



Tire Tracks



President's Letter

Thank you to Victoria Clark. Her original speaker for the October meeting had some personal problem that caused him cancel. She arraigned for Dan Dagget, a conservative environmentalist to speak. We learned that land could cure itself of many ills through judicious use of cattle. Others are of the opinion that the land needs to be controlled (protected) and not disturbed. On the contrary, land that has cattle roaming on it is in better shape than protected land. He gave us a power point presentation that demonstrated his "out of the box" thinking and the positive results.

The E-board conducted an emergency meeting to nominate Steve Blank to fill in for Al Moss as tour/events chairman for the rest of the year. Any suggestions for tours/events should go to Steve. Thanks Steve.

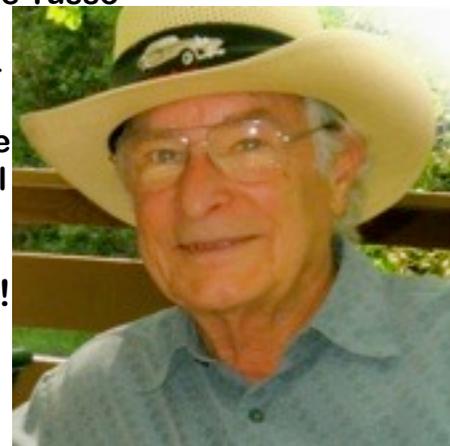
Vince Monaci gave us the list of candidates for the club's officers for 2013. They are: President -- Larry Currie
1st Vice President -- Ed Pittman. 2nd Vice President/
newsletter editor -- Jane Tusso

Secretary -- Greg Zucco
Treasurer/membership --
Sam Pietrofitta

The election will be
at the November general
meeting.

Christmas is coming!!
Look in this newsletter
for details.

Larry



Editor's Closing Comments

Two years have passed since I undertook the task of publishing Tire Tracks. I accepted the assignment willingly and have not had any regrets. Soon Jane Tusso will pick up the assignment, and I am confident that she will make the newsletter reflect her own interests and skills, as well as serving its primary function of communications.

Passing roles to new hands is, in my opinion, vital to the continuing vitality and efficacy of the Club. We talk about new blood, but we may overlook the fact that no Editor works alone. So the "blood" of many active members, including the entire Board and all who volunteer to work on refreshments, programs, events and our Car Show and more, is continuously mixing.

Let me mention a few of the many members who contributed to Tire Tracks in specific ways:

- I. Larry Curry and David Lombardi provided President's Letters for each issue.
- II. Greg Zucco, who had edited Tire Tracks for many years, shared his experience and materials so the new Editor could get rolling.
- III. Sam Pietrofitta supplied membership lists with current E-mail addresses, birthdays and anniversaries, and updated the lists so new members would be quickly integrated and would feel included.
- IV. Steve Blank facilitated the integration of the newsletter into the Club website, ensuring that all members would be able to read it and download their personal copies rapidly, with none of the E-mail glitches, also saving the postage costs under the older system of distribution.
- V. Victoria Clark not only offered encouragement, she also made useful suggestions and passed along materials that could be included in upcoming issues.
- VI. Al Moss was always good at providing key information about upcoming events, but he also offered what I might call empowerment; based on his own prior experience, Al recommended that those critics who are so quick to tell you how you should be doing the job are best served by boxing up all of the working files and delivering them to their front doorstep ex post facto!

Looking back, I am grateful for the support and encouragement that allowed me to change Tire Tracks from a hard copy format delivered by US Mail, to the E-mail format which saved money, and upgraded the product with vivid color. That change was a stepping stone leading to the inclusion of Tire Tracks on the website, which eliminated reliance on an updated E-mail address file and the uncertainty of online delivery which always seemed to fail for a few members for reasons that only the gods could fathom. Further, I am grateful to the entire membership for allowing me the opportunity to write and include "sudden fiction" features such as the prosaic tales of Bud and the satirical accounts of my family history, which, for the record, were 90% fiction and 10% ordinary lies. For one whose writing skills were developed by writing technical reports and journal articles, this was both scary and delightful.

See you at the next meeting ...

RLB



This holiday artwork was originally created by Les Peck while he and Sally co-edited Tire Tracks.

RHYTHMS OF THE PRAIRIE

Continued from the October issue. Bud spins a tale of his uneven experiences as both hero and outlaw in elementary school. But things turn darker.

Buddy

The two of us set off for the library. It was way up on the far end of the second story. We passed through long halls with black, grey and white speckled floors of polished terrazo. We passed a large bubbling water fountain in the lobby outside of the principal's office. Set in little niches in the long hallway were drinking fountains finished with tiny square tiles in all shades of green that glowed with the light from overhead chandeliers and large casement windows. We came to the stairway and started up, coming first to a roomy landing where the tall windows seemed to be there just to please the large wicker baskets of ferns. Then the stairs turned back and we ascended to the second story, our footsteps ringing in the hard echoing emptiness.

The next hallway was just as nice as the first. The library was a short walk to the left. It was at the end of the hallway, so it had those same huge windows. We passed through heavily mullioned French doors which closed with a solid muted thump. The side-walls were all black walnut bookcases rising 10 foot or more, but, still short of the ceiling. The heady incense of books, and paper with maybe just a hint of library paste and mold caressed us, as soft and comforting as an old quilt on a cold night. Every shelf was filled, and a small desk was set before the windows. There were several library tables with strong wooden chairs arranged around.

John nodded toward the table closest to the window and signaled that I should sit wherever I chose. At least, I think that all of this happened. It felt so much like a dream that I might have been floating a step above the floor; no trouble could possibly reach me in this safe haven. I sat down. John Law chose a seat close by. I scarcely breathed in my state of grace. And waited for whatever.

He began ... "I think I'll just call you buddy since that is what most other people call you. I already feel like I know you pretty well because I've been talking to a lot of people about what got Chuck in trouble, and your name came up. So I asked people who you were and what you were like. Don't look so worried, now. You're not in the kind of trouble your friend has. And you aren't him, so whatever comes out of all this for him will not be the same for you."

"I couldn't hold back." What will happen to Chuck? Is he in reform school now? Can I see him? Will I ever see him again? He's not all bad, really" I could feel my eyes filling, and I took a deep breath, looking aside.

"No, No." He assured me. He's in a safe place for now, but in a few days he can go home again, He won't come back into your class, but you still might run into him after school. Do you two walk to school together?"

"No, not usually. But we walk after school. Will we still be able to?"

"I guess so. But things won't ever be just like they were. And that might be hard but it might be good, too. Is Chuck you best friend?"

I didn't speak, eyes down, the full feeling was coming back to my eyes. "I guess so ... maybe? I don't know."

“It’s alright to tell me. He has been your closest friend for quite a while. I already know it, anyway. And what’s true is true, so let’s not hide it from each other. I will make you a promise, right now. I’ll never lie to you. I’ll tell you what I know is true, or at least what I believe is true. Can you try to do the same thing for me? It may be hard sometimes, but it makes other things a whole lot easier.”

“I don’t know if I can. Sometimes everything is better if people don’t tell their secrets. Isn’t that right?”

“I don’t know. It seems like a little white lie might even be good thing, sometimes, if it’s for a good reason. But not if it’s only a way to avoid the truth, because the truth always comes out. Lies just don’t work very well. And the truth is likely to hurt you a lot more if you’ve been lying.” John sat there for a long time, looking out the window where there was a clear blue sky and white clouds moving so slowly you had to wonder if it was a picture. In time he looked back at me and asked, “Can you tell me what you meant when you said you don’t know if Chuck is your best friend?”

Now I couldn’t answer for a long time. My mind was racing. I was confused by this talk about good lies and bad lies. Finally, I took a deep breath, looked up into his eyes, and plunged in ... “No, not my best friend. Only the best one I’ve got. A real best friend wouldn’t want me to do some of the things we do together. He’d try to keep me out of trouble. But Chuck doesn’t care about trouble and I think he wants me along so he won’t be the only one. ‘Kinda like I’m his sidekick, you know. I don’t like being the only one, either. So I go along. But that doesn’t mean I don’t have fun with him. I really do. So maybe I’m no different from him. I didn’t steal that money but I liked my share of the candy and stuff. That’s the truth.”

John Law

I was floored. I thought, “I’ve made the “truth pitch” to more kids than I want to count, but never, never did I get an answer like this one. Now it’s my turn to search for a response. Did he really see through my ploy so easily? Am I so transparent? How did he know just where to strike? Is he a full-blown sociopath? Or is he real in his sincerity? For that matter, more to the point, am I real in mine?”

I decided that there was only one way to find out and that was to accept Buddy’s words as true. “And I might as well admit it, to accept my own words as true”, I thought.. “I know well how easy it is to agree to tell the truth in these games we play. But to mean it ... unthinkable! I have never been tested this way before. Could I possibly live up to the standard I had just set?”

I floundered, but found the words, “Buddy, we’re going to have a hell of a ride together! Now, there are some things I’d like to know about how we got to this place. Are you up to some questions? Maybe you have some more questions for me too?”

We talked until the dinnertime bell rang, and got together again later that day, and many days thereafter. Did Buddy ever turn his life around? Maybe, but if so, turning around must be a long and uncertain journey. Buddy continued his friendship with Chuck for at least two years following our first discussions. But there was a slow and uncertain shift, away from Chuck’s leadership and more searching for new adventures, many new ones, most lasting only for awhile,. Nothing really took hold in a dramatic way. No epiphanies, no catharses. Just growing and changing the way young people do so well. What part did I play? Mostly, I was there and we talked, sometimes, as truthfully as we could manage.

The Opp placed Chuck in a setting where there were new possibilities for sidekicks or apprentices. There was nearly complete isolation from the regular school program. In time Chuck's company, now shared with one or two newbies, just didn't mean as much. It became easier for Buddy to say no to some of Chuck's life style choices and even to serious criminal activity, if he so chose. Chuck decided to break into a neighborhood grocery store, a real career step up from the home burglaries and small thefts.. Buddy was pressured to participate along with a faceless new Opp sidekick. As the appointed hour to meet up and carry it out approached Buddy was deeply torn. Buddy knew that there would be trouble in either case, either from the law or from Chuck. To go or to just not show up? Some question, no? Buddy climbed up a cottonwood tree after supper, and stayed there until long after dark.

He had defied Chuck's control. The other two carried out their plan without him. The police caught Chuck and his apprentice within 24 hours, so soon that they were certain that they had been turned in. Buddy knew that revenge was inevitable. Chuck's new apprentice was shipped off to a foster home, and Chuck was put on a more strict probation, just a step short of reform school. Buddy had work to do if he would be ready for what was certain to come.

Buddy

For weeks Chuck was nowhere to be seen. When he showed up again, he bragged that he had been in jail and had to go to court. The cipher, he added, had been sent to a new foster home but the judge told Chuck ... "If I ever see you back here again I will send you to reform school 'til you turn 18!" Chuck was so proud, he could hardly stop grinning. But I knew his good mood would only last until he decided what revenge he would take. So I had some time to prepare.

I was no fist-fighter and I especially hated getting hit in the face. I knew that I would have to face Chuck and he loved fist-fighting. If I took him on - his way - I would never win so I decided to rattle him. If I could take a few shots to the head I could grab him and trip him backwards. Once I got him on the ground I knew I could control him for as long as it took to get the fight out of him. Since he didn't expect any trouble I could take him by surprise. I started some fights with my brother just to practice getting hit in the face. I survived that and I was ready for Chuck, as ready as I could be.

Chuck was doing some planning too, it turned out. A couple of weeks passed and we hung out just like always. One Saturday we both met where the papers were dropped off and we made our deliveries as usual. We planned to meet afterward at the sawmill where there were large piles of logs and we could hang out without being bothered. When I showed up Chuck was already there, waiting. He had a flushed and angry look on his face, and it wasn't long until he started some pushing and took a few open-hand swings at me.

"What in the hell are you doing?" I asked, knowing that the time for settling up was at hand. He started a line of mean-talk and accused me of ratting him out over the burglary.

"You had your orders but you didn't show up and next thing I knew the cops had me and they knew all about it 'cause you told them! I'm going to show you that nobody gets away with ratting me out. Either you do what I tell you to do or I'll beat the shit out of you!" He dropped his pants and ordered, "Touch me you stupid little punk!" I held back and he started the head slapping again.

“I’ll never be your punk!” I yelled and took a few steps back. “Put it away and let’s get this settled.” While he focused on his belt I moved in, but he was quick to swing and my head was ringing as his fists caught me in the face. He expected me to move back but instead I threw my shoulder into his gut, raising him off the ground. My leg slipped behind his knee and my momentum threw him to the ground. I was on top of him and had his arms pinned. He struggled and it was almost too easy to roll him over on his face. I put him in a headlock and cozied one knee up between his thighs, ready to strike if he made too much trouble. I didn’t say a word but he was yelling his head off and pretty soon he was ordering me to let him up. Time passed, I held my silence. He was still yelling with frustrated cussin’, pleas and threats. He basically rassled himself out. I was tiring out too, so as soon as I figured he’d had enough I spoke.

“You’re no friend of mine. You think everybody is afraid of you. But I’m not! So I just beat you in a fair fight, and if I ever hear that you told anybody you punked me, I’ll be back to finish it. Stay away from me from now on. We’re not friends now. I don’t ever want to be your friend ... never, no more!” I got off of him, aimed a quick kick to his gut, and walked away. If I had looked back I would have seen tears, pain and ... shame. I would have known that this was still not an end.

For the rest of the school year I made a game out of avoiding him. Before and after school and even on the weekends I stayed alone, just did things that didn’t need anybody else. I knew every alley in my whole end of town, and used a different door every time I came to school or went home. Summer came at last, and I started going to the cowboy shows every Saturday.

On one such day I saw three shows and it was still light when I started for home. I was walking on one of my favorite places, a paved walkway at the rivers’ edge, with high concrete walls that ran on for more than a quarter of a mile. Every so far there were stairways set into the wall leading up to the top of the bank. I imagined that I was in a movie and it took place in Paris. The muddy Cedar River was really the Seine.

My peaceful mood was abruptly ended. From one of the recessed stairwells four members of the 14th Street gang stepped out and blocked my way. My trouble sensors were fairly sparking although I knew all of these boys, and we had an unspoken agreement to mind our own business. Today they had sly grins on their ugly faces, something that sent a chill up my spine. My mind flashed back to a day not so long ago when a neighbor boy named Bobby drowned. Everybody seemed to have gathered on the river bank. Bobby’s naked body was laid out on the grass. His face was blue and my skinny old uncle Bill had been called in to get him breathing again. “In with the good. Out with the bad!” I can still hear his squeaking voice reciting the chant that sounded to me like some strange kind of a religious rite. His invocation of divine intervention failed. In almost no time the story spread that Bobby had gone bare-ass swimming with the 14th Street gang . When he was caught in a strong current, he tried to paddle back to the shore, but the gang threw rocks at him until he drowned.

I kept walking toward them and making friendly noises. They took up positions to block my way and started making lewd poses and gestures. Their meaning came clear when the oldest one said Chuck had told him he had punked me. and I liked it! I told him, “Chuck is a lyan’ sonofabitch and you shouldn’t believe anything he says.” I moved to pass between them but they closed ranks so I stepped back. “What the hell do you want from me?” The answer was stated with perfect clarity. “Like hell I will!”, I answered. He responded with a choice ... “Do it or you go in the river!”

I quickly calculated the odds. I was 20 yards back down the sidewalk before they even started the chase, which I opened up a little more every hundred yards or so, until they dropped out. I didn’t stop running until I ran out of sidewalk and even then continued to run deep into the railroad yards where there were hundreds of boxcars.

I lost myself in the maze and hid in one of the cars with an open door. I didn't come out until well after dark. I made a pretty good imitation of an old alley cat slinking home in the shadows. I knew that the word would get to Chuck, and that he would have to do something to "defend his honor". But I couldn't even have imagined the way it happened.

Several days passed and the heavy summer heat had settled in like a life sentence. I was slumped out on the couch and my brother was looking in the kitchen for a cold drink of water. The windows were all open but there still wasn't a breath of air moving. Without warning I heard Chuck's voice yelling, like the bad guy in one of my favorite cowboy shows. "Buddy! Buddy! Get out here. I'm callin' you out. Get out here so's we can fight!"

My first instinct was to crouch down so he couldn't see me. But that didn't make much sense. I was pretty much paralyzed, and then my brother came into the room and said, "Who the hell is that? Is he kiddin' or what? What's goin' on here?" I tried to tell him something, not wanting to go into the real story. He laughed and said, "Let me take care of this." And he went out into the front yard.

"Who are you and what do you want here?"

"I'm here to beat the shit out of Buddy. He called me a lyin' sonofabitch! Send him out here, now!"

My brother was not impressed, and he suggested that Chuck might rather have a fist-fight with him. This took Chuck by surprise but there wasn't much he could do except to back down or fight. So they started in. I was peeking over the window sill and things seemed just too strange to be real. So I decided to raise the unreality a step or two. I ran to the hook where daddy's old shotgun hung. I grabbed it, already heading for the front yard. I came around the corner of the house and yelled as loud as I could manage, "Get the hell out of here!". I closed the breech and raised the shotgun pointing it dead-center at Chuck's chest. His interest in fist-fighting had never been lower. He dropped his fists and backed up, eyes wide and a trickle of snotty blood smearing his upper lip. If he spoke a word, I can't recall, but he was gone in a flash. My brother looked at me like I was a scene out of some Laurel and Hardy movie. Then we were both laughing and telling each other what a cowardly jerk he was. After a while he said, in a moment of seriousness, "You'd better take thing back where you found it, before mama comes back home and we'll both have some explainin' to do!" All I could say was, "Thanks. I'll bet that Chuck won't be back again. Don't worry about this thing with him. I think I can handle it, now."

Time passed and these episodes became memories that were barely recalled. Now and then I heard something about Chuck, usually not good. He finally made it to reform school and that took him out of the picture for months or maybe years. I guess he finally gained enough reputation to run with the 14th 'Street gang, but by then they had all become less interesting and generally ended up as common drunks and petty thieves. One incident, though, had special meaning for me.

At some point Chuck fell in with Munro, who being black, had been "placed" in the Opp. It was there that the two of them met. Munro lived just a few blocks from me, and we had spent a lot of time hanging out one whole summer. Munro couldn't go to the city swimming pool on the West side of town, which was "Whites Only" so we took the long bus ride to the East side where Munro was allowed. We went often and had good times, but his parents cut me out, because they didn't think it was a good idea for him to spend so much time with a white boy. I knew that mama would have done the same, if I had let her know. But I knew him to be a good natured and gentle person, so I was shocked, at first, to hear that he had shot Chuck with a shotgun in a "hunting accident". When I learned that Chuck's wound was dead center in his crotch the story came together. Chuck was probably up to his old tricks and Munro found the best way to end it. Chucks' new nickname became "lefty". And Munro became a personal hero of mine.

In time Chuck/Lefty found his natural place in our small-town underworld, mostly as a sneak-thief; he served time in the county jail and ultimately in the state penitentiary. The last I heard he was serving life under the habitual criminal enhancement of the three-strikes-and-you're-out statute

Buddy did somewhat better.

Reflections:

Can anybody, at any age, turn his own life around? Many old cons love to tell their stories. They all blend into the same set of lies. They have no understanding of what has happened to them, or why. So they tell the story they know everybody wants to hear. They claim all of the credit.

Many self-declared sinners will claim that redemption happened to them in an instant of catharsis. And many trained professionals claim that they know how to change other peoples' lives. They are all telling the same story. Some use more vernacular while others use professional and religious jargon. They share a common belief that change is something that must be done to a person, and they claim to know how to do it.

Experience makes two things clear. First, most attempts to help will ultimately make the changes we call reform more unlikely. So, as long as possible we should be tolerant of human failures and stall for time! Most people, if not pushed over some invisible line, will mellow with age and experience and turn for the better on their own. And lastly we all have warts and we all have problems being "good". If somebody turns out "pretty good", they're probably no worse than your neighbors, and we should include ourselves in that bunch.

Getting back to the classic Iowa farmers, who never expect good times to flow forever, and prepare for failure and trouble every day, ... they teach us that we should celebrate all good things and be tolerant of the other things, which will pass in time.

Most decisions are retrievable. But some are not. The worst consequences may never come without help from well-meaning people. Don't screw up the one thing that really works ... time.



CLUB NEWS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday To:

David Lombardi: 11/24	John Ossenfort: 12/15	Herb Soltero: 11/13
Vince Monaci: 11/5	Karl Scheinuck: 12/12	Robert Tusso: 12/15
Lee Ridell: 11-12	Patty Lamb: 11/9	Lynn Orr: 11/12
Terri Scheinuck: 11/5	Deb Wachs: 12/6	Sharrie Wadsack: 11/29

Happy Anniversary To:

Ernie & Loraine Cousins: 11/28	Phil & Sharrie Wadsack: 11/3
Marvin & Pat Wiegand: 11/7	Bill & Deborah Johnson: 12/12

If you do not see your information when you expect to, for any reason, contact the Editor.

Board of Directors

The slate of nominees to serve on the Board was approved by vote of the membership at the November meeting. They will be installed at the December meeting, which is the Annual Christmas Party.

Christmas Dinner

Christmas Dinner, our annual event, will take place on Tuesday, December 11, 2012: it will be held at The Golden Goose Cafe. Location: 2545 W. Hwy 89A, in Sedona. Cocktails (no host) will be served at 6:00, and dinner will be served at 7:00.

If you plan to attend, please contact Larry Curry at 204-9540 or lcurrie@centurylink.net to make a reservation. The cost is \$30 per person payable to the cashier at the Golden Goose on the evening of the party.

Menu Choices

Prime Rib Topped with Three Jumbo Prawns

New York Steak With 8 oz Lobster Tail

Chicken Oscar Scallopini

(tender grilled chicken breast topped with crab, sauteed spinach and garlic cream sauce)

Hashbrown Crusted Salmon

Rack of Lamb With Pecan-Whiskey-Mint Sauce

Entrees Include Non-alcohol Beverages and New York cheesecake

BOARD MEETING

The Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month, at 8:30 AM, at the Cousins' clubroom. All members are invited to attend.

CLUB MEETINGS

The General Meetings of the Sedona Car Club are held at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of each month at the Sedona Library, except in June when our meeting is the Annual Picnic, and in December when it is the Annual Christmas Party. We do not meet in JULY. Be sure to attend. Bring a car-loving friend!

DECEMBER MEETING: PROGRAM

Traditionally the Annual Christmas Dinner constitutes the December Meeting.

Annual Cottonwood Christmas Parade

Join the fun on Saturday, December 1, 2012, at the Annual Christmas Parade. The Parade goes forward come rain snow or even sunshine. A goodly number of cars are signed up but there is room for many more. Lunch at the Renegade Steak House follows. To register, please contact: Steve Blank 284-2112, or sl_blank@msn.com

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(open position)
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT/
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