



Rev.
Hults
Editorial
Now & Then



Your Professor would like to consider a couple of events this month, one pending, another completed. Friday evening Lloyd Jones slipped quietly into town and unleashed his blues magic at Bill's Tavern. Taj Mahal once made this observation about the blues (I'll try to paraphrase his notions): "When a man gets down, feeling bad, lost his wife or girlfriend, is down on his luck, he doesn't want to hear music that makes him feel worse! He wants to feel better. That's the kind of blues I try to play. The feel good blues." Lloyd plays that way too. As he slides his steel through a honey flow of sinuous sounds, say a tune from Sleepy John Estes, your heart begins to smile. There's something deep down there, and it goes back a long ways, talking about the human spirit, adversity, the raw history of race and poverty, the common plight of mankind. Lloyd's canon runs the gamut, deep driving blues whirling along like a freight train in motion, soulful blues of reflection, light-hearted, high jinks blues, the knees bouncing and feet slappin'. Some of the best string men test the envelop. When Lloyd gets rolling on a blues-riff frenzy, he tears open the envelop and lets the contents spill out. I get a deep down happy shudder when that happens. When he winds through a driving line of enunciated blues, whipping his special fillip on the frets, something in me whoops and laughs.

Lloyd ran through material from the greats Friday night, the recently passed Joe Williams, Blind Willie McTell, Robert Johnson, Elizabeth Cotten, Fats Domino, and Mississippi John Hurt. He gave us "The Keys to the Highway" and left the crowd "Satisfied and Ticked Too!" Who could ask for anything more! In a late-show romp with our own Reverend Billy Lloyd Hults on washboard, the crowd went wild. If he comes again, and I hope that will be the case, you should certainly tune in.

Toward a future event: I have received word that J. Barre Toelken will speak in our area in mid May, the 15th, I believe. The venues suggested to me are Clatsop Community College and the Cannon Beach Arts Association Building. Dr. Toelken is a folklorist of international renown, whose lectures should not be missed. During his tenure at the University of Oregon, Dr. Toelken established a program that made the university a strong beach-head for regional study of oral tradition. His influence on those who gather, collate, and archive folk materials has been monumental. Under his tutelage, a vast number of students have continued the work he began. The Randall Mills Archives in Eugene house substantial collections gleaned from informants.

Barre Toelken was never a dry, fusty academic. His lectures included folk songs he performed on guitar, wry anecdotes and jocular tales, sage insights into the nature of the folk process. Finding a seat at a Toelken lecture was often problematic. I strongly counsel your attendance.

I have a particularly soft spot in my sensibilities for Barre Toelken. He was my mentor and one of the finest teachers I encountered as a student. In 1969, a time of turmoil on campuses throughout America, I was in the Republic of Vietnam near the Cambodian border. Dr. Toelken personally orchestrated my acceptance into graduate school at the University of Oregon and an early release from the U.S. Army. Considering the events of those days in that time, I may well owe him my life.

Our headline this month can be found on the opening pages of Edward Abbey's Monkey Wrench Gang. We chose it for several reasons: first, it never hurts to quote Walt Whitman; second, we had just finished a Biography on Abbey, called Epitaph for a Desert Anarchist, by James Bishop Jr. Atheneum, 1994, which talks about Abbey's paradoxical life and philosophy. The man who inspired Earth First! and protested being called a 'Nature Writer' (he once said the only birds he could identify were a turkey buzzard, a fried chicken, and a barebutted skinny-dipper) believed that the best reason to save the world was because our lives depended on it. Above all else he loved human beings, yes, especially young attractive female human beings, followed by a stiff drink, a good cigar, and a desert to wander around in. We suggest that everybody read some Edward Abbey, especially environmentalists. And yet another reason to bring up Abbey's work, is that Bear Deluxe Magazine (formerly Orlo) is having its third annual Edward Abbey Short Story contest. The deadline for entries is Sept 7, 1999; maximum length 4000 words; \$5 reading fee; send your stories to: Abbey Award c/o Bear Deluxe, Box 10342, PDX 97296.

And the last reason for the headline is we are mad as hell!! Did anyone else notice that PGE is being bailed out of its Trojan mess once again, to the tune of 300 million dollars, which rate payers will have to cough up so that stockholders will be able to afford several new Personal Assault Vehicles again this year? Yep, it's on Dr. John's desk. And who carried the bill through the legislature?? (We warned you.) That poster boy of 'family values', closely related to Dim, Half, and Nit; Bill (I wanna be a congressman!) Witt. He and his self righteous right Republicans are so busy giving away money to the Utilities Industries and the Logging Industries that they haven't had enough time to actually do what they were elected to do, i.e. "promote the general welfare." Corporate welfare is more to their liking, and doesn't hurt those campaign coffers.

To the editor,

Planning to harvest some timber? Has the usual combo of warm fuzzies and free range brush hippies got you down? Tired of rising decibels, raised blood pressure, and upright hackles caused by splendorous panoramas of stumps bleaching in the viewshed? Take your clues from the BOHICA* Riding Academy's forestry planning handbook, on the management of perceptions. Once you have decided on a course of action, regulatory bureaucrats will immediately assume their customary submissive position, as handmaidens for the harvest.

A clearcut by any other name; fire suppression clearcut, forest fire salvage clearcut (in coastal zones where it's too wet to burn, substitute blowdown for any reference to fire), insect infestation clearcut, natural selection plantation deconstruction clearcut, regenerative nuisance vegetation stewardship clearcut, alternative prescription rehabilitation clearcut, structure based management clearcut, riparian mitigation clearcut, commercial thinning clearcut, non-commercial competitive hardwood conversion clearcut, blunderschlamundbange German clearcut, Kamana Wannalaya Hawaiian clearcut, habitat conservation clearcut, preemptive Wise Use anti-takings clearcut, shelterwood removal two step innuendo clearcut and variable retention incidental takes clearcut. All are pretty useless as intensive forest management techniques, unless they meet the high profit standards set down by the shareholders of the corporate-sate industrial forestry complex.

Parbuck D. Buttcut

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An Open Letter to Readers

Since the editor, Billy Hults, shows no sign of ending his "investigative" series on our "working" vacation to Arizona, the nearest place offering both Cubs baseball games and sunlight (Downloading Arizona, ULE, April), I have no choice but to respond, calmly and rationally, to yet another example of the sort of wanton editorial mischief I have no quarrel with unless it's directed at me. I refuse to rise to the bait or stoop to his level (else we would tell the story about the seal, the beer truck and the all-girl meringue band) and write, not to defend myself, but only to balance Mr. Hults' version of events with something resembling the truth.

1. As for the side trip to Boonville: I would have been much less pouty had Billy (who was, he forgets to mention, self appointed navigator) been even remotely aware of its location relative to towns actually shown on the map. Or had the dimmest notion of the sort of mountain wilderness he was guiding us into in the gathering darkness and freezing conditions which could, at any moment, turn our rented car into a poorly designed bobsled. While I fought the wheel, and the mounting horror of dying in California, our stalwart editor complained of car sickness. It was also he, not I, who seriously considered turning back. I only said I wanted to live.

2. Regarding Bakersfield: I have never set foot in Bakersfield in my life. Nor do I know Buck Owens. Or inhale. And I certainly know better than to drink beer in the presence of women wearing cowboy hats.

3. As for my refusing to stop at any hotel lacking room service and a pool, Billy knows better than this. After the unnerving episode in Tonopa, I only insisted there be beds instead of pallets and that the restroom be indoors. You wouldn't believe the muttering.

4. Concerning the incident at Long Wong's: Contrary to what Billy may honestly believe, I was not trying to "rain on his parade". I merely tried, with eventual success, to pull him down from the bar before his comments on Arizona's lack of a bottle bill became more incendiary.

5. At no time during our stay in Tempe, did I safety pin Billy's room key to his baseball cap. Why would I do such a thing? Not only is Billy a grown man often perfectly able to take care of himself but we were still, at this point, friends. Would anyone who wasn't a friend have insisted he wear the little knee and elbow pads his poker support group packed him for the trip? I think not.

6. Billy's impression of my motives regarding the young waitress at Hooters are (in the opinion of, not just myself, but my day nurse as well) a projection of his own tawdry, midlife desires. I was merely trying to befriend the woman. At no point did I use the word please three times in a row. Or bite her ankle.

7. Whatever Billy says about the nearly tragic day trip to Apache Lake must, since he was off watching a baseball game at the time, be taken with a large dose of salts. As Ron Logan and Bob Ragsdale, who were actually in the Rental Car of Death (Bob tried to get out several times but Ron kept dragging him back and calling him a big weinie), will tell you, it could easily have been my refusal to scream hysterically that got any of us out alive. Had Billy been with us when the rear wheels were spinning and thumping across the gravel toward the unobstructed edge of the sheer, thousand foot precipice, and the Winnebago nearly being steered by a cadaverous retiree with an oxygen mask came hurtling round the curve, I daresay he'd have clawed through the upholstery too.

8. As with Bakersfield, I have never been in Caesar's Palace in my life. The whole episode, which becomes more outlandish and self congratulatory each time Billy whoops and snorts his way through it, is what my attorney refers to as "a vicious and damaging pack of lies". Those who know me know that, regardless how many Bombay tonics were involved, I'm hardly the sort of man to leap into public fountains wearing only a Panama hat. Neither would I tell the drink lady I was on assignment for Rolling Stone and could make her famous. As with the young woman at Hooters, I was merely trying to befriend her. And another thing: who was it, readers might like to know, who panicked at the vision of what the American dream can be, given bad drugs, ruthless greed and an unlimited budget, and bolted like a rabbit through a fire exit that put us a mile and a half on foot via freeway onramps from the entrance used by normal people. In the blazing sun. Carrying my stupid plastic bucket of nickels.

9. Mr. Hults makes repeated references to my insane driving. I refuse to dignify this with a response, aside from reminding His Nagginess of the three hundred mile stretch of road through Nevada billed as The Loneliest Hiway in America. And how long it took me to convince him that, when one can see the road stretching straight as an arrow for fifteen miles WITHOUT A SINGLE CAR IN SIGHT IN EITHER DIRECTION, 45 mph is, in fact, a reasonable speed.

10. And finally, although provoked beyond belief for two solid weeks, when we reached Cannon Beach, I did not, as Mr. Hults claims, merely slow the car down and boot him out onto his driveway. This is ridiculous. Mr. Hults was wearing a seat belt at the time and, in another of his sullen moods, appeared not only likely but eager to resist. A model of restraint, I stopped smoothly in front of his door, smiled, gave him a hug, and asked him to get the hell out of my car.

It is my sincere, if woefully dim, hope that these corrections of the record will settle matters, that Mr. Hults will recover some shred of professional shame, and that our attorneys will be able to get on with their lives.

Sincerely,
Uncle Mike

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