



Apple Blossom Computer Club
A registered Apple/Macintosh User Group



May '10
still only
\$2.00

The

ROSE BYTER

Next Meeting

May 20, 7 PM
American Legion Hall
406 SE Oak Ave

Agenda

1. Meeting starts at 7 P.M.
2. Intro's of members and guests
3. Old business
4. New biz
5. Program: TED - videos worth watching - Stephen Wolfram
6. Questions & (maybe)Answers

Apple Blossom Membership

by **Jim McClellan**
<mcclellan@charter.net>

I assume at least some of our Apple Blossom members, like me, belong to more than one local organization that meet at least monthly. Most of our membership do not attend meetings, but pay their dues.

I would like to have a dollar for every time those who attend meetings spend at least a few minutes wondering why more members don't attend meetings.

In my situation, we have a similar problem getting members to write things for our monthly newsletters. Items for newsletters DO NOT have to be directly related to the purpose of the organization.

OZZIE AND HARRIET IN THE LABYRINTH

by **Dave Archer** <dave@davearcher.com>
(with help from Big Bro)



In the 40's and 50's, some of the most enjoyable family times I remember were spent gathered by the radio listening to live shows. Painted by Chagall, the Nelson's would have floated sidewise and upside down, eyes joined, roaring with laughter at the antics of George Burns and Gracie Allen, Fibber McGee and Molly, going wild for Digger O'Dell, *The Friendly Under-taker*. We all loved *The Shadow*. Dale and I were partial to *The Lone Ranger*, rarely missing a show. A little later, Mom became a junkie for, "One Man's Family," the longest running radio soap opera in American history — on from 1932 to '59 for 356 episodes — *so sayeth Google*. A show that kept the neighbor ladies buzzing every day over backyard

fences and phones, repeating installments from memory to any unfortunate soul on jury duty or returning from a trip. The first thing Mom did when she got back from camping was *fix-up* by calling her best friend Bobby for every detail concerning stockbroker Henry Barbour, his wife Fanny and their five children Paul, Hazel, Jack, and the twins, Clifford and Claudia, not to mention their grandchildren: Teddy, Hank, Pinky, Margaret, Skipper, Joan, Penny, Nicky, Elizabeth, Jane, Mary Lou, Abigail, Deborah and Constance. (thank you Wikipedia)

Abutting the davenport, our table radio displayed a cathedral facade of fine wood typical of the day. I remember the on/off knob popping like a knuckle, as satisfying

The **Apple Blossom Computer Club** (ABCC) is an Apple Computer Inc., registered Macintosh and Apple][family user group. The ABCC publishes *The RoseByter* newsletter monthly which is posted to each paid up member and reciprocating user groups. ABCC participates in user group newsletter content exchange. The ABCC also maintains a WWW site at:

<http://www.abccmug.org>

Membership

Just \$20/year! Send with your name, snail- & e-mail address & phone to:
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Good examples with ABCC members are the items Dale Nelson and Dave Archer contribute to *The RoseByter* periodically. A number of years ago, we had a member who wrote short vignettes about other ABCC members.

How about you writing something for *The RoseByter*?



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as the amber dial glowing with the visual warmth of a votive. At 644 Mountain View our family radio constituted one of our closest circles. Other great times were clam digging at Pismo Beach, camping at Big Sur and Yosemite, and frequent outings to Avila Beach, seven miles away. Also at Avila, fishing at night by hooded light off the Union Oil pier where Dad worked as a tugboat pilot.

Approaching the mid-fifties, after much stalling, Dad finally brought home a used Bendix television for sixty five dollars, put an antennae on the chimney, and the deed was done. The Bendix had a large cabinet with a 13 inch screen affording at first, a single channel. Looking back, even that small screen pre-empted our “creative imaginings” in subtle yet significant ways.

There was a lot of neighborhood foot-dragging coupled with much backyard fence talk over the pros, and especially cons, of the new technology. Here and there antennae began sprouting like alien milk weeds on the homes of folks already daubing their sets, “the idiot box”. Such terms as “couch potato” and “boob tube,” and “talking heads,” came later. Quite a bit later as I recall, however “idiot box” was with us from the gate. Solid neighbors, wary that television might intrude like a burglar stealing time better spent on more worthy pursuits, did not like the idea at all. Later, TV trays caused a stir with people saying they would never go “that far.” The same for TV dinners which came later. Family dinners for many were considered as important as church. Television demanded an obligation that could interfere with daily chores and outside involvement’s: homework, yard work, part time jobs for most kids including cutting grass for neighbors, paper delivery routes, janitorial work, plus

in summer, weekly recreation at Avila beach, not to mention dragging the main.

Mothers all had clotheslines. Garments were indignantly squashed through hand-crank ringers. Mom made clothes on a treadle Singer, darned socks, ironed nearly everything, plus food shopping, cooking, serving, and clean up, not to mention making beds and all else essential to a household. Women attended weekly Pinochle circles and club events. Mom just said no, explaining, “I don’t want to sit around with a bunch of women. I have things to do and I don’t want to *have* to be anywhere every week at a certain time.” Nearly all boys became Cubs, graduating into Boy Scouts. Dale was in Future Farmers of America, plus attended regular DeMolay meetings, went to target practice at the rifle range in the basement of the Ford Garage. He and three buddies would be driven there by parents, then walk home right through town with their .22 rifles, after dark, and nobody cared. Dale dated girls and went deer hunting and deep sea fishing with Dad. I hunted as well, with Dad and Dale, chiefly for quail and duck. I was also an avid free diver, spearing fish with a homemade Hawaiian sling made of a broom stick and a loop of surgical rubber tubing for power.

We all read books and magazines and made family jaunts to dig antique bottles from old dump sites, then placed many on the roof in a bed of beach sand where over months direct sunlight turned them from tinted lavender to deep violet. There were near continual visitors coming by for coffee and chats, as well as extended family bar-b-ques and family visits to friends homes that sometimes lasted hours. Us kids played “kick the can,” wrestled in the yard, fought mud-ball wars, and often climbed Cerro San Luis, 3 -->

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living as we did, on the base of the mountain. We called her San Luis Mountain, a near 1300 foot challenge.

Note from Dale: *You could see Bay Wood Park and the ocean from the top, 28 miles away. It was a big deal to ride our bikes around the mountain. You were with us, I think it was you, me and Rick Whiting, when we rode around the mountain and stopped at the creek behind the cemetery and there was a bum sleeping under the bridge. We ran like Hell, back across the bridge on our bikes. We'd disturbed the wino, and he got up to take a dump, pointing his bare butt right at us, and Rick hollered at him, "Hey Mister, you sure got a red ass!" That guy jumped like you'd shot him with my pellet gun, and we laughed like heck as we sped off on our bikes.*

Also from Dale: *"During W.W. II, used fat and grease were collected from butcher shops and citizens, because somehow it was used in the manufacture of explosives. So we kids would have fat, and or, grease drive fund raisers. We would take our little red wagons and go down the street knocking on doors, collecting the saved bacon drippings from the lady of the house. Then when the drive was over, the grease was taken to the butcher shop, and we were paid something like .03 cents a pound for it. At one house, an extremely overweight woman answered the door, and our "ever tactful" cousin Rick said, "Hey lady, you got any spare fat?" She got mad, and we had to beat a hasty retreat. I remember Dad thought it was funny because Rick did it. If I'd done it, he probably would have gotten upset, because we were taught to simply never disrespect adults.*

Passively watching television? Dale and I wanted TV, but Dad was slow about getting a set. We had movie theaters and the drive-in for that.

Foster's Freeze was new then too. On nearly any whim, we would climb into the DeSoto to enjoy this treat in the car, or bring home a quart. All in all, a fairly full schedule.

We never watched television from the dinner table. A few years later, however, Mom did arrive home with a full set of previously shunned TV trays which we used occasionally, at first joking about how far "down" the scale of consumerism we were sinking, later, occasionally eating while watching favorite shows. One thing is sure. Television *did* change us from using active radio participation, that is, each of us imagining a different Jack Benny "vault," and seeing our own Rochester, to passive attention with little eye contact, yet not as bad as the all out trance-gazing that came later in many homes. We never zoned-out back then. Some families did, almost immediately, from the moment they came home from work until bed time. Not us. There were some holdouts more severe than others, rumored to be resisting temptation from belief or circumstance, Jehovah's Witnesses, poor people, even stubborn readers. I remember hearing, "I'm too busy for television". Later, the first color TV set in the neighborhood drew us two blocks over to the Barbarus home for occasional Lawrence Welk shows, plus Thanksgiving and Christmas specials.

Mom always shunned TV products if the commercials irritated her. At 80 years of age, Margaret Nelson had yet to buy a single roll of "Charmin," toilet paper, trashing Mr. Whipple at every appearance. Yes, our loving Christian mother hated Mr. Whipple's guts. If Margaret Nelson had ever actually run into old Whippie in the grocery store she would have shoved a roll of Charmin' up his butt and said, "Squeeze that." When I mentioned from time to time that Whipple was just some Hollywood character actor she

would say, "Well *la-tee-da*, I won't watch his movies either, nobody on earth squeezes toilet paper".

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In junior high school chums nicknamed me "Ricky's brother." I only escaped it completely in my thirties, when, for professional reasons, I changed my name from David Nelson to Dave Archer, using my middle name as my last. Ozzie and Harriet had one of the biggest shows on TV, with sons, Ricky and David, our, "ghost family Nelson's". That is, when *we* Nelson's sat watching *those* Nelson's, Chagall would not have painted us. The show was television's first "reality" show and for that reason, actually made media history. Ozzie and Harriet and their boys played themselves using their real names, with their TV home based on their actual place in Hollywood. Ricky stole the show. Ricky's brother stole my name. Some years after high school, I called Mom collect from a pay phone on Broadway in North Beach. In those days, to make a collect call one dialed "O" and gave a name.

"I'd like to make a collect call to Margaret Nelson at: (number such and such) my name is David Nelson".

Ernestine said, "I hope you don't mind me asking, but I just *have* to know ... are you *the* David Nelson?"

Feeling frisky I answered, "Why ... yes actually, I am".

"Oh ... I feel just like like I grew up with you and Ricky ... oh my god this is such a thrill!"

She asked what I was doing in San Francisco. I lied that I was working on a "picture," leaving out the part about being an art hobo. I've always wondered if she eavesdropped. It would have made an item for Hedda Hopper for sure: Ricky's wino brother wheedling Harriet out of forty bucks.

San Luis Mountain dominated 6 -->

The Black Hats are everywhere. I even have one, but it's not official. But **the Black Hats are not really bad guys**. They just research how operating systems and software can be exploited with the point being to fix the problems. The Black Hats hold conferences at which various discoveries are published. These meetings are generally attended by representatives from the likes of Micro\$hapht and Apple so they can find out what needs fixing. Interesting to me was the result of a recent discovery about IE (Internet Explorer), Micro\$hapht's weapon against their users ... er, I mean ... web browser, included with Windows operating systems. It seems there's an exploit that affects every version of IE that's been published. When Micro\$hapht was informed of the findings, their response was that it "... is not something [Microsoft] can fix because the flaw is so much a part of the fundamental design of the browser." Hmm... I seem to recall hearing that somewhere else. Oh, yes. I've been saying it for years.

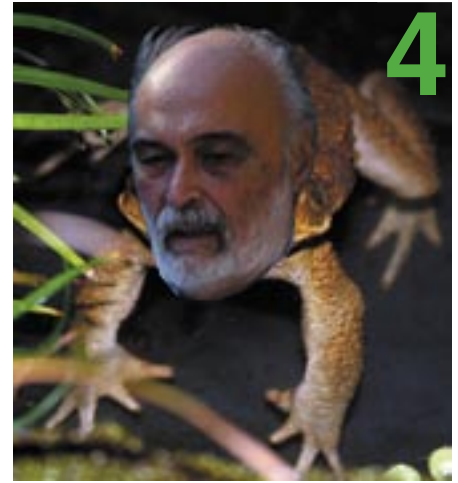
I was watching a movie this evening that had a scene in it where a woman, who was considered the moral watchdog of the community, praised herself and her committee of like minded citizens because they were open minded and always willing to consider "both sides" of any situation. This is, apparently, the normal way people think about resolving issues. In an ultimate sense, I have no argument with this idea. Mathematically, decisions are based on relations which are, per force, binary. But **the decisions of human existence are seldom easily reduced to simple mathematical relations**. It's one of the great problems of artificial intelligence. Put another way, it's seldom the case that human situations result in just a simple choice between two alternatives. Yet we persist in dealing with issues on that basis. What really bothers me is that we also insist that this is reasonable and even rational. Perhaps

Croak of the MUGwump

Any trace of organization in these paragraphs is entirely coincidental

I'm just a bit daft, but I believe we're routinely taken advantage of by people who understand this concept all too well. We spend far more effort rhetorically polarizing issues than we do than actually coming to grips with them. It's a type of shell game.

Recently I got to help migrate a Mac user from a relatively early model of G4 to a brand new 21.5 inch iMac. I wish I could say this went off without the slightest hitch, but that would be an out and out lie. First, there was the major failing of my brain. I'd brought a firewire cable to connect the G4 to the iMac. The trouble is that the iMac only does firewire 800. My cable was 400 to 400. We went out and bought a new firewire 400 to 800 cable at Staples. May I say that Staples is not a particularly thrifty place to get such things. I leave the level of the facetiousness of the last sentence as an exercise to the reader. Our troubles having started, they were now on a roll. We hooked up the computers, putting the G4 with all its peripherals disconnected into Target Disk Mode and turned on the iMac. The initial delays moving from step to step in the iMac's boot process were interminable but it finally got to the point where we'd migrate the data from the G4 to the iMac. We chose firewire and the iMac told us that it saw the G4. Then it sat there. I thought perhaps it was checking the disk but that didn't make sense as it was shutdown cleanly. It continued to sit there. For a long time. The only thing left that made sense



is that we'd violated some required sequence. You see, the iMac tells you what to do and when to do it to connect up the computer you're migrating from. **Perhaps knowing how to connect things ahead of time was not a good thing**. So, we went through the process once again, carefully doing things as the iMac ordered. Result: it sat there for a very long time. After deciding to abort the attempt, we investigated the curious button that was labeled "Ethernet." Like the firewire case, the iMac had instructions for us to carry out the connection. Unfortunately, they were impossible to follow. They called for using one of the iMac's supplied DVDs in the G4. Unfortunately, no DVD by the name given came with the iMac. We improvised, using the DVD with a name most like the one we were instructed to use. Naturally, there was nothing on it remotely like what we were supposed to install: CD, DVD sharing and an upgraded Migration Assistant. This seemed to be a necessary installation because the Migration Assistant that was already on the G4 only knew about bringing data to the G4, not sending its data to another computer. Curiously enough, I found that there was an upgrade available via Software Update. After installing it, the iMac was willing to accept data from the G4. We started the process. This was, in retrospect, probably a mistake. I could have driven home, gotten an external USB hard drive enclosure, driven back, yarded

<--MUGwump

the internal drive from the G4 and put it in the enclosure in less than an hour. Using the hard drive this way, it might only have taken a couple of hours to do the migration. By using it over the 10Mbps ethernet connection, it took about nine hours. But it did take place and seemed reasonably successful. Time will tell.

Here's a good one. It's been discovered that IR laser light can kill viruses. This is no surprise, as such, but the details of this discovery are. It turns out that an IR laser with output in sub-picosecond pulses can be used to kill viruses *in situ* – in the the body. Of course, the pulses have to be very powerful: about 1 GW per square centimeter. To get an idea of how much power that is, consider that the Sun puts out about 1 KW per square meter at the distance of the Earth's orbit. That means the laser power is 10 billion times higher. **So, if you use this wonder virus killer, do you also vanish in a puff of smoke?** Well, probably not. The laser puts out a very large amount of power for an even smaller length of time – about as long as it takes for an electron to cycle through its orbit around an atom's nucleus, give or take. Run at a 1,000 pulses per second, it would simply warm you up a bit. The pulse duration and energy are critical for it to work; killing viruses without killing normal cells. The reason it's possible is that the shell proteins of viruses are comparatively simple and held together by chemical bonds that are weaker than those in cells. So, the fast laser pulses can rip up the stuff that holds viruses together without doing the same to the body's cells. Despite its real ability to kill viruses in the body, it seems unlikely that this sort of gizmo will soon become a regular therapeutic device. It's difficult to radiate a whole body with such light. Even if it were feasible, that light would need to penetrate deeply at the right energy level. That would require the surface to be

at a much higher energy level, risking the aforementioned smoke. But there are ways to do some good with this technology. Even though treatment might not completely eradicate all the virus particles in ones body, passing the blood into a treatment chamber and back into the body could greatly reduce the virus population in the body. At that point, the body's immune system might be able to mop up the stragglers.

There are some very interesting **rack-ets on the web. Some advertise on TV.** Take beezid.com, for example. The advertisements tout being able to buy things for discounts as much as 95%. All you have to do is bid in their auctions and make the winning bid. Riiiiiiight. But you don't get to just bid on things. First you have to buy "a bid package." Bid packages come in a number of sizes, with bids costing less each the more you buy. They range from 60¢ to 90¢ per bid. It's pretty easy to see how you can get really big discounts on brand new items. The web site gets a huge prepayment for "bids" and the money associated with any particular item is the sum of all the bids placed for the item, not just the final equivalent amount. Not quite up to eBay, even.

OK, I just had my nose tweaked by a pet peeve of mine again, so I'm gonna write about it. I know I should not be annoyed at common parlance ... regardless of how idiotic it is when taken literally. But I am. I've come to believe that most of the large scale problems amongst people are the result of what is really **bad language. No, I'm not referring to the notion of cursing or epithets** of any sort. Rather I'm referring to using language which does not convey the meaning that's intended by its use. Most politicians do little else, at least publicly. The particular phrase that set me off was proffered by, of all venues, The Weather Channel. It goes like this: the blah-blah that changed history. What's wrong with that? Well,

it's really quite simple – we don't yet have time machines. **5** History can't be changed. Nothing we know of changes history. Likewise, literally every event, however miniscule, makes history. Thus declaring that some event or other made history is saying nothing in particular. We can change our choice of what to describe as history but this has no known effect on the past reality as far as I can tell. Perhaps that's part of my problem: I can't tell but others can. I don't believe that but I can't logically rule it out as a possibility.

Did you know about the FCC's "100 Squared" initiative? I didn't. It seems that **the FCC has a goal of delivering 100 Mbps Internet service to 100 million households.** Once upon a time, that would have been a statement that everyone would have much faster Internet connections than are reasonably available today. After all, how many persons are there per household? I guess we'll get to know when the census results are tallied, but it used to be about four and a half. Since there are supposedly 120 million cable subscribers of which about half have DOCSIS 3.0 available which will support 100 Mbps and Verison's FTTH FIOS (Fiber To The Home stuff) passes by 15 million households already, it would seem that the FCC's goals are attainable. I question the extent of the reported coverage but really haven't a clue ... other than what we see around here. But wait! There's more. Google is starting an experiment to connect 500,000 households at 1 Gbps to see what the effect is. Maybe we should get them to drop in a local hotspot as part of the experiment (don't hold your breath).

Apple is having its next WWDC (World Wide Developer's Conference) this June, from the 7-th to the 11-th. They tout, "These five days will change how the world does all kinds of things." No doubt. If you have several stray kilobucks laying around that you don't need

<--MUGWump

for anything else, **you can sign up as an Apple developer for free and then buy attendance at WWDC 2010** ... if you hurry. There are only 5,000 seats available. WWDCs used to be pretty good parties, if nothing else. I have to wonder whether the economy won't have a somewhat chilling effect on attendance this year. Probably not. After all, it's a religion.

As you know, if you read these diatribes, I don't give high marks to the efforts **we spend millions on each year for dealing with computer fraud**. It's long seemed to me that there's a lot of sound and fury and precious little action. So I'm reading an article about a botnet that's referred to as "small," consisting of some 74,000 computers around the world. Apparently the investigators got their hands on a controlling computer for the botnet. It had a 75GB log file (that's more than a megabyte per compromised computer) detailing its activities. But here's the part that grabbed me: "If you wanted to go hunting for these things, you could find them every month." I guess that sort of explains why there's not much in the way of enforcement.

I really hate having to agree with Steve Jobs but, you know, when he's right, what are you going to do. **"Steve Jobs hates Flash."** You can put that into a search engine and read all about it in grand detail. Adobe has leveraged it's strangle hold on the print business into many other areas, primarily because the people in the print business are moving more and more into other venues. Like all of us, they tend to use that with which they are familiar. It's thus not uncommon to find web pages these days which consist entirely of one large Flash video. Of course, to use the page, you must download the whole monstrous mess ... just to click the button that gets past viewing the video in its entirety. Then

there's the fact that the "standards" that Adobe provides are anything but: at least in my opinion. A standard should stand the test of time. Longevity of a standard is not in a commercial company's best interest if they're defining the standard and selling the tools to work with it. Clearly, it's in such a company's interest to churn the market and keep their revenue coming in. One might think we'd get hip to this ploy. Sadly, most of us seem to embrace it, choosing to be regularly victimized with smiles on our faces.

Curiosity can kill the cat. Or, in this cat's case, make him choke on his own spit. I was looking around at motherboards the other day that might accommodate two of the same Intel processors that Apple is using in the Mac Pro. I just do this to waste time since the processor chips I was looking at alone cost \$1100 each which puts such a project way outside any realm of reason I can imagine at the moment (I'm not going to win any lottery since I don't buy lottery tickets). I was musing about this to my wife and she mused back that it was probably more than Apple charged for a Mac Pro. So, naturally, I had to go look into that. No, Virginia, Apple charges a lot more for a dual chip (8-core) Mac Pro than roughly \$2500 a motherboard and two processors cost. While looking at the page, I decided to blow some time pricing out a sort of **maxed out Mac Pro. How's \$18,166.90 sound to you?** But, hey, Apple ships it for free!

BTW: Intel has a six-core processor these days, capable of running 3.33 Ghz called the i7-980X, aka "Gulftown." It's about time for Apple to be birthing a new Mac Pro, especially when one factors in their recent announcement of very fast multi-threading software. Just what one needs to keep all those cores chewing away on those terabits. If any of you are up for using these bit munchers for a Hack, it ought to be a screamer.



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our neighborhood landscape. **6** My guess is that most of the current residents of San Luis Obispo do not even know of the balancing rock near the summit. Difficult to reach through a jungle of poison oak which us kids carefully maneuvered, a stone column rises, 20 feet or so, on top of which rests something from Arizona Highways Magazine — an improbable boulder of many tons, and quite round. My buddies and I talked many times about how "neat" it would be to wrench the sucker and watch it bounce down the mountain like a huge bowling ball. The good news being, we could never figure out quite how this would be accomplished. I'm sure glad we never attempted that imagined prank, as success could have created one hell of a canyon through a lot of nice folks' homes for at least a block.

San Luis Mountain is not an extinct volcano in the common sense, but was created by volcanic action. Near Bishop's Peak, (elevation 1,546 ft) both mountains (and others) are known as volcanic plugs. Bishop's Peak is the tallest of the *Nine Sisters*, a chain stretching to Morro Bay around thirty miles. Generally, the Nine Sisters include Morro Rock, Black Hill, Cerro Cabrillo, Hollister Peak, Cerro Romualdo, Chumash Peak, Bishop Peak, San Luis Mountain and Islay Hill. Today San Luis Mountain is often called *Madonna Mountain* which I do not care for at all, since the only reason it is called that, is because Alex Madonna bought "our mountain" years after I left home. For Dale and I and our parents and grandparents, it was always: *San Luis Mountain*. Black Hill and Islay Hill are small and usually left out of the list when people refer to the Seven Sisters. Next to our home at the base of the mountain landscapes rose steeply. Every spring us kids had grass 7 -->

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fights, pulling up long clumps, then forming the moist roots into balls with our hands and throwing them at each other like green comets. While not exactly Nerf material, taking one in the teeth was fairly safe. In summer the grass dried and turned wheaten. Then came the season of Olympic luge events as we kids raced each other down the slopes on cardboard sleds at break-neck speeds. While not quite reaching ice speed, it's a miracle none of us were ever seriously injured.

We lived on the base, therefore, walking across the street brought us to: headed up. Somewhere around hundred feet the view took in the tops of neighboring homes, across town to the eastern Santa Lucia Mountains. Viewed from a thousand feet San Luis became a patchwork quilt tucked in around the edges of mountains forming a fine valley. In the fields that ended at the brush line, halfway to the summit, seed grasses, thistles and wildflowers grew in profusion. Poppies, buttercups, Indian paintbrush dotted the landscape. Enormous areas of cobalt lupine blanketed the grassy foothills every spring.

Nearer to the brush-line grew patches of prickly pear cactus we called "beavertail," some areas quite enormous, each patch consisting of thousands of spiky paddles clumped here and there with red and yellow "cactus apples," we often consumed with some relish. Dale said he never did, not having the cojones. Using Army surplus bayonets we would stick a ripe fruit then toss it to the ground. Each "apple" was covered with small tufts composed of hundreds of the nearly invisible stickers, actually called "globins," fine as hairs and sharp as needles. They were barbed on the business end therefore once in the skin, **7** nearly impossible to find, let alone remove. Armed with

inside knowledge that came from Ken Benell's Cherokee grandmother, we used green sage fronds to swat the stickers from the fruit. Swatting was never rushed, every tiny sticker banished forever before chancing our fingers, let alone, tongues. Thoroughly processed cactus fruit was semi-sweet, with a taste and texture all its own. Even one micro-sticker in a tongue however, ruined everything.

Note from Dale: *"I remember we chopped trails into the cactus patches and made forts. I fell off a rock one day and landed on my butt in a patch. Mom had me over her lap on the front porch, my bottom hanging out for all to see, pulling stickers out of my cheeks with tweezers for eternity. Now the city protects the cactus patches like they are some sort of endangered heritage".*

One day we came upon an Asian man who ran toward us pointing to his open mouth with one hand, saying, "Ahhh, ahhh," while pointing wild-eyed at the cactus patch with the other. Both helpless and horrified we said, "Go to a doctor in town," wondering how any doc could possibly remove hundreds of stickers that small.

Above the brush line grew dense tangles of sage, poison oak, and scrub. White-tail deer, bobcat, quail, doves, foxes, owls, raccoons, opossums, and red-tail hawks abounded. Here and there in the bush, pack-rat houses rose, some three feet high, made of seemingly thousands of sticks.

Note from Dale: *"Remember spending the night on the mountain in sleeping bags after a pack-rat got caught in my trap, and rattled the chain most of the night? All night long you kept saying, "Dale, poke me." What a miserable camp out".*

Before Alex Madonna, owner of now famous Madonna Inn, also at the base of the mountain, (and financed from riches of his construction

empire) — one in which all of his dozens of dump-trucks, bulldozers, earth-movers and steam-shovels were painted lavender pink *dilly dilly* — defied public sentiment and scraped his infamous "fire road" all the way to the summit, there were only two ways up. The "Devil's Slide" was dangerous due to loose dirt and rocks. The nameless, more direct route led to the "Giant's Chair," a boulder larger than two Buick sedans welded together belly to belly. The Giant's Chair was about 1/4 of the way to the top, shortly into the brush line. Three or four kids at a time could sit on its flat "seat," where we always rested to survey the scene below like the capricious boy demigods we were.

Nowadays, due to Madonna's road, boys and girls, indeed, all of the citizens of my hometown are missing the wonderful challenge we had in climbing. For it was a true accomplishment for an 7 year old, yet fairly safe in retrospect. Today one need only take a relatively easy walk up the "fire road," affording the same wonderful view from the top, but not as sweet as "earning" it. The road does afford access to establish a Christmas tree shaped and lighted structure on the summit every holiday season, as well as assemble a choir of locals to sing carols to the "village" folk below, however all of the real climbing that fairly called to generations of boys and girls is gone.

Mother was born in San Luis Obispo. My grandfather, Harry Archer Truesdale, was not only County Auditor, but a Municipal Court Judge, after delivering mail for many years from a horse and buggy. On the Foreman side of our family, Margaret Foreman was, in 1867, the first Protestant woman in San Luis Obispo, and she founded the Methodist Church. I don't know when Mom became a Presbyterian, but grandma and grandpa Truesdale met at a Methodist Church Camp, and the Methodist church in Shandon was founded by our great grand- **8 -->**

parents, I. N. and Aurilla Truesdale. I think I get to complain a little, okay.

The summit of San Luis Mountain could have ended a complete disaster. Madonna owned it after all, and this is America, and the Madonna Inn, is well, the inimitable *Mother of All Inns*, with “gaudy” taken to the excess of Gaudi, yet without a single hint of the artistic brilliance practiced by the great Spanish architect. For instance, in the men’s restroom, the urinal is made of massive native boulders. When a guy steps up to pee, a beam of light breaks, and a waterfall begins to cascade over the rocks, a sight for which, nearly every woman in the place just *has* to walk right in to observe. So much for the *shy of kidney*. Each large room has a theme, as in: “Circus” – “Cowboy” – “Pirate,” etc., decorated by Alex’s wife in an atrocious style only outdone at Disney Land. Madonna actually drew up plans for a Swiss Chalet with a revolving restaurant on the summit of San Luis Mountain, accessed by Alpine type cable cars direct from the Inn. Fake snow no doubt, soon to follow. Somebody had to stop him. Nothing would have pleased Alex Madonna more I’m sure, than to add a one hundred foot statue of himself standing atop the restaurant, revolving with it, right arm rising and falling, blessing all below like the Christ of Rio de Janeiro, but with a lavender pink shovel.

Speaking well of the townsfolk, a majority objected to the terrible idea and today the mountain, if scarred, at least retains a large part of its dignity. And beautiful she is, with a pinnacle cap of wondrous boulders, astonishing in size and form, sometimes shrouded in fog. In a child’s eye at least, a mystic castle or fantasy fortress. Alex’s bulldozer surprise for the Town Council and citizens, was accomplished early on a Sunday morning to avoid being



stopped. And yes, he had the

right to take a D-8 bulldozer and ram a fire road up his own mountain without asking permission. The brush did burn off once in awhile. And yes, people had the right to become enraged when they saw the ugly scar he left, defacing a former scene of pristine beauty. A gaggle of honking locals championed their man, saying such things as, “... come on, look at all the wonderful things Alex Madonna has done for San Luis Obispo over the years ... a native son ... and he didn’t get to have his Swiss Chalet with a revolving restaurant and a lavender statue on top ... and he has the right to protect his mountain from fire.”

You know where we stand. And it is all true of course, that Alex Madonna did accomplish much good for his hometown. Bless him with a pink revolving shovel for it. He was a sensational booster for many causes and projects, not to mention constructing a mind-boggling Inn that brought in worldwide tourists to laugh at its kitsch excesses. And I still don’t like his dang fire road.

San Luis Obispo is a much larger town of course, than when Dale and I were boys, yet in many ways retains the sense of a village. In our youth the population was around 9,000 — now 265,297 (July - ‘08) and bustling, but the downtown section still seems small to me when I’m there. Although surrounded by a declining agricultural base, San Luis has always had a good economy of shops, services and light industry. It is home to California Polytechnic State University we called, “Cal Poly,” where Mom worked in the housing office after Dad died. Dale went there as an “aggie” and took the only course available in the country in horse shoeing at that time. Much of the town’s growth has been to the south, where new housing spills ever outward, taking over pristine farm land.

Ours was a great neighborhood to

grow up in. Homes were built in the early thirties on typical grids of square blocks — yet not in the sense of “tract” homes. People bought lots and built. Backyard vegetable gardens had not yet become swimming pools and houses and yards had more individuality than today. Mom and Dad bought an existing place for \$4,000. Each home had a medium sized front lawn. Backyards were quite large even somewhat rural. There were horses across the street and a cow was kept nearby. One block away in an empty field, a Clyde Beatty Circus performer put his horses through their circle paces during the off season. We had a moderate “Victory” garden, a long clothesline with four lines, chicken and rabbit pens, a tool shop, as well as rose bushes, honeysuckle vines, a lemon and an orange tree, plus a large prune tree that produced hundreds of fruits Mom always canned in Kerr jars. She also tended a patch of rhubarb for making pies.

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[Ed. Note: to be continued.

Tune in again next month.]

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