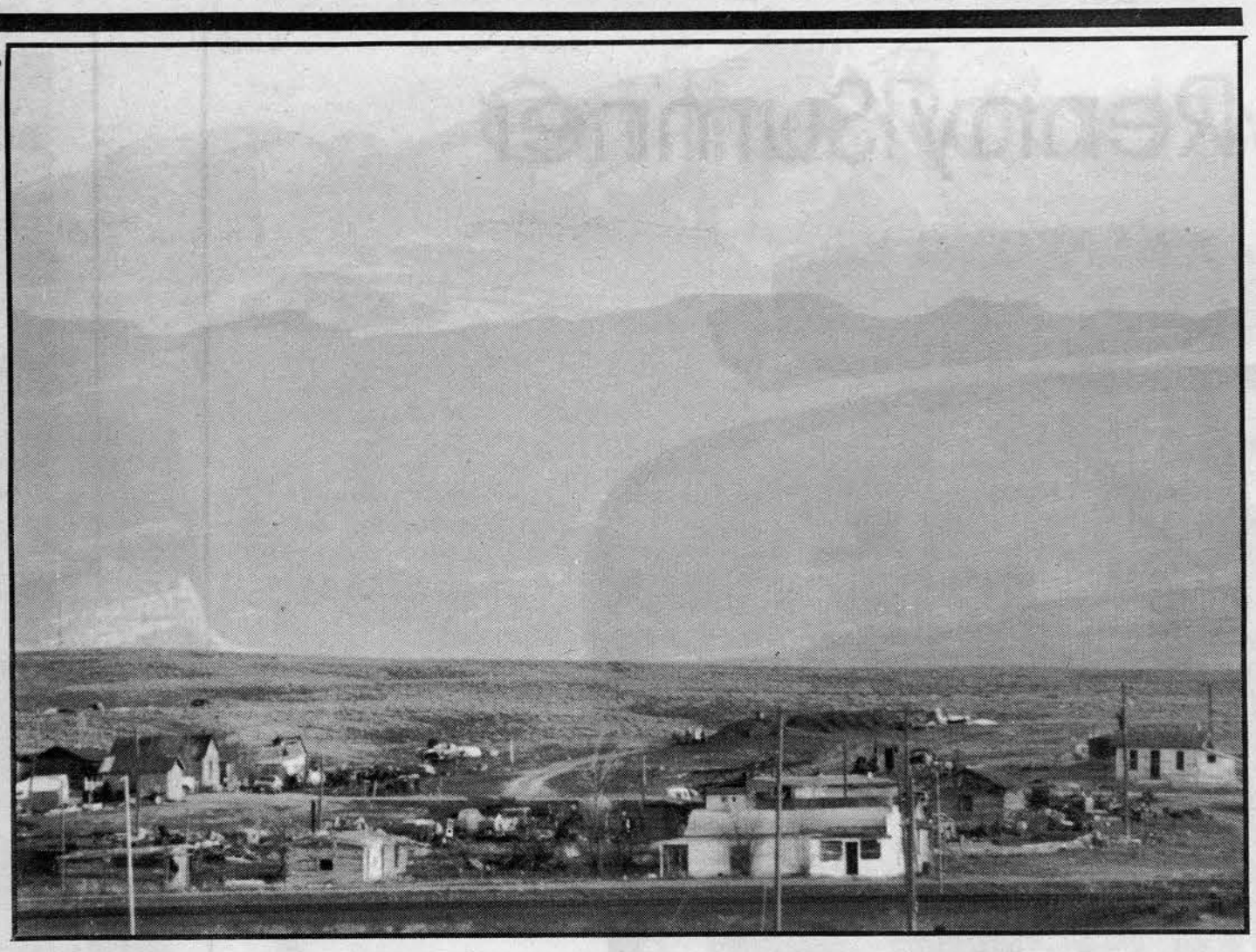
"Not one of us is an environmentalist," Mullen's campaign manager Melba Stewart explained, "unless you call someone who cares about the community and all living things an environmentalist. I told Dutch he should look up the definition. It doesn't sound like a quote from Karl Marx."



Norm Shrewsbury

Merv Lawton

Norm Shrewsbury



The mostly abandoned town of Cisco, Utah

Supporters of the incumbents tried to label Lawton as a turncoat, a miner who had become an environmentalist.

Most of the women are natives, or, like Mullen, have lived in Moab for 25 years or more. They are not necessarily better educated or more experienced in the outside world than many of their generation, but they place more stock in both knowledge and experience. Their willingness to learn and change with the times created a special bond between them and activists in the anti-incinerator and political campaigns.

Most of the activists in these campaigns are older members of the baby boom generation. Some grew up in Moab and went off to college in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Some are "newcomers" who found Grand County during the "back to the earth" movement of the time.

Whether native or newcomer, most, but not all, of this generation were quite willing to work in mining or related businesses when jobs were there. The most creative and adaptable remained after the jobs were gone. During the past few years a few real newcomers have brought to the fray their own wherewithal or ability to adapt to adverse economic conditions.

Until recently, the ability of this younger generation to influence events has been low. Their opposition to the Nuclear Waste Repository, proposed for land adjacent to Canyonlands National Park, was characterized by the Sagebrush Rebel establishment as coming from obstructionists, hippies, welfare bums and "newcomers."

The defeated commissioners treated the incinerator opponents in the same way, failing to notice that whether "newcomer" or native, they were respected people active in community affairs. In addition, because of their own unquestioning commitment to the proposition that only heavy industry can provide jobs for simple rural folk, they failed to notice that a majority of their constitutents were no longer simple enough to accept the incinerator.

The opponents of the incinerator and of the commissioners easily grabbed the political center by choosing a cooperative mode. By being in favor of reasonable industrial development, including mining if properly managed, they created a broad base of support among merchants and even leaders of the Red Rock 4-Wheelers (jeep club). While they accepted no overt assistance from environmental organizations, they gladly took help from grass-roots organizations downwind of Cisco in western Colorado.

While the senior women of Moab expressed their distaste for Zimmerman by replacing him with one of their own, community activists settled on a candidate from a surprising place, the uranium industry.

Merv Lawton had left South Africa's repressive society to take up mining in Canada. His employer, Rio Algom, sent him on a temporary assignment to Moab, where he found a permanent home. Once president of the Utah Mining Association, Lawton was well known in mining circles.

Lawton set himself to work making new friends while keeping old ones (the Rio Algom union endorsed him even though the mine and mill were permanently closed in October). It turned out to be easier than one might expect, because he speaks the new constituency's language, albeit with an accent.

It is a language of self-examination, of sensitivity to natural forces, and of devotion to community. It understands that resource exploitation imposes public costs even while bestowing public benefits. It is surprisingly pragmatic because it blends counter-culture values with an ability to survive in an economy that lost 37 percent of its jobs in five years.

Supporters of the incumbents tried to label Lawton as a turncoat, a miner who had become an environmentalist. Lawton did not take the bait. Instead he portrayed himself as the leader/manager who could meet the challenges. He had, after all, stretched the life of the ailing Rio Algom mine and mill from an expected five years to 17 years.

"The health of our present economy," he argued, "depends upon our ability to attract tourists and retirees. A hazardous waste incinerator will undercut these last remaining strengths of our economy." His standing in the community countered charges that once elected, Lawton would join the ranks of the "extreme environmentalists." (That is the term used by Sagebrush Rebels to distinguish local "environmentalists" from people who belong to organizations like the Sierra Club.)

While Lawton and Mullen preached economic optimism, Walker and Zimmerman were haunted by desperation. They belligerently pursued the toxic waste incinerator, even though warned by no less an authority than Sam Taylor, publisher of the Moab *Times-Independent*, that it could irreparably damage the Republican Party.

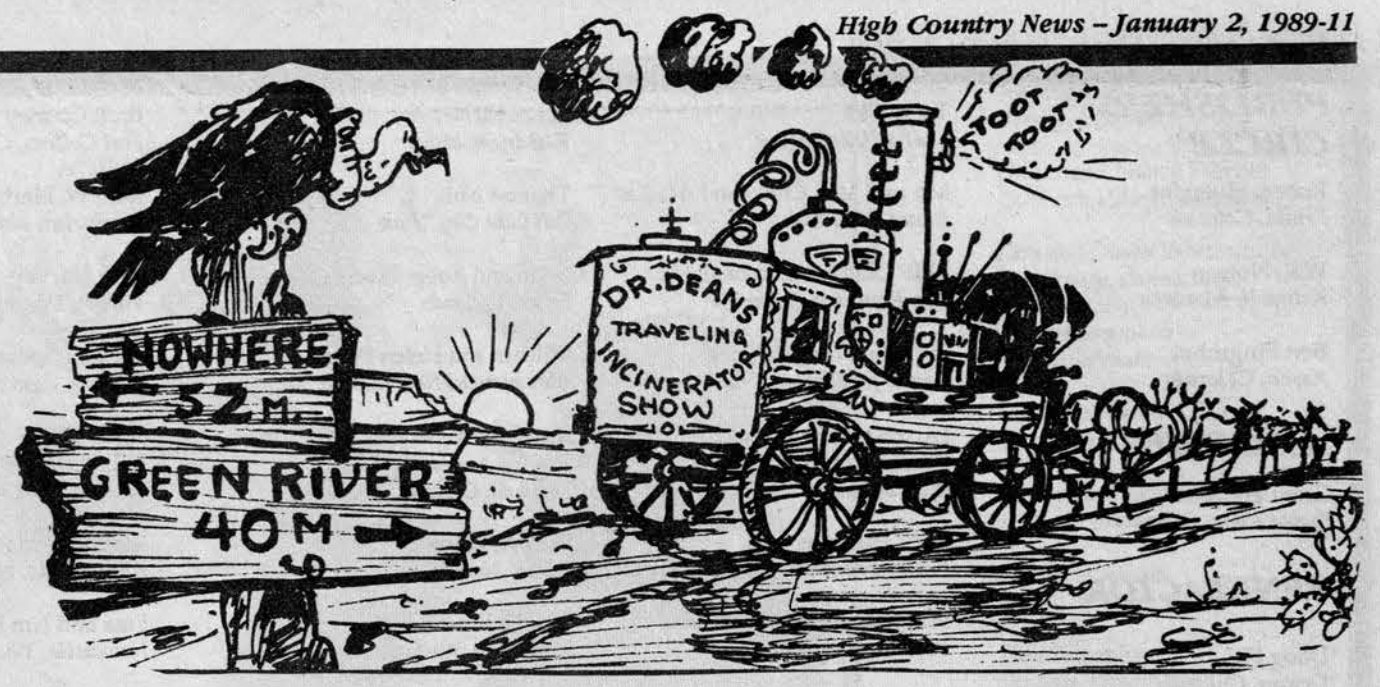
They exclaimed, "beggars can't be choosers," because that's how they saw the economic situation. They believed their course was best for the county because of its obvious need for a tax base. They believed they represented the majority and that it was right and proper to subdue minority opinion.

After the election, Walker told a Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel* reporter: "It's nothing more than another environmental movement. It was an incinerator today, tomorrow it'll be a road. There's an element of society around here that doesn't want anything to happen and they never have liked Jimmie Walker. And, by the way, Jimmie Walker is quite proud of that."

❐

Craig Bigler is a freelancer in Moab, Utah.

Don't waste us, say Nevada and Utah



by Steve Hinchman

Although the proposed Cisco toxic waste incinerator was overwhelmingly rejected by Grand County voters, Utah still faces major decisions on toxic waste disposal. Over the past two years, 15 toxic waste incinerators have been proposed for Utah.

Some proposals are no more than preliminary inquiries to the state Bureau of Solid and Hazardous Waste. Others, like CoWest's proposal for Cisco, are being aggressively pursued by both industry and small towns seeking new jobs and tax revenue.

The boom has left Utah's environmentalists, community leaders, governor, some legislators and its Bureau of Solid and Hazardous Waste scrambling to develop a hazardous waste policy. But the policy is not yet complete, and several projects may slip through while the issue is debated. State officials predict Utah's first incinerator could be permitted as early as next spring.

Now that the Cisco site is out of the running, CoWest president Dean Norris has accepted an invitation from the town of Green River, Utah, to move his proposed incinerator across the line to neighboring Emery County. Other active projects include five commercial incinerators proposed for the barren salt flats of Tooele and Box Elder counties in the northwestern part of the state and five incinerators or test facilities proposed for two of Utah's many military bases.

All would process out-of-state waste. Utah produces about 20,000 tons of solid hazardous wastes annually, according to the Bureau of Solid and Hazardous Wastes. That is less than half the capacity of an average-sized incinerator.

If built, the incinerators would burn polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), highly toxic chemicals such as benzene, phosgene, chloroform, tetrachlorethylene, napthalene, formaldehyde, dioxin and more than 400 others, as well as soils and other material contaminated by toxic solvents. The military projects would burn rocket fuel, gasses used in chemical warfare and outdated ammunition, as well as the normal toxic chemicals.

Utah is not the only Western state beseiged by toxic waste proposals. In 1986, Nevada received 22 applications for hazardous waste incinerators and landfills. Like Utah, nearly all were from out-of-state companies or the military, and all would have had to burn or bury wastes generated elsewhere to turn a profit.

The two states are victims of the NIMBY, or "Not In My Backyard," phenomenon. For decades, chemical wastes were buried in landfills, which often leaked and contaminated soils, surface water and groundwater. As a result of the problems, Congress passed the 1986 Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments to the Resource and Conservation Recovery Act of 1980.

The amendments' restrictions on land disposal closed landfills in many states, making incineration the technology of choice. But incinerators proved difficult to site in the large industrial states that produced most of the hazardous waste.

California, for example, is a major waste producer. But since 1979, six of its 12 disposal facilities have closed. And with passage of California Proposition 65 in 1986, it is now nearly impossible to build new incinerators or to open landfills there. Instead, the state's tough regulations and $72-per-ton disposal fee have encouraged California companies to look out of state.

Their eyes first fell on Nevada and Utah, states with empty spaces, low populations, low disposal fees (in 1986, Nevada charged $20 per ton and Utah $3 per ton), tiny regulatory agencies and no plans for hazardous waste management.

Nevada reacted first to the out-of-state attention. Nevada Gov. Richard Bryan imposed a moratorium on construction of new hazardous waste facilities until the state had passed a hazardous waste management plan. The plan took more than a year to formulate and included extensive public debate on the question of how much out-of-state waste Nevada should accept.

Passed in March 1987, the plan banned hazardous waste incinerators or landfills that would import waste to Nevada and encouraged the state's industry to reduce its chemical wastes by recycling or by new manufacturing processes. However, the plan exempted the state's two existing incinerators, which at 160,000 tons per year can burn 30 times more waste than Nevada generates. It also exempted a third incinerator, near Yerington, which was already under construction.

Utah hasn't proved as quick or as unified. State officials first favored a toxic waste industry. In 1986, Gov. Norman Bangerter convened a task force of legislators to develop a hazardous waste incinerator policy. Their recommendation was to let the free market decide how many incinerators Utah would build and to use existing county land-use laws to decide where they would go.

Allan Miller, a community resource specialist for the Utah Environment Center, an incinerator foe, says that with Utah's $3-per-ton disposal fee and California's $72 fee, "What the free market ended up doing was saying, 'Welcome to Utah.'"

Most Utah residents, however, gave the toxic waste companies a different reception. In the late summer of 1987, farmers in southwestern Utah's Iron County learned of the Rollins Co.'s intention to build an incinerator near the town of Beryl. Worried about crops and groundwater, the farmers drove their tractors to Cedar City, the county seat, to protest the commissioners' approval of a conditional permit for Rollins. In October, after extended controversy, the Iron County Commissioners withdrew the permit and, according to the *Deseret News*, won a standing ovation from the more than 200 residents who attended the meeting.

Rollins, which is one of the nation's larger waste disposal companies, was then invited to Lynndyl, population 100, which is located over 100 miles north of Beryl, in Millard County. That set off a fight in Millard County.

Although a majority of the county's 10,000 residents appeared to oppose the incinerator, the county commissioners said they couldn't interfere with the zoning decisions of even as small a town as Lynndyl.

In early September a public information meeting in Delta, the Millard County seat, drew 900 people — nearly 10 percent of the county's population. Those attending were almost unanimous in opposing the incinerator. County officials said it was the largest public meeting ever held in western Utah.

This meeting, combined with the anti-incinerator movement underway in Grand County, proved too much for Gov. Bangerter.

Miller recalls, "Forty-eight hours after the meeting in Delta, the governor, in a special session of the Legislature, asked for a temporary moratorium on processing permits for hazardous waste incinerators." The Legislature agreed and also raised the state's disposal fee to $6 per ton for wastes generated in-state and $9 per ton for wastes generated out of state.

Bangerter then asked the state Committee on Solid and Hazardous Waste to draft siting criteria governing hazardous waste incinerators, instead of leaving it to county land-use plans. Final siting regulations were unanimously adopted Dec. 16, and the moratorium was lifted.

According to Brent Bradford, director of the Bureau of Solid and Hazardous Waste, the criteria prohibit siting an incinerator within five miles of surface water or of a population center, ban any incinerators in state or national parks, limit construction of incinerators on land having groundwater within 150 feet of the surface and require industry to provide or fund local emergency-response safety teams.

The criteria do not create a buffer zone around parks, but they are otherwise considered as good as those in most other states. The new rules will knock out several proposed incinerators, including the Rollins project in Lynndyl.

Miller says the criteria are important because they will send industry the message that "we don't want to be the dumping ground of the region, despite what the Legislature may have told you."

Although they serve notice that Utah is no longer wide open to hazardous wastes, Utah still must decide if it wishes to develop a hazardous waste disposal industry and, if it does, how much waste it should accept from outside the state. That question may be answered in the 1989 session of the Utah Legislature.

In the meantime, state law gives the Bureau of Solid and Hazardous Waste 270 days to process a permit application for hazardous waste incinerators. Bradford says several are already in the works, and those that meet the criteria will be accepted.

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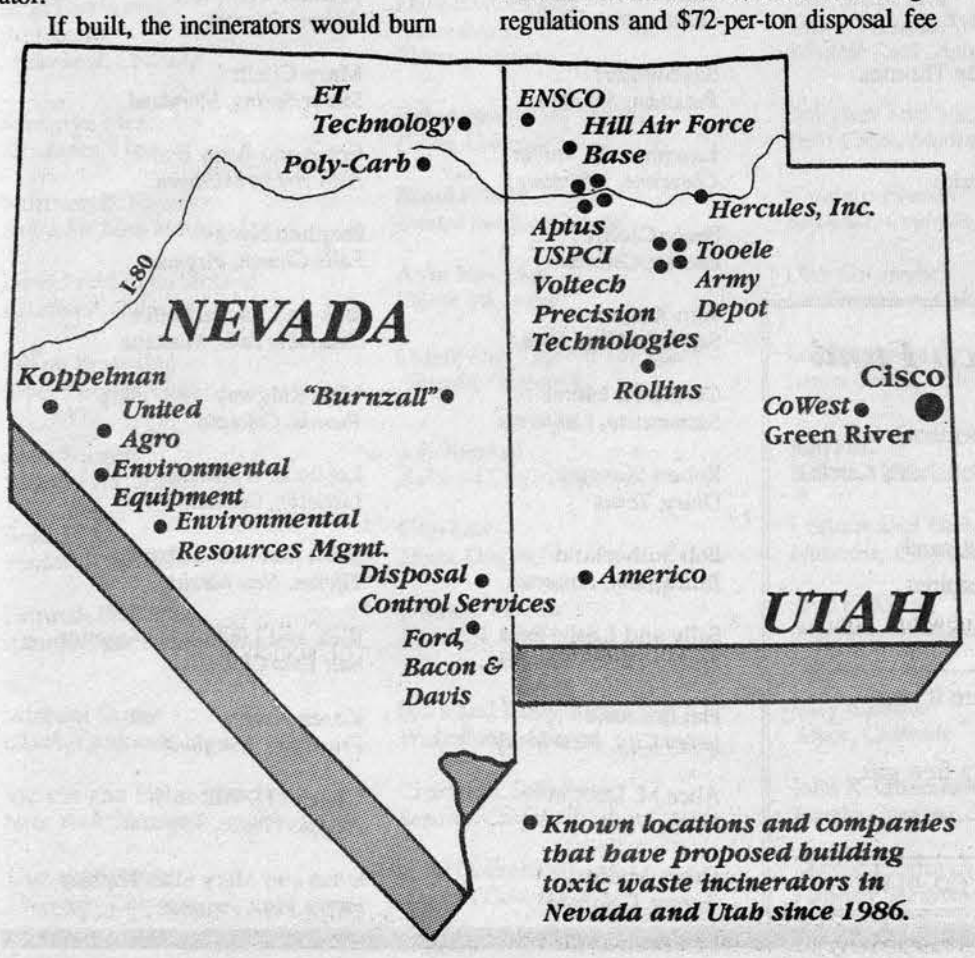

● Known locations and companies that have proposed building toxic waste incinerators in Nevada and Utah since 1986.

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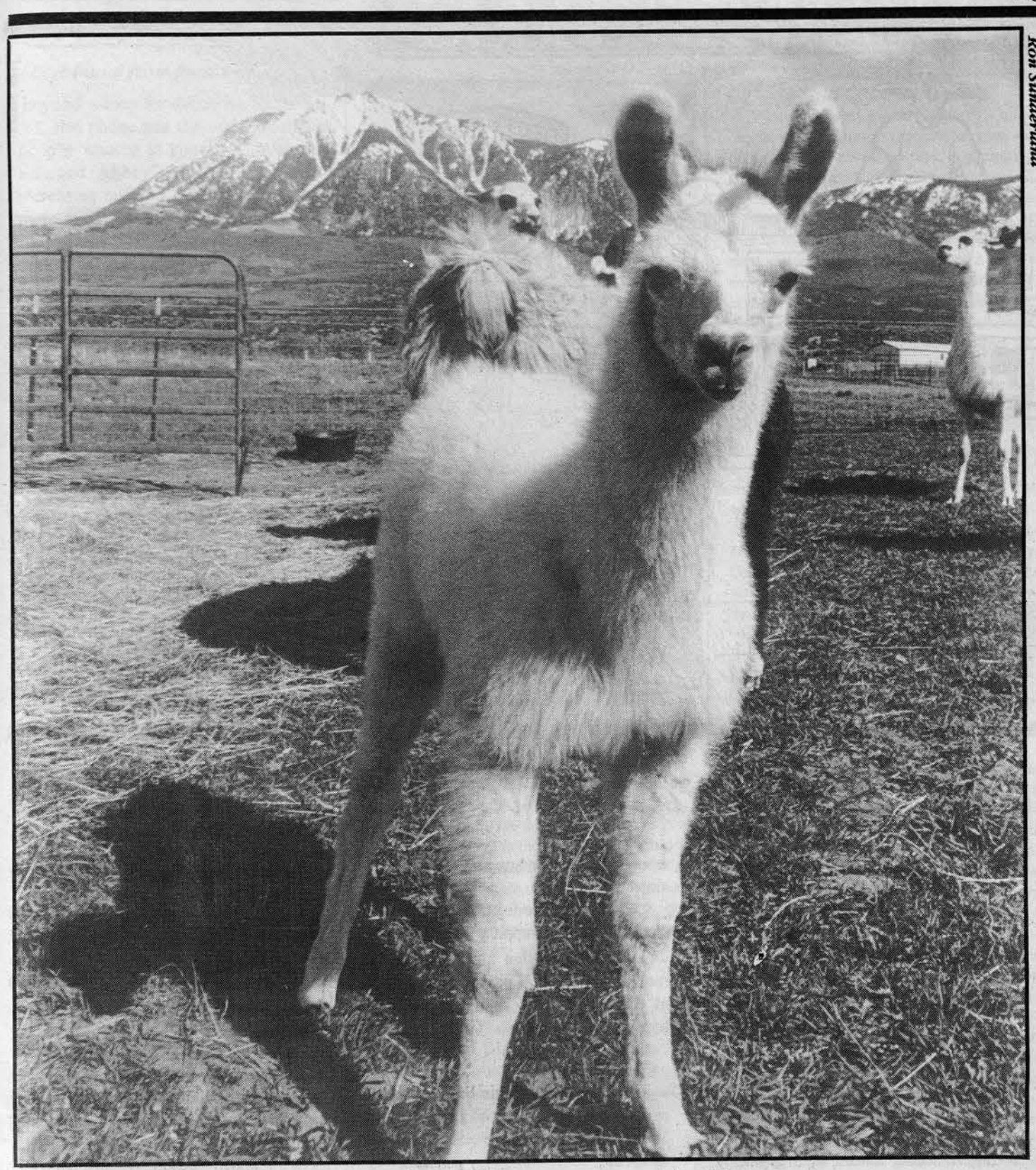

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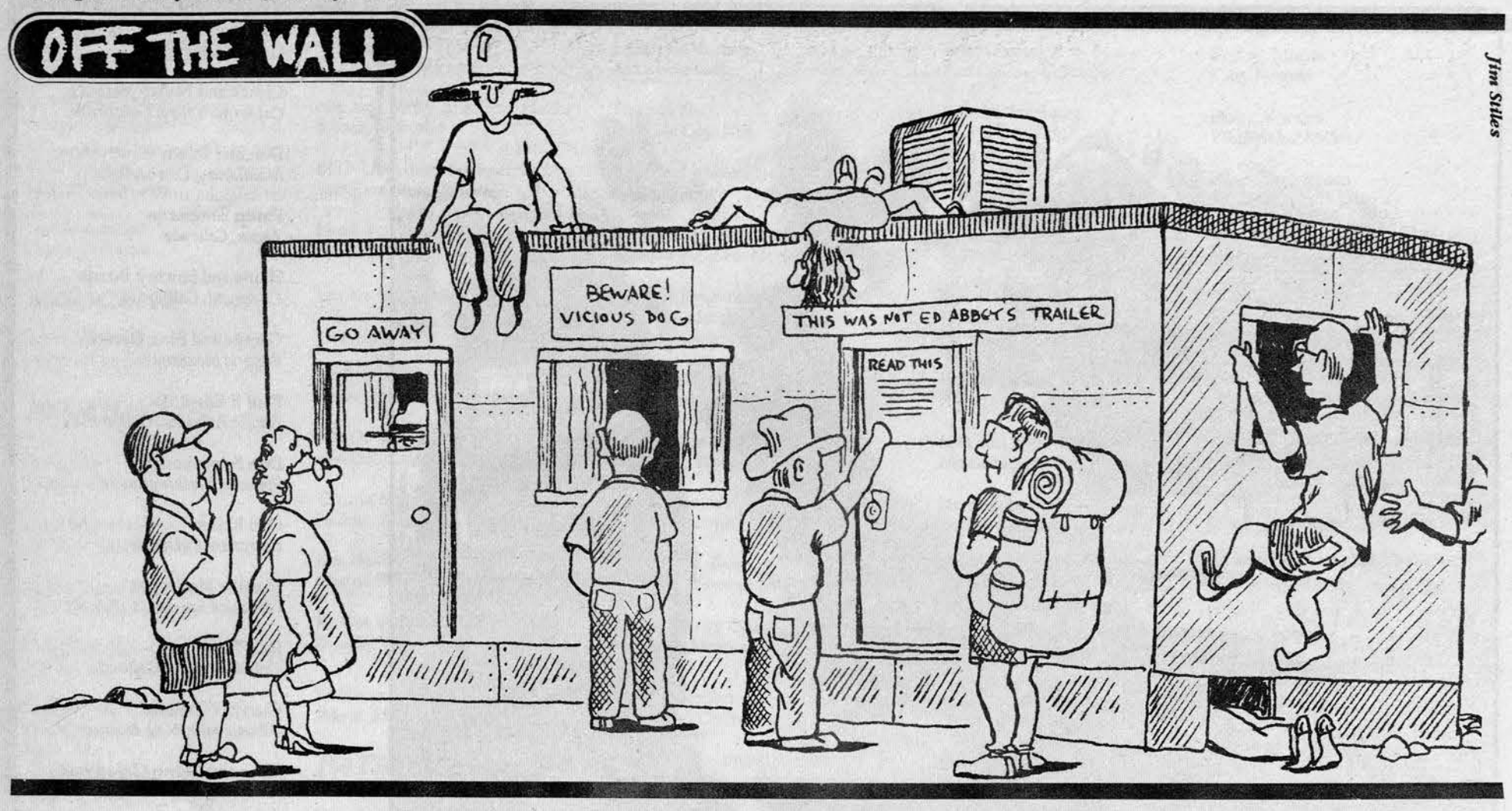


Crazed tourists track park ranger to his tin lair

by Jim Stiles

In the winter of 1975, I arrived in Moab, Utah, determined to make it my home. A very kind park ranger named Larry Reed offered me a job as a volunteer at Arches National Park.

For a free apartment and three bucks a day, I filled in at the Visitor Center information desk, made coffee and drove around the park in a big green ranger carry-all. I thought that was pretty neat.

In exchange for these privileges, I agreed to shave off my beard, thereby revealing my weak chin. I was rather attached to my beard; not only did it conceal the chin, I found I could store things in there — pencils, pens, as many as 10 eight-penny nails, a toothbrush, if need be.

But it was December, it was cold, and compared to frostbite and losing toes, losing hair was not so bad. Besides, hair grows back; toes don't.

So I took the job. After a quiet winter, chief ranger Jerry Epperson offered me a seasonal position. I was to live and work at the Devils Garden trailer, 18 miles from park headquarters. I would run the campground, patrol the roads and trails, and see that everything ran smoothly at the north end of the park. It all sounded like *Desert Solitaire* to me. I imagined myself as the lone (park) ranger, surrounded by solitude and stillness, sitting on a rock, observing the clouds pass, the sun set. Yes, I would spend this summer by myself, meditating. Contemplating the meaning of life, the essence of the desert, of a grain of sand.

Pretty heady stuff.

My starting date approached, and my uniforms arrived. I'd never worn any type of uniform before and was concerned I'd look too militaristic, but Larry assured me I looked fine. "But Jim," he said, "those white socks and sneakers have got to go."

On April 4, I moved to the little tin trailer at the campground entrance. It was right at the junction, barely 10 feet from the curb, but I never gave it a thought. I unloaded my gear and moved in. Later, I drove the big carry-all to Balanced Rock, chatted with a few visitors, and then hiked the Devils Garden trail to Double O Arch. It was the first and last time I wore that ridiculous Smokey Bear hat on the trail.

When the wind blew, I had to twist and contort my neck in all sorts of unnatural directions to keep that round monstrosity on my head. And it was (and still is) about as cool, comfortable and practical to wear as a cast-iron skillet.

Monday passed quietly. So did Tuesday. And then it happened. I was sitting on my porch, trying unsuccessfully to think deep, esoteric thoughts when a distant rumbling sound interrupted my concentration. The noise grew louder and louder. Finally, from around the corner, I saw an enormous Winnebago motorhome race toward the campground junction and turn in. It was followed by another. And another. And another ... and ANOTHER.

They kept coming — motorhomes, trailers, cab-over campers, recreational vehicles of all types. A lady climbed out of an Airstream trailer: "Yoo hoo, Ranger! We're the Salt Lake City Fire Department. We always come here for Easter. There'll be about a hundred more tomorrow." She roared off in search of a campsite.

Ten minutes later, a school bus pulled up. Fifty Boy Scouts poured out of it like angry ants and started running up and down the slick-rock domes and cliffs, screaming and yelling, and, by all appearances, trying to kill each other. A meek, bespectacled little man in a Boy Scout uniform tiptoed over to me on spindly legs and handed me an envelope.

"We're Troop 451 from Orem," he whispered. "We have reservations for the group site."

I told him where his site was located, but advised him he had to control his kids.

"Oh my, yes... of course." He turned in the general direction of the marauding little monsters and squeaked, "Now, now, boys. The rangers want us to behave ourselves. Let's all be good scouts."

The uniformed urchins continued to act like drug-crazed loonies. I went back in the trailer and pulled the shades. This is not what I expected, I thought to myself. How introspective can I be with all this noise? How can I possibly contemplate the meaning of a grain of sand when these Boy Scouts are *throwing* it at me.

Within an hour the campground was full, but the campers kept coming. I worked overtime that night, the first of many long nights. I parked the carry-all at the junction. RV after RV rolled in, long after midnight. They needed a campsite, they would say. "But the campground is full. Didn't you see the sign at the park entrance? " I would reply. Yes, but... they would stammer. Sorry, folks, and they would head back to Moab.

At midnight, I gave up. I went back to the trailer and took off my uniform. I was in my shorts and about to turn off the lights when a lady walked in my front door. She just *walked in*. Before I could even voice a protest over this obvious illegal entry, this woman with tear-filled eyes began to plead her case:

"Ranger, please! I'm begging you. We've driven all the way from Logan. My seven children are screaming, the baby threw up on the front seat, and my husband says he's going to leave me if we can't stay here tonight. I beg of you to help us." She sobbed big gut-wrenching sobs.

"Madam," I said finally. "Do you realize that you just walked into my trailer, my residence, my home? And that I'm standing here in my jockey shorts?"

Through the blur of tears, she looked closely at me for the first time... "Well," she replied, "I did notice you were out of uniform."

What could I do? That night this wretched family from Logan, Utah, slept in the empty group site, but I was hardly rewarded for my kindness and compassion. I survived Easter weekend, barely. (Things got tense when the firemen wanted to shut down the campground and have a street dance.)

But even after the Big Weekend had passed into history, hordes of tourists just kept on coming, and without exception, they all felt the need to "check in" at the Devils Garden trailer — my humble home. It was like the proverbial fishbowl, except all the fish were on the outside. Finally, when one day a German tourist walked in the trailer and asked for directions to Landscape Arch while I was taking a shower (I was actually shouting instructions through the bathroom door), I finally reached my limit.

I put a big sign on my door. I explained that the trailer was a residence, not an office. There was no need to stop. I explained the campground registration system, where the nearest phone was. Every conceivable question was dealt with on that sign.

I proudly installed the sign on the front door and went inside. About five minutes later, there was a knock on the door.

"Yeah, I've been reading this sign of yours, ranger ... Is all this information on here true?"

I became desperate. Finally, in what I modestly describe as a stroke of genius, I devised a brilliant new strategy. The Devils Garden trailer had two doors, both on the same side, facing the campground road. Each had small portable wooden steps in front of them. I dragged one set of steps behind the trailer. I placed the other set of steps in front of a blank section of exterior wall. Then I placed new sign on the two doors. The first sign said, "This is not a door." The other sign said, "This is not a door either — there are no doors."

It worked. Tourists would read one sign, then the other, circle the trailer, and leave. Once while peering through the curtain, I saw a man walk up the wooden steps and actually knock on the blank wall. But sometimes, genius is unappreciated. My boss was not pleased. Larry Reed was a patient man and was sympathetic to my plight. But the "No door" strategy was just too much.

"Doggone it, shoot, Jim," Larry said when he first saw the sign. When Larry's language degenerated to "doggone it," I knew I was in trouble — Larry was not mincing words. "And that picture has got to go," he added. "You're going to scare somebody."

Well, maybe so. It was just an 8x10 glossy of me in a rented gorilla suit, wearing my hat. Some thought the "monkey look" was an improvement. Anyway, I thought it added a nice touch to the door, but again I was vetoed.

I went back to the old sign and tried to make the best of it. As the summer rolled on, I realized I needed to include an additional piece of information.

(Continued on page 15)

Crazed...

(Continued from page 14)

Beyond asking for directions to the toilet, the phone and the water fountain, people wanted to know — "Was this Edward Abbey's trailer?" In ever-increasing numbers, visitors had tears in their eyes. One admirer came with tin snips, hoping to take home a little piece of the trailer as a memento.

At first, I told them the truth. No, this was not Edward Abbey's trailer. This trailer was at the time lying in a state of ruin at the central maintenance yard. It was eventually to be sold for scrap. But after a while, I thought — Why disappoint these people? *Of course* this was Ed Abbey's trailer (by the way). And when a beautiful young woman came by one day, touched my cheek with her hand and sighed that she just had to see where Ed Abbey slept, I knew that it was my duty, my responsibility as a loyal public servant, to fulfill her desire.

After that experience, another brand new sign came to mind:

Edward Abbey Slept Here
If You Play Your Cards Right,
***You* Can Too**

"No," said Larry simply. He didn't even want to discuss it. I had a feeling I was pushing my luck.

The summer ground on. I started wearing my Darth Vader mask whenever anyone knocked on the door, but the visitors didn't seem to notice. I started wondering why I was living in this crummy tin can. I'd come here for solitude, to be near the rocks and watch the sky. Instead, all I'd done was to either answer questions or expend an enormous amount of energy trying to avoid answering questions.

One night at 3 a.m., I was awakened by a knock on the door. A woman was standing anxiously on the porch. Her husband had kidney stones, she explained. Could I please take him to the hospital? The poor man groaned and moaned all the way to Moab, while his wife berated him for his alleged excessive beer drinking. We arrived at the hospital, and I turned the beleaguered husband over to Dr. Mayberry, climbed wearily into the carry-all and headed back to my little Devils Garden trailer. The sun was up by now. I stumbled through the front door and collapsed on the couch. I was about to drift away when there came a rapping at my door.

"Excuse me," the man said, "but is this Edward Abbey's trailer?" He had a copy of *Desert Solitaire* under his arm.

It was seven o'clock in the morning. I looked at this devoted follower through bleary eyes.

"Sir," I finally replied, "I *am* Edward Abbey."

"Really," he said. "I thought you'd be taller."

"Do you want me to autograph your book or not?" I snarled.

He handed me his book, and I must admit there was a look of reverence in his eyes as I wrote "To my old friend Herb ... Don't ever knock on my trailer door again....Your pal, Ed Abbey."

Herb left, a happy man. I went back to the couch. Well, I thought to myself, it's been quite a day. I impersonated Ed Abbey. I provided assistance to a man with kidney stones. I collected $154 in camping fees. This, I realized, is what it means to be a public servant.

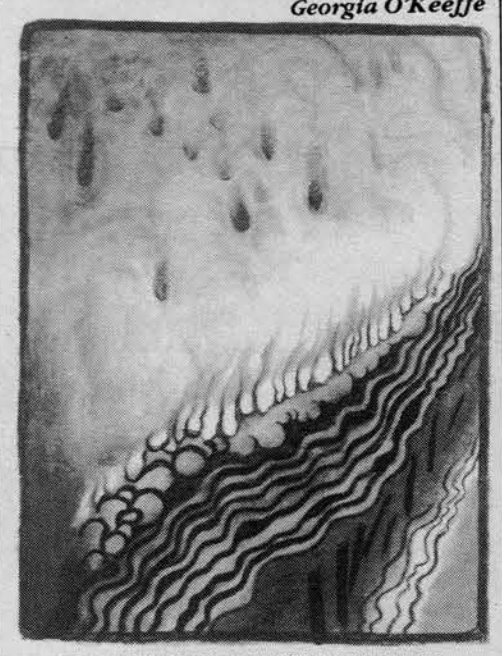
I live elsewhere now.

❐

Jim Stiles, now older and wiser, is a freelance writer in Moab, Utah.

BULLETIN BOARD

Georgia O'Keeffe

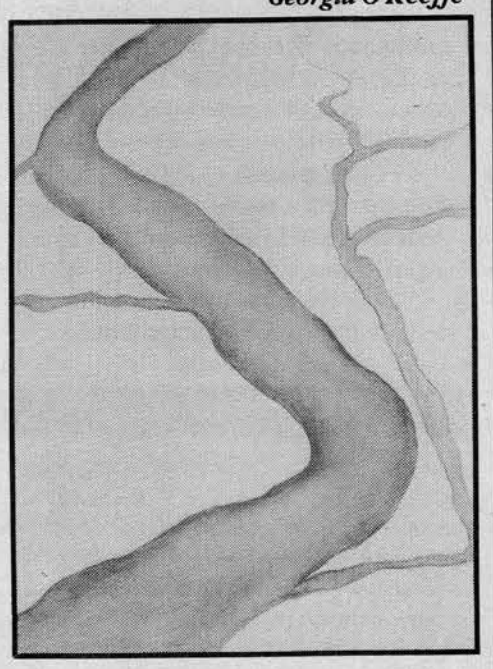


DRAWINGS BY GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

In 1915, the artist Georgia O'Keeffe decided to reject much of what she had been taught about painting and to say "the things that were my own." The result was drawings in which line, tone and color express O'Keeffe's idea of "filling space in a beautiful way." In *Some Memories of Drawings,* edited by Doris Bry, several of these early drawings are included in a 21-plate collection that spans the artist's career from 1915-1963. For each drawing, O'Keeffe has written comments on where and how it came about. Designed by Bert Clarke, and set in a format where white space is as important as the words or images, the collection includes notes and plates inspired by the landscape of New Mexico, where O'Keeffe spent her later years. Bry, a longtime friend and associate, writes a brief biographical sketch and a bibliography of books on the artist. O'Keeffe worked with Bry on the high-quality reproductions of the drawings.

University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM 87131. Cloth. $19.95. Illustrated. 107 pages.

Georgia O'Keeffe



FREE TO X-COUNTRY SKI

Start with the right environment — groomed trails or easy slopes — learn techniques in easy to digest steps, and you have the best chance of loving cross-country skiing. With the new third edition of *Cross-Country Skiing,* authors Ned Gillette and John Dostal take readers through from beginning strides to the latest in skating techniques, downhill and telemark turns and waxing. Noting that too many cross-country ski books show only the right way to ski, this edition shows what can also go wrong, sometimes with humorous results. "When you take technique off the page and onto the snow, it can be a pretty messy process," Dostal says. The text is complemented by 179 photographs, many in sequence form, that provide examples of techniques and misadventures. Later chapters offer introductions to racing and training, dealing with the winter cold and avalanches, and backcountry skiing. This is a good overview of the sport, but readers will want to do more research before heading for the backcountry.

Cross-Country Skiing, third edition. The Mountaineers, 306 Second Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119. Paper: $10.95. 240 pages.

TROUBLED WATERS IN COLORADO

What has been called Colorado's most serious water pollution problem has received little public attention, but that is something state health officials are trying to change. At a recent series of public meetings held around the state, the health department presented its plan to control runoff which deposits sediment, metals and pesticides in the state's rivers and reservoirs. The plan was developed in response to 1987 amendments to the federal Clean Water Act requiring states to assess runoff pollution. Although no state met the Aug. 4, 1988, deadline for a sediment control program, Colorado was the first state to examine the problem of runoff from road-building, mining and grazing. All flush chemicals and silt into water sources. Colorado's developing plan includes measures to reduce phosphorus in several reservoirs and will start an irrigation management program for farmers. The final public meeting will be held in Denver during the Water Quality Control Commission's session Jan. 4, 1989, where the group will decide whether to adopt the pollution control program. The meeting begins at noon at the Colorado Health Department headquarters, 4210 E. 11th, Room 150. For more information, contact Greg Parsons at the Health Department, 303/331-4756.

DIVIDED RESPONSE

Controversy continues in Utah over the Bureau of Land Management's San Juan Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement. Utah's governor and four of the state's congressional delegation protested the first San Juan Plan, and as a result, the comment period was extended by 60 days. The San Juan area covers a large part of southeastern Utah and has a high concentration of Anasazi ruins and artifacts. It is also growing in popularity as a desert hiking and backpacking area. Of 362 comments the BLM received, approximately one-half favored additional Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and stronger controls over surface uses; while the other half thought there were too many ACECs and that proposed controls prevented "true" multiple use An area of critical environmental concern is defined in the plan as "an area where special management attention is required to protect important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife or natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards." The BLM says it has begun work on a revised analysis, scheduled for release in April 1989. A 30-day protest period will follow its release. The BLM now proposes to designate 536,000 acres of the 1.8 million acre resource area as ACECs, but such classification will not protect those areas from mineral leasing, disposal of minerals, restricted off-road vehicle use, range modification, and mining with only minimal restrictions (*HCN*, 4/25/88). For more information, contact Nick Sandberg in the San Juan Resource Area office in Monticello, 801/587-2141, or Daryl Trotter in the Moab district office, 801/259-6111; or write to the Moab District, San Juan Resource Area, P.O. Box 7, Monticello, UT 84535.

GILA GETS A GATEWAY

Thanks to a $10,000 grant, a museum on the edge of the nation's first wilderness area will be expanded to include an environmental education center and "gateway." The Forest Service awarded the grant to the Western New Mexico University Museum, located near the Gila National Forest in the southwestern part of the state. The forest is the home of the Gila, the first designated wilderness in 1924, as well as the Aldo Leopold and Blue Range wilderness areas. The gateway station will include interpretive exhibits, provide university courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and serve as an orientation point for hunters, hikers, backpackers, and bird watchers, according to museum director Andrew Gulliford. The museum wants to add natural history specimens to its collection for study and display. Items already donated include mounted antelope, deer, javelina, and cougar. For more information, contact Andrew Gulliford, Western New Mexico University, P.O. Box 680, Silver City, NM 88062.

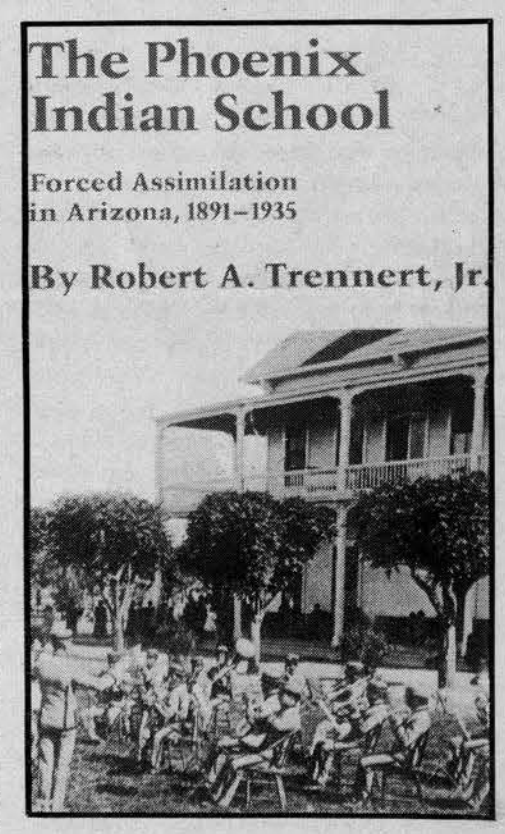
FIRES OF CHANGE

The fires of 1988 in and around Yellowstone National Park did not destroy the park but cast the seeds of a new beginning, says writer-photographer George Wuerthner in the first of the aftermath books, *Yellowstone and the Fires of Change.* Perhaps no natural event since the eruption of Mt. Saint Helens has been covered more by the press. This paperback takes us through the conditions that led to the runaway fires of last summer, fire behavior, and the impact of fires on humans, as well as its place in the ecosystem. A chronology of important events during the fires is included, plus many fine color photographs by Jim Peaco of the National Park Service, Erwin and Peggy Bauer and Wuerthner himself.

Dream Garden Press, P.O. Box 27076, Salt Lake City, UT 84127. Paper: 63 pages, illustrated. $8.95.

WANTED: CAMPGROUND HOST

The Bureau of Land Management is looking for a volunteer to act as campground host for the Aquirre Spring Campground in New Mexico's Organ Mountains. The host will live at the campground in a rent-free trailer, with water, propane and a $16 daily allowance provided by the BLM. He or she will be expected to spend 8-10 hours a day on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday talking with campers, providing information about the area and cleaning up the campground. Applicants should be in good physical condition, have a current driver's license and be able to drive a government vehicle. Contact Scott Florence or Mark Hakkila at the Las Cruces District, BLM, 1800 Marquess St., Las Cruces, NM 88005 (505/525-8228).



INDIANS AT SCHOOL

After the Indian wars of the 19th century, the U.S. government decided to forcibly assimilate Native Americans into the dominant white culture. Public boarding school was the agent of change for Indian youth, and its hallmarks were a ban on Indian languages, restrictions on visits from parents, harsh discipline and racial segregation. In *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891-1935,* Robert Trennert, Jr., uses one school's history to illustrate how federal policy was carried out in Arizona. Although Trennert, a history professor at Arizona State University, frankly discusses abuses at the school, he also says it had some merits: It created student rapport, built some self-esteem and laid the groundwork for Indians to function in a non-Indian world. But he says that foundation was quickly lost when social reformers and the Great Depression forced a reduction in federal funding for many programs, including those run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Surprisingly, he says the assimilationist policy of the 1930s wasn't necessarily better than the old approach. The real problem, he says, is that not enough money was ever spent to equip Indian schools with qualified teachers and good curricula.

University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, OK 73019. Paper: $22.95. 272 pages.

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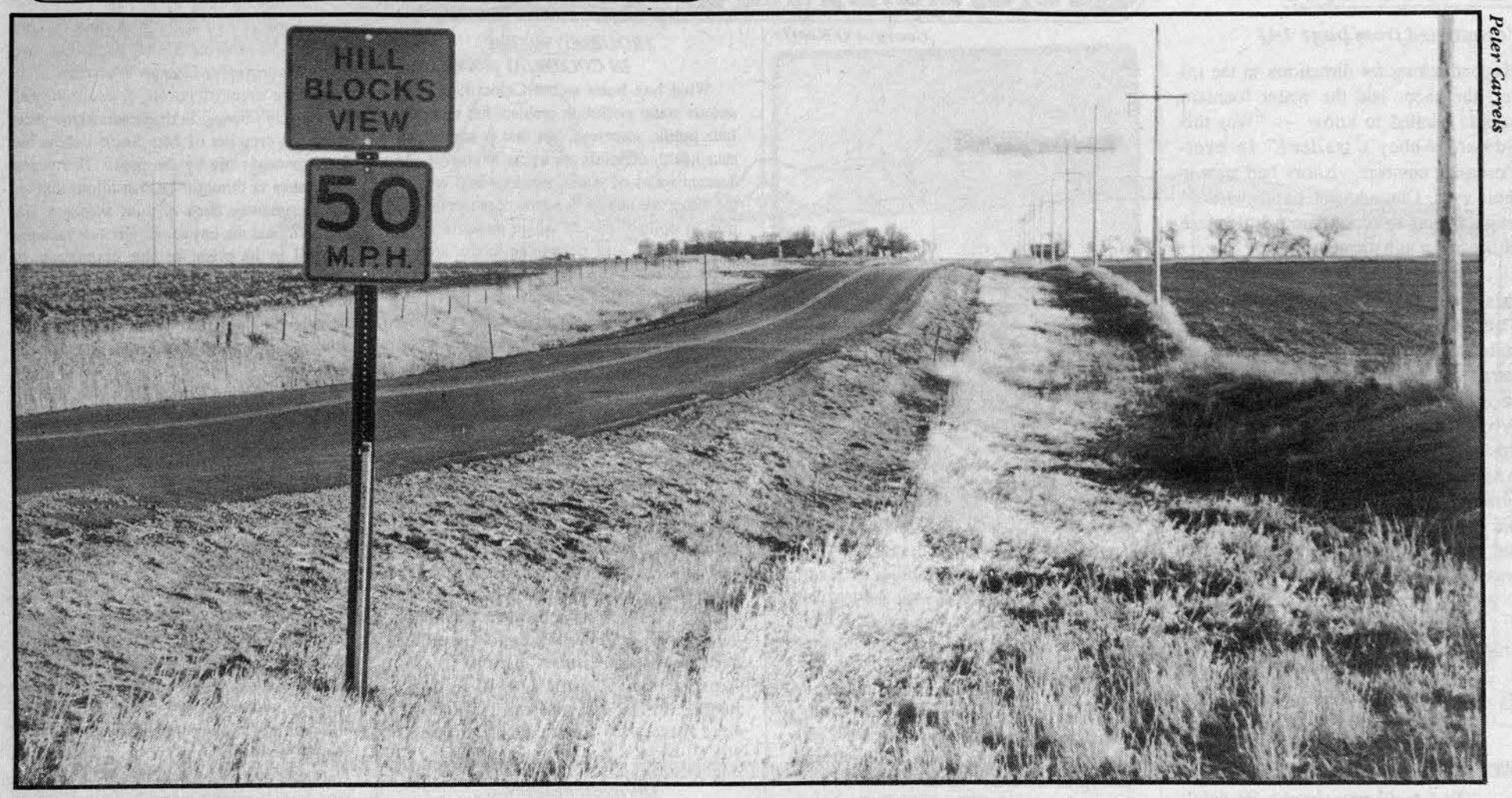

Peter Carrels

A bump in the road in South Dakota

How glaciers iron the wrinkles out

by Peter Carrels

I'd like to destroy, once and for all, the myth that South Dakota is flat. Even on an ancient, glacial lake bed, now called prairie, there's a dip or two in the landscape.

Imagine you've spent your entire life in farm country here. You're traveling a smooth, black-topped state highway for the first time when you encounter this warning sign. Whoa, you think. Potential trouble ahead. And if you're driving the legal limit, you slow down a whole 5 mph, heeding the advice of highway officials.

Then you note the odd sensation of land rising and falling beneath you. It feels ... exhilarating. You turn around and go back over the "hill" again.

Those who live in the mountains will chuckle, no doubt, at the warning in the photograph. They'll wonder how an unworldly flatlander would react to steeply graded switchbacks, runaway truck ramps and hairpin corners. Folks at the South Dakota Department of Tourism will cringe when they see this photograph, for they work hard to downplay the belief that their state is mostly prairie or plains. Wide open spaces are, after all, uninviting to tourists.

Actually, very little of South Dakota *is* flat. East of the Missouri River the land softly rolls, with farmsteads, symmetrical shelterbelts, and marshes and sloughs in the folds between croplands and grazing livestock.

West of the Missouri the landscape really opens up. Here the Great Plains begin. It is a tumbling, hummocky topography, mostly without timber. And, I repeat, it is not flat, at least not like Illinois is flat.

But there is an exception, a place so frying pan flat that a slight rise and fall of earth warrants a warning to motorists.

Near Aberdeen, where I live, the countryside broadly straddling the James River valley is a level land that undulates only where watercourses have sculpted modest floodways. Ranges of small hills, called coteaus (coo-tooes), border this prairie flatland.

The James itself typifies the flatness of the region; it may be the nation's flattest river. Through northern South Dakota, the slow-moving James may drop only several inches to the mile. In some stretches there is no change in elevation at all. It is a river that can flow backwards, depending on the whim of the wind or a sudden, sizeable contribution from a tributary.

How did this pocket of level land come to be? Credit belongs to the long winter of geologic evolution.

During the Pleistocene Epoch, or Ice Age, beginning 2 to 3 million years ago, at least four major ice sheets descended into South Dakota from the north. Many thousands of years separated each advance, with glacial retreat and ice thaw occurring during the long intervals. Less is known about the first three periods of glaciation than the final one, called the Wisconsin Age.

About 18,000 years ago, the Wisconsin ice sheet began receding as temperatures rose, exposing landscapes that had been influenced by the massive bulk of ice. Deglaciation was a slow process, involving the melting of ice 6 million square miles in area and two miles thick at the center. The final phases of glacial melt in South Dakota took place only nine or ten thousand years ago. As the glaciers melted, large amounts of runoff resulted, and rivers and streams were born. Some of the runoff pooled in glaciated valleys, creating pro-glacial lakes.

In what is now northern South Dakota, a broad, shallow valley, 100 miles by 25 miles, filled with meltwater. Smaller and not as well known as its relative to the north, Lake Agaissiz, Lake Dakota nevertheless had a profound effect on the land it covered, despite the fact that it existed for only a few thousand years before emptying via the earliest version of the James River.

During Lake Dakota's brief lifespan, fine-grained, glacial sediment, carried in meltwater, settled to the floor of the lake, filling irregularities on the earth's surface and dramatically reducing relief. When the lake completely drained, its former bottom was blanketed by a smooth mat of alluvial and chernozem (black) soil. Today, the site of Lake Dakota is the flattest part of South Dakota.

I didn't think of all this when I first stopped to contemplate what seemed a peculiar highway sign. I had driven this road on many occasions and this was the first time I'd seen the warning. Evidently, the sign was new.

I did, in fact, slow to a crawl after spotting the sign, and once I cleared the so-called hill I turned around to take a second look. A similar sign was posted for northbound travelers.

For 15 minutes I shuffled about in the dusty grass beside the road. Why, I wondered, and I laughed out loud at this sign that seemingly contradicted itself.

A noisy grain truck was the only vehicle that passed as I stood there. The truck slipped from sight for a few seconds, then reappeared, rumbling toward the horizon. The speeding driver ignored the sign.

Then I realized that only in such a setting could such a sign be justified. If the highways of western Montana were marked by signs warning motorists about hilly conditions they would line highways like guard rails.

No, only on flat prairie is such a sign truly useful.

The sign's most important function has nothing to do with speed or safe travel. As well as being emblematic of my homeland, the sign has been posted to stir imaginations and prompt the powers of observation.

❐

Peter Carrels of Aberdeen, South Dakota, is a regular contributor to *High Country News.*

ACCESS

ASPEN CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES summer naturalist intern position. Assume a diversity of responsibilities including: teaching natural history programs for children and adults, wildlife rehabilitation, writing, artwork, photography. Qualifications should include an educational background in natural science, interest, enthusiasm and self-motivation and a knowledge of Rocky Mountain flora and fauna. Dates: June – August 1989. Housing, stipend, and tuition-free participation in field school included. Send resume to Tom Cardamone, ACES, Box 8777, Aspen, CO 81612 (303/925-5756).

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition seeks a

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Contact: Ed Lewis, Executive Director
Greater Yellowstone Coalition
P.O. Box 1874
Bozeman, MT 59771
406/586-1593

Apply by Jan. 20, 1989

ORGANIZER WANTED, WYOMING: For Grassroots organization formed in 1973. Must be committed to promoting conservation of natural resources through education and empowerment of people. Driving and long hours. Requires working with people, research, speaking, writing, word processing, fund-raising and planning. Starting $775/mo. Health benefits; 24 vacation days/yr. Submit resume, references and writing sample by January 15, to Powder River Basin Resource Council, 23 No. Scott, Sheridan, WY 82801. 307/672-5809. 1x1b