

Tall Tales from the Editor

Our little cosmic bungalow or A class five financial storm



It seems as though it was decades ago when I saw those magical first rays of sunrise transcending the morning sky—hot pink and red neon lighting. Chris “Madman” Allen and I were preparing ourselves for an unskilled climb of 12,721-foot Mt. Peal in the La Sal Mountains of southeast Utah.

The night before we had set up our base camp in a grove of fir and spruce trees in Dark Canyon, near Dark Canyon Lake, both of which lie on the east side of Mt. Peal. The morning air was quite cool (a few degrees above freezing) for late July. Madman Allen and I already had warmed ourselves up with a pot of strong Irish coffee and the nourishment and additional benefits from a couple of homemade brownies. The late Doo Doo the wonder dog also was making this excursion with us into the abyss.

We had a couple of soft underbelly hatchery-raised rainbow trout left over from the afternoon before’s fishing adventure. As we tossed those dried out leftover miserable excuse for rainbow trout onto our morning campfire, they provided us with an amazing amount of bright light. We felt like early whalers who scoured the oceans in search of whale oil for better lighting. Now don’t get all ticked off at me for using excess stocker trout for camp lighting. In those days it just seemed easier than packing a Coleman lantern, mantles, and fuel around. I gave up the habit of using stocker trout for lamp oil decades ago. I can’t say for certain if Madman Allen has given up such a despicable,

pathetic habit or not. I haven’t gone fishing with him for those placid white inbred stocker rainbow trout since the last century.

We loaded our daypacks with bottles of Mickey’s wide-mouth malt liquor, Doo Doo’s drink of choice, and barbecue potato chips for added nourishment on our climb. Anyhow, on that morning, Doo Doo was already preoccupied with a squirrel that was chatting relentlessly at him from high up in a fir tree, a repeat performance of the evening before. Doo Doo was sitting at the tree base staring up at the heavens and giving an occasional primal whimpering cry, or maybe it was a prayer to the great all-seeing poodle in the sky to bless him with squirrel stew. I had a hard time convincing him it was time to go and start the climb.

By the time we hit the halfway point on our climb, the sun was rather warm on our backsides. Being dressed in buckskins—we thought we were reincarnated mountain men—we were sweating profusely.

It was at this point we had to transverse a slide rock alley way. We were almost across this very unstable, geological fool’s crossing when Doo Doo saw a mountain marmot above us on the slide rock alley way. Doo Doo was off after the marmot before I could tell him “no,” a word he always despised. As he carelessly forged ahead, his look said, “Won’t my ancestors be proud of me if I can make my own lunch.” The “you’re mine” marmot chase of Doo Doo’s started the slide rock under our

feet to rapidly begin moving down the mountainside. We discovered a new sport called “mountain man slide-rock surfing.” When the rockslide ground to a halt, we’d surfed a good 40 to 50 feet. It felt like we surfed for miles even though the slide was over as fast as Doo Doo had started it.

This seemed to be the perfect time to take a break and toast yet another victory over natural selection. When Doo Doo heard the twist top opening on a Mickey’s, he quickly gave up his search for marmot steak and scampered back to his party bowl to celebrate with us. While the three of us recharged our brain cells, we gazed out at the San Juan Rockies silhouetted in the distant eastern horizon. Between

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us and the San Juans lies Paradox Valley, Naturita, home to the Incline Bar, Gypsum Gap, San Miguel and Dolores Rivers, UraVan, Coke Oven Ranch, the Bedrock Store, bloated sheep, wayward horses, uranium mines, Indian ruins, and a lifetime of exploring; but first we had to reach the top of Mt. Peal.

We had worked our way to within 300 feet or so of our destination when I asked Madman Allen, “Was that thunder I just heard?” At that point, a bad dream boiled over the top of Mt. Peal from the west. We had obviously angered, at the same time, the gods of wind, thunder, rain and hail as they descended upon us. Quicker than you can say “deep-fried mountain men,” Doo Doo, who hated getting wet and was terrified of thunder, found a small overhang that he could crawl into. Before the lightning could locate the fake silver conches on my fake beaver hat, Madman Allen and I tried to wiggle our way into the little clam of the micro overhang. Doo Doo, who was becoming one with the rocks in the back of his hideout, started growling at us. I believe he was trying to convey the warning, “If you two crowd me or try to move me, I’ll be the only survivor of this climb. I’m not kidding. You two go play out in the lightning and next time check your local weather channel first.”

Madman Allen and I barely had ourselves out of the storm’s fury. Unfortunately our little cosmic bungalow had a downward slope to it and we soon had water dripping and running on us. I just love the smell of wet buckskins. Not! When Doo Doo started growling again, Madman Allen asked him if he’d like a Mickey’s. That changed Doo Doo’s attitude. It was very difficult, but we managed to free a Mickey’s from my backpack and all three of us shared the bottle.

I believe the storm lasted around

20 minutes, but it is hard to say. Time slows down when you’re cold, wet, and in a compromising position with a deranged lunatic. And I’m not referring to Doo Doo the wonder dog.

When we were sure the lightning had left our area and blue was the color of the sky again, we crawled out of our dungeon. It took a while for the circulation to return to our bodies, but when it did we toasted yet another victory over natural selection!

From the top of Mt. Peal the world around us looked surreal. It was truly worth the dangers we encountered from the storm’s three inches of new hail on that last leg of the climb. We didn’t linger, though, as another storm was rapidly descending upon us.

The thunderstorm that caught us on our climb of Mt. Peal was a breeze compared to the financial storm on Wall Street. From the top of Mt. Peal, I could see the next incoming storm and could rather accurately gauge its severity. I knew what action would be required of me: find a safe hiding place.

With this Wall Street storm, there really is no hiding in a cosmic bungalow and no apparent cave of safety. Every aspect of all of our lives is affected by the relentless pounding of this class five financial storm. It appears we will all suffer from this firestorm, possibly for years to come.

We can thank the unregulated financial banking monopolies for these woes. Some say we the public carry some of the responsibility through our complacency. That may be so, but behind closed doors the banking monopoly was created and allowed by our congress. Where oh where is Teddy Roosevelt when we all need a monopoly buster? Most aspects of our lives, whether we realize it or not, are controlled by the oil, food, insurance, pharmaceutical, etc., monopolies. There is no free marketplace when most everything is controlled by those government-sanctioned monopolies.

We need leaders, both financial and political, with a conscience who will plan for the long haul rather than the next financial quarter and their own padded bank accounts.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to make as much money as they can as long as it is done honestly. The person who robs a bank and gets caught goes to jail for maybe 20 years. When the snakes in suits on Wall Street clean out the vaults of our investments and retirements, they are rewarded with tens of millions of dollars. Both are criminals, but who do you think should be taken to the proverbial hanging tree?

Check out the ad on page two for my new book published by Odyssey Press. It’s a collection of my columns from over the years. It’ll make the perfect Christmas gift.



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Farewell to Frank Ferreira

Owner of
Applegate
Red Winery

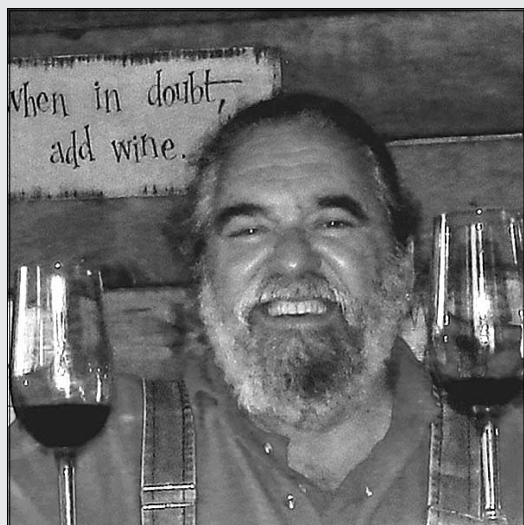


Photo by Gabriella Sarrouh, age 9, San Carlos, CA

What a huge loss to our community! We are very saddened by the recent passing of Frank Ferreira, owner of the popular Applegate Red Winery.

Not only did Frank produce excellent wines, but he enjoyed sharing them. And share he did—all the while entertaining visitors with humorous stories and his larger-than-life laugh. We will miss Frank and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family.